

SHAKESPEARE, THE MOVIE, II

Popularizing the plays on film, TV,
video, and DVD

Edited by

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The semantics of casting are telling: in spite of having won several film and TV awards, Cher is still largely considered to be a commercial success rather than an artistic one. Indeed, the fictive Elsa's shopping spree for European paintings is reminiscent of the way in which real-life American moguls like Henry Huntington and Henry Clay Folger went about buying up English libraries, and especially collections of Shakespeare, in the first half of the twentieth century.

12 The treatment that Gina receives in Levring's film points to one of the weaknesses of the Dogme movement: the Dogme brothers are as *retro* in their treatment of the female subject as they are in their cinematic techniques. The language of the manifesto, for instance, entirely excludes women from *auteur* status. No wonder that Anne Wivel, originally the fifth founding member of the Dogme movement, thought of the society as "a man's club" and left because of the "male chauvinism." (This is the description of Wivel's experience according to Levring and Zentropa Managing Director Pete Aalbaek Jensen (quoted in Kelly 2000: 47, 89).) No wonder that Lone Scherfig, the only woman to direct a Dogme film, claims that she had to rely upon her "masculine side" in order to make *Italian for Beginners* [*Italiensk for Begyndere*] (2002) (quoted in Kelly 2000: 128). The king might be alive in Dogme-wood, but the queen ain't.

13 Marc Norman's quote comes from one of the behind-the-scenes segments, entitled "Shakespeare in Love and on Film," on the *Shakespeare in Love* collector's edition DVD.

14 Levring's film was funded by Good Machine in New York. In 2002, Good Machine and USA Films were merged into Focus, which is owned by Universal Studios. Technically, the connection to Universal would make *The King is Alize* a Hollywood film; however, such a categorization is not irrefutable, since the film was produced almost a year before the merger. Nevertheless, even when national and independent cinemas are able to retain artistic and legal control at the level of production, there is still the possibility of studio takeover at the level of distribution. In the case of *The King is Alize*, Good Machine sold the distribution rights to IFC Films, and IFC Films handed distribution over to MGM, which had recently acquired twenty percent of Rainbow Bravo Entertainment, IFC's parent company (Hettrick). Ultimately, then, the American/Canadian DVD version of *The King is Alize*, released in October 2002, was distributed by MGM/United Artists Video, which, again, would make *The King is Alize* a Hollywood film.

SHAKESPEARE AND ASIA IN POSTDIASPORIC CINEMAS

Spin-offs and citations of the plays from
Bollywood to Hollywood

Richard Burt

The dislocation of culture

While the concept of diaspora has gained wide academic currency among postcolonial critics since the 1990s as a way of opposing a transnational liberation to the oppressiveness of the nation-state and of turning the tables on the West, its meaning has been both expanded and redefined. Ien Ang observes that diaspora was once reserved for Jewish, Greek, and Armenian peoples, but "today the term tends to be used much more generically to refer to almost any people living outside its country of origin, be it Italians outside of Italy, Africans in the Caribbean, North America, or Western Europe, Cubans in Miami and Madrid, and Chinese all over the world" (2001: 75). A number of postcolonial critics have deconstructed diaspora as a site of identity politics, ethnic authenticity, internal coherence, sameness, and exclusion, and redefined it as border crossings, mobility, hybridity, and difference in dispersal (Chow 1994; Radhakrishnan 1996; Mishra 1997; Spivak 1996; Peters 1999; Ang 2001: 11–13, 75–92; Naficy 2001; Axel 2002). The diaspora is usually viewed by postcolonial critics as a forced migration in the twentieth century of people either from often poorer, developing Asian nations to developed, Western nations (the subaltern) or from upper, educated classes who either identify with the colonial, as in the case of V.S. Naipaul, or produce a hybrid, cosmopolitan critique of both the West and East, neither of whom, it is implied, can really understand itself except with the help of intellectuals freed from the parochialism of specific location (Rushdie 1992; Spivak 1993; Bhabha 1994; Said 1994). The celebration of diasporic cosmopolitanism has in turn generated a critique of the metropolitan-based intellectual as inauthentic and complicit with global capitalism (Dirlik 1997).

Despite the increasing centrality of diaspora as a critical concept, postcolonial Shakespeare critics have not attended to it in literature, theater, or in film. Instead, the focus of postcolonial critics has been on globalization, intercultural performance, and the breakdown of oppositions between the local and the global, the foreign and the native, and so on.¹ A debate has emerged over Shakespeare's global/local reproductions. For some critics, globalization threatens to appropriate local, postcolonial

elsewhere. The popular cinema, on the other hand, can boast of audiences far beyond the shores of India and the pockets of diasporic Indians scattered all over the globe" (1993: 238). She then defends attention to popular, less obviously "engaged" films on grounds that "the global" is increasingly shaped and apprehended in the realm of mass culture. And what has spawned more 'universalism' in film than Hollywood, more far-flung cultural crossings in the Third World than the Bombay film and the film song?" (1993: 308). For these critics, the diaspora, cinema, and mass media are means of advancing postcolonial critique as practiced by literary writers such as Salman Rushdie and theorists such as Gayatri Spivak, Dipesh Chakrabarty, and Homi Bhabha.

In my view, however, networks of media, communications technologies, and the diaspora make these kinds of postcolonial critique obsolete.⁴ Film's transnational production and reception puts it at odds with postcolonial accounts of literary and theatrical intercultural importing and exporting, appropriation, and so on precisely because they keep intact the concept of place and location even as they claim to deconstruct oppositions between foreign and native, East and West, center and margin.⁵ Because film has always been international and world cultural, and now global, transnational, and hypermediated diasporic, attempts to read Asia-related cinematic citations of Shakespeare as "sly mimicry" and "ironic appropriation of master texts" (Mishra 2001: 44), to claim for them "adversarial subjectivity" (Shohat and Stam 1996: 166), and to celebrate their hybridity are all mooted. The very expansion of the concept of diaspora is, as Ang acknowledges, its "undoing" (75–92) and deconstruction as a critical concept.⁶ Earlier models of diaspora assumed that there is a place of return, the adopted country was only a temporary residence. Now, that very notion of place no longer obtains (see de Sola-Morales Rubio 1992; Jameson 1992a; Auge 1995; Peters 1999; Iyer 2000; Natfay 2001). As Brian Keith Axel says, "the very common analytic posits that a homeland is originary and constitutive of a diaspora, and very often supports an essentialization of origins and a fetishization of what is supposed to be found at the origin (e.g. tradition, religion, language, race). Nevertheless, for many diasporic groups, place, or place of origin, is not the primary issue" (2002: 411). Moreover, if mobility and hybridity are the overriding characteristic of the new border diaspora, characteristics that spell the end of an exclusive diaspora that managed to contain migrants in little colonies in the new countries, as Mishra and Ang insightfully argue, that very mobility and hybridity extends well beyond diasporic migrant communities, particularly when it comes to transnationalized cinemas.

While acknowledging that diasporas come from the West as well as from the East, postcolonial critics have written as if the diasporas were all Asian. The range of Shakespeare and Asia in postdiasporic cinemas is so extremely diverse that it throws into relief just how homogeneous such accounts of hybridity in postcolonial studies are, no matter how much hybridity is said to be deconstructed and inflected with difference. Current definitions of hybridity cannot coherently make sense of postdiasporic films as diverse as Ang Lee's *Sense and Sensibility*, James Ivory's *The Golden Bowl*, *Fuck Hamlet* (dir. Cheol-Mean Whoang, 1996),⁷ *Romeo Must Die* (dir. Andrew Bartkowiak, 2000), and *China Girl* (dir. Abel Ferrara, 1987), which engage diasporas from Africa and Hong Kong to the United States in the twentieth century, from Italy to the United States in the nineteenth century, and from Korea to Germany in the late twentieth century. And even postcolonial Shakespeare adaptations such as BBC Four's bilingual *Twelfth Night* (dir. Tim Supple, 2003) engage multiple diasporas. In this BBC adaptation, Viola (Parminda

productions of Shakespeare for neoliberal or neocolonial purposes. For others, globalization enables the indigenization and subversive appropriation of Shakespeare in postcolonial and developing nations. Despite their differences, critics on both sides of this debate agree that focusing on the local cases in which Shakespeare is appropriated and historicized is a corrective to a tendency to homogenize and blur differences between appropriations when attending to the global. Significant differences will blur, so the argument goes, unless we look at particular cases.² For critics of postcolonial Shakespeare, local analysis means attending not only to how Shakespeare is used as a means of writing back to the imperial center but to how he is used for the "natives" own purposes. The point of focusing on the local, I take it, is not to examine how "the Other" reinvents Shakespeare to criticize the center, itself a residually Eurocentric task, but to examine how Shakespeare is used in the peripheries to reinvent foreign, postcolonial, and indigenous literary or theatrical traditions. Implicitly, critics assume that the less metropolitan the rewrite, the less the point of the rewrite is to produce a new interpretation of Shakespeare, the more the use of Shakespeare for non-Shakespearean purposes is valued (see Loomba 2001).

In this essay, I examine a range of art and mall films related to Shakespeare and Asia, including recognizable adaptations such as Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* to acknowledged spin-offs such as *China Girl*, citations or allusions sometimes consisting of a single scene or even word (*Romeo Must Die*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *American Pie*, *The Golden Bowl*, *Moulin Rouge*, *The Emperor's Club*), and unacknowledged spin-offs that do or do not mention Shakespeare (*Dil Chahata Hai*, *The Glass House*, *Mississippi Masala*, *Monsoon Wedding*). I look at Asians in a variety of roles, including director, screenwriter, producer, and actor, in connection with a variety of Asian, British, and American cinemas. My aim is not simply to update postcolonial Shakespeare criticism by taking account of the relation between film and what Vijay Mishra (1997) has called a new "border" phase of the diaspora, to be distinguished from an older "exclusive" diaspora. I situate the films I discuss in relation to what I call the "postdiaspora" in order to challenge the ways postcolonial critics have assimilated film, mass media, and new communications technologies to existing practices of postcolonial critique focused on literature and theater. Critics of Indian cinema have pointed out that Indians living in the diaspora connect back to the nation (as idealized homeland) via videos played in their homes on their VCRs (Mishra 2001: 235–69). More generally, Ang writes:

it is only with . . . the increased possibilities for keeping in touch with the old homeland and with co-ethnics in other parts of the world through faster and cheaper jet transport, mass media, and electronic telecommunications, that migrant groups are collectively more inclined to see themselves not as minorities within nation-states, but as members of global diasporas which span national boundaries. (2000: 76)

Similarly, there has been a shift in Asian film studies from art film to popular film on the grounds that the latter has more international appeal.³ In her study of Indian film, for example, Sumita S. Chakravarty writes: "Unlike Italian neorealism, the French New Wave, or Latin American Third Cinema esthetics, India's new cinema was neither revolutionary enough nor culturally distinct enough to influence aspiring filmmakers

Nagra) and Sebastian (Ronny Jhutti) are Bollywood *filmi*-style Indian refugees shipwrecked in contemporary England. Shakespeare's language is kept, but lines occasionally appear in subtitles as the actors speak the lines in Urdu. The combination of race-blind casting (Orsino, Valentine, and the priest are played by African-British actors, Feste is played by an Indian-British actor, and Olivia and the rest of her household are white) and race as signifier complicates any attempt to read the film as a topical allegory of postcolonial immigration, legal and illegal, to Britain.⁸ Moreover, the diversity of examples I discuss also suggests that the opposition between art film and popular film is still in place and it demands an account of the heterogeneity of the popular in its engagements with high-world culture. Bollywood films are marketed in the US not as popular Indian films but as foreign art films, and films like Almercyda's *Hazlet* and Ferrara's *China Girl* are hybrid engagements with both art and popular films. Film (and its video and DVD reproductions) is not an exception to the rule of postcolonialism but the medium by which Shakespeare circulates most widely, having an impact in other kinds of Shakespeare performance such as live theater. And film often simulates live Shakespeare performance (Burt 2002c) in relation to race. The debate between postcolonial critics who view the Asian Shakespeare theater productions performed in the West as tainted by imperialism and critics who defend such performances is made equally irrelevant by the fact that there is no location not subject to globalization.⁹

To be sure, "location, location, location" is still the mantra of filmmakers, but while location is often massively encoded in the films I discuss, that encoding is done with reference to various media and cinematic genres.¹⁰ Attention to the geopolitical esthetics of the cinema (Jameson 1995) aside, film cannot usefully be mapped on to geography.¹¹ Diaspora is only one version of global mobility. This is not to say that everyone is diasporic, of course; it is to say that in the postdiasporic present a distinction between diasporic mobility, migration, and border crossings, on the one hand, and global mobility and migrations, on the other, is not particularly meaningful or useful when it comes to understanding cinema and mass media in general and to filmed Shakespeare in particular. Given that filmed Shakespeare is already multiracial and multinational in the West, it hardly makes sense to regard either Asian or Asia diasporic appropriations as subversive.

To refuse to acknowledge fully the way film and media have undone diaspora (either old or new) as a critical concept and shift focus on migration, media, and mobility in general is to condemn oneself to debating ad nauseum and unproductively whether a given film has an authentic or inauthentic ethnicity or, in a variation on the same, whether the film engages in the commodification of hybridity or produces a genuine hybridity, whether it domesticates the Other or preserves the Other's strangeness, as if these distinctions were clear and significant, as if the Other culture were static and existed the same way across history. Rather than "intensify the local" (Wilson and Dissanayake 1996) or find the "global in the local" (Dirlik 1997) or focus on "border crossings" to combat or demystify the complicity of Shakespeare reproductions (and academic criticism of them) with social and economic inequities produced by globalization, I want to intensify both the cinema's citation and even allegorization of Shakespeare in relation to mass media and postdiasporic placelessness. By focusing on the ways in which film and media have undone diaspora, we can break out of the logjam of current postcolonial debates and gain a deeper understanding of Shakespeare's cinematic migrations and mobility across the globe, the persistence of the national in transnational cinemas, and the end of third world cinema.

Several significant consequences follow from shifting from a model of cinematic Shakespeares based on global/local performance to one based on media and post-diaspora. In terms of Shakespeare, it means addressing his postcolonial status, the full range of citations and spin-offs from the hermeneutic to the post-hermeneutic. If Shakespeare in film (and also in theater) is now that which is not at all connected to "place" or the "local," how are we to "replace place" (Huhtamo 1999), think the alternative in a way that does not amount to a regressive account of Shakespeare's universality or to a reductive account of his global homogenization? More interesting than the infinite variety of Shakespeare's citations is the fact that registering them is so often unimportant for the plot, success, and meaningfulness of the mediatic text.¹² If most people, including academics and film critics, don't register the citations, in other words, it doesn't appear to make any difference.¹³ I contend that cinematic Shakespeares function as a type of currency without any particular meaning, location, traceable source of value, but as nevertheless somehow signs of that which can be exchanged. Like economic capital itself, Shakespeare is no longer connected to a "gold standard," or to the British pound, or to any particular source of value such as Pierre Bourdieu's notion of "cultural capital." The range of cinematic Shakespeares, including the post-hermeneutic, unspeakable variety, represents precisely that which has become a mark of postdiasporic transit, media, and flex (if not flux).

