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5. In the name of the father: Marcel Pagnol's 'trilogy': *Marius* (1931), *Fanny* (1932), *César* (1936)

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Marcel Pagnol's series of three films, *Marius*, *Fanny*, and *César*, usually referred to as 'the trilogy', has conformed to the fate of many truly popular classics: adored by the public — they were all box-office hits — the films were put down by contemporary critics as bad boulevard theatre or Marseillais melodramas (Bardèche and Brasillach 1948, 411). Pagnol did not seem to care and would blithely declare 'I only write about clichés' (Leprohon 1976, 388). Such professed candour, however, was underpinned by considerable intellectual and economic assets.

Pagnol was a forceful participant in the debates surrounding the coming of sound cinema in France, and particularly the question of 'filmed theatre'. He launched his own (short-lived) film magazine *Les Cahiers du film* in 1933 partly to publicize his provocative views on the primacy of dialogue over image, such as 'any sound film that can be projected silently and still remain comprehensible is a very bad film' (Pagnol 1933, 293). But Pagnol's contribution to the filming of theatrical texts was far more sophisticated than such bravado remarks would credit. If Pagnol the intellectual could give as good as he got, Pagnol the businessman could afford to brush off criticism. Between the release of *Marius* in 1931 and that of *César* in 1936, Pagnol, already the latest prodigy among France's playwrights and an experienced literary editor, made his name also as a filmmaker, a novelist, and a journalist. In addition, he became a producer, first with Rocher Richebé in 1932, then with his own company in 1933, *Les Auteurs associés* (changed in 1934 to *Les Films Marcel Pagnol*), and the owner of a studio in Marseilles — almost his home town as he came from nearby Aubagne — complete with labs, editing rooms, viewing theatres, and a regular staff. In 1935, he was the first to publish the full dialogue of one of his films (*Merlusse*) and two years later, he started his own publishing company, *Les Editions Marcel Pagnol*.

Pagnol had complete control over the technical side of his productions and his collaborators have testified that his equipment was, in many ways, the most advanced in France. This technological state of the art, as well as exceptional financial freedom — unheard of in 1930s French cinema — allowed him, for example, to experiment with direct sound and multiple re-takes, going as far as shooting both *Merlusse* and *Cigalon* twice over in 1935. Unlike Sacha Guitry, the other 'theatrical' director with whom he is often compared, and who would shoot a film like *Le Mot de Cambronne* in an afternoon, Pagnol always showed a keen interest in the cinematic process —

thus belying his (part self-fostered) image as a despiser of film as a 'minor art'. The completion of Pagnol's vertically integrated film 'empire' came with the opening of his own cinema in Marseilles, the Noailles, for the release of *César* in 1936, used as a 'sneak preview' theatre for his productions until 1938. Pagnol went on to make films until 1954 and subsequently published autobiographical works, among which *La Gloire de mon père* and *Le Château de ma mère* now figure on many schoolchildren's set book lists both in France and abroad.

Though it has had passionate defenders (Bazin, the *Cahiers du cinéma* editors in the late 1960s), Pagnol's work has generally suffered from critical discredit, with the exception of the Giono-inspired trio of *Jofroi*, *Angèle*, and *Regain*, which have been hailed, by Rossellini for instance, as precursors of Neo-Realism. Together with *La Femme du boulanger* (also based on Giono), it is the trilogy, however, which has remained the most popular part of Pagnol's oeuvre, regularly repeated on French television as well as in film clubs, its outrageously 'melodramatic' plot still bringing tears to the most cynical eyes, despite a cast of comic actors. Yet it is also the trilogy which has contributed most to the derogatory label of 'Pagnolade' given to anything set in Marseilles — a tribute, if anything, to its iconic power. Outside France, the trilogy has suffered from its association with a certain notion of quaint populist French film, evoking dusty film clubs, or, worse, holidays in the south of France and French cuisine (publicity material for one of the trilogy's American remakes advised local exhibitors to 'link the film with all local off-licences, wine importers, and hotels'); more recently, an expensive gourmet restaurant near San Francisco, 'Chez Panisse', has taken the name of one of the trilogy's key characters, a *panisse* in Marseillais patois being also a type of bread loaf. Thus Pagnol's films have acquired, in film studies, a somewhat debased cultural image. Their enduring popularity, however, remains, and we only need to look at the international success of Claude Berri's *Jean de Florette* and *Manon des sources*, both based on Pagnol's scripts, to perceive the centrality and actuality of Pagnol's work to a definition of French film.

