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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO SHAKESPEARE ON FILM

EDITED BY
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I

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From play-script to screenplay

In fashioning their theatrical raw material into screenplays the makers of Shakespearean films have adopted strategies as diverse as the impulses behind their various projects. The wish to convey faithfully some of the perceived qualities of the chosen play has led to the adoption or rejection in varying degrees of the original's dramatic structure, language and character relationships. The Introduction to this *Companion* has already suggested some ways in which commercial considerations might not only influence the way a Shakespeare film is promoted, but stipulate outlines to which characterisation and narrative may conform. The example, for better or worse, of what has already been sold successfully is reflected in the affinities with film genre that Harry Keyishian discusses below (chapter 4). As Geoffrey O'Brien observed in February 1997 – when another flurry of new Shakespeare films had just been released – 'singular opportunities have been created, not to recapitulate, but to invent'.¹

In the study of film techniques a broad distinction can be made between films in which story-telling is effected by the montage of images, and which foreground the means by which this is done; and others which conceal the art which places dramatic scenes before the camera with an illusion of unobstructed and privileged access for the audience. Identified in particular with Hollywood before the 1960s, this latter style of 'continuity editing' came to be accepted as a norm of mainstream cinema.² However, audiences quickly become habituated to innovation, and since the 1960s films perceived as mainstream have tended to combine both approaches. The films of Orson Welles are remarkable for the simultaneous use of both montage and continuity editing, which partly explains the tension between the sense of radical disruption and a coherence that might (in an ideal world, with the right materials) be restored before the films reach their audience.³ In filmic terms, the most conservative Shakespeare films are those which adopt as many features of a given play's structure and language as possible, while adapting them to the accepted rules of mainstream cinema in continuity editing, clarity of character and story, and intelligibility of speech. The most radical seek to achieve the play's ends by using as fully as possible the

medium's ability to juxtapose images and narrative elements, to superimpose one element of the narrative upon another, shift point of view and register, and disrupt the sense of a coherent world seen clearly. In such films the original's form and methods are not respected, but replaced. The more 'mainstream' group includes such apparently straightforward adaptations as Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *Julius Caesar* (1953), which makes very modest use of techniques only available to or associated with the cinema. Among the most radical versions are Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's Books* (1991) or films derived more or less directly from Shakespearean originals but not seeking to replicate their effects. (See Tony Howard's discussion of 'Offshoots' in chapter 17.)⁴ Between these extremes there is much blurring of boundaries. Nor can the presence of elements of avant-garde technique be assumed to indicate radicalism in the cultural values implicit in a film. *Prospero's Books*, for example, for all its elaborate visual effects and self-conscious theatricality (framed in turn by cinematic self-consciousness) includes the original play, spoken almost entirely by Sir John Gielgud. In the director's own words, this provides 'a still centre around which everything revolves'.⁵ Akira Kurosawa's 1957 *Macbeth* adaptation, *Kumonosu-jo* (commonly known in English as *Throne of Blood*), includes none of the original play's words but can be said to adopt (and indeed enhance) the play's fusion of psychology, superstition and politics. A feature of this, and of Kurosawa's later *King Lear* film, *Ran* (1985) is the infusion of elements of Noh theatre, so that an elevated, aristocratic theatrical form with an eloquent repertoire of archetypes is married with elements of the Western and of Shakespeare. In the West, the director's adventurous mixing of conventions may be at once more radical and less accessible than in his own country.⁶

Cinematographers with a prior interest in Shakespeare – a significant but not dominant portion of a film's anticipated public – tend to begin by assessing the degree of a screen version's divergence from the published (and edited) dramatic text. Even if the ultimate measure of a film's worth is not its degree of fidelity to the words and structure of the original, understanding of the relationship between the two is an important element in the viewer's perception of what a given film is doing. An examination of some ways the mainstream film adaptations have used the texts of their originals also offers a means of assessing more insistently radical work.

Speech, action and poetry

The most obvious difference between a screenplay and the text of an Elizabethan play is the number of spoken words. In writing for the mainstream cinema it is axiomatic that dialogue should be kept to a minimum. What happens in a scene – as the director's traditional command indicates – is 'action'. Syd Field, an

influential teacher of screenwriting skills, insists that 'a screenplay is a story told in pictures, and there will always be some kind of problem when you tell the story through words, and not pictures'. His definition of 'the real dynamic of good screenwriting' offers an encapsulated definition of successful mainstream work: 'strong and active characters, combined with a unique, stylized visual narrative that constantly moves the story forward'.⁷

Aiming for the 'ideal' running time of less than two hours, most Shakespeare films have used no more than 25–30 per cent of the original text, and it has been shown that Welles (again, a good example of the most adventurous use of an original) consistently uses fewer words for each transaction between characters.⁸ Kenneth Branagh's adaptations of *Henry V*, *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Love's Labour's Lost* and Trevor Nunn's *Twelfth Night* probably reflect the specific theatrical experience of their makers by following the common stage practice of cutting within speeches and scenes, making the dialogue leaner but (mostly) preserving the scene's original shape. In each of these cases there is some reordering of the play's scenes, as in the opening of Nunn's *Twelfth Night*, the 'watch' scenes of *Much Ado* and, more extensively, in the more radically adapted text of *Love's Labour's Lost*. There is also some transposition and cutting of entire scenes, but the narrative outline of the original is more or less adhered to and theatrical practice and priorities are acknowledged although not slavishly followed.

In July 1935, when Max Reinhardt returned to Vienna after filming *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Hollywood, he expressed his delight that the sound film would allow an immense audience to appreciate the subtleties of the most intimate conversation: the cinema now had the potential to become *Kammerspiele für die Massen* ('chamber theatre for the masses').⁹ The opportunity, unfashionable as it may seem, continues to attract. Geoffrey O'Brien, in the essay quoted above, argues passionately for attention to the plays' language in film versions. In the films by Branagh and the theatre directors Trevor Nunn and Adrian Noble (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1996), as well as those by Olivier and Mankiewicz, dialogue retains its theatrical role as a dominant vehicle for characterisation and for the conducting of business between the persons of the play. This has resulted in some notable clashes between the habitual technique of actors and what the camera needs. A classic account of a stage-trained Shakespearean's encounter with acting for the camera is that of Micheál MacLiammóir, enlisted by Welles to play Iago to his Othello. MacLiammóir wrote in his diary:

Find what I have long suspected: (a) that one's first job is to forget every single lesson one ever learned on the stage: all projection of personality, build-up of a speech, and sustaining for more than a few seconds of an emotion are not only unnecessary but superfluous, and (b) that the ability to express oneself just below the rate of normal behaviour is a primal necessity . . .¹⁰

Since the 1950s the distance seems to have diminished between the speaking of Shakespeare's language in the theatre and on screen, if only because few theatre actors make their living by acting Shakespeare in large spaces, and forceful projection and self-conscious rhetorical mannerisms are consequently less prevalent.

