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sonata, cutting to others in the room who observe his reaction: see Boyum, *Double Exposure*, p. 263.

¹⁰ Charney, *Empty Moments*, p. 10.

¹¹ Woolf, "The Cinema" (1926); *The Crowded Dance of Modern Life*, ed. Rachel Bowlby (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1993), p. 54. Here Woolf offers an opposite view to Jean Epstein's theory of *photogénie* from the early 1920s, in which he argues that film is intimately bound up with the viewer's perception: see Charney, *Empty Moments*, pp. 150–6.

¹² Michael Cunningham, *The Hours* (London: Fourth Estate, 2001), p. 225.

¹³ Cunningham, *The Hours*, p. 226.

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PETER BROOKER

Postmodern adaptation: pastiche, intertextuality and re-functioning

Average film-goers probably take more notice of a film's stars than of its director. Stars or actors are, after all, visible on screen for approximately two hours whereas the director merely fronts or ends the credits. How many viewers, for example, know the directors of the *Bridget Jones* films (Sharon Maguire and Beeban Kidron) compared with those who know its stars, Colin Firth, Hugh Grant, and Renée Zellweger? When you read a novel you hold the author's name in your hands, touching it with your finger-tips, and what you see in reading are their words. But when a film is "based on the book, story or play by . . ." then the author's name tends also to recede along with their text, even such a one as Helen Fielding, J. R. R. Tolkien, Jane Austen, or Shakespeare. The process is, we might say, a technologically-induced version of the "death of the author" theorized by Roland Barthes in the 1960s. Barthes's intention was to demote the godlike figure of the (usually male designated) "Author" to the figure of a "scriptor" working laterally across texts, and to activate the reader, similarly, as a figure who cruised, antennae bristling, across this layered textuality, but did not pause to dig below or look behind this surface for a book's single authorized meaning.¹ Barthes's essay, along with other theoretical essays in the same decade, by Julia Kristeva,² for example, inaugurated the concept of intertextuality and the practice of intertextual reading. This was one of the major strategic features of post-structuralism and is a continuing touchstone in the Humanities. At the same time, we cannot fail to notice, almost fifty years after Barthes's essay, that in the world of everyday reading, book reviews, as well as much academic criticism, the author is as strong a presence as ever.

In cinema theory and criticism, there had been an earlier move the other way, and a correspondingly contrary set of popular habits and attitudes. For here under the influence of "auteur theory,"³ promoted chiefly by contributors to the magazine *Cahiers du Cinéma* in the 1950s, the work of individual Hollywood and subsequently French "New Wave" directors was elevated above any written fictional source or generic conventions in a bid to earn

those directors and the medium of cinema artistic respect. Though this tendency ran counter to the customary denigration of American commercialized culture, it depended, much like traditional literary criticism, on the notion of the creative individual who could bring a distinctive and overriding signature to a varied range of work across different genres. The notion has of course survived in interpretations of the work not only of earlier examples (Alfred Hitchcock, Howard Hawks, Douglas Sirk, and others) but of directors such as Woody Allen, Steven Spielberg, Martin Scorsese, or David Cronenberg. This has been a somewhat anomalous perspective upon film however. For not only is filmmaking an evidently collaborative endeavor and a more clearly technologically advanced industry than book publishing, it has also depended on scripts adapted from novels, whether of "high" or "low" cultural status, and this practice, along with re-makes, cross-genre films, blockbuster series, and the migration of stars and actors from picture to picture and between TV, theater, and cinema, has arguably made the experience of variegated intertextuality, and not authorship, the more immediate one for viewers. The example of Colin Firth, above, whose character Mark Darcy in *Bridget Jones's Diary* (2001) and *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* (2004) is modeled on his TV role as Darcy in the adaptation of Jane Austen's novel *Pride and Prejudice* (1995) would be a case in point.

These differences have something to do with differences in media and modes of production and reception, but they are also informed by habits of cultural value and these are most exposed when book and film, especially "literary" fiction and film, are considered together. The kinds of hierarchical distinctions, often noted in critical study, between literature and film, creativity and commerce, the individual and the mass, or the original and copy, then come relentlessly into play and continue to bedevil this comparison. The criterion of "fidelity to the original" is perhaps the most stubborn, and most futile and deluded of these attitudes – futile because, strictly speaking, fidelity can only mean literal repetition, and deluded because a judgment of success or failure is clearly dependent on differently situated strategies of interpretation.

