

## Pathos as Narrative Glue: Marnie the Novel, Film, and Opera

Alina Bottez 

English Department, University of Bucharest, Romania  
alina.bottez@lils.unibuc.ro

**Abstract:** This article looks at several ways in which personal trauma is the source of *pathos* in the etymological sense of suffering and affliction, engendering social failure in Winston Graham's novel *Marnie*. Likewise, the study strives to demonstrate that both the literary original and its cinematic and operatic remediations are sparked into emotional cohesion by the narrative glue of pathos. From the perspective of both psychoanalysis and adaptation studies, this article reaches the conclusion that the open ending of the three versions also involves the reader/spectator in the process of narration – as Aristotle discovered in anticipation of Jauss's reception theory – and thus leaves it to them to decide whether healing from *pathos* can ever be reached by the protagonist

**Keywords:** *adaptation; remediation; transmediation; trauma; Marnie; pathos; Winston Graham.*



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## Introduction

Written in the first year of one of the most tumultuous decades in history and one of the most prolific in modern British literature, Winston Graham's novel *Marnie* responded to the many needs of its contemporaneous readership, whetted by the advent of the Sexual Revolution, the aftermath of the Second World War, the horrors of Vietnam War reports, the popularisation of crime fiction, the ever-growing interest in psychoanalysis, as well as the rise of beatnik and Flower Power philosophies.

Since pathos is the red thread that connects the ideas of this article, a psychological perspective is unavoidable, not in the already traditional meaning of Freudian or Jungian approach, but in that of probing the sources that lead to this emotional element in its original, ancient sense – that of suffering – especially in light of Galen's views. But focusing on two transmediations of the original novel, this article relies mainly on an adaptation studies approach in its second part. It sets out to demonstrate that all three media – literary text, cinematographic film, and opera – build the appeal of their narrative on the age-long tradition of pathos in its kaleidoscopic and polysemantic meaning, analysed both in its etymological sense<sup>1</sup>, and in its narratological one that harks back to Aristotelian theory.

The term *pathos* has extremely old linguistic origins, being derived from the Proto-Indo-European *ph<sub>2</sub>tós*, participle of *peh* ('to hurt'). If the word used in English today is a neologism borrowed directly from Greek in the modern age (the 1660s), vernacular European languages developed it from the deponent verb *patior*, *patiri*<sup>2</sup> in Latin, which means to suffer or endure. Etymologically, it led to the notion of *passion* – both as excruciating pain<sup>3</sup> and ecstatic pleasure. In its modern and international meaning, pathos has come to mean 'quality that arouses pity or sorrow'. It is thus indissolubly connected to the notion of trauma, another ancient Greek term that meant wound or damage.

The field of trauma studies in literary criticism is a fairly new one, as it rapidly soared in the mid-1990s. Early scholarship (mainly Cathy Caruth and Kali Tal) based their theories on the idea of trauma as an unrepresentable event, which is, in Michelle Balaev's terms, "a psychoanalytic poststructural approach that suggests trauma is an unsolvable problem of the unconscious that illuminates the inherent contradictions of experience and language. This Lacanian approach

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<sup>1</sup> For the sake of clarity, I have chosen to use italics for *pathos* when referring to its etymological meaning of pain, suffering or disease, and without italics when the term denotes the rhetorical feature.

<sup>2</sup> This has led to the formation of verbs used in everyday discourse in many Indo-European languages: *pâtir* in French, *patiiti* in Proto-Slavic, *a pătimi* in Romanian, as well as a number of nouns such as fiend in English, and many others.

<sup>3</sup> E.g. the passion of Christ; in time, certain languages have differentiated the two terms semantically. For instance, in Romanian, the neologism *pasiune* is now used only as 'great love'. But the much older word *patimă* means both suffering and pleasure.

crafts a concept of trauma as a recurring sense of absence that sunders knowledge of the extreme experience” (*Literary Trauma Theory* 1).

Such an approach is, in fact, highly applicable to Winston Graham’s novel *Marnie* and the string of remediations that it has engendered. Even if trauma studies are a recent critical and theoretical endeavour, in literature, suppressed trauma as a source of *pathos*, including both personal and social failure, is as old as Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*. In this play, the protagonist needs to engage in a process of retrospective detection combined with introspection in order to reconstruct a carefully concealed puzzle. Variations on the same theme have accompanied the process of dealing with trauma in literature for the twenty-six centuries that have elapsed since.

### ***Marnie*, the novel**

*Marnie* is an autodiegetic<sup>4</sup> novel written in 1961 whose action takes place sometime after 1956, probably between 1958<sup>5</sup> and 1960. The protagonist Margaret Elmer, nicknamed Marnie, is born in 1937 – part of the Silent Generation.<sup>6</sup> Generally characterised by a conviction that it was unwise to speak out, this generation was conservative, traditionalist, conventional and hard-working:

The most startling fact about the younger generation is its silence. With some rare exceptions, youth is nowhere near the rostrum. By comparison with the Flaming Youth of their fathers & mothers, today’s younger generation is a still, small flame. It does not issue manifestoes, make speeches or carry posters. They Are Grave and Fatalistic. Their Morals Are Confused. They Expect Disappointment. (“People” 1–7)

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<sup>4</sup> Tony Lee Moral’s view that this I-as-protagonist perspective is “almost anonymous” is quite interesting: “[Graham] found that the first person was almost anonymous, in the sense that the character never seemed to reveal anything particular about him- or herself to the reader. It occurred to Graham what a great idea it would be if Marnie had a quirk, but she didn’t reveal to the reader what that quirk was. Through her behaviour it would become obvious to the reader that she was slightly odd. In Marnie’s case her unusual behaviour was her frigidity and stealing, which had its genesis from her upbringing” (173).

<sup>5</sup> There is a reference to a very popular film, *Santa Clara*, and to the fact that the cinema that shows it has cashed in the greatest profits since 1956. Although it is not certain whether this is the film that Graham refers to, *The Star of Santa Clara* (German: *Der Stern von Santa Clara*) is a 1958 West German musical comedy film directed by Werner Jacobs.

<sup>6</sup> The demographic cohort formed of people born from 1928 to 1945 in the Western World – a less numerous wave due to the apprehensive atmosphere before the war and the hardships during the conflagration.

Marnie is a true representative of her generation. Quiet and keeping up appearances of perfect conventionality, she uses her hard work and her taciturnity to build a career of successful and prosperous small-time criminal. Her deeply set and long-suppressed trauma is closely connected to the reality of the Second World War and the mentality of the 30s and 40s in Britain. The whole narrative warp of this suspense novel is built around the title-character's endeavour to discover her formative trauma (psychological wound and damage) and the behaviour that reflects this trauma and becomes her *pathos* in the original sense – of both suffering and disease.