Three related consequences of a postdiaspora model of film and media can be grasped by attending to Shakespeare. The first relates to space. There is a tendency to engage in somewhat superficial deconstruction in postcolonial criticism – despite moves to collapse oppositions in favor of mixing and hybridity, places and locations remain in place – a geographical orientation remains the same as orientalism and occidentalism are put into question. But the consequences of mobility and stasis seen in the Shakespeare and Asia related postdiasporic films I discuss are processes of dis-Westernization and dis-Orientalization, processes far too subtle to be explained, for example, as neo-orientalist forms of Asian "chic."

The second, related consequence of acknowledging the postdiasporic model of media and mobility is time, particularly as it involves the transnational cinemas and the marketing of cinemas as national entities. Like the superficial deconstruction of postcolonial criticism, a superficial historicism forgoes attention to the nuances and complexities of historical transformations in favor of whatever can crudely be narrated inside of binary oppositions. The result is that history amounts to twin accounts of domestication and imperialism or resistance and subversive appropriation. Diaspora is about mobility and speed, but also about slowness and, in the case of cinema distribution and impact, time lag. When it comes to Indian cinema, the reception abroad is quite different from the national reception. As Rachel Dwyer and Divia Patel note:

while this global visual culture has succeeded in engaging the diasporic audience, there is a certain irony that, as "filmi style" is being discarded by the Hindi film industry, this is the means by which it is finally gaining the recognition it has long sought in the West. Since around 2000 "Bollywood" has become a buzz word in the West, recognized and celebrated as denoting the flamboyant attractions of the Hindi movie.

(2002: 217)

A deeper irony that Dwyer and Patel note is that the attention to Bollywood has occurred at the moment it is in decline. For film critics, Bollywood's "golden age" ended in the 1970s. The 1990s has marked a serious and rapid decline and even the plagiarism of Hollywood movie scripts (Joshi 2001; Levich 2002; *Guardian* 2002). To this extent a fiction of diaspora remains within the postdiaspora, a fiction of national cinema inside of cinema's transnationalization. If the new, border diaspora is about identification with what Salman Rushdie calls "imaginary homelands," or what two postcolonial critics have called the "diasporic imaginary" (Mishra 1997; Axel 2002), a lost place, a place of no return, then the postdiaspora is the imaginary of the diasporic imaginary, not post-imaginary. In Raymond Williams's (1977) terms, we may glimpse a residual attachment to national film industries and products, "Indian" or authentic, at this moment of emergent globalization and transnationalization of cinema.

A postdiaspora model yields not triumphalism of national cinemas (as they become not only international but transnational) but abjection due to stasis and slowness, being stuck, in a rut, in decline. Abjection is not a function of uneven economic developments globally. To be sure, there are uneven developments when it comes to new electronic and digital communications technologies.¹⁴ For example, the Singapore film spin-off of *Romeo and Juliet*, *Chicken Rice Wars* (dir. Cheek Kong Chea, 2000), was reproduced as a CD-ROM rather than a DVD, and the film itself only refers to MTV, while the *Romeo Must Die* and *Moulin Rouge* DVDs have actual MTV music video spin-offs on them. There is also a digital divide in the access to different visual technologies. While many diasporic Indians and increasingly upper-middle-class urban Indians have access to VCRs and DVDs, the bulk of Bollywood viewers are the subaltern masses who only have access to the cinema (and increasingly shared televisions in slums). Yet the North/South digital divide is not just a matter of access across the board lags in time and access; even in remote, unmodernized parts of Asia where there is no running water or heating, one can nevertheless hook up a lap top computer or use a cell phone. Moreover, global cities like Tokyo and Singapore are more hypermediated than any in the West.

Cinematic abjection in Shakespeare related cinema runs across migration and mobility, whether Asian diasporic or Western. Consider two films involving Shakespeare that focus on American and English migration. In *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, for example, Ripley's murderous envy is signaled both by a postcard he gives Dickie that cites Macbeth's "stars hide your fires" and a later performance of Verdi's *Otello*. Ripley's use of Shakespeare is not simply a product of his abject wannabe upper-class Englishman obsession that results from his migration from the US to an ex-patriot community of Anglophilic Americans (played, in the chief roles, by an English actor, Jude Law, and by Gwyneth Paltrow, an American who usually plays Englishwomen) living in Italy. An equally abject citation of Shakespeare may be seen in the James Whale biopic, *Gods and Monsters* (dir. Bill Condon, 1998). At a party for the closeted gay director George Cukor, the elder Whale, who early in his life had migrated from England to Los Angeles, wittily embarrasses the guest of honor, but later, in a defeated moment, he cites Hamlet's "O that this too, too solid flesh would melt."¹⁵ The cinematic abject is linked to migration *tout court*, then, not just to Asian diasporic migrations, but to migrations among Caucasians in Western cinema as well.¹⁶

The last consequence of the postdiaspora for Shakespeare, film and postcolonial studies I want to consider is that it calls into question Marxist and postcolonial

explanations of the end of the so-called third cinema (Pines and Willemen 1989) and collapses a related opposition favored by many leftist film critics between popular memory and official history (see Gabriel 1989; Cham 2001; Landy and Villarejo 1995; Landy 1986 and 1996). Fredric Jameson has acknowledged that "the very term Third World seems to have become an embarrassment in a period in which the realities of the economic have seemed to supplant the possibilities of collective struggle, in which human agency and politics seem to have been dissolved by the global corporate institutions we call late capitalism" (1995: 186), and he excuses the failure of Third World cinema of the 1960s and 1970s by offering a series of explanations: it "could be crushed politically . . . or the filmic experiment itself could fail to take, or could be reabsorbed and co-opted by an enlarged and more ecumenical mainstream (or classic Hollywood) cinema" (1995: 187). Jameson sees the failure as resulting from external pressures: the cinema is essentially authentic, but is co-opted. Yet this account of the third cinema has no force given a postdiasporic, mediated world and transnational cinema. For there is no automatically progressive, authentic popular memory outside of media, nor is film a repository for "popular memory" somehow outside or opposed to official history since that history is also told through the same media and just as constructed as official history.

The remainder of this chapter falls into two parts. In the first, I examine a diasporic Australian, an Indian, and two Asian diasporic film directors in order to analyze Shakespeare's place in the cinematic undoing of diaspora. In the second, I address Asian characters as racial minorities and the circulation of the abject among Caucasian characters, some ethnic minorities in their own right, in Western films directed by Caucasians.

Shakespeare goes Bollywood

With few exceptions, postcolonial Shakespeare criticism has focused almost exclusively on Shakespeare in India, and I will therefore begin by considering how exchanges between Bollywood and Hollywood in the 1990s and millennium call into question postcolonial accounts of intercultural performance. The name Bollywood, combining Bombay and Hollywood, of course marks the transnational hybridity of Bombay Indian cinema.¹⁷ Shakespeare has become almost inescapable in Bollywood film even as Shakespeare has been decolonized and decanonized. As Indian filmmakers target an international audience in the millennium, Shakespeare — the plays, Hollywood appropriations of them, and the cultural phenomenon — is apparently unavoidable. Consider, for example, director Sanjay Leela Bansali's characterization of his remake of *Devdas* (2002), a film that had already been made three times (in 1928, 1935, and 1955). It tells the story of Devdas, a man who falls in love with a woman who is forced by her family to marry a much older man, and he then takes up with a prostitute and becomes a drunk. Bansali describes his film, which runs for almost three hours and was "made with a mainstream audience in mind" as "a cross between *Shakespeare in Love* and *Moulin Rouge*, a film that dipped into music from Bollywood films."¹⁸ Whether Bansali's references are meant seriously or are cynical packaging to market the movie in Western, mainstream Hollywood terms, they suggest the difficulty of placing Shakespeare in Indian cinemas since the difference between Hollywood and Bollywood is being dissolved. For Bansali, a Western film that remakes Bollywood

and alludes to Shakespeare, *Moulin Rouge*, becomes a model for marketing a Bollywood film in the West.¹⁹ Bollywood directors oriented to Hollywood also make use of Shakespeare. In response to an interviewer's question posed to Subhash K. Jha, a Bollywood director well known for adapting Hollywood films, about whether his next film, *Kutumb*, would be faithful to *The Godfather*, Jha said: "Actually, it's more Shakespeare's *King Lear*, more to do with what Francis Ford Coppola said during the making of *The Godfather*" (Raaz 2003).²⁰ (On *King Lear* as a source for *The Godfather III*, see Burt 1999: 158.)

Similarly, in the Indian diaspora, Shakespeare is used to sell Bollywood to a global audience. A forthcoming adaptation of *Hamlet* called *Aditya*, to be directed by Tarsem Singh, director of the R.E.M. music video "Losing My Religion" and *The Cell* (2001), using an all-Bollywood cast, and shot in India and in England, is referred to in the Bollywood press as a Hollywood film. The American producer markets its lead actor, Bollywood star Hrithik Roshan, as "an Indian Hamlet", adding that Hrithik is an unfamiliar name and therefore "we will have to sell him through two known names — Hamlet and Shakespeare" (Sengupta 2001).²¹ Although *Agni Varsha: The Fire and the Rain* (dir. Arjun Sajnani, 2002) was adapted from the play of the same name by Girish Karnad based on the myth of Yavakri from the Indian epic *Mahabharata*, two major US film critics (see Holden 2002; Thomas 2002) compared the film to *Hamlet* and the official film website links both reviews.²²

Further mixing Shakespeare and East and West cinemas and aimed both at Indian and non-Indian audiences, the Canadian film *Bollywood/Hollywood* (dir. Deepa Mehta, 2002) has a Shakespeare-quoting grandmother (Dina Pathak), and ends with the hero, Raoul (Rahul Khanna), climbing onto an old truck to propose to Sue (Lisa Ray), the heroine, "on her balcony Shakespeare-style" (Covert 2002).²³ According to the director, "*Bollywood/Hollywood* is not a Bollywood film. It is a Canadian film inspired and infused with Bollywood and Hollywood traditions" (Chhabra 2002). Mehta says she "would call it a hybrid film, a fusion film. Its composer is from Bollywood and its choreographer is from Toronto who works in Hollywood" (Pais 2002). A similar dislocation of Bollywood is registered in the UK film, *Bollywood Queen* (dir. Jeremy Wooding, 2002). According to the English director, the film, which includes a mixed English and British-Asian cast and Hindi songs, is a "*Romeo and Juliet*-style drama set in London, a musical genre meets *Romeo and Juliet* . . . that reverberates around a Bollywood theme" (Anon. 2002). And the British actor Jimi Mistry, who plays the hero, an Indian dancer, in the "Hollywood Bollywood" film, *The Guru* (2002), also plays a psychotic Sikh in the UK gangland take on *King Lear*, *My Kingdom* (dir. Don Boyd, 2001).²⁴ Clearly, Bollywood as signifier of film is not identical to film produced in Bollywood film studios located in Mumbai.

Even when an Indian film director wants to market internationally what he regards as an Indian film unlike Hollywood films, the effort does not succeed in leaving Shakespeare and Western cinema behind. Consider *Taj Mahal: An Eternal Love Story* (dir. Bharat Bala, 2003), India's first film in the IMAX format, produced by US-based Scott Swofford with short filmmaker Bharat Bala as director. The film was budgeted at seven million US dollars and was shot entirely on location in northern India. "The world sees India through [Sir Richard] Attenborough's film, *Gandhi*," said Bala, adding: "But I want to show that there is more to us than that. The *Taj Mahal* is also an excellent example of human commitment. It is time we made the love story behind it as popular as Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*."²⁵ The director wants to drop Attenborough's film as a lens Westerners use to see India, but ironically cannot escape measuring his love story

against the most famous British one.²⁶ And Shakespeare is cited in relation to popular Bollywood movie stars. For the sixtieth birthday of her husband Amitabh Bachchan, one of Bollywood's most famous movie stars, actress Jaya Bachchan published a book entitled *To Be or Not To Be: Amitabh Bachchan* (2002) on his life and career. In an interview, Jaya explains the meaning of the title: "Amit is indecisive in real life. Also, my father-in-law translated Shakespeare's *Hamlet* into Hindi. So in a way, this book is also a tribute to him."²⁷

The circulation of Shakespeare, Bollywood, and Hollywood does not translate, as some might expect, into hegemonic impositions, neocolonialism, residual internalized colonialism, or subversive indigenizations.²⁸ Consider, for example, exchanges between Shakespeare and Bollywood in Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge* and Akhtar's *Dil Chahta Hai* (*The Heart Desires*), both released in 2001. The presence of Bollywood and Shakespeare in *Moulin Rouge* demands to be understood in relation to the film's transnational production. Set in Bohemian, nineteenth-century Paris but anachronistically covering pop hits such as The Police's "Roxanne," Madonna's "Like a Virgin," Nirvana's "Smells Like Teen Spirit," and Patti Labelle's "Lady Marmalade" with tango and other dance forms, *Moulin Rouge* was financed both by Hollywood and Australian backers.²⁹ Moreover, the film's director and female star, Nicole Kidman, are both Australian, and its male lead, Ewan McGregor, is a Scot. Shakespeare is mentioned in relation to the film's final musical number, "Spectacular Spectacular," derived from Bollywood's Formula 44, in which an Indian courtesan chooses a penniless sitar player over the Maharajah.

Dancer Nini Legs in the Air (Caroline O'Connor) lip syncs to Hindi lyrics sung by Hindi film music queen Alka Yagnik. Nini's performance is followed by the heroine Santine's (Nicole Kidman), in which Santine covers her opening song, itself a cover of Marilyn Monroe's "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend." When this number is rehearsed, the Bohemian artist's evil patron, the Duke of Monroth (Richard Roxburgh), demands it be rewritten so that the Maharajah, not the sitar player, wins the courtesan. And the heartless dancer Nini Legs in the Air sits on writer Christian's (Ewan McGregor) lap and says "Don't worry, Shakespeare. You'll get your ending . . . [apparently reassuring and consoling him] . . . once the Duke gets his . . . end . . . in!" [she laughs spitefully and he throws her off his lap angrily].³⁰

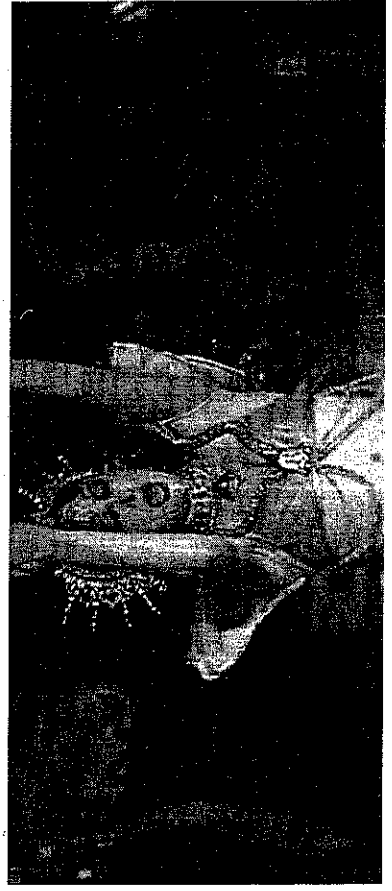


Figure 16.1 Shakespeare goes Bollywood.