Academic study has tirelessly returned to the criterion of fidelity and its other associated binary distinctions of type and value to critique their inconsistencies and implications.¹ Most convincingly they have been deconstructed in favor of a preferred emphasis upon relations of difference or dialogue, not of hierarchy, between texts and media. In its broader application this emphasis should include the influence of the differently situated experiences of reading novels and viewing films, sketched above, including the experience of video and down-loaded computer texts, and the different cultural contexts and chronologies in which these occur. The Hollywood

adaptations of European film texts (Godard's *Un Bout de Souffle*, 1960, as *Breathless* [Jim McBride, 1983], Wim Wenders's *Wings of Desire*, as *City of Angels* [Brad Silberling, 1998], *Nikita* [Luc Besson, 1990] as *The Assassin* or *Point of No Return* [John Badham, 1993] – the inspiration in turn of a US TV series) entail these often taken-for-granted cultural exchanges across film and cultural history. More recently there has been a more self-conscious, two-way exchange between American and Asian cinema, in the work of Quentin Tarantino, Wayne Wang, and Wong Kar-Wai, amongst others.

There are points, too, it should be said, when relations of textual difference should be understood in terms of broader and long-term relations of cultural dominance, dependency, and subordination. We cannot ignore, that is to say, the global hegemony of Western literature or American film. Adaptations in literature such as Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* of *Jane Eyre* and J. M. Coetzee's *Foe* of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (of which there have also been play and film adaptations) are well-known examples of the way later texts reveal the colonial and patriarchal attitudes determining their originals. The recent film versions of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* (1999) and Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (2004) "write back" in this way to their originals. In turn they expose the satiric sexual abuse of slaves on the Antigua sugar plantation which is the source of Sir Thomas Bertram's wealth in Austen's novel, and foreground the tension between the Imperial rule and the enchantment of India in Thackeray. These films have attracted disparate reviews. What is plain, however, to anticipate some of the discussion below, is that while adaptations are invariably commercial propositions, which might succeed or fail artistically, they can be informed by a committed re-reading, interested in more than an unmotivated recycling of existing stories.

I want to develop the case for this kind of multi-relational critical perspective below, but firstly I shall set the present discussion in a particular context. Postmodernism made its explicit appearance in critical and cultural studies in the early 1980s and brought with it a new vocabulary and perspective upon relations between the real and the image, and the present and past. It did so in response to the newer reproductive media and information technologies and to trends in film and TV which seemed increasingly to feed off repeats and remakes. Both tendencies undermined the concept of the original and therefore had clear implications for the study of adaptations.

Fredric Jameson's celebrated essay "Postmodernism and Consumer Society" (1983), expanded as "Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" (1984), effectively set the agenda for future debate on these themes. Thus with the absence in postmodernism of stable norms, the mocking parody or satire of an earlier age became no longer possible. Nor, with "the transformation of reality into images, the fragmentation of time

into a series of perpetual presents" was it possible to access an authentic view of the past or in writing and art "to invent new styles and worlds" since "—they've already been invented."⁵⁴ Instead there was pastiche, the practice of neutral and humorless imitation: "speech in a dead language," at best "blank parody."⁵⁵ In film this tendency was evidenced, Jameson argued, by the prevalence of the "nostalgia mode," the superficial reproduction or re-styling in films such as *American Graffiti* (1973), *Star Wars* (1977), or *Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981) of a past decade in American life or of its associated iconography. Even a film such as *Body Heat* (1981) ostensibly set in its own time, blurs this reference, Jameson contends, in the haze of "some indefinable nostalgic past, an eternal 1930s, say, beyond history."⁵⁶