The novel starts by portraying Marnie as she is at the age of around twenty-two – a beautiful and clever young lady who works as a book-keeper and uses both her intelligence and her looks to deceive her employers, steal from them and proceed unimpeded elsewhere by assuming new fake identities. In Galen's<sup>7</sup> view<sup>8</sup>, “A *pathos*<sup>9</sup> of the soul is a state or event whereby one of the two non-rational (aloga) parts of the soul, the desiderative or the spirited overrides the judgement of the rational part, leading the person to inappropriate action – action, typically, which manifests an excessive or uncontrolled level of greed, lust or anger” (Singer, “Galen's Pathological Soul” 384). Marnie's psychological *pathology* surfaces as apparent greed – an obsessive-compulsive need to rob men as retribution for their having robbed her – a subconscious impression that she has because of her repressed memories. There is another excess in her case – not of lust, but of its opposite. The disgust instilled in her by men's sexuality as a child is translated as frigidity in her adult self.

In Stoic philosophy, *pathos* came to refer to a ‘complaint of the soul’: “succumbing to a *pathos* is an internal (soul) event which consists in the wrong response to presentations external to it (...), an error of reason” (Singer, *Psychological Writings* 209). This is yet another take on *pathos* that can be applied to the protagonist of the novel, as the ‘self-inflicted’ treatment that she devises for her trauma – larceny, impersonation, false identity, disguise, pretence, deceit, seduction, and flight from the scene of the crime – result in self-destruction as a consequence of faulty reasoning – a mistake that stems from her ignorance of the real root of her impulses.

As the action progresses, Marnie's new employer, Mark Rutland, falls in love with her. In the novel, he is also the victim of *pathos*, his pain having been

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<sup>7</sup> Galenos (129–c. 216), Greek physician, writer, and philosopher who exerted a great influence on medical theory and practice in Europe until the seventeenth century.

<sup>8</sup> In *Affections and Errors of the Soul* and *The Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, especially books Four and Five.

<sup>9</sup> Cicero suggested that the Latin word *morbus* corresponded to it, while Hippocrates used the term as illness or impairment (in Singer, “Galen's Pathological Soul”, 383, note 3).

caused by the loss of his twenty-six-year-old wife<sup>10</sup>, as well as that of his brother Tim, who has been killed in the Second World War<sup>11</sup>. This bereavement leaves him with his own feeling of inadequacy and, possibly, impostor-syndrome. In Marnie he probably recognises a kindred spirit, damaged and maladjusted. Mark realises she has stolen from him too, replaces the money out of his own pocket and manages to find her after she has run away. He uses his knowledge of her theft to blackmail her into marrying him and he proposes “marriage in the least conventionally romantic proposal scene in the history of cinema (if not of the human race)” (Rothman 354). From this moment on she is tied to him, her real name is used in the marriage registry, and her childhood nickname is used by her so-called new family and friends.

Marnie is not consciously aware of any trauma, but she acutely feels *queer*, as she keeps saying throughout the novel. Before her marriage, the visible effects of her unknown trauma, which render her socially inadequate and even dangerous, are her incapacity to form bonds of affection with any fellow human beings and her pathological need to lead a double life. After her marriage, other pathological streaks become apparent, namely her frigidity and her repulsion at any form of male touch, as well as her violent rejection of the idea of conceiving children in full Baby Boom<sup>12</sup>. Her suppressed trauma is enhanced by a new one – Mark’s spousal rape<sup>13</sup> during their honeymoon, which she provokes by infuriating him and saying that she has lied and never loved him. Hours later he apologises and asserts that “no man really wants it that way” (Graham 173), but in her the ‘*pathogen*’ has operated – she is filled with hatred, nausea, and the certainty of the futility of her life, which will make her try to commit suicide by drowning: “Marnie will be locked (...) on the cruise ship on an enforced honeymoon, held captive by a combination of blackmail and good intentions. The honeymoon bedroom will become a site of terror for the wife” (Jacobowitz 462).

All these forms of estrangement from mankind channel Marnie’s natural affection towards a horse, Forio<sup>14</sup>, who will be the recipient of all the warmth that she has to give and who is characterised by the fact that he cannot speak, thus making language unnecessary. This is relevant as, according to Barry Stampfl,

<sup>10</sup> A “brainy” archaeologist (Graham 64) who died of a disease – “Kidneys or something odd” (30).

<sup>11</sup> The loss of her first-born also leaves Mrs. Rutland, Mark’s mother, permanently scarred emotionally, and she will never find her younger son to be enough to fill the void left by her bereavement.

<sup>12</sup> Baby Boomers were the generation of people born between 1946 and 1964 during the demographic explosion that followed the restrictions of the Second World War.

<sup>13</sup> Historically, spousal/marital rape was not seen as such. Marital sex was seen as the husband’s conjugal right by law. The wife’s refusal was considered to be her unreasonable dereliction of duty. Mark, however, does not embrace this position. His deviation is brought about by human fallibility, by injured feelings, not by macho presumption.

<sup>14</sup> If we pursue the same etymological outlook, Forio would mean “carrier”, derived from Greek, so he would metaphorically be the purpose that keeps Marnie going.

“in our own modern / postmodern era, the trope of the unspeakable has attained particular prominence within trauma studies. (...) [and] the alleged unrepresentability of the traumatic event was widely accepted as a starting point of discussion, and has continued to be regarded as an intellectually respectable position even by those who disagreed with it” (*Parsing the Unspeakable* 15). In the other etymological acceptance of *pathos* – namely in its Epicurean perception as voluptuous pleasure –, riding this horse is the only passion that Marnie has. Mark will use her organic need of Forio to blackmail her into seeing a psychologist, Dr Romano, about her frigidity issues.

Ancient Greeks perceived *pathos* as a disease of the soul – *psukhē*, the term for vital spirit or soul, traditionally associated with affections and emotions. Later, in the modern age, the same term – psyche – came to be identified with the mind, the brain, the organ responsible for thoughts and reason, as well as sensations and emotional responses. In the antiquity, it was the soul that was considered to contain both rational and non-rational functions. Certain (medical) philosophers located it in the brain and were aware that the soul could also suffer from various ailments – *pathē psychēs*. Galen considered that “the rational soul, understood as the soul’s leading-faculty, the *hēgemonikon*<sup>15</sup>, is subject to a whole range of illnesses or impairments–impairments which arise from physical conditions of the brain, or affecting the brain; and these impairments, too, may be referred to as (...) *pathē* of the rational part of the soul” (Singer, “Galen’s Pathological Soul 385). This is the kind of *pathos*, of suffering, that the psychiatrist tries to heal in his patient Marnie.

