

Exilic/Idyllic Shakespeare: Reiterating *Pericles* in Jacques Rivette's *Paris nous appartient**

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ABSTRACT

Jacques Rivette's *Paris nous appartient* (1961) is about a literature student, Anne Goupil, who becomes involved with a group of bohemians centering around the absent figure of Spanish musician, Juan. The film incorporates the attempt by theatre director Gérard Lenz – in many ways a simulacrum of Rivette himself – to stage *Pericles*, even though this is a play that he himself defines as “incoherent” and “unplayable.” This essay explores the significance of this incorporation, and shows how the reiterated, fragmentary rehearsals of this “unplayable” play are essential to an understanding of the (disjointed) logic of the film as well as the atmosphere of conspiracy it continually evokes. It also argues that the “Shakespeare” included in the film is an “exilic Shakespeare” that does not *properly* belong, a kind of spectre haunting the film characters. This construct uneasily coexists with a version of “Shakespeare” that the film simultaneously emphasizes – a “Shakespeare” that takes place “on another level” (in Anne's words), an idyllic and idealistic entity.

KEYWORDS: Shakespearean adaptation; *nouvelle vague*; *Pericles*; Exilic Shakespeare; Jacques Rivette; *Paris nous appartient*; *Paris Belongs to Us*; New Wave Shakespeare.

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Belonging – the fact of avowing one’s belonging, of putting in common – be it family, nation, tongue – spells the loss of the secret.

(J. Derrida, *A Taste for the Secret*).

Critically acclaimed by Jacques Doniol-Valcroze in *Cahiers du cinéma* as “the most significant and most resolutely modern work of the new cinema” (i.e. the *nouvelle vague*) (cit. in Hillier 1986:6) and virulently attacked by Gérard Gozlan in *Positif* (*Cahiers du cinéma*’s rival journal) as a film that provides “a chaotic portrayal of a chaotic period” (2009 [1962]:120), Jacques Rivette’s first feature *Paris nous appartient* [*Paris Belongs to Us*] is a *sui generis* film noir that deliberately displays and cultivates opacity.¹ Part of its elusiveness has to do with the fraught, almost legendary history of its production: the shooting of the film began in 1958, and proceeded in a haphazard manner, largely due to financial difficulties, so it was not until December 1961, after a frenetic process of editing and re-editing, that the film had its theatrical release.² The convoluted plot is one of the elements of the film that bears witness to these vicissitudes. *Paris nous appartient* is about a newly enrolled drama student, Anne Goupil (Betty Schneider), who is introduced by her

¹ Here Doniol-Valcroze is defending Alain Robbe-Grillet’s film *L’immortelle* and likens it to Rivette’s film: “Each work is a searching which ends by destroying itself” (cit. in Hillier 1986:6-7). Many critics have noted the affinity between the *nouveau roman* (and its filmic articulations) and Rivette’s film, especially as regards its self-reflexive structure. See, for instance, Morley and Smith (2009:25-26). Gérard Gozlan’s “Brechtian” attack in his ironically titled essay “The Delights of Ambiguity – In Praise of André Bazin” – he goes as far as to state that “Rivette is making a fool of us and of himself” (2009 [1962]:118) – is nonetheless an implicit and explicit acknowledgment of the film’s significance as an emblem of the *nouvelle vague*. To Gozlan, *Paris nous appartient* is more representative of the *nouvelle vague*’s *Weltanschauung* than films such as *À bout de souffle* (*Breathless*).

² A clear symptom of the quasi-mythical status the film had acquired within the circle of critics and film-makers gravitating around *Cahiers du cinéma* is the fact that this is perhaps the only film in the history of cinema that appears in another film as a finished product before being actually released: in Francois Truffaut’s *Les quatre cent coups* (*Four Hundred Blows*), in one of their uncommon outings as a family, the Doinels go and see the film and do not hesitate to pass comments on it. (The film was not funny but it had “some depth”). On the piecemeal shooting of the film, see for instance, Frappat (2001:106-10) and Monaco (1976:318-21).

brother Pierre (François Maistre) to a group of cosmopolitan (or pseudo-cosmopolitan) intellectuals and bohemians who seem to be affected by an irremediable malaise. This group includes Pulitzer Prize winner Philip Kaufman (Daniel Croheim), an escapee from McCarthyism, theatre director Gérard Lenz (Giani Esposito), and *femme fatale* Terry Yordan (Françoise Prévost), Philip's former lover, who is now with Gérard. It centres on the absent figure of Juan (who was also involved with Terry), an exiled Spanish musician who is found dead. His mysterious death – was he murdered or did he kill himself? – prompts, or reactivates, Philip's speculations about a terrible worldwide conspiracy whose immediate targets are those who know, or suspect (like Juan), that “the world is not what it seems,” and that “the real masters rule in secret.” Recoiling from Pierre's friends at first, Anne is little by little taken in by Philip's grandiose theories about a tentacular form of power that remains hidden from view, and this especially after she discovers that her next door neighbour, who turns out to be Juan's sister Maria, has herself mysteriously disappeared. Her gradual involvement with this group of eccentric people (which features cameo roles by *nouvelle vague* directors such as Claude Chabrol, Jean-Luc Godard, Jacques Demy, and Jacques Rivette himself) also takes the form of her acceptance to play the role of Marina in Gérard's theatrical production of *Pericles*, which is at once an experiment in self-fashioning and a confused attempt to save an idealistic theatre director from whatever fate may befall him. (Philip has told her that Gérard will be the next victim.)

