

The Film within The Diary

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”The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.

When I came upon the diary, it was lying at the bottom of a rather battered red collar-box, in which as a small boy I kept my Eton collars. Someone, probably my mother, had filled it with treasures dating from those days.”¹

This is the beginning of Leslie Poles Hartley’s novel *The Go-Between*, written in 1953, and based on events Hartley himself had experienced a summer in his youth. Joseph Losey turned the novel into a film 1970, where Harold Pinter wrote the screenplay. I watched this film on television many years ago and I was profoundly moved without being able to figure out why. It is a sad and tragic story, where the events also keep haunting the characters by being unresolved and forgotten for a long time. I have over the years made several attempts to understand the films strong hold on some of my own emotions, and the reasons I have given myself have changed over time. But this is also very much what the film is about, memory and recollection. It is about not wanting to remember, of closing down because what has happened has been too painful. But by hiding these emotions away everything is left unresolved, creating a void that in the end becomes unbearable. The necessity of opening up for what has been left hidden takes over and a pilgrimage to the place where it all started becomes necessary. Thus an encounter with the place where it all started is a possibility to get access to a memory that has not faded over time, but due to its strong impact instead been sealed and hidden away.

Hartley’s story opens with a prologue where he finds the diary in its hiding place, and when he opens it he also opens up for revisiting his memories. What this story also has come to signify is the importance of reinterpretation, between medias, but also of

¹ L.P. Hartley, *The Go-Between*, The New York Review of Books, 1953, 2002, New York, p. 17.

the event in the course of time. Time changes our memories and mould them into something different, not only from the original events, but from our previous recollection of what has happened. Thus will all the stages in the transformation of the novel to screenplay, and then to film, change and add new perspectives to the original story. This transformation has thus similarities to the process of recollecting, a constant rearrangement of emotions and events. But what also plays a role here is the tools for remembering. *The Go-Between* as a novel opens with a description of the past as a foreign country, although it carries our own memories. The past is something unknown yet to be discovered and thus knowledge to be conquered. In the sentence that follows an old diary is found, and this initiates the telling of the story. A diary is an immediate recollection of the past day, thus the essence of what has gone by. By revisiting the diary this present becomes vivid again, and the impressions from these days tells about details long gone. This is how our memory works; smells, sounds, colours, patterns, touching a specific surface, all kinds of tactile experiences, can most unexpectedly make us remember situations and a particular emotional state that we experienced at the time. The diary is also what we connect with something written by hand, the simplest and most direct way to catch a mood or to describe details that at that particular moment plays a crucial role to form a pattern that facilitate an understanding of what one is going through. The diary is thus the selected information prioritized at a moment catching a certain mood. This information is not related to other images than those produced by the handwritten text, thus a highly subjective act. The diary therefore signifies the personal, while photographs always are closer to the general. Private photo albums tend to look alike although places and persons are different while the text in a diary is an intimate utterance, and thus also preserves experiences with a directness that can be much more painful than the photographic duplication of reality. Both the diary and the photograph are tools to help us preserve our memories, and when encountered with them we are often struck by discrepancies to the images we carry around in our consciousness. The distance between these recollections of past events are often bridged in fiction. Here are events like the summer Hartley experienced in his youth disguised, remoulded, and refined to present the essence of those intense emotions, presented in a manner that makes them possible to digest, with all the pain embedded in an elegant structure. But when this structure is reworked to fit into another medium the recollection is reinterpreted, thus a subjective response to the original story. By adding emotional reactions in this

process other layers are added to the story, where specific parts are enlarged. Pinter develops a screenplay with another time structure to emphasize how the past has been defining the grown up man's whole life, playing with the representation of present and past in film. But what is striking is that Hartley himself uses the filmic image to describe how the past, left as a frozen image, has had a paralyzing effect on him through out life.