Perceiving marriage as a trap and a prison, she decides to run away again and to steal from Mark once more. But her husband’s love has operated certain irreversible changes in her and she feels incapable of robbing his safe. She thus flees to Plymouth to confess all the truth to her mother, Edith Elmer – the one human being that she adores.

On getting there she finds out that her mother has just died. Before the funeral, she looks for pictures of herself and her father to put into her mother’s coffin – an unexpected sentimental gesture from an apparently cold person. Looking for the photos, she stumbles upon a newspaper clipping that reveals to her the sordid identity of her mother as well as the source of her own perpetual feeling of “queerness”, unleashing all the suppressed memories of her infancy. Her father had gone to war and her mother had felt lonelier than ever before, and had consequently taken to sleeping with soldiers only to be caught in the act by her husband and then divorced. Subsequently she had become pregnant out of wedlock and denied her pregnancy throughout the nine months, thus evincing serious *pathē psychēs* of her own, this severe bout of anosognosia revealing other older underlying conditions. She had finally given birth to a baby boy, strangled

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<sup>15</sup> Equivalent to Plato’s *logistikon*, or reasoning faculty.

him, wrapped him in a newspaper and slipped him under Marnie's bed – the psychological trauma that had marked her so strongly as to block her memory of it, thus leaving the core of her identity vacant and forcing her to explain her feeling of inadequacy without allowing her to access its terrifying reason. Edith's brother Stephen reveals to Marnie that his sister had herself been the victim of a dictatorial father who had forbidden all sexual manifestation in his obviously oversexed daughter, forcing her to lead a double life, which introduces heredity as a possible reason for Marnie's psychological lability.

All this triggers in Marnie desperate thoughts on insanity, received behaviour and inescapability. Retrieved memory allows Marnie to remember soldiers tapping on the window and her associating this noise with her removal from her mother's warm bed to the ever-cold bed of the guest room – a child of the Silent Generation, raised to be seen, but not heard. Her psychiatrist, Dr Roman, asks her at some point if she is really cold, which strikes him as improbable. Psychologically, this sensation is relevant, as Galen believed that both fear and loss of memory were caused by coldness (Singer, "Galen's Pathological Soul" 390, 392–3). Hence Marnie's frigidity both in its sexual, sensorial, and etymological meanings.

The dead child explains the protagonist's unconscious horror at the idea of having her own offspring, and the theme of the deranged mother who strangles her illegitimate baby and becomes deranged now sheds light on Graham's choice of the title character's name, Margaret – that of Goethe's protagonist in *Faust*,<sup>16</sup> who undergoes the same fate. Margaret means daisy and, as Elizabeth Silverthorne writes, "In the language of flowers the daisy can mean both deceit and innocence" (39). Marnie reflects both these symbolic connotations, being a serial swindler, but also absolved of guilt in retrospect, as she appears to act out of compulsion caused by distress, not due to an innate criminal bent.

Furthermore, "In Norse mythology, daisies are associated with the love goddess Freya. In this context, the daisy symbolizes motherhood, childbirth, sensuality, and fertility. For the ancient Celts, the spiritual meaning of a daisy comes from the belief that when a child dies, the gods will sprinkle their grave with daisies to comfort the grieving parents" (Karlsen 16). The subliminal association with dead babies is thus organic. The first origin-story of this flower, also Celtic – found in the poems of Ossian – is the tale of Malvina who mourned her dead child. She is consoled by the Maidens of King Morven, who tell her he has been turned into a daisy that "looked like an infant playing in the field; and it became, therefore, the very symbol of the innocence of a newborn baby" (Kell 16).

The permanent uncertainty around Marnie's capacity to love can also be associated with the well-known petal-plucking game played on daisies – "she loves me, she loves me not." Moreover, daisies are composite flowers – they

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<sup>16</sup> The protagonist's German name is Margarethe, or its diminutive Gretchen.

actually consist of many flowers combined into one –, which is a potent symbol for the character's multiple life of ever-changing identities. Nevertheless, an influence that seems more probable for Graham is Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, in which Ophelia offers Gertrude a daisy in her delirium and also dies by drowning adorned with daisy garlands, a context in which the flower is associated both with (Gertrude's) duplicity and with (Ophelia's) psychic *pathos* triggered by trauma.

The nickname Marnie preserves the initial part of the name Margaret which, in English, suggests the verb *to mar*, as the effects of her trauma are destructive both to herself and to society. Of course, the syllable also has the subliminal effect of being the same as in Mark, thus hinting at the fact that, eventually, the spouses are soulmates. Edith's double life – a diurnal existence of obsessive respectability, responsibility, and elegance, and a nocturnal life of debauchery – are reflected in her daughter's recurrent assumption of new names that should keep her true identity hidden, not only to social authorities, but also to herself. Not accidentally, Graham says she assumes a new name every nine months (*Marnie* 390), as these new masks are baby surrogates.

A sign of Marnie's eventual transformation is also connected to children and motherhood – the passage in which she encounters a crying child (Bobby) whose mother has recently died. She holds him, comforts him and returns him to his mourning father and siblings. The fragment is a *mise en abyme* of the main story, as the father confesses his attempt to conceal the trauma of the dead mother from his children: "Bobby (...) knew. Tried to keep it from 'em, but they all knew" (Graham 373). This is also a rite of passage for Marnie, who, on the one hand, realises that she is part of mankind – "I thought, there's only one loneliness, and that's the loneliness of all the world" (372) – and, on the other side, she starts to evince the signs of female love and selflessness: "that's right, be a mother for a change. (...) If he'd asked me I'd have stayed" (372-3). Putting her *pathos* aside temporarily in order to comfort that of the bereaved child who is her mirror proves to be therapeutic and is the first step she takes towards healing.

