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# FRANÇOIS TRUFFAUT AND FRIENDS

## MODERNISM, SEXUALITY, AND FILM ADAPTATION

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HENRI-PIERRE ROCHÉ

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## PRELUDE

IT IS BY NOW a well-known fact that Truffaut's *Jules and Jim*—perhaps one of the most poignantly memorable films ever made—was an adaptation of a book by the French novelist Henri-Pierre Roché. The very mention of the film's title conjures up indelible images of the famous love triangle of Catherine and Jules and Jim. The characters and events of the film, we now know, were based on a real-life ménage à trois, to wit, the romantic triangle, begun in the summer of 1920, that involved Roché himself (the model for "Jim"), along with the German-Jewish writer Franz Hessel ("Jules") and his wife, the journalist Helen Grund ("Kathé" in the novel, "Catherine" in the film). Their lives, it turns out, were even more audaciously experimental than those depicted either in the novel or in the film. The story of the ménage is featured not only in the Roché novel and the Truffaut film but also in a larger transtextual diaspora that includes other novels and books by Roché and by Hessel, along with the intimate diaries of Roché and Helen Grund Hessel, published in 1990 and 1991, respectively. The diaries, together with these other materials, form part of a vast intertextual circuit. Each textual "stratum" offers still another layer of information relevant to the complex interplay of four distinct sensibilities, all mulling over the same nucleus of feelings and events. Although each text is on one level autonomous and self-contained, on another level each forms part of the *transtext* of this larger body of work.

It is this larger transtext that forms the subject of *François Truffaut and Friends: Modernism, Sexuality, and Film Adaptation*. The book addresses the multifaceted relation, at once personal and artistic, between François Truffaut and Henri-Pierre Roché and, through and beyond them, the work and lives of many others, especially Franz Hessel

and Helen Grund. Along with *Jules and Jim* I study another Roché novel adapted by Truffaut—*Two English Girls*—and *The Man Who Loved Women* in the much broader intertext of a proliferating and variegated spectrum of texts generated by the three principals, all of whom were prolific writers and all of whom wrote about the ménage itself.

Although the book focuses primarily on the four figures already mentioned, it also touches on the people and movements to which they were connected. Thus the story of their lives and writings leads us to Franz Hessel's friendship with Walter Benjamin, to Roché's with Marcel Duchamp, and to Helen Grund's with Charlotte Wolff. These corollary figures lead us still farther, to the various movements in which these artists and writers were enmeshed, to Old World flâne-rie and the arcades of Berlin and Paris, to "New York Dada," and to the transnational worlds of bohemian sexuality—what has sometimes been called *sexual modernism*—in all these metropolises.<sup>1</sup>

Our discussion of these texts and relationships takes place against the backdrop of the sexual politics of bohemia during no less than four moments and sites of artistic efflorescence: the turn-of-the-century Belle Époque (the period of Roché's affair with the Hart sisters, which generated his novel *Two English Girls* and Roché's first meeting with Hessel); the period of World War I and the exile art of "New York Dada"; the *entre-deux-guerres* period of the "historical avant-gardes," an epoch of relative freedom and creativity in both France and Weimar Germany (the period of the ménage that generated *Jules and Jim*; and the postwar period of the French New Wave, existentialism, and the nascent international counterculture (the period of the Truffaut films). Since the three principals lived at the epicenters of various avant-gardes, located in some of the capitals of modernity (Paris, Berlin, Munich, and New York), I hope to illuminate in this study some of the lesser-known corners of artistic modernism.

In terms of Paris, specifically, we find that each epoch had its bohemia and even its favored neighborhoods. In the time of La Belle Époque, the period of the events portrayed in *Two English Girls*, the Butte de Montmartre and the "Lapin Agile" were the center of a vibrant avant-garde, where Apollinaire, Picasso, and Braque reigned supreme. (All three, as it happens, were friends of the gregariously ubiquitous Roché.) In the 1920s the center of gravity shifted to Mont-

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parnasse, and cafés like Le Dome, La Coupole, Le Select, La Rotonde, and La Closerie des Lilas, where figures like Sergei Diaghilev and Jean Cocteau dominated the scene, and where the members of the ménage first met. Montparnasse was home to Marc Chagall, Henri Matisse, Picasso, and Max Ernst, all friends, once again, of Roché. The French New Wave, finally, inherited the postwar bohemia of St. Germain des Prés, where figures like Juliette Gréco and Boris Vian, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir held court in cafés like Café de Flore, Deux Magots, and Brasserie Lipp. And although Truffaut was not in any way an official member of the 1960s counterculture, he indirectly helped shape its sensibility. In some ways a conservative figure, Truffaut was influenced, nevertheless, by the “historical avant-garde” of Jean Vigo and Luis Buñuel, and he knew and befriended Jean Cocteau, opposed the war in Algeria and the firing of film historian Henri Langlois from the post of director of the Cinémathèque Française, and protested the banning of the Maoist newspaper *La Cause du peuple*. And like the members of the counterculture, Truffaut preferred constructed, creative families—like those ephemeral families summoned up by the filmmaking process—to biologically inherited nuclear families.

Like Paris and Berlin, New York took on the status of an urban myth linked to modernist experimentalism. Andrea Barnet describes the atmosphere in Greenwich Village at the time of Roché’s sojourn during World War I: “In Greenwich Village, cradle to the avant-garde, the dream of a cultural revolution was ubiquitous. Creative dissent, whether expressed as artistic innovation or as liberating lifestyle, was the revolutionary *cri de coeur*; sparkling talk and racy innuendo were the fashion. Sexual relations between men and women were lusty and unbinding. In bars and crowded basement restaurants, literary salons and former stables turned into ateliers, the talk was of Freud, free love, feminism, homosexuality, modern art, birth control, personal fulfillment, and radical politics.”<sup>2</sup>

New York in the period of Roché’s visit featured a cosmopolitan array of European and American modernists. The city became a temporary home to French-based figures like the composer Edgar Varèse, the originator of *la musique concrète*; to Francis and Gabrielle Picabia; and to poet/actor/boxer/womanizer Fabian Lloyd (a.k.a. Arthur Cravan, the putative nephew of Oscar Wilde), who had earlier been a part of

the Parisian scene. On the American side New York was home to such figures as the poet William Carlos Williams, the photographer Alfred Stieglitz, and the modernist poet/painter/actress Mina Loy, whose erotically explicit poetry depicted life, as she herself put it, as “generally reducible to sex.”<sup>3</sup> Linked to the European avant-garde through her affair with the futurist Marinetti, Loy, like Helen Grund in the same period, was wrestling with the challenge of simultaneously pursuing artistic and sexual experimentation in a generally phallocentric milieu.