It is easy to multiply subsequent examples of Jameson's types: in the literal shot-by-shot remake of *Psycho* (1998), or the freer remake *Ocean's 11* (2001) and *Solaris* (2002); in films evoking an earlier period, frequently still of the 1950s, such as *Pleasantville* (1998), *Midwinter Drive* (2001), and *Far From Heaven* (2002), along with the Coen Brothers' *O Brother - Where Art Thou?* (2000) and *The Man Who Wasn't There* (2001), and the fabulously extravagant martial arts derived films, *Hero* (2002) and *House of the Flying Daggers* (2004) by Zhang Yimou, which imagine periods in ancient China. The last twenty years have also seen any number of adaptations of literary texts: by Jane Austen, most obviously, Edith Wharton, Thackeray, Shakespeare, and J. R. R. Tolkien. These examples represent less "more of the same" than *more* of the same; that is to say, the emergence of a more intensively palimpsestic, ironic, and self-reflexive film culture, extending, in company with broader cultural trends, into an enthusiasm for fantasy. The *Star Wars* series is evidence of this increasingly layered complexity. For Jameson in the 1980s, the first *Star Wars* film induced a particular type of nostalgia, "a deep . . . longing" to relive the experience of viewing "Saturday afternoon serials of the Buck Rogers type" screened two decades earlier.⁷ If some viewers can still see the film this way, the later *Star Wars* films have recruited new, younger audiences and fans and arguably shifted this nostalgia to the moment in 1977 of the screening and first viewing of the opening instalment (Episode IV) in the series.⁸

Indirectly, Jameson's twin notions of pastiche and nostalgia are indebted to the scenario of a hyperreal world of simulacra (the copy of a copy without reference or original in the real world) theorized by Jean Baudrillard. This has proved a deeply controversial proposition in the political realm. Meanwhile, the idea of simulation and the loss of the real finds very clear endorsement in the world of material and cultural production, where neither Lewis nor laptops, CDs or books are copies of a single original. Baudrillard's findings have also fed into a continuing debate on the changing conception

of the human in its relation, by turns, to the natural world and advanced computer technology. We think in this connection of discussions of cloning, of cyborgs and cyberpunk fiction, and of course of the different texts of *Blade Runner* in some combination of Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968), Ridley Scott's film versions (1981, 1991), and the later spin-off novels. Dick has proved a fertile source for adaptations to film and a number of his stories, notably *Time Out of Joint* (1959) and *The Slaughter* (1964), as well as those made into films including "We Can Remember It For You Wholesale" (1987), filmed as *Total Recall* (1990), and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* deal with the themes of pastiche and authenticity, slippages in time, and the loss of the past which came to characterize academic and popular debate on postmodernism. More recently, Steven Spielberg's 2002 adaptation of Dick's short story, "The Minority Report" (1956) sets these themes in a spectacularly computerized future where, as in Dick's story, crime is anticipated by three mutant "precogs." This system, termed "Precrime," would seem to administer to a perfect, crime-free world, but goes into crisis when the commissioner of police, John Anderton (Tom Cruise in the film) is himself named as a future murderer. This shared narrative nucleus is played out quite differently in story and film, according to the kinds of intertexts indicated above: the respective predilections of author Philip K. Dick (where the system is restored) and auteur Steven Spielberg (where it is abandoned and family life is restored); the extra-textual associations with Tom Cruise; the plainly incompatible technologies of the short story and Hollywood production; and the cultural import of crime in Dick's 1960s and Spielberg's millennial America. Thus, where Dick's story strikes the period note of paranoia, the film's audiences might find reason to associate the regime of "Precrime" with the contemporary language of "zero tolerance" and "pre-emptive strikes." A notable further difference is that in Dick the precogs are ". . . idiots . . . deformed and retarded"⁹ and are little more than catalysts, whereas, in Spielberg, the story of one of the precogs, re-named Agatha, is highly developed. In the film she is an unusually sensitized and disturbed young woman who has repressed the death of her mother, but, aided by the Tom Cruise figure, is recalled to human society. The film adaptation therefore makes more of the notion of "minority" in the story's title and this too accords with Spielberg's humanist sensibility and his response to other submerged texts or "pararexts" making up the surrounding debates on the non- or post-human.