As psychology claims that remembering and understanding your trauma are the first steps towards healing, Marnie progressively feels the need to see Mark, tell him what she has uncovered, and attempt to start afresh. The modern use of the term *pathos* pertains to the domain of rhetoric. Harking back to Aristotle's theory, it refers to an appeal to emotion from the listener. "Persuasion comes about either through the character (*ethos*) of the speaker, the emotional state (*pathos*) of the hearer, or the argument (*logos*) itself. (...) Aristotle (...) says in a different context that a speech consists of three things: the speaker, the subject that is treated in the speech, and the listener to whom the speech is addressed (*Rhet.* I.3, 1358a37ff)" (Rapp n. p.). In this tripartite conception he is – by two millennia and a half – the precursor of Jauss's reception theory. Aristotle realised how important the interlocutor's emotional state always is in verbal communication and understood that human beings often resort to *pathos* in trying



to win their ‘audience’ over, supplanting the method of *logos*, that is, appealing to emotion instead of proper reasoning: “[There is persuasion] through the hearers when they are led to feel emotion [*pathos*] by the speech; for we do not give the same judgment when grieved and rejoicing or when being friendly and hostile. ... Persuasion occurs through the arguments [*logoi*] when we show the truth or the apparent truth from whatever is persuasive in each case” (Aristotle I.2.5-6). Quite often, pathos is used rhetorically in an appeal to emotion or *argumentum ad passiones* – a fallacy characterized by the manipulation of the recipients’ emotions in order to win an argument by triggering their sympathy, often using the victim’s stance. Interestingly, Marnie does not use that. When she is indeed the victim’s victim – unmasked by the man that she had robbed – she prefers to remain silent or rebuke Mark in spiteful anger. She resorts to emotion only when she starts opening up and looks for empathy. In fact, what she tries to reach through her whole process of inner search and self-analysis is a state of *apatheia* – without suffering or passion, a state of mind that the Stoics associated with the sages and saw as not disturbed by any emotions – a sort of equanimity, of psychological stability devoid of pain or mental imbalance.

At the end of the novel, under the pretence of taking her home, Mark’s malevolent and womanising cousin, Terry Holbrook, betrays her and hands her over to two former employers from whom she has stolen, who will in their turn hand her over to the police. Having reached a stage in her evolution in which she no longer wants to flee or pretend to be someone else, she complies in order to become worthy of self-esteem and of Mark’s love. She realises that stealing is nothing but an elaborate process of lying, and lies are what she has resented most in her life, as her family’s concealing the truth from her is what had triggered her psychological defence mechanism of memory suppression. Her confession will bring about her liberation and redemption through truth. The final image of the sacrificial lamb is no doubt inspired by an earlier female protagonist victim of multiple trauma and pathos – Hardy’s Tess Durbeyfield.

If certain passages in the book seem overly analysed, the traumatic details ring true, and that is because, as Tony Lee Moral reveals in his book *Hitchcock and the Making of Marnie*, Graham inspired his novel from real-life incidents and conceived the character of Marnie from a combination of two women he knew. The first one was his youngest child’s nanny: “She seemed alright except that she was constantly taking baths, about three a day usually, and she was in constant communication with her mother. On one occasion, I found a letter from her mother warning her about the evils of men and that she must never consider having any connection with them at all. (...) She sublimated her interests in horses and spent all her spare time riding” (Graham qtd. in Moral 158<sup>17</sup>). The second inspiring real-life person was a war evacuee, a mother of three whose husband was

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<sup>17</sup> The numbers indicated next to the quotations do not correspond to pages, but to ‘Kindle Locations’.

at sea, and about whom Moral sarcastically asserts that “she decided that doing her part for the country was offering herself to any soldier that happened to take a fancy to her” (158). It is clear that the impression she made on the novelist informed his pencilling of Edith’s character: “She looked the absolute epitome of perfect behaviour. (...) Apparently, if the soldier wanted and knew about her, he’d come to the window and tap. She had her youngest child with her in bed, and she’d take the child out and put him in a cold bedroom next door. Then she’d open the window and let the soldier in” (Graham qtd. in Moral 163). The details of this part of the story are very clearly borrowed from this woman’s history. The idea of theft was also derived from it and coupled with another contemporaneous event: “The incident had further repercussions. After the war, the youngest child began to steal. [Graham] derived the idea for Marnie stealing from this real-life event, together with an article he had read in the Sunday Express newspaper about a girl who kept stealing from her employers and reappeared in various guises” (Moral 168). Thus, the *pathē psyches* of human beings who lived in the Britain of the 1950s were moulded so as to lend a true-to-life quality of the *pathos* of a literary character intended to reflect the catastrophic effects of a previous age, that of World War II.

### ***Marnie, the film***

*Marnie* had three literary adaptations – into a theatre play by Sean O’Connor in 2001, and into two radio plays – by John Kirkmorris in 1975 and by Shaun McKenna in 2011. The present study will not analyse these works.

What rendered *Marnie* famous was its screen version, as it became

Hitchcock’s last great woman-centered film (...). *Marnie* is a film that evolves from a classical realist tradition, but its greatness is attributable to the manner in which it creatively redefines the conventions from which it draws. *Marnie*’s sources are the woman’s film and its gothic variant. Hitchcock described the film as a character study and a psychological mystery. (...) The melodramatic variant of the gothic [is] a genre concerned with ‘the horror of the normal’ (Britton 41) that allows a cultural space for the critique of the Cinderella myth.” (Jacobowitz 462)

It was the suppressed trauma, the murder, the two suicide attempts, the killing of the horse, the theme of the double life, the mystery and suspense, the puzzle structure and – above all – the rape that attracted the great director Alfred Hitchcock to adapt Graham’s novel into a film in 1964 – the first remediation it was to undergo, in Bolter and Grusin’s acceptance of the term: “the formal logic by which new media refashion prior media forms” (273). Charles Suhor’s concept of transmediation is also completely apposite in this case – a term through which

he denotes the process of taking meanings from one sign system and moving them into another (250).<sup>18</sup>

According to Dennis Simanaitis, Alfred Hitchcock bid anonymously for the book's film rights to keep the price down. Once a deal was made, at twice the initial bid, Graham admitted he would have ceded the rights for free just for the honour of having his novel directed by Hitchcock.

The latter asserted: "One might call *Marnie* a sex mystery – if one used such words" (qtd. in Simanaitis). The makeup of the plot had all the ingredients that appealed to the great English director who had already become famous for his Hollywood films – especially *Psycho* (1960) and *The Birds* (1963). The central character was especially appealing to a creator of crime movies that had a very peculiar view of criminals. Truffaut's assertion has by now become something of a bromide: "The more successful the villain, the more successful the picture" (19). However, in his superb study, Thomas Leitch offers a much more nuanced interpretation of Hitchcock's conception: "he never makes a criminal the hero of a film without recasting that criminal, from Alice White in *Blackmail* (1929) to Marnie Edgar in *Marnie* (1964), as a victim" (*Crime* 16). This ambivalence is circumscribed within the larger frame of the crime film in general: "The master criminal is immoral but glamorous, the maverick police officer is breaking the law in order to catch the criminals, the victim is helpless to take any action except capturing or killing the criminal"<sup>19</sup>. (...) Crime films are about the continual breakdown and reestablishment of the borders among criminals, crime solvers, and victims. This paradox is at the heart of all crime films" (15).