Paris nous appartient is replete with references to Shakespeare. Yet, studies of Shakespeare on film hardly ever engage with these references in a sustained manner.³ In Rivette's film Shakespeare is evoked as soon as the initial credit sequence ends: a protracted tracking shot from a train window taking the viewer (and perhaps Anne) to Paris-Austerlitz is followed by a high angle view leading us

³ A notable exception is Burt (2009; 2010). For instance, the film is not mentioned in an otherwise illuminating account of media Shakespeare such as Thomas Cartelli and Katherine Rowe's *New Wave Shakespeare on Screen* (2007), a study one of whose aims is that of retracing the impact of the visual and textual strategies of the French *nouvelle vague* on the Anglophone Shakespeare on film boom of the 1990s (and beyond). The paucity of critical writing applies to Rivette's *oeuvre* more generally. The first book-length monograph on his work in English was published in 2009.

into Anne's apartment, where she maladroitly reads (in English) Ariel's song from *The Tempest* in preparation for her exam:

Full fathom five thy father lies.
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes;
Nothing of him that doth fade
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange. (1.2.397-402)

These almost inaudible words can be said (in retrospect) to foreshadow some of the aspects of the film, especially if one considers them within the immediate context of the play from which they are taken: the dream-like quality of its *mise en scène*; the interpenetration of "art" (or magic) and "life," truth and falsehood; the sense of weariness and loss; the urge, however vague, for a radical metamorphosis, a "sea-change," especially on the part of Anne, who starts out as a blank, a "girl without opinions;" the irresistible draw of music. As to the latter, it is worth pointing out that part of the film plot revolves around Anne's search for a music tape recorded by Juan, a tape Gérard deems indispensable for the success of the production of *Pericles*. This elusive piece of music – one of the many samples in the film of what may be called, *à la* Hitchcock, a McGuffin – is, in more senses than one, "no sound | That the earth owes" (409-10).⁴ Moreover, through the combination of the scene in which Anne studies *The Tempest* and the following scene, the film establishes a subterranean link between Shakespeare and the vast international conspiracy upon which Philip will elaborate later on: Anne's reading is disrupted and then finally interrupted by the sobbing coming from her neighbour's apartment; in this apartment we find Maria who is, Ferdinand-like, "something stained | With grief" (415-16) for her brother Juan's death, and abruptly shifts from mourning to a manic assessment of an impending doom: "First, Assunta. Then, Juan. All one after another. It's the beginning [...]. No one will escape [...]. Everything's

⁴ This can be compared to the music that only Pericles can hear in Shakespeare's play: "But hark, what music?"; "But what music?" (5.1.212, 215). Much later in the film, one finds out that Terry had it, but there is no explanation as to why she has not given it to Gérard.

threatened. The whole world. And nothing that can be done" [subtitles modified].⁵

However, the most extended reference to Shakespeare in *Paris nous appartient* is the film's incorporation of a number of rehearsals of scenes mostly from act four of *Pericles*.⁶ As Jonathan Romney observes, this inclusion is not a marginal aspect of the film: "somehow we feel that the entire fate of the whole world hinges on its success or failure" (2006). These rehearsals never take place in the same location, and they are hardly ever with the same actors. Moreover, as is almost invariably the case with films by Rivette that comprise forms of theatricality – a considerable number of films, some with significant Shakespearean citations, from *L'amour fou* (1969) to *Out 1: Noli me tangere* (1970), from *Céline et Julie vont en bateau* (1970) to *L'amour par terre* (1984), and so on – these rehearsals do not develop into a full-fledged staging of the play. I want to argue that the incorporation of rehearsals of a play that is already in itself fragmentary, stylistically inconsistent, and multi-authored is essential to an understanding of the (disjointed) structure of *Paris nous appartient*. It is also intimately connected with the logic of conspiracy and the atmosphere of paranoia that permeate the film. Moreover, and relatedly, it is through this incorporation that Shakespeare emerges, or re-emerges, as a (fragmented) "spectral" entity – what Jacques Derrida may call the "Thing 'Shakespeare'" (1994:22). As such an indeterminate "Thing" that haunts, it takes over the "life" of some of the film characters, and situates itself at the crossroad of further, multiple transactions.⁷

⁵ Maria shouts twice "J'en peux plus" ["I can't stand it anymore"]; Anne says the same words, although not with the same exasperation, in the following scene, when she meets her own brother. Reporting her meeting with Maria, she marks her distance from her by dismissing her claims: "it wasn't coherent. I think she is crazy." Yet she adds, in a half-joking way, "like me." And, of course, by the end of the film, Anne will have her own brother Pierre killed. Thus, there is an uncanny overlapping between these two female characters. In the film, words typically move from one character to another in an uncanny way.

