TESIS DOCTORAL
2016-2017


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PROGRAMA DE DOCTORADO EN FILOLOGÍA. ESTUDIOS LINGÜÍSTICOS Y LITERARIOS: TEORÍA Y APLICACIONES
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank John Wyver, whose contribution to the development of TV theatre has been the main inspiration for this doctoral dissertation. His generosity has been outstanding for having granted me two interviews where many clarifications and useful answers were offered to carry out this research.

My heartiest acknowledgements belong to Dr. Marta Cerezo Moreno for her great supervising task, enthusiasm, optimism and energy; for her rigor at correction together with all the methodological and theoretical suggestions she has been making over these last three years.

My acknowledgements should be extended to the teachers at the English Studies Department and other Humanities Departments at the UNED. Over a series of seminars, I have had the chance to meet some of them and their advice and contributions have been highly beneficial for my work.

Also, I need to thank my partner Olga Escobar Feito for her unconditional support, for her kind words, her frequent smiles and her infinite patience over three years of coexistence with a frequently absent-minded PhD student buried in books and paper.

It only remains to dedicate this work to my family, friends, colleagues and students.

February 17, 2017
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0. INTRODUCTION
0.1. Research Statement

The main goal of this PhD dissertation is the analysis of the innovative stage-to-screen hybridity elements in four Shakespeare television films produced by John Wyver and the production company Illuminations Media.1 These films were directed by Gregory Doran, resident director of the Royal Shakespeare Company – henceforth, RSC –, and Rupert Goold, current director of the Almeida Theatre in London. Both directors had previously run these productions with the texts nearly uncut on the stage and, afterwards, were invited to take charge of the television film versions too. Thus, Doran directed Macbeth (2001), Hamlet (2009) and Julius Caesar (2012) for both the stage and the television screen.2 As for Goold, he transposed his celebrated 2007 production of Macbeth to film in 2010.3 The performances were translated to television with the financial support of British Broadcast Corporation – from now on, BBC – and were also transmitted by Public Broadcasting Service – henceforth, PBS – over the first two decades of the current century. These transcoding operations produce what I will be calling ‘hybrid television Shakespeare films,’ which will be the main object of my research.4

The relations of collision and slippage between film and theatre languages in television constitute the main point of interest for the viewer in Doran’s Macbeth (2001), Hamlet (2009) and Julius Caesar (2012), as well as in Goold’s Macbeth (2010). To qualify my statement, I am borrowing Jeremy Lopez’s notion that Shakespeare’s texts were addressed to audiences that were ready to be cognitively challenged. As Lopez demonstrates, meta-theatricality, puns, metaphors, hyperboles, deviating narratives and textual constructions were the very source of pleasure for the Elizabethans. Research has easily dismantled the idea that part of the text was dedicated to high audiences and nasty sexual jokes were necessarily only addressed to popular audiences. What Lopez proposes is that dramatists in Shakespeare’s times took for granted that the audiences, regardless of their social class, were globally ready to attend the playhouses to see their horizons of expectations modified and challenged by creative reformulations of dramatic genre, meta-theatricality, energetic and vital language, together with many other theatrical techniques that constituted the writer’s craft at that period (2003).

1Illuminations Media is a producing company dedicated to the creation and distribution of several types of media that are related to performance and the arts. See http://www.illuminationsmedia.co.uk.
2 Except Hamlet, the texts have remained largely uncut.
3 These are the transmission dates for the four films, which do not coincide with the performance dates.
4 I am borrowing the term ‘transcoding’ from Michèle Willems. She takes this term from the field of linguistics and applies it to the study of Television Shakespeare (see Jean-Pierre Marquelot 2008: 33).
How does that apply to the purposes of this dissertation? My contention here is that, consciously or not, Wyver’s hybrid productions engage in a similar procedure to the one described by Lopez, since the audiences of his films are also demanded and, hopefully, ready to conjugate different languages and modes within the same television film narrative. Such demands are grounded in Wyver’s approach to hybridity.