*Marnie* the film continues the novel's way of basing its structure on pathos, both in its psychological themes and in its specifically cinematic narrative strategies – appealing to the emotional reaction of the audience through camera angles, editing<sup>20</sup>, sound track and, especially, acting techniques: "Hitchcock was a master of the frame, and every nuance of his image is vital, no aspect decorative. In Hollywood, he was one of relatively few filmmakers who cared, and knew, about special effects, and his sense of camera position is cunning and impeccable" (Pomerance 238).

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<sup>18</sup> This concept is *not* to be confused with transmediality, a term coined by Henry Jenkins – "A transmedia story [that] unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole" (95) – in which there is no process of adaptation, but of addition or multiplication, and in which it is not relevant which the original version is.

<sup>19</sup> Here, the initial victim of abuse – Marnie – does turn detective, but in order to investigate the root and reason of her own criminality, which is a truly original and captivating stance.

<sup>20</sup> "The economic use of bursts of nontraditional, sensational editing in the midst of a more conventional narrative pacing based on the principles of classic continuity was displayed in the final film that Tomasini completed before his death, *Marnie* (...). The veteran editor again exploited short shots effectively because of his willingness to juxtapose them into sequences that also contained relatively long takes and to use them judiciously (Monaco 96).

The screen adaptation moves the action from England to Philadelphia, which operates a change of mentality, as well as of atmosphere, for, as Linda Hutcheon remarks,

*Where* is as important a question to ask about adaptation (...) as *when*. Adapting from one culture to another is nothing new... Often, a change of language is involved; almost always, there is a change of place or time period. Almost always, there is an accompanying shift in the political valence from the adapted text to the “transcultured” adaptation. Context conditions meaning, in short. (*Theory* 145)

Regarding the psychological thread of *pathos*, the whole traumatic warp in Graham’s novel was not enough for Hitchcock. He added a little girl to the *dramatis personae* – Jessie, the mother’s neighbour, who will traumatise Marnie even more by the sting of jealousy and by making her feel unloved and neglected by her own mother. Mark’s former sister-in-law Lil<sup>21</sup> is another additional character. She clearly aims to have Mark all to herself and it is she who invites Strutt, an employer from whom Marnie has stolen, thus exposing her.

A very significant difference is that Mark hires Marnie *knowing* that she is a thief and being intrigued by her character, which emphasises both his propensity for taking risks in the novel, and his stance as predator, since he sets out to capture his ‘victim’ and entrap her.

The script also changes several names in the literary original. If the transformation from Elmer to Edgar<sup>22</sup> is unfathomable, that from Edith to Bernice<sup>23</sup> has its significance. Edith is a very relevant name. Certain sources<sup>24</sup> ascribe this name to Lot’s wife in the Old Testament. She turns into a pillar of salt after looking back at Sodom, which betrays her secret longing for its sinful way of life. Bernice, however, is also a Biblical name from the New Testament, referring to Berenice of Cilicia<sup>25</sup>, a Jewish client queen from the first century AD who was known for her tumultuous love life and incest with her brother. Both given names are thus redolent of the religious criticism of sinful female morals, meant to trigger a subliminal response in the reader/spectator.

In the film, the effects of Marnie’s suppressed trauma are expanded, as she suffers from bad dreams and a terrifying phobia of the colour red:

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<sup>21</sup> It is difficult to believe that the choice of name was accidental and that Jay Presson Allen – the screenwriter – did not make an ironic hint at this character’s namesake in T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*. In Part II – “A Game of Chess” – Lil, whose husband “got demobbed”, is threatened by her friend that he will be seduced by another woman. In the film, it is Lil who is the would-be seductress of Mark, who has decided to leave the Navy.

<sup>22</sup> Marnie’s surname.

<sup>23</sup> The name of Marnie’s mother.

<sup>24</sup> A number of midrash exegetes between 400 and 1200 AD.

<sup>25</sup> Racine and Corneille dedicated plays to her.

It's not in *Marnie's* image that her psyche is fully reflected; her illness [*pathos*] is signaled by her disturbed vision. Again, red is the color of intense affect, and warning chords provide recurrent aural accompaniment to *Marnie's* reaction to it. Red is the color of affect, but it is also the color of blood, the substance for which the red color in this film so obviously substitutes. The code would seem to be a simple one, the associations the film provides readily decipherable. Interestingly, however, *Marnie* "sees red" only metaphorically: while something red is the object of her look, it's *her* image that's suffused with that color in virtually each instance. In some sense, the red film frame disturbs the spectator's vision, transferring the character's symptom to us. Like a wash over realist images, it cloaks representation in pure color. (Peucker 214, italics mine)

Thus, physical and psychological suffering is conveyed through visual, auditory, and kinetic images and techniques that are more direct in triggering an emotional reaction in the audience than any screenplay cues. *Marnie* was made only four years after *Psycho*, which was groundbreaking in the domain of the cinema of sensation whose tradition *Marnie* continues:

The new cinema of sensation pioneered in this film [*Psycho*] grew up separate from the cinema of sentiment that had constituted the aesthetic core of classic Hollywood from the late 1920s through the 1950s. The new aesthetic of sensation was defined by a speeded-up pacing, the sweep of color production that all but eliminated black-and-white features from Hollywood production, and an increased reliance on graphic visual and sound effects. (...) The aesthetics of this cinema of sensation moved away from the dialogue-based cinema that had dominated Hollywood production from the end of the 1920s into the 1960s. Perceptibly, visual and audio sensation began to coexist with—and even displace—the narrative and dramatic demands of dialogue and scripting as the primary elements upon which the viewer's attention was focused in a feature film. (Monaco 2)

Such visual strategies tied to the viewer's emotional perception determined Robin Wood to say, in *The Trouble with Marnie*, that this film harks back to the expressionist trend of the early twentieth century, which no longer tried to imitate reality, but to suggest it by laying the emphasis on the artists' – or the characters' – inner turmoil and conflicts through visual distortions and hyper-expressivity in performance:

[Hitchcock] worked in German studios at first, in the silent period. Very early on when he started making films, he saw Fritz Lang's German silent films; he was enormously influenced by that, and *Marnie* is basically an expressionist film in many ways. Things like scarlet suffusions over the screen, back-projection and backdrops, artificial-looking thunderstorms – these are expressionist devices and one has to accept them. If one doesn't accept them then one doesn't understand and can't possibly like Hitchcock.

If Wood considers that this strategy anchors *Marnie* in the artistic tradition of the past, Restivo contends – on the contrary – that it announces the great cultural shift that the sixties were to operate:

This device [the colour red], then, could be said to announce the properly postmodern. (...) Hollywood cinema also develops and augments Hitchcock's vocabulary of unreliable narration, to which the aesthetics of suspense is wedded. This deployment of unreliably communicative narration to foster suspense is exploited and amplified by the psychological thriller and horror genres, in which the narration flaunts its control of the spectator's access to the whereabouts of the villain or the monster. (581)

Thus, this visual effect functions as a bridge between the aesthetic conventions of the past and the innovative style of the future at the level of narrative technique suffused with pathos.