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The plot of the trilogy is disarmingly simple. In Marseilles' Vieux Port, Fanny (a shellfish seller) and Marius (who works in his father's bar) love each other, but Marius longs for the sea. After he sails away Fanny, now pregnant, has to marry the older and wealthier Panisse to save the family's honour. Marius later comes back to claim his 'wife' and son Césariot, but his father, César, sends him away. When Panisse dies twenty years later, Césariot learns the truth about his paternity and seeks out his real father. Fanny and Marius are finally reunited.

Equally disarming is the explicitness of these three films. The mechanics of desire, repression, and economics that propel the narrative along are practically spelt out by the dialogue. Furthermore, the *mise-en-scène* of the

trilogy is what might be called 'exoteric'. Camera set-ups, predominantly static, are unashamedly put to the service of the dialogue, and the editing — bar a couple of montage scenes — simply juxtaposes one episode after another, and this whether the films were technically directed by Alexandre Korda (*Marius*), Marc Allégret (*Fanny*), or Pagnol himself (*César*). Does this mean, as some would claim, that the trilogy is 'the end of cinema' and, pushing the image further, the end of analysis? Perhaps not quite. While Pagnol's cinema is far from experimental, it is nonsense to describe it as 'utterly anti-cinematic' (IDHEC 1958, 31). For one thing, as Claude Beylie points out (1986, 56), the trilogy makes imaginative use of *sounds*, not just dialogue. And if it is not quite a documentary on Marseilles, the iconography of the city is present in all three films, and most effectively in *Fanny*'s long walk to Notre-Dame de la Garde in *Fanny*. Pagnol's views on the grounding of authorship in the written word have been publicized well enough, and the debates on 'filmed theatre' sufficiently aired¹ for me not to have to rehearse them here. More importantly, Pagnol's works owe their genesis and appeal to a variety of intertexts that go beyond their dramatic basis: cast, performances, and iconography create a strong identity, in excess of a simple illustration of the written texts. The trilogy, however, because of its close relationship to a set of plays, is also a good test-case for a study of the interaction of the theatrical and the filmic.

Though conceived with a perfect ending for sequels (*Marius* sailing away), *Marius* was written as a single play for the stage, first performed in March 1929. Its filming in 1931, however, belongs to the early history of sound cinema in France, during which playwrights — including the most prestigious — turned out play adaptations and 'original' material, notably for the infamous Parisian branch of Paramount.² It is in this context that, in harmonious collaboration with Alexander Korda who was drawn in by Bob Kane (the head of Paramount in Paris) to palliate Pagnol's lack of experience in filmmaking, Pagnol adapted his stage hit for the screen, with almost the same cast: Raimu as César, Pierre Fresnay as Marius, Orane Demazis as Fanny, Charpin as Panisse. In line with the contemporary practice of making multiple-language films, German and Swedish versions were shot at the same time, with, according to Pagnol, much tinkering with the narrative compared with the French original (Pagnol 1981, 242).

The triumph of *Marius* prompted Pagnol to write a follow-up, *Fanny*, also for the theatre but clearly with a film in mind. Though Harry Baur (a considerable name and talent then) took the part of César on stage, a questionnaire among audiences showed overwhelming demand for the return of the same cast for *Fanny* (the film) as in *Marius*, the intertext already sliding from a theatrical to a filmic one. As André Bazin remarked, 'even though *Marius* triumphed at the Théâtre de Paris, its essential form is now and forever cinematic. Any new production of it on stage can only be a theatrical adaptation of the film' (Bazin 1975, 181). As would be expected, *Fanny* (the film) shows far fewer changes compared to the play than *Marius* does. As for

César, it was written directly as a screenplay and only performed on stage after the release of the film. The fact that *César* took a directly cinematic form is, paradoxically, a function of the success of *Marius* and *Fanny*: the cast, and in particular Raimu and Pierre Fresnay, had become far too expensive as film stars for them to be immobilized for months in a theatre. The published text of *César* does away with the traditional theatrical divisions into acts and tableaux present in the first two works. The gradual evolution away from the stage play is echoed in the increasing amount of outdoor shooting. Pagnol moves from the earlier, studio-bound *Marius* to *César*, where almost a quarter of the film is shot on location, and which, significantly, ends on a long open-air scene. These technical distinctions between 'play' and 'screenplay', between stage and cinema, are not, however, the only way the trilogy articulates the theatrical with the filmic.

