The Figgis Version

One evening as Mike Figgis was dressing to go to a dinner party in the Hollywood Hills, he had the television set on and was channel surfing. He came across an old black-and-white British film that he had not seen:

> There was something about it which immediately caught my attention, which was to do with the style of acting and this kind of very underplayed drama that obviously had a lot of tension. And looking back I think it was quite early on in the film. I'd missed the opening scenes where, but it was still at an early enough stage for me to have a certain specific kind of interest in. The film wasn't over. And so I was dressing, and more and more I became fascinated by the film, and I ended up having to just sit down and watch it. And I kept looking at my watch and thinking I'm going to be extremely late.[1]

The film was *The Browning Version* directed by Anthony Asquith. When he finally arrived at the dinner party, he confessed why he was late and was amazed to discover that his hostess was involved in an attempt to remake the movie. She worked with Ridley Scott, who had acquired the remake rights with the intention of directing it himself but had decided to turn it over to another director. Figgis had at this point directed four features and had attracted considerable attention with his first two: *Stormy Monday* and *Internal Affairs*. His hostess asked if he would be interested in directing a remake of *The Browning Version*.

Figgis was born in England in 1948, but spent the first eight years of his childhood in Nairobi before his family returned to England to live in Newcastle. He studied music at Trent Park College of Education and began his career as a musician, playing guitar and keyboards. He was a member of an R & B / Soul band called Gas Board with Bryan Ferry playing clubs in Newcastle in 1965. He then joined an experimental theater group called The People Show first as a musician and then as an actor. Experimental theater led to multi-media experiments, which sparked an interest in film. *Slow Fade,* one of his theatrical productions, led to an opportunity in 1984 to make a television film, *The House*, and that opened doors for him eventually to make *Stormy Monday* in 1988.

Figgis professes to have been hesitant to take on a remake of *The Browning Version* because he thought it was such a perfect movie. The producers encouraged him to view it more as a revival of a play, and obviously he decided to do it. The result is a classic case study in what can happen when a movie is updated or remade.

The Script

Ridley Scott had originally intended to make the film with Anthony Hopkins in the lead role and had engaged Ronald Harwood to write the

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1 Criterion DVD interview

script. A native of South Africa Harwood studied at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts but abandoned acting in the Fifties to become the backstage dresser for a Shakespearean actor. He eventually wrote a play based on his experiences. He had been writing plays and screenplays since the early Sixties, but in 1980 *The Dresser* was a huge hit in London. Harwood adapted it for the 1983 film, and was nominated for an Academy Award along with the film's director Peter Yates and the actors, Tom Courtenay and Albert Finney. (More recently Harwood won an Oscar for his screenplay for *The Pianist* (2002), was nominated for *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* (2007). He also wrote the screenplays for *Love in the Time of Cholera* (2007), *Being Julia* (2004)and *Cry the Beloved Country* (1995).

Harwood has sole screenwriting credit for the 1994 production of *The Browning Version*, and there is no way to know exactly how much influence Figgis had on the script. There is a copy of Harwood's script in the collection at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences which is a "Final Draft" dated May 28, 1993, and the differences between that script and the finished movie are typical examples of the kind of tinkering that goes on when a film is actually shot and edited. Most of the alterations are minor but in some instances they have a significant impact on the meaning of the film, particularly the changes in the ending.

The screen credit says the film is based on Rattigan's play, but the script itself acknowledges that it is based as well on Rattigan's screenplay. Much of Harwood's screenplay is obviously modeled on Rattigan's and even in some scenes taken verbatim.

Figgis says he only saw the Asquith film one more time after his initial discovery of it on television. He wanted to see it from the beginning to get the whole experience, but he did not want to be overly influenced by it in making his own version. The key to his interest in the film seems to be his response to Redgrave's performance. In an interview about the Asquith film he describes Andrew Crocker-Harris as

> …an incredibly passionate man who was a stoic. This man is the epitome of the stoic, which means that he's a person who's not going to show his feelings and who has immense pride and inner strength. And through a bad marriage and through a combination of these personality characteristics has somehow fallen out of time with himself. He's no longer someone whom people can relate to. He's at a certain age.

He views the British public school system as designed to cultivate this kind of stoicism, and he describes the "devastating" impact of the film in terms of a desire to see the character open up emotionally and overcome this repression. The pivotal moment in the story for him is the moment when

Taplow in giving Andrew the book breaks through his armor.

Figgis views the brilliance of the Rattigan's writing in terms of the way in which the audience is enabled to see beneath the surface of Andrew's repression.

> These repressed characteristics or these hidden characteristics are something which of course the audience can see and the genius of the writing here is that we are let in, we the audience are let in on this secret early on. We like this man.
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> We like him because he is so well written and we like him because he is so beautifully played in the original by Redgrave. And so we know that he's misunderstood and that's a really interesting ability in a great writer and a great director and a great actor to immediately - and remember this was a one-act play - So within five or ten minutes we've got to know that this is the good person, this is a person whom we sympathize with and everybody else is coming and misunderstanding.
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> And I mean you can do that in a crude way in which case the drama's not going to work on anything like the same level. But if you do it in this brilliant piece of writing in such a subtle way then all of our aspirations for the drama are that please somebody come along to understand him. So finally when the great breakthrough scene occurs, it's the most brilliant heartbreaking scene where the boy

MIke Figgis ca 1993

actually gives him a gift. And at first he even misunderstands that it is a gift. He's almost prepared to sort of sabotage it and one can see Rattigan going right the to edge here, going "Please, open up and let this appreciation in, but no, it's carried right to the precipice of stoicism. It's painful to watch.

And I remember so clearly the first time I saw the film going "For God's sake! you know, break through" and then finally when he does it's devastating, But it has to be devastating by that point because we've gone so far with the withholding of this piece of information. So when it does come through it really is a revelation and the film turns on that incident and goes from one kind of film to another kind of film without ever - and again this is why we're talking about quality British cinema here - without ever lapsing into a sort of crass sentimentality that often cinema lurches towards

> in a moment like this; you know, let's milk this for all it's worth.
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> It remains stoic and in fact he continues to put the knife in after the event and it's even more painful now because all the nerve endings are exposed so it's...It is actually an immensely cruel piece of drama. Cruel in order to be kind, in order to get finally to a point of revelation or of understanding about human nature. By the end of this film one has had to go on a very tough journey with the character. It's quite devastating to watch.

Even allowing for the off-the-cuff nature of these remarks, it seems clear to me that the foundation has shifted between Asquith's or Redgrave's interpretation of Andrew Crocker-Harris and Figgis's. The clearest indication of this may be Figgis's "We like this man." Not everyone shares his immediate sympathy for Andrew as portrayed by Redgrave. Take for example the following excerpt from a review on the internet by Steve Evans:

> Asquith directs at a mannerly pace, building his themes methodically. Younger audiences weaned on flash-cutting and cursory character development may grow impatient with these wholly unlikable characters. But we ought to approach these stuffed shirts with compassion—or at least appalled fascination—in order to appreciate their plight. Redgrave's repressed professor, while an inspired creation, is still an arrogant and obnoxious man. Only in the final act does his essential humanity force its way to the surface. But it is Redgrave's ability to transform this unsympathetic man into a pitiable figure that ultimately makes the film such a rewarding experience. That, and the jaw-dropping dialogue. There are lines in this picture that slice clean to the bone.[2]

Needless to say I do not share the view that Redgrave's Crocker-Harris is "an arrogant and obnoxious man," and I have trouble imagining how anyone can respond to him in that way. Nonetheless even Redgrave himself apparently referred to Andrew as the "villain-hero of the play"[3] and his summary of the character as "an elderly, embittered schoolmaster whose defences break down because someone is kind to him"[4] seems to imply a degree of analytical distance lacking in Figgis's response. Redgrave was careful to emphasize that he felt he himself was nothing like Andrew Crocker-Harris and in fact liked the role because of the challenge it presented in playing someone so totally different.

This might seem like a slight difference in emphasis in describing a character were it not for the evidence presented by Figgis's film. Albert Finney's Crocker-Harris is a very different man

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2 www.dvdverdict.com/reviews/browningversion.php

3 Minney 138

4 Mask or Face 139

from Michael Redgrave's, and the difference is found in the script as well as in Finney's performance. Figgis clearly wanted to make sure the audience found Andrew sympathetic.

Harwood's script "opens up" the play even more than Rattigan's screenplay. The action now takes place over three days rather than one, and there are scenes in the surrounding countryside and nearby village as well as at the school and Andrew's house. Scenes have been added to expand the depiction of student life and more attention is given to the cricket match. In spite of the additional material the Harwood/Figgis film is 18 minutes shorter than the Rattigan/Asquith version.

Many scenes have been altered in fairly basic ways but the overall thread of the story remains the same. It begins with Gilbert's arrival in time for the morning chapel service and ends with Andrew's farewell remarks and a final exchange with Taplow. Most of the basic story points remain unchanged: Andrew's wife is having an affair a science teacher; Andrew learns he is not receiving a pension and is asked to speak before Fletcher; Andrew learns what the students call him; Taplow gives Andrew a book after Mrs. Crocker-Harris has overheard his imitation of Andrew; she debunks the gift; Andrew insists on speaking last; he apologizes for his failure as a teacher; and he tells Taplow he has received his promotion.

There are however, several, alterations in the story which are not simply accommodations to the more contemporary setting or efforts to elaborate on existing motifs. First of all there is a change in Andrew's situation conveyed by a seemingly minor alteration of some dialogue.

FROBISHER: You know, it's extremely unlucky ill health should have forced your retirement…

ANDREW: Well, I felt that I could have continued, Headmaster. If you remember it was yourself and the governors who thought that my health was…

FROBISHER: Well, quite so, quite so… I was going on to say that it's unlucky about your having to retire before becoming eligible for a pension.

The real reason Andrew is leaving is not that his doctor says he must, but that the headmaster and the governors of the school want to get rid of him. Andrew does still have a heart condition. Taplow tells the other students and Gilbert that he knows the medical problem forcing Andrew to retire is his heart. We see Andrew take some pills twice during the film, once before his private lesson with Taplow and once right before he goes into the prize giving ceremony. There is, however, no dialogue about the medicine in the finished film. Taplow is not sent to get a refill nor does Andrew ask him for water to use in taking a pill. There is no discussion of the possibility of his taking too many of the pills. Other than his emotional vulnerability Andrew shows no signs of an illness.

This de-emphasizing of Andrew's illness is taken even further by one of the changes that took place between Harwood's final draft and the edited film. Harwood's script has Andrew explain why he is late for his lesson with Taplow:

ANDREW: I'm not as spry as I once was. I get very breathless. I had to rest. Excuse me for a moment, I need to take my pills.

The reason for this change is not just to make Andrew less a victim of ill health and more a victim of his own failure as a teacher. It is related to a new theme which has been introduced into the story: the death of Western civilization or at least the replacement of traditional culture by modern culture. The school wants to modernize. Gilbert has been hired to establish a new language department focusing more on modern languages and may even phase out the teaching of Greek and Latin. Andrew has become obsolete.

Laura (nee Millie) does say that the doctor says Andrew's new job will be less of a strain on him, but his new job is teaching English as a second language rather than prepping slower students for their exams. There is perhaps the implication that although Andrew is still fit to teach classics at a public school, he cannot find such a position because other public schools are as intent on modernizing their curriculum as this one.

The theme of Western culture culminates in Andrew's farewell remarks:

Rattigan/Asquith Version	**Harwood Final Draft**	**Figgis Film**
A valedictory address, as those of you who have read your Plato's *Apology* will remember, can be of inordinate length, but as I, unhappily, am not Socrates, and as I have often believed that Vita longa, ars brevis,[1] is a more suitable apothegm than the one in more general use, and in connection with the word brevitas, it is, I think, of some small interest -- it is, I think, of some small interest --	…	The study of the Classics is, in my view, the foundation of our culture, and culture is simply an expression of what is best in society – philosophy, decent government, justice, art, language. Our classical heritage is no longer valued and how can we help mold civilized human beings, if we no…if we no longer believe in civilization.

Rattigan/Asquith Version	Harwood Final Draft	Figgis Film
You must excuse me. I have prepared a speech, but I find now that I have nothing to say, or rather I have three very small words, but they are most deeply felt. They are these: I am sorry. I am sorry because I have failed to give you what you have the right to demand of me as your teacher: sympathy, encouragement, and humanity. I'm sorry because I have deserved the nickname of "Himmler" and because by so doing I have degraded the noblest calling that a man can follow -- the care and molding of the young.	I am sorry. I am sorry because I have failed to give you what you had the right to demand of me – sympathy, encouragement, and humanity. I apologize too for not having fought harder for those standards of excellence in which I so much believe. I allowed those standards to atrophy and I allowed myself to atrophy. I have deserved the nickname of Hitler of the lower Fifth because I have degraded the noblest calling a man can follow – the care and molding of the young.	I am sorry. I'm sorry because I have deserved the epithet Hitler of the Lower Fifth. I'm sorry because I have failed to give you what it is your right to demand of me as your teacher: sympathy, encouragement, humanity. I have degraded the noblest calling a man can follow: the care and molding of the young.
I claim no excuses. When I came here I knew what I had to do, and I have not done it. I have failed, and miserably failed. I can only hope that you and the countless others who have gone before will find it in your hearts to forgive me for having let you down. I shall not find it so easy to forgive myself. That is all. Good bye.	When I came here I believed I had a vocation for teaching – I knew what I should have done, but I did not do it. I knew that our classical heritage was no longer valued, and I did nothing. How, I asked myself, can we help to mould civilised human being if we no longer believe in civilization? Study of the classics, in my humble view, is the foundation for our culture, and culture is simply the expression of what is best in society: philosophy, decent government, justice, art, language. Yes, I knew these things and I did nothing when I should have shouted my beliefs from the rooftops. I have failed, and miserably failed, and I can only hope that you and the countless others who have gone before you will find it in our hearts to forgive me for having let you down. I shan't find it easy to forgive myself. That is all. Good-bye.	When I came to this school, I still believed…I… that I… I had a… a vocation for teaching. I knew what I wanted to do and yet I…I did not do it. I cannot allow excuses. I have failed and miserably failed. And I can only hope that you can find it in your hearts, you and the countless others who have gone before you, to forgive me for having let you down. I shan't find it easy to forgive myself. That is all.

The change in the remarks that Andrew had prepared reflect a change in the conception of Andrew from a pedantic academic to someone wishing as he told Frobisher "to touch on a matter of some gravity." More importantly perhaps, Andrew's personal failure is presented as a part of a larger failure of the establishment, which no longer believes in civilization.

The differences between Harwood's final draft and the finished movie seem designed to enhance this theme. Harwood's script has a moment where Andrew starts rehearsing his speech in his study earlier in the morning, and the opening is taken from the Asquith film with its reference to Plato's *Apology*. The implication seems to be that Andrew's comments on our classical heritage are, for Harwood, part of Andrew's apology. The devaluation of the classics was already well advanced when Andrew began teaching, and his failure to fight against it is part of his personal failure. The filmed version implies that the comments on the study of classics were part of Andrew's prepared remarks and not part of his spontaneous apology. The decline in commitment to the classical tradition is made to seem more of a contemporary issue than a fait accompli, and there is an obvious connection with the establishment of a modern language department and the governors' decision to terminate Andrew.

The theme of modern versus traditional culture is reflected in three other motifs in the script: science versus humanities, sportsman versus scholar. American versus English. The first two are motifs which can be found in the Asquith film, but receive additional emphasis in Harwood's script.

Frank Hunter has been turned into an American. Even though Laura says he is "more English than the English" because of his coldness with her, everything else about him – his dress, his familiarity with the students, his manners, his diction, his flippant humor – is clearly intended to be American and, I think, to appear only superficially appealing.

Even though Frank professes to appreciate the history and tradition of the school, his appreciation seems a bit like that of a tourist and his joke about the uncomfortable beds conveys something of the way in which he takes the tradition with a grain of salt. In the Harwood script Frank is infatuated with the history and tradition of the school. He goes out of his way to show Gilbert a statue of King Charles and a bench where Byron and Shelley are supposed to have sat together discussing their dreams of going to Greece. His anglophilia is indicated in the description which says "He affects an old fashioned, untidy English look with half-moon classes. […] Under his academic gown he wears an alpaca jacket."

His exchange with Frobisher about science has also been expanded a bit:

Rattigan/Asquith Version	Harwood/Figgis Version
FROBISHER : And this, unless my ears deceive me, is the science upper Fifth where Hunter manufactures his nauseous odors of his perverted branch of learning.	FROBISHER : Up here is the upper Fifth science where Mr. Hunter manufactures foul smelling concoctions for his own perverted branch of learning.
HUNTER : How much more perverted, sir, than say certain passages of the Greek anthology?	HUNTER : Not as perverted as the Classics. Won't Mr. Gilbert be teaching the boys about rape and murder and incest?
FROBISHER : Unworthy, Hunter. A good dose of the Classics might still save you scientists from destroying this pleasant little planet of ours.	FROBISHER : Unworthy, Mr. Hunter. If you knew more about the Classics, you scientists, you might be less keen to destroy this little planet of ours. Wasn't it Einstein who said, "We don't understand science properly"?
HUNTER : I'm sorry, sir. I'll see you later, Gilbert.	HUNTER : No, I believe he said we don't know how to use it sensibly. Have a nice day, Mr. Gilbert.
FROBISHER : Bad that…	
GILBERT : What was that?	
FROBISHER : The noise in his classroom.	
GILBERT : Oh.	
FROBISHER : A good chap, Hunter, in many ways but no sense of discipline and, of course, like all scientists a trifle narrow-minded.	FROBISHER (reacting to noise in classroom): If only he had a little more discipline…but of course he's an American, you see.

The prejudice against science in the earlier film seems like a minor instance of stodgy conservatism and is not taken up anywhere else in the film. Harwood has connected it to an underlying theme about modern culture. The chairman of the board of governors, Lord Baxter, is head of Euro-Space Industries instead of a general as he was in the earlier film. Harwood's screenplay also had Frobisher commenting on the bank of telephones installed for the students by a parent, Sir Gerald Hamley of Hamley Communications. Dr. Rafferty, the head of the science department, is the one who explains to Hunter in a deliberately crass bit of dialogue that the current expression for "Cut along" is "Fuck off!"

This expression is used much more naturally and sincerely by Buller in his response to Taplow's effort to offer sympathy and moral support. In contrast Andrew expresses a similar sentiment to Hunter by saying, "I'd rather like to be left alone at the moment, thank you." When Hunter persists, even Andrew's coldest rejection is bathed in an aura of civility:

HUNTER: Is there anything I can do to help you? … I'd like to help…you.

ANDREW: Yes, don't take sides; it's so very unbecoming.

Civility is a correlate of civilization, and there are moments in the film when Andrew seems to embody civility. After he suffers the humiliation of being asked to relinquish his status in deference to Fletcher's popularity, he is able to gather himself and complement Fletcher on his cricket playing. He is able to generously "bequeath" his classroom to Gilbert with sincere wishes for success right after Gilbert has clumsily informed him that he is known as "the Hitler of the Lower Fifth." At a moment when he has been thrown completely off balance by Taplow's gift, he is able not only to make gracious and witty conversation with two alumni, but to recall their names. Frobisher whose job demands more social skills than Andrew's is constantly forgetting names, even of Gilbert, whom he had just introduced and addressed by name a few seconds earlier. Lord Baxter is also unable to remember the name of an employee whom he has mentioned in a clumsy effort to relate to Adakendi.[5]

None of this should be taken to imply that the meaning of the film is a comment on the death of Western civilization. The film is not "about" Western civilization at all. It is "about" Andrew Crocker-Harris, and it uses views about modernity as a way of delineating his character and enhancing his stature. Casting Andrew as a representative of classical culture and tradition gives him more substance than his more "modern" colleagues.

There is, of course, also a downside to Andrew's conservatism. Two students complain to Gilbert that Andrew always opposes anything new, and Andrew's civility seems to cloak an unwillingness to stand up for himself. In fact Andrew's acquiescence seems to have moved to the foreground in Harwood's screenplay. Laura's response to the news that Andrew will not receive a pension is one of the elements that has survived more or less intact from the play

LAURA: And what did you say? … You just stood there and made some joke in Latin, I suppose.

ANDREW: There was very little I could say, in Latin or any other language.

LAURA: Well, I would have said something. Don't you worry; I would have said something.

ANDREW: I'm sure you would.

Harwood has her elaborate on this, though, in a bit of dialogue that perhaps replaces "marriage of mind and body" as a summary of the conflict:

LAURA: You know what you are? You're a wimp. You always were and you always will

5 Figgis has apparently altered the joke on Baxter. In Harwood's script Baxter says right off that he has a Nigerian chap working for him whose name he can't remember, but follows with "You probably know him." Adakendi responds, "Probably not." This can be read as a way in which Adakendi puts Baxter in his place and presumably it was felt that allowing Baxter just to shoot himself in his own foot played better.

> be, a double first class wimp. … You know, I think I could have forgiven you anything if you had just once said "No. Enough." – not just to me but to every setback you've ever had.[6]

The issue is not just an incompatibility between the sensual and the cerebral, but a question of integrity and self-assertion. Andrew does, of course, eventually say "No. Enough." to her when she makes a conciliatory gesture after her cruelty about Taplow's gift. He also says "No" to Frobisher regarding the order of speakers at the prize-giving ceremony. In this sense Harwood has reverted to something closer to the theme of the play than the main theme in the Asquith film. As with the play the relationship between Andrew and Laura is not definitively ended. Their separation may be temporary. Andrew's farewell remarks seem to have enabled Laura to recover some of her respect for him, and her last words are "I'll write."

