

*Blackwell Concise Companions to Literature and Culture*  
General Editor: David Bradshaw, University of Oxford

This series offers accessible, innovative approaches to major areas of literary study. Each volume provides an indispensable companion for anyone wishing to gain an authoritative understanding of a given period or movement's intellectual character and contexts.

*Chaucer*

Edited by Corinne Saunders

*English Renaissance Literature*

Edited by Donna Hamilton

*Shakespeare on Screen*

Edited by Diana E. Henderson

*The Restoration and Eighteenth*

Edited by Cynthia Wall

*Century*

*The Victorian Novel*

Edited by Francis O'Gorman

*Modernism*

Edited by David Bradshaw

*Postwar American Literature and*

Edited by Josephine G. Hendin

*Culture*

*Twentieth-Century American Poetry*

Edited by Stephen Fredman

*Contemporary British Fiction*

Edited by James F. English

*Feminist Theory*

Edited by Mary Eagleton

# A Concise Companion to Shakespeare on Screen

Edited by Diana E. Henderson

## Chapter 1

## AUTHORSHIP

# Getting Back to Shakespeare: Whose Film is it Anyway?

Elsie Walker

of immediate contact with the author or the intentions behind his work.

Nevertheless, in *Looking for Richard*, Pacino looks everywhere for tangible ways to bridge the gap between himself and Shakespeare, to "authorize" his production of *Richard III*. He consults dusty tomes, people on the street, other actors and directors, and specifically English academics, and visits the site of the new Globe in London (under construction in 1996) as well as the birthplace. About halfway through the film, Pacino suggests that his acting company seek academic advice on playing Richard's seduction of Lady Anne. Kimball immediately flies into a rage of romantic rhetoric, claiming that actors are the "proud inheritors of the understanding of Shakespeare" and the "truth" of his plays, that actors are more qualified than anyone to determine Shakespeare's meanings. The encounter captures the struggle inherent in making a "Shakespeare film," between the sense of (financial and ideological) obligation to "decode" Shakespeare for a wide audience and the necessary admission of the limitations in any interpretation. Also, it suggests a similar problem to one identified in twentieth-century theatrical performance and criticism by W. B. Worthen: "the value of . . . representation is measured not by the productive meanings it releases or puts into play, but by the 'proximity' it claims to some sense of authorized meaning, to something located in the text or, magically, in 'Shakespeare'" (1997: 37-8). Ultimately, Kimball appears to assume that the truth of Shakespeare's meanings can be found.

Many filmmakers similarly "authorize" and market their productions in terms of "proximity" to a given Shakespearean work – the webpages for *Titus Andronicus* directed by Christopher Dunne are littered with grandiose claims about fidelity to the author's original intentions (Titus 1998). Branagh claimed authority for his *Hamlet* (1996) by promising the longest version, "more Shakespeare for your money," including the "full" Folio text along with insertions from the Second Quarto (the "How all occasions do inform" speech). He promised, without irony, to present "for the first time, the full unabridged text of *Shakespeare's Hamlet*," "the most fully authentic version of the play" (Murphy 2000: 13) in which he saw an "all-embracing survey of life" (Branagh 1996: xiv). In their attempts to somehow recover the text, Branagh, Dunne, and Pacino arguably continue the legacy of "bardolatry" – the "romantic ideology of the timeless and universal Author" and the "timeless text which obscures the historicity of his plays and thereby contains any present political charge they might

Near the beginning of *Looking for Richard* (1996), Al Pacino prepares to deliver the famous first speech from Shakespeare's *Richard III*. Sporting an irreverent baseball cap, the actor/director walks onto an ornate, mock-Elizabethan indoor stage. The camera cuts to show where the audience would be and there is only one member, a man whose face and dress resemble the Chandos Shakespeare portrait. "Shakespeare" disparagingly shakes his head, at which point Pacino sighs, shrugs, and walks off the stage without uttering a word of the play. In this virtually silent scene, Pacino wittily confronts what any Shakespearean film actor or director is up against: the pressure of expectational texts. Coined by Barbara Hodgdon, the phrase refers to the preconceptions about what "should" be done or what Shakespeare *intended*, which people bring to any performance of Shakespeare's work (Hodgdon 1983: 143).

A later sequence in *Looking for Richard* shows Pacino and his friend, Frédéric Kimball, visiting Shakespeare's birthplace in Stratford-upon-Avon. They enter the birthplace with the zeal of missionaries, wistfully expecting some kind of epiphany. However, their reverent entrance is interrupted by firemen who burst in unceremoniously, alerted to a false alarm. Pacino and Kimball's attempt to commune with some Shakespearean spirit instead emphasizes the impossibility

have carried" (Felperin 1991: 129). The term was coined by Bernard Shaw in 1901 for the idealization of Shakespeare in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although it is still in currency today.

Just as these directors attempt to represent the "true" or "full" Shakespearean text, many Shakespearean film scholars are wont to talk about films "true to the spirit" of Shakespeare. This "spirit" is, finally, impossible to locate. Nevertheless, the assumption that there are identifiable, singular authorial intentions behind the plays has, until comparatively recently, dominated Shakespearean film (and television) scholarship.

Shakespeare film criticism has been "preoccupied with what gets lost in the translation" (Lehmann 2001: 62). The first Shakespeare "film," Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree's *King John* (1899), is almost as old as cinema itself (see GUNERATNE). Yet for decades, one-reel adaptations were regarded as mere entertainment for the masses without artistic credibility (even though early film companies set the trend of using Shakespearean subjects to achieve prestige). Despite widespread praise for and interest in some later Shakespeare films, especially those directed by Laurence Olivier (the 1944 *Henry V* and the 1948 *Hamlet*) and Orson Welles (retrospectively, the 1952 *Othello*), many professional and academic critics still responded in a positivist fashion in terms of loss, calculating each film's relative "faithfulness" to the Shakespearean text, establishing simplistic taxonomies about the nature of the stage and cinema, and different degrees of adaptation. In particular, they wrote of cinema as a primarily "literal" visual medium incommensurate with Shakespeare's more complex writing. The "tension between text and image is one of the strongest motifs in critical evaluations of Shakespeare on screen" along with the *tension* between (rather than possibilities in combining) "theatricality" and "visual media" (Simone 1998: 233). Critics such as James Agee and Norman Berlin focused on cuts, the percentage of Shakespearean lines included, evaluating according to degrees of fidelity and/or distortion (in terms of how well the visuals served the language). There was also a prevalent concern that the powerful, primarily visual, "realist" nature of film would displace the stylized integrity of Shakespeare's plays. This concern with the distortion of original texts and the fear that "Shakespeare" and "film" were inherently incommensurate prevailed until the late 1970s, and continued beyond (see Sinyard 1986: 2-3).