Though the importance of performance is a feature of French 1930s cinema as a whole, the primacy of the cast in the trilogy is unique and works on several levels: as a marketing strategy (Raimu and Pierre Fresnay were stars of the Parisian stage before *Marius* was shot), as a way of consolidating the coherence of the narrative across three films, and as a way of successfully blending different generic codes. Alongside its obvious references to classical tragedy (the trilogy structure, the unity of space and action and, for the most part, time, and the 'chorus' formed by M. Brun, Panisse, Escartefigue and friends), Pagnol's trilogy has recourse to thematic and structural patterns that belong to melodrama, such a conjunction — of tragedy and melodrama — connecting it to the tradition of specifically *French* stage melodrama (Turim 1987). The cast of characters includes a suffering mother, an illegitimate child, a wealthy tutor, and an overbearing father. Marius' sudden return in the middle of the night at the end of *Fanny*, to reclaim woman and child from the clutches of the older man, bears the hallmark of stage melodrama (as well as modern soap opera), as does his alleged involvement with smugglers in *César*. Something else links the trilogy to specifically French melodrama: that is the constant juxtaposition of comic and tragic modes. Structurally, this informs the trilogy throughout, where a comic episode almost invariably follows, or is interspersed with, a 'tragic' one, as in the burlesque orange episode after the writing of the letter to Marius in *Fanny*, or the comical arguments in the kitchen while Panisse is dying at the beginning of *César*. The same principle works at the level of practically each scene and rests not just on dialogue and situation but on performance.

The cast of the trilogy is largely composed of actors whose range included music-hall revue and boulevard plays (Raimu), and classical tragedy (Charpin), and it mixes specific comic types (Dullac, Maupi) with an archetypal Comédie Française actor and later matinée idol like Pierre Fresnay. They were thus well equipped for the shifts in mood demanded by the text. But it is Raimu who most spectacularly achieves this duality through his constant recourse to a double register of acting. Like the others, Raimu's performance is pivotal in moving constantly between 'drama' and comedy, but, uniquely,

His also shifts from the register of — comic as well as melodramatic — excess, to that of total sobriety. This he achieves through a body language which veers within instants from the exaggeration typical of the burlesque tradition he came from, and the emphatic gestures of the Marseillais (at least according to their accepted representation, a question I will come to later), to the restraint characteristic of modern sound cinema acting — and which is why Raimu was later much admired by Orson Welles. In other words, his two registers correspond to the enunciatory marks of the two forms of the trilogy: theatre and cinema. This capacity to shift instantaneously between the two is particularly effective in such set pieces as the breakfast scene in *Marius*, the reading of Marius' letter in *Fanny*, the conversation with Césariot after he has learnt his true paternity in *César*. Not surprisingly the theatrical mode corresponds to moments when as a character César is in situations of intense representation, usually on a comic register (demonstrating how to make a 'Picon-Grenadine' apéritif in *Marius*, his rendering of the supposed effects of the plague or whooping cough in *Fanny*), and the cinematic mode often to 'serious' moments of intimacy or solitude. In these passages, the gestures acquire a precise and moving sociological weight: sweeping the café, setting the breakfast table, etc. Through the dialectical relation between the two modes, an effect of realism emerges. The naturalistic gestures, the spectacle of realism, are embedded in moments of flaunted theatricality reinforced by the fact that all key locations in the trilogy are themselves public representational spaces: César's Bar de la Marine, Panisse's sailing equipment shop, and Fanny's shellfish stall (it is in the logic of gendered representation that the woman's stall — in the open, in full view of the bar — is itself a spectacle within the spectacle). Finally, the enclosed, U-shaped, Vieux Port is not unlike a stage, while being itself turned towards the spectacle offered by the sea and the ships.

In the same way as the trilogy combines different registers of theatre and cinema, it reconciles opposed ideological positions throughout. This mythic structure can be seen, to start with, in the contradictory discourse on Marseilles and the Marseillais proposed by the three films. Legend has it that Pagnol was initially opposed to the filming of *Marius* on the grounds that 'they would not understand it in Lille'. As it turned out, the regional aspect of the trilogy greatly helped its universal success. But Marseilles in the trilogy means more than local colour.