⁶ There are references to *Macbeth* ("Tomorrow, tomorrow, and tomorrow"), when the actors say farewell to each other after a rehearsal. Moreover, one of the actors, Paul, after telling Anne that he might play Mark Antony in a production of *Julius Caesar*, delivers part of the "Friends, Romans, countrymen" speech.

⁷ To adapt Derrida's argument, this "Thing" moves "in the manner of a ghost." It "inhabits" the rehearsal scenes "without [properly] residing" (1994:18). On the

The first mention of *Pericles* occurs when Anne meets Jean-Marc (Jean-Claude Brialy), a friend from her hometown who has also moved to Paris. He is about to see Gérard to inform him that he will no longer be part of the *Pericles* project, since he is too busy with other projects and, in any case, he thinks that it will be a “flop.” During their meeting, the two friends briefly discuss the play. To Anne, it is a “very good” play. Instead, to Jean-Marc, it contains some good scenes but “it does not hold together” [*ça ne tient pas*], and it is not by Shakespeare after all. Gérard himself suspects that this production may be a flop, as he confesses to Jean-Marc when they meet. He is also well aware of the fragmentary status of *Pericles*. Talking to Anne on the *Pont des arts*,⁸ after offering her the role of Marina (Suzanne, who was supposed to play her, has landed a role in a film), he agrees with her that the play is “*un peu décousu*,” [“a little disconnected;” literally, “a little unstitched”].

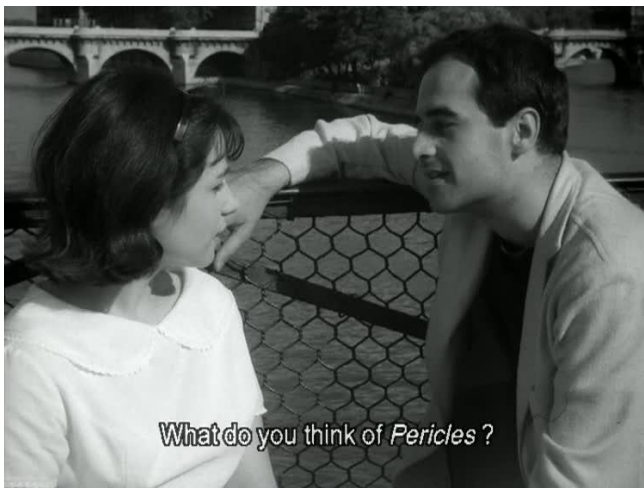


Fig. 1. Anne and Gérard on the Pont des arts.

He adds that it is “incoherent,” and made of “shreds and patches” [*de pièces et de morceaux*]. The rehearsals of scenes from the play do nothing but reassert the sense of disjointedness: how do they fit into Gérard’s overall project? Moreover, one could argue that

spectrality of Shakespeare in contemporary media adaptations of the Bard, see Calbi (2013:1-20).

⁸ For a very detailed account of the film locations, see Lack (2010).

Gérard is speaking to Anne as a simulacrum of the film director, a double of the director qua *auteur*. He is speaking of *Pericles*, that is, but also, more obliquely, of the film itself in which he happens to play the role of a theatre director. This is a film that is equally made of “*pièces et morceaux*,” of elusive fragments that litter its narrative: the missing tape, the multiple drawings of almost identical devouring mouths adorning Philip’s hotel room as well as a photograph of Antonin Artaud, the girl enigmatically playing with her shoes in sinister economist Jean-Bernard de Georges’s office, and so on. How significant are these elements? To what extent are they loose ends? By implicitly raising these kinds of questions, the film self-reflexively explores – and exploits – the desire to make sense of the fragments; to make them cohere in an organic, meaningful whole; to produce meaningful narratives out of “shreds and patches.” This desire concerns the many “positionalities” that are somehow involved in the film – the film director as would-be *auteur*, some of characters within it, the viewers themselves.⁹ Moreover, as a film *noir* that also references other *noirs* (in particular, Robert Aldrich’s *Kiss Me Deadly* [1955]), *Paris nous appartient* intimates that the position of the interpreter and the position of the paranoid are structurally interdependent, and thus not clearly distinguishable from one another.¹⁰ In Freudian terms, both the analyst/interpreter

⁹ To this, perhaps, one could add the desire to see Rivette’s film as a *Shakespearean* film. On meaningfulness and meaninglessness in the film, see Burt (2010:171). On the spectator as witness and participant, see Wiles (2012:11-12).