For Jameson, the uncomprehended reach of globalization and the recycling of styles as pastiche and simulation have obstructed our access to an authentic past and frustrated alike political understanding and genuine artistic novelty. It is not Jameson's intention, however, to defend a betrayed

or traced original, human or otherwise. Rather, he is concerned, unlike the more fatalistic Baudrillard, with the extent to which postmodernist intertextuality merely replicates the circulation of goods and "logic of consumer capitalism," and with how "the disappearance of a sense of history" frustrates the making of a "critical... contestatory... oppositional" postmodern art and culture.¹⁰

Amongst many responses to Jameson's analysis, Linda Hutcheon argued (in 1989) that both the postmodern historical novel and film engage in a critical and still parodic dialogue with the past and therefore produce more than a facile imitation or pastiche of it. This is a more positive way certainly of viewing what Hutcheon suggests is a changed and more self-consciously knowing historical sense – which would embrace adaptations as well as historical fictions. A cultural history of the kind Jameson evokes which operates in one episode by norms (enabling parody) and in another without them (resulting in pastiche) surely rests on too absolute and simplistic a distinction. Indeed, while postmodernism, in league with post-structuralism or deconstruction, is credited with challenging the distinction between high and low or popular culture, it has ironically often been marked by persistent binaries of which parody and pastiche and, more broadly, an absolute division between modernism and postmodernism are examples. The result is a melancholy refrain of loss: whether of reference and historicity, or of the subject, or of political agency and critique. To contest this, as Hutcheon does, in order to affirm that parody remains an option, presents us with a "double-coded" postmodernism which at once inhabits the conventions it subverts, but does not, all the same, entirely release us from the limitations of the initial binary configuration.

The concepts of dialogics and intertextuality, as theorized by Mikhail Bakhtin and adopted in film studies, notably by Robert Stam, can help us move beyond the stark choice of "either... or" to a thoroughly open appreciation of art as, in Stam's words, the "endless permutation of textual traces."¹¹ Bakhtin viewed all utterances as inherently dialogic: "Each utterance", he wrote, "is filled with echoes and reverberations of other utterances," it "refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies on the others, presupposes them to be known, and somehow takes them into account."¹² Stam argues further that the idea of "intertextual dialogism" undermines the hierarchies and prejudice governing the common response to adaptations and, as he puts it, helps "us transcend the *aporias* of 'fidelity'."¹³ His view of art as a "palimpsestic multi-trace" operating "both within and across cultures"¹⁴ is a particularly salutary one. However, the evident degrees and types of adaptation and different relations between even two core texts, calls for a correspondingly focused but flexible vocabulary able to distinguish

types of intertextuality. Stam refers us in this respect to the taxonomy developed in Gérard Genette's *Palimpsests* (1997). Here Genette identifies a general category of "transtextuality" and five subtypes: "intertextuality" (quotation, plagiarism, and allusion), paratextuality (titles, prefaces, interviews, reviews), "metatextuality" (the commentary by one text on another), architextuality (the features assigning a text to a genre) and the most relevant type in the present context, "hypertextuality" concerning the relation between a first "hypotext" and a second, "hypertext" in some way derived from the first.

If Genette helps us distinguish the kinds of transtextuality necessary to a systematic poetics, his terms do not in themselves help us understand the important "process" of adaptation. Nor do they represent a significant advance on the existing, already extensive vocabulary describing this relation: for example, "editing," "substitution," "amplification," "transcoding," "transposition," "re-reading," "re-writing," "bricolage," "imitation," and "mockery," as well as "pastiche" and "parody." Two such concepts are, I suggest, worth some further attention: "translation" and "refunctioning." The concept and practice of translation have a history in which privilege and dominance is conferred upon one language and culture over another – where the first is invariably Western and most often English. Recent thinking, however, not only critiques such assumptions but argues that neither the "original" text and culture, nor its translation and corresponding culture can be deemed homogeneous entities. Rather, the practice of translation, contends Naoki Sakai, is "radically heterogeneous."¹⁵ Sakai adds that "the translator is also the interpreter" and in an "extremely ambiguous and unstable" relation to both the original author (addresser) and reader (addressee).¹⁶ Such thinking undermines any essentialized notion of either prior or subsequent texts and participants and the traditional assumption that a level of underlying sameness exists between them. Rather, translation becomes a "hybridizing instance"¹⁷ marked by disparity, gaps, and indeterminacy rather than equivalence.