Nevertheless, academic studies by Robert Hamilton Ball (1968), Roger Manvell (1971), and Jack J. Jorgens (1977) paved the way for

fundamental shifts in Shakespeare-on-screen criticism. Over the last decade critics have moved from "positivism to hermeneutics," "from Victorian conservatism to modernist expansiveness to postmodernist permissiveness." The preoccupation with "what gets lost" in the translation from stage-play to film has given way "to a more open and adventurous foray," "discovering that which is unique and special about each movie" in both aesthetic and sociological terms (Rothwell 2001: 82-3).

Recent writing considers the ideological and cultural work, the various realities that Shakespeare films represent: in *Shakespeare, Cinema and Society* (1989), John Collick provides a Marxist analysis of the social significance of films produced in Europe, Russia, and Japan; *Shakespeare, Film, Fin de Siècle* (2000), edited by Burnett and Wray, analyzes how Shakespeare films of the 1990s confront "millennial anxieties"; *Shakespeare on Film* (1998), edited by Shaughnessy, ranges from formalist analyses to Marxist, psychoanalytic, poststructuralist, feminist, and queer readings of diverse (popular and "arthouse") films; Michael Anderregg (1999) provides a comprehensive, historical account of Orson Welles' productions; *Shakespeare the Movie* (1997), edited by Boose and Burt, establishes cultural, industrial, and aesthetic contexts for the consideration of Shakespeare adapted to film, television, and video; *Spectacular Shakespeare* (2002), edited by Lehmann and Starks, considers their ideological resonance at the multiplex and in the classroom. And yet, surprisingly, in his recent survey of Shakespeare-on-screen criticism, Kenneth Rothwell argues that for most critics the key question remains, "Is it Shakespeare?" (2001: 259).

Arguments about the importance of truly "getting back to Shakespeare" do persist. Daniel Rosenthal's survey focuses on "how 'faithfully' [each film] has treated its source play" (2000: 8), and argues that "with cinema the only restrictions are imposed by the size of the budget and viewers do not expect to have to exercise their imaginations" (2000: 10). The premise here is again that cinema is a "realist" mode of representation prompting a straightforward, passive response. Rosenthal's arguments echo Catherine Belsey's influential 1983 essay (reprinted in Shaughnessy 1998), "Shakespeare on Film: A Question of Perspective," which presents an essentialist argument about the limitations of cinema. Belsey claims that the film medium is inherently conservative because the cinematic frame, like the nineteenth-century proscenium arch stage, reduces the multiplicity of potential meanings to a single, unified point of view which is imposed on the passive viewer. Whereas the Shakespearean text is "interrogative,"

full of questions, representative of and subject to multiple perspectives, the Shakespearean film is a "classic realist" text which presents unified, selective, and limiting meanings to an audience without permitting interpretive flexibility (Belsey 1983: 155-6). Her article is filled with assumptions about the filmic medium that have not been adequately addressed in (even the most recent) Shakespearean film scholarship: the assumption not only that singular, authoritative messages are presented in films, but also that films prompt determinable responses.

While Kathy Howlett's *Framing Shakespeare on Film* (2000) is a *defense* of films which "deviate" from the Shakespearean source, her approach is nevertheless, like Rosenthal's, prescriptive. She begins by citing Franco Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* (1990) featuring the prince as "Western film hero" and Akira Kurosawa's *Ran* (1985) with King Lear as "a great lord of the Japanese feudal empire." Although the Shakespearean play seems "transformed beyond recognition," Howlett argues that "Shakespeare is still centrally in these films," the "essential concepts remain as one finds them in Shakespeare's text" (2000: 1, 2-3; see also 19). In *Shakespeare in the Movies*, Douglas Brode adopts an even more Romantic approach, evaluating films according to Shakespeare's "personal vision" and "authorial intention" (2000: 225). The implicit assumption is that Shakespeare is a precursor of Andrew Sarris' *auteur* figure - "the film artist who, through the force of his powerful personality and aesthetic preoccupations, is able to overcome all barriers to the expression of his vision" (Lehmann 2001: 62).

My goal is not to provide a comprehensive survey of critical debates, but to illustrate that problems of fidelity remain: the desire and sense that it might be possible to "get back to Shakespeare," to represent his work authoritatively, persists. Such criticism impedes a thorough appreciation and understanding of the diverse cultural and historical contexts in and mediums through which Shakespeare is understood. However, rather than just offer a reaction against fidelity arguments, I want to address what's at stake in the process of claiming Shakespeare in more specific, contemporary terms. I'd like to consider the "textual" work that recent films represent.

Two theoretical points are worth reinforcing before turning to the films themselves. I do not mean to suggest that particular films prompt determinate responses any more than do their Shakespearean sources. The fixedness of a film interpretation *and* its conceivable reception is as illusory as the fixedness of any textual material. Douglas Lanier points out the dangers of approaching films like "stable artifacts rather

than contingent, unstable, ephemeral experiences" (1996: 203). Films are, to an extent, "remade" rather than pinned down in each interpretive text about them. Even a self-consciously subjective understanding of a film cannot be described "accurately": in written description, the direct experience of watching and hearing a film is lost. Thus there is some value in borrowing William Worthen's approach to analyzing stage productions "as though they participated in textuality" when considering the theoretical work these films perform (Worthen 1997: 183). In critical practice, however, the once determinable Shakespearean text has often been replaced by the knowable resonance of the film text - the implicit assumption being that the signifying potential of a film is determinable.

Secondly, the resonance of Shakespeare films is most often discussed in accordance with claims about the director. It is standard in Shakespearean film criticism always to mention directors: simply providing a film title and date is not enough to establish which production of a given play is under consideration. But critics have gone further by focusing primarily on the input of the director, often privileging *auteurs* (like Olivier, Welles, Kurosawa, Kozintsev, Branagh) who fulfill the "author-function" as, in Worthen's words, "stand-ins for Shakespeare" (1997: 60). Howlett, for example, is primarily concerned with how the "the director's aesthetic awareness . . . frames questions of identification and definition in the Shakespeare film," following Peter Donaldson's precedent of locating meaning as "an aspect of the director's subjective and personal experience" (Howlett 2000: 3, 6). Without discounting Donaldson's scholarly contribution - he has, perhaps more than any other critic, demonstrated the psychological complexity and resonance of *auteur*-based readings - I suggest that such readings are inevitably limiting if taken as automatically most authoritative.