Apart from its exploration of bohemia, however, this book hopefully offers other levels of interest. First, it gives us a glimpse into the fascinating story of the amorous triangle itself and the other satellite relationships. Here we enter an erotic and writerly territory reminiscent of that inhabited by other famous lover-artist couples given to multilateral erotic exchanges, such as Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, or Henry Miller and Anaïs Nin, or John Reed and Louise Bryant, or F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald. These artist/intellectuals lived their romantic and aesthetic lives as “bright, gemlike flames,” but some of the participants and bystanders ended up “getting burned” by those flames. In a time of war and anti-Semitism the members of the ménage were German and French, Christian and Jew, and their story seems even more poignant when we reflect on its violent historical backdrop. Hessel, for example, belongs to a tragic period when many of Germany’s best writers were forced into exile. Although these friends/lovers caused one another pain as well as pleasure, they tried to remain true to values of friendship, sincerity, and creativity. Even their stormy *folie à trois* seems in retrospect a form of sanity in comparison with the madness raging around them.

All of the principals, moreover, reflected on their lives in diaries and fiction, revealing themselves to be extraordinarily astute chroniclers of the tensions and aspirations at the center of modern love. As an experiment at once textual and sexual, the Helen-Franz-Roché ménage constituted a simultaneous exploration of eroticism and writing in ways that looked both backward to the more cynical tradition of eighteenth-century libertinage of *Les Liaisons dangereuses* and forward to the more naively utopian and sexually liberated counterculture of the 1960s. My hope is less to declare “what really happened” than to reflect on how the various participants narrated and interpreted what happened and how what happened was transmogrified into artistic form.

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To tell that story, *François Truffaut and Friends* draws on biographical materials, but its genre is not, ultimately, biography. Rather, it is a work of contextualized film and literary analysis, a meditation on a series of novels, journals, films, and their intimate interconnections—one that constantly crosses the borders between art and life.<sup>4</sup> The goal is not to explore biography or history but rather the biographical overtones and historical reverberations of texts. Rather than pursue biography or history for their own sakes, I try to multiply perspectives, in a quasi-cubist manner, on the principal figures. Thus we look at Franz Hessel, for example, “through” Roché’s novels and Truffaut’s film but also through Helen Grund’s memoirs, Walter Benjamin’s essays, and the autobiographies of his son Stéphane and friend Charlotte Wolff. At the core of the book is a series of close readings of texts—novels, films, diaries—read against the backdrop of the broader history of bohemia, the arts, and sexuality. Nor is the approach strictly chronological; rather, it mingles various temporalities: the sheer consecution of biography, the uneven parallelisms between “real” and artistic history, the remembered time of diaries and novels, and the chronotopic duration of filmic representation (a time line is appended to clear up any confusion about basic history and biography).

As a second level of interest, the project delves closely into the actual writings of the three principals, in terms both of their shared themes and of the highly personal nuances and inflections that the writer-participants gave to them. This body of writing, I would suggest, has not received the critical attention it deserves. In the case of *Jules and Jim*, Truffaut’s adaptation rendered an enormous service by popularizing the Roché novel. Yet at the same time the adaptation perhaps had the inadvertent effect of turning the spectatorial experience of the film into a substitute for actually reading and analyzing the source novel, with the result that the novel qua novel has received little in-depth analysis. Despite Truffaut’s redemptive intentions, and despite his success in calling attention to the book, the adaptation both praised and, in a way, “buried” the novel, as if the adaptation had said all that need be said about the novel.

Third, the project explores one small instance of the gendered nature of modernism as it was lived differentially by men and by women, giving us insights into how gender and sexuality were experienced and

reflected on at a specific point in history. Within the rather sexist and even misogynistic environment of the avant-garde, Helen Grund, the “Catherine” of the Truffaut film, represents an extraordinarily free and dazzlingly experimental figure who managed both to thrive and to suffer in a highly masculinist context. Her diaries offer an indispensable account of these issues as she lived them, filtered through her remarkably acute sensibility and intelligence. It is in this overall context that we will discuss the phenomenon of *flânerie*, so beloved to Walter Benjamin and Franz Hessel, and its relation to free-spirited *flâneuses* like Helen and her compatriot Charlotte Wolff. What did it mean to be a woman writer in a modernist milieu where the norms of literary authority were so often explicitly or implicitly masculinist and heterosexist?

Put differently, this book addresses the question of sexual modernism. We often speak of a military avant-garde—the root literal sense of the metaphor—and of the political and artistic avant-gardes, but can we speak as well of a sexual avant-garde? Laura Kipnis speaks of the “secret underground” of “conjugal saboteurs” who disrupt the “social machinery” of marriage as a disciplinary institution. Does love have its guerrillas and freedom fighters, or is the kind of sexual experimentation described here merely a form of patriarchal exploitation, dressed up in liberatory clothing? Do all the libidinous shenanigans merely end up reproducing in polyandry, as Flaubert wrote of Emma Bovary’s adulteries, “all the platitude of marriage?” Kipnis speaks, with tongue firmly planted in cheek, of a kind of isomorphism between rule breaking in love (adultery, *ménage*) and rule breaking in art (the autographed *Urinal*, with which Roché was directly involved, or the mustache on the *Mona Lisa*). But while artistic rule breaking can trigger scandal and censorship, the consequences of rule breaking in love are more immediately demonstrable. *Mona Lisa*, to put it crudely, was not hurt by that mustache, but real women were hurt by Roché’s infidelities. But that point should not let conventional marriage off the hook, since many people have also been hurt by the institution of marriage itself.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, we will discover a kind of uneven development; although sexually adventurous, our protagonists were also politically erratic and sometimes even conservative.

Fourth, the book forms part of a larger project that I began to explore, together with others, in a trilogy of books about the filmic adaptation of

novels.<sup>6</sup> The goal of those books was to rethink the debates about adaptation by moving from a language of “fidelity” and “infidelity” to a language of “performativity” and “transtextuality.” The notion of intertextual dialogism, seen as referring both to the play between individual texts and to the larger converse of all the utterances in which those individual texts are embedded, I argued, offers us a richer understanding of the “conversation” between various texts and media and art forms than do notions of “fidelity.” Truffaut, for example, takes an activist stance toward his sources, intermingling them in new and often surprising combinations. I discuss his adaptations of Roché’s novels not as a question of a simple dyadic relation between originary source and filmic adaptation, with the latter being judged in terms of the adequacy of the “copy,” but as a series of dialogical turns, forming part of a veritable dance of relations between a wide spectrum of texts (novels, diaries, plays, paintings, sculptures, essays). Truffaut’s adaptations of Roché’s work, I argue, show how adaptations can be more than simply inferior “copies” of their “originals”; rather, they can become an immensely creative enterprise, a form of writing in itself. Adaptation studies, in this sense, can go beyond an evaluative measuring of “fidelity” by seeing artistic texts as part of the unending, recombinant work of transtextuality.