Films, however, have their own non-verbal means of denoting transactions between characters. Some have their equivalent in the theatre, such as the construction of spatial relationships between characters. Others are specific to cinema, notably the choice of camera angles and the rhythm of shots in the edited film. Musical emphasis under dialogue is also more common and more readily accepted than it is in the theatre. In the bustling world of Zeffirelli's *Taming of the Shrew* the intimacy of the looks they exchange and the moments of silent understanding they share – underlined by the orchestral score – suggest the inevitability of eventual union between Kate and Petruchio. A striking example of film's aptitude for revealing intimate feelings occurs early in Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *Julius Caesar* (1953): when Caesar, on his way to celebrate the feast of Lupercal, asks Antony (Marlon Brando) to touch Calpurnia after the foot-race, because she is barren. A glance from Brando, seen in medium close-up, suggests a response of sympathy for the dictator's wife. The staging of the forum scene in the same film makes effective use of the large studio set, with moments when Antony and Brutus are seen against an expanse of steep steps or in juxtaposition with the crowd. But there is little in the direction that seems uniquely cinematic – except, that is, for the glimpses the camera affords of Antony's eyes, and the sense they give of his intentions and feelings. Typically, it is Welles who furnishes the greatest abundance of examples of emotionally charged camera angles and staging. In *Chimes at Midnight*, for example, Hal's encounters with John Gielgud's starchy morose Bolingbroke take place in what seems to be an empty cathedral, a cold, stony environment with the camera positions emphasising the distance between the two and the elevation of the king. The tavern world inhabited by Falstaff is characterised not only by low ceilings, wood furniture and half-timbering, but also by the habitual proximity of one person to another. Laurence Olivier is less dynamic (or disruptive) than Welles in his editing and staging, and more theatrical in the way he stages scenes for the camera. Comparison of the two directors' work suggests the range of techniques available. The stylised mode of Olivier's *Richard III* encompasses not only the frankly artificial studio sets but also the emblematic and quasi-theatrical placing of figures within them, notably in the two coronations. In the first – that of Edward – Olivier stage-manages a ceremony that constitutes a formal statement of relationships between the three brothers and the rest of the court; in the second, Richard's, the throne is elevated on a high dais and vertiginous camera-angles suggesting the usurper's point of view convey an atmosphere of fear and confusion.

The manipulation of the audience's sense of time and place, and the perception

of action in them, is one of the fundamental elements of cinematic narrative. In the cinema, shifts in time can be represented in ways that range from the subliminal to the ostentatious. If a character sees a face at a window, then goes to look closer, in continuity editing it is not necessary – or usually desirable – to show the move made across the room to the window. If days, months or years are to pass, the images suggesting that may be compressed into a few seconds of screen time by the use of montage (the crudest means include such devices as inserts of calendars with pages torn off). In the texts written for the Elizabethan theatre's unlocalised and daylight stage, changes of place and time are accomplished by the simplest of means: statements in the dialogue, accompanied if necessary by clearance of the stage. It has been customary to regard it as an imperative in film that there should be movement among locations, which involves 'opening out' a stage script. A useful comparison can be made with the adaptation of plays written for the realistic, scenic theatre, such as those of Wilde or Shaw. Here the difficulty is more acute, because an organising principle of the original is that as many significant turns of event as possible should take place in a limited number of locations within a given period of time.

Elizabethan dramatic texts invite more latitude, and adaptors are more likely not only to abbreviate dialogue, but to use it outside the framework provided by the original. The opening sequences of Welles's *Othello* exemplify this, as do the opening sequences in Michael Hoffmann's 1999 *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in which we are shown several dimensions of Theseus (estate owner, prospective bridegroom and dispenser of the 'Athenian' law) together with different aspects of the domain he presides over. Another instance is the first court scene in *Hamlet*. Kenneth Branagh's 'full-text' version (1996) shows Claudius's first speech delivered in full to a massed audience of courtiers. Kozintsev (1964) and Zeffirelli (1990) both employ a selection of the lines to give a more varied picture of the king's power at work, including (in both films) public and private contexts.

The modification of the text of the theatrical original in this way is not so much an unavoidable and regrettable consequence of filming, as an opportunity the director forgoes at his or her peril. The film-maker is able to enjoy greater freedom in showing the words and deeds of characters in relation to the environment created for them. The *mise en scène* of a film is in fact a vital element of the cinematic experience – in all its definitions and varieties – and in Shakespearean films it retains this importance, rather than becoming a reprehensible competitor with the spoken word.

The milieu – 'production values' vs. 'poetry'

From its early days, the narrative cinema proclaimed its ability to show a dramatic action's physical surroundings more vividly, spaciouly and accurately than the

illusionist theatre. This capacity for delivering 'reality' was established alongside the capacity for depicting fantasy – establishing the now-familiar dialogue between the Lumière and Méliès aspects of the medium.¹¹ Some early Shakespeare films (such as the Vitagraph *Julius Caesar* of 1908 or the 1911 film of Benson's company in *Richard III*) were effectively a series of animated tableaux, corresponding at once to the pictorial aesthetic of contemporary Shakespeare productions, and to the tradition in the graphic arts of illustrating key moments from the plays. Others, such as the *Hamlet* featuring the actor-manager Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson (1913), were more concerned to convey the narrative shape of the play and the quality of the actor's performance, but also took advantage of the opportunity to 'illustrate' to a degree not possible in the theatre, sometimes by using open-air shooting. From the commercial point of view, relatively spacious and historically authentic settings and appropriate costume designs were 'production values' that both mimicked and challenged the popular theatre.¹² What silent films lacked, of course, was dialogue, and with it not merely its function in conveying character and transactions, but also the presence within the film of poetic description and evocation to rival the milieu shown by the film-maker. Paradoxically, the advent of the 'talkies' made it more difficult to film Shakespeare's plays. The theory and practice of staging Shakespeare in the theatre had moved radically away from pictorialism, symphonic music around and during speeches and the wholesale cutting of the text.¹³ Now it seemed that the cinema was reinstating these habits of the actor-manager's theatre.