Following Michael Bakhtin’s definition of hybridity, this notion refers to ‘the mixing, within a single concrete utterance, of two or more different linguistic consciousnesses, often widely separated in time and social space’ (2014: 429). Thus, the viewers need to connect these discourses that ‘cannot be isolated by formal grammatical means, by quotation marks’ (ibid). Although I intend to apply Bakhtin’s ideas to this study, my analyses will show that, although the degrees of convergence and divergence between film and theatre in Wyver’s productions vary, these filmic and theatrical discourses remain sufficiently differentiated so we can still appreciate them. In fact, as I intend to prove, this difference is something pursued, clarified and underlined rather than avoided.

Acknowledging the relations of difference between the various recording modes and film genres used in the films requires that we define where theatre and film truly differ. For Noël Carroll, the only undeniable differences between theatre and film are that:

The theatre performance is generated by an interpretation, whereas the performance of the motion picture is generated by a template; and, the performance of a play is an artwork in its own right and an object of aesthetic evaluation, whereas the performance of the motion picture is neither (1995: 81).

Beyond these abstract and questionable considerations, technically speaking, there is nothing possible for theatre which cinema cannot do and vice versa. The British scholar and ex-practitioner Martin Esslin, even though he recognizes the differences between film and theatre, he advocates for foregrounding some of the ‘identical areas of theory and practice’ in both disciplines, the boundaries of which should be treated as ‘fluid’ rather than ‘narrow’ and ‘normative’ (1994: 10, 23). Also, the works of Hugo Münsterberg (1916), Nicholas Vardac (1949), Béla Bálaázs (1952) and André Bazin (2005) establish many lines of convergence between film and theatre. Likewise, in the early days of cinema, theatre artists such as Sergei Eisenstein, Erwin Piscator, Hermann Schüler or Bertolt Brecht embraced the social and didactic impact of the emerging medium of film as a potential aid for their stage work.5

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In fact over the twentieth century, it has been almost the norm that theatre performances employ cinematographic aids as part of the spectacle.

Despite the difficulty to discern the differences between the two languages of film and theatre, the fact is that such differences do exist. Whereas Carroll demonstrates that there are counter-examples to any crystal clear film-theatre divisions, Wyver’s films foreground the idea that film and theatre are, to a great extent, conventionally accepted and differentiated categories. What is true is that the recognition of the differences between film and theatre is never absolute but rhizomatic – borrowing Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze’s term ‘rhizome’ (2016) – as the two languages are decentred and interconnected by discursive lines and confluence spaces. Wyver’s works emphasize the importance of the different lines which connect these two codes together with all sorts of intermediate recording stages.

The intertextual power of Wyver’s films is, in their gradual and rhizomatic transitions between one code and another, different from the sheer experimentalism and the fierce challenge to mainstream conventions presented by the New Wave Shakespeare films which, as Thomas Cartelli and Katherine Rowe affirm, get beyond ‘the Branagh Era’ and beyond BBC and follow much more allusive, vernacular, allegorical, visually complex, self-reflexive and Shakespeare-eccentric approaches than traditional stage-to-screen productions do (2006). Although most of the resources presented by the New Wave are shared by Wyver’s films, the latter can be still regarded as British TV reworkings of stage productions. The productions we are dealing with can be said to be, like Kenneth Branagh’s Shakespeare films, to some extent, backdating productions that, at first sight, follow the tradition started with Peter Dewes’ An Age of Kings (1960), the BBC Shakespeare Series (1978-1985) or the recordings carried out by the RSC inasmuch as they are consistently rooted in the political and ideological infrastructure of British TV theatre. However, in my view, Wyver’s films clearly differ from Branagh’s or the New Wave films in their own specificity as they clearly announce their theatrical origins. Also, we need to add that these films constitute text-based television products that reconceive previous stage performances in visual terms with nearly uncut Shakespeare texts that seem to work more in line with

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6 In Appendix B, the reader will find a comparative chart featuring the differences between Renaissance drama, British TV and film. I have devised this table following John Ellis (1992), Anthony Davies (1988), John Caughie (2000), Caughie (2000a), and Tanja Weiss (2000). Also, the reader will find in section 2.1 a series of charts that account for the recognized recording modes for Shakespeare on the big and the small screens.