The issue is not Andrew's failure as a teacher. In fact despite his own harsh judgment, there is evidence he has in fact succeeded in at least the one in a thousand times which "can atone for all the failures in the world." In the play and earlier film these successes only happened in his early years at the school, but Harwood has clearly decided to present Taplow as an instance of Andrew's success even in his last year.

6 As we shall see, part of this dialogue was originally used much later as part of the resolution of the relationship between Andrew and Laura

He also introduces two alumni who go out of their way to pay their respects to Andrew and who, despite their own considerable success in their careers, still regard Andrew with awe. When Trimmer says, "God help me, I'm still terrified of the old bugger" he is revealing not that Andrew traumatized him for life but that Andrew represents the voice of conscience demanding perhaps unattainable levels of discipline and excellence. The scene takes place in front of a scoreboard, and the alumni have just been asked to account for what they have "been up to" in their lives. Andrew playfully assumes the position of a superior officer telling the brigadier general to "stand easy," and they instinctively address him as "sir." Trimmer expresses regret that Andrew is leaving the school and later goes out of his way in the middle of the concert to give Andrew his card and offer financial assistance.

> TRIMMER: This isn't the best moment, sir, but we're not staying the night, so uhmm … If ever you need any financial advice or assistance – indeed, anything of that sort, please telephone. I'd like to help. Think of it as umm… as repayment.
>
> ANDREW: Why thank you very much. This is extremely civil of you.

When Foster tells Andrew, "The old place won't be the same without you sir;" he is sincerely expressing a sense of loss that contradicts the

opinion of the board of governors. It is almost as though even he can see that Andrew represents the backbone of a tradition that has infused the school for centuries.

These additions to the script help make the applause following Andrew's farewell remark more believable. The implication is that Andrew's judgment of his own failure is simply the application of his own impossible standards to himself and overlooks the inspiration he has provided students and colleagues over the years. Modernization of the school may be inevitable, but there is still a deeply felt nostalgia for the values and tradition Andrew embodies.

The use of the cricket match to delineate Andrew is more subtle or oblique. The contrast between the popular cricket player and the feared scholar is obvious enough, and in the play it is used simply to underscore the failure of Andrew as a schoolmaster and set up the issue of his place in the speaking order. Asquith uses the cricket match simply as a means of punctuating the scene in which Frobisher informs Andrew about the pension and asks him to speak first. Fletcher's farewell remarks in the Asquith film function as a double edged sword puncturing the pomposity of the school traditions and classical scholarship and at the same time making Fletcher seem awkward and trivial in comparison to the depth of feeling in Andrew's apology.

Harwood's script sets up Fletcher more prominently in the beginning as everyone exits the chapel and the students crowd around him seeking his autograph. Andrew has to make his way through the crowd against the tide. Fletcher's farewell remarks no longer contain anything that punctures pomposity and seem mainly designed to make him seem shallow in comparison to Andrew.

Rattigan/Asquith Film	**Harwood/Figgis Film**
Well, chaps, I never was much good on my hind legs except perhaps at running with them. In fact I shall feel much less nervous today facing the Australians than I am on this platform. So just let me say what I have to say in a single sentence and then let me relax and enjoy myself with you all listening to Mr. Crocker-Harris's gilded and classical epigrams. Good-bye, good luck, and let's win the public school sports again next year.	Well, chaps, I'm not much good…you know…you know, on my feet except when I running between the wickets. So I'll just say I'm really… sad, you know… to be leaving this wonderful old place. I've loved it here. So… you know… good luck and good-bye.

Harwood and Figgis use the cricket game as punctuation for the conversation between Andrew and Frobisher just as the earlier film did, but they also make a very different use of it as well. There is an almost lyrical treatment of the game, which culminates in the slow motion shots of Fletcher's final pitch after the scene in the library between Andrew and Frank. This is as much a result of direction as screenwriting, but from the very first shot of the cricket players taking the field there is a celebratory aspect to the depiction of the game that seems completely sincere and not at all satirical. The immaculate green playing field, the white uniforms and the soft light make for seductive images. There is also an attention to detail in close ups of the wickets and of the pitchers hands which seem to be an indication of a fondness or fascination with the game. As Andrew says of Fletcher to Trimmer and Newton, "He's a superb player and quite beautiful to watch, isn't he." [7]

The Classics scholar is able to appreciate the performance of a sportsman, and we are reminded that sports of this sort are as much a part of the public school tradition as Latin and Greek. The final sequence of the cricket game conveys an image of the sportsman who is completely at one with himself in moments of peak performance and is celebrated by his teammates. In its own way this is an ideal comparable to one which motivated Andrew as a teacher. Coming after the scene in the library the image of Fletcher is particularly poignant as a contrast to the agony Andrew is experiencing in his internal conflicts and his conflicts with his wife and the school.

There are other touches in Harwood's screenplay designed to ensure that Andrew is sympathetic. The opening shot of the film is of Andrew alone and is clearly a signal that he is a character who will be the focus of our attention. (This is actually an addition made in the filming and is not in the final draft script.) Most of the initial scenes with Andrew are comparable to his depiction in the Asquith film until we come to the "end of term treat" for his class. At first Andrew's critique of the student's reading seems harsh and humiliating; but, as he begins to read and comment on the text himself, his passion for the work becomes obvious. He is swept up by it, and Taplow at least is able to sense, and in some small way share, his enthusiasm. Clearly in this film Andrew is not someone who is already dead. His passion may not be shared by his students, but it is real; and he would clearly like to communicate it to them.

There is a moment after his class and after the brief exchange with Gilbert about the importance

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7 This line was not in the final draft of Harwood's script. The scene with Trimmer and Newton occurs because Trimmer is looking for the ball which has been hit beyond the bounds near the tree where Andrew is still absorbing the impact of Taplow's gift. The scene between Andrew and the alumni is basically the same but there is more of an air of awkwardness and Andrew responds to the comment on Fletcher getting his hundred simply with "Well, it was only to be expected." as he walks away

of modern languages when Andrew is in the classroom alone and hears the sounds of boys outside in the quadrangle. He goes to the window and looks down on them. They seem small in the distance and their uniforms make them indistinguishable, almost like a swarm of insects. There is no clear indication of what Andrew is thinking and the moment is obviously open to interpretation, but it is hard in retrospect not to view it in terms of a "god from afar" who looks "graciously upon" the students. (This moment is not in Harwood's final draft. The script has Andrew going to look out the window to collect himself after the bell has interrupted his reading.)

The next additions Harwood makes for Andrew are during the lesson with Taplow when Taplow inserts his own free translation. Harwood's re-interpretation of this moment is worth comparing to the play and the Asquith film because of what it implies about Andrew and his relationship with Taplow.

Play	Rattigan/Asquith Film	Harwood Final Draft	Figgis Film
ANDREW: Taplow – I presume you are using a different text from mine –	ANDREW: Taplow – I presume you are using a different text from mine –	ANDREW: Taplow – I presume you are using a different text from mine.	ANDREW: Taplow – I presume you are using a different text from mine –
TAPLOW: No, sir.	TAPLOW: No, sir.	TAPLOW: No, sir.	TAPLOW: No, sir.
ANDREW: That is strange for the line as I have it reads: ητις τοισνδ ε π ᾱνδρι κομπ ᾱζεις λσγον. However diligently I search I can discover no 'bloody' – no 'corpse' – no 'you have slain'. Simply 'husband' –	ANDREW: That is strange for the line, as I read it, reads: ητις τοισνδ ε π ᾱνδρι κομπ ᾱζεις λσγον. . However diligently I search I can discover no 'bloody' – no 'corpse' – no 'you have slain'. Simply 'husband' –	ANDREW: That's strange, for however diligently I search, I can discover no 'bloody' no 'corpse,' no 'you have just so foully murdered' simply ε π ᾱνδρι , 'husband'.	ANDREW: That's strange I see no 'foully murdered' no 'bloody corpse,' simply ε π ᾱνδρι , husband.
TAPLOW: Yes, sir. That's right.	TAPLOW: Yes, sir. That's right.	TAPLOW: Yes, sir. That's right.	TAPLOW: Yes, sir.

Play	Rattigan/Asquith Film	Harwood Final Draft	Figgis Film
ANDREW: Then why do you invent words that simply are not there?	ANDREW: Then why do you invent words that simply are not there?	Andrew, for once seems rather at a loss. ANDREW: Then why do you invent words that simply are not there?	ANDREW: Then why do you insist on inventing words that simply are not there? … Go on, Taplow. Go on; I wish to understand.
TAPLOW: I thought they sounded better, sir. More exciting. After all she did kill her husband, sir. She's just been revealed with his dead body and Cassandra's weltering in gore –	TAPLOW: Well, I thought they sounded better, sir. More exciting. After all she did kill her husband. She's just been revealed with his dead body and weltering in gore –	After a moment's hesitation, Taplow takes the plunge. He leans towards Andrew. TAPLOW: Today, in class sir, when you read from the play – He finds it impossible to continue.	TAPLOW: Well, I think of it like this, sir. There she is, Clytemnestra. She really hates her husband, Agamemnon. He returns from winning the war, and what does she do. She welcomes him back and then murders him. She stabs him over and over and then makes a speech…
…	…	ANDREW: Go on, Taplow. Go on; I want to understand -	…
…	…	TAPLOW (again summoning courage): Today – in class – I thought you read – well – passionately, sir. And for the first time I got a sense of the drama, the horror, the emotion – it was – it was so – so vivid, sir –	…
…	…	ANDREW: I'm flattered, Taplow, but still puzzled as to why that should encourage you to rewrite Aeschylus.	…

Play	Rattigan/Asquith Film	Harwood Final Draft	Figgis Film
…	…	TAPLOW: Just think of it this way, sir, there she is, Clytemnestra, she hates her husbanad, Agamemnon. He returns form winning the war, and what does she do? She welcomes him back and then she murders him! Stabs him over and over -	…
ANDREW: I am delighted at this evidence, Taplow, of your interest in the rather more lurid aspects of dramaturgy, but I feel I must remind you that you are supposed to be construing Greek, not collaborating with Aeschylus.	ANDREW: I am delighted at this evidence, Taplow, of your interest in the rather more lurid aspects of dramaturgy, but I feel I must remind you that you are supposed to be construing Greek, not collaborating with Aeschylus.	ANDREW: I'm delighted in your interest in the more lurid aspects of dramaturgy, Taplow –	ANDREW: I'm delighted in your interest in the more lurid aspects of dramaturgy, Taplow; but I still fail to understand why you should wish to improve Aeschylus.
TAPLOW: Yes, but still, sir, translator's licence, sir – I didn't get anything wrong – and after all it is a play and not just a bit of Greek construe.	TAPLOW: Yes, but still, sir, translator's licence, sir – I didn't get anything wrong – and after all it is a play and not just a bit of Greek construe.	Laura passes on her bicycle. LAURA: Andrew, there's cold meat and salad on the kitchen table – She disappears.	
ANDREW: I seem to detect a not of end of term in your remarks. I am not denying that the Agamemnon is a play. It is perhaps the greatest play ever written –	ANDREW: I seem to detect a not of end of term in your remarks. I am not denying that the Agamemnon is a play. It is perhaps the greatest play ever written –	ANDREW (barely acknowledging her): - but I'm still not clear as to why you should think you can improve Aeschylus.	…

Play	Rattigan/Asquith Film	Harwood Final Draft	Figgis Film
TAPLOW: I wonder how many people in the form think that? … Sorry, sir. Shall I go on? … Shall I go on, sir?	TAPLOW: I wonder how many boys in the class think that? … Oh, I'm sorry, sir. Shall I go on, sir? … Shall I go on, sir?	TAPLOW: Well, sire, surely there's no crime in trying to make him – well – alive. Why can't we get some – yes, some life into our translations, sir. Why can't we translate like you read today? Why can't we use words like 'bloody' and 'corpse' and 'murder'? He waits for Andrew's reaction.	TAPLOW: Today in class, sir, for the first time I got a sense of the horror. It was so vivid. I mean, why can't we put more life into the translation, sir, like you did? Why can't we use words like 'bloody' and 'corpse' and 'murder'?
ANDREW: When I was a very young many, only two years older than you are now, Taplow, I wrote, for my own pleasure, a translation of the Agamemnon – a very free translation – I remember – in rhyming couplets.	ANDREW: I remember when I was a very young many, only a few years older than you are now, Taplow, I wrote, for my own pleasure, a translation of the Agamemnon – a very free translation – I remember – in rhyming couplets.	Andrew glances at him then smiles faintly. ANDREW: When I was a very young man – only two or three years older than you are now, I wrote, for my own pleasure, a translation of the Agamemnon – a very free translation – I remember – in rhyming couplets.	ANDREW: Ummm… When I was a very young many, not much older than you are now, I wrote, for my own pleasure, a translation of the Agamemnon – a very free translation – I remember – in rhyming couplets.
TAPLOW: The whole Agamemnon – in verse? That must have been hard work, sir.	TAPLOW: The whole Agamemnon – in verse? That must have been jolly hard work, sir.	TAPLOW: That must have been hard work sir -	TAPLOW: That must have been hard work.
ANDREW: It was hard work; but I derived great joy from it. The play had so excited and moved me that I wished to communicate, however imperfectly, some of that emotion to others. When I had finished it, I remember, I thought it very beautiful – almost more beautiful than the original.	ANDREW: It was hard work; but I derived great joy from it. The play had so excited and moved me that I wished to communicate, however imperfectly, some of that emotion to others. I remember, I thought it very beautiful – almost more beautiful than the original.	ANDREW: Yes, it was. Very hard work. But I derived great joy from it. The play had also excited and moved me - as it did you. I wished to communicate, however imperfectly, some of that emotion to others. I felt much the same thing today in class. My translation, I remember thinking was very beautiful. (a faint smile) Almost more beautiful than the original.	ANDREW: Yes, it was; it was – very hard work; but I derived great pleasure from it, because the play had excited and moved me as it did you; and I wanted to communicate, however imperfectly, some of that emotion. A little like what happened in class today. My translation, I remember thinking was very beautiful – almost more beautiful than the original.

Play	Rattigan/Asquith Film	Harwood Final Draft	Figgis Film
TAPLOW: Was it ever published, sir?	TAPLOW: Was it ever published, sir?	TAPLOW: Was it ever published, sir?	TAPLOW: Was it ever published?
…	…	…	ANDREW: I'm sorry?
…	…	…	TAPLOW: Was it ever published?
ANDREW: No. Yesterday I looked for the manuscript while I was packing my papers. I was unable to find it. I fear it is lost – like so many other things. Lost for good.	ANDREW: No. I didn't finish it. Yesterday when I was packing my papers, I looked for it, but … I'm afraid it is lost – like so many other things. Lost for good.	ANDREW: No. He falls silent.	ANDREW: Oh no. No it was never published. …
TAPLOW: Hard luck, sir. … Shall I go on, sir?	TAPLOW: Oh, hard luck, sir	Taplow stares at him, trying to understand, feeling sympathy. Then: TAPLOW: Shall I go on, sir?	TAPLOW: Shall I go on, sir?
ANDREW: Now, go back and get that last line right.	ANDREW: Now, go back and get that last line right.	ANDREW: No. Our time has run out.	ANDREW: Ahh, no, I fear we've run out of time.

The stage directions for the play explicitly describe Andrew as "*Murmuring gently, not looking at Taplow*" when he says, "When I was a very young man…" Redgrave turns to look at Taplow as he comments on the "note of end of term" and his tone is reproving. He looks away from Taplow as he says the *Agamemnon* is perhaps the greatest play ever written, and then he becomes sufficiently absorbed in his own thoughts to ignore Taplow's question as to whether he should go on. Harwood's final draft has Andrew staring off into space as he begins to recall his translation. In the Figgis's film Finney pauses and pours lemonade for both of them after Taplow asks why he can't use words like 'bloody' or 'corpse'. Then he looks directly at Taplow and addresses his reminiscences to him. He is sharing something with him and relating to him on a completely new footing. He takes himself back to a time when he was almost a peer of Taplow, and Taplow temporarily ceases to address him as 'sir'.

Much of what happens in the scene is a matter of the acting and directing, but the basis for it is in the script and Harwood drives the point home by adding an exchange as Taplow is leaving:

ANDREW: Scientia est celare scientiam. 'The art of learning is to conceal learning.' And I wouldn't try it on any of your friends. It isn't particularly funny.[8]

8 Andrew's joke is a riff on the epigram Ars est celare artem "Art is to conceal art" or "The art is in concealing the art."

This is clearly a generous gesture and more than compensates for whatever humiliation he may have inflicted on Taplow in the classroom. It even makes one want to reconsider what actually did happen as Andrew called on Taplow to account for his laughter. When Taplow explains that he laughed out of politeness, the final film includes an initial response from Andrew ("I beg your pardon?") which indicates that he may be genuinely surprised by Taplow's explanation or caught off guard by the fact that a student could be motivated by such a feeling for him.

The scene in which Taplow gives Andrew the book has been relocated to an exterior setting overlooking the playing fields, but Harwood preserves much of the dialogue from the play. Most of the difference in the impact of the scene is due to the directing and acting, but there can be little doubt in this film that Taplow's gift is completely sincere and not at all the bribe that Laura claims it is.

Harwood has altered the final scene between Taplow and Andrew as well. Rather than have Taplow approach Andrew to return his manuscript and ask about his promotion, Harwood sets up a moment in which Andrew shakes Andrew's hand and says goodbye on behalf of a group of students. Andrew enjoys the diplomatic formality of the proceedings and characteristically informs Taplow that he has obtained his promotion by telling him first in Latin.[9] There seems little doubt that the scene is meant to be played as Finney does with genuine affection.

There are also substantial alterations in the script in the roles of Laura and Frank and their relationships with Andrew and with each other.

Laura is introduced in the chapel when the headmaster refers to her pointing out that Andrew had already been at the school for three years when he married her, but there are none of the exchanges between Laura and Gilbert or Frank during the service. She introduces herself to Gilbert after the service with a flattering joke about his youth. She already knows who he is, and she mentions the plan to form a new language department.[10]

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9 Greek in the final draft

10 Her comment that Andrew was "only head of the classical languages" seems to introduce a complication in terms of Andrew's status at the school. In the play and earlier film the fact that Andrew was still teaching classics to the lower fifth seems to be an indication of how his career floundered. Gilbert is pleased to be given the lower fifth straightaway, but the implication is that he will advance to a higher status rather than be stuck with the "soul-destroying lower fifth." At a school like this there are surely upperclassmen studying the Classics in preparation for university. No mention is made of who is teaching them, but if Andrew is head of classical languages at the school surely he must be. If he has an occasional success with a lower fifth student like Taplow, then he would presumably have similar successes with older students who are even better equipped to appreciate classical literature

In her initial exchange with Frank there is only a hint of familiarity and a mildly suggestive comment about keeping "our bodies in shape." There is no scene with Laura and Frank alone at the house before Taplow's lesson. In fact Frank has come to the house at Andrew's behest to turn in his information for the class schedule, and Andrew arrives almost immediately after Laura. There is nothing in the dialogue that explicitly reveals the nature of her relationship with Frank, and it is not really until the following morning when she invents an excuse to go into the village that we learn of her affair.

Laura goes to Frank's flat in the village with the obvious intention of having sex with him. She has also learned that her mother will be in Canada for the summer, and she invites Frank to stay at her mother's cottage with her for month before she joins Andrew at his new job. Her comment "Don't worry; I'm not pregnant." as well as his initial remark, "I thought we agreed never to meet here." make it clear that they have been having an affair for some time. It is also clear from her behavior and dialogue that the basis for the affair is primarily sexual, but her suggestion that they ought to tell Andrew about their relationship indicates that she hopes that it can be more than a brief affair. The fact that Andrew is leaving the school presumably puts some pressure on her to solidify the relationship with Frank in some way.

The scene is Frank's flat is over five minutes long and replaces all the scenes between Frank and Millie in the play or Asquith film. Frank balks at her invitation to spend a month with her during the summer, offering the excuse that his father is not well and he may have to return to the US. She clearly interprets this as a rejection and compares him to Andrew.

Instead of discussing why Andrew became a schoolmaster, they discuss what happened to Andrew's marriage. It is Laura who gives the first indication of how she and Andrew were incompatible. Unlike Millie she expresses frustration rather than contempt, and she accepts responsibility for her part in the marriage. Her "déjà vu" remark seems to imply that this is not the first affair she has had, but she does not seem to have deliberately tormented Andrew by letting him know about her affairs. She never refers to Andrew as dead or completely unfeeling, and she does not become angry with Frank in the way Millie does.