Fifth, the book gestures toward a study of friendship, indeed of many friendships: that of Franz Hessel and Walter Benjamin, for example, or of Franz Hessel and Henri-Pierre Roché, or of Marcel Duchamp and Roché, or of Helen Grund and Charlotte Wolff, or of Truffaut and Roché, and so forth. The many heterosexual liaisons in which these people were involved, in this sense, took place alongside complex forms of same-gender and cross-gender friendship. In a larger sense the book is about patterns of identification not only among individuals but also across cultures, across media, and across time periods. Reading and spectatorship, in this sense, constitute a form of friendship by proxy, a matter of fantasies and identifications shared across time and space. Along the way, as we stroll like flâneurs through various lives and texts, we will wander into the adjacent neighborhoods of such subjects as the aesthetics of flânerie, the politics of Jewishness and anti-Semitism, and the ethics of homoeroticism.

Sixth, the project will, I hope, shed new light on Truffaut’s oeuvre, not only as reflected in the obvious impact of Roché’s life and work on



at least three Truffaut films—*Jules and Jim*, *Two English Girls* (*Deux Anglaises et le Continent*), and *The Man Who Loved Women* (*L'Homme qui aimait les femmes*)—but also in the less obvious “diasporic” impact on such films as *Stolen Kisses* (*Baisers volés*) and *Shoot the Piano Player* (*Tirez sur le pianiste*). What do these films reveal about Truffaut’s approach to adaptation? More broadly, what do they reveal about the New Wave’s attitude toward literary modernism and about their attitude toward the possibilities of adaptation in general?

Seventh, the book constitutes a meditation on the bookishness of sexuality and the erotics of bibliophilia. It is about the intimate entanglements of textuality and sexuality. Thus not only does sexuality generate an infinity of books and films, but books and films, in a feedback loop, inflect our common sexuality. *François Truffaut and Friends* explores, in sum, these mutual and hopefully pleasurable inflections.

With this ménage love becomes deeply enmeshed with literature, which partially shapes their conceptions and even their feelings about love. The ménage, in this sense, mingles not only individuals but also literary traditions, promoting an amorous exchange of literary fluids, as it were, between France and Germany, primarily, but also with Europe generally and with the United States. Literary love, in this sense, is palimpsestic. Embedded in Roché’s work, for example, are traces of the long tradition of French literary representations of love, from the proto-romanticism and love-death of “l’amour courtois,” to the sexual bawdiness of the “fabliaux” and Rabelais, on to the tragedies of unreciprocated love in Corneille and Racine, to the nuanced analyses of “les Precieuses,” to Rousseau and *Julie; ou, La nouvelle Héloïse*, on to the sadism of the Marquis de Sade, to the Stendhal of *De l’amour*—whom Roché consciously imitated—to Flaubert and Proust and then the sexual-taboo breakers of the avant-garde (many of whom were Roché’s friends), on, even, to *The Story of O*, the sadomasochistic novel published under a pseudonym in 1954, just a few years before Roché’s *Two English Girls*.

On the German side the writerly sensibilities of Helen Grund (Hessel) and Franz Hessel were undoubtedly shaped by the German version of the *liebestod* tradition, with its conjunction of Eros and Thanatos, as well as by early German romanticism. It is noteworthy, in this sense, that the “Athenaeum” group, formed around the journal of the same name founded by the Schlegel brothers in 1797, constituted a

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1. François Truffaut (left) and Jean Cocteau during the filming of *The Testament of Orpheus* in 1950. Source: Photofest.

kind of proto-avant-garde, a close-knit group fascinated by revolutionary ideas in politics, art, and life, which anticipated the avant-gardes of the 1920s. Their dream was of an artistic-philosophical community where friendship would play a key role. As with Roché's project of "polyphonic writing" later, the Athenaeum group spoke of collective writing and the "fraternization of knowledge and talents" in the form of "symposie" (etymologically, poesy together) and "symphilosophy." At the same time, they spoke of innovative sexual arrangements such as "four-way marriage." Goethe too was an inevitable influence, especially the triangular love of *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, and it is hardly an accident that a copy of *The Elective Affinities* is briefly glimpsed in the film version of *Jules and Jim*.

Finally, the book can be seen as a meditation on translation, first of all in the most obvious sense of literal translations between French, German, and English. The prototypes were actively engaged in translation; Franz Hessel translated Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*, for example, and Helen Grund (Hessel) translated Nabokov's *Lolita*. But the book also concerns translation in a more figurative sense.

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Pablo Picasso famously said of Roché that he was “very nice,” but in the end “he was only a translation.”<sup>7</sup> My discussion here treats translation not only between languages but also between cultural codes and traditions. It also treats the translation between the literary and the cinematic, with adaptation constituting a form of intersemiotic or intermedial “translation.” As the same biographical and historical materials are filtered through various media—letters, journals, music, novels, films—each medium inevitably inflects the representation with its specific constraints and possibilities.

And on a personal note: If I am currently a professor of cinema studies, that fact has everything to do with my initially being overwhelmed by two films—Godard’s *À bout de souffle* and Truffaut’s *Jules and Jim*. I have spent decades, in a sense, explaining exactly why these two films gave me such a feeling of pleasure and freedom. This book continues that attempt at explanation.

To conclude, a few thank-yous. Thanks first to Leslie Mitchner for enthusiastically endorsing the project. Thanks to Richard Sieburth for an attentive last-minute reading and for suggestions concerning the German intellectual milieu. Thanks also to the film professors who helped me appreciate film and the New Wave—Michel Marie, Christian Metz, Roger Odin, Bertrand Augst, and many others. Thank you to the *Camera Obscura* group back in the time of its Berkeley incarnation. Thank you to Dudley Andrew for the pleasurable dialogue and for extremely useful materials concerning Franz Hessel. Thanks to mein Bruder Jim for his help with the Deutsch. Thanks to Joe Abbott for an impeccable job of editing. Thanks to the students in my “French New Wave” course, who have served as interlocutors and sounding boards during more than two decades of teaching Truffaut’s films. Thanks to my brilliant research assistants Cecelia Sayad, Karen Wang, and June Monroy. Thanks also to Francine Goldenhar and NYU’s Maison Française and to Frederic Viguier and Emmanuelle Saada at the French Institute at NYU for providing a steady stream of French celebrity intellectuals for our delectation and stimulation. And thanks, finally, to my perpetual and beloved interlocutor Ella.