7 One of the future lines of research I intend to pursue is precisely the study of these productions in relation to the larger work produced by New Wave directors, BBC vernacular adaptations of Shakespeare plays, such as Shakespeare Retold, as well as Live Cinema productions – where Wyver is involved as an independent producer – within the field of Shakespeare and Popular Culture Studies.
the attention to character construction, textual delivery and psychological detail that has characterized British classical and Renaissance acting for the last decades.

Therefore, as I want to insist upon, Wyver’s productions attempt to hide neither their theatrical nor their textual origins, and clearly challenge Troy Kennedy Martin’s contention against televised theatre in “Nats Go Home,” which we will go back to in Chapter One. The truth is that these films, as current serializations and live broadcasts do, have taken the task of finding a language which helps displaying Shakespeare’s text on the small screen seriously and pleasurably. Yet, Wyver’s performances are not mere archive recordings or ‘photographed stage plays.’ Rather than having a stage production simply recorded as a ‘straightforward’ archive filming, these films are ‘theatrical productions radically reworked for television’ (Michael Hattaway 2008: 91). Let us, however, insist that Wyver’s films are not so much films as confluence spaces for conventions associated to the media of film and theatre.

Doubtless, a series of precedents exist for this type of recording. Jane Howell’s *First Henriad* for the BBC Shakespeare Series acknowledges the struggle between theatre and film languages in television. For the BBC Series, categories such as ‘stylization vs realism, pictorialism vs symbolism, presentation vs representation, referential vs emblematic’ were employed to define the traces of the productions (Marquelot 2008: 33). Film productions like Laurence Olivier’s *Henry V* (1945), Tony Richardson’s *Hamlet* (1969), Peter Greenaway’s *Prospero’s Books* (1991) or Derek Jarman’s version of Christopher Marlowe’s *Edward II* (1991) revel in the abstract and symbolic resources offered by theatre and avant-garde performance within the film frame. Likewise, the RSC has been prolific in the

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8 Broadly speaking, the ‘photographed stage-play’ refers to the recording of a theatre production without attempting to employ filmic techniques. At its best, the photographed stage-play constitutes a transparent archive recording worth for scholars, for theatre historians, and, before the 1960s, for most of British television audiences. At worst, it constitutes a rather tedious and excessively demanding recording which does not reconceive the performance in audiovisual terms. Jason Jacobs compares the ‘photographed stage-play’ of the Reithian system with Sydney Newman’s more filmic and liberated television plays of the 1960s. Whereas the former recordings were static and detached, the latter embraced montage, Brechtian collision, voice-over and an array of filmic resources. However, we should be careful with dismissing the photographed stage play. Jacobs’ work is enormously valuable as it challenges misconceptions on the static nature of Early Television Drama and its staginess. Following this revisionist premise, he argues that the process through which television drama became more cinematic was not an overnight one but the product of a long period of experimentation and it attempted to improve the technological possibilities to represent theatre plays on television (2000).


10 As Martin Esslin suggests, filmed drama requires a degree of realism that resembles the quality of the photographic image. Per contra, stage sets rely on higher or lower levels of abstraction ranging from Meyerhold’s bio-mechanic totally abstract signs to icons – which suggest selected features of reality – or formalized abstractions which gradually turn into ideograms, hieroglyphs or conventional symbols (1994: 74).
recording of their productions for the TV screen. For instance, Trevor Nunn’s musical version of *The Comedy of Errors* (1978) explored the potentialities of TV live shows by including audience members responding to the play. In addition, the RSC Live, Shakespeare’s Globe Live and National Theatre Live have allowed large audiences experience prestigious performance across the world in what seems to be a democratic turn in the access to big performances for wide audiences thanks to the clever and agile use of live recording technology.¹¹ In some ways, Wyver’s films dialogue with these live performances as some elements from live recording are borrowed by Doran in *Julius Caesar*.