¹⁰ On paranoia and film *noir* from a largely Lacanian perspective, see Charnes (2006:26-42). For a splendid reading of Claude Chabrol’s *Ophélie* (1962), a film that, much like *Paris nous appartient*, displays and exposes the co-dependence of the drive to interpret and paranoia, see Lanier (2001). In this self-reflexive film, according to Lanier, Yvan’s chance encounter with Laurence Olivier’s *Hamlet* turns *Hamlet* (and the cinematic tradition of *noir* associated with it) into an “irresistible interpretive model” (244) that cannot but be used to “set right” what is (supposedly) out of joint from an ethical point of view. Relatedly, the film also functions as a trenchant critique of the notion of the “New Wave *auteur* as [Hamlet-like] artistic avenger” (253). Rivette’s film is perhaps not as radical as Chabrol’s in this latter respect. Yet, its inclusion of a character such as Gérard as a double of the filmic *auteur* as well as of a play such as *Pericles* that is notoriously multi-authored points to a similar problematisation of this notion. It may be argued that in films as diverse as *Ophélie*, François Truffaut’s *Jules et Jim* (1962), Jean-Luc Godard’s *Bande à part* (1964), and *Paris nous appartient*, the much-cherished *nouvelle vague* notion of *auteur* is simultaneously asserted and put under erasure, and that this complex dynamics is partially articulated through the “mobilizing” of Shakespeare as a cultural paradigm of authorship. In a 1996 interview

and the paranoid are informed by “the compulsion not to let chance count as chance” (1901:258); they are driven, that is, by a compulsive desire *not* to let chance fragments or events be *merely* accidental. Philip and Terry’s interpretive feverishness is of course the utmost example of the uncanny proximity of interpretation and paranoia. Terry goes as far as to speak of a conspiracy that will turn the whole world into a “global concentration camp,” a dystopian village in which “everything will be sacrificed to efficiency, the State, technology” (the quasi-Foucaultian word used here is “*techniques*”).¹¹ But one must add that they occupy a position along a shifting continuum without clear beginning and with no definite end. Anne, for instance, starts as a “girl without opinions” and then moves from incredulity to playing the detective/interpreter. (At some point, Philip, who fundamentally contributes to this transformation, calls her an “over-imaginative child.”) It is perhaps because of the haunting presence of this continuum (a continuum that does not exclude the viewer) that H el ene Frappat, one of the major critics of Rivette’s films, succinctly defines *Paris nous appartient* an “uninhabitable work” [“*oeuvre inhabitable*”] (2001:7, my translation). It is almost as if interpretation inexorably leads to the idea of a secret international conspiracy, and contributes to spread it, like an infection;¹² conversely, without interpretation, there would be no conspiracy but also, by the same token, there would be no narrative,

Rivette defines Shakespeare as “a continent that we know to be gigantic, extraordinary,” but still a “*terra incognita*” (cit. in Wiles 2012: 16).

¹¹ The film by Rivette that is closest to *Paris nous appartient* in this respect is *Le pont du nord* (1981), where Baptiste (Pascale Ogier) continually warns Marie (Bulle Ogier) of the mysterious presence of “the Maxes”: “The Maxes are everywhere: their gazes fall on everything that moves.” She also describes surveillance in the following terms: “it’s an absolute surveillance: every moment, every word you say, every move you make.” As with *Paris nous appartient*, this (paranoid) hypothesis is simultaneously confirmed *and* undermined. On the political resonances of this, see, for instance, De Pascale (2002:30-46); Neupert (2007:277-78) and Wiles (2012:12-15).

¹² The eerie, modernist musical score and the film’s cinematography contribute to the transformation of the most innocuous scenes into scenes pregnant with a sense of impending doom. This also applies to conversations between characters. For Frappat, one never simply communicates in Rivette’s films: “conversation serves to create accomplices” (2001:191, my translation). As to conspiracy, the mere fact of talking about it is what brings it into being (191). Morrey and Smith identify the double bind of the logic of the secret as follows: the “secret [is] so terrible that no individual can bear its burden alone, and yet to reveal the secret is to condemn oneself to execution” (2009:24).

and the film itself would collapse. In other words, what matters is not so much the “truth” of the conspiracy. As Morrey and Smith argue, it is almost impossible “to decide between two interpretations of *Paris nous appartient*: that of a global conspiracy directing all events of the film, or that of a series of essentially unrelated accidents, each with their own prosaic explanation” (2009:24).¹³ What matters is that there *is* a secret, an undecidable secret without depth. The putting together of various pieces of a puzzle *produces* what one claims to discover, a necessarily disjointed narrative that moves forward just as much as backward, a narrative that thus “pro(re)gresses” and allegorizes the process and workings of the film itself.¹⁴ And, as we shall see, the “Shakespeare” of the film largely responds to this undecidable logic of the secret: it is an out-of-joint “entity” that is like a spectre, simultaneously visible *and* invisible, an “object” of representation, out there in the open, *and* what exceeds the visible. It is a potentially (re)iterable construct that unfolds in a non-linear manner, and implicates as it unfolds.

Thus, as mentioned earlier, Gérard admits that *Pericles* is a little “incoherent” and “*décousu*.” Yet he also maintains, at one and the same time, that it “hangs together on another level, a terrestrial level” [*“tout se lit sur un autre plan, sur le plan terrestre”*]. As he explains: “Pericles may traverse kingdoms [PAUSE]. All the heroes may be scattered all over the globe [...]. Yet they are all reunited in act five.” To Gérard, “*Pericles* is a *mise en scène* of a world that is chaotic but not absurd, just like ours, flying off in all directions but with a purpose.” Anne of course agrees with him. (In a sense, Philip and Terry would agree with him, too: the world is chaotic but not absurd, in so far as each and every sign of this chaotic world speaks of a secret conspiracy. Idealism thus shakes hands with paranoia.)