Although in other works, such as *Le Schpountz*, Pagnol shows the dichotomy Provence/France (or to be more precise, Paris) as a basically rural/urban divide, here we are talking of two rival urban cultures. The only French city capable of offering an alternative popular entertainment culture to the Parisian monopoly, Marseilles in the 1930s was a city thriving on the colonial trade and one which had been, since the nineteenth century, characterized by its own rich theatrical and music-hall traditions within which

forms such as cabaret and operetta were particularly popular. Concurrently, the early 1930s saw one of the peaks of a fashion for Marseillais — and southern — lore in the rest of France. Clearly linked to the arrival of sound cinema which showcased the southern accent (in addition to the locations already well-documented by silent films), this trend was noticeable in other mechanically reproduced artefacts such as records, printed music sheets, postcards, etc. (see Peyrusse 1986 for a detailed study of Marseillais culture). It is in the midst of this fashion for 'Le midi' that film stars such as Fernandel and singers like Tino Rossi shot to national fame. Most of the trilogy performers — Raimu, Alida Rouffe, Charpin, Orane Demazis, Maupi — hailed from this milieu. But whereas the Marseillais live entertainment was aimed at an indigenous population, in Pagnol's trilogy, as in a spate of other films of the period, the effect is to represent Marseilles to outsiders, and notably Parisian audiences. Though he later claimed it had been originally designed for the Alcazar in Marseilles, Pagnol wrote *Marius* while 'in exile' in Paris, where his career had taken off, and he worked very hard at having it performed on a Parisian stage. Thus Marseilles was already the object of nostalgic longing: 'I did not know I loved Marseilles ... I discovered this after four years of Parisian life' (Pagnol 1981, 145). Some of the best-known Marseillais actors were also well integrated in Parisian society; for instance Raimu who started his career as a *comique troupier* (military comic) in Toulon at the turn of the century, but had by the late 1920s become an established pillar of the smart Champs-Élysées bars, while continuing to base his screen persona on his 'southernness'.

The objectification of Marseilles in the trilogy takes specific linguistic and performance channels: the exaggerated gestures and accent traits, such as Raimu's excessive opening of the vowel 'o' as in 'pôvre' for 'pauvre', become the ostentatious signs of 'Marseillais-ity', though outside France (where the cliché representation of the French is as excitable and gesticulating anyway), they tend to be seen simply as 'French'. Within the French context, this promotion of a regional culture through accent and gestures is a recognition of cultural difference which is not without ideological ambiguities. It is as well to remember that the picturesque southern accent is but a trace of a previous language, *provençal*, obliterated by French hegemonic culture; as Peyrusse (1986) points out, live shows in Marseilles up to the First World War would have been performed in *provençal*. The coming of sound cinema spread southern entertainment as long as it made itself acceptable to the dominant culture.

Alongside dialogues that remain classically theatrical, with an emphasis on well-turned phrases and clear diction,³ the inflated rhetoric of speech and gestures in the trilogy is itself explicitly shown up as 'theatrical', with many self-conscious references in the lines, and with a constant shifting of the attributes of 'Marseillais-ity' across characters and situations. For example, M. Brun as a Lyonnais stands for the non-Marseillais in his encounters with other characters, including César; but when César himself is with

Escartefigue, it is Escartefigue who becomes the outrageously exaggerated cliché Marseillais, forever boasting and disinclined to work, compared to the then sober César. The Marseillais/rest of the world split covers other divisions too, class in particular. M. Brun as a customs clerk is the most middle-class character — he recites Sully-Prudhomme after Panisse's death, while Panisse himself in *Marius* quotes 'poetry' taken from a tobacconist window. Throughout the trilogy, talking '*pointu*' (with a Parisian/northern accent) equals being educated. But to be an educated Marseillais is to lose one's cultural specificity; to 'make it' as a Marseillais is to leave Marseilles — a paradox evident in the character of Césariot, but equally close to Pagnol's (and Raimu's) own experience. Thus despite the explicit discourse of the film which presents Marseilles as a coherent self-evident norm — against which other cities like Lyons and Paris are comically measured — it is positioned from the start as 'other', as culturally distanced.