The *auteur*, like the Author, is the figure who is seemingly "outside" and "antecedes" the text, the figure bringing coherence and unity to a production "through his biography, the determination of his individual perspective, the analysis of his social position, and the revelation of his basic design" (Foucault 1988: 197, 204). Of course such a view must be projected onto the given production; the identification of authorial (directorial) intentions that delimit the meaning/s of a text is an inescapably subjective exercise. We might reasonably identify resemblances between different films involving the same director, and the way a director discusses "Shakespeare" may be an important index to understanding the attitudes and assumptions that governed a

film's making. Nevertheless, whilst directors have a key role in any film's development, the filmmaking process can only be understood as a highly collaborative one (see HENDERSON).

Tying a production to an "originator" (whether author, director, or indeed star) is, to adapt Margreta de Grazia's words, to "confine[e] it to the perimeters of a single consciousness. . . . Tying the quotation to its originator, tying the work to its author are modes of denying and curbing discursive possibility" (1991: 68). The ways in which directors speak of staying "true" to Shakespeare point to the ideological work their productions represent. Film directors outside the English-speaking North Atlantic orbit have long taken the lead in self-consciously appropriating Shakespearean texts for their own cultural purposes. When, in the 1960s, Grigori Kozintsev asked Boris Pasternak to translate *Hamlet* into Russian, Pasternak produced a screenplay which he advised Kozintsev to cut: "Cut, abbreviate, and slice again, as much as you want. The more you discard the better. I always regard half the text of any play, of even the most immortal and classic work of genius, as a diffused remark that the author wrote in order to acquaint actors as thoroughly as possible with the heart of the action to be played. . . . Dispose of the text with complete freedom; it is your right" (Kozintsev 1967: 214–15). Akira Kurosawa did not even attempt to translate Shakespeare's language "straight" into Japanese, but used his understanding of the plays' overall structure and thematic concerns as a template for his screenplays (see DAWSON). Since the Shakespearean text was immediately translated, these directors generally avoided simple questions of fidelity or betrayal.

By contrast, the desire to reproduce "the Shakespearean text" is evident in the way English-speaking directors talk. These directors, like critics, speak of "getting back to" Shakespeare in order to authorize their productions: they establish straightforward correlations between author and playtext, director and film, playtext and screenplay, early modern and postmodern contexts of understanding. I want to explore their reasons for this way of speaking, drawing on films by Branagh and Pacino, before turning to four recent films that work differently. Richard Loncraine's *Richard III* (1995), Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1996), Julie Taymor's *Titus* (1999), and Michael Almercyda's *Hamlet* (2000) do, despite what the directors say, represent a more complex, playful, and/or painful confrontation with Shakespeare and with what Jean Howard calls "the radical otherness of the past" (1992: 25). These films, I argue, represent a profoundly nostalgic desire to claim the truth and authenticity

attached to Shakespeare's language. At the same time, each film recontextualizes, claiming the power of the words in a highly self-conscious way.

Additionally, there has been a recent burst of adaptations dispensing with the language almost entirely, in favor of modern scenarios which parallel Shakespeare's plot and thematic structures (often themselves derived from other sources). Such films as *Get Over It* (2001, loosely based on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), *O* (2001, based on *Othello*), *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999, based on *The Taming of the Shrew*), and *Never Been Kissed* (1999, loosely based on *As You Like It*) are witty adaptations in which the nostalgic desire to get back to Shakespeare is not obviously played out (see LANIER). Indeed, the Shakespearean sources are seldom mentioned in their promotional material.

Conversely, every film which does incorporate the historically remote Shakespearean text may be immediately understood as negotiating a "direct" relationship with the past; indeed, Burnett and Wray attribute the recent Shakespeare film "Renaissance" in part to *fin-de-siècle* nostalgia (2000: 3). Some take place in fictionalized historical settings: a forest in Tuscany at the end of the nineteenth century for Michael Hoffman's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1999); nineteenth-century England for Branagh's *Hamlet* ("starring" gorgeous Blenheim Palace, birthplace of Winston Churchill). These "period" productions appear to "preserve the 'historical' character of the Shakespearean original," and arguably "use history as a metaphor for the recovery of authentically Shakespearean meanings" (Worthen 1997: 67). The promotional materials and theatrical trailers foreground the adaptation of "classic" text matched with high production values. In such cases the safely distant evocations of a bygone era and the revered, "timeless" text provide an antidote for the anxieties and disruptions of the present – reusing *the* old text satisfies a need for continuity and togetherness in a world where such ideas are problematized or "lost." Branagh's *Love's Labor's Lost* (2000), Shakespeare done in the style of a "classic" 1940s Hollywood musical, is a particularly utopian, though unwittingly disconcerting, vision. Ladies in diaphanous gowns and men in tuxedos dance in Oxford University-style, studio-set courtyards and study rooms. The work of the Author at the center of the canon is located in enclosed, elitist grounds enjoyed by a privileged few. The framing of Branagh's film with black-and-white footage also signals that, here, "Shakespeare" is located in a romanticized past. Towards the end of the film (set loosely during World War II) there is the brief

intrusion of a de-Nazified battle. But the war does not seriously threaten the quaint fun of this film: a brief "break" in the Shakespearean narrative and a few grainy images of brave troops and lonely ladies are quickly followed by their reunion.

*Love's Labor's Lost* fits what Fredric Jameson defines as the "nostalgia film": an "attempt to appropriate a missing past." Such films do not include "old-fashioned 'representation' of historical content, but instead represent the 'past' through stylistic connotation," "conveying 'pastness' by the glossy qualities of the image." They attempt to "blur" their contemporaneity "and make it possible for the viewer to receive the narrative as though it were set . . . beyond real historical time" (Jameson 1991: 19, 21). In discussing such "moonlit impression[s] of the past," Patrick Wright argues that once history is presented abstractly, "the political tensions which must necessarily inform it are purged; the residual product is a unifying spectacle, the settling of all disputes" (1985: 69). Branagh's *Love's Labor's Lost* is such a utopian vision, featuring "color-blind casting" and accent mixing, an inauthentic past "authorized" by a transhistorical, transcultural text.