If Wyver’s films can be encompassed within an entrenched British TV and film tradition, in what sense is his style, as already said, innovative? The interest in Wyver’s films lies in the fact that, as we will see, they truly make demands on the audience and appeal to their filmic horizons of expectations – controversial as this notion is – as they are constantly challenged and inflected with several filmic modes and recording techniques while keeping most of the text uncut. Contrarily to the New Wave Shakespeare, Wyver’s films are Shakespeare-centric in their reverence to the text and textual delivery. In some ways, Wyver’s productions built bridges between the New Wave experimentalism, traditional BBC Shakespeare recordings, Branagh’s and other directors’ Shakespeare work as well as live cinema performance. However, as this dissertation intends to show, Doran and Goold’s productions employ different film frames to articulate the televisual narrative. We will see how cinématé vérité, horror film, war film, live cinema, action film, studio recording, meta-filmic devices, and surveillance film devices are used by Doran and Goold to situate Shakespeare’s text in line with the audiences’ filmic and televisual experience.¹² At the same time, as in most traditional television Shakespeare productions, the creators of the films at stake take a firm position in retaining Shakespeare’s text. Therefore, this dissertation regards Wyver’s filmic hybridity as a dialogical field in which popular culture dialogues

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¹¹ ‘Democratic’ means that, at present, a citizen in Madrid or in Santander, whenever given the chance, can see Benedict Cumberbatch’s *Hamlet* or Tom Hiddleston’s *Coriolanus* live at a local film theatre. Yet, the distribution of such performances is still quite scarce in comparison to mainstream film, which predominates in film theatres. Olwen Terris accounts for the many recordings carried by RSC and Shakespeare’s Globe, although the levels of quality vary (2009: 200).

¹² In her brilliant chapter “The Frame’s the Thing (Franco Zeffirelli’s *Hamlet*),” (2000) Howlett tackles how Zeffirelli employs the frame of the American western myth to re-tell *Hamlet* by using the First Quarto edition. The director focuses on the archetypical aspects of the play and connects them to the ancient Homeric epic and mythic symbolism, both of which highlight Mel Gibson’s masculine star persona as well as the contrasts between the wilderness and the rustic freedom of the outside world and the shallow court of Elsinore. This world is opposed to the turbulent space occupied by Gertrude, who becomes the coveted saloon girl and around whom the interactional ‘duel’ between Claudius and Hamlet in the play script is articulated (2000). Following suit with this notion, Wyver’s works are particularly aware of the film frame used to record the productions. This principle is much more recognizable in Branagh’s films or in Goold’s film, which makes use of a vast cinematic repertoire.
and negotiates with the aura of excellence that surrounds the BBC’s and the RSC’s public commitment to Shakespeare and literary heritage.

### 0.2. Dissertation Objectives

Now let us break this contention down into a series of more specific objectives with which I expect to support my research statement. Firstly, I will try to elaborate a methodological apparatus to analyze hybrid television Shakespeare film by way of borrowing concepts from the fields of reception theory, audience reception, intertextuality, film genre theory, popular culture and convergence culture. This theoretical corpus will be employed to look into the specific manifestations of hybridity in the different films. The purpose of using concepts from so many different disciplines responds to the need to situate three variables. Firstly, I have intended to situate the mechanisms of reception of the films. Secondly, I have paid attention to the concepts that revitalize the texts by turning them into filmic interweaving networks. Thirdly, given the fact that Wyver positions himself, as we will see, within the so-called ‘culture of excellence,’ I have considered necessary to assess to what extent hybrid television Shakespeare films are situated in relation to the paradigms of high culture and popular culture.

A second objective will be the analysis of the many processes through which the languages of film and theatre coexist within Doran’s and Goold’s respective filmic frames. Considering that the authors’ self-proclaimed intentions were, from the very beginning, to maintain the ‘essence’ of the stage production – see Impact Study Case cited in section 1.2.2 –, I will not be so much interested in whether this intention is accomplished as in the multiple discursive strands that are developed through the filming and what sort of interaction is facilitated through the relationship of difference, the collision and the slippage between the languages of film and theatre.