The reception accorded the Warner Brothers' *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1935 demonstrates the ways in which sound crystallised the problem of poetry. This film married the glamour of movies – costly production values, big stars – to 'high' European culture, represented not only by William Shakespeare but also by Max Reinhardt, one of the greatest and most versatile theatrical directors of his time. Its promotion in these terms has been mentioned already (Introduction, p. 7). Beyond the 'trade' press (where exhibitors' anxiety about audience resistance dominated) the reviewers tended to focus on a new element of suspense, as to whether the movies could handle Shakespeare at his most 'poetic'. The anonymous reviewer in *The Times* (17 October 1935) posed the question with a degree of condescension: 'No doubt it was too much to expect an adequate performance of a play by Shakespeare in a film, though there does not seem to be any real reason why it should not be attempted, and the result might be extremely exciting . . . ? Reinhardt's version "has all the faults that grandiose stage productions of Shakespeare once committed but have now happily outgrown". The *Daily Express*, under the headline 'It Should Never Have Been Filmed', admonished the producers: 'Shakespeare is not, and never will be, film material. You will never make screen entertainment out of blank verse. It has nothing to do with cinema, which is primarily a visual form' (11 October 1935).

MGM's *Romeo and Juliet*, with Norma Shearer and Leslie Howard, released a year later, was treated by many critics as yet another test for the cinema – or at least, the sound film – and the publicity was clearly designed to meet objections half-way. Audiences were given to understand that the whole thing had been approached conscientiously. Shakespeare's wishes were being fulfilled to a degree beyond the capacity of his own stage. (This was an argument familiar in the days of the Victorian and Edwardian actor-managers.) In the published 'scenario' the literary adviser, Professor William Strunk, Jr., wrote that the advantages of the screen lay 'in continuity, in control of tempo, and in portrayal of background'.¹⁴ The burden of this fell on such lavish set pieces as the spectacular opening sequence, with the rival factions processing to church on a Sunday morning in Verona, or the 'noisy, brightly colored pageant of fifteenth-century Italian life under blue skies in spring weather' that provided the setting for Shakespeare's Act 2 scene 2. Such scenes could be enlisted in support of Strunk's claim that the film 'does not merely tell a story of individuals; it gives a picture of the life of a great epoch, and in so doing illuminates the story'.¹⁵

Writing in the *Spectator*, Graham Greene found himself 'less than ever convinced that there is an aesthetic justification for filming Shakespeare at all'. He observed of Cukor's film of *Romeo and Juliet* that 'the effect of even the best scenes is to distract, much in the same way as the old Tree productions dis-tracted'. Perhaps the poetry could only be served if 'we abjure all the liberties the huge sets and extras condemn us to. Something like Dreyer's *Passion of Jeanne d'Arc*, the white-washed walls and the slow stream of faces, might preserve a little more of the poetry than this commercial splendour'.¹⁶ Hatley Granville Barker, whose own practice and theory had done much to discredit the pictorialism of the old lavishly pictorial staging of Shakespeare – particularly as practised by Sir Herbert Beerbohm-Tree in the 1900s – denounced both the new *Romeo and Juliet* and Reinhardt's *Dream*. The film-maker's concern, he wrote, 'was not with the integrity of Shakespeare's play but with the making of pictures, as many and as good pictures as possible'. The lesson was that the two art forms did not mix: 'if we intrude scenery when [Shakespeare] thought he needed none . . . we wrong his art'. The following week a rejoinder from Alfred Hitchcock praised the dramatist for having 'almost the scenario writer's gift for keeping the story moving from setting to setting'.¹⁷

The English-language Shakespeare films of the 1940s and early 1950s – with the exception of Castellani's 1954 *Romeo and Juliet* – all use milieu in a more or less symbolic, stylised manner. This has more in common with contemporary stage production of the plays than with the habitual production values of the commercial cinema. None of Olivier's three films is conventionally realistic either in production design or in camerawork. *Henry V* (1944) moves from a depiction of Elizabethan London in realistic mode to stylised settings based on

the Duc de Berri's Book of Hours.¹⁸ For *Hamlet* (1948) the production designer Roger Furse created Elsinore as a castle of the mind, and Olivier himself remarked that he first imagined the film as a series of engravings. In *Richard III* (1955), also with Furse as designer, Olivier uses a sparsely decorated, apparently interconnected series of locations in a medieval London that has something of the style but none of the prettiness of the tableaux in *Henry V*. Here milieu can assume symbolic significance with relatively little support from cinematography or editing. In both *Henry V* and *Richard III* the move to a genuine outdoor location for the climactic battle comes as a shock.

Orson Welles's *Macbeth* (1948), with its deliberate sense of confinement, and frankly (and cheaply) 'studio' settings, can be read as either deliberate exercise in the manner of 1920s German Expressionism, or a failure to achieve a realistic milieu. The former is consistent with Welles's other work, where 'real' locations (as in *Othello* and *Chimes at Midnight*) are used expressively, either by photography or editing. As Pauline Kael observed of *Chimes at Midnight*, 'Welles, avoiding the naturalistic use of the outdoors in which Shakespeare's dialogue sounds more stagey than on stage, has photographically stylized the Spanish locations, creating a theatrically darkened, slightly unrealistic world of angles and low beams and silhouettes.'¹⁹ Peter Hall's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1968) uses locations, with a deliberate 'alienation technique' in the daytime world ('Athens' appears aggressively as a title over an opening shot of the inescapably English house at Compton Verney in Warwickshire) and a chaos of filters and accordingly disruptive editing devices in the night-time woods. For many reviewers the woodland remained obstinately earthy. 'Nature' (wrote Eric Rhode in the *Listener*), 'a complex concept in the text, becomes visible, concrete, specific: we move back, as it were, from the workings of the poet's mind to the possible source of his inspiration.' Another reviewer complained that Hall had 'lost all touch with unreality'.²⁰