While rooted in urban culture, the celebration of Marseilles by the trilogy is also a paean to archaic values. Central to this celebration is the running comparison between two types of knowledge as belonging to different generations. For example, Marius corrects his father's arithmetic in the 'Picon-grenadine' demonstration, and M. Brun corrects several characters' French.⁴ Although in each case the correctors are technically right, the Marseillais and the older generation's superiority is constantly re-asserted by the narrative, their knowledge presented as 'natural' as opposed to acquired — folklore rather than culture. César may count four 'thirds' in his Picon-grenadine cocktail, but it is he, not Marius, who runs the bar efficiently. Although signs of modernity are increasingly apparent as the trilogy progresses, the three films cling to these nostalgic values. By the end of the trilogy, 20 years later, Marius himself has graduated to his father's position, and sharply criticizes Césariot's superior scholarly knowledge.

It is indeed the character of Césariot which most acutely shows this split between two types of knowledge, class and culture. As a gifted student at the *Polytechnique* school, Césariot, who wears the uniform of his difference at Panisse's funeral, has reached one of the heights of the French education system, a fact echoed naturally in his (and his friend Dromar's) lack of Marseillais accent. However, Pagnol makes the divide between him and the rest of the family and cast even more radical. André Fouché, as Césariot, has no Marseillais accent (unlike Pierre Fresnay, the only other major trilogy actor not from the south, who, as is well-known, took great pains to acquire a convincing one); his speech pattern is also different from the others, and so are his elocution and type of performance; whereas Robert Vattier as M. Brun, though coded as non-Marseillais, blends in his performance with the rest of the group. An elegant young man with a silk polka-dot dressing-gown and brillantined hair, Césariot seems straight out of a Parisian high society boulevard play or a Sacha Guitry film — even the decor of his bedroom, with

its modish art deco furniture, seems to belong to another film. This jarring effect is itself of course a function of the iconic coherence of the rest of the trilogy, and of Pagnol's work in general. Although traditional film history has retained the radical works of Vigo, early Clair and Renoir, and the populist works of Duvivier, Chenal, and Carné, as the image of French cinema in the 1930s, these filmmakers were in fact a minority who defined their work against the bulk of French films which focused on high society and the *demi-monde* (the double legacy of boulevard theatre and of Hollywood). Pagnol's contribution was to give a local inflexion to the populist iconography of working-class and petit-bourgeois milieux: cafés and shops, 'ordinary' people in everyday clothes: baggy trousers, cloth caps, aprons, rolled-up sleeves; and of course the accent. These attributes were more than merely functional, they established a Pagnol 'genre', metonymically representative of a 'sub'-culture (Marseilles), and metaphorically of a whole (French) culture.

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Powerful as performance and iconographical motifs in Pagnol's work are, they cannot alone account for the lasting popularity of the trilogy. We now have to turn to the type of narrative offered by *Marius, Fanny*, and *César*, and its symbolic and historical significance.

Pagnol's contention that he only wrote about clichés is a useful starting point. The trilogy deals in an apparently candid way with archetypal family relationships and it comes as no surprise that these accord with the dominant patriarchal ideology of the period, a set of values certainly not challenged by Pagnol. However, in its very 'naïvety' and in its explicitness, the discourse on the family proposed by the trilogy comes close, if not exactly to a critique, at least to a laying bare of its own contradictions — in terms of the conflict between generations, of the place of desire within the patriarchal family, and of the figure of the mother. In doing so it allows, crucially, for a variety of normally irreconcilable spectator positions.

Near the final resolution of the trilogy, in *César*, Fanny delivers an angry speech against César's (and her mother's) life-long interference in her affairs. Her heartfelt tirade against *les vieux* (the old ones) is undercut by the narrative, since César at this point is about to reunite her with Marius, but it underlines a basic structure of the three films. In the trilogy power is still firmly in the hands of the older generation. In contrast to the overt justification of building up wealth for the sake of the younger generation, as seen in Panisse's dream of bequeathing his business to his heir, characters who do have children, such as César and Honorine, show absolutely no inclination to relinquish their power to them. There lies one of the crucial narrative determinants of the trilogy — the symbolic, Oedipal blockage from César (who, in *Marius*, repeatedly emphasizes his son's infantile status), and on a lesser register Honorine (who, as a widow, is endowed with phallic power), parallels an economic blockage, and effectively sends Marius on his journey