If translation can in this way provide a suggestive model for adaptation we have to consider how, in the present instance, this occurs across media and genres and recognize too that the adaptation places no obligation on the viewer to know or acquaint themselves with the source text. In an obvious example, we do not need to know Jane Austen's *Emma* when we watch *Chesless* (1995) – a film which itself became the "original" for a TV series. It is indeed one of the features of postmodernism that texts exploit precisely this kind of dispersed, free-ranging intertextuality. An adaptation, that is to say, will stand in a set of potential intertextual or dialogic relations, not all of which will be realized or need be realized at any given time in order to afford

pleasure and understanding. They may also become increasingly distanced from their "original" while entering different transtextual worlds with other synchronically related texts. The moment of reading or viewing, moreover, can and frequently will reverse the chronology of source text and its adaptation, putting the second before the first. In which case the consequence of reading or viewing back to the source text will inevitably be to resituate and transform the supposedly fixed and authentic original.

What none of this discussion broaches, however, is the question of evaluation. How, if we reject the standard of "fidelity" for the analytic vocabulary of "intertextual dialogue" or "translation" are we to assess the interest and quality of an adaptation? We might, in this respect, recall the concept of "refunctioning" (German: *Umfunktionalisierung*) coined by the theorist and playwright, Bertolt Brecht, himself a frequent adaptor of earlier texts, in response to the film adaptation of his play *The Threepenny Opera*.¹⁸ Brecht had in mind a transformation of artistic form and the means of cultural production in the interests of working-class democracy. The postmodern has distanced us from Brecht's revolutionary cultural politics yet we might consider how, in "translating" Brecht, an adaptation simultaneously "re-functions" both the form and content of its source text so as critically to address the changed cultural and political circumstances of its own time. Such a criterion would enable us to respond to the supposed lack of invention and newness implied in Jameson's account of postmodernism: not at all so as to defend the "original" or its priority, but to restore the possibility of "originality," understood as the practice of an imaginative re-making which edits, echoes, borrows from, recomposes and "re-functions" existing narratives or images; that is to say, makes them work in a different medium with an invigorated social and artistic purpose – what Brecht termed art's "critical attitude to the social world."¹⁹

I want, with these thoughts in mind, to turn here to a more extended discussion of a particular example. Michael Cunningham's novel *The Hours* transplants, or translates, the double icon of modernist literature, Virginia Woolf and her novel *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) into a postmodern present in ways that raise questions about style, narrative, and identity, as well as about historical reconstruction and originality. It was made into a film directed by Stephen Daldry in 2002. On first viewing the film I was acquainted with Woolf's career and writing, including *Mrs. Dalloway* but not with *The Hours*. *The New York Times* commented that there was no need to have read *Mrs. Dalloway* before reading *The Hours*, but not to do so would deny readers "a readily available pleasure." Of ten reviews cited in the frontispiece to Cunningham's book only one of any length does not mention Virginia Woolf. Cunningham's novel is said to "shadow and echo," to be "inspired

by," to "re-voice" and "emulate" Woolf's.²⁰ The assumption is that Woolf's text comes first and sets off these later echoes, but clearly this cannot be the case if we enter Woolf's novel after reading Cunningham's, or read Cunningham's after viewing the film. The echoes will in fact circulate through all three texts, possibly embracing the film of *Mrs. Dalloway* (1989) too, and in so doing reconstitute our sense of them.