Harwood Final Draft	Figgis Film
	FRANK: Laura.
LAURA: Were you expecting someone else?	LAURA: Were you expecting someone else?
FRANK: I thought we'd agreed you wouldn't come here, it's risky Laura -	FRANK: I thought we agreed that we wouldn't meet here.
LAURA: Who were you expecting?	LAURA: Who were you expecting?
FRANK: I thought the new guy, Gilbert. Laura, you take such crazy chances.	FRANK: Gilbert, the new guy.… Laura, come away from the window please.… Would you please come away from the window.
LAURA: Yes, but it's fun, isn't it. Go on, admit, yesterday was fun. (exasperated, he starts to dry his hair with a towel) Well, don't take a vote on it -	LAURA: Aren't you going to say hello?… I love you guilty… the puritan in you. I love fucking you. You talk when you make love.
The sound of a kettle whistling. FRANK: Be with you in a moment. The kettle's just boiling.	FRANK: The kettle's boiling.
LAURA: Which is more, apparently, than we can say for you.	LAURA: Which is more, apparently than we can say for you.
He disappears. She wanders over to the kitchen door and watches him.	FRANK: Laura, I haven't got much time.
	LAURA: No, I don't think I have either.
	FRANK: Tea?
LAURA: Tea. You're more English than the English. I thought at least you'd offer me three fingers of rye.	LAURA: Oh Frank, you're more English than the English.
He lifts the tea-tray, passes her awkwardly as he carries it into the main room. She regards him beadily.	
LAURA: (teasing him) No crumpet?	
FRANK: What?	
LAURA: Crumpet is slang for a bit of fluff. Me…I'm your bit of crumpet, Frank.	
FRANK: Oh. (pouring her tea) I haven't got long, Laura -	

Harwood Final Draft	Figgis Film
LAURA: (wry) No. I don't think I have either. (brief pause) But I'm the bearer of good news -	
No. I don't think I have either.	
FRANK: If Gilbert happens to walk in just say you're delivering a message form Andrew -	FRANK: If Gilbert does come, let's just say you're here delivering a message from Andrew.
LAURA: Oh, to hell with Gilbert. I said I'm the bearer of good news.	LAURA: To hell with Gilbert.… I've got good news.
FRANK: What?	FRANK: Oh? What?
LAURA: I had a letter from my mother. She's lending me her cottage in Dorset for the summer. Andrew starts his new job in September. But I won't join him immediately. That means you and I can be alone there together for a whole month.	LAURA: Don't worry I'm not pregnant. … I've had a letter from my mother. She's decided to visit my sister in Canada, so I can have her cottage in Dorset for the whole summer.
(he tries to smile)	FRANK: That's great.
LAURA: I didn't mean to over-excite you. (he laughs softly but unconvincingly)_ Think. Just the two of us. For a whole month. You will come, won't you. Frank, I need you. I need to be with you.	LAURA: Andrew starts his new job in September, but I don't have to go there immediately, so that means you and I can be alone together, if you like. Just think, darling, a whole month. … You will come, won't you. I need you. I need to be with you.
FRANK: I may have to go back to the States, my dad's not been well – He falls silent, removes his half-moon glasses, cleans them. She watches him, her mood changing. She becomes more aggressive.	FRANK: You know, my father's not well. I may have to go back to the states.
LAURA: God, you remind me of him.	LAURA: Go, you remind me of him.
FRANK: Of who?	FRANK: Of who?
LAURA: Of, whom, of whom? Of Andrew, of course. He wasn't always the Crock, you know. He was only just a bit older than you are now when I first met him. But just as - ungiving. He was so - pure, so idealistic – She breaks off. He replaces his glasses, looks at her.	LAURA: Of whom. Of whom. Of Andrew, of course. He didn't always used to be the Old Crock, you know. He wasn't much older than you are now when I first met him. He was so pure, so… so idealistic. But just as ungiving.
FRANK: What happened to him?	FRANK: What happened to him?
LAURA: I did.	LAURA: I did.
FRANK: Were you never happy together?	FRANK: Weren't you two ever happy together?

Harwood Final Draft	Figgis Film
LAURA: (truthfully and with some regret) I can't remember -	LAURA: I can't remember…can't remember.
FRANK: Laura - I - (he loses courage)_I feel sorry for him.	FRANK: Laura, I… I feel sorry for him.
LAURA: No, you don't, Frank. you feel guilty because you're screwing his wife. (a smile) Or, to be more accurate, because his wife is screwing you. But that's all right. I like taking you by surprises. I love you guilty. It's the puritan in you. Suffering gives you pleasure.. You don't really like to talk when we make love. Just like Andrew. If I remember correctly.. (he goes to the window, looks out) I think we should tell him.	LAURA: No you don't. You feel guilty because you're screwing his wife; or, to be more accurate, because his wife is screwing you. … I think we should tell him.
He turns to look at her, alarmed. FRANK: Tell him what?	FRANK: Tell him what?
LAURA: About us.	LAURA: About us.
FRANK: Jesus Christ, are you insane? I think you're totally insane -	FRANK: What are you insane? That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard. And what the hell would you want to tell him for, Laura? What are we talking about now – marriage, divorce?
LAURA: Don't get you knickers in a twist, Frank. My biological clock isn't ticking, don't worry, it's just that -	
FRANK: What the hell do you want to tell him for. What are you talking about, divorce, marriage?	
LAURA: (turns to him, back to the window) I'm talking about us. I don't want to become just good friends -	LAURA: We're talking about us. I don't want us to become just good friends.
(momentary silence; then he starts to say something; she holds up a hand)	FRANK: Listen, Laura…
LAURA: Deja vu. This has happened before. I know what you're going to say now. You're going to say, I'm not ready to settle down. (she waits) Isn't that what you were going to say?	LAURA: Don't! Déjà vu. I know exactly what you are going to say now. You're going to say you're not ready to settle down. … Isn't that what you were going to say?
And as he turns away from her CUT TO	

One of the biggest differences between Harwood's final draft and the film as shot is the development of the relationship between Frank and Laura. In Harwood's script Laura is seen leaving the house during Taplow's private lesson. She goes to she school where Frank is exercising in a small gym near the library. The school choir is rehearsing right outside on the library steps and Laura waves to Dr. Lake (the choirmaster) as she passes. Frank is lying on his back more or less strapped into an exercise machine.

> Laura has entered and watches him with a faint smile. …[H]er mood is dangerous, edgy.
>
> Frank continues to exercise but he watches Laura.
>
> She gazes at him with a faint smile - mischievous, sexy. Then, elegantly she takes off her panties and tosses them aside. … [She] pulls at his shorts, sits astride him…

Laura jokes about the angelic choral music outside accompanying them. Frank is nervous about being seen, but obviously does not resist. The script cuts back outside for more choir rehearsal and then rejoins Frank and Laura post coitum.[11]

> Frank is turned away from Laura. He seems unable to look at her. But Laura is looking at him and she's sad, disappointed.

There is already an indication that Laura's relationship with Frank is replicating her relationship with Andrew in some way. She is eager and playful; he is uptight. She elaborates on this in the scene in his flat where dialogue in the script is even more explanatory than it is in the film.

Harwood's Laura seems more predatory than Figgis's, and the connection between her affair with Frank and her initial attraction to Andrew is given more emphasis in the script.

Laura's interactions with Frobisher are more or less the same as they are in the play and Asquith film, although she does not indicate that she knew Frobisher was going to ask Andrew to speak first. In fact she is present when he does and is silent when he seeks to enlist her moral support for his request. In the scene at the house with Frobisher she speaks in Andrew's behalf reminding Frobisher of Andrew's academic honors at Oxford. In the other versions it is Andrew himself who reminds Frobisher that he was every bit the scholar that Gilbert is. There is one bit of throwaway dialogue from Laura to Frobisher about how hot it is, but there is no indication that Frobisher had discussed anything with her beforehand.

Laura's cruel interpretation of Taplow's gift takes place at the lunch with not only Frank, but Dr. Rafferty, Diane and Gilbert present. The presence of all the other's has amplified Andrew's pleasure at the gift, and Laura's jab seems all the

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11 There in an indication in the final draft that three intervening scenes have been deleted

more cruel. Harwood has also fleshed out her interpretation of the gift a bit.

Play	Rattigan/Asquith Film	Harwood Script	Figgis Film
My dear, because I came into this room this afternoon to find him giving an imitation of you to Frank here. Obviously he was scared stiff I was going to tell you, and you'd ditch his remove or something. I don't blame him for trying a few bobs' worth of appeasement.	Because, my dear, I came into this room this morning to find Taplow giving an imitation of you to Frank here. Obviously he was scared stiff I'd tell you, and you'd ditch his promotion or something. I don't blame him for trying a few shillings' worth of appeasement.	Because when I came into the garden yesterday Taplow was giving an imitation of you to Frank. Obviously he was scared I was going to tell you and that you'd put him on Cromwells or stop his switch to Frank's form or some other Hitlerian torture. The book was clearly an insurance policy – a sweetener – a bribe.	Because… Yesterday I saw Taplow doing an impersonation of you for Frank. Obviously he was afraid that I would tell you and that you would put him on Cromwells or stop his switch to Frank's form or some other Hitlerian torture. The book was clearly an insurance policy – a sweetener – a bribe.

Taplow's impersonation of Andrew in Figgis' film is limited to the single line "You have obtained exactly what you deserve – no less and certainly no more." (Harwood's final draft also has him imitating Andrew's response to Taplow's plan to play golf: "Then, Taplow, you must unfix it mustn't you.") This bit is also recited by several of his classmates and seems to be a mantra associated with Andrew. In the play and Rattigan screenplay Taplow does a much more sustained impersonation of Andrew involving the incident of his laughter at the Latin epigram. In those versions there is a question regarding how much of the performance Millie may have witnessed or overheard. Harwood makes up for this by giving Laura the line "Is that you, Andrew?" as she enters the house, but Taplow's concern still seems a bit exaggerated. (Harwood's final draft has Taplow and Frank waiting in the garden rather than inside the house, presumably because audiences might wonder about leaving the front door unlocked. They do not see Laura approaching because an umbrella over the garden table blocks their view.) Whether he is genuinely worried about being disciplined because of the remark is much less of an issue in Harwood's script, however, because it seems so clear that the gift is completely sincere and not at all a bribe.

There is another alteration in Harwood's script which may affect how we view Laura's behavior. The end of her relationship with Frank has hap-

pened during the morning before the luncheon where Andrew mentions Taplow's gift. To some extent Laura's behavior can be seen as a reaction to the rejection she has just suffered from Frank.

There is no extended discussion with Frank after Laura punctures Andrew's pleasure. Laura does not venomously question why Andrew should be allowed to have his illusions when she is denied all comfort. Frank simply tells her to go tell Andrew it was a lie and leaves to go find Andrew when she refuses. She offers only a brief explanation of her refusal to the rest of the group:

FRANK: Laura, go and tell him it was a lie.

LAURA: Certainly not. It wasn't a lie.

FRANK: Then I'll tell him.

LAURA: I wouldn't do that if I were you. … He'll only hate you for your sympathy. Andrew doesn't need sympathy. That's his strength.

This is probably as close as Laura comes to expressing contempt for Andrew to anyone but him, although her irony is a far cry from the vehemence with which Millie justifies her cruelty and turns on Frank in the play. There is, of course, the question of why she would choose to puncture Andrew's pleasure. Laura is not the "unmitigated bitch" or harpy that some saw in Millie in the play or Asquith film. She is surely reeling from the discovery that Andrew will not receive a pension and from the realization that her affair with Frank is a dead end. She is hurt and angry. She has also just watched Andrew eat crow in agreeing to speak first at the ceremony reinforcing her disappointment in him. She justifies what she has done simply as telling the truth, but there is none of the importance placed on the idea that she never lies to Andrew as there is in the play or Asquith film. She clearly deceives Andrew in having the affair with Frank, and does not hesitate to invent a fib to explain her trip into town to see Frank.

In general I would say that in Figgis's film, Laura's cruelty seems to be less of a bloody murder than simply yet another skirmish in an ongoing conflict. The impact is as much due to its timing as it is due to its content. Andrew is exceptionally vulnerable, and this may just be the final straw.

Her comment that Andrew does not need sympathy is an indirect expression of how she feels cut off or shut out by him. Rather than describe him as dead, she views him as "ungiving", as too self-contained to need her or as too abstracted or repressed to be able to satisfy her needs. She seems to be implying that Andrew hates her, but we are given no evidence of such hatred in what we see of Andrew. In fact Harwood's final draft has Andrew asking his wife's lover to be kind to her.

Laura is also not the snob that Millie is. All mention of her Uncle has been dropped. There is also no indication that she has any degree of financial independence. Harwood's final draft re-

tained Frobisher's reference to Andrew's wife's "allowance" when discussing the decision regarding the pension, but that has been dropped in the film. All we know about Laura is that her mother has a cottage in Dorset, and she has a sister in Canada. She does not argue with Andrew about the amount of income they will have to live on. The issue for her is simply whether Andrew had been forceful enough in attempting to get the pension.

At the end of the cricket match when Andrew emerges from the library, he spots Laura, and she walks over to him. This is followed immediately by a scene in their bedroom where they are both dressing to go to the concert. Laura offers to tie Andrew's bow tie for him and then makes a gesture of apology for her cruelty:

LAURA: You left Taplow's present behind. I put it in your study.

ANDREW: Thank you.

LAURA: It wasn't a very good impersonation.

Andrew, of course, lets her know that he feels it is over between them, that he can or will not take any more; and she agrees to leave first thing in the morning.

Very little actually happens between them during the concert. Andrew receives a gesture of support from Trimmer, while Laura is neglected by Frank – all against the background of the headmaster's bumbling socializing. Laura leaves in the morning with the porter after telling Andrew that he looks "very impressive", but then evidently changes her mind and shows up at the ceremonies in time to hear Andrew's remarks. She is able to give him a kiss on the cheek and say, "Well done." She goes ahead and leaves to catch her train saying only that she will write.

Obviously in the last 20 minutes of the film Andrew and Laura's marriage is seesawing back and forth in a delicate balance of hurt, love, power, remorse, forgiveness, and rejection. In some ways the film is as unresolved and open ended as the play, but the tension in the marriage is overwhelmed by the emotional release of the resolution of Andrew's relationship with the students and the school.

The ending of Harwood's final draft is very different and reflects a different attitude towards Laura. First of all the scene before the concert takes place in the living room after they are both completely dressed except for Laura's earrings and Andrew's bow tie. Immediately there is less of a sense of intimacy than Figgis achieves by having Laura partially dressed. Figgis has them in the bedroom and Laura is just in her slip. She comes over to get perfume and a necklace from the dresser where Andrew is trying to tie his bowtie. She puts the perfume on standing next to him in a way that bespeaks years of intimacy, and her offer to help him with his tie is gentle and respectful if not affectionate. Andrew is gentle with her as well when he says "No," but she is clearly hurt and

pulls back. When she crosses the room to the other mirror to finish putting on her dress, Andrew straightens his tie and then comes over to button up the back of her dress, again with an air of natural intimacy.

Harwood's scene includes an initial gesture from Laura, but it culminates in her being irritated by his clumsiness. He also discards any immediate reference for Andrew's remark about expectations, and the ensuing exchange seems to be more cerebral and even ironic than the exchange in the final film. More than anything the Laura of the script seems bitter, and it seems clear that the relationship is completely over.

Harwood Final Draft	**Figgis Film**
LAURA: It wasn't a very good impersonation.	LAURA: Let me do that.
He is apparently extremely calm; barely looks at her, but summoning courage	LAURA: You left Taplow's present behind. I put it in your study.
ANDREW: (very gently) I don't think either of us has any longer the right to expect anything from the other	ANDREW :Thank you.
LAURA: (not yet understanding the full import, amused) My fault, I suppose.	LAURA: It wasn't a very good impersonation. … I'm sorry.
ANDREW: No. Don't take all the blame. That would be quite wrong and unjust. We inhabit two different worlds, you and I. We always did. We always will. It is, I believe, what is known as incompatibility. I have not yet decided where I shall go but I shall not be accompanying you to Dorset tomorrow after prize giving.	ANDREW: Laura, we uhh… we inhabit different worlds you and I. We always have; we always will.
She stares at him blankly He cannot manage to tie his tie. His clumsiness irritate her.	LAURA: What are you saying?
LAURA: Oh, give it to me.	ANDREW: I'm saying, "No." I'm saying, "Enough."
She ties his tie	LAURA: We better not keep the headmaster waiting.
They look and don't look at each other.	LAURA: Do you still expect me to come to your prize giving?

Harwood Final Draft	Figgis Film
LAURA: I think I could have forgiven you anything if only once you had said, No. Enough.' Not just to me. But to every set-back you've ever had. (He is still, just gazes at her) Yes, I know. It's as much my fault as yours. And she adjusts his tie.	ANDREW: I don't think either of us has the right any longer to expect anything of the other.
	LAURA: Right. Well, I'll leave first thing tomorrow morning then.
	ANDREW: As you wish.

Moving Laura's line about saying "No" to the earlier scene enables Figgis to redefine the climactic moment of the film. Andrew's reclaims his integrity not just by insisting on his proper status during the prize giving ceremony but by saying "No" to Laura and perhaps ending their marriage. This is hardly the kind of moment to which ones heart "responds as to the sound of a trumpet" as one critic described the moment in the play when Andrew informs the headmaster of his intention of speaking last. It is a double edged sword in which Andrew does what in the play he said he did not want to do: add "another grave wrong" to the one which he had already done to her by marrying her. The fact that Laura in this film is far more sympathetic than Millie in either the play or the previous film makes this moment even more distressing.

When Laura leaves with Foster in the morning, there is a moment in Harwood's script when she is ready to go, but Foster is clearly waiting for her to say goodbye to Andrew. The script says she is "forced to cross to Andrew," and she gives him a peck on the cheek. This is the point in the script where she says, "I'll write," perhaps for Foster's benefit as well. Needless to say the impact of this seems very different from the kiss and the final goodbye in the film.

The Harwood script does have Laura present at the prize giving but there is no indication that Andrew's remarks have moved her in any way. Afterwards she says good bye to Diana in the courtyard but does not speak to Andrew. He only tells her that she'll miss her train if she doesn't leave. Harwood ends the marriage, but Figgis decided to leave room for hope or to at least pay tribute to the depth of the emotional bond that has existed between them for 15 years.

The role of Frank has been substantially altered in Harwood's script, both in his relationship with Laura and in his relationship with Andrew. Frank's relationship with his students has been "updated" and adjusted to reflect the fact that he is an American, but it remains essentially the same as it is in the Asquith film. His ambivalence towards the "little blighters" in the play has been eliminated in the films. Harwood's Frank is perhaps even more comfortable and familiar with his students than the Frank of Asquith's film. His exchanges with Taplow have been cut down substan-

tially, presumably because they seemed redundant or unnecessary.

The essence of Frank's role with Laura seems fairly summed up by Laura's own description: *she* is screwing *him*, and he is not ready to settle down. Frank seems to be simply a young man who is at the school for three years and has availed himself of the local entertainment. We do not see him attempt to placate Laura by promising to come visit her in the summer when he has no intention of doing so. Nor is he provoked enough to turn moralistic on her. His concern with decorum is a concern to enjoy sex without creating any gossip or scandal. Whether or not he is sniffing after Diana is uncertain because he may also just be playing up to her husband, who is his boss as head of the science department.

More importantly in Harwood's script Frank's rejection of Laura comes before Laura's puncturing of Andrew's pleasure in Taplow's gift. Laura's behavior does not precipitate a moment of truth for Frank in which he tells her he is breaking off their relationship. Frank's rejection of her is more passive, but it can be viewed as part of the explanation for her behavior later that day.

The changes in Frank's relationship with Andrew are a bit more telling. Again several scenes have been collapsed into the exchange in the library after Laura's cruelty. Frank tries to divert conversation away from Laura at the luncheon by offering Andrew champagne. He seems to have genuinely shared Andrew's pleasure in the book, and he senses that Laura is about to puncture it.

When Frank catches up with Andrew in the library, he makes a rather awkward attempt to repair the damage:

Harwood Final Draft	**Figgis Film**
FRANK (gently): Andrew?	FRANK: Andrew? … I want to make something clear about Taplow. He has a genuine affection for you, Andrew, please believe me. … I think you should treasure that book.
ANDREW: Go away.	ANDREW: I'd rather like to be left alone at the moment, thank you.
FRANK: No. I want to talk to you -	…
ANDREW (voice flat, almost toneless): Go away. Please.	…
FRANK: I want to make something clear. About Taplow. He has a genuine affection for you, Andrew, believe me, please -	…

Harwood Final Draft	Figgis Film
ANDREW: I'm not particularly concerned with Taplow. Nor with you if it comes to that.	…
He rises, goes to the window, looks out.	…
FRANK: I think you should treasure that book.	…
ANDREW: I'd like to be left alone at the moment, thank you -	…
FRANK: You may find it'll mean something to you -	FRANK: You may find that it'll have a special meaning to you.
ANDREW: Oh, yes. It will mean something to me all right.	ANDREW: Oh, yes, it will mean something. It will remind me of my own foolishness.
Silence.	…
FRANK: I'm going to be impertinent now. I'm going to give you some advice –	…
ANDREW: I'd really rather you didn't –	…
FRANK (summoning courage): Make a life for yourself.	…
ANDREW: I'm not sure I understand.	…
FRANK: I think you do. You don't deserve – you – you've been badly treated, Andrew -	FRANK: You…don't deserve this. I mean… You've been treated badly, sir.
ANDREW: By the school, do you mean?	ANDREW: By the school, you mean?
FRANK (avoiding Andrew's gaze): Not only by the school.	FRANK: Not just by the school.
(ANDREW narrows his eyes, trying to decode what's being said)	ANDREW: Never, never presume to know the secrets of a marriage.
FRANK: You're not too old to make the break, you could find someone who really cares for you, who – who'll be – loyal and – who won't – who'll be faithful –	FRANK: Take my advice… sir. Make a new start for yourself. You could still find someone who will care for you and who'll be loyal and who won't… who'll be faithful.
ANDREW sucks in his breath and closes his eyes, a sudden realization like a stab of pain.	…
ANDREW (quiet): Of course I should have guessed. How stupid of me.	…
(he stares at FRANK)	…
Yes, yes, just her type. Clean cut. Innocent.	…
FRANK turns away -	…

Harwood Final Draft	Figgis Film
FRANK: Take my advice. Make a new life for yourself.	…
ANDREW: Why? Do you want to marry her?	…
Still not looking round, Frank shakes his head.	…
Silence	…
ANDREW: I'll give you a word of advice now. Never, never presume to know the secrets of a marriage.	…
(he finds a chair, sits)	
You see, we are both interesting subjects, Laura and I, for the kind of cheap easy analysis of which you Americans are so fond. We were incompatible from the moment we met, although neither of us knew it then. We both required love but of different kinds. Worlds apart. So, it's not very tragic and not very unusual. Merely the problem of an unsatisfied wife and an inadequate husband. Often, I believe, a subject for farce.	ANDREW: Ahhh… Hmmh…We…we were incompatible from the moment we met, although neither of us realized that at the time. Of course Laura was uh… was only 22 years of age. We both required love, but of a different kind…worlds apart…worlds apart…So it's not really very tragic…or abnormal – just the problem of a dissatisfied wife and an inadequate husband, often I believe a subject for farce.
FRANK: Is there anything I can do to help? I'd like to help -	HUNTER: Is there anything I can do to help you? … I'd like to help…you.
ANDREW: Yes, be kind to her. And don't take sides; it's always very unbecoming.	ANDREW: Yes, don't take sides; it's so very unbecoming.