Peter Brook once declared that 'the power of a Shakespeare play on stage stems from the fact that it happens "nowhere"'. A Shakespeare play has no setting. Every attempt, whether supported by aesthetic or political reasons, to try to build a frame round a Shakespeare play is an imposition which runs the risk of reducing the play: it can only sing, live and breathe in an empty space.²¹ Brook's own film of *King Lear* (1971) does not create a 'nowhere' and does build a frame round the play, but the wintry civilisation, the sense that nature is a constant threat against which furred gowns and huddled encampments are a fragile defence, might be considered a symbolic rather than 'real' milieu. Kozintsev, working in a comparable manner in his 1970 *King Lear*, displays the structures of a society more forcefully than Brook. The opening shots depict the slow progress across a barren heath of what becomes a large crowd of peasants. They assemble silently on the ridges overlooking what we presently learn is Lear's

castle. As Sergei Yutkevitch observed, 'the whole film begins remarkably, not as an incident within the walls of a castle, but as an event with repercussions far beyond. It is not only the characters of the drama who are involved but an important new hero: the people.'²² Kenneth Tynan hailed the same director's earlier *Hamlet* (1964) for populating Elsinore – normally deserted in the theatre, 'apart from the characters with names and a few extras to tote halberds, serve drinks and express shock when people of rank are insulted or slaughtered'. Kozintsev 'never let the audience forget that a royal castle is like a vast hotel which somebody has to run'.²³

Akira Kurosawa's *Kumonosu-djo* (*Spider's Web Castle*) is more symbolic than realist: the Spider's Web Forest – the equivalent of Birnam Wood – is its governing metaphor, and the wood's defiance of the laws of nature reflects the hero's own subversion of the moral order.²⁴ The only signs of benign nature in the film are the peaceful fields (with toiling peasants) through which Tsuzuki's (Duncan's) entourage approaches Washizu's (Macbeth's) castle. Architecture and domestic settings may be historically correct (at one point in the published screenplay the 'black' style of castle building is referred to), but as in the same director's later *Ran* (1985) they are equally charged with symbolic significance. The interiors, with their classical Japanese proportions, elegant sparseness and sliding walls, are made to isolate the figures as though on a Noh stage, placing them in symbolic rather than realistic relation to each other and to such emblems of status as a sword or a wall-hanging.²⁵

In comparison, the medieval milieu of Roman Polanski's *Macbeth* (1971) is fashioned in a commonplace if accomplished 'realistic' historical mode but remains neutral – except when the weather turns bad or the killing begins. The various castles are distinguished from one another in comfort and regality, so there is a sense of the Macbeths as moving up in the world after the regicide. But these are never castles of the mind, and Polanski's Birnam Wood is only a 'moving grove' because the attacking soldiers carry branches to conceal themselves. The matter-of-(medieval)-fact world created by Polanski is part of a strategy, what one reviewer identified as his being a 'gothic realist' whose 'murderous carnivals have an everyday look'.²⁶ Polanski creates an unremarkable, if meticulously realised milieu in which extraordinary events will take place and unconventional thought will be given utterance. The setting is not itself a privileged speaker, as in Brook or Kurosawa, nor does it carry the social significance that Kozintsev makes it provide.

This brief survey of milieu in a handful of films reflects one important development in the reception of Shakespeare on film: the setting gradually receives its due as an element of the poetic vocabulary of film and, consequently, as an active element in the process of adaptation, as significant as the cutting or reordering of the spoken words. Although projects (such as André Bazin's) to formulate a

phenomenology of cinema rightly make distinction between dialogue in the theatre and on film, it is the nature of the space shown to the viewer, and the way it is shown, that dominates. As Bazin observes, 'the screen is not a frame like that of a picture but a mask which allows only a part of the action to be seen'.²⁷ The deployment of scenic space, the creation of a world before the lens and the implication of one beyond its field of vision, are central to the narrative cinema. This dimension of the films' work as interpretations of the original text is crucial to any assessment of them. At the same time, it should be remembered that – quite apart from the milieu depicted and the sense we are given of the actors' relationship to it (and to each other within it) – films also manipulate the audience's relationship to the space in which action unfolds. Overhearing scenes, often of great complexity and sophistication on Shakespeare's stage, are particularly difficult to transfer to the screen. In the theatre we see the whole of the playing area, and we can choose (even if the director takes steps to influence us) whom to attend to when Othello overhears Cassio with Iago and Bianca, or when Benedick and Beatrice overhear the allegations of their love for each other. The effect is intensified in scenes with greater numbers of on-stage observers. When *Hamlet* is performed on stage we see all the witnesses of the 'Mousetrap' at once; in *Love's Labour's Lost* we see the concealed Berowne – somewhere 'above' on the stage – observing the King, Longaville and Dumaine in turn, and watch each newly arrived (and newly concealed) Lord as they observe the others. In the cinema our view of the observers and the observed in such scenes is controlled, and its quality altered. We are all shown the same selection of images and sounds, and we are obliged to see and hear each person's reactions serially rather than simultaneously. The members of a theatre audience (themselves diversely placed) may pick and choose to diverse effect: here the cinema, at least in its conventional form, has the effect of limiting the audience's options and with them, arguably, the scope of its reactions.²⁸

Showing, telling and thinking

Many critics, though, particularly in the earlier decades of sound, were influenced in their response by the fact that in the theatre Shakespeare had only recently been emancipated from the scenic display that in the theatre as now in the cinema had come to represent commercial vulgarisation. This anxiety about the visualised image usurping the spoken word's legitimate function has often dominated commentary on filmed Shakespeare. A notable example is the reception by literary critics of Polanski's *Macbeth*, where the director's professed aim was to 'visualise' as much as possible. Apart from its role in the treatment of the supernatural (discussed by Neil Forsyth in chapter 16), this practice produced occasional over-deliberate enactment of imagery. At the feast after Macbeth's

installation as king a bear is baited. The bear is first seen in its cage in the courtyard during preparations for the feast, and Lady Macbeth hails it as 'our chiefest guest'. Later, before we (via the camera's eye) enter the banquet hall, the carcass of the bear and one of its assailants are dragged past the camera down a corridor, leaving a vivid bloody smear on the floor. Towards the end of the film, as he receives reports of the enemy's advance, Macbeth notices the pillar to which the bear had been tied, and much later, as he faces his first assailant, he sees the same pillar, ring and chain. This time he speaks the line 'They have tied me to the stake.' Frank Kermode, declaring that 'the film mustn't spoil [Shakespeare's] astonishing effects of language'²⁹ complained that these were lost in Polanski's film: one might observe that the visual effects created by the director were a transposition of imagery into another medium. Against this one might set one of the most fulsome defences of a Shakespeare film against such objections: Robert Cowie's assertion that in Welles's *Othello*, 'Far from being attenuated, the play reveals under [his] direction that restless, brooding aspect that lies hidden in the folds of Shakespeare's verse.'³⁰

Another point of coincidence or collision between the spoken word and the shown image in Shakespearean film is the soliloquy. The theatrical convention, allowing access to a character's 'private' thoughts, depends on that character's ability to address the audience directly. With the tragic heroes in particular this conventional means of access to their interiority has been essential to a critical tradition celebrating the plays as studies in psychology. The speeches are perceived both as technical tests, and as a measure of the performer's emotional (even spiritual) range and capability in the role.