It is Cunningham's novel, however, not Woolf's, nor the film, which generates the intricate dialogic relationship between these texts. Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* was set in its own intertextual relations, of course. She began the novel with the working title of "The Hours" and planned initially that the character Clarissa would commit suicide. She had recently read James Joyce's *Ulysses* which arguably provides the idea of a novel of the day in the life of Mrs. Dalloway, and had delivered a talk on the modern novel (the famous essay "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown") eight days before she wrote in her diary that she had begun "The Hours." A different Clarissa Dalloway appears in the earlier *The Voyage Out* (1915) and there was a short story, "Mrs. Dalloway in Bond Street." These intertexts drop away from her novel, with the result that it acquires the signature of the single author, along with the modernist concern with unity in the midst of, or as transcending, the multifariousness of modern metropolitan life, in one of the marks, says Jameson, of the modernist text. Cunningham's taking over Woolf's working title is in keeping with his novel's amplified sense of time's immediacy and duration and the foregrounded theme of age, memory, illness, and suicide. He also extends Woolf's English location to the USA and multiplies her novel's plot lines. Thus *The Hours* intercuts the story of Woolf's novel-writing, personal circumstances, and mental health with a second which follows Clarissa Vaughan (nicknamed "Mrs. D." in recognition of Woolf's novel) on a day in late twentieth-century New York; and a third which presents the day in the life of Mrs. Brown (the name borrowed from Woolf's essay) in post-World War II suburban Los Angeles.

The novel conforms in these ways to much that would be said of the postmodernist text: in its crossing the genres of biography and fiction, its dislocated time sequence, and also in its style. Thus the novel directly quotes from Woolf's suicide note and *Mrs. Dalloway* and pastiches her novel's idiom and the syntax of free indirect discourse in describing her. Thus:

She washes her face and does not look, certainly not this morning, not when the work is waiting for her and she is anxious to join at the way she might join a party that had already started downstairs, a party full of wit and beauty certainly but full, too, of something finer than wit or beauty; something mysterious and golden; a spark of profound celebration, of life itself, as silks

rustle across polished floors and secrets are whispered under the music. She, Virginia, could be a girl in a new dress, about to go down to a party, about to appear on the stairs, fresh and full of hope. (p. 31)

Fredric Jameson, once more, characterizes pastiche as "blank parody," the imitation of "dead styles," and the eclipse of the authorial signature. Certainly we do not identify a uniquely personal authorial voice here, but rather a postmodern facility to move laterally across available styles and idioms. Cunningham, in other words, can write like Woolf, but she would not have written like him. We would do better, however, to think of Cunningham's prose as at once an impersonation and homage; far from blank, and far from a rejection of its modernist precursor. Indeed the novel demonstrates the continuing life of a modernist author, "refunctioned" in Cunningham's own prose, in the easy reference to Clarissa Vaughan as "Mrs. D." and in Laura Brown's avid reading of all Woolf's works.

In Cunningham's novel, the character Richard (whose surname we learn shortly before the end is "Brown") is a prize-winning author who is dying of AIDS. He is therefore less the Richard Dalloway who is a version of Leonard Woolf in Woolf's novel than the homosexual Lytton Strachey who once proposed to Virginia Stephen, just as Clarissa and Richard Brown once shared a fleeting kiss and short-lived affair. Cunningham incorporates the story of Woolf's main male character, the shell-shocked Septimus Smith, into the story of Richard who, like Smith, commits suicide by falling from a window. But in its main narrative drive, his novel follows the interlaced stories of three women across the twentieth century from an opening re-enactment of Woolf's suicide through stories about writing, giving parties, depression, and survival. Crucially all the women are conscious of parallel or alternate worlds. Woolf, stuck in the stolid routines of Richmond, yearns for the dangerous "life" of London; Clarissa's mind turns repeatedly on what might have been between herself and Richard; and Mrs. Brown finally abandons her unfulfilled life as suburban wife and mother for an undefined something else. In the process Cunningham evokes the nascent lesbianism in Woolf's own relationships, expressed in *Mrs. Dalloway* in Clarissa's youthful infatuation with Sally Seton. In New York, Clarissa lives openly with her Sally; and in Los Angeles Laura Brown is awoken by a kiss with her friend to the possibility of her own bisexuality.

The film collaborates with Cunningham's text in its elaborations upon *Mrs. Dalloway* and in bringing us to rethink the circumstances of Woolf's life and suicide. It supplies the Woolf biography and Cunningham's locations with the period realism of the 1920s and the "authentic" dress and décor of this and the latter settings in post-war and end-of-century America (updated

to 2001 in the film). In addition, it brings the strong Hollywood cast of Nicole Kidman, Meryl Streep, and Julianne Moore, known for several other roles, to this story. We might appreciate the joke, too, if we remember the moment in Cunningham's novel where Clarissa Vaughan thinks she spots Vanessa Redgrave or Meryl Streep (the two "Clarissa Dalloways" of the two films of Woolf's novel) on a New York street (p. 27).