¹³ An extract from Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* is included in the film. But, once again, the meaning of this inclusion is unclear: when the film on the reel breaks, nobody bothers to do anything about it. In a sense, what appears at first to be a significant insertion “deconstructs” itself. According to Frappat, Rivette adopts the point of view of “*l’entre-deux*” (196), of the undecidable yet ethically compelling “in-between.” Her example is an emblematic exchange between Anne and Philippe: “You are right. And so am I. It is this that is complicated.” Arguably, this undecidability reintroduces chance.

¹⁴ Similarly, Morrey and Smith observe that “the function of the secret [...] is to generate narrative,” and that “the real secret of *Paris nous appartient* appears as the infernal logic of secrecy itself” (2009:24).

Yet, we never see the fifth act of *Pericles*; we never witness this idealized, idyllic Shakespeare, the *Pericles* of romance and resolution. *Pericles* remains “*décousu*” and “unplayable” (Gérard’s words), often appearing in the form of (spectral) remainders that are reiterated, in the course of rehearsals that are themselves “*décousu*.” (Aptly, the French word for rehearsals is “*répétitions*”).¹⁵ “I never manage a proper rehearsal,” Gérard complains. Indeed, with the partial exception of Anne and Jean-Val (the sound designer who also plays Gower), actors often leave in the very midst of the rehearsals because they have a “normal” job to go back to; sometimes they do not turn up because they have found a job that pays (in a film, radio quiz, and so on); even when they stay to the end, as is the case with Virginie (the actress playing the bawd), they are adamant that they would rather be somewhere else: “Shakespeare’s all very well, but I prefer operetta.”¹⁶ However, the film implicitly but forcefully insists that these rehearsals, botched as they are, compare favourably to the “proper” rehearsals in a “proper” theatre with professional actors that take place after Gérard signs for thirty performances of *Pericles* with one of the most famous theatres in Paris, the *Théâtre de la Cité*. (It is implied that the deal is concluded because Terry agrees to sleep with the mysterious de Georges, who appears to be a close friend of the theatre manager, perhaps not insignificantly called Boileau.) By including these rehearsals, the film offers a critique of what can be seen as the theatrical equivalent of the cinematic “*tradition de qualité*,” the *nouvelle vague’s* *bête noire*.¹⁷ as we enter the *Théâtre de la Cité* with Anne, we can hear the sound of the sea and the crying of seagulls, which create a perfect scenic illusion; a veteran actor asks Gérard if he can wet his finger to check the direction of the wind while replying “South-west” to Marina’s “Is this wind westerly that

¹⁵ For Frappat, all the theatre directors who appear in Rivette’s films choose their texts “because of the mystery they contain, not because of the enigma that they solve” (2001:35, my translation).

¹⁶ In the film, theatre is besieged by advertising, radio, and cinema itself. But this does not mean that theatre is seen as the “proper” medium of Shakespearean representation. Theatre can be stultifying, as the rehearsals at the *Théâtre de la Cité* clearly show. Many Shakespeare-on-film critics have discussed the inclusion of theatre in filmic adaptations of the Bard, and emphasised its multiple valences. See, for instance, Burnett (2007:7-27) and Lanier (2007:135).

¹⁷ I am of course referring to François Truffaut’s famous, virulent attack on what he pejoratively dubs “the tradition of quality” (as exemplified by screenwriters Aurenche and Bost), when he was only twenty-one (1954:39-63).

blows?" (4.1.49); Boileau tells Gérard that he is thinking of having a pirates' galley in the background, manned by dwarves, so as to provide a realistic "third dimension." With its lavish production values and spurious sense of realism recalling the "*tradition de qualité*," this *Pericles* is certainly not the *Pericles* Gérard has in mind. He is prepared to "make concessions," as he tells Anne, because he is so eager to direct the play, but in the end he realizes that he has been deprived of any decisional power, and decides to quit the production. But, for him, it is too late to "go on with the play as before," as Anne had suggested. He will soon be found dead and, as with many other aspects of the film, the cause of death is not entirely clear: is it suicide because of his disappointment in himself as a theatre director? Does he take his life because Anne has turned him down? Has this anything to do with the secret conspiracy? (After all, Philip had predicted his death).