## CHAPTER ONE

# THE ORIGINS OF TRUFFAUT'S *JULES AND JIM*

INITIALLY CONCEIVED IN the early 1920s during the first clutches of the Henri-Pierre Roché–Helen Hessel–Franz Hessel ménage, *Jules and Jim* was initially drafted as a novel in 1943 and finally published in 1953. After reading the novel, François Truffaut turned it into a film in 1961. According to Truffaut his reading of the novel in 1955 created such a strong impression that it cued his choice of profession: he felt that he simply *had* to film it. Truffaut corresponded with Roché between 1955 and 1958 about a possible adaptation and visited with him at his home in Meudon, where the pair developed a strong personal rapport. Truffaut writes of their encounter: “[Roché] was tall and slender, and had the same sweetness as his characters. He resembled Marcel Duchamp, of whom he spoke constantly. Painting was his great passion.”<sup>1</sup> Truffaut’s encounter with Roché and with *Jules and Jim* had seminal importance, then, for the history of the cinema in that it catalyzed the filmic vocation of a director who was to become a key figure both in auteur theory and in the French New Wave.

The Truffaut adaptation thus presents a number of salient and somewhat anomalous features in terms of film-novel relations: (1) the crucial impact of a novel on a filmmaker’s career, (2) the close personal rapport between novelist and filmmaker, and (3) the redemptive role of the adaptation for the novelist’s career. As will become clear over the course of this text, Truffaut’s sympathetic rapport with the then octogenarian Roché was deeply rooted in Truffaut’s biography. Like Roché, Truffaut had a complicated love/hate relationship with his mother, and, like Roché, he had never really known his biological father. Perhaps as a

result Truffaut became attached to a number of substitute father figures, notably Roché himself, Jean Genet, and, especially, André Bazin, who all became paternal surrogates for Truffaut. Even before his encounter with Roché, Truffaut wrote to his friend Robert Lachenay that “Bazin and Genet did more for me in three weeks than my parents did in fifteen years.”<sup>2</sup> As Dudley Andrew explains in his indispensable critical biography of Bazin, Truffaut’s stepfather, after learning the whereabouts of his runaway stepson through an ad for the “Film Addict’s Club,” arranged for the stepson’s arrest and imprisonment. At that point a furious Bazin began a campaign to convince the authorities to release the boy into his care. Later, when Truffaut was placed in military prison for desertion, the Bazins drove to the prison to see him, using the “strategic lie” that they were his parents.<sup>3</sup> In a kind of literalization of the Freudian “family romance,” in which the resentful child conjures up ideal substitute parents, Truffaut was virtually adopted by Bazin and his wife, with whom he went to live during a very difficult period. Whereas Truffaut’s stepfather mistreated him, and even had him sent to jail, Bazin protected him, snatching him from the pitiless jaws of the French justice system.

It is well known that Truffaut painted a hostile portrait of his parents in his first feature, *Les Quatre cents coups* (1959). And indeed, Truffaut’s parents recognized their son’s aggressivity, their pain aggravated by press reviews of the film that described the mother in the film in terms worthy of a narcissistic whore in love with nothing but her own body. In his response to an angry letter from his stepfather Truffaut acknowledged that he “knew [the film] would cause [them] pain” but that he did not care because “since Bazin’s death, I no longer have any parents.” Truffaut further explained to his stepfather that “although I silently hated mother, I liked you even while I despised you.”<sup>4</sup> At the same time, Truffaut’s perhaps disproportionate outrage partially displaces his intensely eroticized relationship with his mother. This feeling is captured in the many shots, in *The 400 Blows*, of the mother’s legs and in the film’s fetishistic preoccupation with her stockings and makeup. Truffaut’s hostile feelings about his mother, at their height around the time of *The 400 Blows*, were still raw even at the moment of her death some years later, to the point that Truffaut hesitated even to go to her funeral.



2. Truffaut's beloved Bazin. Source: British Film Institute.

The Truffaut-Roché friendship offers a case of cross-generational identification, a strange confluence of adolescent rebellion and twilight-of-life nostalgia. Truffaut was intrigued by the notion of a first novel by an old man, one with whom he felt an uncanny bond. In his adaptation Truffaut claimed that he tried to make the film “as if he himself were very old, as if he were at the end of his life.”<sup>5</sup> And Roché, conversely, was equally intrigued by Truffaut, seeing in him, perhaps, an artistic heir and adoptive son. Enthusiastic about Truffaut’s short film *Les Mistons*, which he screened in 1957, Roché decided that Truffaut was the ideal director for *Jules and Jim*.<sup>6</sup> Roché was not completely unfamiliar with the world of cinema, having dabbled in the buying

and selling of films and having worked briefly as a screenwriter for Abel Gance on the film *Napoléon*. Roché also approved, on the basis of photos, the casting of Jeanne Moreau as Catherine. Thus, the real-life lover of the fiercely independent Helen Hessel ironically came to exercise power, at a time when Helen was still alive, over her representation in the film. Truffaut even planned to ask Roché to write dialogue for the Catherine character, but the plan had to be given up when Roché died on April 9, 1959, just a few days after approving Truffaut's choice of lead actress.<sup>7</sup>

Truffaut had a highly fraught, almost Hamlet-like, relationship with his mother, whom he resented not only for what he saw as her maternal neglect but also for what he regarded as her "promiscuous" behavior. A moment in *The 400 Blows* captures this sexual jealousy. On a day that Antoine and his friend René have skipped school, the mother and son both catch each other in a "crime": the mother catches the son "playing hooky" from school, but at the very same moment the son catches the mother "playing hooker," at least in the son's fevered imagination, as he observes her engaging in a public, adulterous kiss. For Anne Gillain, Truffaut's tortured relationship with his mother is "the lost secret" that provides the key to his entire oeuvre. All of Truffaut's films constitute, for Gillain, an unconscious interrogation of "a distant, ambiguous, inaccessible, maternal figure" reminiscent of his own mother, Janine de Montferrand.<sup>8</sup> Although Truffaut's oeuvre provides very varied responses to this enigmatic figure, she nonetheless "remains always at the very source of his creative dynamic."<sup>9</sup>

At the same time, Truffaut never knew his biological father. Truffaut was an "illegitimate child," recognized and given a name by his stepfather Roland Truffaut. Truffaut's *Baisers volés* indirectly recounts the story of the young Truffaut's research (in 1968) into the identity of his real father, who turned out to be a German-Jewish dentist named Roland Levy.<sup>10</sup> Truffaut reacted ambivalently to the discovery, on the one hand declaring that he had always felt Jewish—a feeling that links him to the Jewish Franz Hessel—and on the other opting not to contact the man who had played such an important role in his life.<sup>11</sup> Truffaut often identified with literal and symbolic orphans. In *Le Plaisir des yeux* Truffaut expresses his admiration for "orphan" filmmakers like D. W. Griffith, Ernst Lubitsch, F. W. Murnau, Carl Theodor

Dreyer, Mizoguchi, Sergei Eisenstein, and Erich von Stroheim—all “orphans” in his view because their spiritual fathers were dead.<sup>12</sup> As Gillain suggests, Truffaut was doubtless intrigued by the fact that his mother alone possessed the key to the identity of his real father and thus the secret of his origins.<sup>13</sup> The obsession with mothers impacted Truffaut’s tastes and sensibility and ultimately the films themselves. In his *Correspondence* Truffaut claimed to have a special shelf reserved for books “all about mothers.” Invoking the names of Georges Simenon, Georges Bataille, Marcel Pagnol, and Roger Peyrefitte, Truffaut argued that the books about mothers were invariably the best books by the writers in question.<sup>14</sup>

An anxiety about paternity and origins, as Gillain suggests, feeds even the most apparently trivial details of Truffaut’s films, for example the brief references to abortion and Cesarean section in *The 400 Blows*. In his films Truffaut took advantage of the psychic energies provoked by his secret, but he also took pains not to probe that secret too closely, carefully camouflaging the autobiographical dimension of his work, preferring to leave undisturbed the psychic springs of his creativity. Truffaut’s films, for Gillain, thus allow for a double reading. The films simultaneously project two stories, one realist and obedient to cause-and-effect logic, the other phantasmatic, where the son tries to understand and dialogue, if only symbolically, with the absent and resented mother.