The force of "Shakespeare" here, hardly limited to the sarcastic and disparaging use Nini makes of it given Lührmann's own prior film, *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*, has to do not with a particular place (the Paris of the film is a total fantasy) or time (all kinds of historical references co-exist) or particular cinematic or dance codes but a variety of media and performance styles, theater, typing, singing, and dancing chief among them. From one perspective, *Moulin Rouge* sympathizes with a writer who, like Shakespeare, is relatively powerless in the theater whose products may be rewritten by "the money." Yet from another, it is precisely the extent to which an older model of authorial universality (Shakespeare/theater) has been displaced by a new kind of transnational *auteur* (Lührmann/digital film). The film's camp parody and reaffirmation for the Bohemian's code of truth, love, and beauty depends on and marks the displacement of Shakespeare on celluloid film adaptation by the digitalization of film. The Shakespeare reference in conjunction with Bollywood in *Moulin Rouge* marks not only a more explicit use of Bollywood by Lührmann but Lührmann's move from celluloid to digital film. All of *Moulin Rouge*'s many special effects were achieved digitally. And it is worth noting that the second, special DVD edition of *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* appeared shortly after the release of the DVD edition of *Moulin Rouge*! Nini Legs in the Air's reference to "Shakespeare" in conjunction with the Bollywood number that follows, registers, then, the decentering of the literary and dramatic author and the recentering of the (digital) cinematic *auteur*: Shakespeare on film itself has been transformed and abjected by a global capitalist digital culture.

In *Dil Chahita Hai*, touted as a Hollywood-Bollywood film and hence what I would call a "hyp(er)brized" cinema, Shakespeare and the Indian diaspora in Australia come together. The film draws loosely upon the Benedick and Beatrice romance in Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing* (in addition to drawing on the *Three Stooges*, *Baywatch*, and MTV videos, among other Western sources).³¹

Shakespeare is first explicitly referenced in Sydney, Australia, during the first major dance number involving the Beatrice and Benedick characters, Shalini (Preity Zinta) and Aakash (Aamir Khan). As Shalini enters the frame, we see a sailboat at harbor to her right named *Much Ado*. Indians and Shakespeare, that is, meet up through a

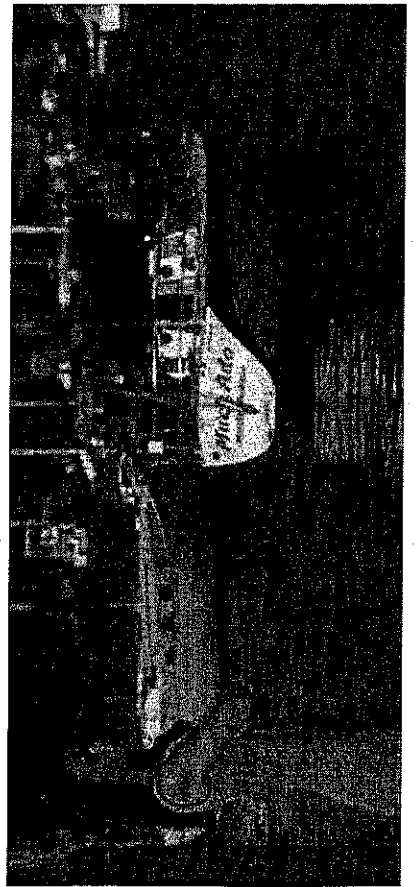


Figure 16.2 Bollywood goes Shakespeare.

diasporic passage out of India, with Shakespeare not only in a sailboat on the water but in a theater on land as well. The film's explicit turn to Shakespeare follows a date between the characters at a cineplex in which Shalini is angry with Aakash for not appreciating a good movie, left unnamed, but identified as a romantic melodrama. Shalini then takes Aakash to the opera so that he can learn that "true love does exist." The opera is, of all things, *Troilus and Cressida*, composed by the Englishman William Walton for the BBC. Some critics who have not seen *Dil Chahita Hai* might think that it uses *Troilus* to send up the many *Romeo and Juliet* Bollywood adaptations.³² After all, Shakespeare's most acidic and generically hybrid play could hardly be regarded by any sane person as a romance about true love. Yet such is not the case in *Dil Chahita Hai*: Shalini explains the opera's plot to Aakash as a tragic romance, and by the end of the performance, Aakash has discovered that he really is deeply in love with Shalini. If the opera is not used ironically in the film, however, its citation situates Shakespeare in a rather complex way in relation to the film's plot. The fragmented title *Much Ado* signals not only the looseness of the film's retelling of the Beatrice and Benedick plot but Shakespeare's secondariness in the present. Moreover, the *Much Ado* reference certainly brings Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* to mind when we see the English opera, as does the Shakespearean spelling of Cressida in the subtitles, but Walton modeled the opera, itself imported to Sydney in the film, on Chaucer's poem *Troilus and Criseyde* rather than on Shakespeare's play directly. The opera performance indirectly suggests Shakespeare's secondariness in another way, namely, by calling into question Shalini's distinction between film (mere fluff) and live performance (high culture). Before composing *Troilus and Cressida*, Walton had written the scores for Laurence Olivier's three Shakespeare films, *Henry V* (1944), *Hamlet* (1947), and *Richard III* (1954), as well as Paul Czinner's 1936 film of *As You Like It* (when he and Olivier first met), and *Richard III* was released the same year *Troilus* premiered. It doesn't really make sense to ask how close the plot of *Dil Chahita Hai* is to *Much Ado* or to try to interpret the film as a retelling of the play, because the film's implicit point is that there is no Shakespeare original or even "Shakespeare" version to locate in a specific space or time.

Nor does it make sense to ask whether the characters who have gone to Sydney and are closer to Shakespeare are less authentic than the characters who remain exclusively in Bombay. While *Dil Chahita Hai* represents particular geographical locations, its *mise-en-scène* is relentlessly transnational (Mercedes-Benz cars, English car tires, English and Hindi languages, American slang, and so on) and it does not locate Shakespeare in a particular place (Shakespeare is both on water and land, both in Australia and India) or in a particular medium (sailboat name, live opera, and more remotely, film score). Moreover, Shakespeare in Indian cinema was tied very early on to the Parsi diaspora in India. Filmed versions of the plays were initially of Parsi theater productions, complete with songs and dances. In grasping how *Dil Chahita Hai* quietly calls attention to the way Shakespeare's plays were themselves adaptations, we may also understand why the film loosely adapts *Much Ado* rather than one of Shakespeare's other comedies. Just as the usual pastoral opposition between city (or court) and country in Shakespeare's comedies is not present in *Much Ado*, which takes place entirely in the city of Messina, so the opposition between Bombay and Sydney, between Indians and diasporic Indians does not signify in the film. The diaspora is not a site of abjection or assimilation. Shalini's and Aakash's migrations are occasioned not by crime or

Dual audio commentary heritage Shakespeare

Taiwanese director Ang Lee's first English-language film was the adaptation of the Jane Austen novel *Sense and Sensibility* (1995). In the publicity for the film and on the DVD commentary, Lee is said to be an ideal director for the film as the Taiwan he comes from, an explosive combination of new kinds of capitalism and old kinds of paternalistic and patriarchal codes of behavior, is closer to Austen's England than the US or UK an American or a British director would have known. The film has what the co-producer calls in his DVD audio commentary a "hidden Chinese theme," and is infected by references to China and a global perspective on eighteenth-century English society. Edward Ferrars (Hugh Grant) jokes to Elinor Dashwood (Emma Thompson), for example, that young Margaret (Famille François) will "lead an expedition to China," and a marvelous large, China cabinet is the immediate background of the scene in which Brandon visits Elinor to give her the dirt on Willoughby. Colonel Brandon (Alan Rickman), we learn, has been to the East Indies where "the air is full of spices."

Lee is very much what used to be called a woman's director, and Emma Thompson won the Academy award for best screenplay adaptation. Thompson's screenplay adds several references to Shakespeare, not present in Jane Austen's Regency novel, including *Romeo and Juliet*, a quotation from Sonnet 116, and *Hamlet*.³⁴ When Marianne (Kate Winslet) and Mrs. Dashwood (Gemma Jones) discuss Elinor's growing attachment to Edward, Marianne says "to love is to burn, to be on fire . . . like Juliet, or Guinevere, or Heloise." When John Willoughby (Greg Wise) goes to court Marianne in her home, he asks the Dashwood women "Who is reading Shakespeare's sonnets?" The women respond in unison: "Marianne is." When Willoughby asks her "which is your favorite," she replies: "without a doubt, mine is 116." He then begins to recite the sonnet from memory, starting with the second sentence, "Love is not love/Which alters when it alteration finds," and she begins to recite with him: "Or bends with the remover to remove./O, no! It is an ever-fix'd mark/That looks on tempests [Willoughby says "storms"] . . . and is never shaken." Both stop as Marianne holds firm for the word "tempests" (though Willoughby has a copy of the sonnets, it is not made clear in the film who is correct). A key word for its resonance, "tempest" anticipates Marianne's later and second recitation of the sonnet's second and third line near the end of the film as she looks at Willoughby's home in the rainstorm. This time she misremembers the line as "Love is not love that alters when it alteration finds." After Colonel Brandon leaves his own picnic without explanation, *Hamlet* is referenced as Willoughby quips, "Frailty, thy name is Brandon." Literary references abound throughout Thompson's script, as does the activity of reading aloud, mostly from poems, or singing lyrics set to piano music. Marianne reads aloud to Elinor from Hartley Coleridge's "Sonnet VII." Marianne and Ferrars read aloud from "The Castaway" by William Cowper. Marianne also determines Willoughby's opinion of Sir Walter Scott at their first meeting. When Margaret has a French lesson with Elinor, Margaret repeats "le destin d'Orreste/Est de venir sans cesse adorer vos attrait" [Orreste's destiny is to come incessantly to adore your attractions] from Jean Racine's *Andromaque* (2.2.482-3). (Orreste speaks here to Hermione, whom he wishes to marry but who loves Andromaque's captor.) Brandon reads part of stanza 39 of Book V, Canto II of Edmund Spenser's epic *The Faerie Queene* to Marianne. (The Books' hero, Artegall, speaks the lines in response to the subversive, leveller giant.) Ben Jonson's poem "The Dreame" and the anonymous "Weep You No

business failure, but by marriage and management. Aakash runs a multiracial work-force for his father's company, and is no different from his friends for having gone temporarily to Sydney. If there is no Shakespeare original but only adaptations, there is also no Indian original to be opposed to diasporic secondariness and abjection.

Shakespeare masala

Perhaps even more than Bollywood film, Indian and Asian diasporic cinemas have received the lion's share of critical attention because they are the heirs to the idea of a third cinema: diasporic films open up hybrid spaces, both for film or for criticism, from which the hybrid director or critic can explain both Hollywood and Bollywood cinemas to themselves. The Indian diasporic films of US-based and Harvard-educated director Mira Nair have been lauded in these terms, with critics arguing that Nair's hybridization allows her a critical distance on India and the West. Other critics have positioned her as inauthentic, however. She is said to engage in the commodification of hybridity (Shaha 1987; Meer 1991; Stuart 1993; Mehta 1996b; Bhavnani 2000; Sharma 2001; Bose and Varghese 2001; Feldvoss 2002). R. Rhadakrishnan condemns *Mississippi Masala*, for example, for making "light of the historical ingredients that go into making 'masala'" (1996: 208). What has gone unnoticed in these debates over Nair's films is the use of Shakespeare. Nair's *Mississippi Masala* (1991) does not directly refer to *Romeo and Juliet* but its setting of a star-crossed interracial romance in the Southern US differs little from Bollywood films such as *Bobby* (dir. Raj Kapoor, 1973) and *Henna* (dir. Randhir Kapoor, 1991) that remake the play without referring to it. To be sure, Nair's films are more Western, closer to the European-influenced art films of Satyajit Ray and Aparna Sen than to the Bollywood films of Mehboob Khan and others. Yet there is no significant difference in the way Shakespeare is used in films made by Indians based in India, either Bollywood directors such as Raj Kapoor and Ramesh Sippy or art directors like Ray, and an Indian filmmaker like Nair who is based in the US. Similarly, Nair's *Monsoon Wedding* (2001), a story of an arranged wedding among wealthy Punjabis, resembles in many respects a Shakespearean comedy: the classic Bollywood "kiss in the rain" scene here functions like the transgressive sex scenes in the woods in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; there are multiple plots with elite characters and a low, worker character, one of a group of "rude mechanicals," and maid (kind of like *A Midsummer Night's Dream* meets *As You Like It*); and the presence of a scapegoat figure (in this case a child molester) to unify the community, and the romances are totally unbelievable (not love at first sight, but at first arranged sight). Yet Shakespeare is never mentioned in the film and was probably not a conscious influence. Seeking to reconcile "ancient tradition and dot.com modernity" (DVD back-cover copy), Nair's film seems clearly aimed at both Indian diasporic and Western audiences (the emphasis on sexual abuse and male bashing seem quite American). Yet *Monsoon Wedding*, shot in India, is not any closer or further from Shakespeare than Nair's earlier *Mississippi Masala*. Clearly, the effects of globalization on Indian cinema cannot confine the global to India and the Indian diaspora. And Nair's success is not to be confused with the failure of Bollywood in the US. Though many thought that Bollywood, in the wake of *Lagaan's* good notices, was poised to be in the West what Hong Kong cinema was in the 1980s, Bollywood basically bombed.³⁵ *Lagaan* flopped, as did *Dardas*.

More Sad Fountains" are set to music (composed by Patrick Doyle, who did the soundtracks for Branagh's Shakespeare films).

The literary culture of the screenplay and women's film genre might seem to harmonize particularly well diaspóra and women, given Lee's interest in the female-centered melodrama. Surprisingly, however, the connections between China, Shakespeare, and literature are not mentioned in criticism of the film.³⁵ This omission may not be surprising as the literary references work as quite subtle "clues" to help viewers "read" the characters. For example, the story of "The Castaway" resonates with what is to happen to Elinor and Marianne, both of whom are cast off by their suitors. Often the literary references work as a kind of secondary soundtrack, which is heard behind characters speaking. For example, the first part of Brandon's quotation of *The Faerie Queene* is barely audible:

What though the sea with waves continual
Doe eat the earth, it is no more at all:
Nor is the earth the less, or loseth ought,
For whatsoever from one place doth fall,
Is with the tide unto another brought . . .
(Thompson 1995: 186-7)

Brandon's nearly inaudible recitation deflects a possibly accusatory use of the lines. (Artegg's quite apt opening lines "Of things unseen how canst thou deem aright,/ Then answered the righteous Artegall,/ Sith thou misdeem'st so much of things in sight?" are not quoted.) It is only when the camera cuts to him and Marianne in close-up that we hear Artegg's more conciliatory last lines in the stanza: "Is with the tide unto another brought./For there is nothing lost, that may be found, if sought." Marianne smiles gratefully in response, having nearly found in Brandon what she lost in Willoughby (he reads aloud from the poem whereas Willoughby recited from memory), and this scene serves retrospectively for what is a rather abrupt shot of them coming out of the church, married, ahead of Elinor and Edward, who we have seen actually propose and accept marriage. Similarly, Margaret's repeated quotations of Oreste's phrase "sans cesse adorer vos attraitis" are the background of the (incorrect) news given by the servant Thomas (Ian Brimble) about the newly wedded Mrs. Edward Ferrars, and Margaret only becomes audible as we see Elinor take in the news, becoming a kind of tragic heroine like Andromaque, who cannot let go of her dead husband, Hector. Oddly, perhaps, these lines are not in the published screenplay (Thompson 1995: 190-2), nor does the screenplay supply any of the references.