In a 1968 interview with *Cahiers du cinéma*, an interview in which he is critical of *Paris nous appartient*, Rivette reasserts his long-held belief that "all films are about theatre;" that "if you take a subject which deals with theatre [...] you're dealing with the truth of cinema" (1986:317).¹⁸ As many critics have noted, what attracts Rivette to theatre is the open-endedness of theatrical production and performance. For Rivette, to include some form or other of theatre, and especially rehearsals that are by definition works in progress, is, for cinema, "another way of looking at itself in the mirror" (318); it is, for cinema, a way of "contemplating something else" (318), thus drawing attention to itself as *other*, as a complex and precarious process rather than a finished product. In this sense the botched rehearsals of *Pericles* are a mirror image of what does *not* unfold in a linear way, either in terms of time or space. As Gilles Deleuze observes in relation to the film, "theatrical representation is a mirror-image" of what does *not* "manage to come to completion" (1989:74), even when it appears to end.¹⁹ But there is arguably something more

¹⁸ He finds the film dialogues "atrocious" (1986:317). But he still likes the way the film is constructed, "the way the characters go from one *décor* to another and the way they move among themselves" (317). His position on theatre can be said to be unique among *nouvelle vague* directors. On theatricality in Rivette's films, see especially Wiles (2012).

¹⁹ In fact, for Deleuze, because theatrical representation is "constantly failing," it is a kind of opaque mirror that cannot be properly said to reflect anything. The bare white stage that comes to coincide with the blank screen at the end of Rivette's *L'amour fou* is

specific about the lines from *Pericles* that the film chooses to include, beyond their function as allegorization of the irremediably decentred structure of the film. They are mostly from 4.1 and 4.2, and these are scenes in which Marina is herself the unsuspecting target of a murderous conspiracy. Once averted, this conspiracy takes the form of a scheme that does not attempt to rob her of her life but, instead, of what is to her dearer than life – her “virgin knot” (4.2.139).²⁰ And, indeed, in *Pericles* the Mediterranean appears to be, much like the Paris of the film, a stage where a vast conspiracy is being played out, and so much so that the quasi-paranoid, irreparably melancholic Prince of Tyre (see 1.2.1-6) begins to see himself as “a man, whom both the waters and the wind | In that vast tennis-court hath made the ball | For them to play upon” (2.1.57-59). In other words, there are forms of reciprocal haunting between the scenes performed in the rehearsals (and even the discussions about the play) and the “themes” that emerge in the rest of the film. For instance, theatre spills over into the “real life” of the film characters when the inexperienced Anne unwittingly becomes involved in another “play”: “What’s the game?,” she asks Philip.²¹ Unlike Dionyza’s plot concerning Marina, the secret conspiracy in which Anne happens to be involved does not seem to require her death. Nonetheless, it affects her deeply, as shown by the battery of questions she asks Philip: “What have I done to you? You encourage me, discourage me, drive me crazy [...]. What use am I to you?” These are questions that arguably resonate with Marina’s questions to Leonine: “What

perhaps the most appropriate emblem of this. *L’amour fou* includes rehearsals of Racine’s *Andromaque*, which are themselves being filmed as they are taking place. In the film, which is arguably a study of sublimation and regression, theatrical representation invades the “private space” of theatre director Sebastian and his wife Claire (Bulle Ogier). The rehearsals of *Andromaque* and the explorations of theatrical postures in “real life” are inverted mirror images of each other, and each infects the other. For the “theatricality of the cinema” in Rivette, which is “totally distinct from the theatricality of the theatre,” see Deleuze (1989:187).

²⁰ According to Wiles, “In its concurrent staging of classical and cold war conspiracy scenarios, the film draws an implicit parallel between antiquity and the contemporary world, between theater and cinema, between the dramaturge and the film director, and in this way re-presents the quotidian world of postwar Paris with the force of ancient ritual” (2012:8).

²¹ Like other films by Rivette, *Paris nous appartient* can be said to explore the divergence and intersection between two meanings of “play” (i.e., “play” as theatrical “*pièce*” and play as “*jeu*”). See Ffrench (2010:161). On *jeu*, see also Morrey and Smith (2009:5-6).

mean you?"; "Why will you kill me?" (4.1. 65, 69), and so on. As to Gérard, he can be seen as a contemporary version of Lysimachus. If Lysimachus hypocritically haunts "the doors and windows" of a brothel he simultaneously "savour[s] vilely" (4.5. 114-15), Gérard is attracted to the mysterious, "transgressive" sexuality Terry embodies, even though he finds this frightful: "I love her very much but sometimes she frightens me," as he confesses to Anne. Instead, he predictably finds Anne reassuring: "I feel at home with you." To his eyes, she is, much like Marina, "a piece of virtue" (116), and perhaps even a "prop" (124). As he overdramatically declares to Anne during one of their last meetings: "I feel I'm lost [...]. You are the last human visage on the horizon [PAUSE]. I have this curious dizziness [...]. Things seem to whirl about me faster and faster," to which she replies, not without irony: "You need something to hang on to?"²² Gérard's reproduction of one of the tritest dichotomizations of femininity upsets and confuses Anne.²³ As far as the rehearsals are concerned, this leads her to explore her own sense of abjection through Marina's lines: "Alack that Leonine was so slack, so slow |He should have struck, not spoke; or that these pirates |Not enough barbarous, had but o'erboard thrown me |For to seek my mother" (4.2.58-61). Anne speaks these lines in an unusual "wooden" way, thus arguably combining her examination of abjection with an "unconscious," performative undermining of Gérard's expectations as a theatre director, an oblique form of dissent. To Gérard, poetry is "lyricism," and "lyricism" is a corporeal "movement forward."²⁴

²² After one of the rehearsals, one of the actresses says to Anne that she is "being treated like a prop" by Gérard [*comme du matériel*].