and Fanny into her marriage to Panisse. The thematic configuration of powerful old men, and their marriage to young women, is a staple of French theatre, both comic (Molière's *vieux barbons*) and melodramatic, and is found in a wide range of 1930s French films, as I have developed elsewhere.⁵ Its peculiar French predominance has to be seen against the background of the socio-historical structure of 1930s French society. Marriages between mature men and much younger women were still widespread among the middle-classes in 1930s France, within a legal system geared towards keeping wealth and property, and hence authority, in the hands of the older generation. Work on contemporary media aimed at women has shown that in the women's magazines of the period discourses aimed at 'preparing' women for such an eventuality coexisted alongside romantic notions of ideal (young) love. These perfectly contradictory positions are exemplified in the trilogy's treatment of the marriage between Fanny and Panisse. An object of mirth when it is first proposed, it is later commented on in terms of its sexual inadequacy despite its economic necessity, a divide succinctly expressed by Honorine ('nightshirts don't have pockets'). What the narrative subsequently and at great length justifies is the desirability of such a marriage in terms of legitimacy.

In the same way as the trilogy contrasts the 'natural' and 'learned' types of knowledge, it opposes two types of inheritance, attached to the two father figures: César and Panisse. Césariot is heir to a 'natural' legacy from César through Marius, and to property from Panisse. This is logical in class terms: the rise of the *petite bourgeoisie* into the elite depends on the money of commerce. In return, the ambitious provincial shopkeeper is stimulated by Parisian-inspired initiative: Panisse modernizes his business for 'the little one'. Though Césariot is the 'true' son of the Bar de la Marine (César and Marius merge into one another on more than one occasion as César explicitly identifies with Marius as lover of Fanny and father of Césariot in Marius' absence), he needs Panisse's money and, even more, his name. For, above all, the point of the marriage is to give Césariot 'a name' — the name of the father, materialized in the letters '& Fils' kept by Panisse in a drawer and triumphantly added to the shop front.

We can see the trilogy, then, as a long declension on the name and nature of the father, a series of variations with, at their core, the character of César enhanced by the star status of Raimu, who understood the centrality of the part of César and turned down the role of Panisse originally intended for him by Pagnol, thus changing the course of the subsequent two works. With the death of Panisse, Marius can return; but more importantly César can be acknowledged as the true ancestor of the child, having occupied all the positions of fatherhood — father, godfather, and grandfather — as well as that of 'father' of the narrative: sending Marius away symbolically in *Marius*, literally in *Fanny*, and bringing him back in *César*, even though this entails a certain amount of 'cheating'. For the law of the father is also shown to be making its own rules as it goes along — a fact comically echoed by the various card games in which César always cheats in order to win. But if the trilogy

repeatedly reasserts the power of the father(s), it also explores contradictory, and potentially threatening, forces against this power: the desire of the 'son' on the one hand, and the place of the mother within a patriarchal, Catholic, culture on the other.

Like most classical narratives, the trilogy is the story of a quest by the male hero, on the Oedipus model. Marius' actual and symbolic voyage condenses classical mythology, French popular myths of the 1930s, and Marseillais folklore.⁶ Marius and Fanny as Ulysses and Penelope is a clear enough equivalence. Marius' longing for the South Seas, while motivated by the Marseilles location, also corresponds to the obsession with exoticism and sea voyages in 1930s French culture. Clearly, it is traceable, in part, to colonial history, and it is certainly dominant in the cinema of the period in a variety of genres — from Navy melodramas to operettas (including a specifically Marseillais sub-genre) — but best known internationally from 'Poetic-Realist' films. Unlike its expression in Duvivier's *Pépé le Moko* or Carné's *Quai des brumes*, where the Gabin hero's voyage is always blocked, the journey in the trilogy does take place. Its object, however, according to the logic of desire, is shown to be an unattainable illusion. In order for Marius' mythic (and Oedipal) journey to be successful, an object approved by the law — marriage — has to be substituted for his own irrepressible desire for 'elsewhere', while the nature of his desire, threatening the cohesion of the family, is dealt with by his virtual exclusion from *Fanny* and *César*.