In the third place, I will be paying attention to how theatre is enhanced by hybridity. One of the main prolegomena in this thesis is related to the apparent divergences between theatre and film. Even considering that there are enough differences to distinguish the two media, I intend to analyze how the television film frame explores the theatrical qualities of the playtexts in ways different from live performances.

Taking premises connected to interactivity and participatory culture into account, a fourth objective to pursue will be the examination of the extent to which hybrid television Shakespeare films can work as an over-arching logic rather than as closed formula. Although I have been insisting on the fact that the films are all recorded under different premises, there are still some repeated patterns in all of them – see section 1.5 –. My intention here is to discuss whether these categories of theatre, television
and film can be expanded beyond television to other platforms. If hybridity in these films is, in part, an intertextual network, it is my intention to explore how far this network can be studied as centrifugal manifestations of transmedia storytelling and convergence culture.13

0.3. Dissertation Overview

The first chapter of the present dissertation will deal with the state of the art. I will be explaining how theatre has been regarded as a poor brother to filmic language in British television since a strong anti-theatre reaction took place over the 1960s with Troy Kennedy Martin’s paper. In this section, I will be defining the scope of the discussion that differentiates the theatrical experience from the filmic experience. I will be emphasizing Wyver’s position in favor of finding new and innovative ways of recording theatre on the small screen. This section will be concluded with the definition of ‘hybridity,’ the key concept of this dissertation. I will be presenting the different definitions provided by the scholarship, paying attention to the scope of the term in the context that affects these four productions. Finally, I will be providing my own definition for the concept ‘hybrid television Shakespeare film,’ which, in some ways, can be regarded as an invention by Illuminations Media.

The second chapter will tackle what Wyver’s contributions to hybrid television Shakespeare film have been. To do this, I will examine his television credentials and the work carried out by Illuminations Media. Specifically, I will focus on how hybridity works at a practical level and, also, I will pay attention to the relationship between Wyver and recorded performance. Additionally, I will acquaint the reader with basic facts about Doran’s and Goold’s artistic trajectories as theatre and film directors. However, I will particularly focus on their relationship to Shakespeare and to Wyver’s productions.

In the third chapter I will deal with the theoretical framework regarding film and television theory, reception theory, intertextuality, and film genre that will be needed to carry out the explorations on hybridity within the different works. What I intend to do is to make use of theoretical contributions which help me support the notion that hybridity constitutes a polyphonic and dialogical way of presenting Shakespeare on the television frame. Because of the necessary relationship between the films and the specific cultural issues around the productions themselves, it will be also necessary to take the theoretical works written by those scholars who have contributed to develop the varied corpus of works on cultural studies into account too.

13 Whereas the previous three objectives are fully developed in all the chapters, this aim will only be carried out in Chapter Nine.
The fourth chapter tackles Doran’s *Macbeth*. In this chapter I will contend that the translation from a stage production to a hybrid television film problematizes the theatrical origins of the piece. Again, as I will be recalling, although Wyver’s self-proclaimed intention may be maintaining the ‘essence’ of the original production, the film will be renouncing its theatricality to preserve it. Relying on Jean Baudrillard’s work, I will be arguing that the theatricality in the film is enhanced while distilled into filmic language. The film attempts to build up a sense of unexpectedness and unpredictability that is intrinsically connected to the hybrid use of cinéma vérité. This type of filming interacts and produces meanings in collision with the theatrical language of the play.

The fifth chapter deals with Doran’s *Hamlet* and self-reflexivity. Hybridity in Doran’s film is manifested through the clear combination of studio drama and the use of meta-filmic devices. To carefully examine how Hamlet deals with different narrative languages, I will be supporting my analysis with Julia Kristeva’s psychoanalytic approaches to language theory. These psychoanalytical concepts will be in dialogue with the theoretical contributions made by theatre practicians like Declan Donnellan (2005) and Konstantin Stanislavski (2016). The basis for such association will be the acknowledgement that acting skills as well as human languages are intrinsically connected to the actor’s social circumstances. Thus, social interaction and linguistic skills are mutually dependent variables. To fight his anxieties at the Danish state, Hamlet will be trying out the languages of drama and film as mechanisms to discover what the truths hidden in this surveillance-based regime are.