The result, however, is more than the "faithful" nostalgia film and knowing star vehicle this might suggest. In particular, David Hare's screenplay radically edits, re-arranges, and supplements Cunningham's text, and the rapid intercutting of the film's opening sets the stories in a more immediate intertextual (spoken and visual) dialogue with each other. The film also introduces four significant additions. The first and third additions concern the Mrs. Brown character and strengthen a sense of her affinity with Woolf. In the first, clearly contemplating suicide, she books into a hotel where she reads *Mrs. Dalloway* (a passage affirming "it is possible to die") and in a sequence, intercut with Woolf's thoughts on her Mrs. Dalloway but which show us Mrs. Brown, dreams that she all but drowns as she knows Woolf did. She henceforth determines to live, as Woolf simultaneously determines Mrs. Dalloway will live. The second addition is an intense exchange between the Leonard and Virginia Woolf characters on Richmond railway station which allows him to explain the background of her mental illness, attempted suicides, and their retreat to the London suburbs, and allows her a speech in which she defends her right to determine her own fate and principally to return to the "life . . . the violent jolt" of London. She is dying in Richmond, and "If it is a choice," she says, "between Richmond and death, I choose death." In the third addition, which builds fragmented information in the novel into a conversation between Laura Brown and Clarissa Vaughan after her son Richard's suicide, Mrs. Brown explains her decision to abandon her children and marriage and to determine her own life: "It was death," she says, "I chose life."

The film in this way discovers an emphasis on women's self-determination and links these examples across the century especially through a figure who is at once Woolf's reader, her virtual character, and a surviving actor in the drama of later years. At the same time, while retaining and reworking its intertextual relation to Woolf and Cunningham, it belongs to a further, later-day and non-literary context as a film about AIDS and as "a woman's picture." In this respect it promotes sympathy for an AIDS sufferer and a positive attitude towards being lesbian; it tells us how what Woolf barely dared contemplate is boldly realized two generations on, but also reveals the profound tensions in a woman's decision to choose her own life. These difficulties are concentrated once again in the middle figure Laura Brown

who commits "the worst thing a mother can do" in abandoning her children. Julianne Moore's role in this film and in *Far from Heaven* (2002) in the same year, reinforce this theme in respectively exposing the stifling conformity and racial prejudice of 1950s suburban America. Both characters seek something other than the supposed, male-defined heaven of a standard marriage and domestic family life. In *Far from Heaven* the character cannot make the choice to quit this world for an inter-racial relationship. In *The Hours* Laura Brown's decision to lead an independent life tortured her son and invites opprobrium but re-inspires Clarissa Vaughan's commitment to her lover. Also, in the fourth addition to Cunningham's text, before a closing image of Woolf's drowning, Clarissa's daughter embraces Mrs. Brown. Thus the film confirms how the sisterhood it has evoked, across narratives of independent choice, whether of life or death, continues into a new generation. Thus, as a 'woman's picture' and in more of a pedagogic than nostalgic relation to women's history, the film 'refunctions' its source text, finding a pertinent transposition of Cunningham's reading of Woolf's own legacy.

What general conclusions can we draw from the above? Firstly, adaptation always implies a process of change and not an alignment of two fixed objects. At its most straightforward, this process may be confined to one medium and take the form of the rewriting in one book of another book or the remake of one film in another film. However, this process may involve a combination of book(s) and film(s) in no prescribed chronological order or assumed hierarchy. Secondly, to understand the process of adaptation as one of translation or, at its fullest, of a stratified dialogic and cross-cultural transformation over time, simultaneously undermines the predetermined status of the "original" and the idea of a unilinear reference back and forward down one channel. An adaptation may remove itself from its source text, edit or amplify a part of it, or transpose the whole, in a spirit of defecence, homage, critique, opportunism, or indifference. In any case it will inevitably contract a supplementary set of relations with other texts. If there is one primary source text and the adaptation remains in significant textual contact with it, then it will not only present a changed version of its source but transform our understanding and valuation of that primary source too. Michael Cunningham's *The Hours* and the film of his book have, in this way, changed *Mrs. Dalloway* for its readers.