The documentary-style *Looking for Richard* similarly attempts to access a fuller, unifying, nonexistent past (despite Pacino's sometimes describing this attempt in an ironic or self-disparaging way; see Honohan). Though set in the present, the film follows (most particularly) Pacino's romantic quest to "access" the perceived idealism of Shakespeare's early modern language. The academics, actors, and people on the street interviewed by Pacino and Kimball repeatedly espouse reverent regard for the sanctity and "truth" of Shakespeare's words. The film focuses primarily upon rehearsals of *Richard III* and discussions led by Pacino. The actor playing Hastings, Kevin Conway, argues: "In a contemporary play, somebody would say, 'hey you, go over there and get that thing and bring it back to me.' That would be the line. Shakespeare says, 'Be Mercury, set feathers to thy heels, / And fly like thought from them, to me again.'" Those lines, from *King John* 4.2.174-5, excerpt the King's speech instructing Philip the Bastard to visit and win back the loyalty of Lords Bigot and Salisbury (who have been swayed to rebel by rumors that John ordered the murder of his nephew Arthur). Without presuming these lines' ultimate meaning, I would argue that Conway has not only quoted them out of context, but also provided an eccentric paraphrase. In the context of this film, however, such particularities are irrelevant. The words of the Poet/Author, regardless of context, are upheld as evidence of a time when words were more beautiful, more carefully

chosen. An African-American man on the street argues that Shakespeare's words are more potent, considered, and emotionally "true" than the way people speak today:

We should speak like Shakespeare. . . . We have no feelings. That's why it's easy for us to get a gun and shoot each other. . . . If we were taught to feel we wouldn't be so violent. . . . If we . . . have no feelings then we say things to each other that don't mean anything. But if we *felt* what we said - we'd say less and mean more.

Pacino and Kimball appear transfixed by this speech and agree emphatically (chiming in several times off-camera). The man then turns to ask a businessman for change, and the camera lingers for a moment before a cut. The poignancy of the moment, the revelation that the most impassioned speech comes from the mouth of a beggar, appears to confirm the filmmakers' belief that Shakespeare speaks to everyone at the precise moment that Pacino's quest is thrown into relief as luxurious. Later, Vanessa Redgrave argues that in Shakespeare's language everything - the aesthetic, intellectual, emotional, and personal - is integrated in a truthful whole: "the music and the thoughts and the concepts and the feelings have not been divorced from the words. And in England you've had centuries in which words have been totally divorced from truth." In this film, "everyone" (from the penniless, African-American man to the distinguished, white actress) understands and defends the restorative power of Shakespeare's language. They likewise argue that we have somehow lost touch with the power of that language which is necessary to our survival.

As Chase and Shaw argue:

We should not suspend our critical faculty and overlook the ahistorical assumptions behind the simple dualism of modern fractured consciousness and the integrated consciousness of times past. . . . If our consciousness is fragmented, there must have been a time when it was integrated; if society is now bureaucratized and impersonal, it must have previously been personal and particular. The syntax and structure of these ideas makes them superficially attractive but this appeal is no warrant for their veracity. (1989: 8)

Similarly, in a provocative essay entitled "Nostalgia Tells It Like It Wasn't," David Lowenthal argues that "the past as reconstructed is always more coherent than when it happened," and that it is wrong to assume there exists some "non-nostalgic reading of the past that is,



by contrast, honest; or authentically 'true' (1989: 30). *Looking for Richard* attempts to recover the alleged certainties of the past, evincing a partial "recognition, and at the same time an elision, of the fact that all that is solid, 'the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,' has melted into air" (Chase and Shaw 1989: 8). As Susan Bennett writes, "it is conspicuous how often Shakespeare performs the role which links the psychic experience of nostalgia to the possibility of reviving an authentic, naturally better, and material past" (1996: 7). Ironically (but perhaps not surprisingly), both *Looking for Richard* and *Love's Labor's Lost* emerge at a time when we confront the impossibility of authentic contact with the past. Jameson argues that in our present "we are condemned to seek History by way of our own pop images [or] simulacra of that history, which itself remains forever out of reach" (Jameson 1991: 25).

With such arguments in mind, it is perhaps easy to dismiss the words of the man on the street or Vanessa Redgrave in *Looking for Richard*. Nevertheless, the desire to harness or rediscover the power of Shakespeare's words implicitly, ironically suggests the fear that they recede from us. This becomes more resonant considering that even those making the most self-consciously postmodern Shakespeare films speak of the restorative power of the endlessly enduring, immediate, and relevant Shakespearean text. Ian McKellen, the star of Loncraine's *Richard III*, was inspired by the 1958 film version directed by and starring Laurence Olivier – it confirmed McKellen's "sense that Shakespeare was for everybody" (McKellen and Loncraine 1996: 37). Similarly, *Romeo and Juliet* is, for Luhrmann, an "archetypal" story which must and will be told over and over again. Luhrmann's "MTV style" film was immediately controversial for challenging "acceptable," "authentic" representations of Shakespeare but the notion of "getting back to Shakespeare" is everywhere in Luhrmann's own discussions. He denies significant historical and cultural differences by likening Elizabethan theater audiences to modern film audiences, describing the enduring resonance of a play for "everybody from the streetsweeper to the Queen" (an idea that is ironically literalized in Madmen's *Shakespeare in Love*; 1998).<sup>1</sup> Luhrmann does not pretend his film is "definitive" – he expects his interpretation to be "replaced" soon – but the play itself will endure as "myth": "As Benjamin Britten said, if a story is true there will be many different productions in different places and it will survive forever. . . . Any adaptation is right if it reveals the heart of the story and engages and awakens the audience to the material."

Similarly, Julie Taymor directed *Titus* because she believes that Shakespeare's play is the most powerful "dissertation on violence" for all time: for Taymor, Shakespeare speaks "directly" to a twentieth-century audience (2000a: 174). She also argues that the generic complexities of his plays anticipate the juxtaposition of disparate elements in modern films (Lindroth 2001: 113). The eclecticism of Taymor's *Titus* has affinities with both Elizabethan theater practice and postmodern playfulness. This eclecticism may be read as "a sign of the play's fragmented or disconnected discourse" and its "intermittent relation to contemporary modes of understanding," but Taymor wanted (to adapt Worthen's words) to signal "the universality and coherence of the [play as a] basic myth" – the signs of specific histories are subordinate to the authority of the text (Worthen 1997: 68). Almereyda, inspired by Jan Kott, likewise argues that *Hamlet* can be made to speak to the "present moment" without sacrificing the integrity of the play (Almereyda 2000: viii, ix). Thus these directors lay claim to an authentic encounter with a timeless Shakespeare, who captured fundamental forms of human relations, individual and collective action.

Despite what these directors say, however, the films themselves do not point to an "authorial," "single position which is the place of the coherence of meaning" (to quote Belsey's description of the classic realist text; 1980: 92). And rather than representing a past "forever out of reach," they demand to be understood in contemporary contexts. Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*, featuring ubiquitous guns, has particular resonance in America; Loncraine's *Richard III* is a parable of twentieth-century fascism which resonates with the rising popularity of the British National Party during the 1990s; some of Taymor's bloody *Titus* was shot in war-torn Croatia two months before war broke out in Kosovo; and Almereyda's anti-capitalist *Hamlet* was released soon after the first large-scale anti-globalization demonstrations occurred. None of these films places Shakespeare in the museum of distant history. Instead, his language is self-consciously recontextualized for present purposes. I want to explore briefly how such films problematize notions of a coherent text and timeless meaning, employing anti-illusionist devices to undermine a sense of spatial (as well as narrative) coherence. In other words, they might be understood as inviting interrogative responses in precisely those ways Belsey disallows.