One critic (Casey 2001) sees the screenplay as a "gateway" into the novel, but this account ignores the fact that the film's literary references are all supplemental to the novel, not quotations of it: literary references are not only a gateway into the film but a means of its textualization: the film invites the audience to read the characters, and anticipates, knowingly or not, its reproduction on video and DVD and postings on Austen fan websites, since most viewers will not be able to track down the references or appreciate their meaning when viewing the film in a movie theater. In other words, the literary references, as they become increasingly muted, come to function in the film like the reverse of DVD audio commentary, in which the film soundtrack is turned way down so that the commentary may be heard. The film sides with a kind of

Elinor/Thompson supplemental process of reading and rereading rather than with an oral, performative, cinematic culture linked to Marianne/Winslet.³⁶ This opposition may also be read as an allegory of post-production friction between the two women stars. If literature is a major influence on character *bildung* in Austen's novel, literary references in the film mark a contestation over status among the female stars' power. Though Thompson has a double role as star and screenwriter, and though she had won an Academy Award (as Best Actress in *Howards End*) before writing and starring in *Sense and Sensibility*, the film was her first screenplay, and her mature age was a casting liability: some studios turned down the film because she was too old to play Elinor. Though the film was only Winslet's second, she won an Oscar nomination for her performance, and she almost immediately took over Thompson's literary ground, starring, this time as the lead, in another British literary adaptation, *Jude* (dir. Michael Winterbottom, 1996), and while filming, becoming Thompson's younger Shakespeare replacement when playing Ophelia in Kenneth Branagh's post-Thompson divorce *Hamlet* (1996). Branagh cast Winslet without having her audition or read for the part, and their explicit nude scene Branagh's idea, may seem like Branagh lording it over Thompson.

While the DVD edition of *Sense and Sensibility* might allow for an extension of supplemental reading processes, it actually reverses the film's valuation of reading from the text over oral performance from memory: the DVD "chapters" access voiced commentaries on the film. Interestingly, the commentaries divide along gender lines. Given that Lee and Thompson were the main authors of the film, it would have made sense for them to comment on the film together.³⁷ Instead, there are two double commentaries, one with two women, producer Lindsay Doran and Emma Thompson, the other with two men, Ang Lee and co-producer James Schamus. Thompson and Doran do not comment on the film's literary references, nor do they comment on the Chinese theme of the film.

By contrast, the American co-producer and diasporic director periodically offer a commentary both on gender politics and on China. The commentary suggests a divergence among the men as well, however, recoding the Elinor/sense and Marianne/sensibility oppositions in the novel and film: Lee is aligned with Marianne's romantic sensibility and Schamus with Marianne's more rational sensible skepticism. In their commentary over the scene when Marianne comes into Elinor's bedroom reading from Hartley Coleridge's "Sonnet VII," Lee and Schamus discuss the lighting they used, and they turn to China.

LEE: I did enjoy those candle light scenes . . . We used a lot of Chinese lanterns.

SCHAMUS: Part of the hidden Chinese theme . . .

LEE: Laughs.

SCHAMUS: . . . that runs throughout the whole movie.

LEE: That's what I find in all those big English houses, all the best Chinese artwork is in England.

SCHAMUS: Right.

LEE: They rot. They're on the walls everywhere.

And the two then begin to offer divergent accounts of what the film is about as Schamus launches into a critique of British imperialism. I quote the exchange in full:

SCHAMUS: Totally. It's imperial booty.

LEE: One of the things I never see in China, in Taiwan . . . was . . .

SCHAMUS: Laughter

LEE: The best things were in England.

SCHAMUS: One of the interesting things about the social and political background of the book of course is that we're in the Southwest of England, and even the house that we were shooting in there was some question as to whether a large amount of the family wealth had been derived from the trading, the slave, and drug running.

LEE: Opium.

SCHAMUS: Opium. And all that good stuff on which the English empire was founded and which we Americans have taken over.

LEE: If that was what I was thinking I could never have made this movie. I'm making a movie about love.

Schamus then concedes the importance of the novel and women in opposing British imperialism, bringing up sensibility as a kind of feminization of civilization. And he points out that the first economic boycott, about sugar and slavery, was led by women in a "feminized if not feminist political movement." The conversation stops as they appear to agree, but Ang actually uses a quite different word, the neologism "femalized," suggesting a more idealized view of women as leaders in love. From presenting some notion of transnational, hybridized, diasporic, and postcolonial version of the novel, Lee and Thompson's *Sense and Sensibility* and its DVD reproduction offer conflicting accounts of the film's most valued medium of critique, voice or text.

(Dis)Orient(al)izing Shakespeare

Costume dramas, literary adaptations, and heritage films such as Ismail Merchant's production of Ruth Praver Jhabvala's screen adaptation of Henry James's novel, *The Golden Bowl* (dir. James Ivory, 2000), are typically viewed by academic film critics as conservative ideologically since they supposedly reinforce conservative orthodoxy: "Production values smoother," as one critic puts it, "political points" (North 1999: 38; see also Harper 1994). One might easily imagine both a critique and a celebration of the film for the way it would be said either to affirm or subvert the authority of patriarchal fathers and husbands over daughters and wives, upper classes over menials, England over America, and West over East. The film would be said to legitimate or to offer a critique of the upper classes it represents, both in the activity of art collecting and in the Orientalism of costume display: in one case, the film would be faulted for reducing women to attempting to position each other as abject, either as rejected wife or rejected mistress who must migrate to New York; in the other, the struggle between women would be seen to be a product of pre-feminist patriarchal oppression.³⁶

In my view, what makes the film of interest is the way its use of Shakespeare in an orientalist context "disorientalizes" the assumptions on which both of these readings rest.³⁹ The film references Shakespeare's *Hamlet* just after the performance of a hybridized modern ballet telling the story of an Indian Pasha (Piers Gielgud) and two Indian Queens. The ballet dancers are both Western and Indian, and the score is ascribed apocryphally to a modern European fictional composer named "Gravilka."

The older Queen (Antonia Francheschi), has an adulterous affair with a Nijinski-like slave (Philip Wellingham), and the Pasha kills him and the rest of his family when he discovers them embracing. The Queen then kills herself. After the performance, Mr. Blint (Robin Hart) says to his older female lover: "It's just like *Hamlet*." She pauses for a moment and then laughs.⁴⁰

It would be simplistic to identify Shakespeare either with Orientalism or a critique of orientalism in the film. For the force of the comparison is far from self-evident. Is the reference to *Hamlet* meant wittily? Is it an implied critique of the play rather than the ballet, *Hamlet* disparaged for being over the top? Or is it a misreading? Is Blint just an ingratiating lap dog, a wit unable to appreciate anything more sophisticated than the popular piano pieces he plays? Whichever reading one prefers, it is clear the plot of the ballet is not really like the plot of *Hamlet* at all (the only resemblance is revenge and an adulterous affair; obvious differences are that, unlike Gertrude, the old Queen kills herself and the King survives). Yet misreading is not confined to twits in the film though it is pervasive. The ballet, the affair between the slave and older Queen, hits too close to home for Maggie Verver (Kate Beckinsale), who gets up and leaves the performance and finds her father Adam Verver (Nick Nolte), who also left because he does not like the "noise," in another room. Yet the plot of the ballet does not resemble the affair between the Prince and Charlotte, who are the same age.

Though reduced to an offhand comment, Shakespeare's tiny presence marks a space of exteriority both to recording media and to live performance. It is not surprising that a ballet about an Indian Pasha and Shakespeare should appear in this film given that Ivory and Jhabvala had earlier collaborated on *Shakespeare Wallah* (1965), the story of the Geoffrey Kendall acting troupe whose traveling Shakespeare productions can no longer compete with Indian popular cinema and movie star/fan subcultures.⁴¹ What is striking, however, is that among a large number of highly varied performances, only the ballet and the comparison to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* are not recorded or mediated (through painting, photography, or wax). Even at the costume ball, a different kind of live performance, the guests take turns having their photograph taken.

Ivory's *The Golden Bowl* also draws our attention to the way the historical past, whether the Renaissance past or turn-of-the-century New York, is available only through media – a medallion, photographs, slides of drawings, oil paintings, costume parties – and to the way the upper classes use these media to commemorate themselves. Throughout *The Golden Bowl*, stories of women being killed by men shadow characters in the present through a variety of media, often ironizing their ability to read the present. The film tells a story not in the novel that begins and ends with shadows cast on the wall in which the older son of an aged Italian Renaissance Duke shows him his much younger wife and his younger son (her stepson) in bed together. The Duke then has both lovers executed, and we see each beheaded in shadow as the credits roll.⁴² Later, the story, based on an actual historical occurrence, comes out when Maggie is in Italy and watches a slide show. The lecturer shows a black and white slide of a painting of the original Prince Amerigo, the older man we saw at the beginning of the film who murdered his adulterous wife and younger son.

Similarly, we see a number of historical wax figures, mostly from the Renaissance, in shadow and often out of focus as Charlotte and the Prince rendezvous clandestinely at Madame Tussaud's. Beginning with a gullotine from the French Reign of Terror, the wax figures, who tend to be women and their male executioners, form a backdrop

The *Golden Bowl*'s disorientation of romance and collecting (they cannot entirely be separated or identified as forms of acquisition) returns us to the way Shakespeare, referenced only as a comment, stands outside of performance. Shakespeare can't be collected as a visual or plastic work of art. Shakespeare's exteriorization both to recording media and to live performance signals both Shakespeare's centrality and his marginality to the elite culture of the film. Yet Shakespeare is for this very reason perhaps reduced to an incidental, offhand, possibly critical remark about one of his plays, a remark whose value as a translation machine for an already Orientalist performance about another culture is also called into doubt. So if Shakespeare is saved because of his distance from Orientalism and cultural imperialism (this is not an Orientalist production of Hamlet, set in the time of the Raj), by the same token his very distance so marginalizes him that he is also beyond the space of a critique of Orientalism and cultural imperialism. The distance between the ambivalence toward canonical British Shakespeare in *Shakespeare Wallah* (the disappearance of Shakespeare from India being both a good and a bad thing; the ambivalence is the consequence of a misrecognition of the many Indian Shakespeare film adaptations and theatrical productions made and performed before 1965) and the incidental, ambiguous, and possibly meaningless reference to *Hamlet* in *The Golden Bowl* also registers the extent to which Shakespeare's position, if he has one, is now post-canonical.

Dim-sum *Romeo and Juliet*, with an order of Zeffirelli on the (west) side

Ian Ang notes that although diaspora, as a concept, tends to de-emphasize living *here* and that diasporic communities are defined as being not-here to stay, "in practice . . . this cannot be the case. All migrants have to forge an accommodation with where they find themselves relocated, and to reconcile their situation here, whether this be the United States, the Netherlands, Australia, or anywhere else. For Asians who have migrated to the West, this means coming to terms somehow with racial minority status, and acting upon it" (2001: 13-14). We can appreciate this point by turning to a number of films made by Caucasian directors. In Abel Ferrara's *China Girl* (1987), two diasporas, Italian and Chinese, come together and are interpreted in relation to a cinematic Shakespeare canon. This film takes up canonical Shakespeare at one remove from the text, in relation, that is, to canonical cinematic adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*. Ferrara's film reclaims *Romeo and Juliet* as an Italian story not by engaging Shakespeare's canonical play but by engaging two canonical film adaptations of it, namely, the earlier American musical adaptation set in New York, *West Side Story* (dir. Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise, 1961), and Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968), set in Verona, Italy. Unlike the US film musical, *China Girl* is set not on a sound stage with artificial looking sets but on location in a dirty, dilapidated, and grimy Little Italy and Chinatown. The rivalry in this case is not between Puerto Ricans and Caucasians but between two immigrant groups, Italian-Americans and Hong Kong Chinese. Indeed, the film alludes directly to *West Side Story*: the Romeo character is named Tony in *China Girl* just as he is to *West Side Story*, and a fight between rival gangs parallels that of a fight in *West Side Story*. Like the balcony scene between Tony and Maria on her fire escape for the number "Tonight," Tony/Romeo calls out to Iye/Juliet from the street, the fire escape below her window serving as a balcony. *China Girl* also defines itself in some ways against the

to the adulterous couple. A woman about to be beheaded is revealed as the camera moves down. Henry VIII refuses to listen to Catherine of Aragon, both of whom are cropped and out of focus behind Charlotte and the Prince. An unidentified Renaissance Queen is praying while her executioner to her left is revealed as the camera tracks right. And a large, imposing Holbein portrait of Henry VIII shadows the relationship between Charlotte and Verver near the end of the film in a tour Charlotte gives of the Verver collection, on its way to New York. As the portrait is shown from top to bottom, Charlotte comments on it in a way that suggests to the viewer she is also commenting acutely on Verver himself:

I think you will agree with me when I say that this life size portrait of King Henry VIII, by Hans Holbein, dominates every picture in this room. Holbein's portrait is that most striking depiction of royal authority in art. But to me it is also the masculine ego in all its brutal physical strength and coldness. The subject perfectly matches Holbein's style in all its coldness, and the King's defiance of all who stood in his way, including his numerous women, who one by one went to their doom.

History casts a very long and often very dark shadow, literal and figurative, on the present lovers, who often don't see the parallel or possibly misread it if there is one. During the slideshow Maggie is trying to see metaphorically what Charlotte and the Prince are up to, but she ignores what the lecturer is saying about the original Amerigo and thus does not see how knowledge of him might give her knowledge of her husband. And the story of the ballet does not parallel the story of Maggie's marriage to the Prince except for the fact of adultery. Similarly, Charlotte and the Prince pay no attention to the wax figures, and one of the last figures we see, Charles I, appears to come alive as his eyes turn toward them when they leave. The lovers, of course, do not know they are being watched. By the same token, it is hard for the viewer to read the relation between the past and the present. Is Fanny's husband her executioner, like the one we see in the wax museum? Or is he her servant, an executioner of those she orders to their deaths? If Fanny is indeed dressed as Mary, Queen of Scots, then the relation between costumed Queen and her executioner hardly parallels the relation between Fanny and her husband, who seem to be quite close. The meaning of the Renaissance prologue is also unclear. The parallel with Duke Amerigo is initially made by the Prince to his Italian ancestor through a medalion he gives Verver. The parallel is then later confirmed in the slideshow. Yet even later in the movie, clips of the prologue are repeated to suggest a parallel between Verver and Charlotte. The force of Charlotte's critique when commenting on a similar parallel between Verver and the Holbein Henry VIII is belied, however, by the characterization of Verver. The model Ivory and Jhabvala adopted for Verver was not the later, rapaciously acquisitive William Randolph Hearst but the cultured philanthropist Henry Clay Frick and Isabella Stewart Gardner. And given that Verver wants to take Charlotte to New York, not take her head off, her implied parallel between Henry VIII and Verver says more about her than it does about Verver.⁴³ While Charlotte may equate her forced migration with her execution, Merchant's transformative experience upon going to New York to study and his, Ivory's, and Jhabvala's longtime residence there, Charlotte's move at the end of the film may seem like a liberating one.

musical as more hard hitting. Whereas Maria lives at the end of *West Side Story*, both the lovers are killed in *China Girl* (by the same bullet). Along similar lines, race and ethnicity are realistically and rigidly represented and codified; whereas Natalie Wood used a fake accent and wore unconvincing make-up to sound and look like the Puerto Rican Maria, the actors in *China Girl* are cast to encode racial and ethnic "authenticity," and in addition to a kind of identity politics casting, race and ethnicity are established through images of food, as is so often the case in ethnically marked films such as *Chicken Rice Wars*, *Dim Sum: A Little Bit of Heart* (dir. Wayne Wang, 1984), *Eat a Bowl of Tea* (dir. Wayne Wang, 1989), *The Scent of Green Papaya/Mùi du đu xanh* (dir. Anh Hung Tran, 1993), *Chungking Express/Chongking senlin* (dir. Kar-Wai Wong, 1994), *Eat, Drink, Man, Woman/Yin shi nan nu* (dir. Ang Lee, 1994), *Big Night* (dir. Campbell Scott and Stanley Tucci, 1996), *What's Cooking?* (dir. Gurinder Chadha, 2000), and *Tortilla Soup* (dir. Maria Ripoll, 2001; screenplay by Ang Lee), to name a few. In *China Girl*, the Chinese are identified by images of fish and the Italians by images of pizza. The Chinese Mafia own and work out of a restaurant, and Romeo and his older brother own and work in a family pizza parlor. *China Girl* is less a retelling of *Romeo and Juliet* than a meditation of the diasporic circulation of the Italian version of the story, to France and to England, then back to Italy (Zeffirelli) and to the US (*West Side Story*). The Chinatown setting and the rewriting of Romeo and Juliet as an interracial Chinese-Italian romance may be read as symptomatic of Ferrara's response to the explosion of Hong Kong cinema in the 1980s, his claim both for Italian canonical cinema and for the resurgence of Italian-American films by the likes of Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, Brian de Palma, and Michael Cimino that had dominated the 1970s.