THE NOVEL

To get closer to the films impact on me I required the novel and found it just as moving, leaving me with the same haunting feeling of how the unresolved cast shadows over our lives. In an introduction to the novel Colm Toibín stresses the fact that it is based on autobiographical events, thus writing it was an actual recollection for Hartley. More than that, it was also a belated emotional awakening, in the novel carried out through a trip to the place where it all happened, and for Hartley himself by turning what had happened into fiction. In David Caute's biography on Joseph Losey it is mentioned that Hartley himself informed Losey about the autobiographical background for the novel:

“Writing to Losey, Hartley explained the genesis of the novel. He was sixteen years old when he personally experienced his own Norfolk summer of 1911. ‘The house where I actually stayed as a boy was Bradenham Hall in Norfolk, somewhere between Wendling and East Dereham...It belonged to the Rider Haggard family, who let it to some well-to-do coal merchants called Moxey: their son was my school friend, who asked me to stay...All I can remember of the house was the double staircase, the cedar tree in the garden and the Deadly Nightshade in an outhouse.’”²

The Go-Between is thus a fictional rearrangement of the events from that summer, but still very close to what actual happened. In the novel young Leo Colston are invited to spend some weeks during summer at his school friend Marcus' house. It soon becomes clear that Leo comes from a less wealthy family and feeling awkward, makes his best to fit in. Leo's servility is spotted by Marcus' sister Marian, that soon finds a way to use him for her own purposes. When Marcus gets the measles and Leo is left on his own, she asks him to take messages to a farmer nearby, without a proper explanation to what the messages are about. Leo takes a liking to the farmer, Ted

² David Caute; *Joseph Losey: a Revenge on Life*, Faber, London, 1994, p. 253.

Burgess, and enjoys his new importance. But when he finds out that Marian and Ted are in love, he feels betrayed. Marian's fiancée, Viscount Trimingham has also arrived to the estate and Leo, feeling uneasy, wishes to stop taking the letters. Since Trimingham owns the house but cannot afford to live in it, will the marriage give him his estate back, while Marian's family will move up on the class scale. But Leo is manipulated to continue, while tensions are growing between the family members. For Leo's thirteenth birthday a party is thrown for him, where it is told that Marian has a special gift for him. But by mistake Marian has set her rendez-vous at the wrong time, and everybody waits in vain for her until Mrs. Maudsley, her mother, furiously grabs Leo and drags him off to the outhouse where they find Marian and Ted together. This event causes a breakdown for Leo whom is sent home. The novel's actual recollection stops here, and what happened for Leo and the rest of the family is accounted for in the epilogue. Ted went home and shoot himself. Marian married Trimingham but within that marriage gave birth to Ted's son. When Leo's finds the diary and decides to go back he meets Marian again after all these years, finding her selfish and lonely. She asks him for a favour again, without taking responsibility for the damage she has done.

What I find interesting when reading the novel is to follow how Hartley describes this breakdown, and especially the lack of will to remember.

“To my mind's eye, my buried memories of Brandham Hall are like effects of chiaroscuro, patches of light and dark: it is only with an effort that I can see them in terms of colour. There are things I know, though I don't know how I know them, and things that I remember. Certain things are established in my mind as facts, but no picture attaches to them; on the other hand there are pictures unverified by any fact which recur obsessively, like the landscape of a dream.”³

What Hartley is doing here is turning the denial into hazy, sometimes blank images, that shifts between black and white. The wiping out of the event makes it an untouchable pain, just a shadow, and yet so defining. Forgetting can be an act of surviving. The description of the difficulty to remember the events are found when the story starts to unfold, thus emphasizing how remembering is indeed an effort. The shadows start to fill out the blanks, and some recurring images triggers the

³ L.P. Hartley, *The Go-Between*, The New York Review of Books, 1953, 2002, New York, p. 45.

remembrance of others. Finally these images start to form a pattern, and the past is appearing again. But what happens with these buried memories over time, are they really left untouched just because they are hidden away? What Hartley refers to as the landscape of a dream, could be this uncertain area between what actually happened and what time adds to these experiences. The frozen memory is not isolated as such, but it affects us in a less predictable manner by slipping into our consciousness when we least expect it. In the novel it is the finding of the diary that makes Leo recollect that summer, not through the description of the traumatic events since these pages were left blank. But by reading the young boy's dry notes from that time the old man finally finds the courage to deal with these memories. Hartley describes it like this in the epilogue:

“As to these ‘others’ of Brandham Hall, somehow I could not think of them as going on after I had stopped. They were like figures in a picture, the frame enclosed them, the two-fold frame of time and place, and they could not step outside it, they were imprisoned in Brandham Hall and the summer of 1900.”⁴