Like all creators, Truffaut makes films partially in order to move beyond childhood and become an adult. It is no accident, in this context, that Truffaut’s films proliferate in references to writing, in ways that are often linked to sexual anxiety and aspiration. In a 1975 interview Truffaut acknowledged writing as an integral part of what might be called his creative DNA: “I can’t get away from writing. In all my films there are people who send each other letters, a young girl who writes in her diary. . . . [That] simply is not done any more, but it’s in my character.”<sup>15</sup> In Truffaut’s early short film *Les Mistons*, the titular rascals express their sexual frustration and aggressivity by sabotaging Bernadette’s (Bernadette Lafont) love affair by writing on fences, tree trunks, and city walls, with the writing constantly increasing in size and intensity and public visibility, so that the object of the aggression will finally notice.



Truffaut saw filmmaking and writing as profoundly personal: "Tomorrow's film appears to me as even more personal than a novel, as individual and autobiographical as a confession or a diary. Young filmmakers will express themselves in the first person."<sup>16</sup> Truffaut's first full-length feature, *The 400 Blows*, in this same sense, proliferates in references both to writing and to paternal/parental authority in ways that lend credence to a psychoanalytic interpretation. The credit sequence—a series of tracking shots of Paris culminating in an image of the cinémathèque française—renders homage to the film "library" where Truffaut's "reading" of old films inspired and informed his subsequent "writing" of new films. The first postcredit shot shows a pupil writing, initiating a whole series of writerly references. Antoine gains vengeance against his teacher by chalking a poem on the wall and is punished by having to conjugate a sentence—in writing. Indeed, Antoine mimics his mother's penmanship in an excuse note. Learning French composition, his mother tells him, is invaluable, since "one always has to write letters." He subsequently steals a typewriter so that the principal will not recognize his handwriting, and as a runaway he falls asleep next to a printing press. Film too can be seen as a *machine à écrire*, a machine for writing.

In short, *The 400 Blows* rings the changes on the theme of *écriture* in a way that makes little sense except as a part of a structural metaphor subtending Truffaut's vision of filmmaking. And in this sense his work was in tune with the theoretical commonplaces of the period. In the postwar period in France, both film and literary discourse came to gravitate around such concepts as "authorship," "écriture," and "textuality." The New Wave directors' fondness for the scriptural metaphor was scarcely surprising, given that many of them began as film journalists who saw writing articles and making films as simply two variant forms of expression. A "graphological trope" thus informed a wide spectrum of coinages and formulations concerning film, from Astruc's *camera-stylo* to Resnais's *cine-roman* and Varda's *cinécriture*.

Antoine, as Truffaut's youthful surrogate, in this sense, "tries on" diverse writing styles in an attempt to become his own man. But writerly imitation gets him into trouble; his mother's writing is "hard to imitate," and Antoine's affectionate pastiche of Balzac elicits his teacher's accusations of plagiarism. (Mis)writing in *The 400 Blows* elicits the con-



3. French prosody in *The 400 Blows*. Source: Les Films du Carosse.

demnation of authority figures. The sentence dictated to Antoine by his teacher reads, "I deface the classroom walls and I mistreat French prosody." The phrasing suggests an analogy between classical literary prosody and the grammatically correct filmic heritage of the "tradition of quality," on the one hand, and between the calculated abuse of conventional filmic prosody and decorum by the French New Wave. The accusations of plagiarism anticipate the frequent charge against New Wave filmmakers that they borrowed their best ideas, that their films were merely collages of citations and cinematic in-jokes. The mistreatment of prosody thus corresponds to the New Wave's disrespect for the academic conventions of dominant filmmaking.

Antoine's writerly revolt has strong Oedipal overtones, a powerful "anxiety of influence." *The 400 Blows* combines a hostile portrait of Truffaut's stepfather, that is, his false father—the one who had him sent to prison—with an affectionate dedication to the beloved substitute father, Bazin, the man who had Truffaut released from prison. Within

the family portrait called *The 400 Blows* Truffaut portrays himself as a revolted “batard”—to borrow Marthe Robert’s terminology regarding the “novel of origins”—a parentless child in search of a true symbolic father who is in fact named in the film’s dedication. Just as on a cinematic level Truffaut rejected the cinematic “father’s generation” of the “tradition of quality” as “false fathers,” preferring the grandfather’s generation of Jean Cocteau and Jean Renoir, so Truffaut on a personal level preferred substitute real fathers like Roché, Bazin, and Cocteau to false fathers like his adoptive father, Roland Truffaut. *The 400 Blows* thus foregrounds the challenges of “writing” in the face of parental interdictions that define an emerging style as “incorrect” or “immature.” In this sense the film is a thinly veiled plea on the part of an artistic adolescent for freedom from parental and stylistic constraints, a revolt against what the New Wave so symptomatically called the “cinéma de papa.” Writerly adulthood entails forging one’s own rules in defiance of “le nom/non”—the name and the “no”—of the scriptural father.<sup>17</sup>

## CHAPTER TWO

# THE NEW WAVE AND ADAPTATION

GIVEN OUR FOCUS on Truffaut's adaptations of Roché's novels and memoirs, it is pertinent to speak of the larger context of the New Wave's attitude toward literature in general and toward adaptations in particular. The *Cahiers du cinéma* critics who subsequently formed the nucleus of the French New Wave were profoundly ambivalent about literature, which they saw both as a model to be emulated and an enemy to be abjured. Haunted by the overweening prestige of literature in a country that had virtually deified its writers, the *Cahiers* critics forged the concept of the *cinéaste* as *auteur* as a way of transferring the millennial aura of literature to the relatively fledgling art of film. Novelist and filmmaker Alexandre Astruc prepared the way with his landmark 1948 essay "Birth of a New Avant-Garde: The Camera-Pen," in which he argued that the cinema was becoming a new means of expression analogous to painting or the novel.<sup>1</sup> Within this view film was no longer the rendering of a preexisting written text; rather, the shooting process itself became a form of writing performed through *mise-en-scène*, a kind of "filmécriture automatique."