However, the expressionist filiation of the film is a plausible explanation for a significant change operated in the film: if in the novel a neighbour puts Forio down after his fatal accident, in the film it is Marnie herself who shoots him, which deepens the trauma of her loss and her mental *pathos*, also intensifying the pathetic build-up of the narrative that feeds on the audience's empathic response:

*Marnie* demands a distinctive kind of viewer participation; it asks one, on the whole, to empathize with Marnie (she defies identification, as she is presented in puzzle pieces) in a manner that is at once visceral and detached. Identification with Mark is thwarted by his partial perspective (he doesn't, as Mrs. Edgar points out, "know the whole story") and by moments of self-serving domination (the proposal, the "rape") that keep him at a distance. (Jacobowitz 463)

But perhaps there is no scene meant to ensure the spectator's sympathy for the victim-criminal more than that of the much-debated rape:<sup>26</sup> "Such are the paradoxes of feminist criticism that many feminists (myself included) believe the rape was dramatically necessary because (per Richard Allen) it creates more sympathy for Marnie and makes for a stronger indictment of patriarchy as well. Out with compassionate sensitive men! In with the rapists, fetishists, and sadists among them!" (Modleski 177) The rape was the kernel of the film – the scene in the novel that had actually made Hitchcock crave the rights to adapt it for the screen. He was so obsessed with it that he fired screenwriter Evan Hunter<sup>27</sup>, who had strongly objected to the scene: "Hitch held up his hands the way directors do when they're framing a shot. Palms out, fingers together, thumbs extended and touching to form a perfect square. Moving his hands toward my face, like a

<sup>26</sup> Neither critics nor fans agree on whether Mark is guilty of marital rape or not. His indicters and defenders form fairly equal groups.

<sup>27</sup> Author of *The Birds*.

camera coming in for a close shot, he said, ‘Evan, when he sticks it in her, I want that camera right on her *face*’” (Hunter 35). And, indeed, this is how he finally filmed the scene, which creates cinematic narrative pathos and triggers the audience’s empathy through identification, all the while complying with the tradition of the “male gaze” that Laura Mulvey theorized in her seminal study that labels the camera as voyeuristic and fetishist when filming women: “In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy on to the female figure. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed (...) so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*. Women displayed as sexual object is the leit-motiff [sic!] of erotic spectacle” (*Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* 837).

Mark is not injured and hospitalised after his riding accident, so he can surprise Marnie when she tries to steal from him again. All this leads to the fact that it will be *his* initiative to take Marnie to confront her mother. The main difference from the novel is the ending, as Bernice, the mother, does not die. The violent confrontation triggers Marnie’s childhood memories and the truth comes out. There is no dead child. Bernice is a former prostitute and once she thought that one of her johns was trying to molest Marnie sexually, when in fact he was trying to comfort her when she was scared during a storm. Bernice had come to her rescue, but Marnie had killed him with a fire poker in self-defence. The pool of blood that had resulted accounts for her phobia of red. Her association between storms and violence is what makes her fear them even as an adult, while her equating sex with both prostitution, abandonment, and murder reveals the source of her frigidity. From a psychoanalytical perspective, “The repressed memory that reappears in Marnie’s haunting dreams, the murder of the sailor, reveals metaphorically the way her experience of the oedipal moment defines her: she defends the mother and herself from the male who intrudes, separates the daughter from the mother, and thus threatens them both. Marnie actively protects the mother, usurping the phallus and eradicating the need for the father” (Jacobowitz 460).

This descent into the nether regions of the human psyche in order to retrieve a suppressed memory and the return to the surface in order to initiate the process of healing from the *pathos* is also expressed visually and kinetically in the film:

The strong causal connection of past sins or mistakes to present woes is emphasized by descents to regions evocative of Hades. The importance of ascents in uncovering or confronting the sickness originating in the past and of love in curing it connects Hitchcock’s romantic movies with mythic, religious, and folkloric forebears. Indeed, descents or threatened falls toward demonic regions and contrasting ascents to love and illumination remain characteristic of Hitchcockian romance. Mark discovers Marnie in the pool below him when she

attempts suicide. Later, he drags her up the steps into her mother's home where, sitting on another flight of stairs, she recovers the memory that promises to return her to health. (Brill 103)

At the end, Mark assures his wife he will stand by her, and Marnie declares that she does not want to go to prison, but would rather stay with him – in a pathetic, if candidly insulting, vein. The ending is, therefore, more definite and conclusive, and therefore less modern than that of the novel. Unlike the novel, the sense of closely knit union and alliance between the two spouses allows for the prospect of love in Marnie's healed self: "Improbable circumstances and social mismatching infuse the love at the center of Hitchcock's romances with traces of the miraculous" (Brill 101).

Even if the suppressed personal trauma is still the cause of the protagonist's social inadequacy, the ending is less dramatic and more optimistic, while the constant *pas de deux* of the two stars, Tippi Hedren<sup>28</sup> and Sean Connery, makes for a more sentimental and cinematic approach. Today it strikes us as decidedly amusing that one of the many reasons for the film's unfavourable reception was the casting of "relative newcomers" Hedren and Connery in roles that "cry for the talents of Grace Kelly and Cary Grant" (Archer 19). In his comprehensive book, Tony Lee Moral meticulously analyses and debunks the criticism with which the film met: "During its initial release, *Marnie* was a commercial as well as a critical failure. Early reviewers criticized Hitchcock's use of a highly expressive *mise-en-scène*, painted backdrops, conspicuous rear projection, stylized acting, and red suffusions of the screen. These devices alienated audiences and critics alike, in what amounts to a constant assault on the boundaries of cinematic realism" (27–9). Instead, Moral sees this film as "the culmination of Hitchcock's concept of 'pure cinema'<sup>29</sup>" (*Hitchcock and the Making of Marnie* 53–4) and highlights "multivocality in the *Marnie* text, a product of the larger cultural and political forces that shape it. I will show how author Winston Graham<sup>30</sup> and screenwriter Jay Presson Allen were major contributors" (*Hitchcock and the Making of Marnie* 45–6).

As William Rothman asserts, "Today, *Marnie* has become a touchstone. I find Robin Wood's judgment to be only slightly hyperbolic when he says, 'If you don't like *Marnie*, you don't really like Hitchcock. I would go further than that and say if you don't love *Marnie*, you don't really love cinema.'" (352) Most

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<sup>28</sup> Who had starred in *The Birds*.