²³ On the problematic of gender in Rivette, see Sellier (2008). She argues that the films displays a dichotomy between Terry as the "woman vampire" and Anne as the "shop girl." She continues, perhaps oversimplifying, that "the film, which presents itself as political [...] is a story in which remarkable men, avant-garde artists and political resisters, struggle tragically, while two women – one because she understands nothing, and the other because she knows too much – destroy them instead of helping them" (129-30).

²⁴ One could go as far as to argue that Gérard furtively plays the part of the bawd: he seems to be unaware that Terry prostitutes herself with de Georges to let him pursue his dream to stage *Pericles*, but he profits from it, at least momentarily. (She ends their relationship immediately after this.) Significantly, during the third rehearsal, there is an acrimonious exchange between Gérard and Paul, who plays Bolt, about the fact

There are many other “spectral” transactions in the film, and quite a few of them involve Terry. One of the most significant instances occurs when Gérard’s amateurish company rehearse in an open-air amphitheatre. While Anne and the actor who plays Leonine speak lines from 4.1. (from “Is this wind westerly that blows?” [49] onwards), the camera insidiously offers a close-up of Terry, which strongly suggests an uncanny juxtaposition between Terry and the play’s scheming Dionyza.



Fig. 2. Rehearsing *Pericles*

The haunting presence of Terry also contributes to the disruption of the rehearsal: Anne moves from “When I was born the wind was north” (50) to “Ay me, poor maid, | Born in a tempest when my mother died, | This world to me is a lasting storm, | Whirring me from my friends” (16-19). Annoyed by this, Gérard remarks that this is “the wrong speech.” But Anne’s mistake is also a movement backwards to lines that encapsulate what she perceives as her vacillating position within the tempestuous and endlessly alienating “world” outside rehearsal. Soon afterwards, and while still on stage,

that he never pays them for the rehearsals. Gérard becomes very upset and Paul retorts: “if you’re broke, find another trade.”

Anne openly confronts Terry, insinuating that the reason why she does not want to see Juan's friends in order to retrieve Juan's music tape has to do with the fact that she is somehow involved with his death. Terry abruptly replies that this is not in "your text" ["*votre texte*"], and invites her to "stick to the lines." Yet, what I have been arguing is that in the film one cannot quite stick to one's lines. The events – or non-events – that take place outside the boundaries of the rehearsal space affect the lines from *Pericles*, and the way in which they are performed; conversely, the fragmented script of *Pericles* often becomes a spectral "entity" that exceeds itself, an "entity" that haunts the film characters and prompts them to explore different forms of malaise, some of which the script of *Pericles* itself brings into being. As shown earlier, this is especially the case with Anne. It is worth adding that this spectrality is material *and* evanescent. It does not coincide with fate, in the sense that it does not slot the film characters into pre-determined roles. Anne is undoubtedly a contemporary version of Marina, "the abandoned waif who becomes the unwitting object of a murderous conspiracy" (Wiles 2012:16). Yet she also takes on the more active role of Pericles, a character who, according to Gérard, "traverse[s] kingdoms." In the phantasmatic rewriting and "re-vision" of the *dispositif* of gender informing *Pericles* as envisaged by the film, she is also the *flâneuse* who wanders "in a Paris which is like a city of ghosts" (Romney 2006). She embodies what Deleuze calls "investigation-outing" ["*promenade-enquête*"]; she belongs to "a race of charming, moving characters who [...] experience and act out obscure events which are as poorly linked as the portions of the any-space-whatever they traverse" (1986:217).

To conclude, it is worth returning to the question of reiteration, a question that is so central to both the logic of the film and the way in which *Pericles* operates therein. According to Patrick Ffrench, "theatricality in *Paris nous appartient* is a contradiction," in that "the contingency of the space of rehearsal is denied in advance by the script" (2010:160). Yet, the reiteration of lines from *Pericles* tells a different story. It can be seen as what reintroduces contingency and undermines the "mastery" and (hypothetical) fixedness of the Shakespearean script. In other words, reiteration is not a representation or reproduction of a pre-existing textual "entity" that somehow authorizes it. This can be approached by referring to a minor, almost inaudible exchange between Gérard and Jean-Val. Just before yet another rehearsal in yet another location, Gérard incites

his troupe to enter the space of rehearsal so as to carry on (“*Allons* [PAUSE] *à la suite*”), to which Jean-Val ironically replies with another question: “carry on with what?” (“*La suite de quoi?*”). The *Pericles* of *Paris nous appartient* is intimately connected with this indeterminate “what” (“*quoi*”). There is hardly anything that precedes *la suite* (i.e., that which follows). There is hardly any stable script – or any previous rehearsal (*répétition*) – upon which *la suite* can build in an unproblematic, linear manner.²⁵ There is only ever reiteration, a reiteration that displaces *and* exposes what it (supposedly) repeats, drawing attention to the multiplicity, dividedness, and fragmentariness of any “origin” or source. As mentioned earlier, this repeated iteration without any “proper” origin or source is perhaps facilitated by the choice of a text such as *Pericles* that is itself multi-authored, inconsistent, and the result of drastic revisions.