In the finished film there is no explicit indication in the dialogue that Andrew knows Laura and Frank are having an affair. Certainly there is no indication that Laura told him from the outset as there is in the previous screenplay and the original play. There is no opportunity for Frank to be horrified by the discovery that Andrew has known all along about the affair. It is reasonable to assume that given the dialogue in the final draft of the script the intention is to have Andrew realize at this moment that Frank has been having an affair with Laura, and Finney's performance seems to imply that he is dealing with this as new information when he reacts to Frank's comment on Laura's infidelity.

Frank's expression of sympathy regarding the way in which Andrew has been mistreated is certainly a veiled confession of his own affair. That Frank would know Laura has been unfaithful to Andrew may be enough to incriminate him, but, unlike his predecessors, the Andrew of Figgis's film is not about to discuss his wife's infidelity explicitly with her lover. It is also possible that, while Andrew may have suspected that Laura was

unfaithful or may have known she was unfaithful in the past, Frank's confession really is a revelation which drives yet another nail into his cross and even precipitates his decision finally to say "Enough" to Laura. If so, his own account of their marriage may be a way of "processing" the information.

Frank seems in this scene to be motivated primarily by sympathy for Andrew though of course his own complicity with Laura's cruelty is also a factor. We have actually seen little evidence of how Frank can know the sincerity of Taplow's feelings. He apparently did not know Taplow at all before that morning, and the only thing Taplow has told him about Andrew is that he will not tell him about his promotion. Taplow's remarks about how he could like Andrew, but that Andrew does not seem to want to be liked have been moved to his conversation with his classmates before Andrew arrives in the classroom. It is reasonable to assume though that Frank dismisses Taplow's concerns about whether he will get in trouble for imitating Andrew. We have seen Laura relating to Taplow in a familiar manner and have no reason to believe that she would want to hurt Taplow. She is simply using him to hurt Andrew. Taplow's offense would also surely seem minor to both Laura and Frank given what we have seen of the behavior of students, and Andrew himself seems too kindly disposed to Taplow to regard such an imitation as a punishable offense.

When Andrew says that the book will remind him of his own foolishness, it carries less force than it did in the play when we were forced to decide for ourselves whether Taplow's gift was in fact a bribe. It may well be that the gift has been spoiled for Andrew more by the fact that Laura has used it to be deliberately cruel than by any real doubt about Taplow's sincerity. Andrew obviously knows Taplow much better than Laura does.

In the play it seems to be the fact that Andrew has allowed himself to display emotion in front of a student that causes him to pull back into bitter irony:

FRANK: (*Hopelessly.*) I think you should keep that book all the same. You may find it'll mean something to you after all.

ANDREW: Exactly. It will mean a perpetual reminder to myself of the story with which Taplow is at this very moment regaling his friends in the House. 'I gave the Crock a book, to buy him off, and he blubbed. The Crock blubbed. I tell you I was there. I saw it. The Crock blubbed,' My mimicry is not as good as his, I fear. Forgive me. And now let us leave this idiotic subject and talk of more pleasant things. Do you like this sherry? I got it on my last visit to London -

In the play Andrew feels he has lost all connection with his students except the fear he in-

spires. The realization of this has left him vulnerable to the suspicion that he is being manipulated in return, and the fact that he was moved to tears by Taplow makes him feel that he has been further reduced to an object of particular derision. There is no basis for this in Figgis's film. Andrew has a very different relationship with Taplow. There is no mention of how students fear him. The line "Still, stupidly enough, I hadn't realized I was also feared" has been cut from the scene with Gilbert. The discovery that he is called "the Hitler of the Lower Fifth" also seems to carry less weight. Andrew even seems to make light of it, and he says as he leaves the classroom, "The boys do still call me The Crock, don't they?" In Harwood's final draft Andrew indicates to Gilbert that he knew he had been called the Hitler of the Lower Fifth but thought they had long stopped calling him that. Calling him The Crock can be viewed as a sign if not of affection at least of a kind of acceptance of him as an institution at the school, a presence to be reckoned with, just as Trimmer refers to him as "the old bugger."

Frank instinctively addresses Andrew as "sir" during this scene, whereas he normally just calls him Andrew. Frank may feel that he is submitting to a judgment of his own behavior, and he relates to Andrew almost as a student. He does not possess the self-confidence that would enable him to reach out to Andrew as the character did in the previous versions with his proposal to visit Andrew at his new school. His gesture is tentative and awkward because it is also a confession. His American manners seem here to be immature. He almost turns and leaves twice during the scene: first when his initial gesture is rebuffed and secondly when Andrew does not seem to be responding to his advice/confession.

The fact that Andrew does eventually respond with his description of how he and Laura were "incompatible" from the very beginning requires some explanation. It does not necessarily follow that someone opens up immediately to the person who has just been revealed to be having an affair with his wife. Laura may pretend that Andrew does not need sympathy, but clearly the point is that Andrew is human and requires sympathy and understanding just like any other person. The connection that he felt with Taplow seems to have been destroyed at least temporarily, and, despite the complications, he may see in Frank's gesture an opportunity for some kind of human contact. Nonetheless the drift towards pathos in Andrew's monologue is abruptly ended when he rebuffs Frank's final offer to "help."

Andrew's description of the marriage to Hunter has also been substantially cut from the dialogue in the play and earlier film.

Most of the irony has been removed from Andrew's description and even the remark about being a subject for farce need not be played with ironic detachment. Finney in fact delivers it with more pathos than irony and on the whole the dialogue in the Figgis film seems much more straight

from the heart. The reference to a bitter hatred is gone as is the reference to his own ignorance of the facts of life. The substitution of "abnormal" for "unusual" may be designed to clear the air of any hint that the problem between Andrew and Laura is simply sexual even though "inadequate" has a much more sexual connotation than "henpecked".

Play	Rattigan/Asquith Film	Harwood/Figgis Film
FRANK: Why won't you leave her?	FRANK: But why won't you leave her?	
ANDREW: Because I wouldn't wish to add another grave wrong to the one I have already done her.	ANDREW: Because I should not wish to add another grave wrong to the one I have already done her.	
FRANK: What wrong have you done her?	FRANK: What wrong have you done her?	
ANDREW: To marry her. … You see, my dear Hunter, she is really quite as much to be pitied as I. We are both of us interesting subjects for your microscope. Both of us needing from the other something that would make life supportable for us, and neither of us able to give it. Two kinds of love. Hers and mine. Worlds apart, as I know now, though when I married her I didn't think they were incompatible. In those days I hadn't thought that her kind of love – the love she requires and which I was unable to give her – was so important that its absence would drive out the other kind of love – the kind of love that I require and which I thought, in my folly, was by far the greater part of love. I may have been, you see, Hunter, a brilliant classical scholar, but I was woefully ignorant of the facts of life.	ANDREW: To marry her. … You see, my dear Hunter, she is really quite as much to be pitied as I. We are both of us interesting subjects for your microscope. Both of us needing from the other something that would make life supportable for us, and neither of us able to give it. Two kinds of love. Hers and mine. Worlds apart, as I know now, though when I married her I did not think that they were incompatible. Nor I suppose did she. In those days I had not thought that her kind of love – the love she requires and which I have been unable to give her – was so important that its absence would drive out the other kind of love – the kind of love that I require and which I had thought, in my folly, was by far the greater part of love. You see, Hunter, I may have been a very brilliant scholar, but I was woefully ignorant of the facts of life.	ANDREW: Hmmh…We…we were incompatible from the moment we met, although neither of us realized that at the time. Of course Laura was uh… was only 22 years of age. We both required love, but of different kinds…worlds apart…worlds apart…So it's not really very tragic…or abnormal – just the problem of a dissatisfied wife and an inadequate husband, often I believe a subject for farce.

Play	Rattigan/Asquith Film	Harwood/Figgis Film
I know better now, of course. I know that in both of us, the love that we should have borne each other has turned to bitter hatred. That's all the problem is. Not a very unusual one, I venture to think – not nearly as tragic as you seem to imagine. Merely the problem of an unsatisfied wife and a henpecked husband. You'll find it all over the world. It is usually, I believe, a subject for farce.	I know better now, of course. I know now that the love that we should have borne each other has turned into a bitter hatred. And that's all the problem is. Not a very unusual one, I venture to imagine – nor hardly so tragic as you seem to think. Merely the problem of an unsatisfied wife and a henpecked husband. You'll find it all over the world. It is usually, I believe, a subject for farce.	…

In the end it is Andrew who extends his hand to Frank during the emotional outpouring after his farewell remarks. Any sign of Frank is noticeably absent during Andrew's speech so we have no indication as in the previous film that he is moved and inspired by Andrew's apology. The change that he has undergone during the film is mainly a matter of a sense of guilt or shame for his part in the mistreatment of Andrew. Andrew's extended hand is a gesture of acceptance or forgiveness from someone standing on much firmer moral ground.

Tom Gilbert fulfills more or less the same function in Harwood's script as he does in the earlier film, although he does not function as a proxy for the audience in his attitude towards Andrew, and there is the added element of the new modern languages department. Gilbert is older in this film. He has a wife and two children. In the beginning he is even more strongly associated with Laura and Frank, perhaps as a means of connecting him emotionally with the challenge posed to Andrew both by the modernization of the school and by his wife's infidelity. The tension in his exchange with Andrew after observing the class is not based on a moralistic judgment about Andrew's teaching methods but on the policy change which is rendering Andrew obsolete. Andrew views a modern languages department as comparable to a "trendy" interest in the Russian language, which has faded with the cold war.

Gilbert is present at the lunch when Andrew tells of Taplow's gift, and he is the one who translates the inscription. Andrew has previously opened up to him and bequeathed him the classroom; so that, by the time the gift is being discussed, Gilbert's alignment seems to be more with Andrew than with Frank or Laura. He corrects Frank's version of the inscription, and Andrew agrees that "gentler is the better translation."

Gilbert is seen at the prize ceremony when Andrew speaks of the importance of classical learning, but there is no indication that he has undergone any kind of change of heart or enhanced sense of his own limitations.

Frobisher is treated more satirically or even harshly by Harwood than by Rattigan. His memo-

ry lapses are much more pronounced, and he twice attempts a witty remark about moving house and divorce, which is painfully inappropriate although he is too oblivious to know it. When he gets Wilson's name wrong, he also inquires about his father, who has apparently been dead long enough for Wilson to make a joke about his corpse. Forbisher brushes off Mrs. Wilson's complaint about the food at the school, saying in justification that he doesn't believe in stuffing the boys. He compares his own job to that of a headwaiter, and his effort to hustle the Nigerian king is bald and only slightly less blundering than Lord Baxter's.

Taplow's role has been expanded mostly by a series of scenes dealing with student life at the school. The main theme of these scenes is the hazing of younger students by upperclassmen and a plot by some of Taplow's friends to take revenge on one of the upperclassmen. The use of student prefects or "scholars" for administration and discipline of the student body is a long standing tradition in British schools, and the abuse of younger students by older students seems to have been an inevitable part of that tradition. The sadistic prefect is represented in the script by Trubshaw, who replaces Andrew as the person recording Wilson's late arrival at the chapel and whacks Taplow's classmates on the head as he tells them not to run. Taplow is apparently a favorite target for Trubshaw[12] and Taplow's classmates persuade him to participate in a practical joke played on Trubshaw on the very last night of term. Harwood's final draft had some other scenes about the younger students. Taplow and his friends have a coded language similar to pig Latin which they use when authorities are around. Rather than just talking as they walk outside about their plans for revenge, he has the group go into the lavatory to share a secret cigarette and discuss the plan. When an older student comes in, they hide the cigarette and speak in code. There is also a scene with the boys digging for worms in the school garden, with the Headmaster commending them for their gardening work.

The main scene with Trubshaw is one in the shower where he harasses Taplow and tries to extract gossip from him about Laura. Taplow refuses to say anything about whom Laura might be "shagging" even though he has just seen her coming from Frank's flat in the village.[13] Trubshaw needles Taplow first by talking about Laura in a sexual way and then by making lewd comments about Taplow's mother.

Earlier that morning Dr. Rafferty had come to speak to Buller while the boys were washing up

12 In Harwood's final draft, Taplow is Trubshaw's "fag," i.e. he has been chosen by Trubshaw to be his servant.

13 The only peculiar thing about this scene is why the boys are taking a shower in the middle of the day rather than first thing in the morning or at the end of the day. Harwood's final draft does have this scene take place in the morning in Trubshaw's room rather than the shower, but he also has another scene later in the day in which the boys are changing into their formal attire for Parent's Day.

and brushing their teeth. He informs Buller that his parents have called to say they cannot come to the school to pick him up and that he must ride the train home alone. Taplow attempts to sympathize by telling Buller he'll get used to it, implying that Taplow's parents are distant or neglectful of him as well. The somewhat idyllic image of the school is tempered by the suggestion that the students there are deprived of their parents and subjected to sadistic abuse from the older boys. The closest thing Taplow seems to have to parents are Andrew and Laura. He seems comfortable in their house when he comes for his extra lessons and even Laura treats him with familiarity. ("Taplow, why don't you go and get the lemonade; you know where everything is.")

Harwood has added scenes when Taplow is in the village and finds the book he gives Andrew. At the same time he sees Laura leaving Frank's flat, and he seems to back away from the street so as not to be seen by Frank. In a strange way each of these scenes seems to be there to justify the presence of the other. There is no reason why we need to see Taplow finding the book in the village. We could certainly believe that he had a chance to buy it without seeing him do so, just as we do in the play and earlier film. Why Harwood wants him to know that Laura and Frank are having an affair is unclear to me unless it is to support his interest in Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon and his sympathy for Andrew. Perhaps Taplow's own family is torn by similar conflicts and perhaps when Taplow says to Andrew, "I understand" we are meant to feel that he understands Andrew's plight even more than Andrew could possibly imagine. In Harwood's final draft he made it clear that Frank saw Taplow in the street after Laura left, but that scene also comes after the hazing by Trubshaw in which Trubshaw asks him who is "shagging" Laura. In the finished film Taplow seems to evade notice by Frank.

There is another scene in the film that seems even more gratuitous: the mildly comic bit with Foster attempting to take charge of girls disembarking from a bus. They disperse without paying any attention whatsoever to his instructions. This scene is not in Harwood's final draft of the screenplay and the key to it aside from a desire to begin the afternoon's festivities with a bit of comic relief may be Figgis's ideas about the way in which British schools cultivated stoicism by excluding any taint of sexual romanticism from their education even to the point of bowdlerizing the classics.[14] To supplement the images of heartlessness and sadistic abuse prevalent at the school, he adds a comic metaphor for the traditional attempt to control or repress sexuality. Foster, the guardian of the gate, is unable to contain the girls who arrive for the festivities.[15]

14 Interview on Criterion DVD

15 One critic commenting on the ways in which the film had updated the play and previous film seemed skeptical about the fact that the school would still be for boys only. Sherborne School where much of the film was shot is in fact still a boys boarding school, although there is a nearby girls school with which it is affiliated

The character of Betty Carstairs has been replaced by Diana Rafferty. Diana may be more of a friend of Laura's than Betty was of Millie. In the scene after the morning chapel service, Diana comes up to ask Laura a question, but she may also be using that as an excuse to meet Gilbert. Laura whisks Gilbert away with a seemingly neutral response, but there is obviously room for interpretation, and the exchange would hardly seem worth including without it.

DIANA: Laura.

LAURA: Diana.

DIANA: Are we still going into town.

LAURA: Uh…darling, I'll be right back.

Diana, who is several years younger than Laura, is a harbinger of Laura's own obsolescence in a way that obliquely mirrors the replacement of Andrew by Gilbert.

At the concert Frank sits with Diana and Dr. Rafferty even though he had said he would be joining Laura and Andrew. This bit has replaced the earlier event (a cricket match or concert) where Frank forgot to join them and they sold their extra ticket to someone else. In the Harwood screenplay, however, it comes at the end of the film after Laura seems to have given up on her relationship with Frank.

Casting

The casting of Albert Finney and Greta Scacchi and their interpretations of Andrew and Laura Crocker-Harris reflect the difference in emphasis of the Harwood script. Finney is an interesting replacement for Anthony Hopkins, who seems an obvious choice for the role. Hopkins had just done both *Remains of the Day* and *Shadowlands*, two films to which *The Browning Version* was inevitably compared, and not always favorably, by critics when it was released. To some extent Finney was cast against type. He is quoted in the publicity for the release as saying, "I never before played a part that is so isolated and stoic."

Finney was 57 when he did the role. Harwood's screenplay has changed Andrew's age to mid-50's. There is no explicit mention of this in the finished film, but making Andrew 10 to 15 years older than he is in the play does create require some other adjustments. Harwood's script has Laura say Andrew was "only just a bit older" than Frank when she first met him. The script describes Frank as "about 30". Harwood's script

says Andrew has been at the school for 22 years and Laura for 15 of those years. The finished film has changed this to 18 years and 15 years and adds the information that she was 22 when he met her. The arithmetic works if Andrew and Laura knew each other for one or two years before they married and she joined him at the school; but it does mean that Andrew was probably 35 when he married. The line from the play in which Andrew says he was "woefully ignorant of the facts of life" when he married has been dropped, and it probably would be difficult to imagine Albert Finney as a man in his mid-thirties in England in the 1970's who was naïve in the way this line implies.

Finney's inherent vitality and charisma makes it seem reasonable that he would be married to Scacchi who is 24 years his junior. (There is a parallel in the marriage of Dr. Rafferty, who is described as 45-ish, and Diane, who is 30.) Even more than 30 years after he played Tom Jones, Finney still has overtones of a roguish sexuality which makes his presence on screen very different from that of Michael Redgrave. Finney has such a robust vitality that one might assume that any health problems he is experiencing in late middle-age must surely be from having lived a bit too hard. Even though Laura says Andrew was "pure", "idealistic" and "ungiving" and Andrew himself describes their relationship as that of "a dissatisfied wife and an inadequate husband," there are moments at the end when they look at each other with a tenderness and affection that reveals another aspect of their relationship.

When Finney holds her hands and looks up at Scacchi in her slip, it is hard not to sense a passionate attraction he feels towards her even though he is preparing to tell her their relationship is over. First of all, even though the slip she is wearing is not particularly provocative, Scacchi is simply a very appealing, sensual and sexy woman. The look in Finney's eye surely reveals that he is not oblivious to this no matter how incompatible they may have been sexually or psychologically.

The gentleness with which Finney finally says "No" to Laura and the obvious hurt that Scacchi reveals in response are testimony to the feeling they have for each other despite their differences. One may want to say that Laura is simply hurt that any man would reject her, but this rejection is very different from the coldness or indifference she sensed in Frank. Andrew is clearly a man she loved and not someone with whom she played. Likewise Finney is not the dried up remains of a man that Redgrave tended to play; he is fairly bursting with emotion that he must contain. We can sense that the reason he has accepted what others might consider to be abuse from Laura is

that he adores her in some way, perhaps not unrelated to the way in which he is able to appreciate the beauty of Fletcher on the cricket field. It may not be an appreciation that satisfies Laura's needs in any way, but it is real and passionate nonetheless. The seed of this is contained, of course, in the line in the play in which Andrew says in response to Frobisher he "hardly need[s] to be told" that he has an attractive wife. Redgrave delivers this line in the Asquith film, but there it seems more like the acknowledgment of an objective fact than an expression of a life-defining passion.

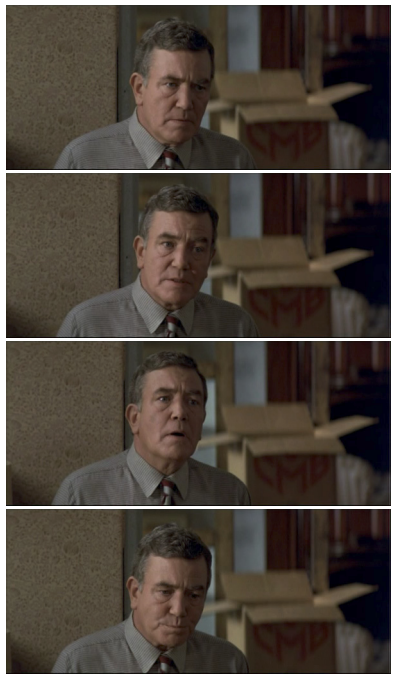
The film ends with Andrew watching the minivan carry Laura away and then removing his academic robe. The loss of Laura is clearly associated with the loss of his teaching vocation. He accepts responsibility for his own role in both, but the film presents him as someone who aspired to the impossible, whose passion was at odds with the facts of life.