In keeping with the patriarchal emphasis, gender roles in the trilogy are unsurprisingly ultra-traditional, not to say archaic, and totally grounded in the family and its rituals. However, as is common in the French cinema of the period, gender divisions within male characters are far more complex than the overt definition of gender roles. Panisse for example occupies both masculine and feminine positions — he gives a name and wealth to the child, but he is also caring and protective; this is the object of the long scene towards the end of *Fanny* in which Panisse's tender nurturing of Césariot is given as justification of his superior claim to fatherhood over Marius' recognized status as biological father. This dual nature of the father is even more explicit in the character of César who is both father and mother to Marius, being, for instance, strongly connected with domesticity while at the same time presented as sexually active (his weekly visits to a mysterious mistress). In this configuration the trilogy is typical of a wide range of 1930s French films, as is the fact that the actual mothers, the older women such as the wives of Panisse and César, are eliminated from the narrative before the films begin. It is true that Fanny's mother, Honorine, is present in all three films, but her narrative function is minimal and her sexuality certainly denied. Though she would seem at first to be the female equivalent of César, the real 'couple' is formed by the latter and Panisse, a couple ultimately consecrated by the name of 'their' child: César(iot) Panisse.

If Honorine is marginalized in the trilogy, her daughter Fanny occupies centre stage as 'the mother'. Within the terms of French and especially

Catholic culture, the place accorded to her is central (as bearer and educator of the child) but concurrently suppresses her as an individual subject in her own right. A good contemporary parallel can be found in Mauriac's *Thérèse Desqueyroux*, published in 1927, in which the pregnant Thérèse is acutely aware that her only value is as a 'container'. Though it is tempting to see the emphasis on motherhood in the trilogy — as in all Pagnol's work — as related to the contemporary concern with low birth rate, it relates more pertinently to generic structures, and in particular those of melodrama in which the classic opposition between the 'good' and the 'bad' woman is really an expression of the conflict between the woman as mother and the woman as individual subject, an antinomy which uncannily evokes Freud's scenario of 'family romances'. Freud's description of the male child's fantasy 'to bring his mother [...] into situations of secret infidelity and into secret love-affairs' (Freud 1977, 223) reads like a blueprint for the scene in *César* where Césariot learns of his true paternity and angrily reproaches Fanny for her love affair with Marius, seeing it as a dereliction of her 'duty', towards her husband Panisse and towards him. Fanny's response is to provoke guilt: she points to the suffering she has endured in order to carry him, give birth to him, and bring him up; such is the mother's revenge under patriarchy.

As is also typical of the maternal melodrama, sacrifice is the only option left to Fanny, one which despite its negativity can be seen at least to validate women's experience, but more fundamentally to point to the fact that this sacrifice is itself also a 'problem';⁷ she sacrifices her love for Marius to his greater love for 'the sea' in *Marius*, sacrifices all for her child in *Fanny*, and, arguably, sacrifices her newfound freedom after Panisse's death for the (re)formation of her couple with Marius in *César*. However, despite its masculine bias, the trilogy can be seen to appeal directly to women spectators. As *Fanny* is the film which concentrates most on the female heroine, both as mother and as 'fallen woman' (a combination which is a recurrent thematic thread in Pagnol's work — see for instance *Angèle* and *La Fille du puisatier*), one might speculate on its increased appeal to women. It is telling that, of the three films, *Fanny* enjoyed the highest attendance (Pagnol 1981, 203), and unsurprising that it attracted the strongest critical disapproval. In this respect, Beylie's view is typical of the traditional attitude to melodrama, when he describes *Fanny* as the part of the trilogy where 'male rigorousness' gives way to 'a lacrymose excess a little out of place' (Beylie 1986, 59). Simultaneously offering the image of perfect womanhood and the image of its transgression, the trilogy addresses contradictory impulses and ideological positions in its audience, though of course these contradictory positions are themselves defined by patriarchy. The 'good' and especially the 'bad' aspects of the female heroine are shown as inherent to her 'nature': there are hints of Fanny's own illegitimate birth and there is the often evoked spectre of Fanny's aunt Zoé, a prostitute. At the end of the trilogy *César*, as always, has the last word. As he is reminded by Marius that Césariot does not bear his (their) name, he retorts:

'This one doesn't, but the other ones will.' Cancelling out the past 20 years (and the last two films of the trilogy), César rewrites Fanny's future as a mother and the perpetuator of his own name.

NOTES

1. For an introduction to the contemporary debates on 'filmed theatre' and reactions to the coming of sound in general, see René Clair (1972) *Cinema Today and Yesterday*, trans. Stanley Applebaum, New York, Dover, and various contributions — including by Clair and Pagnol — in Marcel Lapierre (ed.) (1946) *Anthologie du cinéma*, Paris, La Nouvelle Edition. Beylie (1986) also provides a good overview of the reactions to Pagnol's place in the debate.