Although this could be one of the pictures hanging in a golden frame at Brandham Hall, this to me is a cinematic image. Film is a two-fold frame of time and place and in this particular image the film has indeed been halted, for a very long time. Here the halted image represents the frozen memory, untouched but yet with a forceful impact. But Hartley lets the film start again and continues: “The figures in the picture started moving again; curiosity stirred in me again. I would go back to Brandham and find out what had happened after I left.” Here the memory finally is touched and not just in the mind, but with the desire to actually revisit the place where it all happened. Maybe this is the only possibility for something that happened such a long time ago, what has been hidden away in the mind is here present through the same tactile experiences. Smells and colours make the memories present in a manner that a dusty diary never would. But this is possible because of the distance in time since places we visit regularly would not give us this kind of experience. For Leo is the purpose of the trip more concrete, he wants to find out what happened to the people from that summer and these people have aged like him. He finally encounters Marian after all these years and through their conversation it becomes clear that they both have found a way

⁴ L.P. Hartley, *The Go-Between*, The New York Review of Books, 1953, 2002, New York, p. 312.

of erasing what actually happened, and it is clear that Leo is the one that has suffered the most. Marian has chosen to live with the lies, she married because she had to, but insists on talking about the love affair with Ted as a beautiful thing, that they shared with Leo. This is indeed devastating since it reveals how she also have decided to lie about the fact they hurt a child by using his trust for their own purposes. When Marian talks with Leo there is not a hint of remorse. She has chosen to accept lies, not only in her life, but also by following rules set by others. The pain inflicted on Leo hurt so much because it touches both the loss of innocence, but also that of trust. Since being linked to a sexual incident this trust is also linked to sensuality, and it is apparent that this has not been a part of Leo's life as a grown up. But is sensuality possible without trust, and is any close relationship to another human being possible without trust? By taking this possibility away from the young boy, attachment to someone else seems not to have been a possibility for him as a grown up. Leo finally dares facing what made him lose his trust, Marian, and realizes that she has not changed the least but instead asks him for a final errand. This time she wishes that he should tell her grandson that her love affair was a beautiful thing and nothing to be ashamed of. He walks out of the house, amused on Marian's behalf, considering her caught in her own self-deception. But then he slows his steps down and reconsiders what she just proposed:

“With every step I marvelled more at the extent of Marian's self-deception. Why then was I moved by what she had said? Why did I half wish that I could see it all as she did? I hadn't promised to and I wasn't a child, to be ordered about.”⁵

Here he has a choice, he can go away or he can fulfil Marian's wish. But what would he have gained by going back now without making the whole journey? The novel finishes with this sentence:

“But I didn't, and hardly had I turned in at the lodge gates, wondering how I should say what I had come to say, when the south-west prospect of the Hall, long hidden from my memory, sprang into view.”⁶

So to break the spell Leo has been under for all these years it is not just necessary to revisit the hall, but to follow the direction given by somebody else. Trust is about

⁵ L.P. Hartley, *The Go-Between*, The New York Review of Books, 1953, 2002, New York, p. 326.

⁶ L.P. Hartley, *The Go-Between*, The New York Review of Books, 1953, 2002, New York, p. 326.

losing control, and about daring to listen to what someone else has to say. By hiding the memories away, without taking them out in the open and looking at them from different points of view, did he go nowhere, but where stuck in the frozen film image himself. Going this final errand for Marian was not so much about making her a favour, but about creating an opening within himself to other people. The only way to get over the trauma is to go back to the person who caused it, and to make an effort to understand what made her do it. When Leo decides to go back to the hall he is not only daring to face the past, he is also daring to trust the person who caused him so much pain. This is where he starts moving forward again, by daring to trust and hopefully will this bring him back the ability to again experience a sensuality similar to that, of that summer long ago.

THE SCREENPLAY

Joseph Losey is an American director that during McCarthy's hunt on people with left-wing tendencies in Hollywood were blacklisted and moved to Britain where he re-established himself. Influenced by Brecht, Losey directed one of his plays in Hollywood, the director's films often involves aspects on society and specific environments. From Brecht he also took a liking for the exaggerated and theatrical, avoiding naturalism in favour of less subtle and more expressive situations. Losey were deeply influenced by European auteurs and in his film *Eve* (1962) he even used Michelangelo Antonioni's photographer and filmed in Venice with some clear references to some of Antonioni's films. But this should be seen as a quality since Losey favoured the eclectic. However, what differed him from these European auteurs was the fact that he did not write his scripts himself, but was dependent on a talented scriptwriter. He found this in Harold Pinter that at the point was an upcoming dramatist. They made three films together, *The Servant* (1963), based on a novel by Robin Maugham, then from a novel by Nicholas Mosely, *Accident* (1967) that was followed by *The Go-Between* (1970). David Caute mentions in his biography on Losey how the director had wanted to turn *The Go-Between* into a film for many years, and also had involved Pinter in these plans:

“In October 1963, before *The Servant* opened in London, Losey pressed Pinter whether he'd read Hartley's novel. Pinter replied: ‘I think *The Go-Between* is superb...It's wonderful. But I

can't write a film script of it. I can't touch it. It's too painful, too perfect, if you know what I mean'.”⁷

Thus it wasn't obvious how it could be turned into a film, and apparently Pinter spent some time on a first draft that he later rejected. In the final screenplay Pinter finds a way to deal with how the past constantly lives within us, affecting our decisions and emotions. What he had to do was to find another way to incorporate the diary within the film, combining the schoolboy's neat observations in the diary with his real and more sensuous impressions of that summer. Caute describes the screenplay as a complex structure made to emphasize the actual going between that novel deals with, between the past and the present:

“In dispensing with the prologue and epilogue of the *Go-Between*, Pinter resorted to a bolder strategy; the summer of 1900 holds the main story, while interwoven flash-forwards to the late 1950s provide a subsidiary narrative whose cross-references are often achieved by a disjuncture between image and sound.”⁸

Instead of keeping Hartley's strict form of a prologue and epilogue in the present, and the retelling of the events from the boy's perspective, based on his own notes in his diary, is Pinter intermingling the present with the past through images and voice-over.

The prologue and epilogue becomes a flash-forwards that appear unexpectedly and without any explanation, but with a clearly different mood. The sunny summer is here replaced with gloomy weather, rainy and greyish, appearing as a cold contrast to the summer's heat. These flash-forwards appear at a higher frequency throughout the film, and at the end they have taken over, and the past is left behind. These short glimpses makes the film surprising, and more complex and compelling than if we would have experienced it plainly as a period film. Here is the boy's future present, we get a sense of what he will become before he knows it himself. It is a feeling of something inevitable, the loss of innocence, here taking place in a brutal manner.

It is interesting to see how Pinter introduces the novel's famous opening sentence, placing it within the summer of 1900:

⁷ David Caute; *Joseph Losey: a Revenge on Life*, Faber, London, 1994, p. 254.

⁸ David Caute; *Joseph Losey: a Revenge on Life*, Faber, London, 1994, p. 261.

“Exterior. English countryside. A river. Summer. Day. The river comes out of the shadow of a belt of trees. It flows gently through the weeds and rushes. Heat haze. Steam rising from the rushes.

Sound of approaching horses’ hooves. A pony carriage drives by on the road, glimpsed only fragmentarily through the leaves. It passes.

Silence.

The camera is still, looking through the leaves towards the silent road. In the distance, a 1900 farm machine, horse drawn, can be seen, moving slowly.

Sound of the flowing river. The voice of an elderly man, COLSTON, heard over:

COLSTON’S VOICE (OVER)

The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there.”⁹

We are reminded of that this is something that has happened, a retelling of events. We arrive at the house with young Leo and his school friend and are experiencing the place with the same curiosity as Leo. Later, when Leo has had the unpleasant experience of realizing that he brought the wrong clothes and feels completely out of place, Marian will rescue him by proposing that she can buy him some new clothes. She has her own agenda though, and goes to Norwich with Leo to secretly meet Ted, and leaves Leo to amuse himself at the cathedral.

The script describes this scene but lets it be followed by a flash-forward:

“Exterior. Cathedral.

LEO wanders through the crowded market and stands to look up at the Cathedral.

Exterior. Village street. Long shot. Very still.

Morning.

PRESENT

The sky is overcast. (The sky is constantly overcast in all present-day shots.)

The street is more or less deserted. A couple of parked cars.

⁹ Harold Pinter, *Five screenplays*, Faber and Faber Limited, London, 1991, p. 287.

COLSTON stands in the distance, looking down the street.

LEOS VOICE (OVER)

Well it wasn't a killing curse, you see. There are curses and curses. It depends on the curse.