Like many adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*, *China Girl* rewrites and explains Shakespeare's story of feuding families as a story of antagonism generated by the racial difference between the families, with love being the antidote to violence. Yet *China Girl*'s return of *Romeo and Juliet* to its Italian roots, here Italian-American, produces some contradictions in the film's take on racial and ethnic assimilation, setting it apart from the more idealizing multiculturalism, melting-plot model of difference celebrated in *West Side Story*. The lovers, Tony (Richard Paebianco) and Tye (Sari Chang), are both extremely pacific. Unlike the play, Tony does not even attempt to kill the Tybalt character (in this case split into two characters) in revenge for their murder of the Mercutio character (here Romeo's brother). At his brother's funeral, Tony rejects the revenge code of his brother's friends. Moreover, he consciously rejects the racism found in his brother's best friend (Michael Mancuso) and almost gets into a fight with him when he calls the Chinese people names.

Unlike *West Side Story*, however, *China Girl* does not make feuding groups morally equivalent; rather, the film makes the Chinese much less moral, at times recalling the portrait of the Chinese Mafia in the violent *Year of the Dragon* (dir. Michael Cimino, 1985), also set in New York's Chinatown. In *China Girl*, the Chinese are viewed as the aggressive predators, both in the form of the older Chinese leader, who wants to take over Little Italy progressively and quietly, and some of the younger Chinese generation, who want to do so violently by extorting Chinese who locate their restaurants in Little Italy. After chasing Tony because he dances with Tye at a disco in Chinatown (initially recalling the Capulet ball), the Chinese are confronted and beaten by the Italian gang members. Later, two of the Chinese gang up on Romeo's brother and knife him when he is unarmed. Only Mercury (Russell Wong) is as crazy as the more

violent Asians. The Chinese are also presented as more foreign, less assimilated, less a part of New York. Many of the Asians speak Cantonese as well as English whereas only the two older men speak any Italian and do so quite infrequently. The Asians are also differentiated in terms of their accents as more or less foreign, more or less assimilated. The Italians also help the Chinese when the restaurant is blown up by members of the Chinese gang. The Chinese murderers cause the Virgin Mary statue to be broken during an Easter parade. Unlike New York, Hong Kong is frequently recalled but never seen.

More crucial than its relation to *West Side Story*, however, is Ferrara's relation to the Italian film version, Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*, and it is in his adaptation of Zeffirelli that we can see a hollowing out of the canonical cinematic adaptation. Ferrara quotes directly from Zeffirelli's film in two scenes of *China Girl*. The first quotation from Zeffirelli's film occurs when we first see Romeo walking up toward a street home, smiling while holding and twirling a flower. This scene is replayed by Ferrara before Romeo and Juliet first make love. In this case, Tony is in a pizza parlor twirling a flower. The second scene quoted by Ferrara is the *aubade*. Zeffirelli begins the *aubade* with a close-up of the lovers. The camera then slowly pulls back and moves to the left, revealing Romeo's naked backside. Ferrara first shows the lovers in a rundown apartment with a mattress on the floor, then shows the lovers kissing in close-up, and then reverses the direction of Zeffirelli's camera, moving from the right as we see Tony's nude body on top of Tye's (also covered by a sheet).

Ferrara's claim for the canonical status of his own film depends on his film being even more Italian than Zeffirelli's. The cinematic *mise-en-scène* and style of *China Girl* allude to the less idealized and more gritty neo-realist Italian cinema that emerged after the Second World War before Zeffirelli as well as to "masculine" Italian-American filmmakers like Martin Scorsese (*Romeo and Juliet* meets *Mean Streets*). Along the lines of Harold Bloom's theory of misreading, in which the belated poet metaphorically reverses the priority of his work and his precursor's, Ferrara implies that his version is prior not only to Shakespeare's, which is already an Anglicized adaptation of its Italian source, but to *West Side Story* (not Italian) and Zeffirelli's film (not as canonically Italian cinema as Ferrara's).

The extent to which Ferrara's legitimation of *China Girl* as canonical, in the tradition of Italian cinema, hollows out the canonically Shakespeare may already be obvious. The film's only reference to the play occurs when Tony's brother teasingly calls him "Romeo." Ferrara extends a process of evacuating Shakespeare's text already begun by Zeffirelli. Whereas Zeffirelli cut two-thirds of the play and substituted images for poetry, Ferrara cuts everything but a single word. The only other allusion to the play is a character named Mercury, but even this reference is drained of meaning since the character has no relation to Mercutio at all.

The draining of Shakespeare does not succeed in producing an Italian film, however, and Ferrara's interest in *Romeo and Juliet* and in Zeffirelli's film puts him on the side of a conciliatory relation to Chinese cinema both in the sense that it is less violent, and more romantic than Cimino's reactionary and racist *Year of the Dragon*. Indeed, it is precisely this more conciliatory relation to Hong Kong cinema which explains why *China Girl* ends twice: in the first ending, the Chinese return to Hong Kong leaving Tye alone to remain with Tony while the Italian-American gang members inexplicably let them walk; in the second, Mercury returns, equally inexplicably, and shoots both

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Tony and Tye, whose corpse is then cradled by her older brother. Tony's relatives and friends are nowhere to be found.

The double ending of *China Girl* may be read as the film's inability either to repress or to acknowledge and integrate its own debt to Hong Kong cinema. *China Girl* is in many ways as much a Chinese foreign film as it is an Italian film, not only in its coding of ethnicity as food but in the way its genre is more action picture than romance. There is almost no sex in the film, and the little there is has no erotic charge. The move from canonical Shakespeare film adaptation, whether Zeffirelli or Robbins and Wise, to Ferrara's "subShakespeare" adaptation marks a double failure to make a film recognizable as Italian-American nationalist cinema (due to its use of Hong Kong cinema) and to integrate racially different and competing national cinematic styles. *China Girl* bombed, is long out of print on video, and has to date never been released on DVD. While Woo became increasingly transnational, citing Scorsese in *The Killer/Die xue shuang xiong* (1989) and stating that he has been influenced by musicals like *West Side Story* (see Ciekko 1997: 230), Ferrara returned to a more exclusively Italian-American national focus, casting Harvey Keitel as the lead in *Bad Lieutenant* (1992) and including Koreans as thugs and mom and pop storeowners.

Amerasian pie/cock-asian pie

At an earlier moment in the history of criticism, one might have examined a Western film involving Asia and Shakespeare in terms of how it represented Asians and how Shakespeare helped to exclude or to include an Asian racial minority; the governing assumption would be that the closer the Asian is to Shakespeare, the more speaking lines the Asian character has, the more progressive the film.⁴⁴ Yet the films discussed thus far ask questions which call these assumptions about racial and Shakespearean authenticity into question: is Shakespeare cited in a way that is next to meaningless, transparent, effectively invisible and unnoticed? Or is he a means of organizing what we see, a kind of frame for the plot's meaning? In Shakespeare-related films where diasporic Asians are proximate to Shakespeare, are Asian characters racially marked, or are they so fully assimilated that their racial difference is invisible? And why are the Shakespeare performances live, as opposed to the highly mediated performances and readings by the white characters?

Consider *American Pie* (dir. Paul Weitz and Chris Weitz, 1999), an apparently mindless US teen comedy centering on four computer-literate jocks who want to lose their virginity before they graduate from high school. In one short scene, an Asian-American English teacher (Clyde Kusatsu) "translates" Shakespeare's *Henry IV Parts One and Two* for the students. In a classroom, Jim Levinstein (Jason Biggs) looks to his right as we hear the English teacher (not yet seen in the film) in voice-over: "So . . . once Hal becomes the King . . ." The camera then cross-cuts to a shot of Nadia (Shannon Elizabeth), a foreign student at whom Jim is staring, as the teacher continues in voice-over: "He has to take on the responsibilities of leadership." The camera then cuts to the teacher, who continues "and turn his back on his old drunken friend Falstaff. You see, Hal is going through a rite of passage much like you all are. [Camera draws back.] So make the most of the time you got [sic] left together. You'll miss it later. You see . . ." As the camera pulls back, the teacher's voice is drowned out by students who ignore him and begin talking together among themselves.

In this scene, two of Shakespeare's history plays are "translated" into a soundtrack version by an Asian-American teacher who turns the story of Hal becoming Henry V into a version of the film's *carpe diem* plot. Shakespeare is here purely oral, though already mediated, it's fair to say, by the teenploitation film genre itself (the plots of the plays are retold in a way that makes them resemble the film's plot). Neither teacher nor students has a copy of Shakespeare's text out, the teacher is giving an adaptation, not reading the play itself.⁴⁵ And despite the pencil above the blackboard with composition processes marked on it, no one even has low-tech pencils and notepaper out either. As a purely oral, modernized story, Shakespeare is opposed in the film to knowledge gained in computers and the internet (computer cameras that allow for surveillance and show to the entire student body Nadia stripping in Jim's room and then Jim and Nadia attempting to have sex), and a book, the "Bible" (consisting of material instructing heterosexual boys how to become good lovers).⁴⁶

Why is Shakespeare being cited in *American Pie*, then? And why is he being cited by an Asian-American teacher? The classroom scene is not about multiculturalism or affirmative action, in my view, but about Shakespeare instruction and race in a post-literary age. *American Pie* is typical in its representation of the teacher as a minority. Other examples abound, such as the black teacher in *10 Things I Hate About You* (dir. Gil Junger, 1999) or the teachers on many television programs.⁴⁷ In *American Pie*, an Asian minority is not included in a multicultural way by universalizing Shakespeare; rather, the film shows the irrelevance of race as well as the irrelevance of Shakespeare to the film's (all-white) students. For them, there is no such thing as the foreign (there's even a scene in a Sushi bar). Neither Shakespeare nor an Asian teacher are of interest. Indeed, the only foreign signifiers here are Nadia and the Union Jack to her left. Yet it is worth pointing out that Jim, a white nerd or "cock-asian," is the focus of abjection here. Nadia is comfortable having sex, while Jim inadvertently shows himself twice prematurely ejaculating to his jock friends watching Jim and Nadia have sex on their computers. The entire school laughs at Jim the next day. While the racial minority may assimilate Shakespeare and minority cuisine may be assimilated literally, there's something about Nadia and the foreign that makes white jock/cock culture gag.

Clubbing the emperor

The abjection of all pedagogy in the US, even when based on a conservative view of the foundational status of a classics curriculum, is made apparent in *The Emperor's Club* (dir. Michael Hoffman).⁴⁸ Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and a gifted Indian immigrant student are in many ways at the center of Hoffman's film, a kind of *Goodbye, Mr. Chips* (dir. Herbert Ross, 1969) meets *Dead Poets Society* (dir. Peter Weir, 1989) meets the updated and darker *Election* (dir. Alexander Payne, 1999). Kevin Kline plays a prep school (all boys) classics teacher, Mr Hundert, who moderates an annual "Mr. Julius Caesar" contest where the three best students compete for the honor of being Mr. Julius Caesar. In a key scene, the students discuss Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, and a "problem" student named Sedgwick Bell, the son of a US senator, who has been assigned Brutus's part, faults the conspirators' plot. The conspirators should have killed Marc Antony, in young Bell's view. Hundert is shocked, and the two have a brief debate in class over morality and power. The students all have copies of the play, and a bust

of Shakespeare figures prominently in a number of shots (also at the end of the film in the same classroom). Shakespeare's appearance in the film is hardly surprising given that Hoffman directed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with Kline as Bottom and *Soap Dish* (1991) with Kline as an aspiring Shakespearean actor, and given Kline's own experience doing Shakespeare and referring to Shakespeare in the mall film *In and Out* (dir. Frank Oz, 1998) and art films like *Looking for Richard* (dir. Al Pacino, 1996).

An Indian student named Deepak Mehta wins the "Mr. Julius Caesar" competition twice. He is one of the four main student characters, but hardly has any lines. (He is also the student who goes into higher education, apparently as an administrator, though the student denied his place in the competition, Martin Blythe, speaks of having applied to "the academy.") Though the actor is American born, his character speaks with a rather thick accent. Another white student who Hundert fails (actually cheats with a chance to be one of the three competitors) and whose father won the Mr. JC competition when he went to the school, drops off his son (same name) at the end of the film in a classroom now conspicuously multiracial and co-ed. The loser white guys bond. In an interesting revision of Rudyard Kipling's "White Man's Burden," multicultural integration and imperialism meet (as they have in George W. Bush's cabinet), but in this case (semi-)virtuous loser white guys are content to smile at each other, apparently admiring their willing sacrifices and impotence as a truly virtuous immigrant of color and a truly evil white man surpass them.

Shakespeare, through a glass house darkly

How Shakespeare and Western postdiaspora cinemas place abjection across white and Asian races may be seen if we turn to the chiller *The Glass House* (dir. Daniel Sackheim, 2001). The film cites Shakespeare more extensively and makes the Asian diaspora more present than does *American Pie* or *The Emperor's Club*. A loose adaptation of *Hamlet* about a teenage girl named Ruby (Leelee Sobieski) who discovers that her parents were murdered by their best friends, *The Glass House* makes more extensive reference to Shakespeare and makes an Asian character closer to him than *American Pie*. Indeed, an Asian teacher named Mr. Kim (Michael Paul Chan) is the first character to mention *Hamlet* explicitly. "Hamlet senses," we hear Mr. Kim say in voice-over just after Ruby sees Mrs. Glass (Diane Lane) passed out on a heroin fix, as we cut to the classroom, "something's wrong that he alone can set right." Mr. Kim then gives the students a writing assignment: "I want two pages on *Hamlet* next Friday about what he means and whether he'll succeed."