<sup>29</sup> The French term coined by Henri Chomette to define the avant-garde film that emerged in Paris in the 1920s and 30s and focused on the pure elements of film such as form, motion, visual composition and rhythm, rather than the narration of events.

<sup>30</sup> The idea that the author of the original novel is a major contributor to the text of the film adaptation is also highly amusing from the perspective of adaptation studies nowadays and shows the influence of transmedia studies.



films decrease in fame and appeal as time goes by and they become old-fashioned and obsolete. Hitchcock's *Marnie* has strangely undergone the opposite journey, from public opprobrium to the enthusiastic acclaim of both critics and fandom. The reason for this unique evolution lies in the revolutionary strategies that the director applied when making the film.

*Marnie* is not a return, however, to Hitchcock's earlier practice of using the camera to declare that he is the all-powerful God who holds sway over the world of the film. It is Hitchcock's own humanity, as well as that of the characters in the film, that shines through. But this means that he must acknowledge, at least rhetorically, that there are limits to his power, that the camera has its own appetites, and awesome powers that no merely human author can claim for his or her own. (Rothman 352)

The most recent and striking remediation of Graham's novel was into an opera by composer Nico Muhly, with a libretto by Nicholas Wright, in an English National Opera production at the London Coliseum in 2017<sup>31</sup>. Muhly is the youngest composer ever to have been commissioned by the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and the co-production with this opera company had its US premiere in 2018,<sup>32</sup> after which the two *Marnies* – Tippi Hedren and Isobel Leonard – met... at the Met. It is the Live in HD transmission from the Met that rendered the opera famous throughout the world – a means of cultural dissemination that has already made the object of a chapter in *The Routledge Companion to Media and Fairy-Tale Cultures* written by Pauline Greenhill. In Brianna Wells' opinion, "the HD series creates in its *audiences* a sense of doubling, of intellectual uncertainty, and strange recurrence within an experience of immediacy, and a sense of the familiar made alien: in other words, a sense of the uncanny" (573) – a state of mind that clearly agrees with mystery plot of *Marnie*.

### ***Marnie*, the opera**

Interestingly, the genesis of the opera stemmed from the film, as it was stage director Michael Mayer, long fascinated with Hitchcock's classic, who suggested the topic first to Muhly and then to Wright. However, the libretto is based largely on the novel, even if departing from it at times. Thus, there is a constant dialogue between the three versions, for, as Linda Hutcheon remarks, "adaptation as adaptation is unavoidably a kind of intertextuality if the receiver is acquainted with the adapted text" (*Theory* 21). The original literary source

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<sup>31</sup> With *Marnie* sung by Sasha Cooke.

<sup>32</sup> Starring Isabel Leonard in the title role.

comes as a surprise to most opera familiars, accustomed to famous texts whose authority is given both by their acknowledged canonical value and by their wide popularity: “Adaptation is ‘the lifeblood of opera’ (Blake 187) and has been so since that art form’s inception in Italy in the late sixteenth century: the tried and tested, not the new and original, is the norm in this expensive art form. With this long history, opera can arguably lay claim to being the Ur-adaptive art” (Hutcheon & Hutcheon 305). Graham’s novel was and still is rather little known, even if its author is famous for his Poldark series; therefore, the appeal of the remediation was provided precisely by Hitchcock’s previous transmediation, and the boldness of tackling such a non-canonical work can only be accounted for by its historical context: “Through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in both Europe and the Americas, the range of operatically adapted narrative materials broadened immensely. Canonical works in traditional literary genres (epics, novels, short stories, plays, poems) continued to be used. (...) Other art forms also provided stories. Not surprisingly, even popular films were remediated into operas<sup>33</sup>” (Hutcheon & Hutcheon 307). This fresh source of inspiration allows cinema aficionados to relish the recognition of a Hitchcock classic, refined literature connoisseurs to enjoy the departures of the adaptation from the original, while also allowing new-comers to taste the opera as it is, without any ulterior comparisons and associations: “The operatic performance becomes a kind of palimpsest, with these doubled layers of what is recalled and what is being experienced at that moment creating both intellectual and aesthetic pleasure” (Hutcheon & Hutcheon 307).

The main distinctions in the libretto are that Mark and Terry are brothers rather than cousins, and their mother has therefore not undergone the trauma of losing her eldest son, as in the novel. She is authoritarian and far more involved in the Halcyon<sup>34</sup> Printing firm, controlling and bullying her sons and being a typical mother-in-law to Marnie, whereas in the literary original she is kind and thoughtful. In act II she shocks Mark by revealing it is she who has been planning a takeover of the family firm. Thus, not surprisingly, the ‘mummy issues’ are also extended to the two male principals.

Mark catches Marnie in the act of stealing from him rather than later on. But the greatest weight-shift of the libretto is the character of Marnie’s *nameless* mother, who is disparaging and quite hostile to Marnie, unlike the novel, in which the daughter asserts she is the apple of her mother’s eye, and unlike the film, in which Bernice loves especially the memory of her daughter as a child, later transferring her feelings to her little neighbour Jessie. In an opera scene between the mother and her old friend Lucy, the former expresses her distrust of Marnie

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<sup>33</sup> Such as Thomas Adès’ 2016 opera *The Exterminating Angel* based on the 1962 eponymous film by Luis Buñuel.

<sup>34</sup> A both suggestive and ironic name, since the noun Halcyon refers to a period of time in the past that was idyllically happy and peaceful.

and says she believes her daughter to have killed her baby-brother as a child. Unlike the novel and film, in the opera Marnie has a session with Dr Romano in which she retrieves the childhood memory of a thunderstorm, a soldier, her mother, and her dead baby-brother. From then on, she will believe herself to be a murderess. The scene is powerful and memorable in its pathos-imbued atmosphere, illustrating the fact that

Psychoanalysis reached its zenith in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The 1950s and 1960s saw for virtually the first time the application of psychoanalysis for persons previously considered inaccessible to psychoanalytic treatment due to the nature of their problems. Freud originally believed psychotic patients to be poor candidates for analytic treatment. As psychoanalysis gained power and influence, its scope broadened to schizophrenia, “manic depression,” and other serious psychiatric conditions. Psychoanalysis was soon being applied to nonpsychiatric problems, as well-such as effects of war, racism, and other social ills. (Ruffalo n. p.)