Truffaut and the New Wave made a number of innovations in terms of adaptation, especially in comparison with earlier French cinema. First of all, they adapted new *kinds* of novels. Whereas the antecedent French "tradition of quality" preferred to adapt prestigious classical novels from the French realist tradition (Stendhal, Balzac, Zola), the New Wave directors favored less canonical (often foreign) and more contemporary writers such as David Goodis, Ray Bradbury, and Roché himself. Second, some of the directors reconceptualized the very idea of adaptation. The "ciné-roman" films by "Left-Bank" directors like Alain Resnais and Marguerite Duras, for example, were

less interested in "fidelity" to an original text than in a synergistic collaboration between two artists, a process productive of quasi-experimental films that were at the same time more reflexively cinematic, and more reflexively and self-consciously literary, than conventional films. And Eric Rohmer, who began as a novelist, not only adapted his own novels but also made many films that, although not adaptations per se, had everything to do, as Maria Tortajada points out, with the novelistic tradition of "libertinage."<sup>2</sup>

The New Wave began to formulate its aesthetic principles, symptomatically, precisely around what came to be called the "querelle de l'adaptation." In a series of articles Truffaut's mentor, Bazin, argued that filmic adaptation was not a shameful and parasitical practice but rather a creative and productive one, a catalyst of progress for the cinema. In his essay "In Defense of Mixed Cinema" Bazin mocked those who expressed outrage over the crimes against literature supposedly committed by film adaptations, arguing that culture in general and literature in particular have nothing to lose from the practice of adaptation. Filmic adaptations, for Bazin, help democratize literature and make it popular: "there is no competition or substitution, rather the adding of a new dimension that the arts had gradually lost . . . namely a public."<sup>3</sup> In another essay, "Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest," Bazin suggested that the adaptation, far from being illegitimate, has been a perennial practice in all the arts. While admitting that most films based on novels merely usurp their title, Bazin also argues that a film like *Day in the Country* (1936) shows that an adaptation can be "faithful to the spirit of Maupassant's story while at the same time benefiting from . . . Renoir's genius. With Renoir, adaptation becomes "the refraction of one work in another creator's consciousness."<sup>4</sup> For Bazin, Renoir's version of *Madame Bovary* (1934) reconciles a certain "fidelity" with artistic independence; here, author and "auteur" meet as equals.

In his manifesto essay "A Certain Tendency in French Cinema" (first published in *Cahiers* in 1954), Truffaut himself also turned to the issue of adaptation. Distancing himself from his mentor's cautious approval of adaptation in general, Truffaut excoriated a specific genre of adaptation, that of the "tradition of quality," which turned French literary classics into predictably well-furnished, well-spoken,

and stylistically formulaic films. The prestige of the “tradition of quality” partially derived from the borrowed luster of the literary sources it adapted, so Truffaut was striking at the very source of a prestige that he saw as illegitimate. Truffaut especially lambasted adaptation as practiced by two “quality” screenwriters—Jean Aurenche and Pierre Bost. In his 1948 “Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest” essay, Bazin had suggested that Aurenche and Bost simultaneously “transformed”—in the manner of an electric transformer—and “dissipated” the energy of their source novels.<sup>5</sup> Truffaut, in contrast, was infinitely more harsh and unforgiving. Truffaut accused the two screenwriters of being disrespectful to both literature and film. He mocked the two screenwriters’ claim to have revolutionized adaptation through a “creative infidelity” that produced “equivalencies” between literary and cinematic procedures. What this amounts to in practice, Truffaut argued, was a cynical triage that discarded everything that was arbitrarily decreed to be “unfilmable.” Every novel became for these screenwriters an excuse to smuggle into the adaptation the same old anticlerical and (innocuously) anarchistic themes. Since one cannot possibly be “faithful” to the style and spirit of writers as diverse as André Gide, Raymond Radiguet, Colette, and Georges Bernanos, according to Truffaut, the screenwriters chose to be faithful instead to their own myopic vision. Basing his critique on adaptations of Bernanos’s *Journal d’un cure de campagne* (Diary of a Country Priest, 1951) and Radiguet’s *Le Diable au corps* (1946), Truffaut argues that the “quality” screenwriters simply exploit their source texts to introduce a limited set of secularist, antimilitarist, and left-wing ideas. The result is a flattening out of the heterogeneity of literary sources. But, even more gravely, the search for “equivalencies” for the putatively “unfilmable” passages from the novel masks a profound scorn for the cinema, seen as fundamentally incapable of ever achieving the grandeur of literature. For Truffaut, not only traveling shots but also adaptations were a “question de morale.” In retrospect, Truffaut clearly mingled valid insights with a passionate, perhaps Oedipal, hostility to the cinema of those he saw as (false) fathers.

Bazin gently rebuked the violence of Truffaut’s language in his own response to Truffaut’s polemical tract.<sup>6</sup> Truffaut denounced “quality” adaptations in the name of “fidelity,” but it seems that since the time

of the New Wave, adaptation studies have oscillated between a “fidelity” discourse and a more theoretically sophisticated “intertextuality” discourse. It was the supposedly conservative and “realist” Bazin, ironically, who anticipated some of these currents in his 1948 “Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest” essay. There he argued for a more open conception of adaptation, one with a place for what we would now call “intertextuality” and “transécriture.” Bazin’s words about adaptation in 1948 ironically anticipate both “auteurism” and its critique. The “ferocious defense of literary works vis-à-vis their adaptations,” Bazin suggested, rests on a “rather recent, individualist conception that was far from being ethically rigorous in the 17th century and that started to become legally defined only at the end of the eighteenth.”<sup>7</sup> Here Bazin anticipated Foucault’s devalorization of the individual author in favor of a “pervasive anonymity of discourse.” Bazin also anticipated Roland Barthes’s prophecy of “the death of the author” by forecasting that “we are moving toward a reign of the adaptation in which the notion of the unity of the work of art, if not the very notion of the author itself, will be destroyed.”<sup>8</sup> Thus Bazin, whose “humanism” later made him the whipping boy for film structuralists and semioticians, ironically foreshadowed some of the later structuralist and poststructuralist currents that would indirectly undermine a fidelity discourse in relation to adaptation. All of these various positions on adaptation, we will see, resonate with the Truffaut adaptations of the Henri-Pierre Roché source texts.