Loncraine's *Richard III* is dominated by the parodic incorporation of "period" details, sending up the reconstruction of history associated with heritage films (Lochlin 1997), and indeed the very notion that

history or "Shakespeare" can be authentically represented. Items from the 1940s are seductively photographed in close-up: from genuine "Abdullah" cigarettes (a rare packet was bought especially) to cars and costuming (McKellen and Loncraine 1996: 48). Patrick Wright describes British "historical" dramas which play out their

stories in reconstructed interiors packed with period objects, all arranged in that slightly obsessive manner which speaks of a present yearning for a time when things at least had the dignity of an indisputable place in an ordered world . . . the aura of overwhelming Romance – the sense of deep psychological investment and compensatory meaning – that permeates and gives lustre to the national past. (1985: 168)

By contrast, in Loncraine's *Richard III*, the aestheticizing of the past is made sinister by the explicit allusions to Nazism, and the Nazi way of manipulating history, in the portrayal of Richard's rise to power. Thus recalling the past does not automatically mean sentimental nostalgia or the recovery of lost meaning and order associated with "Shakespeare." McKellen asked for the playwright's initials to be placed on the dance-band's music stands in the opening scene at "The Victory Ball" (1996: 58). Yet the first words of the film (after ten minutes have elapsed) are the big-band song setting of Christopher Marlowe's "The Passionate Shepherd to his Nymph" – so the author's initials are aurally paired with verses that are not his own. The initials of the Author, ornately embroidered in red and gold, are part homage, part parody of any attempt at an authentic representation of the Author's work (compare LANIER).

Similarly, the recasting of Shakespeare's "sword" and "longsword" as gun trademarks in Lührmann's ironically titled *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* marks its derivative relationship to an "original" at the precise moment that it marks its distance from the conditions under which that play was produced (Worthen 1998: 1104). Several scholars, including James Loehlin, assume that the film's title is "a gesture to bardic authority" (2000: 121).<sup>2</sup> I argue that the film is a more self-conscious recontextualization than this assumption suggests. It aggressively foregrounds the processes by which it "updates" Shakespeare, relocating stage language within a cinematic world: from the billboards featuring Shakespearean lines as slogans ("Prospero's finest whiskey: the stuff dreams are made of"; "I am thy Pistol and thy Friend") to the dominance of a decrepit stage (located beside a pool hall called "The Globe").

Taymor's *Titus* is an equally playful collage featuring heterogeneous film iconography, an international cast, and a hybrid *mise-en-scène* emphasizing temporal and cultural differences rather than homogeneity. Instead of "re-creating Rome, 400 A.D.," Taymor wanted to evoke an ancient world of ritual, mausoleums, and orgies alongside elements of modern America. Tanks, horses and carriages, limousines, bows and arrows, machine guns, and electric Olympics-style torches appear in close-up. There is no synthesizing stability in *Titus* – different peoples, architectures, "texts," and cultures coexist rather than blend. And whilst Taymor speaks of the enduring, unifying resonance of Shakespeare's words, those words are continually "upstaged" by savage spectacles: this is in keeping with much twentieth-century criticism which emphasizes the clash between Shakespeare's figurative, sometimes absurdly ornate language and the horrific, relentless violence of the play. The film's final moments show young Lucius carrying Aaron's baby away from the other characters and the Coliseum, walking slowly towards a painted sunrise, as if reaching beyond the action of the film, the play, and the words which don't work anymore (see AEBISCHER).

The difficulty of preserving "Shakespeare" is perhaps most painfully explored in Almereyda's *Hamlet*. There is little time in this film for the uninterrupted contemplation of Hamlet's speeches: telephones, fax machines, door buzzers, and a bombardment of visual information (surveillance cameras, television screens showing explosions and rapidly edited montages) cut short almost every key speech. The frequently whispered and cut-off dialogue, the absence of non-musical sounds except for voices suggesting spaces in a vacuum evoke a world closing in. The film is dominated by slogans, trademarks, and prices which "speak louder" than Shakespeare – the privileging of individual subjectivity attributed to Hamlet's speeches seems out of place, naive, and indulgent in the context of a late capitalist world driven by money and faceless masters.

Each film foregrounds the clash between early modern text and postmodern *mise-en-scène*. Because the viewer is offered a variety of possible subject positions, narrative and ideological coherence is further disrupted. As noted, pinning down the "perspective" of any film is problematic. But these Shakespeare films emphasize the point by demystifying the process of filming "reality": to recontextualize the words of Linda Hutcheon, "what they represent is self-consciously shown to be highly filtered by the discursive and aesthetic assumptions of the camera-holder."<sup>3</sup> Loncraine's *Richard III*, for example,



Taymor likewise wanted to emphasize the subjectivity of reality presented in *Titus*, to disrupt the "safe space" of illusionist cinema by featuring editing *discontinuity*, subjecting her audience to spatial and temporal confusion. Taymor and her editor Françoise Bonnot did not attempt to shoot every character and scene "with the obligatory master shot, medium two shots, singles and reverses" (2000a: 182). For one thing, Taymor did not have the time and money to cover every scene extensively. But she also wanted to disobey conventional shooting and editing practices: in the scene where Lavinia and Bassanius are attacked by Tamora's sons, for example, Taymor favored a chaotic series of rapid, disconnected shots. She asked her camerawork team to match Lavinia and Bassanius' sense of panic with unsteady, unnerving shooting and she had the editor splice the shots without "perfect" continuity – saying, "I wanted the audience to feel like the attacked" (Taymor 2000b). In Almercyda's *Hamlet*, some scenes and speech snippets are shown as the central character's video diaries, black-and-white disjointed sequences which Hamlet edits on his computer screen (see DONALDSON). Each case reveals the process of manipulating reality for particular emotional and aesthetic effects: by highlighting the subjectivity of representation, the films (not unlike Brecht's epic theater) provoke complex responses hovering between detachment and engagement.