Andrew may feel he has deserved the epithet "Hitler of the Lower Fifth," but it is not at all clear that Figgis agrees with him. Andrew as played by

Finney certainly intimidates the students and even Gilbert, but what we see of him has a decidedly paternal or avuncular aspect. This is emphasized in his relationship with Taplow and visible in Finney's face. It can also be sensed in the satisfaction Finney reveals when he remembers the names of Trimmer and Newton and jokes with Newton about communications in Greek.

Much of the time the emotion visible in Finney's expression seems more a sadness or weariness than affection for his students. Even this emotion evokes a very different response than the ironic detachment so often seen in Redgrave's Andrew. Finney's performance seems shot through with a sense of loss. Even as he watches his wife leave the breakfast table to go into the village, there is a premonition of loss without any hint of suspicion or jealousy.

In Andrew's dealings with Frobisher Finney never gets anywhere near obsequiousness. He seems genuinely taken aback when Frobisher tells him he will receive no pension, and there is at least a hint of a challenge in his question about past exceptions. The script no longer has him laying responsibility for this question off on his wife as he did in the play. He clearly sees that no matter how unreasonable the decision may be there is nothing he can say to change it, and he accepts it with characteristic resignation.



When Frobisher sidles up to the request to let Fletcher speak last and Andrew cuts to the chase with "So, do you wish me to speak first," Finney seems as though he is calling Frobisher's hand and not trying to make it easier for him. Frobisher fumbles and even tries to drag Laura into his plea. Andrew agrees to speak first in a way that

does not seem to be the least bit acquiescent or servile. We can, of course, see that more is going on beneath the surface as Frobisher and Baxter rub it in with their bumbling attempts to say there is nothing "personal" about the matter, and Laura's glance reveals that she does not like Andrew's response.

The fact that Andrew needs a moment alone rather than going into tea with everyone makes it clear that he is disturbed by Frobisher's request. When Taplow approaches him he obviously regards it as an intrusion and expresses impatience. All this of course helps set up the moment when Andrew realizes that Taplow is giving him a gift,

and Finney is able to make Andrew's emotional response to the inscription completely believable.

When he informs Frobisher of his decision to exercise his privilege and speak last, he clearly stands on equal footing with both Frobisher and Baxter and is forceful in claiming his right. Finney's face seems to be carved from stone while Frobisher's and Baxter's seem flabby in comparison.

Perhaps the most striking moment in Finney's performance is the way in which he plays the scene at lunch which sets up Laura's cruel remark. He has just been on an emotional roller coaster ride dealing with Frobisher's humiliating request that he speak last, being moved to tears by Taplow's gift and encountering two very successful alumni who have gone out of their way to pay their respects to him. He is in an expansive mood that Laura notices immediately, and he beams with pride and satisfaction as he shares the story of the gift with his colleagues. He seems to enjoy a private joke when Diana stops Gilbert from reading the inscription in Greek and asks what it means, clearly enjoying his relatively rarified status as a classical scholar. He basks in the collective agreement that Taplow's gesture was "a wonderful thing to do." He connects with Gilbert as he agrees on the aptness of his translation, and then glows with pleasure as he says "I would rather have this present than anything else I could think of." His initial reaction to Laura's "cunning little brat" is glimpsed across Frank's arm as he pours champagne for Andrew in an attempt to distract him from what he senses is brewing in Laura, and he persists in asking her "Why cunning?" as a vulnerability begins to infect his joy.

Greta Scacchi

Laura is supposed to be in her late-thirties. Andrew tells Hunter she was 22 when they met, and according to Frobisher she has been at the school for 15 of the 18 years Andrew has been there. Greta Scacchi was actually 33 when she played the role. She had been born in Italy but grew up mainly in England and Australia. She studied acting at the Bristol Old Vic Theater School and had her first film roles in 1982 in *Das Zweite Geicht*, a German film, and in 1983 in *Heat and Dust*, a Merchant Ivory production. She had apparently turned down the role in *Basic Instinct* (1992) that propelled Sharon Stone into the Hollywood stratosphere, but she had been in *Presumed Innocent* (1990) and *The Player* (1992) as well as a string of other films.

It is interesting to speculate to what extent Greta Scacchi is an updated version of Jean Kent. Obviously both are glamorous in a style of their period. Attempting to compare their performances in *The Browning Version*, however, is complicated by the difference in the conception of

the character in the two films. Certainly Scacchi brings a softness and an emotional warmth to the role that is very different from the venom which seems to permeate Kent's performance. There is a playfulness in Laura which is totally absent in Millie.

There is even a moment when she stands by her man reminding Frobisher of the prizes Andrew won at Oxford.

Most of these moments, of course, are just background to the pivotal points in the story, but they serve to put her behavior in a completely different context from that of the play or Asquith film.

The first glimpse of her crueler side comes when she answers Frank's question about Andrew's new job.

Her reaction to Frank's hesitancy is more hurt than anger, but the frustration fuels her attack on Andrew after news of the pension. There is, however, in her parting shot about saying "No" a glimpse of the disappointment and frustration beneath the anger.

Her expression when Frobisher tries to drag her into the request to have Andrew speak last seems to be a mixture of distress and disappointment which slides towards contempt. When she asks Andrew if he is coming into tea, she seems to reveal an apprehension which is compounded by Andrew's request that Frank escort her to tea.

Her debunking of Taplow's gift takes place in a much more public setting than it does in the play or the previous film and builds quietly from the first moment she notices Andrew's mood. When

she concludes her explanation "…a sweetener…a bribe" she does it with a gently condescending tone and smile as though she is explaining it to Andrew for his own good. The surgical precision with which she has punctured his mood is, of course, not lost on the others at the table. It may seem like just an unnecessary bit of petty cruelty which has ruined the mood of the luncheon, and one may assume that it is not terribly different from other such moments which have punctuated their marriage, but in the larger context it is for Andrew a devaluation of everything he values most. She glances at him one last time before he leaves the table as though to survey the damage she has done, but there is a way in which her own frustration shines through her anger.

When she sees him after the cricket match there is some suggestion of contrition in her expression, and it is she who walks over to join him.

As they dress that evening and she offers to tie his tie, it is a gentle gesture of reconciliation accompanied by first an oblique acknowledgment of her cruelty and than an explicit apology. She is clearly hurt when Andrew says "No" and even seems to have a moment of stunned disbelief before she pulls away from him. The implication seems to be that she felt the incident would blow over and they could continue as before.

Matthew Modine

Casting Matthew Modine as the Americanized Frank Hunter was probably a matter of his ability to project a certain kind of easygoing informality and energy. He grew up in California and Utah before going to New York to become an actor when he was 20. His first film role came in 1983 when John Sayles cast him in *Baby It's You*. He is reputed to have turned down the role Tom Cruise played in *Top Gun* (1986), but received a lot of notice for his role in Stanley Kubrick's *Full Metal Jacket* (1987).

Modine is able to make Frank Hunter's joking with the students and bantering with the headmaster seem completely natural. His Hunter is a far cry from the urbanity of Nigel Patrick in the Asquith film, and he is also devoid of the seemingly affected anglophilia and even the earnestness described in Harwood's final draft. The greatest payoff with Modine's character for me comes during the luncheon when he responds to Andrew's description of Taplow's gift first with genuine enthusiasm ("Taplow! That's fantastic!") and then with sincere sympathy. ("It's a lovely gift.") Modine does this with an unfettered spirit and open generosity that may seem American in comparison to a typically English irony or indirection, and it enables him to connect with Andrew and share his pleasure. It also, of course, sets up Laura's spitefulness much more powerfully than anything Frank does in the play or the Asquith film. Modine has one brief moment in which he seems concerned that Laura may be inclined to take a jaundiced view of Taplow's gift, but he does not interpret these lines as an effort to divert the conversation from an impending disaster as

he does when he offers Andrew champagne once Laura has begun her attack.

The real crux of Modine's performance, of course, is the scene in the library with Andrew after Laura's attack. This is a scene which might be worth analyzing in detail, but perhaps it is sufficient to recognize that Modine must convey a complex mixture of guilt and sympathy bordering on compassion as he offers Andrew advice and asks if he can help.

Michael Gambon

Michael Gambon had been a fixture of British theater, television and film for 30 years, and it is easy to understand why he was cast as the headmaster, Dr. Frobisher. The character has come a long way from the deliberately underwritten role in the play, and Harwood has taken him in a much more satirical direction than Rattigan did for the Asquith film. Gambon is fun to watch even if at times he seems to belong in a different movie. He's not quite Alastair Sim, but he does a wonderful job of sticking his foot in his mouth and sailing

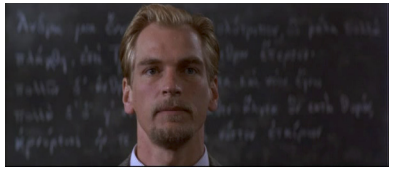
through the days' festivities without a clue. There are, of course moments, when he is something other than an object of ridicule. His observation that Andrew "must be one of the most brilliant scholars ever to come to this school" is delivered with genuine sincerity, although he fumbles in attempting to explain why he forgets the fact. In the end he does rise to the occasion and acknowledge Andrew's right to speak last, but he is conspicuously absent from the host of well-wishers who shake Andrew's hand as he comes out into the courtyard.

Julian Sands

Julian Sands had been Anne Rice's choice to play the vampire Lestat before Tom Cruise was cast, and he was the evil warlock intent on destroying the universe in *Warlock* (1989) and its sequel, *Warlock: The Armageddon*. He does seem capable of projecting a kind of coldness that suits him to these and the other horror films he had

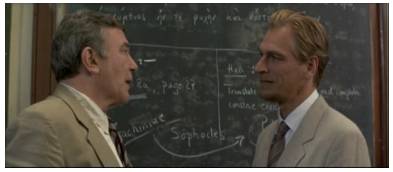
done, but he also had originally attracted notice as George Emerson in *A Room With A View* (1985). Even though he was only two or three years older than Ronald Howard had been when he played Gilbert in the Asquith film, Sands has none of the boyish earnestness of Howard. Harwood's script had made Gilbert an older character. He is 28-ish and already married with two children. More importantly he is being brought in as head of the language department.

Sands' Gilbert at first seems all business. He seems aware of his status in his dealings with Frank even to the point of being a bit brusque as he lets Frank know that he will be moving into the Crocker-Harris's house. His first real interaction with Andrew seems a little aggressively defensive as he justifies the need to modernize the language department at the school. He has, however, not been immune to the commanding presence with which Andrew enters the classroom and instinctively snapped to attention along with all the students. Sands gives one indication that Gilbert is not comfortable with the way in which Andrew seems to be berating a student when he critiques his reading of the Agamemnon, but for the most part we are barely aware of his presence during the class. When he rises somewhat self-consciously to leave after all the students have gone, the sense is not that Gilbert is judging Andrew for his abusiveness but that he feels he has been privy to something private or personal in Andrew's impassioned reading. It is almost an awkwardness at a public display of emotion which foreshadows the moment between Andrew and Taplow. It is only when Andrew brings up the subject of modern languages that Gilbert turns to defend himself.



The idea that this Gilbert would come into the empty classroom later because he has the jitters about teaching the Lower Fifth seems at odds with the way in which he has been presented. This is not a recent graduate who has only taught eleven-year-olds for a few months. He has presumably done well enough teaching elsewhere for six years to be offered the job of completely revamping the language department. We may have seen that he did not immediately intimidate students when he was visiting for a single class, but his manner seems to imply that given sufficient authority he will be able to hold his own.

Sands does well enough revealing a vulnerability in Gilbert, and he is helped by the fact that Harwood's script has reversed the order of things so that Andrew comes into the room to discover Gilbert there already rather than having Gilbert intrude on Andrew. Since he starts out the scene being startled by Andrew's entrance and feeling embarrassed about being in the classroom, it is easier to accept his "jitters" about teaching at the school. In any event the focus rapidly shifts when Andrew questions why he thinks Andrew might laugh at his nervousness. Once Gilbert lets slip the reference to "Hitler of the Lower Fifth," he is standing on com-



pletely different ground, and the reason for his being in the classroom are no longer of any consequence.

As he attempts to apologize, the balance in his relationship to Andrew changes. Andrew literally rises above Gilbert, and Sands is able to convey the embarrassment and sympathy with which Gilbert now views Andrew. Gilbert is able to respond with a little self-deprecating humor and, after Andrew leaves, Gilbert stands alone faced not so much with the difficulty of teaching 15-year-olds as the complexity of his feelings about Andrew.

In the broadest terms Gilbert's development follows the general direction established in the Asquith film. He goes from being someone at odds with Andrew to being a colleague, but Harwood completes this with the luncheon scene after Taplow's gift rather than with Andrew's farewell speech. Sands conveys a sense wanting to merit Andrew's respect as he translates the inscription and corrects Frank's rendition of it, and he is obviously gratified by Andrew's approval of his translation.

Ben Silverstone

The Browning Version was Ben Silverstone's first film as it was for the other students in the film. He was 14 at the time and a student at St

Paul's School, a prestigious boys school similar to the school in the film. Mike Figgis was friend of his family. He subsequently had a bit part in Adrian Lyne's version of *Lolita* (1997) and played the lead in *Get Real* (1998) before studying English at Trinity College, Cambridge.

I think it is safe to say that casting Silverstone as Taplow clinched the deal in terms of making Taplow a completely sympathetic character. Harwood's script has dispensed with any ambiguity about Taplow's motivation in giving Andrew the book and added elements to help insure the audience likes him. His visit to Frank's science classroom has been retained from the Asquith film but without his attempt to offer advice to Frank about how to do the experiment. Harwood makes the point of Taplow's interest in science with Frank's challenge to give the chemical formula for ethanol. We also see Taplow bearing up under the taunting to which Trubshaw subjects him and Taplow attempting to offer sympathetic support to Buller.

Silverstone seems to combine the right amounts of sensitivity and intellect with the requisite balance of self-confidence and vulnerability. Buller may have written a better translation of the poem, but Taplow seems set apart by his emotional maturity. His enthusiasm for the *Agamemnon* seems genuine, as does his admiration for the passion with which Andrew reads; and he is very affecting in his response to Andrew's display of emotion. The way in which we share his happiness at being able to switch to the science curriculum in the next term is very much a part of the emotional resolution of the film, and the sense that Andrew has once again been able to communicate his love of great literature to a student is crucial to the story.

The Production

According to one trade publication the film was shot in seven weeks with a budget of $10 million starting in July of 1993.[16] The credits indicate that it was shot entirely on location in and around Sherborne School and Milton Abbey School in Dorset. Sherborne was the school used for some of the exteriors in the Asquith film, but most of the exteriors in the Figgis film seem to be at Milton Abbey school.

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The difference in the photographic styles of the two films is mainly an indication of how much the "idiom" of cinematography had changed over the course of forty years. The Figgis film is shot in color and in a 2.35:1 wide screen format with Panavision anamorphic lenses.[17] In general the photography is naturalistic and focused primarily on the faces of the characters involved, although there is a much greater effort to evoke the physical environment for the story than there is in the Asquith film. I think the sense of intimacy achieved by long lens close-ups reflects the way in which our eyes have been conditioned by viewing documentaries or other films that have relied increasingly on telephoto lenses to capture their subjects.[18]

17 All of Figgis's earlier films had been shot in the more conventional 1.85:1 widescreen format, and it seems a little odd that he would choose to shoot a relatively intimate character drama in the 2.35:1 scope format which had originally been associated with large scale epics. The proof is in the pudding, however, as he and cinematographer Jean-François Robin make excellent use of the format in the compositions for the film.

18 A telephoto lens can have overtones of spying, enabling the viewer feel both that he is examining the subject very closely and at the same time sufficiently far away not to be influencing it. It also can have enhance the illusion of reality because of its association with film of news events where the cameraman had to use a telephoto lens because he could not get close enough to use a normal one. More to the point, perhaps, a telephoto lens reduces the depth of field and contributes a feeling of insubstantiality to everything except the in-focus subject of the shot. Out of focus people or things moving through the foreground of a shot contribute a sense of fluidity and perhaps transience like a contemporary photographic equivalent of the floating world of Japanese woodblock prints.

The color resulting from the predominantly soft or back lighting feels natural and perhaps idyllic in the way we have learned to hope that our color snapshots may turn out. The camera is also freer to move than it was in 1951 and in particular an aerial and traveling shots of the taxicab in the opening sequence seem relatively normal in a film in 1994. This is not to say that they do not have an emotional impact or serve to draw the viewer into the film.

Physically the environment in which the story unfolds is a combination of idyllic natural greenery and romantically Gothic architecture. The opening shot of the film places Andrew within an arch of an obviously ancient building, and it is followed by moving camera shots in the lush green countryside surrounding the school. The school courtyards and exteriors convey the sense of tradition to which Andrew has been linked. The Crocker-Harris house and the village are so quintessentially English that they would risk being clichés if they were not so obviously real and photographed with such affection. The trade publication article about the film described it as a period piece, and Foster's van is about the only obviously contemporary thing in the film aside from some of the dialogue, the women's fashions and the cars parked beside the cricket field. The setting has been updated but in a way that seems to put it into an almost timelessly traditional moment.

There is one detail that always puzzled me before I began analyzing the film. The shot of


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Foster's van driving away from the school includes a loudspeaker on a pole in a way that seems deliberate and yet peculiar. It seems at first to be a somewhat arbitrary intrusion into the scene. There is, however, a line of dialogue in the opening scenes of the film in which Dr. Rafferty assigns Frank the responsibility for supervising the sound system being installed for the festivities. He says, "We'll need about twenty Tannoys…" before Laura's arrival distracts him.[19] The speaker then is associated with the sciences and with the modernization of the school. The fact that it sticks out like a sore thumb in the landscape is exactly the point.

Some of the interiors of the school are used to enhance the sense of tradition. The Old Hall through which Foster escorts Gilbert seems like a room in a museum, and there is a very deliberate use of a stain glass window in the chapel which emphasizes the medieval origins of the school.

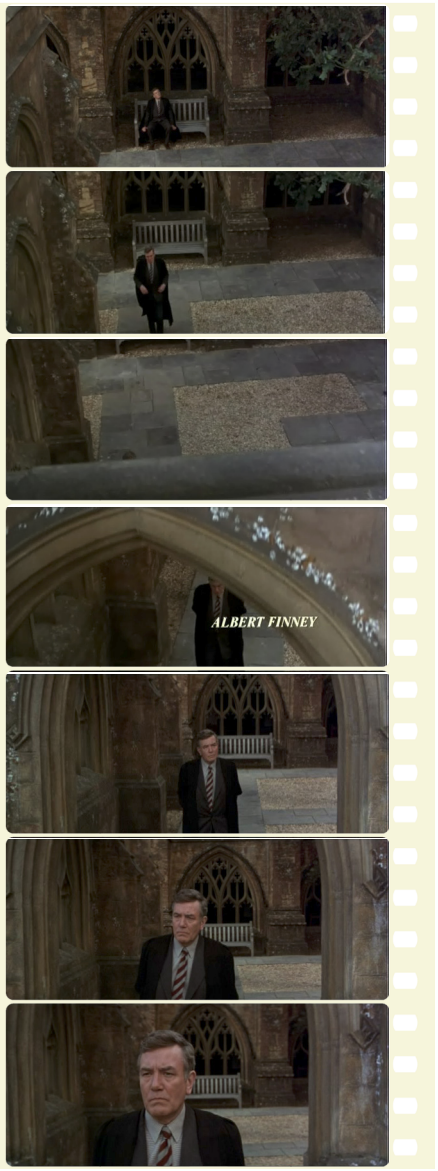
The playing fields and Andrew's garden are the two places where the idyllic greenery and the traditional world of the school converge.

In the Asquith film the camera moves mainly as a means of accommodating the blocking of the

19 Tannoy is a brand of speaker made in England. Harwood's script had him refer only to "loudspeakers", but presumably Figgis decided it would be more appropriate to have him refer to the speaker brand in the way someone who worked with the equipment might – even if it meant that the significance of the remark was lost on someone who was not an audiophile.

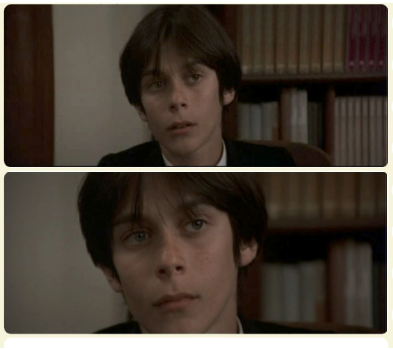
scene. There are some scenes in Figgis's film where the camera moves just to stay with the actors as it does for Asquith. For example both films have Andrew and Frobisher walking beside the cricket field as Frobisher broaches the subject either Andrew's pension or his farewell speech and the camera simply tracks with them to keep them framed in a medium shot. In Asquith's case, however, the walk is motivated by Frobisher's desire to speak to Andrew privately and they move away from the crowd. In Figgis's version Frobisher and Baxter walk with Andrew along the edge of the crowd not in an attempt to find privacy but simply to walk as they talk. Laura accompanies them attempting not to intrude on the conversation but in the end being pulled into it. With Figgis it is almost as though the actors move in order to justify moving the camera rather than vice versa. The moving camera gives an additional bit of momentum to the scene, carrying the audience along until the group stops in order for Frobisher to finally get his point across. After the scene everyone but Andrew heads back in the direction from which they have just come, and Andrew moves away to find some privacy.