2. The Parisian branch of the Paramount studios, located in Joinville, was nicknamed 'Babel-on-Seine' on account of its high production of multi-language versions (including the three versions of *Marius*), and provoked much commentary and criticism. See Pagnol (1965) in *Cahiers du cinéma* 173, Henri Jeanson 'Cinq semaines à la Paramount, choses vécues', *Le Crapouillot*, special issue, November 1932, and Vincendeau (1988) 'Hollywood-Babel', *Screen*, 29 (2).

3. This is itself a feature of a majority of French films of the 1930s that focused strongly on actors' performances, whether they were based directly on theatrical texts or not. For a close study of dialogue in a Pagnol film, see Marie's contribution (on *Le Schpountz*) to Michel Marie and Francis Vanoye, 'Comment parler la bouche pleine?', *Communications* 38 (1982), special issue 'Enunciation and Cinema'.

4. In a scene from *Marius* (the play) which was not retained in the film, Fanny also corrects her mother's pronunciation of the word 'inventaire' (stall).

5. 'Daddy's girls, Oedipal narratives in 1930s French films', *Iris*, 'Cinema and Narration 2' (2nd semestre, 1988).

6. Within the film's paradigm of sea voyages, the ferry-boat that crosses the Vieux Port functions metonymically, as part of the Marseillais familiar scene. It also works metaphorically, both as sign of a doomed folklore (its existence is threatened by the construction of a new bridge), and as representative of the small-scale, routine existence Marius wants to leave behind by embarking on the glamorous sailing ship.

7. This is a problematic identified notably by Ann Kaplan in relation to Hollywood melodrama. See Kaplan, 'Mothering, Feminism and Representation, The Maternal in Melodrama and the Woman's Film 1910-1987', in Christine Gledhill (ed.) (1987) *Home is Where the Heart Is*, London, British Film Institute.

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SCRIPTS

All three parts of the trilogy have been published in book form and reprinted many times (they are all currently available in the *Livre de poche* collection). The original editions are:

- Pagnol, Marcel (1931) *Marius*, Fasquelle.
 Pagnol, Marcel (1932) *Fanny*, Fasquelle.
 Pagnol, Marcel (1937) *César*, Fasquelle.

APPENDIX

Marcel Pagnol (1895—1974): filmography

(Main films directed or supervised by Marcel Pagnol; for a complete filmography, see Beylie 1986.)

- 1931 *Marius* (technically directed by Alexander Korda)
 1932 *Fanny* (technically directed by Marc Allégret)
 1933 *Le Gendre de Monsieur Poirier*
 1933 *Jofroi*
 1934 *L'Article 330*
 1934 *Angèle*
 1935 *Merlusse*
 1935 *Cigalon*
 1936 *César*
 1936 *Topaze*, 2nd version — a first version of Pagnol's play was directed in 1932 by Louis Gasnier
 1937 *Regain*
 1937 *Le Schpountz*
 1938 *La Femme du boulanger*
 1940 *La Fille du puisatier*
 1941 *La Prière aux étoiles*

1943 *Arlette et l'amour* (technically directed by Robert Vernay)
1945 *Naïs* (technically directed by Raymond Leboursier)
1948 *La Belle meunière*
1950 *Topaze*, 3rd version
1952 *Manon des sources*
1953-4 *Les Lettres de mon moulin*
1967 *Le Curé de Cucugnan*

Remakes of the trilogy

a) simultaneous foreign language versions

1931 *Zum Goldenen Anker* (Germany), directed by Alexandre Korda
1931 *Längtan till Havet* (Sweden), directed by John W. Brunius

b) remakes

1933 *Fanny* (Italy), directed by Mario Almirante
1934 *Der Schwarze Walfisch* (Germany), directed by Fritz Wendhausen, with Emil Jannings as César
1938 *Port of Seven Seas* (USA), directed by James Whales, scripted by Preston Sturges, with Wallace Berry as César, Maureen O'Sullivan as Fanny.
1961 *Fanny* (USA), musical directed by Joshua Logan, with Maurice Chevalier as César, Charles Boyer as Panisse, and Leslie Caron as Fanny

Other films cited in the text:

Jean de Florette, Claude Berri (1985)
Manon des sources, Claude Berri (1986)
Le Mot de Cambronne, Sacha Guitry (1936)
Pépé le Moko, Julien Duvivier (1936)
Quai des brumes, Marcel Carné (1938)