A number of the essays in the Truffaut collection *Le Plaisir des yeux* are gathered under the rubric “Literature and Cinema.”<sup>9</sup> There Truffaut speaks of his relationship not only to the work of Henri-Pierre Roché but also to other writers such as Jean Giraudoux, William Irish, André Gide, and François Mauriac. In his essay “Literary Adaptation in the Cinema” Truffaut acknowledges that one cannot apply general rules and that each case is special and unique. Nevertheless, Truffaut posits three legitimate forms of successful adaptation: those that do the “same thing” as the novel, those that do the “same thing, but better,” and those that do “something different, but interesting.” Although Truffaut does not give examples of the three types, I would suggest that directors like David Lean (for example in *Passage to India*) do the “same thing” as the novel, that a director like Orson

Welles (for example in *The Trial*) does “something different, but interesting,” and that a director like Truffaut himself, in *Jules and Jim*, does “the same thing, but better.” Truffaut concludes on an auteurist note: “In sum, the problem of adaptation is a false problem. No recipe, no magical formula. All that counts is the success of the particular film, which is linked exclusively to the personality of the director.”<sup>10</sup>

Truffaut and the New Wave are very much linked to modernism and to the avant-garde. The question of adaptation, for the New Wave, stood at the point of convergence of a number of crucial issues—cinematic specificity, modernist reflexivity, and interart relations. But these questions were all inextricably interrelated; the foregrounding of specificity was often linked to a modernist stance or aesthetic, and filmic modernism necessarily passed through comparison to other, more markedly modernist-dominated, arts like painting, music, and theater. It is hardly surprising, in this light, that the *Cahiers* writer/filmmakers constantly draw comparisons between film and other arts, usually in terms of their relative coefficient of realism or modernism. The 1959 *Cahiers* roundtable devoted to *Hiroshima mon amour*, for example, elicits a number of interart comparisons. Rohmer describes Resnais as a “cubist” and the first “modern” filmmaker of the sound film. And for Godard *Hiroshima* can only be appreciated in relation to other arts, as “Faulkner plus Stravinsky” but not as a combination of any two film directors.<sup>11</sup> And Truffaut said that one had to speak of cinema “before and after” Godard’s *Breathless*, much as one had to speak of painting “before and after” Picasso.

While the New Wave drew on the early avant-gardes, contemporaneous with the bohemian period of Roché, Franz Hessel, and Helen Grund—that is, the avant-garde of filmmakers like Buñuel and Vigo—the emergence of the New Wave movement in the late 1950s also coincided with and was inflected by the emergence of various experimental movements—Barthes and “nouvelle critique” in literary theory, Beckett and absurdism in the theater, Boulez in music, and the “new novel” in literature. It was hardly an accident that the title of Astruc’s landmark 1948 “Camera-Stylo” essay was “Birth of a New Avant-Garde.” What would differentiate the “new avant-garde” from the “historical avant-gardes” of the 1920s was its hybrid character as a compromise formation negotiating between entertainment and



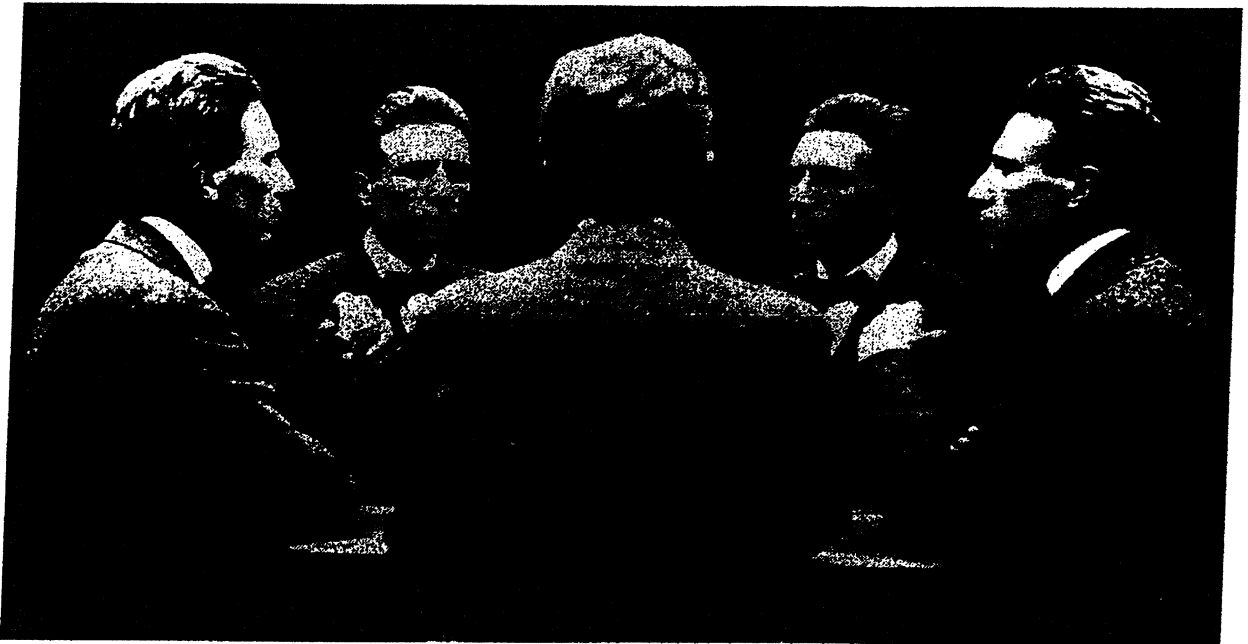
vanguardism. Whereas the avant-gardists of the 1920s had called for “pure cinema,” New Wave directors like Truffaut preferred a “mixed cinema” that mingled formal audacity (reflexivity, sound/image disjunction) with the familiar pleasures of mainstream cinema (narrative, genre, desire, spectacle).

## CHAPTER THREE

# THE PROTOTYPE FOR JIM

## HENRI-PIERRE ROCHÉ

**J**ULES AND JIM, as I noted earlier, was based on real-life prototypes, all of them artists and bohemians. The prototype for the character “Jim” was Roché himself, played in the film by Henri Serre (who was chosen partially because he physically resembled the young Roché). Born in Paris on May 28, 1879, Roché was a writer/artist/bohemian whose circle of friends and acquaintances included Pablo Picasso, Marcel Duchamp, Erik Satie, Darius Milhaud, Le Douanier Rousseau, Le Corbusier, Paul Klee, Diego Rivera, Isadora Duncan, Abel Gance, Blaise Cendrars, Ezra Pound, Ford Madox Ford, James Joyce, Gertrude Stein, Heinrich Mann, Thomas Mann, Edgar Varèse, Man Ray, Modigliani, Marie Laurencin, Sergei Diaghilev, Francis Picabia, Vaslav Nijinsky—in short, a veritable “who’s who” of artistic modernism. It was Roché who boxed in the ring with the painter Georges Bracque. It was Roché who first presented Stein to Picasso. In *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* Stein describes Roché as a “very earnest, very noble, devoted, very faithful and very enthusiastic man who was a general introducer. He knew everybody, he really knew them and could introduce anybody to anybody.”<sup>1</sup> For Stein, Roché was a “born liaison officer, who knew everybody and wanted everybody to know everybody else.”<sup>2</sup> A shrewd and cosmopolitan observer of the art scene, Roché moved easily and gracefully among very diverse milieux and communities. Gertrude’s brother, Leo Stein, described Roché as a “tall man with an inquiring eye under an inquisitive forehead” but a man who was “more ear than anything else.”<sup>3</sup> Roché was thus a kind of medium, a vehicle of communication between persons and arts and movements.