The use of a moving camera to provide momentum for the audience's involvement is exemplified by the opening sequence of the film. There are two openings: a shot of Andrew which involves a crane move and the sequence of sweeping aerial and tracking shots as Gilbert and Frank converge on the school. The shot of Andrew starts with a relatively long shot of him sitting on bench in the



courtyard with a few students running past and then pulls back and up over an archway in a move which culminates in a close up of Andrew as he walks towards the camera. This is a prologue establishing Andrew as the central theme of the film. It discovers him in an environment and then moves in to focus on his face. The following shots of Gilbert and Frank approaching the school give the widest perspective of the environment in which the story is set and push the audience into the school. Flying over or moving through the countryside seems to convey some sense that the drama has import beyond the classrooms and campus of a school.

Camera movement is used in similar conventional manner in two shots when it moves in from a medium close-up to a tight close up first on Taplow as he listens to Andrew reading from the *Agamemnon* in the classroom and then on Andrew as he reflects on his marriage during the scene with Frank in the library. Moving in on a face in this way is a rhetorical device that intensifies the concentration of the persons feelings. It can be quite effective when it is used sparingly as it is in this film.



The flying camera at the beginning of the film is the most striking use of camera movement, but the most effective may be a pair of tracking shots in the marquee as Andrew goes to join the luncheon party and then as he exits after Laura's cruelty. The first is a wider angle tracking shot in which we see Andrew immersed in the celebration and interacting with Fletcher. It is a perfect expression of his expansive mood after Taplow's gift and the encounter with Trimmer and Newton. As he exits the camera tracks with him in a long-lens close-up that separates him from everything going on around him. The camera is unable to keep up with him and pans to follow him as withdraws from the crowd.

For the most part the film relies more on cutting than on camera movement to control the viewer's perspective on the story. There are almost three times as many cuts in the Figgis film than the Asquith film.[20] In this sense the point of view of the film is more fluid and conveys less of a sense of events staged for a camera than of the camera

20 2.85, but the film is only 87% as long.

capturing events that are relatively independent of it. This is probably an indication as much of the way in which the conventions of cinematic naturalism have evolved as it is of a unique style for this film. The compositions of the shots, however, are tightly controlled, and there is nothing haphazard about the photography even when it attempts to convey the impression of tracking an individual in a crowd.

A close look at the staging and shooting of some key scenes may suffice to convey the way in which the story is told visually. The easiest to start with is Taplow's extra lesson, which consists almost entirely of two people seated facing each other. Figgis has moved the scene to the garden, and he appears to have "covered" the scene in an absolutely conventional manner. There is a wide establishing shot in which the camera tilts down from the trees to reveal Andrew and Taplow sitting at a table as we hear Andrew say, "Begin, Taplow." The same wide angle is used at the end to show Taplow leaving. The bulk of the scene is constructed from pairs of complementary over-the-shoulder medium shots and close ups. There is one additional set up, a medium shot of Taplow for the moment when he stops to listen to Andrew's explanation of the Latin epigram from the morning's class.

Asquith shot this entire three-and-a-half-minute scene in a single set up with Andrew and Taplow seated side by side, although the camera does move to reframe them as Andrew leans forward and then back again. Figgis's 25-second longer version of the scene is constructed of 50 cuts. This obviously permits Figgis to exercise a much tighter control over the viewer's focus of attention. From a practical point of view it also makes it possible to shoot repeated takes of portions of the scene without having to do the entire scene each time and to use all the best bits rather than having to select only one take. The choice of which character to see and whether to use a close-up as opposed to a medium-shot at any given point in the scene is ideally dictated by the point of the scene and the way in which each moment contributes to the meaning.

The assumption generally is that a close-up is more emphatic than a medium-shot, that it intensifies the focus on the character. With a long lens close-up such as Figgis and Robin use, the shallower depth of field puts the background out of focus and tends to abstract the face from its en-

vironment. In this case the greenery of the grass and foliage becomes an abstract tone in the close-ups and, I believe, heightens the impact of the greenery motif in the film. Taplow is positioned so that the lawn behind him fills the frame completely while the green behind Andrew is hemmed in by large dark areas caused by tree trunks and shade. Regardless of whether this is a conscious stylistic choice or a happy accident, I do believe that the green tone becomes associated with youth and youthful enthusiasm or passion in a way that affects the viewer's response to the film.

The editing of this scene strikes me as a classic example of the kind of analytical thought informing conventional editing. The setting is established, and we see each of the characters in relation to their environment and each other. We see enough of Taplow as he translates to set up the moment when he introduces his own version of text, but the main point of the beginning of the scene is that Andrew knows the text by heart and could do this in his sleep. He in fact is leaning back with his eyes closed in a way that would seem to indicate he is asleep were it not for the fact that he speaks to correct Taplow. The first close-up comes when Andrew comments that "canst is more poetic." It emphasizes the fact that Andrew appears to be asleep even when he is speaking about poetry, and, in fact, he is metaphorically asleep. Taplow will arouse him from his slumber by taking liberties in his translation and reminding him of his own youth. In the Figgis version Taplow as the bearer of medicine has been replaced by

"Begin, Taplow."

"…we are surprised at…"

"We marvel at …"

"…we marvel at thy toungue…"

"…mmm"
"…how bold thou art…"

"…that thou can"…

"Canst is more poetic … canst."

"…canst utter such a boastful speech…"

"…mmmm…"

"…over the bloody corpse of the husband you just so foully murdered…"

"Taplow, I presume you're using a different text to mine…"

"No"
"That's strange I see no foully murdered…"

"…no bloody corpse, simply ep' andri, husband."

"Yes, sir."

Taplow as the disturber of sleep or reverie. (cf "Do I disturb you, sir" "Perhaps" and "I'm sorry to disturb you, sir, but I did want to see you." "Disturb me indeed.")

The next close-up, of course, is of Taplow as he summons the courage to add spice to his translation. The focus has shifted from the sleeping giant to the young man in his charge who is about to blossom. Then the focus shifts back to Andrew as he responds to Taplow's attempt to put life into the translation. There are five close-ups of Andrew intercut with medium shots of Taplow until regains the courage of his convictions. There is also one medium shot of Andrew as he says, "Why do you insist on inventing words that are simply not there?" This could be justified in any number of ways. The dynamic of the scene has reached a kind of standoff where Andrew has been aroused, but Taplow has not yet started to justify his translation. The scene hangs in the balance for a moment, and it makes sense to pull back from Andrew so that his close-up in next beat when Taplow's explanations begin to sink in will have renewed emphasis.

Once Andrew begins to recall his own translation, both he and Taplow are seen in close-ups. They are on a new kind of equal footing, and they are both abstracted from the immediate present. Taplow returns first in the medium shot where he starts to drink his lemonade, and for a moment the focus shifts to him and what he has been given. Andrew has again drifted off and is recalled

"Why do you insist on inventing words that are simply not there?"

"Go on, Taplow. Go on; I wish to understand."

"I think of it like this, sir. There she is, Clytemnestra…"

"…she really hates her husband, Agamemnon…"

"…He returns from winning the war, and what do she do?"

"She welcomes him back…"

"…and then murders him. She stabs him over and over and then makes…"

"I'm delighted in your interest in the more lurid aspects of dramaturgy…:

"…Taplow, but I still fail to understand …"

"…why you should wish to improve Aeschylus."

"Today in class, sir, for the first time I got a sense of the horror…"

"…it was so vivid…"

"…Why can't we put more life into the translation like you did? Why cant we use words like bloody…"

"…and corpse and murder?"
"mmmm…When I was a very young man…"

"…not much older than you are now, I wrote for my own pleasure…"

"…a translation of the Agamemnon, *a very free translation, I remember, in rhyming couplets…"*

"That must have been hard work."
"Yes it was, it was…"

"…very hard work, but I derived great pleasure from it because the play had excited and moved me as it did you…"

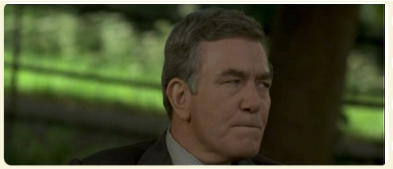
"…and I wanted to communicate…"

"… however imperfectly some of that emotion… a little like what happened in class today…"

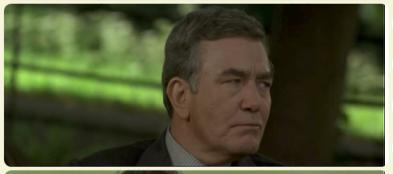
"…My translation, I remember…"

"…thinking was very beautiful…almost more beautiful than the original…"
"Was it ever published?"
"I'm sorry?"
"Was it ever published?"

"Oh, no. No, it was never published."



"Shall I go on, sir?



"Ah, no, I fear we've run out of time."

"Uhm…may I go now, sir?"

"Yes."

"And Taplow, Scientia est celare scientiam. 'The art of learning…'

"… is to conceal learning. And I wouldn't try it…"

"…on any of your friends. It isn't particularly funny."

"I wouldn't know, sir."

only by Taplow's question about continuing the lesson. In the end, of course, the point of the scene is the impact of the moment on Andrew, and the scene fades out on the close-up of Andrew as he absorbs it.[21]

The other key scene between Andrew and Taplow when Taplow gives him the book is also mainly two static characters facing each other and is constructed almost entirely from a wide shot and two pairs of complementary medium-shots and close-ups. (There is one additional setup of a medium close-up on Taplow when he comments on the translation. It suggests that perhaps

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21 There is one other aspect of this scene which is perhaps worth noting as an indication of the way in which film compresses time in a narrative. The cut from the interior of Andrew's house to the wide shot of the trees in the garden with the tilt down to reveal Andrew and Taplow seated at the table implies a jump ahead in time. At the very least Andrew and Taplow have had time to walk to the table, sit down and open their books to the passage which Taplow is to translate. Figgis and Harwood, however, have retained the line in which Andrew says, "Begin, Taplow" implying that we are seeing the beginning of their lesson as we did in the play and the Asquith film. The lesson proceeds in real time without any cutaways or dissolves to a point where Andrew says they have run out of time. At that point the lesson has lasted 3 minutes and 18 seconds. I doubt that any viewer would feel that there was anything unrealistic about this because time compression of this sort is a conventional type of poetic license in film. The initial cut does help, but it is perhaps a little strange that Andrew's initial line was not dropped so that the viewer would be encouraged to feel the lesson had already been going on for some time. There is also the possibility that one might interpret Andrew's early dismissal of Taplow as a gesture of sympathy occasioned by his reminiscence about his own youth.)

Silverstone's performance was covered with three different setups and that the use of this piece was dictated by his performance or something about the framing. In terms of its impact on the viewer it would seem to be essentially the same as the slightly wider angle.) The wide shot bookends the scene as before but with an additional use as Taplow starts to give Andrew the book, presumably to emphasize the relationship between the two and to in effect restart the scene.

The logic at work in the editing of this scene is similar to that during the lesson, and there is also a similar use of the greenery behind the characters. The main distinguishing feature of this scene is the wide shot beginning it, which tracks with Taplow as he walks past the scoreboard to where Andrew is standing on the hilltop. In the background we are able to see the other activities going on in addition to the cricket game, and we can see the way in which Taplow stands at a respectful distance from Andrew so that they have to reach out to each other in order to hand the book back and forth. The background activity is not visible in any of the other shots for the scene so that we are not distracted by it from the real action going on in the faces of Taplow and Andrew.

Taplow again disturbs Andrew's private reflections, and Andrew goes from impatience to being moved to tears by Taplow's gesture. This scene seems to be a condensation of the point of the entire movie as Andrew's sense of his own worth is in some way restored by the discovery that he is

"Sir?"

"Sir?"

"I'm sorry to disturb you, sir, but I did want to see you…"

"Disturb me, indeed. … Well?"

"Well, Taplow?"

"I thought this might interest you, sir…"

"…a verse translation of the Agamemnon*."*

"Good heavens…"

"The Browning version…"

"I've glanced through it; I don't think it's much good, but

"I agree the translation has its faults, but I think you'll enjoy it more…"

"…when you become more familiar with the meter that Robert Browning …"

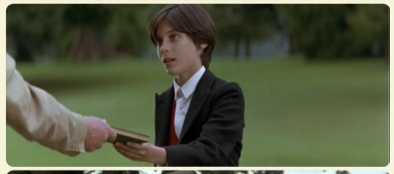
…employs. … Very interesting…""

"…Taplow."

"It's for you, sir."

"For me?"

"Yes, sir; I've written in it."



"Did you buy this?"
"Yessir, it's only secondhand."
"You shouldn't spend your pocket money in that way."
"That's all right; it wasn't very much."

The price isn't still inside, is it?"

"No, only what you wrote; nothing else."

"What's the matter, sir?"

"Have I got the accent wrong?"
"No, the perispomenon is perfectly correct.

"Forgive me, Taplow; I…I've been under rather a strain."

"Yes, sir. I understand, sir."

"Well…goodbye, sir… and the best of luck."

appreciated despite all the ways in which he has been rebuffed. This is, of course, a very different interpretation of the material than that of the original play.

A more interesting scene involving just two characters is the rendezvous between Laura and Frank at his flat. The blocking of this scene is organized around four things: the door, the window, the kitchen and the bed. Each of these elements represents a different perspective on their relationship. The scene begins with Laura opening the door and entering, just as the relationship obviously began with Laura's initiative. She is coming into

his life for her own reasons and is not entirely welcome. She closes the door to shut out the rest of the world as she says, "To hell with Gilbert," and she protects her pride by exiting through the door leaving Frank alone. The window evokes Frank's concerns about scandal and Laura's enjoyment of the scandalous. She forces him to join her in front of it, and he only responds to her after he has shut the blinds. The kitchen is opposed to the window and is the place where Frank is "more English than the English." It can be construed to represent a form of domesticity that the couple do not enjoy. Laura does not go into the kitchen but stays between the door and the bed while Frank fetches tea they never drink. The bed is obviously the keystone of their relationship, and Laura sits on it uninvited and begins undressing. Frank only sits with her for a moment and then withdraws when she lies back on the bed. She spends over a quarter of the scene lying alone on the bed.

The heart of the scene consists of the 1 minute 41 second cut during which Laura sits on the bed and then embraces Frank as he stands in front of her until he stops her from undressing and sits beside her. He then stands and exits frame as she flops back onto the bed as the camera continues to move in on her. The action and camera movement repeat the beginning of the scene by the window where Laura drew Frank close to embrace and kiss him as the camera moved in and then Frank pulled away at the sound of the tea kettle. Both shots convey the state of the relationship and the focus on what it means to Laura. The most strik-

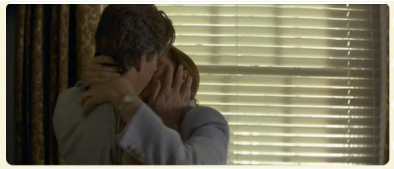
"Laura…"
"Were you expecting someone else?"
"I thought we agreed we wouldn't meet here."
"Who were you expecting?"

"Gilbert, the new guy."

"Laura, come away from the window, please."

"Would you please come away from the window."

"Aren't you going to say hello?"
"Hello."



"I love you guilty… the puitan in you… I love fucking you…You talk when you make love…"
"The kettle's boiling."

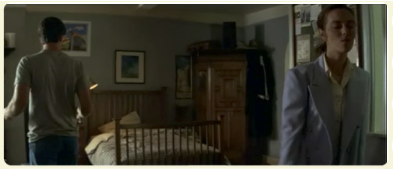
"More apparently than we can say for you."

"Laura, I haven't got much time."
"No, I don't think I have either."

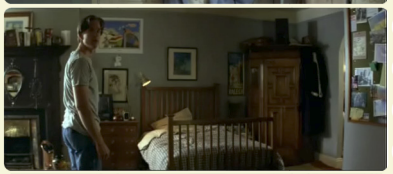
"Tea?"

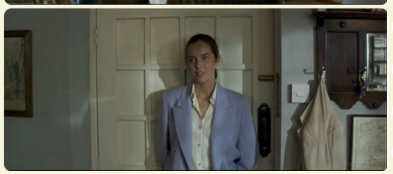
"Oh, Frank, you're more English than the English."

"If Gilbert does come let's just say you're here delivering a message from Andrew."

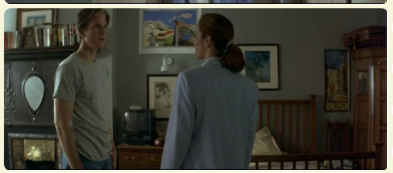


"To hell with Gilbert."

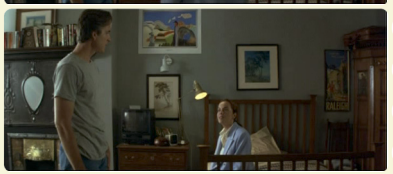




"I've got good news…"



"What?"
"Don't worry; I'm not pregnant."



"I had a letter from my mother. […],

"Just think, darling, a whole month… you will come won't you?…I need you; I need to be with you"

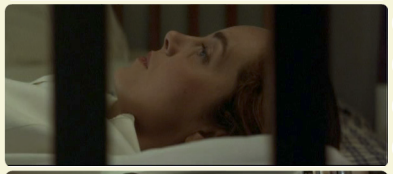
"You know, my father's not well…I may have to go back to the states…"

"You remind me of him"
"Of who?"
"Of whom…of whom… of Anderw of course. He didn't always used to be the Old Crock […] so idealistic and just as ungiving."

"What happened to him?"

"I did."

"Weren't you two ever happy together?"



"Can't remember … can't remember."

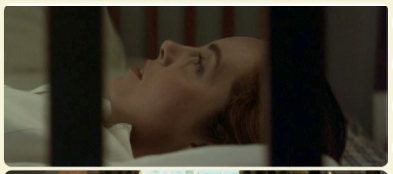
"Laura, I feel sorry for him."

"No you don;t; you feel guilty because you're screwing his wife…or to be more accurate…

"…because his wife is screwing you."

"I think we should tell him."

"Tell him what?"



"About us."

"What are you insane? That's the stupidist thing I've ever heard and what the hell would you want to tell him for, Laura!"

What are we talking about now… marriage…divorce?"

"I'm talking about us. I don't want us to become just good friends."

"Listen, Laura…"

"Dont! … Déjà vu…"

"I know exactly what you're going to say now. You're going to say you're not ready to settle down."

"Isn't that what you were going to say?"

ing shot in the scene is the extreme close up of Laura lying back on the bed and seen through the vertical pieces of the foot of the bed frame. She appears to be behind bars or boxed in by the bed. It is clearly not Frank's perspective on her and makes the viewer feel closer to her than Frank is.

The ease with which Figgis handles a scene involving more than two characters is best exemplified by the luncheon when Laura punctures An-

drew's pleasure at Talplow's gift. The scene has been moved into a public setting, and Laura wields her stiletto in front of four other people in addition to Frank. We are led into the scene with a 43 second tracking shot of Andrew making his way through the tent, and we never lose sight of the festivities surrounding them during the scene. Even in the tightest close-ups, other guests are visible in the background. The group is seated three on one side of the table and two on the other. Andrew takes a place at the head of the table rather than making his way to the empty place across from Laura. This enables Andrew to be the center of the composition when the whole group is seen and puts Laura in a position of the odd one out. Laura is also seated next to Frank so that the wider reverse angle on her is a two shot of her and Frank.

In one sense the other characters at the table function as the chorus witnessing Clytemnestra's murder of her husband, but each of them has a part to play in setting up the blow to Andrew. Frank has what are to me Modine's most natural moments in the film when he responds to the news of Taplow's gift with "Taplow! That's fantastic!" and "It's a lovely gift." He also attempts to function as a buffer between Laura and Frank and obviously senses trouble brewing before the others. The main use that is made of the others is to

"Andrew, have a seat."
"Oh, thank you."

"Taplow, that's fantastic."

"Hello, Andrew"

"So what was the present?"

"A translation of the Agamemnon *by Robert Browning."*
"Let me see."

"You're looking pleased with yourself…."

"…What have you been up to?"

"Oh, he's inscribed it."

"Best not to ask, Laura."
"Well, I'm looking please with reason, I think. I've just been given a present."

"What does it mean?"

)h? By whom?"

"Darling, what does it say?"

"Taplow."

"It's all Greek to me."

"Mr. Gilbert…"

"…can you enlighten us, please?"
"How marvelous. It's hexameter."

"…malthecose theos…"

"Yes, but what does it mean?"

"Well. I"m not familiar with the Browning version but…"

"…roughtly it translates as 'God from afar looks grciously upon a gentle master.'"

"Oh, how sweet!"

amplify Andrew's pleasure by passing the book around and commenting on it. Laura is the only one at the table who does not look at the book. Andrew clearly gets an extra boost from the fact that none of the guests except Gilbert can read the Greek inscription, and his expansive mood enables him to acknowledge Gilbert as a colleague. His agreement with Gilbert about the proper translation is in fact the resolution of Gilbert's role in the film, and it is managed in a casual manner that also contributes to the impact of Laura's attack.