These Shakespeare films include many allusions to popular films, and draw from diverse generic film templates to engage and "awaken" cine-literate audiences. Their explicit intertextuality "sits well with the postmodern interrogation of the supposed integrity and coherence of all textual announcements" (Burnett and Wray 2000: 5). The films also implicitly decentralize Shakespeare the author "as the unique and isolated source of meaning" as well as the notion of the printed book as a fixed entity (Murphy 2000: 19). Of course no film, no "text" exists in a cultural vacuum and so will be, intentionally or not, a "woven fabric" of quotations (Barthes 1977: 159): within every film there will be references or moments reminiscent of other films. For instance, Collick examines how Reinhardt's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1935) draws on nightmarish elements of contemporary animated cartoons (1989: 80–106), and Branagh's films are often "read" in relation to those of Olivier and the wider Hollywood "intertext" (i.e., the "quotation" from *The Magnificent Seven* near the beginning of *Much Ado About Nothing*, 1993). It is "standard Hollywood practice" to incorporate (or appear to incorporate) diverse generic elements. As Rick Altman demonstrates, studios, producers, and directors aim for an

highlights the conventions of cinematic "realism" by sometimes disobeying them. The film potentially, to paraphrase Graham Holderness, interrogates the ideologies which underpin an apparently unmediated presentation (the kind of "straightforward" representation that Belsey associates with "classic realist" works).<sup>4</sup> McKellen as Richard makes several direct addresses to camera, breaking the "fourth wall" convention of film performances (itself derived from nineteenth-century theater). The music which punctuates his victories (composed by Trevor Jones), and the consistently distancing camerawork – the apparent objectivity of which could be "read" as Richard's own detached viewpoint – reinforce Richard's "directorial" control disconcertingly, prompting us to seek another perspective beyond the limits of the frame (see HODGSON, LANIER).

Luhrmann likewise wanted to avoid making *Romeo + Juliet* a conventionally "naturalistic," "window-on-reality" film. He says he directed *Strictly Ballroom* (1992), *Romeo + Juliet*, and *Moulin Rouge* (2001) in the "red-curtain style," that is, as "theatricalized," "audience-participation cinema." Each film world is both self-consciously stylized and "realistic" in different ways. His comments about the "heightened creative" world of *Moulin Rouge* also seem pertinent to *Romeo + Juliet*: "we use devices that awaken the audience to the fact that they are watching a movie... most of the naturalistic cinema that's been the vogue for years puts the audience to sleep and asks it to look at reality through a keyhole. We're doing the exact reverse" (Fuller 2001: 7). Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* features different camerawork styles – from the "distorted out-of-control close-ups" and "super-macro slam zooms" for the "action movie" beginning (Pearce and Luhrmann 1996: 9), to the more conventional, lingering shots of Romeo and Juliet when they are alone. By foregrounding various ways of filming "reality," the film avoids privileging a particular point of view. The camera often seems transfixed by Romeo and Juliet, and the method of filming perhaps beguiles us into idealizing the fantasy of escapism that they represent. However, in the final scene, after a series of tight close-ups throughout Romeo and Juliet's death speeches, the camera pulls dramatically away from the lovers' deathbed giving a painterly bird's eye view of their lifeless bodies surrounded by a multitude of candles, neon crosses, and rose petals. The movement away from the lovers, accompanied by the climactic ending of Wagner's *Liebestod*, draws attention to the scene's Romanticism in a self-conscious, almost parodic, way, emphasizing the "excess" and the dangerous appeal of that sacrificial vision.

inclusive product to draw a wide audience (1999: 141). This Hollywood practice is parodied in *Shakespeare in Love* when Henslowe commissions Shakespeare to write a "crowd-tickler" play incorporating various generic elements: "mistaken identities, a shipwreck, a pirate king, a bit with a dog, and love triumphant."

Genre mixing is often connected with the "bricolage, pastiche, and intertextuality" at "the very heart of the postmodern style," although, Altman observes, generic ambiguity in film is not a new (or solely postmodern) phenomenon. Movies are usually connected to a single, specific genre only retrospectively and, besides, genre boundaries are difficult to define: "What western is not at some points a melodrama? What musical can do totally without romance?" (1999: 141). He adds, however, that until the so-called "postmodern era" "attention was rarely drawn to the disparities among the genres" combined in many films, and argues that recent, postmodern films "often use intertextual references and conscious highlighting of genre conventions to stress genre conflict" (1999: 141, my emphasis). Loncraine's *Richard III*, Lührmann's *Romeo + Juliet*, Taymor's *Titus*, and Almereyda's *Hamlet* are set apart from many other Shakespeare films by the highly self-conscious way in which they accentuate generic "clashes" and work against the "safe" familiarity of their widely disseminated Shakespearean sources.

*Romeo + Juliet*, for example, begins with a montage summarizing the action, accompanied by Craig Armstrong's "O Verona" (a musical parody of Carl Orff's "O Fortuna" from *Carmina Burana*), followed by a television-style "introduction" of the principal characters (each turning towards the camera in close-up along with a name caption), followed in turn by a parody of westerns and action movies in the first Capulet/Montague showdown sequence. The close-up slow-motion and freeze-frame shots of Tybalt lighting, smoking, and extinguishing his cigarette and the extreme close-ups of his silver-heeled boots "quote shots of Clint Eastwood in *A Fistful of Dollars* and Charles Bronson in *Once Upon a Time in the West*"; the fight music alludes to Ennio Morricone's familiar western scores (guitar chords, eerie whistling, and male chorus), and the subsequent fast editing, changing camera speeds, and slow-motion shots of Tybalt leaping into the air while firing two guns at once are a parody of, or homage to, the action movies directed by John Woo (Loehlin 2000: 126). The cheeky allusions lose predominance in the scenes focusing on Romeo and Juliet – explicit parody gives way to more "serious" romance designed to engage the spectator less self-consciously. This effectively highlights

the unsustainable idealism of Romeo and Juliet's speeches: within an aggressive, postmodern context, their sweetness and absolutes have no place. The Shakespearean text is used to make a statement about the difficulty of speaking about truth and love in a world of irony, surfaces, and commercialization.

As James Loehlin details, Loncraine's *Richard III* is similarly eclectic, combining the *mise-en-scène* of Merchant-Ivory productions with the narrative template of 1950s gangster movies: the strangeness of this mixture is part of what makes the film original. Taymor's *Titus* likewise brings disparate styles together: in the first sequence (scripted by Taymor), a "clown" crashes through the wall of a regular boy's kitchen and drags him into the Coliseum where much of the action is based. This "prologue" alludes to both Loncraine's *Richard III* (where Richard crashes through Prince Edward's study) and *The Last Action Hero* (1993), in which a boy becomes subsumed within an action movie starring Arnold Schwarzenegger as a modern-day anti-Hamlet. By contrast, Taymor's final scene, with its bright colors, *tableaux-vivants*, and horrendous subject matter, surely borrows from Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* (1989); in both films, nasty events are portrayed in a stylish way. The mix of diverse filmic iconography newly illuminates the disconcerting mixture of tone in *Titus Andronicus* for a cine-literate audience.