The next three chapters will focus on Goold’s *Macbeth*. Only one year after Doran filmed *Hamlet* for Channel Four, Goold, who had been truly interested in the development of this film, was offered the chance to direct *Macbeth* on the television screen. The differences between this film and the previous two mainly lies in the budget, the timing for filming – which was consistently higher in Goold’s case – and the fact that, arguably, Goold embraces a much more filmic style than Doran does, although neither of them ever wants to dissimulate the stage origins of the productions. Goold’s higher inclination to filmic intertexts has led to his film being more cinematically dense and iconographically charged in terms of film genre than Doran’s films have. In this respect, considering that Goold’s film is much denser in film genericity, I decided that Goold’s approach to hybridity was well worth exploring through three different chapters paying attention to how different filmic statements are made on this piece of recorded theatre. Such statements have been made with the combination of different film genres together with larger intertextual references. These intertexts collide with the theatricality of the location chosen for the film.
In the sixth chapter I will analyze Goold’s *Macbeth* as a katabatic narrative. This chronotope will be examined particularly in how it integrates several different film genres and how it inflects the different modes available to the filmmaker. In this respect, I will try to examine how the framing of the film as a katabatic narrative provides the chance to create a multi-layered interpretation by borrowing devices from slasher horror and J-horror films.

The seventh chapter deals with the intertexts related to gangster and war films employed as mythical artifacts in Goold’s *Macbeth*. The director uses references from films made in the 1970s that bring about a component of nostalgia. At the same time, these signifiers energize the social relationships between the characters and they also deal with the values embodied by the military community in a postmodern pseudo-Soviet filmscape. As I want to approach this film production in its mythical capacity, I intend to focus on how film genres interact with Kott’s Grand Mechanism theory and how such theory seems particularly articulated in visual terms thanks to its interaction with a plethora of film genre speeches. A major feature of this analysis will be how these film genres affect the theatrical values in Goold’s work.¹⁴

Chapter Eight deals with Goold’s re-conception of *Macbeth* as a surveillance film. Relying on Michael Foucault’s and Gilles Deleuze’s work in association with the theoretical contributions of Cultural Materialism and New Historicism, I will explore the power relations in this surveillance film. Also, I will analyze how the surveillance film conventions deployed by Goold turn the film into a meta-filmic event that allows the viewer to perceive surveillance not just as part of the subject matter but as inseparable from the narrative structure. Eventually, this will serve to study how the ultimate subversion produced by surveillance in the film helps us to understand how the narrative presents the evolution of the filmscape from being a society ruled by surveillance to progressively give way to a society of control. Clearly, this metafilmic discourse will be in contention with the theatrical basic composition of the original production.

The last chapter will tackle Doran’s *Julius Caesar*. I will try to analyze how far hybridity extends itself beyond the television screen toward other modes of transmedia and convergence culture. I will analyze the different languages employed in the film as well as several epitexts associated to the filmic text. Amongst these, I will pay attention to the different ways in which the theatrical mode and the filmic mode work in the film. After this, I will analyze a spin-off from this production. Finally, other texts, that pay attention to audience participation will be examined too. The starting point for this way of

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¹⁴ As I will be remarking, in this dissertation ‘genre speeches’ and ‘film genres’ are, at least partly, taken as synonyms.
analyzing hybridity is Wyver’s suggestion that, in *Julius Caesar*, Shakespeare was treating the fictional audience at the Roman forum and the real audience at the stage as one. Following this premise, my intention is to explore how this breaking of the fourth wall moves outside the television frame.

After pertinent conclusions are drawn on the effects of hybridity on the television context and the intersections produced because of the clashes and slippage between different recording modes, it will be possible to access the resources consulted. The section will be divided between books, chapters and articles, films and television programmes and websites. To continue, a series of appendices follow which feature additional material that may be of the reader’s interest to explore some of the key documents essential to establish the general context and theoretical premises upon which the dissertation lies.