Diana's role as both co-conspirator and competition for Laura is underscored in this scene. She is seated on the other side of Frank and immediately injects a note of wicked humor into the proceedings by responding that it is "Best not to ask" when Laura asks Andrew what he has been up to. As Andrew joined the party she was finishing an anecdote which involved her being stranded naked in a hotel corridor. She expresses genuine interest in Taplow's gift and reacts positively to the translation of his inscription ("How sweet!"). Her manner may seem superficial or playful as befits a festive luncheon, but she does appreciate the pleasure Andrew feels and provides a stark contrast to Laura. This contrast is emphasized by the close-ups of Diana as she looks at the book and notices the inscription. There is a cut from Diana to a corresponding close-up of Laura as the significance of the gift begins to brew in her mind. She starts the circulation of the book by taking it from Andrew and then handing it over to her husband rather than giving it back to Andrew. That

"And very apt."

"I can't imagine a boy giving me a present."
"Nor me."
It's a very wonderful thing to do, don't you think?"
"Yes", very much so."

"He bought it with his own pocket money.

"What was the inscription again… 'God from afar looks graciously upon a kind master'?"

"Perhaps not 'kind master' but…"

"…'gentle master'."

"Yes, I agree with Mr. Gilbert; I think 'gentle'…

"… is the better translation."

"All right.. … It's a lovely gift."

"I would rather have this present…"

she would immediately reach across to her husband underscores the distance between Andrew and Laura. Perhaps she knows full well that her husband will not be able to translate it, and she is teasing him affectionately. She is first to say, "Why cunning, Laura?" as though she expects a little juicy gossip or an amusing anecdote, but she is appalled by Laura's cruelty and serves as the focal point of the awkwardness that all the other guests at the table feel.

Rafferty's contribution to the scene is to welcome Andrew to the table, to admit that he cannot read Greek, to pass the book along to Gilbert and to confess that he cannot imagine a boy giving him a present. Of all in the group Rafferty comes closest to being Andrew's peer, but there is a polite distance between them that is never overcome by any direct interaction. There is no single shot of Rafferty in the scene. He is always seen in con-

"…than anything else I can think of."

"Cunning little brat."

"Why cunning. Laura?"

"Andrew, you don't have any wine. Can I give you some champagne?"

"Why cunning, Laura?"
"Because…"

"…yesterday I saw Taplow doing an impersonation…"

"…of you."

"Obviously he was afraid that I would tell you and that you would put him on Cromwells…"

"…or stop his switch to Frank's form or…"

"…some other Hitlerian torture."

"The book is clearly an insurance policty…

"…a sweetner … a bribe."

"I see."

"Laura, go and tell him it was a lie."
"Certainly not."

"It wasn't a lie."

"Then I'll tell him."

"I wouldn't do that if I were you. … He'll only hate you for your sympathy"

"Andrew doesn't need sympathy. … That's his strength."

junction with Gilbert or just in the wide shot of the whole group. When Diana hands him the book, his response is seen initially in the wide shot and then partially off screen in a shot of Andrew's reaction. That Rafferty would pass the book along to Gilbert rather than ask Andrew to translate the transcription is an indication of his alliance with the modernizing policies of the school as well as a simple gesture to include everyone in the response to Andrew's pleasure.

Gilbert's rather awkward reading of the Greek passage is a pale shadow compared to Andrew's impassioned reading from the play in class. His close up is reserved for the moment when he corrects Frank's recollection of the passage and earns Andrew's approval.

The real focus of the scene, of course, is the interaction between Laura and Andrew, and about a third of the scene at the table consists of close-ups of them. The climax as she smiles and twists the knife consists of just close ups of each culminating on Laura before it drops back to the wide shot to remind us of the context in which this is taking place and to see the awkwardness of the others as they witness it. As Andrew withdraws emotionally, he exits in a medium close-up in which he is abstracted from the environment. The scene ends on a close-up of Laura after she has justified to the remaining group her attempt to dissuade Frank for following Andrew.

There is a 13 minute sequence in Andrew's classroom which is really five scenes occurring in the same place. First Frobisher brings Gilbert into the class room and interacts with the students as he introduces Gilbert to them Then Gilbert is left alone with the students and is unable to restrain them. With Gilbert alone in the room there are two sub-scenes: one involving the desire of two students to start a magazine during the next term and another in which Taplow attempts to express his feelings about Andrew to some of the other students who basically attack him for feeling for being a "little arse-crawler."

Andrew's entrance into the classroom is virtually a scene in itself as it is the first time we see directly the way he inspires fear in his students. Even Gilbert snaps to attention and somewhat self-consciously introduces himself as a means of justifying his presence. The close shot in which Andrew walks up the aisle towards the camera and his desk is the only moment in the film in which he even remotely resembles "the Hitler of the Lower Fifth." As he walks he silently surveys the classroom with a stone face and an expression once could imagine on the face of a prison warden inspecting the inmates. His first communication with the class is a reprimand of Wilson for being late to Chapel, even though in this version of the story Andrew is not the one responsible for reporting Wilson's infraction. (Trubshaw has already recorded it and given him Cromwells.) The second order of business is to distribute the class's last assignment and to instruct them to do it over since

"Good morning, sir. I'm Gilbert."

"Good morning."

"Sir."

"These are your Latin verses. Only one boy's efforts, Buller's…'

"…had any merit, and that…"

"Wilson…"

"…somewhat doubtful."

"Sir?"

"The rest were…"

"Apparently you were late for chapel."

"…mainly abominable."

"Just a few seconds. I was in the library…"

"It seems to me that the best way to employ the first part of this period would be for all of you to atttempt the verse again."

"…where you can't hear the bell…"
"No doubt you will recount those excuses to your housemaster. I fear I'm not interested in them"

"And if you should find the disturbance from the…"

"…upper Fifth science too distracting…

"…you may console yourselves as…"

"…good classicists with the thought that, to amend an aphorism, scientia est celare scientiam.

the initial results were so awful. While this may seem sadistic to the students, it is actually an indication of the expectation of excellence which is part of the tradition of the institution, at least in Andrew's view.

The next scene is the interaction with Taplow when Taplow laughs at Andrew's epigram. Again the meaning of this scene has evolved significantly since the play in which Taplow reenacts it for Frank. In the play it sounds like a needless bit of humiliation that Andrew inflicts on a student. It is played that way in the Asquith film, but there is something about the way in which Finney plays the scene that gives it a slightly different edge. The way he responds to the idea that Taplow laughed out of politeness seems to indicate that he is caught off guard by Taplow's sympathy and is in fact genuinely "touched." There is a seed planted for the way Taplow will touch him more deeply later.

The final scene in the classroom is the "end of term treat" which culminates in Andrew's reading of the passage from the Agamemnon. This has already been cited as an addition designed to make Andrew more sympathetic. The main point is of course the passion with which Andrew reads, but the second point is seen in the faces of his students. For the most part they are uncomprehending. Initially Buller rolls his eyes at the prospect of this "treat". Laughton struggles with his reading and meets with little patience much less encouragement from Andrew. Gilbert

"Taplow?"

"Yessir?"

"You laughed at my little epigram."

"Yessir."

"I'm flattered at the advance your Latin has made that you should so readily understand what the rest of the class…"

"…did not.

"Perhaps you would be good enough to explain it to them so that they can share your pleasure … Oh, come along, Taplow…".

"…don't be so selfish that you keep a good joke to yourself. Tell the others."
"I didn't hear it properly, sir."
You didn't hear it?"

"Indeed…and why may I ask did you laugh. Why did you laugh at what you did not hear?"

"Politeness, sir."
I beg your pardon?"
"Politeness, sir."

"Toujours la politesse."

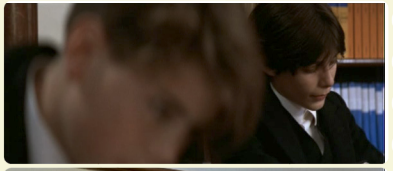
"I'm touched, Taplow, but if you really wish to show me politeness you will do so now…"

"…by translating verses less appalling than the ones I corrected this morning."

"Sit."

"Still feel…"

"…sorry for him?"



"Finish now."

"As this is the last time we shall meet as a class, it may not be amiss for me to say goodbye and wish you all the best…"

"…of good fortune And now the end of term treat.".

"We will read a scene from the Agamemnon *by Aeschylus."*

"Agamemnon *is perhaps…"*

"…hupsos kreisson…"

"…the greatest play ever written. The scene I have selected…"

"…êlthe, sun chronôi…"

"…starts with Clytemnestra standing over the bodies of Agamemnon, her husband, and…"

"…ge mên: hestêka…"

"…the prophetess, Cassandra, both of whom she's just murdered."

"hestêka…"

"Very well, Laughton begin."

"porsunôn, philois…"

"…hestêka"

"…dokousin einai, pêmonês…"

"hestêka d' enth' epais'…"

"…arkustat' an phraxeien…"

"…ep' exeirgasmenois"

"Forgive me for interrupting…"

"…but I have the impression you understand nothing…"

"…who has destroyed her husband; nor perhaps had Aeschylus…"

"…of what you're reading."

"…Nevertheless, he knew, alas, that such wives …"

"No, sir, I…"

"…do exist. … He used his imagination.,…"

"Clytemnestra has just committed murder."

"…Laughton, … Imagination, a word I think …"

"She is describing her foul deed; she is unrepentant."

"…not in your vocabulary. For example…"

"Do you not think she would show some emotion?"

"…hestêka d' enth' epais' ep' exeirgasmenois…"

"Of course, sir; I was just…"

"…I stand upon mine act, yea where I struck. Do you not think in saying those words…"

"I realize, Laughton, that you may not have met a wife…"

"…she might reveal a flash of cruelty…"

"…and of pride? Hhmn? Defiant creature."

"… paiô de nin dis…"

"And then here…"

"I struck him twice…"

"… houtô d' epraxa,…"

"…and once and twice he groaned. He doubled up his limbs. kai peptôkoti tritên ependidômi, tou kata chthonos Dios nekrôn sôtêros…"

"… kai tad' ouk arnêsomai: hôs mête…"

"… euktaian charin.. And with that stroke committed him to Zeus that keeps the dead

"… pheugein mêt' amunesthai moron. And I confess it. I did use such craft he could not fly nor fend him against death."

"… houtô ton hautou thumon…"

"apeiron amphiblêstron, hôsper ichthuôn…"

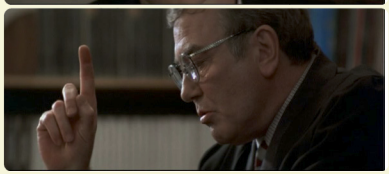
"… hormainei pesôn:…"

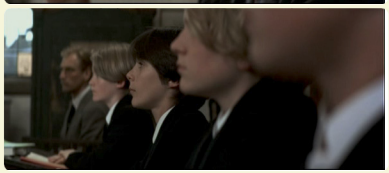
"… peristichizô. I caught him in a net as men catch fish… plouton heimatos kakon. … No room, no rathole…"

"… kakphusiôn oxeian haimatos sphagên ballei m' eremnêi psakadi…"

"…in his loopless robe … paiô de nin dis…"

"… phoinias drosou"





"Very well, you may leave."

"Goodbye sir…Goodbye, Mr. Crocker-Harris… Thank you very much, sir…"

"Goodbye, sir…"

can be seen presumably judging the harshness of Andrew's methods. Another student makes a face to Wilson as Andrew begins to comment on the action of the play, and Andrew's impassioned reading is met with blank stares all around except for Taplow. Perhaps the other students know they are in the presence of something out of the ordinary, but only Taplow seems to be getting it in any real way. As Andrew becomes swept up by the poetry he loses all sense of the students, and we see him in a close-up profile which seems to dissociate him from the class. In the end he stands before them reciting Greek without bothering to translate it, and the bell rings to bring everything crashing back down to earth.

The difference between the Figgis interpretation of *The Browning Version* and that of Asquith is probably best represented by the scene in Figgis's film in which Andrew tells Laura that he has had enough. It replaces the scene in Asquith's film during the fireworks at the Headmaster's house when Andrew tells Millie he will not be going to Bradford with her. In Asquith's film Andrew and Millie stand side by side on the terrace almost like statues. Much of the scene takes place in the dark with only the occasional burst of light from the fireworks illuminating their faces. They hardly look at each

other, and it is the last time in the film that they speak to each other.

Figgis and Harwood relocate the scene to the couple's bedroom while they are getting dressed for the evening. It is the most intimate scene in the film, and there is a gentleness or tenderness as Andrew announces the end of their marriage, which is completely different from the coldness and bitter irony of Asquith's film. It is filmed with a warmth and with an eye to the remnants of intimacy and affection which still connect Andrew and Laura.

"Let me do that."

"You left Taplow's present behind. I put it…"

"… in your study."
"Thank you."

"It wasn't a very good impersonation."

"I'm … I'm sorry."

"Laura…"

"…We…uh…"

"…we inhabit different worlds, you and I…"

"…We always have; we always will…"
"What are you saying?"

"I'm saying, 'No.' I'm saying, 'Enough.'"

"Do you still expect me to come to your prizegiving?"
"I … I don't think either of us…"

"We'd better not keep the headmaster waiting."

"…has the right any longer to expect anything of the other."

"Right. Well, I'll leave first thing tomorrow morning then."
"As you wish."

The Music

Figgis says he was fired as the composer for *The Browning Version*, but that he salvaged some of what he wrote for use in *Leaving Las Vegas*. It is hard for me to imagine an emotional or physical world more alien from that of *The Browning Version* than the world of *Leaving Las Vegas*, and I am not sure what this says about the art of film music. Aside from the songs by Sting, Don Henley and Michael McDonald the music for *Leaving Las Vegas* is mostly moody or bluesy jazz with what I might call a vaguely surreal use of voice and synthesizer. It is intriguing to try to imagine the kind of intensity such a score might give to moments in *The Browning Version*, but it is also easy to imagine why the producers thought a more conventional score might be better.

The composer who replaced Figgis on *The Browning Version* was Mark Isham, whose score for *A River Runs Through It* (1992) had been nominated for an Oscar. Isham's parents were both musician-teachers, and he is a classically trained musician who studied piano and violin before settling on the trumpet. He played in some San Francisco orchestras before getting involved first with rock and then with progressive jazz. He played synthesizer and trumpet with Van Morrison's band for four years, and in 1983 he recorded his first solo album, which has been described as "an experimental blend of modern jazz and electronic music." Two of his subsequent albums had been nominated for a Grammy and a third had won one. His first film score was for Carroll Ballard's 1982 film *Never Cry Wolf*, and he had scored 34 films by the time he worked on *The Browning Version*.

Isham composed a little over 30 minutes of orchestral music for the film, including the three minutes of the final cue that play over the end credits. It is performed by the London Metropolitan Orchestra conducted by Ken Kugler, and Isham plays the flugelhorn solos. In his newsletter for 1994 Isham describes the score as more orchestral that the others he had done, and he calls the music for the end credits "some of the best orchestral music" he had written. Perhaps more revealing is his description of the film as "about a man finding the courage to transcend all the things in his life that conspire against him." This seems to me to coincide with Figgis's interpretation of the material if one adds the idea that Taplow's gift helps Andrew regain his strength.

There are an additional 14 minutes of music in the film which are part of the content of the scenes such as the music the students are listening to in the dorm or the music played by the band on the cricket field. Surely the most striking of these is the Elgar "Ave Verum" performed by the choir at the evening concert. The film is almost bookended with sacred music starting with the hymn "Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven" and culminating with the "Ave Verum". The hymn has associations with Devonshire where the movie was shot and is

typical of the sort of hymn that would be sung at a school like this.[22]

The music obviously contributes significantly to the emotional impact of the movie, and its use is a clear indication of the difference in style or meaning separating the two films of *The Browning Version*. Asquith was also a musician, an accomplished pianist who had youthful ambitions as a composer. *The Winslow Boy*, *The Woman In Question*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, movies he directed immediately before and after *The Browning Version*, all had scores, but he used no music in his film of *The Browning Version* except stock music over the opening credits and ending. This may, of course, have been a purely financial decision, but it does make a difference in the impact of the film.

I find it very difficult to verbalize the emotional impact of music. I am not enough of a musician to analyze Isham's score in technical terms, and I am not sure that doing so would really help clarify the way in which the music works in the film.

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22 Henry Francis Lyte wrote "Praise, My Soul, The King of Heaven" for his congregation at Lower Brixham in Devon, England. Queen Elizabeth II chose this hymn to be sung as the processional at her wedding. In a posting on the internet Bloomfield alumna Holly Bunch wrote: "If my school ever had a school hymn it would have been Praise my soul the king of heaven… I don't think I've heard it since I left school but it conjures up images of teachers walking really slowly wearing robes (on prize day- not a regular occurrence…) and choir practices trying to teach the descant to clueless 4th years…"

There is one music cue in the film that works in a conventional manner, but which seems to me to be out of character with the rest of the score. This is the music used to highlight Trubshaw's discovery of the worms in his bed. The music sounds like something from a horror/suspense movie with perhaps a hint of a motif associated with students in other musical cues. The scene itself, of course, it similarly out of character with the rest of the movie and seems somewhat like a perfunctory obligatory payoff to the scenes involving Trubshaw. My initial reaction to the music for the scene when I listened to it closely was to wonder if the someone had felt the scene needed all the help it could get. The music builds tension for suspense and punches up the revelation of the worms in about as "literal" a way as music can.

Needless to say the rest of the score does not work in this manner. It serves to unlock emotional reserves, perhaps even to the point of risking sentimentality. Most of the cues ease in under the dialogue or sound effects in a way that catches the viewer unawares and sweeps him along with the emotional current already generated by the visual and dramatic elements of the scene. It becomes most noticeable in climactic moments when it comes into the foreground, but it never completely replaces the natural sound associated with the images.

Isham commented on the function of a film score in an interview with Christian DesJardins:

I've found over the years that sometimes characters can have themes, but I've not really found them that helpful to me when telling the story. I find that what the story is telling you is more important to identify thematically. Let's say you've got a story of a man and a woman, Sam and Grace, coming together and loving each other, then breaking apart, then coming back together again, and you have Sam's theme and Grace's theme, and when he's on the screen you play him and when she's on the screen you play her, and when they're together, you mix them both together. That's very cute, but it doesn't necessarily help you at all emotionally. What I would probably find more helpful is a theme for loneliness and a theme for the satisfaction of a marriage or a relationship and a theme that represents the fear of commitment or whatever it is that's going to happen in your story. One of those themes is going to supply the true emotions and the true goals and purposes of the story rather than just telling you she's off-camera, but he may be thinking about her, or that she is about to come to the door. You know what I mean? The pictures are already telling you that information, so the themes can be more about the bigger things – like honor or betrayal or love or trust – the various sorts of things that great storytelling wants to tell us about.[23]

23 DesJardins p.133f

While he may be using a bit of a straw man to make his point, it does help reveal how his score works. When I first started to think about the impact of the music, I felt that it occupied a space somewhere between a Puccini aria and contemporary show tunes primarily because of one motif picked up by the flugelhorn. When I began to listen more closely, it occurred to me that Isham may well have been taking his cues from the Elgar *Ave Verum*, and the more I thought about it, the more Elgar made sense as a frame of reference. Elgar, of course, has strong associations with British national pride and traditional "pomp and circumstance." He also has a sentimental strain in some of his work and made no distinction between his serious and his popular music. Isham's score uses soprano voices comparable to the voices in the boy's choir performing the *Ave Verum*, and there are tonalities and tempos comparable to those of sacred choral music in much of the score. The use of the *Ave Verum* is not without irony, but its presence and allusions to it in the score seem to me to add a note of seriousness to the whole affair. While there is no overtly religious theme in the story, there is an existential seriousness in Andrew's appraisal of his life and of the "noblest calling a man can follow." There are also themes associated with the school and with Andrew that have overtones of the kind of processionals or marches at which Elgar excelled. Despite the overuse of one of his *Pomp and Circumstance* marches, they still retain their sense of historical seriousness and inspiring social purpose.

One other the way in which I hear Isham's score is that someone listening to the score without knowing anything about the film might assume the music dealt with the seasons of spring and fall. This is probably because one of the motifs associated with Taplow reminds me vaguely of the opening of Copland's *Appalachian Spring*. I think it is reasonable to describe the motif in Isham's score in terms of burgeoning of youth in the same way I think Taplow is associated with the greenery of surrounding the school. Some of the motifs associated with Andrew have a melancholic elegiac quality that I think might conjure a sense of the coming of winter and death.

In the broadest, simplest terms I think Isham's score weaves together motifs which conjure youth, old age, tradition, progress, yearning, hope, despair, and loss in such a way as to provide a resolution which feels triumphant or celebratory despite overtones of sadness. This is also, of course, what I think the movie as a whole is "about."

The first music cue comes over the main title sequence in which Gilbert arrives at the school and Frank hurries to make it to the morning chapel. It does not begin right away but is set up by the first shot of Andrew sitting alone on the bench and then getting up to walk towards the camera (on his way to chapel). The first sounds in the film are the chapel bells ringing and some birds chirping. Three choirboys run past the bench where Andrew is sitting and then Andrew starts walking. We can hear his footsteps on the stone courtyard as the bells and birds continue. This is all perfectly naturalistic but it can also be described metaphorically. A bell tolls for Andrew as youth passes him by. He walks alone to meet his destiny which is then seen descending on the campus in the persons of Gilbert and Frank. The music starts quietly under Andrew and then takes over on the cut to the aerial shot of the cab bringing Gilbert to the school. The music is in a minor key and has foreboding or tragic overtones combined with an insistent tempo. The tonalities seems somewhat at odds with the verdant landscape surrounding the school, but the tempo works with the moving camera shots to pull us into the movie and to provide a sense of an impending collision of some sort. The cue modulates into a major key at the end as Gilbert is shown the historic hall on the way to chapel. A variation on the motifs of this cue are used under the scene in which Laura rides her bicycle into the village to see Frank.