Film has other means of access to the characters' interiority, to which speech may even be a hindrance, and has little (or at least, very selective) use for direct address to the audience. Welles deprives Iago of his soliloquies, but this does not seem to diminish the impact of Maclammóir's performance, and Kurosawa's Washizu (Toshiro Mifune) is no less effective for being a Macbeth whose thoughts are given no words. When a character in a film does speak directly to camera, the effect is a radical disruption of the sense of fictional space – the intimation of a whole world beyond the camera's range, of which we are being shown a part – and is potentially far more momentous (and alienating) than direct address to a live audience from an actor on stage. Usually, when a film character must be seen to reflect, she or he will look to the left or right of camera, the eye-line depending on the demands of continuity and with respect to what is understood to be in the space 'off'. Speaking to the lens has a distinctive effect and has to be used sparingly and strategically.

This important element of the plays' theatrical conventions may, however, be modified to advantage, in that soliloquy can be elided with the 'aside'. In Polanski's *Macbeth* both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth move in and out of

'spoken' and 'thought' soliloquy, usually speaking only one phrase or sentence out loud. Their thoughts can now be juxtaposed with other action, and the characters do not have to be alone – to be given, as it were, a stage to themselves – for the thinking to take place. Lady Macbeth (Francesca Annis) reads her husband's letter in voice-over, but speaks some phrases out loud. We see preparations for Duncan's arrival as her voice is heard ('Hie thee hither, that I may pour my spirits in thy ear') and her invocation to the 'spirits, that tend on mortal thoughts' is spoken as she watches Duncan's arrival. She 'thinks' her invitation to night as she comes down into the courtyard, preserving the outward demureness that distinguishes her in this part of the film. A speech that on stage could hardly be spoken without a passionate display of commitment to evil, is here juxtaposed with Lady Macbeth's outward composure. The film's capacity for placing the protagonists' passages of reflection in, or at least beside, the world around them has been diversely articulated in the different *Hamlet* films. Hamlet's first, bitter soliloquy, is a case in point. Olivier (1948) isolates Hamlet on his chair in the now empty, shadowy council chamber, a setting expressionistically appropriate for his state of mind. Kozintsev (1964) has Hamlet 'thinking' as he makes his way through a throng of fawning courtiers, a grave and isolated intellectual amid a politically dangerous chattering class. Branagh (1996) splits the difference by having Hamlet pace, bursting with angry vocal energy, through the vast, brilliantly lit but now deserted hall.

This adaptation of the soliloquy convention permits the protagonists to go about other business while we hear them think, and often (though not inevitably) suggests a corresponding psychological trait: Macbeth or Hamlet can seem like men who frequently think but don't have to stop to do so. Because the camera can keep close to him, Olivier is able to allow Henry V a moment of thoughtfulness 'aside' on the line 'And how Thou pleasest, God, direct the day' after he has defied the French herald before the battle of Agincourt. Polanski's camera is always catching Jon Finch's Macbeth in moments of reflection, even when we cannot hear his thoughts, and he is no less a man of action for all his troubled imagination. In any case, Polanski gives us privileged access to the visions that trouble Macbeth's imagination. Towards the end of the film, as the usurper's regime disintegrates, we see Lady Macbeth's hands from her point of view, stained with illusory stigmata. In a play where visions are of paramount importance, Polanski's camera insists on a degree of complicity in the viewer that would not be available to the theatre spectator.

Additional narrative: pictures telling stories

Scenes not represented in action in Shakespeare's theatre but added by screenwriters have sometimes been thought an undesirable challenge to the supremacy

of poetic description. This is clearly the case when an incident described in the dialogue is enacted for the camera. Outstanding examples occur in Olivier's *Hamlet*; when we see the scene of Hamlet's distraught visit to Ophelia's closet; in both films of *Henry V*, which show us the death of Falstaff to illustrate Mistress Quickly's words; in Branagh's *Henry V*, when flashbacks clarify the former relationship of Henry with Falstaff and his tavern companions; and on several occasions in Branagh's *Hamlet*. A notable 'double dose' of illustration occurs when Olivier accompanies Gertrude's description of Ophelia's drowning with a scene imitating Millais's painting of the same subject. In these cases the director has had to decide between the desire to take his audience with him, and the fear of distracting from what is being said (and how it is expressed) rather than illuminating some necessary question of the play. Examples of divergent approaches to the problem can be found within Branagh's *Hamlet*: we are not shown Hamlet's visit to Ophelia's closet, and the image of her drowned face is shown after, not during, the scene in which Gertrude describes her death. On the other hand, there are many other 'illustrations', ranging in seriousness from Hamlet and Ophelia in bed together to images of Priam and Hecuba in *extremis* to accompany references in the play's speech.³¹ More problematic are images which illustrate (and perhaps validate) what a character imagines – such as those in Oliver Parker's *Othello* where the hero visualises Desdemona in bed with Cassio. The effect is anticipated (more decorously) in the German silent film of 1922, but there Othello cannot speak of his imaginings, and they have to be shown.

Additional sequences are more certain of being welcome when they advance or amplify the narrative rather than duplicate or expand on information already expressed verbally. There is a clear correspondence here with the Elizabethan stage conventions of prologues, choruses and other framing devices. Olivier's *Henry V* is remarkable for its use of a 'play within a film' structure to facilitate the shifting of the historical events into an aestheticised past, a process which effects a negotiation between the conflicting 'realist' and 'escapist' modes of wartime cinema. Once the Elizabethan playhouse and the London it is set in have been established, the film proceeds for some time by framing the lines from the original play in a 'historical' performance mode, rather than by adding new lines and sequences. In Olivier's epic the ideological dimension of this 'prologue' is strong, but is not explicit. (In what was at the time a powerful contrast to the drab, war-damaged London of 1944, Shakespeare's city is shown as idyllic, and its theatre as ideally democratic, colourful and lively, which seems to confer a particular validity and relevance on the dramatic fare presented there.)³² Branagh, by contrast, focusses on the medium itself by opening 'backstage' in a film studio (in the first drafts of his script this was to be a theatre) before moving to a scene of conspiracy between the two clerics: cinema, he implies, can make

us privy to the secret workings of the state. In other films framing devices direct the audience more explicitly to a point of view from which the ensuing events should be contemplated: Olivier's *Hamlet*, Kurosawa's *Macbeth* version and Welles's *Othello* accomplish this with, respectively, a sequence foreshadowing the final scene and including a legend read by a voice-over (Olivier himself); a chanted chorus as a pillar bearing an inscription is first revealed, then enfolded in mists which clear to reveal the 'spider's web castle' of the film's Japanese title; and an elaborate episode anticipating the conclusion of the film by showing the funerals of Othello and Desdemona, with Iago hanged in his cage.