*The man begins to walk down the street.*¹⁰

Here Pinter lets the images of the grown up man revisiting Norwich be accompanied by the young boy's voice, eagerly telling about his skills as a magician. The innocent belief in miracles has been replaced with the painful experience of remembering how that innocence was lost. What Pinter achieves is to create an image of how we in our minds constantly live with our experiences, how we use them in all kinds of situations, sometimes helpful and sometimes merely obstacles.

Deleuze has described how film has developed from representing movement to at a greater extent deal with time. In *Cinema 2, the time-image*, he creates some interesting images himself to describe these ideas, one of them is the crystal of time, where he uses the crystalline structure to show how the passing of time in film can be represented through mirrors, where the slipping away is reflected in a series of mirror images, existing simultaneously and yet divided. Another image he uses to introduce some of Bergson's ideas on time is the sheets of past. Sequences in the film, representing another temporal reality, appear as sheets in the film. What Pinter is doing thus is in a way to create sheets of the future, not of something that has happened and thus works as an explanation, but as a prediction, in a sense a curse for Leo Colston himself. Deleuze writes about the sheets of the past in relation to Fellini:

“Depending on the nature of the recollection that we are looking for, we have to jump into a particular circle. It is true that these regions (my childhood, my adolescence, my adult life, etc.), appear to succeed each other. But they succeed each other only from the point of view of former presents which marked the limit of each of them. They coexist, in contrast, from the point of view of the actual present which each time represents their common limit or the most contracted of them. What Fellini says is Bergsonian: 'We are constructed in memory; we are *simultaneously* childhood, adolescence, old age and maturity'”.¹¹

¹⁰ Harold Pinter, *Five screenplays*, Faber and Faber Limited, London, 1991, p. 297.

¹¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2, the time-image*, The Athlone Press, Minneapolis, 1989, p. 99.

This is what Pinter tries to achieve with his screenplay, an experience of how we carry all these experiences within us, all of the time. Not just the grown up man living with his memories but the young boy with his hopes and expectations. Our old age plays a larger role in our adolescence than we usually think of, since it is the decision we make here that will form us, and take us to what we will become. Already here, by refusing to accept certain consequences will we let our lives go in directions that might disappoint us later. In that sense are we constructed in a memory that belongs to the future, and when we reach that memory we realize how much we already knew about it, through our actions, but without the ability to embrace the reality of it.

THE FILM

The sensuous nature of the story, the heat of the summer, the boy's curiosity and the secret passion was important for Losey, and Cauter accounts for the great care he took in creating this in the film:

“In his pre-production notes, Losey conveyed his overall visual image of the film: ‘The picture should look hot and like a slightly faded Renoir or Constable – the colours mostly gold and brown, the green minimized as much as possible under the circumstances. The skies and their clouds and the peculiar light of Norfolk ... also the chiaroscuro of the corridors and secret passages ... the present day sequences should stand out photographically.’”¹²

Here the recollection is carefully reconstructed to become that fixed picture from the past that Hartley describes in the novel, a faded but yet glowing image. But he also pays attention to create a subtle discrepancy between the images from that summer and from Leo's later visit, where the overcast weather sets another tone. Colin Gardner writes this about the present day sequences:

“Fifty years later, the film returns full circle to Leo's opening narration as he revisits the village, drawn by curiosity, nostalgia and a desire for some form of emotional exorcism.”¹³

Gardner thus suggests exorcism as a motivation, and indeed Leo needs to chase away the shadows but he also needs this through a confrontation. When he meets Marian

¹² David Cauter; *Joseph Losey: a Revenge on Life*, Faber, London, 1994, p. 260.

¹³ Colin Gardner, *Joseph Losey*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2004, p. 171.

she asks him for a last errand and this wish is in the novel fulfilled. But Losey changes this by letting Leo drive past Brandham Hall, instead of telling the grandson what Marian asked him for. The forgiving gesture has here been replaced with a refusal to let something that caused a lot of misery continue. If the grandson do not wish to marry because he feels that a curse is following the family due to Marian's illicit affair, then the line will die out. This also means that Mrs. Maudsley's plans for her daughter and her family, to rise socially, will not be fulfilled. Leo is here not punishing Marian, but Mrs. Maudsley and her snobbery. This is thus a liberating act in a different sense since it is a refusal to fulfil a pattern laid out by somebody else. This ending is more in line with Losey's radical views, where he himself had experienced how the political system in America during the 1950s caused severe damage to a lot of creative people's lives. Gardner mentions some of the qualities in the collaboration between scriptwriter and director:

“The common wisdom is that while Pinter softens Losey's didactic tendencies, teasing out the director's love of ambiguity and nuance while adding a spice of mordant wit to his Puritan dourness, Losey takes Pinter outside the confines of locked rooms into closer contact with the real world.¹⁴

In Pinter's ending the car actually stops, while Losey lets it drive by. Here could the answer to what fascinated me with the film in the first place maybe be found, since the refusal to follow what is already laid out is a condition for making art and being creative. Thomas Elsaesser writes in an essay on the film about how Losey in many of his works points out that spontaneity is not always an act of freedom, but just a concealed lack of knowledge about social determinants in our lives. Elsaesser thereby sets the scene, the passionate affair is not the revolt it was supposed to be, but instead a desperate act, to avoid these social determinants. The essay starts with a summation of the films plot where he states:

“As the story unfolds we come to understand why Leo has never married, and just what psychological damage the illicit passion, the secrecy, a child's trust and the adults' casual use of that trust has inflicted on Leo's life.”¹⁵

¹⁴ Colin Gardner, *Joseph Losey*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2004, p. 135.

¹⁵Thomas Elsaesser, *European Cinema, Face to Face with Hollywood*, Amsterdam University Press, p. 412.

It is here pointed out how the abuse of trust has inflicted the damage, and how hard it is to recover from such an experience. Leo's trust is also depending on a lack of knowledge about this unknown environment that the secret is a part of. Since everything is new to him he is easy to seduce, without the natural suspicion that would have made him harder to convince. But when he finally realizes what is going on it is too late to use that knowledge. Elsaesser sums up the finishing scene while making references to how knowledge is linked to creativity:

“The sudden acceleration, with frayed tempers at the birthday party, the growing tension of Mrs. Maudsley, the thunderstorm, the sense of an almost apocalyptic disaster, which fragments the narrative at the end into a series of explosive flashes, results from a perfect convergence of style and theme: the forces of sex explode the Maudsleys' world, while the direct representation of the sexual act makes the process of “symbolization” redundant: repression of sexuality created the void in Colston's life, but its emergence in his childhood destroys the magic universe of innocent sublimation, which is indeed also the universe of art. Knowledge, Losey seems to be saying – as in so many of his films – is always accompanied by loss, and a diminution of creativity.”¹⁶

Here the film's content is associated to matters beyond class and social determinants, and instead links the loss of innocence with a possible lost creativity. Elsaesser comments on a recurrent theme in Losey's films, that acknowledged knowledge often leads to a diminution of creativity. If we link this to Losey's own experience with the Hollywood system and political circumstances knowledge could also mean an awakening to realities. Losey indeed had experienced to have his creativity diminished by these systems, but he actually managed to create a kind of new innocence by moving to Britain where he re-establishes, and reinvents, himself as a director. Thus the acquired knowledge is transformed into a new take on his creativity, expanding his possibilities while yet informing upcoming enterprises. The loss of innocence should maybe therefore not be seen as something permanent, but instead as a condition for the creative act. Knowledge makes you lose your innocence constantly but through curiosity is it possible to re-establish an ignorance that might lead you to take steps in unexpected directions. To Hartley's own story have several layers been added through the novel, the screenplay and the film, layers that create a

¹⁶ Thomas Elsaesser, *European Cinema, Face to Face with Hollywood*, Amsterdam University Press, p. 419.

complex and compelling story but that stays true to the original experience. The intricate weave of images and words that are created in this process enlarges the original experience though, and puts it into a more general context, making the emotions accessible for an audience. Caute describes the expectations the participants in this process had to each other's contributions and describes how Losey's wife Patricia catches Pinter observing Hartley at a screening of the film:

“On 22 October, when the film was screened again, Patricia sat next to Pinter and behind Hartley; she was conscious of the young screenwriter observing the old novelist's reactions: Hartley was visibly moved. Losey asked him if the real ‘Mrs Maudsley’ had really dragged the boy like that to the outhouse in the year 1911. Hartley said, ‘Well, no, really I was just made to follow’.”¹⁷

By Hartley's remark it becomes obvious how close his account for the events of that summer is to what actually happened, and although the film enlarges and transforms these experiences, in a precise and yet compassionate manner, it still mediates the original pain.

¹⁷ David Caute; *Joseph Losey: a Revenge on Life*, Faber, London, 1994, p. 264.