The second music cue plays very quietly under the dialogue when Taplow approaches Andrew after chapel to ask if he has received his promotion. It introduces the motifs associated with the students and which I find reminiscent of Appalachian Spring in its combination of sustained tones with plucked strings. It has a tentative feel appropriate for Taplow's hesitancy in approaching Andrew or in attempting to get out of his extra work on the last day of term. It probably has less immediate impact on this scene than it does in setting up later scenes between Andrew and Taplow. The motif is reprised in the class Andrew enters and when

Andrew summons Taplow to the front of the class to explain why he laughed at the Latin epigram. Underneath Andrew's entrance the music has overtones of suspense and threat, but in the course of the scene with Taplow I believe it becomes associated more with the youth and vulnerability of the students.

One of the biggest music cues in the film comes as Andrew gets carried away in his reading of the Agamemnon for the class. This is a classic example of the use of music to bolster the emotional impact of a scene by sweeping the audience up in a way comparable to the way in which a character in the scene is swept up. It is also a nice example of the way in which music abstracts a naturalistic scene and provides a sense of the inner emotional or spiritual dimension of what can be seen or heard directly. It functions in the way a moving camera can function to provide the feeling that the viewer is being freed from literal reality. When the camera moves in on Taplow as he listens to Andrew read we are not simply being encouraged to imagine what is going on in Taplow's mind or heart. We are being transported with him. Andrew's reading takes on the force of an incantation as the music builds to a climax. The music in this cue has transformed the processional and choral associations into a martial spirit through the addition of snare drums and an increasingly march like tempo. There is a smell of victory in the air, but, of course, the whole thing is brought crashing back to earth by the ringing of the bell signaling the end of the period.

The cue that comes when Andrew is alone in the classroom and goes to the window to watch the students in the courtyard below is a reprise of elements from the music from the opening credits. It carries over into the shot of Frank walking to Andrew's house and helps convey the sense that everything in the day is converging inexorably towards Andrew's fate.

The music that plays beneath the final half of Taplow's private lesson as Andrew tells him about his own translation of the Agamemnon is a gentler version of themes from the cue for his reading in the classroom combined with the themes associated with Taplow. This is the moment in the film where the relationship between Taplow and Andrew seems to be transformed. Taplow has gained a new respect and sympathy for Andrew, and Andrew's recollection of his own youth has allowed his generosity and paternal affection for Taplow to blossom. There are none of the stern overtones of the earlier encounters.

The closest the score comes to sacred choral music is the music for the scene in which Taplow gives Andrew the book. This is clearly the pivotal moment in the story for Figgis, a moment when the repressed passion of Andrew's youth is fully retrieved, even if only temporarily, and a moment when he is validated in his vocation as a teacher. Once Andrew has understood that Taplow is giving him the book as a farewell gift and notices the inscription, the music begins playing quietly under the dialogue and the sound of Andrew's weeping.

The natural sounds never go away, but when Taplow takes his leave the music swells to something that is surely meant to have "heavenly" overtones with the soprano voices and the flugelhorn. Perhaps the nicest thing about this music cue is the decision to let it spill over the footage of the cricket match and the umpire's call for the tea break. One interpretation of this is that Andrew's emotional state is capable of infusing the entire world around him. At the very least it permits the film to cut away from Andrew and let the audience down gently. Exactly how Andrew returns to the world of the cricket match and tea is left to the viewer's imagination. We next see Andrew walking in front of the scoreboard just before he is accosted by Trimmer and Newton.

It is worth noting that the music for the scene in which Laura punctures Andrew's mood is the source music of the quintet playing a Gilbert and Sullivan medley for the luncheon. Andrew walks past the quintet as he makes his way to the table. The light festive music seems suited to his mood as he congratulates Fletcher and joins the others at the table with Laura. It is mostly buried in the ambient sounds of the luncheon as they talk, but there is just enough of a sense of it to let it become an ironic counterpoint which emphasizes the insidiousness of Laura's explanation.

After Frank leaves in pursuit of Andrew there is a seque to a musical cue beginning under Laura's comment about Andrew's "strength" and continuing under the shots of Frank looking for Andrew. This music functions again to lift the viewer out of the completely naturalistic scene into that slightly abstracted level which seems to provide more direct access to the characters inner lives.

The music cues during and after the scene between Frank and Andrew in the library help solidify the way in which this scene parallels the scene in which Taplow gives Andrew the book. In both cases Andrew has left the group because he wants to be alone to deal with a blow he has just received. Frank like Taplow pursues him and persists in disturbing him. Frank also offers Andrew something and Andrew responds, but of course what Frank offers is the revelation that his wife has been unfaithful and advice to make a new start for himself. Andrew responds initially by opening up to Frank but ultimately he rebuffs his offer to help by suggesting he not takes sides. The net effect of the scene is the complete antithesis of the scene with Taplow and the music here is elegiac or even tragic rather than uplifting.

There are two separate music cues for the scene in the library. The first, which plays under the dialogue between Frank and Andrew regarding his marriage, is unrelentingly somber and tragic although very subdued and may be a culmination of the thread of the score that started under the opening credits. The impending forces have fully collided with Andrew. He has been dealt every blow and even sees Taplow's gift as a blow. Rather than recalling his youthful literary ambitions and his sense of his vocation as a teacher, he

is moved to review the inherently doomed nature of his marriage. The blindness with which he entered into the relationship is now comparable to the supposed naiveté with which he received Taplow's gift. Even though Andrew describes his situation as "not very tragic" the music underscores the depth of his pain.

This first cue ends as Frank says "I'd like to help you" signaling an end to the first part of the scene. Andrew's response constitutes a clean break. Only after he has rebuffed Frank and is left alone is he able to allow the full emotional impact of the moment to engulf him. The second begins after Andrew replies and Frank starts to leave. It swells as we see Andrew alone and immediately pours over slow motion footage of the conclusion of the cricket game. It is built largely from a five note motif, which becomes associated with this relationship with Laura and which seems to express both a longing and a sense of loss. It will be taken up again in the music at the very end of the film where it is resolved in a bit more triumphant sounding way.

The slow motion footage of the end of the cricket game is the most abstracted visual sequence in the film and the natural sounds have reverberation added to them to achieve a similar level of abstraction. Perhaps more than any other time in the film the music at this point takes over and comes to the fore as the prism through which everything is viewed. What is conveyed is the extent to which Andrew is removed from the celebration going on around him. When he sees Laura and she starts to walk towards him in the beginning of a gesture of reconciliation, the camera rises above the crowd so that it can keep Andrew and Laura in view. The rising camera as opposed to a cut to a closer angle joins the music in transporting the viewer into the emotional realm in which Andrew now moves, and it does this without making the post-game celebration seem ironic. Life goes on, and the celebration is still valid even if we are reminded of how oblivious Frobisher can be; but there is also another reality at this moment which takes precedence in the story.

The music continues into the scene in the bedroom as Andrew and Laura are dressing for the evening concert. It ends as Laura continues her attempt to make up by saying, "It wasn't a very good impersonation." The moment when she actually says, "I'm sorry" as well as the following moment when Andrew says, "I'm saying, 'No'" have no music under them as though everything is now focused on the actual exchange expressed in the dialogue. The music has in effect been leading up to this moment and steps aside so as not to distract. Once Laura pulls away from Andrew to return to her mirror and put on her blouse, there is a new music cue which reprises the motif from the previous cue. It continues until Laura asks if he expects her to come to the prize giving ceremony. Andrew's response which defines the break in their relationship again plays without music.

There is evidence of some last minute changes in the score for scenes in the morning of the prize giving. Isham composed a cue entitled "Goodbye" which is 2:27 long on the CD for the score. In the cue sheets for the film as released only 0:08 of this cue is used and the music which actually accompanies the moment when Laura and Andrew say goodbye as Foster carries out her bags is a reprise of the music for the scene in which Frank looks for Andrew after the luncheon. (A cue called "Defiant Creature" which is 0:51 long.) It is probably pointless to speculate about what occasioned this change of plan. The full cue called "Goodbye" has a long slow build to a climax, which is fairly somber – I would say almost funereal. The "Defiant Creature" cue works well with the quiet awkwardness of the scene, and is also thematically more closely related to the other cue associated with Andrew and Laura. After Andrew leaves there is a brief cue, which sounds like it may be just the last chord of the "Goodbye" cue and which ends as Frobisher says "Ah, Andrew, there you are."

There are, of course, music cues for the prize giving ceremony. The first helps sustain the mood as we skim across the surface of the actual prize ceremony and cutaway to Laura leaving the house. The second begins as Andrew breaks away from his prepared remarks to make his spontaneous apology. The third swells with the applause at the end of his remarks and carries over to the scene in which he exits the hall and is greeted by his colleagues. It stops before Taplow comes up to say goodbye. The emotional function of these cues is fairly obvious, and they surely help distract from any questions about the logic of the action (Why is Andrew last to exit the hall when he seemed to be leaving at the end of his speech?) or believability of the reaction to the speech.

The final music cue starts just before Laura gives Andrew a kiss on the cheek and carries all the way through the end credits. It attempts to resolve things in an upbeat way while maintaining much of the elegiac tone. The soaring flugelhorn and soprano voices provide the uplift, but the theme and some of the harmonies recall the sense of loss and yearning. The mixed effect is, of course, much like the mixed effect of the movie as a whole.

Conclusion

The Browning Version was selected for competition at Cannes in 1994 when *Pulp Fiction* won the Palme D'Or. Its screenplay was nominated for a British Academy award, and the Boston Society of Film Critics gave Albert Finney their award for best actor. It was also selected for competition at Cameraimage, a Polish festival focusing exclusively on cinematography. It apparently only grossed $464,423 in its US theatrical release[24], and Figgis has described it as a film which he loves but which "got dumped. It got only a two-theater release."[25]

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24 http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0109340/business

25 LA Times, Friday, July 25, 2003, p. E18

Figgis's *The Browning Version* is a movie that can always bring tears to my eyes. The simple fact that something can make me cry is hardly a reason to value it, and there is obviously something else that makes a five-handkerchief movie a memorable experience. I remember the second movie my son saw when he was probably three was a Lassie movie, and at one point, when Lassie was separated from her family and maybe even presumed dead, I looked over and realized my son was very upset. I immediately thought "Why am I subjecting him to this?" He was, of course, elated by the end when Lassie was reunited with her family and all was right with the world; but I took away a question, which I have never resolved to my complete satisfaction.

The core issue of course is sentimentality and its relationship to art or more importantly its function in the constitution of a healthy psyche. Needless to say as a kid I did not appreciate sappy, sentimental movies. I remember when I was probably six having to leave *The Wizard of Oz* when the Wicked Witch launched the flying monkeys, and my mother taking me across the street to another theater where we saw some romantic melodrama while the rest of the family stayed the course on the yellow brick road. I recall nothing about the movie I saw except a vague sense of a soft gray image of a car and a couple somewhere in the countryside. Eventually I learned to like being frightened by movies (or not being frightened when I was supposed to be), and I know in retrospect that like any child I responded to *Bambi* or *Pinocchio* because my emotions were played like a fiddle; but I do not recall consciously liking a movie because it tugged on my heartstrings until I was well into my twenties. I have a wonderful memory of watching *Random Harvest* on TV with my then future mother-in-law and how surprised she was that I could like such a sentimental movie. I don't know that it had moved me to tears, but I had clearly come to appreciate sentimentality.

The movies that made me want to make movies tended towards the cerebral or existential. I was moved by them, but not in a way that provoked tears. Bergman, Antonioni, Fellini, Godard, Truffaut, Kurosawa, or Satyajit Ray did not make tearjerkers. Their films may have been emotionally devastating at times; they might have left me drained and exhilarated at the same time; but they did not make me cry.

I am probably moved to tears fairly often by movies, but I have trouble recalling which ones did. I had to think for a while before I recalled how I wept both times I saw a Swedish film called *As It Is In Heaven*, which was nominated for Best Foreign Language Film in 2005. Normally I recall that I liked a film and perhaps that I found it "very powerful" but I would be hard pressed to say for sure whether it made me cry. I can guess whether a film might have made me cry. For instance I suspect there is a better chance that I cried during *Shadowlands* than during *The Remains of the Day*, to choose two films comparable to *The Browning Version*. Nonetheless I regard

The Remains of the Day as the best of the three and probably the most moving. It just does not happen to push the buttons that open my tear ducts.

At some point in my young adult life I realized I am a complete sucker for a reconciliation scene. I associate this realization with seeing a performance of *The Merchant of Venice* and being amazed by how moved I was at one point. It is no wonder to me, given the emotional realities of my childhood, that I should have a deep involvement with fantasies of reconciliation; but I do have some difficulty reconciling my sentimentality with what I feel are the "deeper" aspects of my sensibility. Developing a love for films enabled me to appreciate a wider range of films old and new, and I began to see value in movies that I might have earlier dismissed as manipulative and sentimental. I still knew, though, that sentimentality was suspect, and my attempts to draw the line separating art from sentimental trash have generally floundered.

Sentimentality connotes an imbalance between the heart and the head, a tendency for ones emotional responses to overwhelm more cerebral responses and cloud perception or judgment. In literature, drama or cinema sentimentality is associated with the use of narrative techniques or rhetorical devices for the sole purpose of eliciting an emotional response, which seems to be an end in itself. With comedy laughter seems to justify whatever means are used to elicit it. One view of entertainment holds that the same is true for emotion. Anything that provokes emotion is justified in direct proportion to the strength of the emotion, although some discretion must be exercised in the choice of emotion. The theoretical basis for this kind of aesthetic would seem to be the idea that most people lead such boring, depressing lives that they will buy a ticket in order to experience some kind of emotion. This is why sentimentality is associated with cynically manipulative narratives at least in the minds of those who feel the arts serve a higher purpose than a roller coaster.

When I start to analyze my own sentimentality I tend to recall three watershed moments associated with my work. The first was a moment when I was working on a montage of clips from Chaplin's films to be used on the Academy Awards. I was winding through a 16mm print of *City Lights* in search of a clip from the ending that was on the list of things I was supposed to use. I had never seen *City Lights*, and I was viewing it on a very small viewer at about two or three times normal speed. When I found and viewed the scene where the flower girl realizes who Charlie is tears welled up in my eyes. I was amazed by the power of Chaplin's film, and it seemed to me that he took sentimentality to the sublime in this scene.

I felt the same way about *Limelight* when I saw it, and the second moment I recall was also in an editing room when I was making a documentary on Chaplin's life. I cut to some home movies of Charlie and Oona with their infant children on a lawn after part of the scene from *Limelight* in

which the Claire Bloom character realizes she can walk again. There is an overwhelming music cue in the scene, which I let play over the home movies. The result to my mind was absolute magic, and I laughed out loud because I was so exhilarated to have hit on this moment. I knew that it would have a very powerful emotional impact on some viewers as it did on me, but I was also aware at the time of thrill of being able to make something that was going to affect others. I later bristled when I read one description of my documentary as "slick and manipulative" because I also felt it was operating on a deeper level, but I was gratified when someone who had been skeptical that a documentary about Chaplin could make them cry confessed that it had.

The third moment that comes to mind in connection with my own sentimentality is of a completely different sort. In my forties I received what I felt was a devastating blow in my career, and I recall doing three things in the aftermath. The first was to listen to one of the slow movements of a Mahler symphony and let it flush all the tears out of my system. The second was to look up and read Macbeth's soliloquy "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow…" and the third was to find and read T.S. Eliot's "Ash Wednesday." The point of this is that I turned to certain bits of artistic creation for some kind of catharsis or consolation in a moment of extreme emotion. This is the flip side of wanting art to provide or provoke emotion, and it seems to me to offer better access to what the point of art may be. It also connects with the desire that I have felt to create some kind of tangible expression of the amorphous feeling constituting what I felt was most "real" in my consciousness or experience.

This is not the place to develop or adopt a comprehensive theory of art, but I will say that I find the ideas developed by Susanne Langer in *Philosophy in a New Key, Feeling and Form, and Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling* to be the most promising starting point for such a theory. I suspect that if would be very difficult to formulate anything but the most general kind of theory that did justice to all the different ways in which movies work on viewers and all the reasons the experience of viewing movies is valued by viewers. Even more difficult is the task of justifying judgments about how or why one movie is better than another. I do think, however, that my response to Figgis's film stems from the fact that the film is a well-constructed analog of a type of experience that has profoundly colored or shaped my life. Identifying with Andrew Crocker-Harris is, of course, the key to a connection with the film, but it is developed and enhanced by visual, musical and conceptual themes woven together in the film.

Paradoxically the fact that I love Mike Figgis's *The Browning Version* does not mean that I can unhesitatingly declare it to be a "great" movie. I do not think it is on a par with *Contempt*, and I know perfectly well that it works for me in ways that it does not work for other people, many of whom share most of my taste in movies. This is

only to say that there is a very large personal component in my response to *The Browning Version*, ranging all the way from a mild case of anglophilia, especially with regard to English academic traditions, to a lifetime of frustration which expresses itself as a sense of failure.

My favorite critical comment on the film is Terrence Rafferty's New Yorker review in which he says:

> It would be easy to make fun of "The Browning Version," to ridicule both the movie's old-fashioned well-made-play construction – the hero's humiliations click into place with almost unseemly efficiency – and the nearly self- parodic Englishness of the conception: only a British playwright, one feels, would try to bring down the house with a ringing speech about failure. … But, outdated as the piece may seem, the new movie is strong and affecting – perhaps because neither the director nor the star has worked with this sort of material before, so neither has the luxury of treating "The Browning Version" as business as usual.[26]

Rafferty admires mainly Finney's performance, which he sees as uncharacteristically restrained and "all in his eyes." He seems to credit Figgis mainly with letting Finney perform and with using the camera in such as way as to catch "every flickering change in his expression." He concludes:

> The best thing about this performance is that Finney, by venturing outside his normal range as an artist, seems to transcend the rather narrow, fragile pathos of Rattigan's drama. This "Browning Version" isn't just an exercise in wistful resignation, a midlife elegy for dashed hopes. Finney's heroic acting proves that it's never too late to reinvent yourself.

Two things strike me about the difference between Rafferty's enthusiasm for the film and my own. First, it is very rare that I find an actor's performance the main reason I like a movie. I can appreciate a good performance, but if I really like a movie it is because a performance is part of a whole in some way. The thrill is not just the enjoyment of a virtuoso performance. One of the reasons I can sometimes enjoy seeing even mediocre movies repeatedly is often the pleasure of watching a performance, and there are times when I might say that the pleasure of seeing a particular performance is the only reason to watch a movie that I think is silly or otherwise unengaging. Nonetheless enjoying an actor's performance for its own sake is for me very different from responding to the film as whole. To some extent this may be because I am not all that attuned to the art of acting. Rafferty seems to be able to appreciate Finney's performance in a way that goes well beyond the kind of enjoyment I can get watching a certain shtick or even a finely observed creation of

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a character. It is as though for Rafferty the actor's performance is itself a work of art. The closest I can come to understanding this is a musical comparison. Maurice Andre could do things with a trumpet that completely transformed the pieces he was playing. The line separating the beauty of the performance from the beauty of the composition becomes blurred. Perhaps his artistry is fully revealing the beauty of the composition, in which case it is not the same as what Rafferty seems to be celebrating. The material from which Finney is creating his work is not the Rattigan drama or Harwood screenplay, it is his own life and career and persona. Rafferty may have just found a neat metaphor with which to wrap up his review by relating Finney's performance to the theme of the movie itself: Finney reinvented his acting persona in the way that Andrew-Crocker Harris attempts to reinvent himself in terms of his career and marriage. It may also be that there is a cultural dimension to movies that involves the iconographic status of actors to which I am relatively indifferent.

The second, and to my mind more important, difference in Rafferty's response to the movie is his assessment of the original material in terms of its "rather narrow, fragile pathos" or as "an exercise in wistful resignation, a midlife elegy for dashed hopes." I do not doubt for a minute that this may be an assessment shared by many others, but I personally do not think it does justice at least to the original play. Even if the earlier film took the material into this territory, I think perhaps Figgis deserves some credit for attempting to rescue it and take it somewhere else. Most of all, however, I feel that the original play was something much more substantial that this seems to suggest. There is no wistful resignation in the air as Andrew and Millie sit down to dinner at the end of the play. I am also hesitant to describe the play as elegiac, although I do not hesitate to describe one thematic element in Figgis's film or Isham's score as elegiac.

In Figgis's film the elegiac theme is resolved by or incorporated into a larger overriding theme to which Isham alludes with his "finding the courage to transcend." It is, as Rafferty implies, a theme of rebirth or reinvention. It is both a gift and a heroic reclaiming of self. It requires fortitude and inner strength, but it also requires openness to others despite the vulnerability that involves. Figgis seems to have moved the material away from its origins in Greek tragedy towards a Christian mythology in which it is possible to rise from the dead.

FRANK: A corpse can be revived.

ANDREW: I don't believe in miracles.

This theme is present in the play but Figgis brings it more to the fore.

Perhaps he just makes it more facile or sentimentalizes it. I am not sure how to evaluate this issue. I certainly respond to it emotionally rather than cerebrally, and I know that it is appealing to

deep-seated fantasies. It may be offering me encouragement, or it may just be allowing me to wallow in wish fulfillment. It may clarify my perspective on one aspect of my life by allowing me to feel it in ways I normally avoid or am unable to access.