Films of the history plays might be thought to require even more by way of preparation, not so much in terms of attitude, but rather of information required for comprehension of what is to follow. Thus, Olivier's *Richard III* begins with a rolling title, emblazoned on an illuminated parchment, which indicates that what is to follow is one of the legends attached to the crown – establishing the latter as a recurrent symbol – and then moves into a rearranged and augmented version of the play's opening scene, designed to clarify the allegiances and background of the principal characters. Olivier is following a venerable stage tradition, but it is notable that Welles, having worked for some years on his stage version of the Falstaff material, frames his *Chimes at Midnight* with passages from Holinshed (spoken in voice-over by Ralph Richardson) and at one stage intended to open further back in the story, with sequences depicting the death of Richard II and Bolingbroke's reception of the corpse.³³ Although Branagh decided (at a late stage) to include the Falstaff flashbacks in his *Henry V*, on the grounds that they were essential to an audience's understanding of the film, he decided against a prologue because it would not have been directly useful to the narrative. Included in the original script, this was to have shown a young man (subsequently identified as the king) gazing mournfully out to sea while a voice-over recited lines from *Richard II*: 'For God's sake let us sit upon the ground / And tell sad stories of the death of kings . . .' Branagh felt that it indicated an attitude rather than helping to tell the story.³⁴ Scene- and mood-setting devices in the same director's *Much Ado about Nothing* form a bridge between the messenger's announcement that 'Don Pedro is approached' and the arrival of the prince and his retinue in the villa courtyard: the main titles are superimposed on scenes of frenzied preparations, frankly sexual anticipation and broad comedy. This is effectively a delayed prologue, sanctioned by the filmic custom of pre-title sequences designed to engage attention and launch the story. (The first section, with the words of 'Sigh no more' shown on screen and declaimed by Beatrice perhaps counts as a pre-prologue, so that by the time Don Pedro's entourage approaches we are into what is effectively a third opening sequence.)

Less clearly capable of integration with the rest of the script, but answering a

perceived need for exposition and stage-setting, was the preliminary sequence drafted (but not filmed) for Reinhardt's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which would have shown the war between the Amazons and the Athenians, and Theseus's hand-to-hand combat with his future bride.³⁵ Nunn's *Twelfth Night*, like some theatrical productions of the play, begins with a spectacularly staged storm, but it goes beyond a mere transposition of the two opening scenes, to include evidence of the resemblance between Viola and her brother and also to strike the first note of the recurring theme of sexual confusion. Here, as with Branagh's *Much Ado*, exposition is already moving beyond narrative into interpretation. In Derek Jarman's *Tempest* (1979) a storm at sea (footage shown in a blue filter) is represented as being 'dreamt' by Prospero and Miranda before the dialogue tells us it is also 'real', a device which shows the director's responsiveness to the medium he is adapting from and his imaginative readiness to use film's capability to go beyond it.

In Kozintsev's *Hamlet* the opening title sequence shows a torch against a stone wall as a bell tolls, with Shostakovich's plangent score cutting in as the camera pans left to reveal the sea. This establishes elemental metaphorical material (water, earth, fire) for what is to come. It is followed by a rapid sequence of shots showing the protagonist galloping across landscape on his way to Elsinore, rushing into the courtyard, up a flight of steps and along a corridor to meet Gertrude. This momentum is then arrested by the raising of a castle drawbridge and the slow obliteration of the daylight reflected in the well beneath: Denmark's a prison indeed. One might contrast this in terms of technique (allowing for the self-evident distinction of mood) with the mysterious but clearly momentous movement of the mass of poor people through a bleak landscape that opens the same director's *King Lear*. This has no direct participation in the narrative development of the film: as well as establishing milieu it functions as a prologue, and directs us to consider what follows in a particular light.

These examples are of films adding to the play in order to indicate a point of view, provide background information, establish mood and scene or announce a theme. It is also common for 'showing' to replace rather than supplement 'telling' in doing the narrative work of the play. This is especially noticeable when an important event that occurs off-stage in the play is either a vital plot point (in Branagh's *Much Ado* we are shown Margaret's impersonation of Hero) or because a large-scale event can hardly be expected to take place 'off-screen' or be represented by a few alarms and excursions (the battles in Olivier's *Henry V* and in *Chimes at Midnight* are the most remarkable examples). Not infrequently, however, scenes and sequences of the original may be cut: because the rhythm of the stage play does not accord with the pace thought desirable in a film: for this reason (it appears) Mankiewicz shot but omitted the murder of Cinna the poet

in *Julius Caesar*, and at a late stage Branagh's *Much Ado* lost the equivalent of the scene with the women on the morning of the wedding (Act 3 scene 4). It has been said that for a director there are three films: the film you imagine and script, the one you shoot and the one you edit. At any stage in this process elements may be removed, and during the shooting stage some may even be added. (Generally speaking, one can distinguish between early drafts of a script, the 'shooting script' as used on set during filming and the transcript of the final cut – a 'continuity' script – which may then be used as the basis of a published script.)

The opening and closing sections of the plays seem to be most problematic, and even those adapters who otherwise stick to the structure of the original worry about the ways in which the central business of the play is approached and how it is left. In the opening sequences forceful establishment of the principal characters, indications of milieu and the springboard of the story are essential, and in the last scenes time seems the major problem. Because the screen versions of *Romeo and Juliet* have tended to follow the narrative shape of the original play, their treatment of events after Romeo's banishment offers particularly useful illustrations of what can happen at a point (around Act Four of a five-act text) where some compression is called for without seeming to be merely 'cutting to the chase'. In Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968) the incidents are set out more or less in the order of the play, but with some notable expansions and compressions.

The most remarkable compression in the incidents of the play comes towards the end. After Juliet's visit to the friar's cell and her acquisition of the potion, her return home, submission to her father and preparation for wedding are drastically abbreviated. They become a series of short scenes with minimal dialogue. In a brave – and apparently late – decision by the director to slide over a major plot point, Romeo is not seen obtaining the poison, and it is not identified as such until Juliet remarks 'poison, I see, hath been thy timeless end' on discovering his body.³⁶ In Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996) the corresponding scene with Crusty (the pusher) is more easily accommodated, partly because of a faster-paced, rougher-cut style, partly because the pool-hall and its owner are central to the film's depiction of a subculture. (One might compare the use of the drug-store owner as a friar substitute in *West Side Story*.)