One of the most emblematic examples of the process of “authorless” reiteration is the repetition of the lines: “Is this wind westerly that blows?” (4.1.49). It is by being repeated – and often by being repeated in the course of what in French is a *répétition* – that these lines take on an almost incantatory, eerie quality. Like an (in)visible secret, they move from one film character to another, from Anne, the “girl without opinions” who reads them before she becomes seriously involved in the *Pericles* production, to Anne the amateurish actress, from Anne the amateurish actress to the professional actress playing Marina at the *Théâtre de la Cité*, and from the latter to Jean-Val at the end of the film. This “Shakespeare” is an iterable, serial, exilic “Shakespeare.” As Richard Burt points out in an article that includes a discussion of Rivette’s film, “Shakespeare’s staying power has nothing to do with his staying in (one) place” (2009:233). It is worth recalling in this context the epigraph from Charles Péguy (a devout non-practicing Catholic just like Rivette) that prefaces the film, an epigraph that oddly puts under erasure the title of the film, reciting that: “Paris belongs to no one” (“*Paris n’appartient à personne*”). The process of reiteration suggests that “Shakespeare,” like Paris, belongs to no one. The film’s finale remarks on the problematics of unbelonging. As previously

²⁵ In this sense, the “second time” cannot be clearly distinguished from the “first time.” In the film, the mysterious figure of Juan is defined as an “anachronism,” a character not properly belonging to his time. “Anachronism” is a word that could be applied to the complex temporality of a reiteration (retrospectively) producing what comes before it.

discussed, this finale does not correspond to the fifth act of *Pericles* that Gérard envisages. It is far removed from the atmosphere of romance. What we experience, instead, is an acceleration in terms of plot: the death of Gérard is followed by Terry's murder of Pierre, whom Philip and Terry believe to be an agent of the secret organization that is taking over the world, and we witness this murder through Anne's eyes. The idea of conspiracy forcefully seems to reassert itself ("I had to be sure we weren't imagining things," Philip says to Anne) only to be immediately denied ("The organization [...] exists only in Philip's imagination [...]. Such organizations do exist but are less clear-cut [...]. Evil has more than one face"). This is itself suspicious, "a little too categorical to be entirely believed" (Morrey and Smith 2009:23). With the question of conspiracy left suspended, Philip and Terry leave for an unknown destination. It is at this point that Jean-Val announces to Anne that the former members of Gérard's theatrical company intend to get together and stage *Pericles* again, and asks her if she wants to be part of it. As he does so, he recites what has by now become a kind of "spectral" refrain: "Is this wind westerly that blows?" As with much else in the film, we are left uncertain as to whether this new production will take place, or whether Ann will participate. The final sequence of the film shows some birds flying away over water. These are extremely beautiful, evocative shots. It is almost as if Marina, and Anne with her (especially after the death of her own brother), had finally managed to "change" into a "bird" in order to "fl[y] i'th' purer air;" it is almost as if Anne/Marina had finally succeeded in escaping a place of confinement, an "unhallowed place" (4.5.104-106).²⁶ For Jonathan Romney, this sequence is simultaneously "melancholic and rapturous, an ending that is also a beginning" (2006). And, indeed, from a "formal" point of view, the tracking shot from right to left irresistibly recalls the opening tracking shot from left to right that leads us into Paris. It establishes

²⁶ In a 1961 interview, Rivette observes that *Paris nous appartient* is "an experience – an adventure, unachieved, aborted, perhaps, but isn't that the risk of experience? Experience of what? Of an idea, of a hypothesis [...]. I tried to tell the *story* of an idea, with the aid of the detective story form; that is to say that instead of *unveiling* primary intentions at the end of the story, the denouement can't do anything but *abolish* them: 'Nothing took place but the place'" (cit. in Monaco 2007:321). (The citation, of course, recalls *Coup de dés*.) But arguably this "place" belongs to no one. In another interview, he stresses that "at the end it all disappears and there is nothing left but this lake and some birds flying away" (1986:318).

a circularity that does not coincide with closure, and doubles mystery. In particular, it is a kind of circularity that does not put an end to the exilic. It invites the viewer to immerse themselves in a fluid, aquatic landscape that bears the promise of the future, and future reiterations of *Pericles*. This is a landscape, one might infer, in which conspiracy – if any there be – will be a “con-spiration,” a “breathing-together” by the surviving members of Gérard’s theatrical community (see Frappat 2001:225), almost as if the “wind [...] that blows” could be turned into a vital element that suffuses and moves through the body. Almost half-way through the film, Gérard observes that we are “all in exile,” which can be seen as a partial reassessment of his idea of *Pericles* as a play that transcends exile, and reconstitutes itself “on another level, a terrestrial level.” At the end of the film this non-Anglophone “Shakespeare” remains a textual and performative body “flying off in all directions,” an exilic figure that melancholically migrates from place to place, much like *Pericles*, and belongs to no one.

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