Later in the film, after Ruby has begun to catch on to the fact that her guardian, Mr. Glass (Stellan Skarsgård), has not only killed her parents but plans to kill her and her brother as well, we return to the classroom where Mr. Kim, in classic Gothic fashion, is reading aloud Old Hamlet's speech commanding Hamlet to avenge his murder: "I could a tale unfold whose lightest word would harrow up your soul, freeze thy young blood . . . / Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres . . . / And each particular hair to stand an end . . . / If thou didst't ever thy dear father love . . . / Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder . . . most foul!" (1.5.15-27). As Mr. Kim reads the speech, Ruby becomes more and more agitated as if she, not Hamlet, were being addressed, and leaves the classroom. As we hear Mr. Kim in voice-over, Ruby

That *Hamlet* would appear in a chiller film is hardly surprising in itself, given that *The Glass House* begins as a horror film (which it turns out Ruby and her friends are watching in a movie theater) and given the frequency with which *Hamlet* is cited in Gothic literature and in horror films such as *Dracula's Daughter* (dir. Lambert Hillyer, 1936), *A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master* (dir. Renny Harlin, 1988), *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (dir. Francis Ford Coppola, 1992), *Interview with a Vampire* (dir. Neil Jordan, 1994), *The Haunting of Helen Walker* (dir. Tom McLoughlin, 1995), *Gods and Monsters* (dir. Bill Condon, 1998), *Teaching Mrs. Tingle* (dir. Kevin Williamson, 1999), *The Turn of the Screw* (dir. Ben Bolt, 1999), *From Hell* (dir. Albert and Allen Hughes, 2001), and *Soul Survivors: The Killer Cut* (dir. Stephen Carpenter, 2001).⁴⁹ What is more striking is that Hamlet, an Asian teacher, and multimedia, interface, as it were.⁵⁰

Addressing this interface requires close attention to the way Kim and Ruby are doubled, he as Old Hamlet, she as Hamlet, and to the way authority figures in the school are a racial minority and a woman. This doubling has two consequences. First, the differences between their relationship to *Hamlet*, pedagogy, and media are collapsed. Initially, the teacher is identified with Hamlet in print and with reading the book aloud; pedagogically, he allows for a certain amount of time for the students to do criticism. In the first classroom scene, for example, we see him holding a book as he moves past Ruby, who also has a book on her desk. In contrast, Ruby is allied to multimedia — printed book, other open and unidentified books, the computer — in excess of *Hamlet*. Whereas in the classroom copies of the text are on students' desks, here the printed

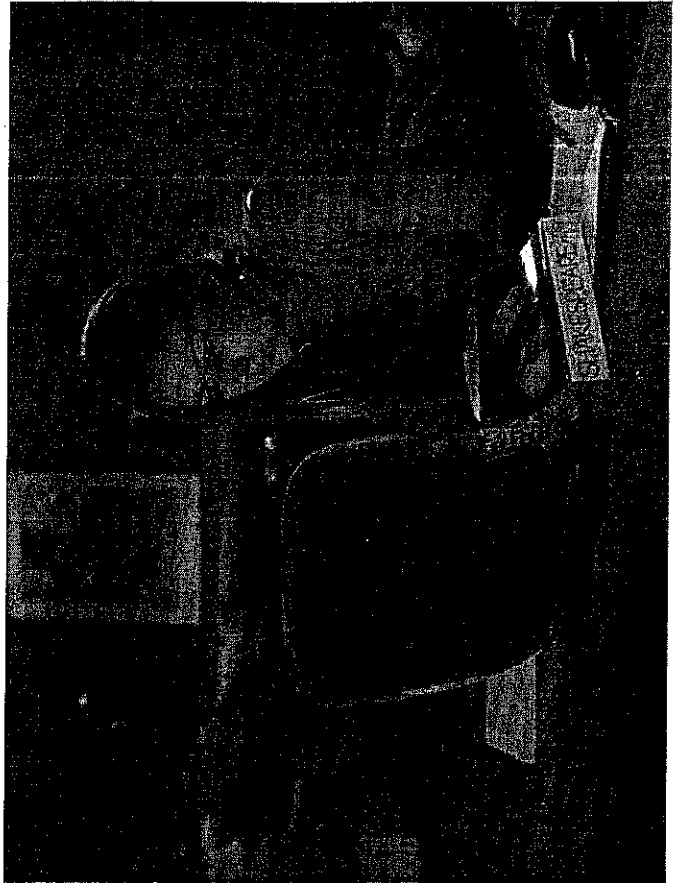


Figure 16.3 Computing *Hamlet*.

allows him to discredit Ruby and Mr. Kim by setting her up to be caught as a plagiarist. Later that night, he comes back to where Ruby has been writing later that night and finds her asleep. The next morning, Ruby awakens and looks at her computer, surprised to find a finished paper on *Hamlet*. Ruby realizes that Glass has completed her paper for her and she thanks him that morning for doing it.

Just after Ruby leaves the classroom to call her attorney to follow up on her internet research, she is called to the Vice-Principal's (Rutanya Alda) office, where the Vice-Principal is reading her paper. Obviously on to the fact that the paper was not written by Ruby, the Vice-Principal asks her if "that paper [she] turned in to Mr. Kim . . . was her work . . . Nobody helped?" "No," Ruby replies, brazening it out as Mr. Kim enters the office without her seeing him. "Not even Harold Bloom?" he asks her. "Dance of contraries" didn't sound like one of my students. I found it and other phrases in Mr. Bloom's recent book, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*."

Along with the female Vice-Principal, Mr. Kim becomes another discredited authority along the lines of Glass/Claudius rather than Old Hamlet. Kim's capacity to give Ruby/Hamlet the law has been corrupted by the fact that he has been deceived by Mr. Glass. Indeed, Mr. Kim may also be deceiving Ruby as well since it is not clear that he noticed the Bloom quotations himself or with the aid of Mr. Glass. There is no racial or gender alternative authority figure, then, to the corrupt Claudius, who has also in this version corrupted his wife, making her into an accomplice to murder and then turning her into a drug-stealing, junkie doctor who eventually kills herself. Ruby's younger brother is corrupted and bought off after the foster parents give him video games. Similarly, the female social worker is deceived and Ruby's attorney Adam Begleiter (Bruce Dern) turns out to be an ineffective, Polonius-like fool. In the near final sequence, a Highway patrolman is also killed by Mr. Glass. All are obscene father figures, as Slavoj Žižek puts it. Even Ruby's character is compromised. Ruby is abject when Mr. Glass makes her feel guilty for the death of her parents. Though her guilt is overstated it is not entirely misplaced. She comes home late after staying out with her girlfriends, fails to stay in touch with them when she moves, and her "bad" reputation keeps her from making friends at her new Malibu school.

Thus there is no place to read and learn from *Hamlet* via old or new media and no racial or gender "Other" to authorize a counter-Claudius/Glass appropriation of *Hamlet*. Indeed, succeeding in the film turns on one's ability to go spectral. Visually, Mr. Kim becomes more embodied during the film, moving from the spectral Ghost in the classroom and then appearing invisibly first to Ruby in the Vice-Principal's office, before showing himself not to be the one who knows. Conversely, Mr. Glass becomes more effective the more spectral he becomes. After we see him spying on Ruby while she writes her paper, he shows up with a drink as he comments on *Hamlet*; later he writes her paper unseen. By the end of the film, it is Ruby who has learned to see Mr. Glass without him seeing her.

To be sure, the paranoid horror film necessitates the isolation of the heroine and the universal corruption of everyone else. Yet that is precisely the point, I would argue. The horror film and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* actually do separate out after Begleiter/Polonius is killed (not by Hamlet but by mobsters). *Hamlet* is a specter to be exorcised from the film to permit a more general war of spectralization between a hero and villain both morally compromised. Pedagogy and literary criticism are similarly pushed aside. It's no accident that Shakespeare is taught live, not through film, as *Hamlet* is in

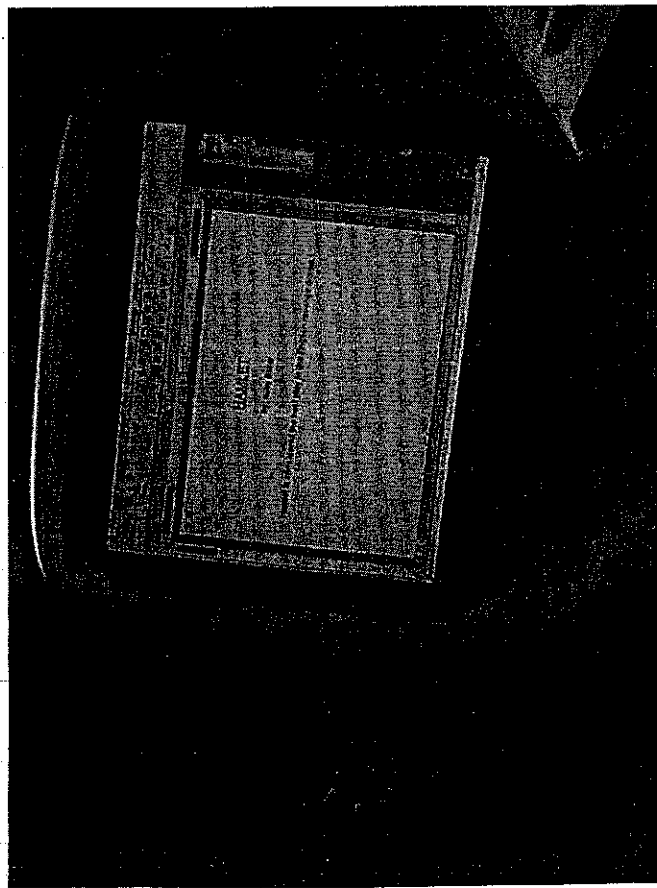


Figure 16.4 Filling in the blanks with *Hamlet*.

book is closed and the electronic text is open. Ruby's command of multimedia allows her to drop her *Hamlet* assignment for the one seemingly called up by the play. After Glass comes in to check up on her, we see that her *Hamlet* paper actually provides cover for another kind of research she's doing. Ruby clicks back to a window with the *L.A. Times* on it which she uses to research her parents' death in a car accident. After confirming her suspicions that her parents were murdered, Ruby returns to her *Hamlet* paper as if to confirm her internalization of Old Hamlet's call for Hamlet to revenge his murder. The cursor blinks at the sentence ending with the words "revenge drama."

Despite the different ways Kim and Ruby are connected to *Hamlet*, pedagogy, and media, however, they are also linked by parallel shots and by reading aloud in ways that collapse the differences between them. As Kim reads aloud from *Hamlet* in the second classroom scene, initially we see him holding the book, and then the camera moves in for a tight focus on his face and on his mouth as he reads it. Earlier, when researching her parent's death and discovering that they were driving a BMW when they crashed, Ruby says aloud, "My father drove a Saab." Ruby's reading practice thus parallels Mr. Kim's.

The second consequence of the doubling of Mr. Kim and Ruby as Old Hamlet and Hamlet is that the difference between Mr. Kim as Old Hamlet and Mr. Glass as Claudius also collapses. Mr. Kim's Asian origins mark him as different from the corrupt white male stepfather (a Swedish actor, incidentally, who broke out in the Danish Dogme film *Breaking the Waves*). Yet it is precisely Glass's own knowledge of *Hamlet* that

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Last Action Hero (dir. John McTiernan, 1993), or that a book by an anti-performance literary critic, Harold Bloom, is the one Ruby plagiarizes from and that Mr. Kim names, not an essay in *Shakespeare, The Movie* or a similar work of Shakespeare film criticism. Getting up to speed in the film means leaving *Hamlet* behind and playing out what Carol Clover (1992) calls the "final girl" scenario of the horror film. If her gender transgression makes her heroic, that is because the film follows the convention of the horror-film genre, not because it positions Ruby as the heir to female *Hamlets* dating back to Sarah Bernhardt and Asta Nielsen.

Why then invoke *Hamlet* and ally the play with an Asian-American character if only to exorcise the play and discredit the Asian-American's authority? The film's spectralization of Shakespeare's tragedy serves as a ruse, in my view, that enables the film to deconstruct various oppositions (Asian male versus white male; Old *Hamlet* versus Claudius; play versus screenplay; original criticism versus plagiarism; print versus computer, and so on) while leaving untouched a more pressing genre distinction, namely between *The Glass House* and the horror film generally. Leaving Shakespeare behind is also leaving behind the question of the copy in all its forms – from adaptation, to double, to plagiarism. Just like Ruby pushes *Hamlet* aside to do research on the web, so the film uses *Hamlet* to make room for itself, pushing aside the horror film that it opens as. Bringing in *Hamlet* to get rid of it allows *The Glass House* to appear to have avoided another kind of haunting, the serialization and hence predictability of the typical horror film. What might appear at first sight to be a critical difference between the relative invisibility of Shakespeare and Asians in *American Pie* and *The Emperor's Club*, on the one hand, and their relative visibility in *The Glass House*, on the other, is really no difference at all since the latter's spectralization of Shakespeare has the consequence of emptying of meaning both Shakespeare and the race/gender of the person who speaks Shakespeare.

The zen art of Hamletmachine maintenance

In the only interpolated dialogue accompanied by a visual in Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet*, we see and hear a clip from the documentary *Peace Is Every Step: Meditation in Action: The Life and Work of Thich Nhat Hanh* (dir. Gaetano Kazuo Matida, 1998).⁵¹ The following excerpt with Thich Nhat Hanh, a Vietnamese Buddhist monk and world peace activist who now resides in Paris, plays mostly as a voice-over. I quote it in full:

We have the word to be. But what I propose is that a word to interbe. Interbe. Because it is not possible to be alone. To be by yourself. You need other people in order to be. You need other beings in order to be. Not only you need father, mother, but also uncle, brother, sister. Society. But you also need sunshine, river, air, trees, birds, elephants, and so, so it is impossible to be by yourself alone. You have to be interbe with everyone and everything else. And therefore, to be means to interbe.

During the clip, *Hamlet* turns away from the video, holding a portable video player on which he watches black-and-white video footage he took of Ophelia in bed reading William Burroughs. *Hamlet* takes his cue from Thich Nhat Hanh's comments, and touched by his memories of Ophelia, is next seen composing and recomposing his

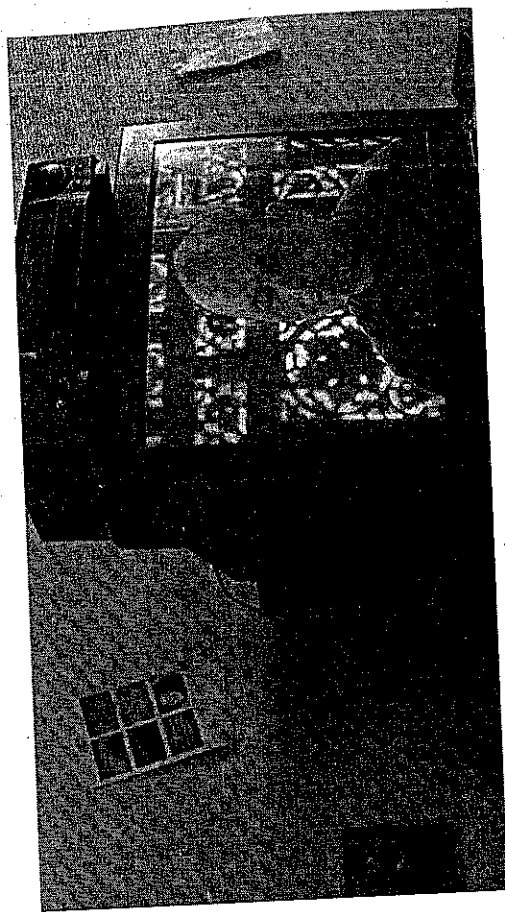


Figure 16.5 Buddhist Hamlet.