Events in the tomb are simplified by Zeffirelli: Paris does not appear, Romeo sends Benvolio away but does not threaten him, and gains entry by smashing the door with a stone – no mattock and wrenching iron – and there is little sense that the expedition is dangerous. The watchmen are only heard in the distance as Friar Laurence tries to persuade Juliet to leave. (Luhrmann's police pursuit of the banished Montague leaves no doubt that Romeo is in danger.) Milo O'Shea repeating 'I dare not stay' emphasizes his fear and confusion as he exits.

Luhrmann's script allows the friar to stay at Juliet's side: her suicide with the revolver takes him by surprise.³⁷ After the close-up on the lovers' hands Zeffirelli cuts directly to a procession, in pale morning light, in which their bodies are borne across the square towards the church. There is a corresponding cut on the soundtrack, from the crescendo of Nino Rota's 'love' theme from the ball, now become a *Lebestod*, to faintly whistling wind, the flickering torches and the tolling bell. The Prince speaks an abbreviated version of his final speech, with the phrase 'and some punished' repeated and then heard echoing round the square. There are no promises of reconciliation or explanation, but as the end titles roll the Capulets and Montagues mount the steps, acknowledge each other sombrely and walk past the camera, which is now inside the door of the church looking out. The 'chorus' voice (Laurence Olivier) heard at the film's opening appropriates the Prince's last lines as an epilogue.

None of these strategies are unknown in stage productions of the play: during its theatrical career for diverse reasons the play's text has been trimmed and parts of it reshuffled – particularly in the final two acts.³⁸ Within their respective parameters, both Luhrmann and Zeffirelli deal in similar ways with the business to be got through in the grander sequences. Zeffirelli's film is operatic, but in the manner of his own naturalistic opera stagings: it offers what will seem natural settings and behaviour to accompany expansive emotional utterance. Once Romeo is into the cathedral (not a private tomb), Luhrmann stages a scene from the grandest of operas – or perhaps Broadway musicals – ending in an aerial shot of the lovers surrounded by a sea of candles. For Zeffirelli, the play's very last lines can be replaced with an abbreviated version of the Prince's speech. Luhrmann, concluding not with a funeral and reconciliation but with the media absorption of the story, makes a similar selection of the available lines.

One crude but persistent truth about making films out of these Elizabethan plays seems to reassert itself in both films: the ending needs to show, rather than promise, something to the audience. Even in Luhrmann's film, going hence to talk of these sad things will not be enough on its own, and he is able to end with a reminder of the medium (broadcast news) in which events are apprehended nowadays. *Romeo + Juliet* has a stylised sense of actuality and modernity, but it is no less romantic at heart and pictorial in values than Zeffirelli's film – or than Olivier's *Henry V*, for that matter. Perhaps we should remind ourselves of a remark made by Alfred Hitchcock during the debate arising from the new sound films of Shakespeare's plays in the mid-1930s: 'The cinema . . . has seen stage directions in Shakespeare's poetry where decades of theatrical craftsmen have seen only words.'³⁹ For the good of the cinema, Shakespeare films have to end – as well as begin – in shows.

NOTES

- 1 Geoffrey O'Brien, 'The Ghost at the Feast', in George Plimpton, ed., *The Best American Movie Writing* (New York, 1998), pp. 199-213; p. 202. The essay first appeared in the *New York Review of Books* on 2 February 1997.
- 2 For an account of film history emphasising 'continuity editing', see David Bardwell, *On the History of Film Style* (Cambridge, MA, 1997) and David Bardwell, Janet Staiger and Kristine Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema. Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (London, 1985).
- 3 See Michael Anderegg, *Orson Welles, Shakespeare and Popular Culture* (New York, 1999). André Bazin suggested that 'As in the films of Orson Welles and in spite of conflicts of style, neorealism tends to give back to the cinema a sense of the ambiguity of reality' (André Bazin, *What is Cinema?* selected and translated by Hugh Gray, 2 vols. (Berkeley, CA, 1967), vol. 1, p. 37).
- 4 On alternatives to the (then) 'canonical' Shakespeare films, see Graham Holderness, 'Shakespeare Rewound', *Shakespeare Survey*, 45: 'Hamlet' and its Afterlife (1982), 63-74.
- 5 Peter Greenaway, interviewed in Brian McFarlane, ed., *An Autobiography of British Cinema* (London, 1997), p. 241.
- 6 See Ann Thompson, 'Kurosawa's *Ran*: Reception and Interpretation', *East-West Film Journal*, 3/2 (June 1989), 1-13, and also Robert Hapgood's essay in Anthony Davies and Stanley Wells, eds., *Shakespeare and the Moving Image. The Plays on Film and Television* (Cambridge, 1994).
- 7 Syd Field, *The Screenwriter's Problem Solver* (New York, 1998), pp. 56, 78.
- 8 A systematic analysis of Welles's treatment of the text is provided by François Thomas, 'Orson Welles et le remodellage du texte Shakespearien', in Patricia Dorval, ed., *Shakespeare et le Cinéma* (Paris, 1998), pp. 171-82.
- 9 Interview in the *Neues Wiener Journal* (28 July 1955): reprinted in Edda Fuhrich and Gisela Prossnitz, eds., *Max Reinhardt. Die Träume des Magiers* (Vienna, 1993), p. 175. A similar point was made by Allardyce Nicoll in a response to Reinhardt's film: see Charles Eckert, *Focus on Shakespeare on Film* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1972), pp. 43-7; p. 46.
- 10 Michéal Macliammóir, *Put Money in Thy Purse. The Making of Orson Welles's Othello* (London, 1952), pp. 96-7.
- 11 On the *Méliès/Lumière* or *fantasy/reality* dichotomy in the historiography of film, see Neil Forsyth, chapter 16 below.
- 12 On the relationship between the early cinema and the pictorial stage, see Ben Brewster and Lea Jacobs, *Theatre and Cinema: Stage Pictorialism and the Early Feature Film* (New York, 1997). The pioneering study by Nicholas Vardac, *From Stage to Screen* (New York, 1949; repr. 1968), remains stimulating and informative.
- 13 On developments in Shakespearean staging see J. L. Styan, *The Shakespeare Revolution* (Cambridge, 1977) and Dennis Kennedy, *Looking at Shakespeare* (Cambridge, 1996). On other consequences of the advent of sound, see Barbara Freedman, chapter 3 below.
- 14 'Romeo and Juliet'... *A Motion Picture Edition... Arranged for the Screen by Talbot Jennings* (New York, 1936), pp. 13, 20.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