4. Five-way portrait of Henri-Pierre Roché, the prototype for "Jim" of *Jules and Jim*. Photo courtesy Carlton Lake Collection, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin.

Roché also became an inveterate, obsessive collector of objets d'art, perhaps in compensation for the untimely loss of his father, or in function of his regrets about his complicated relationship to his mother and his inability to sustain stable relationships with women.<sup>4</sup> Susan Stewart has suggested that whereas women collect souvenirs and memorabilia, men are more likely to be serial "completists," more invested in the completeness of their collections than in the emotional resonances of the objects collected. It might even be suggested, in a somewhat vulgar Freudian manner, that in seeking plenitude the collector is essentially warding off a fear of castration. For his biographers Roché's collecting was "a way of protecting himself from loss, absence, and the means of communicating symbolically with loved ones. Like collectors of religious relics or the man of archaic civilizations who believes in fetishes, Roché attributes supernatural qualities to the pieces in his collection, endowing them with power and virtues of an almost curative nature. Quite logically, he refuses to speak of works of art, words which 'leave me cold. Rather, the works are secretions or the fantasist/natural fruits of [his] friends and the toys of their agile hands.'"<sup>5</sup>

It is not an accident, Roché's biographers point out, that Roché placed near his bed such erotically charged paintings as Brancusi's *La Princesse X* or Duchamp's *Neuf Moules* or *Machine Optique*. Roché indulged a parallel passion for collecting women and paintings, but whereas his "collection" and "ownership" of living beings like wives and mistresses was necessarily always precarious and tentative, inexorably doomed to incompleteness or loss, the collection of dead objects such as statues or *natures mortes*, as they were so suggestively called, seemed a way of cheating death by possessing objects that would not change or betray or die. And while Roché's "collecting" of women left a lot of human wreckage in its wake, his collecting of art objects was much less destructive, leaving a legacy of beauty.

As a young man Roché, in a kind of "advertisement for himself," described himself as follows:

H. P. Roché (born 1879), graduate in law, former student at the École de Sciences Politiques, member of various international and humanist organizations, belongs to the "modern movement" in France in literature and art (as well as philosophy, feminism, socialism), works currently in this movement in England, will be studying in Germany and in the United States on a project concerned with "modern psychology"; he wishes to begin communication with persons concerned with the same subject and to give lessons or papers in London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna. Languages: English, German, Latin, Esperanto.<sup>6</sup>

Carlton Lake characterized Roché as spending his life in three principal ways: "1) making friends, 2) being a kind of private art dealer . . . and 3) keeping a journal. Transcribed single-spaced on 8"-by-11" sheets, his journal runs to about seven thousand pages. Among other things it established two facts: 1) Roché was, without any doubt, one of the greatest lovers in the history of literature, and 2) he documented that aspect of his life in such a thoroughgoing and convincing manner as to make him . . . one of the greatest diarists in the history of love."<sup>7</sup> Roché saw himself, meanwhile, as a contemporary Stendhal, a chronicler of love writing for a future time when writers could "show sex in the light of day, when one will speak of the touch of sex organs as one

speaks of the knees, with all possible nuances, since each situation is emotionally and sexually unique.”<sup>8</sup>

Roché’s own sexual life was an endless marathon of obsessive sexual conquests. Roché first ejaculated at the age of twelve after glimpsing the breasts of his mother’s maid in the next room.<sup>9</sup> Already as an adolescent, Roché established a pattern of pursuing women, but he usually engaged in that pursuit in the company of other men. He also developed the habit of using writing as an invaluable instrument of seduction. With his lycée friend Jo Jouanin, Roché developed a way of meeting women through paid newspaper advertisements that invited women to meet them for “discussions.” In Ian MacKillop’s account, this scheme “worked spectacularly: in one day alone Jo and Pierre received a hundred replies, so they rented a back room at a café to spread out the letters into categories and discuss tactics. Sometimes immediate meetings were arranged, [and] sometimes no meeting materialized.”<sup>10</sup>

Roché kept careful records of his exploits. Public writing served to initiate conquests, while private diary writing allowed him to register his private impressions of conquests already achieved. In this period of his life writing, eroticism, and male friendship became mutually cathected, initiating Roché’s career as a relentless self-chronicler. An ascetic orgiast, Roché enjoyed both the stormy erotic encounters themselves and the remembering of them, through writing, in the cloistered calm of solitude.

A later Roché novel—*Two English Girls*—was based on Roché’s real-life relationship with two English sisters: Margaret (Muriel in the novel) and Violet (Anne in the novel) Hart. At the time of their meeting, Roché was a Tolstoyan idealist and a student in political science, and Violet was a student of sculpture. The real sequence of events, refracted in the novel, is delineated in loving detail in Ian MacKillop’s *Free Spirits: Henri Pierre Roché, François Truffaut, and the Two English Girls*. The events of this story went more or less as follows. Roché (Claude in both novel and film) met Violet when his mother, Clara (“Claire” in the novel), proposed that she teach English to Henri-Pierre. During a trip to Wales, Henri-Pierre met the other sister, Margaret. After maintaining a Platonic camaraderie in which the three called each other “brother and sister,” Henri-Pierre became enamored of Margaret. Ultimately, Claude/Roché proposed to Margaret, but she

hesitated, and in any case Roché's mother, Clara, was opposed to the marriage. Margaret slowly began to relent, but Claire demanded a year of separation for the couple, which effectively foreclosed marriage as a possibility. In 1902 Roché read Nietzsche and began to see himself as a partisan of erotic freedom, flying high above the earthbound social constraints of conventional monogamy and reality.

From 1903 to 1906 Roché became the lover of the other sister, Violet. In 1907 Margaret visited Roché in Paris, but she was shocked to learn of Roché's affair with her sister. In 1908 Violet married someone else, thus freeing Margaret to marry Roché. But by this time it was too late, since Henri-Pierre found Margaret "terrifyingly virtuous," and he was already beginning to enjoy his new life as an adept of *amour libre*. During this time, the sisters had generally been romantically monogamous, or in Anne's case at least serially monogamous, while Claude had been enthusiastically, even religiously, polygamous. For Margaret, Henri-Pierre was the only one, but for him, she was but one of many. In 1913 Margaret married as well. Margaret died in 1926, leaving a husband and daughter. In 1939 Roché had the perhaps hallucinatory impression of glimpsing Margaret's daughter in the Paris metro.