The explicit film quotations and allusions within Almereyda's *Hamlet* also create generic confusion, problematizing any talk of originals or single sources, inviting plural readings. Hamlet's own film (instead of play) is a montage of different film clips: *The Mousetrap* opens with a rose unfurling with time-lapse cinematography (as in Scorsese's *The Age of Innocence* credit sequence), cuts to Golden Age television images of a boy with his parents, to "Monty Pythonesque" cartoon images of the ear poisoning, to porn clips, to a shot of an audience emphatically clapping, to various images of death. In this climactic film-within-the-film, words are dispensed with altogether. Almereyda's treatment of a familiar scene prompts a new response, demanding that the audience (both within and outside the film world) piece the story of *The Mousetrap* together by assimilating the cinematic montage (the images evoke the text, rather than the other way around). In all previous *Hamlet* films, *The Mousetrap* takes place on a stage (within the given film world), whereas this *Mousetrap* can only be understood cinematically. Paradoxically, the sequence of quotations that is *The Mousetrap* in Almereyda's *Hamlet* is therein original (see SHAUGHNESSY, DONALDSON).

This *Mousetrap*, made from a pile of Blockbuster videos, is perhaps also a meditation on the Hollywood filmmaking industry as a network of endlessly recyclable material, an industry in which the same stories are told/adapted with "regulated difference," to use Steve Neale's phrase (1990: 64), where it is difficult for individual voices – the "voice" of Almereyda the independent director, the voice of Hamlet, of Ethan Hawke in the lead – to make themselves heard. Hawke makes several false starts at the "To be or not to be" speech – the most famous Shakespearean "soundbite" sounds trite, then haunting when it is repeated. Such famous lines and whole speeches apparently cannot be delivered "whole" without a sense of embarrassment or loss (whether metaphysical or temporal). In Ethan Hawke's words, explaining the exclusion of the "alas, poor Yorick" speech, "How do you find a skull in a modern day cemetery?" (Anderson 2000). Hawke finally delivers "To be" in the action aisles of a Blockbuster video store. Clichéd action sequences are displayed on television screens: explosions and bodies thrown in the air, guns firing, the invincible hero of *Crow II* walking through flames and waving at the camera, visually mocking Hamlet's indecision. Hamlet begins the speech in voiceover and then begins speaking out loud in the videotape, as if addressing his words to the stories of mainstream Hollywood heroism that surround him. Hamlet's efforts to emulate such heroism are inescapably parodic: in his maniacal multiple shooting of Claudius during the final scene, swords are replaced by a gun, drama becomes action movie, and Hamlet is finally more like Jules from *Pulp Fiction* than Olivier's or Branagh's sweet Prince.<sup>5</sup>

Much of the meaning of these films lies not within themselves but in their relationships with other texts: they do not attempt to be original in the narrow sense but instead participate in a postmodern free-for-all. The knowledge that all work is allusive and/or intertextual is celebrated and exploited. Materials from both "high" and "low" (popular) culture sources are not simply quoted but incorporated into the film's very substance, dissolving the fixedness of each frame, shifting "Shakespeare" and the revered texts into a democratic, postmodern arena of playful recycling. In Jameson's words, "they no longer 'quote' such texts as Joyce might have done . . . they incorporate them, to the point where the line between high art and commercial forms seems incredibly difficult to draw" (1996: 186). The sequentially ordered sections of these films are, to borrow from Linda Hutcheon's description of postmodern novels, "disrupted by a particularly dense network of interconnections and intertexts, and each enacts or performs

. . . the paradoxes of continuity and disconnection, of totalizing interpretation and the impossibility of final meaning" (1989: 14–15).

*Richard III*, *Romeo + Juliet*, *Titus*, and *Hamlet* obviously are not "unmediated," nostalgic evocations of the past. Instead, each is an engaging riff on the multiplicity of cultural referents that come into play whenever we encounter Shakespeare. As Hutcheon points out, postmodernism is usually defined in terms of "negativized rhetoric," "discontinuity, dislocation, decentering, indeterminacy, and anti-totalization" (1989: 3). But these films demonstrate the "positives" of postmodernism she identifies: the recognition of cultural and temporal differences, the freedom that comes with realizing there is no "final" text, the democratization of art (mixing "high" and "low" elements), the use of parody and playfulness to challenge the "authority" and "authenticity" of a "revered" text in the process of reclaiming that text for a wide, contemporary audience. Shakespearean sources are used to raise, rather than provide an antidote to, anxieties. The illusions of consensus, all-embracing perspectives, and final truths are revealed as such in the cultural eclecticism of these films. While filmmakers and critics continue to invoke Shakespeare's timelessness to "authorize" productions, the films themselves represent a much less straightforward, parodic, and sometimes painful process.

We could use these productions to explore the complex significance of the sign "Shakespeare" further: he may read as subversive and/or conservative, queer and/or straight, timeless and/or time-bound, threatening and/or under threat, elite and/or popular. Clearly, the desire to "get back to the truth of Shakespeare" represented in much Shakespeare film criticism is a desire that may be easily dismissed as stultifying and out of step with developments in both Shakespearean and film scholarship. Yet these films convey the paradoxes of all that is involved and at stake in attempting to get back to Shakespeare. Seen thus, the process may be understood as reactionary, conservative, romantic, limiting, earnest, doomed to failure – and, at the same time, ironic, playful, subversive, moving, inspired . . . and open-ended.

## Notes

1. Luhrmann explained this to me in an interview on July 9, 2000 at the House of Iona (the Bazmark headquarters) in Sydney, Australia. The other quotations in this paragraph also come from that interview.
2. In fact, in a subsequent radio interview with Kim Hill, Luhrmann revealed that he gave the film that title so that even when audiences saw the

wordless images and music of the preview they would still know to expect Shakespearean dialogue. "Nine to Noon" show, *National Radio*: Wellington (New Zealand), February 4, 1997.

- 3 I quote Hutcheon's description of "postmodern" photographs as obviously subjective instead of "neutral representations" or "technological windows on the world" (1989: 7).
- 4 Holderness (1998: 75) directly challenges Belsey's assertion of cinema's inherent conservatism. As Shaughnessy notes, Holderness provided an important challenge to the prevalent assumption when his essay first appeared in 1985 (a view that is "still particularly dominant within new historicism") that "Shakespeare is an inevitably conservative and reactionary cultural force" (1998: 11).
- 5 The parodic (self-conscious, contestatory) "language" of these films is different from the "straight," "dead language" of pastiche that, for Fredric Jameson, dominates postmodern work (especially "nostalgia films"). For Jameson, postmodern texts are trapped into recalling texts of the past because it is no longer possible to make a new, "unique" statement: "With the collapse of the high-modernist ideology of style - what is unique and unmistakable as your own fingerprints . . . the producers of culture have nowhere to turn but to the past: imitation of dead styles, speech through all the masks and voices stored up in the imaginary museum of a now-global culture" (1991: 17-18). Therefore, Jameson argues, where modernist artists used parody, postmodern artists are forced to use pastiche. I do not understand these postmodern films as somehow "haunted" by dead forms, but as collages of older forms which have been recontextualized, defamiliarized, "made new" for the use of the present.