The meaning of this interpolation is inseparable, I think, from a series of scenes related to Chinatown which Almereyda cut from the film. Again, I quote in full from the screenplay:

It seemed like a fair idea to throw Hamlet, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern into Chinatown, to admit more local reality into the movie, and so a sequence of eventually excised scenes had Hamlet running through Chinatown, pursued by his disloyal friends. He ducks into a particular nerve-jangling video parlour; R & G catch up with him in a dingy back room . . . An envelope filled with cash bought us about twenty minutes with a horde of oblivious teenage video addicts and their thrilling, deafening, death-filled games. (More disassociated images-within-images! Sleepwalkers! Enemies of consciousness! Contemporary Rosencrantzes and Guildensterns!) Earlier on what we were up to fully kicked in. On an open van . . . when the absurdity of what we were up to fully kicked in. On the neon-lit sidewalk, standing in a crush of pedestrian traffic, amidst a sea of Asian faces, Ethan was recognized – by Gwyneth Paltrow, strolling along with Ben Affleck. For the back room scene, on a separate night, the art department threw together an impressively desolate three-walled set, replete with a live rooster rented for the occasion. (Until fairly recently, a tic-tac-toe playing rooster, electronically motivated, had been one of the arcade's featured attractions. The caged bird, [pacing across a soiled newspaper photo of Forinbras] is one of my favorite missing images in the film.) My friend You-Fei gamely pitched in, exhorting Hamlet with Shakspearean dialogue translated into Chinese. But, despite energetic work from actors and non-actors alike, the resulting scenes weren't half as cohesive as I'd hoped. They were somehow too busy, they clotted the film's forward motion, they weren't necessary. Alas.

(Almereyda 2000: 139)

While we may respect Almercyda's editorial judgment, cutting the scenes has a crucial effect in drawing a dividing line between media as coming into self-consciousness through a transcendental esthetic and media as going into unconsciousness via an additive, mind-numbing, sub-esthetic. The few Asian touches remaining are aligned with transcendental, artistic characters: Hamlet, Horatio, and Ophelia. On the plane to England, Hamlet looks at a Polaroid of a defaced Buddhist statue (it follows a postcard of a nude painting). When Hamlet returns, we see a box with Chinese lettering on his refrigerator in Horatio's apartment.

The video clip of the documentary about Thich Nhat Hanh establishes a transcendental coding, that is for Hamlet's use of video as well as Horatio's philosophy and Ophelia's photography. Indeed, early on both Hamlet and Ophelia are linked to writing as well as visual media. He passes her notes while making a video of the press conference, and writes her letters and a poem on paper, not on e-mail or a word-processing file. She reads Burroughs and takes photographs. Almercyda has a rather sentimental take on the play: Hamlet's romantic love for Ophelia, her love for him, and their knowledge via art/media are opposed to parental and self-surveillance; that is, the film opposes Hamlet's authenticity as a lover and scholar as well as Ophelia's resistance to patriarchy by linking the two characters to print and visual media, and with a range of visual media (Polaroid photographs) as well as digital camcorders. She writes a note to him, which Laertes intercepts, and she later reads his letter. And Horatio's apartment is full of books. By contrast, it is the older generation who are allhyper-mediatized. The only time Hamlet writes on a computer is when he revises Claudius's command to have him killed by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's laptop. Had Almercyda left the Chinatown scenes in his movie, the opposition between young and old characters in relation to techno-media would have been greatly weakened as Asia would have been on the side of the transcendent as well as the degenerate. Through the documentary clip and other images, Asia remains on the side of Hamlet, Horatio, and Ophelia.



Figure 16.6 Hamlet's polaroid photo of defaced Buddha.

Yet Almercyda's mediatization of film and video in his *Hamlet* nevertheless deconstructs this opposition, revealing both Hamlet's own narcissism and the director's as well. Consciousness is defined as Asian in the sense of being transcendental, media supplying critical distance, and in the sense of unconsciousness, media as a kind of addictive drug. Throughout the film, Almercyda draws attention to visual mass media by framing someone watching another film or image. Consider, for example, the "To be or not to be" speech, reduced to a single line in this sequence before Hamlet continues it in Blockbuster, with a teacup on the left. Yet in the Vietnamese clip, the difference between the framed clip and the movie frame dissolves as the television image occupies the entire screen. The cross-cutting and voice-over in the sequence effectively conflate the monk's consciousness with Hamlet's.

Afterwards, Hamlet shows at Claudius's office to kill and begins by looking at himself on video. After Polonius appears and talks with Hamlet, we see him turn back toward a surveillance camera. Rosalind Kraus has called video a narcissistic medium, and what seems to save Hamlet from the charge of self-absorption is that he is using media for an ethical purpose, one that involves, alternately, detection and self-examination. Yet it is the film's equation and alternation between various visual media that calls this ethical legitimation of Hamlet into question. His film footage of Ophelia is already a kind of voyeuristic surveillance hardly different from the footage he aggressively shoots at the press conference. Hamlet's wool hat, linking him to the lead singer of the band The Spin Doctors, establishes his slacking as yet another form of political spinning. What he is doing to Ophelia by videotaping her is no different in kind from what Polonius does when he wires Ophelia to spy on Hamlet. Near the end of the film, Hamlet ends his "How all occasions do inform against me" soliloquy in an airplane bathroom, staring at himself in the mirror (stage). And the film begins with Hamlet delivering the "what a work of man" speech on video he has taken of himself.



Figure 16.7 Tea or Hamlet?



Figure 16.8 To interbe or not to interbe?

The film similarly dissolves distinctions between video and digital film when Hamlet produces *The Mousetrap*, a movie. Hamlet rents videos, not DVDs, from Blockbuster, and then produces his movie digitally, but then prints it on video. And the video-box cover in turn echoes the film-title frame near the beginning of the film, where Hamlet is also written in white "letters." The title credits of Hamlet's film reproduce this shot. Hamlet is a kind of director, with "Action," seen also as the marker of a Blockbuster section, being equated with physical action. Almereyda's editing/screenplay adapting/directing mirrors Hamlet's.

The very editing processes that make Hamlet's (inter)active command of multimedia in the film seem like self-reflective knowledge and art of being are also what open the film to a critique of its unrecognized narcissism. Hamlet sees himself everywhere, in *East of Eden* clips with James Dean, in a clip of *Return of the Crow* showing in Blockbuster, in footage of a 1950s, *Leave It to Beaver*-like nuclear family, in a film clip of Sir John Gielgud as a young man doing Hamlet in the gravedigger's scene. In the easy flow of accessible images of the film, Hamlet's time is never out of joint. Hamlet is truly posthistorical not only in his accessing of images but in the way that the mediatization of the live here implies no loss. Hamlet can stop, rewind, and fast forward the film of himself holding a gun in his mouth and to his head at will, all without loss. (By contrast, Ophelia burns photos of Hamlet and her, and Hamlet's letters to Ophelia end up floating in a fountain.)

The final moments of the film, as Hamlet dies, register an even more psychotic breakdown of film and video as a close-up of Hamlet's eye is intercut with video footage of Ophelia, his father, mother, and uncle, seen previously in the color film itself, now in black and white. What began as Hamlet returning the gaze with his camcorder now becomes a cross-cut mirroring of one of his eyes and film footage outside his consciousness which is positioned as if it were his memory, his consciousness. Buddhist idealism goes out the window as Hamlet meets Kurt Cobain in Nirvana.

Interestingly, it is Claudius who allegorizes a psychotic sequence of images drawn from infomercials, cartoons, and news coverage of a Bill Clinton State of the Union speech he sees on his limousine TV and draws a moral that applies to himself. As if the TV were speaking to him, he has an attack of conscience, moving into "O my offence is rank." Claudius finally blocks out the images by covering the screen with his hand, having had enough. Hamlet, however, does not see Claudius reading these images as his own story.

The problem narcissism poses in Almereyda's *Hamlet* is not simply that a Buddhist conception of "interbeing" legitimizes the voyeurism of the male gaze, equated by Laura Mulvey (1970) and others with the pornographic, male gaze; rather, Hamlet's disembodied knowledge acquired through video is the problem, *à la* Graham Dalton (James Spader) in *Sex, Lies, and Videotape*. The most sexualized moment of the film comes in the use of *Deep Throat* (dir. Gerald Damiano, 1972) footage in Hamlet's film, *The Mousetrap*. The porn actors are to be equated with what Hamlet assumes are the randy Claudius and Gertrude. Hamlet gets off (the hook) while Ophelia is left holding the letters, if not his bag, precisely because all romantic physical contact is live for Hamlet. He does embrace and kiss Ophelia at two different points, but the haptic video footage is tantalizingly intimate, tactile, and ambiguous, unlike the porn footage or the rather explicit footage of Hamlet and Ophelia having sex in Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlet*.⁵² Does Hamlet's video footage of Ophelia show us a moment in which Hamlet's appearance is unwelcome and obtrusive, as if he were spying on her like another Laertes? Is that why she covers her face with her book? Or is this a moment of post-coital self-consciousness on her part? Ophelia's interiority is not the issue for Hamlet, however. His ability to use video to simulate her as live but not sexual is at one with his misrecognition of his own mediatization of "interbeing" as a live voice(-over).

Postdiasporic cinemas as the end of postcolonial Shakespeare criticism?

If cinema and media have undone the diaspora, deconstructed it so radically that postcolonial concepts of hybridity and difference may now be seen to have always already depended on an inadequate model of globalization that in turn relied on, whether overtly or not, oppositions between the Western authority and the nation-state as original and its Eastern transnational, diasporic subversion, what is postcolonial Shakespeare criticism to do when it comes to Shakespeare-related film? I am not interested in offering a prescriptive answer to this question, but I am interested in clarifying the issues related to it. To be sure, the fact that films are produced and financed transnationally does not mean that nations and national cinemas have ceased to exist, that the significance of the local entirely vanishes, or that Shakespeare cannot be used in relation to national myths represented in film.⁵³ Nations select the films that are nominated at the Academy Awards for "best foreign film," and there was a heated debate in India, for example, about whether *Monsieur Wedding* or *Lagaan* should have been nominated. Yet even in nationally supported cinemas, the impact of transnationalism marketing has undone distinctions between margin and center. The default position for Shakespeare is not universality or neo-universality, however, but cinematic abjection, and by extension the abjection of pedagogy and criticism, which fails to cross over or succeeds in doing so only by circulating obsolete concepts and critical practices.

Belatedness is the fate of postcolonial criticism in particular and criticism in general, even if it does begin to make productive use of new electronic media. If the assumptions that currently enable postcolonial Shakespeare criticism give way to a deeper understanding of the temporal and geographical complexities of Shakespeare's postdiasporic cinematic circulation and citations, that is, I should think, a salutary effect. Given that Shakespeare's own theater depended on a vast series of dislocations, from the rural to the urban, from the religious to the secular, from the free to the commercial, and so on, did it ever make sense to think of the plays as being located in the first place?

Notes

- 1 Similarly, Shakespeare film critics have not attended to Shakespeare in Asian cinemas nor to diasporic cinemas. Except for much older films such as James Ivory's *Shakespeare Wallah* (1965), Kurosawa's Shakespeare film adaptations and the documentary *When Hamlet Came to Mizoram* (dir. Pankaj Butalia, 1997), no Asian films or television documentaries have been discussed, nor has the Asian diaspora in Western Shakespeare-related films, apart from very brief discussions of *Hard Boiled* (dir. John Woo, 1992) and *Jamstom* (dir. George P. Cosmatos, 1993) by Breight 1997. The list of Asian and Asian diasporic films related to Shakespeare is too long to list here.
- 2 On this debate, see Barker *et al.* 1994; Radhakrishnan 1996: 133–54; Loomba 1997: 2001. The best contribution to this debate, to my mind, is Dirlik 1997.
- 3 See the end of Mishra's study of Bollywood (2001) for an example.
- 4 While critics like Ang 2001 rightly eschew a simplistic opposition between oppressive nation-states and liberating diasporas, they nevertheless recirculate radically compromised notions of hybridity and mimicry when discussing film, literature, and theater. The postdiaspora shows that hybridity and sly mimicry always already failed to work the way postcolonial critics have argued it has. Postcolonial critique depends on the very oppositions it wants to deconstruct, and though it often presents itself as engaging in deconstruction, it is actually affirming a series of binary oppositions that cannot be sustained, as film, even more racially than print, so clearly shows. Identifications of hybridity with subversion are always already breaking down inside of postcolonial criticism. Robert Young (1995: 27), writing that hybridity "is a key term in that wherever it emerges it suggests the impossibility of essentialism" is a typically self-defeating assertion, since it is itself completely essentialist (hybridity, that is, is essentially anti-essentialist). The problem with hybridity as a concept is not, as has sometimes been argued, that it is merely a fashionable term, that it is a false substitution for a more truly radical language, or that it depends on an ethical and hence ahistorical account of cultural difference. The problem is that there is only hybridity, particularly when it comes to Shakespeare. Hence, there is no Western, original, hegemonic, imperialist, orientalist, cinematic Shakespeare one could usefully oppose to a subversive, multicultural, anti-imperialist Asian or Asian diasporic Shakespeare cinema.
- 5 See, for example, the essays in Palumbo-Liu 1995.
- 6 Along similar lines, Axel writes "to account for the creation of the diaspora, not through a definitive relation to place, but through formations of temporality, affect, and corporeality. The diasporic imaginary, then, does not act as a new kind of place of origin but indicates a process of identification generative of diasporic subjects" (2002: 412).
- 7 I saw *Fuck Hamlet*, too late to be able to include a discussion of it in this chapter. The film is about an out-of-work (formerly East) German actor in Berlin who periodically rehearses lines from Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy as he has random encounters with Korean immigrants and tourists, two of whom, at the end of the film, accidentally run him down outside the Café Adler on Friedrichstrasse just after he has recited Hamlet's last speech. My thanks to Ulrike Unfig for obtaining a copy for me.
- 8 My thanks to Darren Pangbourne of the BBC for sending me a copy of *Twelfth Night*. The phenomenon of Shakespeare films that engage reverse diasporic immigration back to the

UK deserves more attention than I can give it in the space of this essay. In some cases, such as *Beginner's Luck* (dir. James Callis and Nick Cohen, 2001), about a young and struggling theater director (James Callis) who wants to do *The Tempest*, Shakespeare remains wholly Caucasian. Despite periodic fantasies of producing *The Tempest* like a colonial import, marked through allusions to the beach at the end of *Shakespeare in Love*, it is precisely the failure of performances of the play in a London strip club and then in an Indian restaurant that drives the director to take the performance to Paris (where it also fails). In other cases, reverse immigration has put significant pressure on the British practice of race-blind casting in Shakespeare productions. While casting in productions like the BBC *Twelfth Night* remains color-blind, race also functions (inconsistently, to be sure) as a signifier. In the TV film *Macbeth on the Estate* (dir. Penny Woolcock, 1997), for example, David Harewood, a West African actor who plays Macduff, is differentiated from Macbeth both by his race and by a prologue and epilogue that allows his perspective to frame the action of the film.

The point holds true for Shakespeare theater productions as well. Anthony Dawson's attempt to salvage a benign version of Shakespeare's universality by attending to the ways in which "Shakespeare shows how the historically and geographically particular . . . can be reconfigured as the universal in a thousand different locations" (2002: 190) fails precisely because the universal and location cannot be "placed."

10 On the limits of reading a film in relation to the geographical location seen in the film, see Lo 2001.

11 For attempts to reconcile film and geography, see Aitken and Zonn 1994 and Jameson 1995. 12 See also architecture theory. Ignasi de Sola-Morales Rubio writes, for example:

This [older idea of place] produced a conservative culture of the city, imitative of the past and committed above all to any kind of recuperation, permanence, custody, and remembrance of the genius of the place. Today this situation seems to have undergone substantial modification. We are experiencing a media culture in which distances are reduced to virtual instantaneity and in which the reproduction of images by mechanisms of every kind means that they are no longer linked to any one place but float unattached over the length and breadth of the planet. At the same time, the society of ubiquity or the total village or the world of the immaterial, while giving rise to simultaneity, multiple presence, and the generation of new stimuli, also produces feelings of profound estrangement. (1992, 113)

13 Iyer 2000 mentions Shakespeare at several points in his penultimate chapter: "The Empire," 234–55.

14 See Kirtler 1990 and 1999 where multimedia "discourse networks" are tied to developments in capitalism. See also Rey Chow's brilliant discussion "Media, Matter, and Migrancy," 1994: 165–80.