I've wanted to broaden an account of these operations to some consideration of the variations in a viewer's experience. This is an argument which has properly, of course, to take account of variations by age, class, sex, ethnicity, and culture. It also soon spirals away from any systematic description. We can, however, make two simple points: that the source text may not be the chronologically first text in a reader's or viewer's experience; and, secondly,

that an "adaptation" may not be experienced as this. *Ocean's 11* (2001), for example, may exist in an actually experienced, potential, or no more than acknowledged relation to the 1960s "original" film and to the sequel *Ocean's 11* (2004). Viewing the three films will produce countless other possible textual and cultural connections. However, *Ocean's 11* may be a one-off viewing experience and known therefore as a "passive" adaptation – though it may be known in relation to other films directed by Steven Soderbergh and/or starring George Clooney (for example *Solaris*, 2002). This film, the remake *Solaris*, may itself similarly stand in a contemporary setting either in a comparative or again independent relation to the "earlier" film and/or earlier book by Stanislaw Lem.

Adaptations, in short, wait to be realized. Their intertextual and trans-textual meanings are inactive, manifest, or potential. The chronologies of our reading and viewing biographies shift back and forth and will on occasion meet up with the production line of books and films, but some (even most) of these texts will pass by as if on a distant track in a parallel world. Adaptations do require an order of events, a before and after, and I have reconstituted this sequence in the discussion of *The Hours* above. But history, *pace* Fredric Jameson, turns out to be less lost than out of joint, suspended or running in reverse. Not only, then, are the author/auteur and the text decentred, as announced by post-structuralism, but so too is the reader/viewer. That this indeterminacy, or "endless permutation of textual traces" has acquired an extra-textual reach into our lives and destinies is surely a feature of the continuing postmodern. The fact that the two-way compound narrative of adaptation from Virginia Woolf to Michael Cunningham's and Nicole Kidman's *Virginia Woolf* catches at these daily perplexities and yearnings for being someone, somewhere else "through the looking glass ... in another realm altogether; another time"²¹ makes these texts both an exhibit of and a reflection upon this sensibility. In this way, adaptation can, as in this case, open out an alternative, undeveloped, or suppressed trace: demonstrating how we too might "refuse the future that's been offered and demand another, far grander and stranger".²² And this too, surely, where in "refunctioning" its source it addresses its own times, is the answer to Jameson's doubts at the onset of the postmodern debate on "the critical value of the newer art."²³

NOTES

1 Roland Barthes, *Image-Music-Text* (London: Fontana, 1977), pp. 142–8.

2 Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez; ed. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press 1980), pp. 36–63; 64–91.

3 See James Naremore (ed.), *Film Adaptation* (London: Athlone, 2000).

PART THREE

Genre, industry, taste

- 4 Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern* (London: Verso, 1998), pp. 20, 7.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- 8 Will Brooker, *Using the Force: Creativity, Community and "Star Wars" Fans* (London: Continuum, 2002). For a fuller discussion of fantasy literature on screen, see Chapter 10 in this volume.
- 9 Philip K. Dick, *Minority Report* (London: Gollancz, 2002), pp. 3, 4.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 20.
- 11 Robert Stam, *Literature through Film: Realism, Magic and the Art of Adaptation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), p. 4.
- 12 Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), p. 92.
- 13 Stam, *Literature through Film*, p. 4.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- 15 Naoki Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: On "Japan" and Cultural Nationalism* (University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis 1997), p. 15.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- 18 See Walter Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht* (London: Verso 1973), p. 93, and Elizabeth Wright, *Postmodern Brecht: A Re-Presentation* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 45.
- 19 Bertolt Brecht, *Journals 1934-1955*, ed. John Willett, trans. Hugh Rortison (London: Methuen, 1993), p. 392.
- 20 Michael Cunningham, *The Hours* (London: Fourth Estate, 1999), frontispiece. Subsequent references are included in parenthesis in the text and are to this edition.
- 21 *The Cultural Turn*, p. 20.
- 22 Cunningham, *The Hours*, p. 56.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 81.