## References and Further Reading

- Agee, James (1945). "Henry V." In Gerald Mast and Marshall Cohen (eds.), *Film Theory and Criticism*, 1st edn. London: Oxford University Press, 1974: 333-6.
- Altman, Rick (1999). *Film/Genre*. London: BFI Publishing.
- Anderson, Jeffrey M. (2000). "Brushing Up Shakespeare: A Conversation with Michael Almereyda and Ethan Hawke." [www.combustiblecelluloid.com/finthawke.shtml](http://www.combustiblecelluloid.com/finthawke.shtml).
- Barthes, Roland (1977). *Image/Music/Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath. London: Fontana.
- Belsey, Catherine (1980). *Critical Practice*. London and New York: Methuen.
- (1983). "Shakespeare on Film: A Question of Perspective." *Literature/Film Quarterly* 11.3: 152-8.
- Bennett, Susan (1996). *Performing Nostalgia: Shifting Shakespeare and the Contemporary Past*. London and New York: Routledge.

- Berlin, Normand (1977). "Peter Brook's Interpretation of *King Lear*: 'Nothing Will Come of Nothing.'" *Literature/Film Quarterly* 5.4: 299-303.
- Brode, Douglas (2000). *Shakespeare in the Movies: From the Silent Era to Shakespeare in Love*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Chase, Malcolm, and Christopher Shaw (eds.). *The Dimensions of Nostalgia*. In Malcolm Chase and Christopher Shaw (eds.), *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press: 1-17.
- De Grazia, Margreta (1991). "Shakespeare in Quotation Marks." In Marsden, ed.: 57-71.
- Felperin, Howard (1991). "Bardolatry Then and Now." In Marsden, ed.: 129-43.
- Foucault, Michael (1988). "What is an Author?" In David Lodge (ed.), *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*. London and New York: Longman: 197-210.
- Fuller, Graham (2001). "Baz Knows the Score." *The Observer*, August 19, Review section: 7.
- Hodgdon, Barbara (1983). "Two *King Lears*: Uncovering the Filmtext." *Literature/Film Quarterly* 11: 143-51.
- Holderness, Graham (1985). "Radical Potentiality and Institutional Closure." In Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield (eds.), *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press: 182-200. Repr. in Shaughnessy 1998: 71-82.
- Howard, Jean E. (1992). "The New Historicism in Renaissance Studies." In Richard Wilson and Richard Dutton (eds.), *New Historicism and Renaissance Drama*. London and New York: Routledge: 19-32.
- Hutcheon, Linda (1989). *The Politics of Postmodernism*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Jameson, Fredric (1991). *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. London and New York: Verso.
- (1996). "Postmodernism and Consumer Society." In John Belton (ed.), *Movies and Mass Culture*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press: 185-202.
- Lanier, Douglas (1996). "Drowning the Book: *Prospero's Books* and the Textual Shakespeare." In Bulman 1996: 187-209.
- Lehmann, Courtney (2001). "Book Reviews: Brave New Bard." *Cineaste* 26.1: 62-6.
- Lindroth, Mary (2001). "Some Device of Further Misery": Taymor's *Titus*." *Literature/Film Quarterly* 29.2: 107-15.
- Loehlin, James N. (2000). "These Violent Delights have Violent Ends: Baz Luhrmann's Millennial Shakespeare." In Burnett and Wray, eds.: 121-36.
- Lowenthal, David (1989). "Nostalgia Tells It Like It Wasn't." In Malcolm Chase and Christopher Shaw (eds.), *The Imagined Past: History and Nostalgia*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press: 18-32.

- Marsden, Jean I., ed. (1991). *The Appropriation of Shakespeare: Reconstructions of the Works and the Myth*. London and New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Murphy, Andrew (2000). "The Book on the Screen: Shakespeare Films and Textual Culture." In Burnett and Wray, eds.: 10-25.
- Neale, Steve (1990). "Questions of Genre." *Screen* 31.1: 45-67.
- Pearce, Craig, and Baz Luhrmann (1996). *William Shakespeare's "Romeo + Juliet": The Contemporary Film, The Classic Play*. London: Hodder Children's Books.
- Rosenthal, Daniel (2000). *Shakespeare on Screen*. London: Hamlyn.
- Rothwell, Kenneth (2001). "How the Twentieth Century Saw the Shakespeare Film: 'Is it Shakespeare?'" *Literature/Film Quarterly* 29.2: 82-95.
- Simone, R. Thomas (1998). Reviews of *Shakespeare and the Moving Image: The Plays on Film and Television*, ed. Anthony Davies and Stanley Wells, and *Screen Shakespeare*, ed. Michael Skovmand. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 49.2: 232-5.
- Sinyard, Neil (1986). *Filming Literature: The Art of Screen Adaptation*. London and Sydney: Croom Helm.
- Taymor, Julie (2000b). Director's commentary. *Titus* DVD. Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment.
- "*Titus Andronicus*: William Shakespeare's Savage Epic of Brutal Revenge" (1998). Joel Redner Productions. Official website. May 13; [home1.gtc.net/titus98/tawsite8.html](http://home1.gtc.net/titus98/tawsite8.html).
- Worthen, W. B. (1998). "Drama, Performativity, and Performance." *PMLA* 113.5: 1093-1107.
- Wright, Patrick (1985). *On Living in an Old Country*. London: Verso.

## Chapter 2

### CINEMA STUDIES

# "Thou Dost Usurp Authority": Beerbohm Tree, Reinhardt, Olivier, Welles, and the Politics of Adapting Shakespeare

Anthony R. Guneratne

Even with the earliest documented performances, the political dimensions of Elizabethan theater, and of Shakespeare's plays in particular, elicited powerful responses. His works engaged issues that preoccupied Renaissance political thinkers from Guicciardini and Machiavelli to Montaigne and Grotius. Yet it was not as political theorist, but as part owner and manager of a theatrical troupe, that the dramatist played an oblique, if for him no doubt alarming, role in Tudor intrigue: the most salient evidence of an Elizabethan play's effect remains the vigorous exception taken by the queen and her ministers to the timing of a revival, widely believed to have been a suitably modified version of Shakespeare's *Richard II*. On February 8, 1601, the day after its command performance at the Globe, those who had commissioned the performance (the most prominent participants in the Essex rebellion) were arrested for treason and the players sought for questioning. The queen's personal objection to the episode was later recorded by William Lambarde, Keeper of the Rolls: "I am Richard, know ye not that," she is supposed to have said, adding, rather