Only the scene of the mother’s funeral will loosen the suspense – for the audience as well as the protagonist – as Lucy tells Marnie by her mother’s grave that it had been the deceased who had killed the baby, not her. The ending is open, just as that of the novel. Surprisingly, both Mark and Terry come with the police, and the audience is left to understand that Mark considers expiation and retribution to be indispensable in the process of healing his wife’s *pathos*. He promises to stand by her side and hopes she will come back to him after prison, but Marnie cannot make this promise. She remains an ever-elusive mystery, concluding the opera by repeating three times “I’m free.” This answer may be equally inspired by her operatic predecessor – Marguerite in Gounod’s *Faust* (a transmediation of Goethe’s poem) – who finds liberation in jail, where she remains by choice, refusing to follow Mephisto, the spirit of evil.

In Muhly’s opera, the remediation must be performed with the means germane to music, which convey characterisation and dramatism through sound as well, not only through text and image:

though some things are lost, others are not – and there are even gains in the move from telling to showing in an opera libretto though some things are lost, others are not – and there are even gains in the move from telling to showing in an opera libretto. [S]ince the libretto is written to be adapted to music, its version of the narrative knowingly creates the room for the addition of the emotional impact of such musical features as orchestral color or vocal expressivity. (Hutcheon & Hutcheon 310).

What becomes obvious from the very first chords of the opera is precisely the musical pathos of the score – a kind of ‘excruciating’ quality of the score that

transpires both at the level of melody and of harmony in the most direct of arts that addresses the affect without resorting to the mediation of reason. If we are to look at the medium of music from a historical perspective, it can be well associated both with femininity and with mental derangement:

Such an understanding harkens back to longstanding Western suspicions of music that conflate its supposed abstract and non-referential nature and lack of fixed meanings with fears of (feminine) disorder, and emotional and sexual excess. Both Plato and Aristotle warned of music's moral ambiguity, while classical Greek literature thematized the ambivalent power of music vested in the female voice, on the one hand celebrating its beauty and capacity to immortalize heroic deeds, and on the other, warning of its seductive charms and magical power to lure men to their destruction, as manifest in the songs of the Sirens and Circe in the *Odyssey*. Music's sensuous sounds were said to give it the capacity to "penetrate the ear and so 'ravish' the mind." (Vernon 48)

Certain psychological valences of the orchestral score were consciously conceived by the composer, who writes: "What immediately became clear as both a solution and a challenge was that each of the principal characters needed to be 'twinned' with an orchestral instrument. With very few exceptions, nobody actually tells the truth to one another in the show, and the twin instruments can help reinforce the chamber music-like tugging between various deceits and agendas" (Muhly qtd. in Park n. p.). The "twinning" that he conceives is also a musical rendition of the narrative theme of the double, and we must not forget that Graham's novel has quite a musical conception in itself, being based on a warp of leitmotifs – sex, lies, mirrors, freedom, money, risk, duality.

The libretto juggles with a juxtaposition of action and internal monologues that Wright calls 'links,' and which give the audience a glimpse into Marnie's private thoughts and feelings. "You get this duality of someone who is completely present, and yet is untouchable," director Mayer says (qtd. in Par n. p.) Muhly thinks of Marnie as dual from many points of view and confesses that his former Julliard's classmate, mezzo-soprano Isobel Leonard, was his first choice because she is "able to do 'come hither' and 'go thither' at the same time" (qtd. in Park n. p.)

Marnie's alter egos are expressed both musically and visually through actual incarnations:

four "Shadow Marnies" (referred to playfully by the creative team as the Marnettes), an all-female barbershop quartet that sings in an early-music style with little vibrato. Conveying a sense of fracture, Muhly describes the desired effect "as if her inner monologue is actually a warped recording of the Tallis Scholars singing a single chord from an obscure Tudor motet." Often surrounding Marnie on stage, they represent "not just her anxieties but the cruel release of her coping

mechanisms” – never more so than in the pivotal Act II scene on the analyst’s couch, when she relives her childhood distress (Park n. p.).

This unforgettable scene illustrates Linda and Michael Hutcheon’s assertion about the ensembles that allow the score to expound multiple thoughts at the same time, in this case not Marnie’s multiple personalities, but multiple layers of awareness and of dissimulation. Her psychological evolution towards the end is also reflected both musically and visually. The Met’s dramaturg remarks that “As the opera progresses, the intervals Marnie sings become tighter. By the time she gets to the end, she’s singing more tonally and lyrically, reflecting her dawning realization of her emotions. (...) She begins to realize that she must reject the false selves she’s created and embrace whatever fragmentary authentic self she can access if she is to live any kind of real, complete life” (Paul Cremo qtd. in Park n. p.)

Psychoanalytically, music has been long associated with femininity and the relation between mother and child:

Rosolato argues for the acoustic origin of the subject’s emergence into selfhood, beginning before birth with the sounds perceived in the “sonorous envelope” of the mother’s womb (...) – “the first model of auditory pleasure” and the basis for all subsequent musical experience (...). This positioning of music as feminine has allowed feminist thinkers such as Julia Kristeva and Hélène Cixous to embrace the supposed irrationalism and emotionality of music as a source of subversive power. (Vernon 48)

Illustrating this age-long perception of music well, Muhly’s *Marnie* creates a new and fresh way to portray the title character as both vulnerable and empowered, inscribing the aural universe of this modern opera in the tradition of the genre while also innovating with rhythm and orchestration.

## Conclusion


This article has looked at several ways in which personal trauma is the source of *pathos* in the etymological sense of suffering and affliction, engendering social failure in Winston Graham’s novel *Marnie*. Likewise, the study has striven to demonstrate that both the literary original and its cinematic and operatic remediations are sparked into emotional cohesion by the narrative glue of pathos. From the perspective of both psychoanalysis and adaptation studies, this article has reached the conclusion that the open ending of the three versions also involves the reader/spectator in the process of narration – as

Aristotle discovered in anticipation of Jauss's reception theory – and thus leaves it to them to decide whether healing from *pathos* can ever be reached by the protagonist.

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### ORCID

Alina Bottez  <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-3300-9931>

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**Notes on Contributor(s)**

**Alina Bottez** is Associate Professor of British Literature, Cultural Studies, and Adaptation Studies at the University of Bucharest, as well as a performing soprano. Her main research interests are Shakespeare Studies and the intertwinement between literature and the other arts. She has published extensively and given lectures at universities in Istanbul, Barcelona, Venice, Tomar, Seville, and Athens. She has been co-convening seminars at the ESRA Conferences in Rome, Athens, and Budapest. She has delivered papers at many international conferences and is, among others, the author of a chapter in *Othello in European Culture* (John Benjamins, 2022) and two books – *A Confluence between Masterpieces: Operas Inspired by Shakespeare's Plays* (Editura Muzicală, 2015) and *Avatars of the Oedipal Myth in Modern Culture* (Eikon, 2022).

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