15 There may also be an allusion to *Leas* later in the film when Whale says "undo this button." Christopher Bram's novel *Father of Frankenstein*, on which the film is based, has several Shakespeare citations.

16 For examples, see the Shakespeare-citing Romanian giant (Gheorge Muresan) who travels to Las Vegas to make movies in *My Giant* (dir. Michael Lehmann, 1998), *Broken English* (dir. Gregor Nicolas, 1996), a diaspora film spin-off of *Romeo and Juliet* featuring Bosnians and Maoris in Australia, and the Australian child molestation victim and Shakespeare lover heroine of *Liliana's Story* (dir. Jerzy Domaradzki, 1995).

17 On Bollywood, see Mishra 2001. There are several national cinemas in India, but the only transnational one is from Bombay (the films are in Hindi and almost all have English subtitles). Nevertheless, Tamil and other regional films also cite Shakespeare.

18 "What's Wrong with Shah Rukh Khan?" 5/16/02: <http://www.1947.lt/_disk1/0000025b.htm>. See also the book by Mushtaq Sheikh, *Devdas, the Indian Hamlet* (2002). It has an epilogue by director Sanjay Leela Bhansali. And see also the opening line of a

newspaper article by Amit Roy: "London: A friend of mine, given to making provocative utterances for the sake of making provocative utterances, says that if William Shakespeare were alive today, he would be writing Bollywood scrips" (10/27/02): <http://mid-day.com/columns/amit_roy/2002/october/34832.htm>

19 Another symptom is the website hollywoodbollywood.com. A similar back and forth movement between Indian appropriations of English Shakespeare and English Shakespeare-anizing of Indian writers begins quite early on. Though numerous Indian critics now claim, in a variation of the German claim for "unsere Shakespeare," that major Indian writers such as Kalladaas and Tagore are "their Shakespeare" (see Srivastava 1921; Dwivedi 1923; Krishnamoorthy 1972; Adarsh 1976). The first person to make the comparison between Kalladaas and Shakespeare, however, was an eighteenth-century Englishman, William Jones (17). See also Drew 1987.

20 Jha (2001) adds:

My film will be about this man with three sons who are all partly a reflection of his personality. Coppola's Sonny Cortone had his father's anger. Fredo was the soft romantic while Michael was the patient pragmatic son. The elder son will be played by Akshay Kumar while the two other sons might be played by Abhishek Bachchan and Aftab Shivdasani. Q: How do you react to critics who say you're successful only when you adapt Hollywood films? Jha: When you seek inspiration from a Hollywood film, the whole content and approach is far more contemporary. But let me reiterate, Raaz wasn't *What Lies Beneath*, as everyone seems to think.

21 According to the American producer, this *Hamlet* is a "chilling thriller which will have a global appeal." The film uses major Bollywood actors in every role. The story is about a Rajput prince living, loving, and killing in the India of the 1850s, in the backdrop of the turbulent times when princely states were falling under the control of the British Empire. Hrithik will play Hamlet, Hollywood style. See Ratnottama Sengupta, "Hrithik will play Hamlet, Hollywood Style": <http://www.gocities.com/aboutindia2000/article/hrithik_will_play_hamlet.htm>. There has been some controversy over whether Hrithik will star. See Rakhee Gupta, "Roshan Goes Global": <<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2001/20010322/main8.htm#2>>; "Hollywood Will Have To Wait," *Asiaweek*, March 23, 2001, Vol. 27, No. 11: <<http://www.asiaweek.com/asiaweek/magazine/nations/0,8782,102615,00.html>>; Subhash K. Jha, "Hrithik not to play Hamlet, a Hollywood film," India Abroad News Service: <<http://movies.indiainfo.com/scoop/hrithik.html>>; "Hrithik signs Hollywood movie" (02/27/02): <<http://movies.nazara.com/news/index.asp>>.

22 The film flopped in India but garnered positive reviews in the US, particularly from Stephen Holden and Kevin Thomas. Holden writes: "The story's climax, echoing *Hamlet*, is a play-within-a-play performed for Parvasu and his court by a troupe of traveling players, including Aravasu, who disguises himself as a demon." For the complete reviews, go to the film website at <<http://www.agnavarsha.com>>

23 A reviewer comments: "[Dina Pathak's] . . . well-placed Shakespeare lines draw a great connection between the pop-culture of Bollywood and the popular appeal of the Bard's works back in the day. Overall, Mehta proves that she can't be pigeonholed as a controversy-stirring *auteur* and that her love for Indian film transcends location" (Banerjee 2002).

24 The first time Misty ever went to India and to Hollywood was to film *The Guru*. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/films/2002/08/020807/jimi_mistry_the_guru_interview.shtml>. For an account of Shakespeare and diasporic cinemas, see Burt forthcoming b.

25 Suresh Debnath 2001. "Aishwarya to play Mumtaz Mahal," *Tribune of India* (05/17/01): <<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2001/20010517/main8.htm>>. See also <<http://www.aiswarya-rai.net/movies/info/itajmahal.html>>, (05/25/01). The official film website is at <<http://www.tajmahalfilm.com>>.

26 Allusions to Shakespeare are also frequently made by Indian film critics. For example: Gurash entitles his chapter, "Play On . . . the Music" (in Joshi 2001: 56-87); Garga entitles his fifth

chapter "The Sound and Fury" (1996); Ganguly entitles a subsection of his book on Ray "To be or not to be a *Nabina*" (2000: 61); and Chakravarty says "the second impulse . . . sought to give textual analysis a local habitation and a name" (1993: 310).

27 See Jha 2001. Bachchan also performed Shakespeare in India. "Harivansh Rai, by then a senior Hindi litterateur, improvised a theatre group from his own family members and began productions of Hindi blank verse translations of Shakespeare at the Little Theatre Gallery in New Delhi. The performances which lasted a few years attracted favourable notice in restricted circles and Amitabh came in for much praise for his roles in *Othello* and *Julius Caesar*." <http://www.3to6.com/final_retro/lanitabh4.htm>. And Bachchan stars in David Dhawan's *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan*, a remake of *The Comedy of Errors*. See Srinivasan 1998. One reviewer says that Bachchan's "father, Dr Bachchan, was the first to translate Shakespeare into Hindi verse. He dedicated his translation of *Hamlet* to his son Amitabh." See Saad El-Din 2001. See also Somaaya 1999. Bachchan's son, Abhishek, has also done Shakespeare:

I went to Boston University for two and a half years. I took up liberal arts, and then fine arts and drama . . . I was still on the Shakespeare trip! But then, I consulted my dad and he said, "Look, if you want to act, why don't you come here? Because Shakespeare doesn't work here!" . . . I took drama as a school subject. In British schools they have it as a regular term subject at the O and A levels. We did some Shakespeare, and more contemporary plays. So, yeah! I got a lot of range of plays to act in. I regret only one fact - that I never got to play Hamlet! It was a play we studied in school, and it's my favourite, but that's a dream that never came true.

(Ke 2002)

28 For more on Shakespeare in Indian cinema, see Burt forthcoming b. Films I discuss include, among others, *Sholay* (Flames, dir. Ramesh Sippy, 1975), and 1942: *A Love Story* (dir. Vidhu Vinod Chopra, 1994).

29 An Indian reviewer comments:

Moulin Rouge actually seems rather Shakespearean at times. Even though the subplot of the movie is ostensibly set in India it seems more of the Shakespearean meta-theatre, i.e. point-to-the-artifice convention, and the verse-like dialogue seems more of a continuation of Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* venture.

(Aparita 2001)

See also Tsering 2001 and Halter 2002.

30 Luhrmann has succeeded handsomely as a writer and director and adapter of Shakespeare, so as *auteur* and writer his position is not all like the Bohemian writer Christian's (and unlike Christian, who loses Satine to consumption, Luhrmann is happily married to his set designer, Catherine Martin).

31 MTV became a major influence; see Gokulsing and Dissanayake 1998: 21-2.

32 For spin-offs, see *Rashtra Aur Sheria* (*Rashtra and Sheria*) (dir. Sunil Dutt, 1971); *Bobby* (dir. Raj Kapoor, 1973); *Romeo in Sikkim* (dir. Kaul Karikshen, 1975); *Romeo* (dir. S.S. Nair, 1976), and *Ek Duge Ke Lye* (*Made for Each Other*, dir. K. Balachander, 1981).

33 This confinement is attempted in the final sentence of Mishra 2001.

34 Thompson also leaves out a mention of *Hamlet* in the novel. On *Measure for Measure* in the novel, see Derry 1993. And on the literary practice of quoting Shakespeare, see Pinch 1996: 1-65, 94-7, 163-92.

35 For example, North (1999) discusses the film without considering Shakespeare and China in the film or Lee as a Taiwanese director. Conversely, Dariosis and Fung (1997) discuss the film with reference to Lee as a director but leave out of account Thompson's screenplay, Austen's novel, and Shakespeare.

36 The contrast between Elinor and Marianne is even more heightened in the screenplay by a speech of Marianne's deleted in the film. Her cut lines link her budding romance to Brandon

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- with reading: "Brandon has promised me the run of his library and I shall read at least six hours a day. By the end of the year I expect to have improved my learning a great deal" (Thompson 1995: 190). Marianne moves away from her oral performative mode, linked to Willoughby, as Brandon, an emotive reader of poetry, appears to be a suitable stand-in for Edward, whose reading aloud she found so disappointing.
- 37 The published screenplay (Thompson 1995) anticipates the DVD commentary as it includes an introduction by Doran.
- 38 For a discussion of the many ways the film transforms James's novel, see Mitchell 2002. And for an analysis of various kinds of cultural capital in James and in the film, see Graham 2002. Both critics find the film far less interesting than I do.
- 39 Even much earlier films that seem markedly Orientalist have their own kinds of complexity. For example, *The Maltese Falcon* (dir. John Huston, 1941) mixes references to Hong Kong with references to Shakespeare where sexuality complicates a gendered distinction between male Shakespeare hero and female (semi-)Asiatic heroine. Sam Spade (Humphrey Bogart) misquotes *The Tempest*: "The, uh, stuff that dreams are made of." Anticipating Elsa Bannister (Rita Hayworth) in Orson Welles's *The Lady from Shanghai* (1948), Brigid O'Shaughnessy (Mary Astor), the femme fatale, is Caucasian but linked to the Far East. Spade notices the label from O'Shaughnessy's fashionable hat, "Lucille Shop, Queen's Road C, Hong Kong," and when we see the newspaper showing ships "Arriving Today," we read that "5.35 p.m. - La Paloma from Hong Kong" has been circled. "*Hamlet* in Flames" (dir. Don Chaffey, 1957), an episode of the British television series *The New Adventures of Charlie Chan* about the sale of a "*Hamlet* Folio" stolen by a former Nazi officer while he served in France during World War II, even more explicitly links Shakespeare to a diasporic Chinese context. In this case, the complication arises from then current racially hybrid casting practices: a British actor, J. Carrol Naish, played Charlie Chan, and James Hong played his "number one son," Barry, whose accents are also reversed (Naish speaks with an unmarked accent). For another gender and racial complication, see "Lucy Meets Orson Welles" (dir. James V. Kern, 1956), where Lucille Ball appears in a magic act dressed up as a Chinese Princess named "Princess Loo See," and then upstages Welles by reciting Juliet's line "O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?"
- 40 Another possibly Orientalist touch may be seen at a costume ball based on parties given by the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire in the 1890s. Fanny Assingham (Aijelica Huston) attends a costume ball at the Verver London townhouse dressed as a Renaissance Queen, possibly Mary, Queen of Scots (her husband is dressed as an - her? - executioner), with a woman dressed as a Japanese Geisha in the background to Fanny's left. The costume ball in the film was based on the Devonshire House Ball on Park Lane, a grand ball given by the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire in the 1890s - the most famous of all the costume balls which were the rage at that time. They were attended by the British aristocracy and by very rich Americans - many of whom had married into the aristocracy. Lancaster House, where the ball was shot, is one of the few surviving private London townhouses: most were destroyed during World War II, or have been torn down.
- 41 See also *Bye Bye Brazil* (dir. Carols Diegues, 1979) for a similar story about an acting troupe in Brazil who leave Sao Paulo for the countryside only to discover that the towns there have recently installed a television set in the town square. And for a version of the same story with an Irish troupe that does parts of *Gone with the Wind* and *Othello*, see *The Playboys* (dir. Gilles MacKinnon, 1992).
- 42 While the Renaissance is not central to *The Golden Bowl*, Renaissance painting is central in *The Wings of the Dove*.
- 43 In this way, the film's making us question what we know parallels the way the novel makes us question whether Maggie ever knows that Prince and Charlotte have been having an affair.
- 44 In this account, a progressive film could also show critically the exclusion of Asians from Shakespeare and speech.
- 45 The telling of the story in terms that mirrors the students' lives is of course an index of the dumbing down of Shakespeare. See Burt 1999 and Ronell 2002.
- 46 See, by contrast, the earlier teen comedy, *Puffy's 2* (dir. Bob Clark, 1983), in which Shakespeare and anti-racist multiculturalism come into explicit play. There is a scene in a Japanese sushi restaurant in *American Pie*, but there is no sense in the film that racism even exists.
- 47 For other examples, see the black teacher in the *Romeo and Juliet* episode of *Lizzie McQuire* ("Lizzie in the Middle," dir. Savage Steve Noland, Disney Channel, Season Two, Episode 46, original air date August 23, 2002) and the Asian teacher Mrs. Kwan in an episode of *DeGrassi: The Next Generation* involving *Romeo and Juliet* ("Friday Night," dir. Paul Fox, ABC, Season One, Episode 11, original air date January 27, 2002).
- 48 The film's website is at <http://www.thecrmpetersclub.com/>.
- 49 See Burt forthcoming a.
- 50 Shakespeare, race, and ethnicity come up more broadly in horror films in relation to abjection; Chinese opium, including multiple citations, and African-American directors in *From Hell*; cannibalism and vampirism in *Blade II*, with an allusion to Caliban; and vampire Lestat citing some of Othello's lines as he kills a Creole prostitute in *Interview with a Vampire*.
- 51 The note on the documentary says:
- This documentary directed by Gaetano Kazuo Maida and narrated by Ben Kingsley profiles the life and work of the world-renowned Buddhist monk, scholar, peace activist, and poet. Thich Nhat Hanh grew up in Vietnam during times of resistance to the French and civil war, only narrowly escaping death several times. He became known for his pioneer work promoting "engaged" Buddhism, social action on behalf of the poor and the refugees. He also served as chair of the Vietnamese Buddhist Peace Delegation to the Paris Peace Talks during the Vietnam War.
- 52 On "haptic visibility" and tactility, see Marks 2000: 162-90.
- 53 Indeed, one of the problems with the nomadic, Deleuzian model of "Shakespeare" formulated by Hedrick and Reynolds 2000 is its relentless abstraction when speaking of territorialization. There's no sense of either the universal or the particular or of the global and local.