- 16 Graham Greene, *The Pleasure Dome. Collected Film Criticism, 1935-40*, ed. John Russell Taylor (Oxford, 1980), p. 111.
- 17 Alfred Hitchcock, *The Listener* (10 March 1937). Granville Barker's article appeared on 3 March.
- 18 On Olivier's *Henry V* and its connotations as an 'art' film, see Dudley Andrew, *Film in the Aura of Art* (Princeton, NJ, 1984), chapter 8: 'Realism, Rhetoric and the Painting of History in *Henry V*'.
- 19 Pauline Kael, *The New Republic* (24 June 1967): quoted in Bridget Gellert Lyons, ed., *Chimes at Midnight* (New Brunswick, NJ, and London, 1988), pp. 298-300; p. 298.
- 20 *The Listener* (6 February 1969); *Observer* (2 February 1969).
- 21 Peter Brook, *The Shifting Point: Forty Years of Theatrical Experience, 1946-1987* (London, 1988), p. 191. Brook was speaking at a conference in 1977.
- 22 Sergei Yutkevitch, 'The Conscience of the King', *Sight and Sound* (October 1971), 192-6; p. 194. (Translation from an article in *Isskusivo Kino*.)
- 23 Reprinted in Kenneth Tynan, *Tynan Right and Left* (London, 1967) pp. 208-9; p. 208.
- 24 J. Blumenthal, 'Macbeth into *Throne of Blood*', *Sight and Sound*, 34/4 (Autumn 1965), 190-5; p. 191.
- 25 Donald Richie, *The Films of Akira Kurosawa* (3rd edn, Berkeley, CA, 1996) p. 123. See also the interview with the director in Roger Manvell's *Shakespeare and the Film* (1971; revised edn, London, 1979), p. 104.
- 26 *New Yorker* (5 February 1972).
- 27 André Bazin, *What is Cinema?* vol. 1, p. 105. See also chapter 1, 'Cinematic and Theatrical Space', in Anthony Davies, *Filming Shakespeare's Plays* (Cambridge, 1988).
- 28 I am indebted to Peter Holland for this important point in relation to the plays' stagecraft and the audiences of the different media. On the overhearing scenes in comedies, particularly Branagh's *Much Ado* and Nunn's *Twelfth Night*, see Michael Hattaway, chapter 5 below.
- 29 Frank Kermode, 'Shakespeare in the Movies', *New York Review of Books* (4 May 1972), 18-21; p. 21.
- 30 Robert Cowie, *The Cinema of Orson Welles* (London, 1965) pp. 104-5. See also Bazin's remark, quoted in note 3 above.
- 31 For a detailed discussion of these additions, see David Kennedy Sauer, 'Suiting the Word to the Action.' Kenneth Branagh's Interpolations in *Hamlet*', in Holger Klein and Dimitri Daphinoff, eds., *Hamlet on Screen, Shakespeare Yearbook*, vol. VIII (Lampeter, 1997), pp. 349-69.
- 32 See my 'Two Films of *Henry V*: Frames and Stories' in François Laroque, ed., *Astrea, No 4: The Show Within... Proceedings of the International Conference held in Montpellier... 1990* (Paris, 1991), pp. 181-98.
- 33 Lyons, ed., *Chimes at Midnight*, p. 269: the information is in an interview with Keith Baxter, who played Hal.
- 34 The sequence was included in the script used for the first read-through, but was never filmed (personal information from Kenneth Branagh and David Patfit).
- 35 I have discussed the 'missing' scenes in the 1935 *Dream* in 'A Shooting Script for the Reinhardt-Dietel *Dream*', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 16/4 (Fall 1998) 39-41.
- 36 It seems that the apothecary scene was shot but not used: the decision might well have been made to maintain momentum as well as save screen time. As the director had

made a similar cut in his 1961 stage version, he may well have shot the scene knowing it might be removed later. See Jill L. Levenson, *Shakespeare in Performance: Romeo and Juliet* (Manchester, 1987), chapter 5.

37 Craig Pearce and Baz Luhrmann, *William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* (London, 1997), p. 160.

38 On the theatrical fortunes of the play, see Levenson, *Romeo and Juliet*, chapter 2 ('Early Revivals') and 3 (on Brook's 1947 production); and Patricia Tattspaug, chapter 8 below.

39 *The Listener* (10 March 1937).

MICHÈLE WILLEMS

Video and its paradoxes

The videotape, whether it represents a Shakespeare film, a made-for-television production or a transfer of a theatrical version, has become the means by which most academics and students study a Shakespeare play. To anyone interested in performances of *Hamlet* for instance, the RSC shops and catalogues now offer, alongside the expected videos of Olivier's, Zeffirelli's or Branagh's films, videotapes of live stage performances, from Tony Richardson's 1969 production of the play with Nicol Williamson, to John Gielgud's 1964 New York *mise-en-scène* with Richard Burton.¹ (A film of this had been shot at the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre to be shown at a few cinemas across the USA; it was restored in 1995 'for domestic and home viewing'.) No catalogue of available videos of the play includes a version actually designed for the small screen, since none of the BBC titles are currently licensed for home video distribution, but the would-be viewer can always fall back on the half-hour long cartoons provided by *The Animated Tales*, a very successful series of videos (complete with study guides), geared to the needs of teenagers confronted with a Shakespeare play on their exam syllabus. This series, which recalls Charles and Mary Lamb's similar enterprise of popularisation of Shakespeare's *Tales* for a public of readers, has so far been translated into thirty-seven languages.²

Even such a rapid survey is sufficient to indicate that Shakespeare multimedia is alive and well. Thanks largely to the vogue of new technologies and of video recordings, it is gradually taking over a good part of the Shakespeare industry, which now rests upon a very active educational market. Back in the 1980s, the production of a complete televised Shakespeare by the BBC was already motivated (and financially supported) by the possibility of providing video-libraries of the Shakespeare canon to universities (particularly in America) supposedly deprived of the real thing in the theatre. The 10 May 1986 issue of the *Times Literary Supplement* greeted the completion of the most ambitious project of its kind with the headline: 'The Canon in the Can'. The tapes of the first series were sold, mainly to institutions, at the high price of £300-£400 for each play, and were distributed for broadcast in forty-two countries. In non-anglophone countries