

FRANÇOIS TRUFFAUT

Cinema as an Act of Love

An Intertextual Approach

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“The film of tomorrow will be an act of love.”

—François Truffaut

In memory of my mother and father, whose spirits were with me while writing this book.

Table of Contents

Prologue

Part I: François Truffaut: From Life to Cinema | From Cinema to Life

Chapter 1: The Film of His Life | Biography

Chapter 2: The Films of His Life | Filmography

Chapter 3: Collector of Culture

Part II: Intertextuality | The Theoretical Discourse

Chapter 4: Defining the Intertextual Discourse

Intertextuality

Intertext

Intertextual Categories

The Bloomian Discourse

Chapter 5: Cinematic Intertextuality: Applying the Semiotic-Conceptual Framework

The Status of Intertextuality in Cinema 'Studies Today

An Overview of Intertextual Approaches in Cinema Studies

A Summary of the Intertextual Studies of Truffaut's Films

Uncharted Fields of Study in Cinematic Intertextuality

Chapter 6: François Truffaut and the French New Wave | The Historical Context

The Importance of Intertextuality in the Study of Truffaut and the French
New Wave

François Truffaut as Reflected through the Prism of Harold Bloom

From Realistic-Classical Narrative to Modernism

Chapter 7: Hypotheses and Goals

Study's Goals

Methodology

Part III : The Films in His Life

Chapter 8: The Mischief Makers (*Les Mistons*, 1957)

Chapter 9: The Antoine Doinel Cycle

The 400 Blows (*Les Quatre Cents Coups*, 1959)

Antoine and Colette - Love at Twenty (*Antoine et Colette - L'Amour à Vingt
Ans*, 1962)

Stolen Kisses (*Baisers Volés*, 1968)

Bed and Board (*Domicile Conjugal*, 1970)

Love on the Run (*L'Amour en Fuite*, 1979)

Antoine Doinel and the Human Comedy

Chapter 10: Shoot the Piano Player (*Tirez sur le Pianiste*, 1960)

Chapter 11: Jules and Jim (*Jules et Jim*, 1961)

Evolution of the Narrative in Truffaut's First Three Films: From the Classical-Realist to the Modern

Chapter 12: The Pygmalion Trilogy

Chapter 13: The Soft Skin (*La Peau Douce*, 1964)

The Evolution of the Female Characters in Truffaut's First Six Films

Chapter 14: Mississippi Mermaid (*La Sirène du Mississippi*, 1969)

Chapter 15: Day for Night (*La Nuit Américaine*, 1973)

Chapter 16: Conclusion: Truffaut's Cinema - From Being Influenced to Being an Influence

Part IV: Appendices

Chapter 17: quantitative summary tables

Chapter 18: Study Objectives | A Summary

Filmography

Bibliography

Indices

Methodology

The study examines eleven films by Truffaut: *The Mischief Makers* (*Les Mistons*, 1957), *The 400 Blows* (*Les Quatre Cents Coups*, 1959), *Shoot the Piano Player* (*Tirez sur le Pianiste*, 1960), *Jules and Jim* (*Jules et Jim*, 1961), *Antoine and Collette* (*Antoine et Colette*, 1962), *The Soft Skin* (*La Peau Douce*, 1964), *Stolen Kisses* (*Baisers Volés*, 1968), *Mississippi Mermaid* (*La Sirène du Mississippi*, 1969), *Bed and Board* (*Domicile Conjugal*, 1970), *Day for Night* (*La Nuit Américaine*, 1973), and *Love on the Run* (*L'Amour en Fuite*, 1978). Each film is examined and interpreted based principally on intertextuality but relating also to a complex of cinematic and narrative elements. The cases examined are those in which intertextual analysis reinforces the analysis of the text as a closed text and therefore serves as a means of cinematic utterance that combines with other means to create a full meaning, as well as cases in which intertextuality enables new insights and an expansion of the meaning of the closed text. The intertextual interpretation is conducted in the following manner:

1. Identification of an intertextual nexus in which we have a text and an intertext;
2. Definition and characterization of the latter—identification of identical elements, similarities and dissimilarities between the primary text and the intertext being examined;
3. Indication of the intertextual nexus' context and function in the film under discussion;
4. Examination of the intertextual nexus' contribution to larger complexes such as: structure, genre, cinematic school, creation of expectations, cinematic utterance, cinematic statements and historical order.

Once we have clarified our goals and defined our vocabulary and discourse, we will address the heart of our discussion in the following chapters: a new reading into Truffaut's films.