Firstly, as mentioned above, Appendix A consists of a brief history of Shakespeare on British television. Of interest in this section will be the study of how different producers, creators and directors have tried to harmonize stage recordings – or, sometimes, the mere text of the plays – and the language of the small screen. This section may not be interesting for the readers who are well acquainted with the history of British television drama in general or with Shakespeare on British television. Nevertheless, should the reader be unacquainted with this area of knowledge, this brief journey through British television Shakespeare may be illustrative to get a general view of the forest of British television theatre rather than of four individual trees represented by these four films. Nevertheless, notice that this historical revision cannot nor does it intend to be definitive. Ultimately, each televisual Shakespeare production deserves specific attention and thorough understanding within its specific production circumstances.

To continue, as also already mentioned, Appendix B consists of a comparative table where the features of British television drama, Elizabethan drama and mainstream film are displayed. This table has helped me to organize the parameters of analysis necessary for the dissertation. Two Appendices – C and D – follow where I am transcribing two interviews held with Wyver in February 2015 and June 2016 respectively.

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15 See section 9.1.
1. STATE OF THE ART
1.1. Theatre on the Small Screen

To understand the origins of Wyver’s innovative style, let us briefly point at Deborah Warner’s production of Henrik Ibsen’s *Hedda Gabler*. This studio television play was recorded by BBC in 1993 and was based on Warner’s stage production of the play at the Abbey Theatre. Despite Ibsen’s apparent suitability for the small screen, Warner was unhappy with the end results (Wyver 2016). Why would a stage director not rejoice at seeing her production re-conceived for the small screen?

For many scholars and critics, the answer to Warner’s problem could be summarized in one sentence: the experience at the theatre cannot be recovered on the screen. From this undeniable fact, it follows that filmed theatre has been, as Wyver confirms, largely stigmatized (2014: 117). In fact, some experts have pinpointed at the clear difficulty to translate an Elizabethan play to the television medium. In this regard, Susan Willis (1991: 79) and Anthony Davies (1998: 5) point at the general suspicion that Shakespeare’s texts, as theatre in general, do not fit the small screen. More specifically speaking about iconic Shakespeare television productions, Michèle Willems’ analysis of the difficulties in transcoding Shakespeare’s texts to television in the *BBC Shakespeare Series* demonstrates that Shakespeare’s texts by themselves are inadequate in televisual terms (1994: 83).  

Hattaway excellently clarifies this point:

> Television may be best at giving us “talking heads”, a prime index of individuality, but Shakespeare wrote speeches that not only reveal the inwardness of his characters as they speak for themselves, but also fulfill a choric or diegetic function, as actors, no longer simply “themselves”, speak “for the play.” (2008: 91)

Apart from this, it is doubtless, as several scholars prove, that the playhouse experience was more participative and less comfortable than the televisual or filmic experiences or even than the contemporary theatrical experience (Andrew Gurr 1992; James C. Bulman 1996; Gurr and Mariko Ichikawa 2004). So far, we can claim that filming Shakespeare on the small screen is a dialogical process that acknowledges the contradictory natures of theatre and television. What I find questionable is the

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16 Viewing the extra features of most DVD editions of televisual Shakespeare adaptations the ‘universal truth’ that Shakespeare is – instead of ‘would be’ or ‘would have been’ – an excellent television writer has been widespread too. This idea has been repeated by Patrick Stewart in the *Extra Features of Macbeth* (2010), Doran in the “Making-Off” of *Hamlet* (2009), and it has also been reinforced in the Extra Features of the last BBC television production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (2016), directed by David T. Russell. As experience demonstrates, ‘universal truths’ show a strong tendency to go wrong. This last film demonstrates that if we consider that much of the playtext has been cut, although the spectacular Disney-like film quality of the recording mixed up with its gender-based statements makes it a potentially complex palimpsest of popular fantasy with an LGTB celebration. All these production values are, undoubtedly, brilliant in their strong search for contemporary relevance. However, setting these many production merits aside, as most of the text is entirely cut, the film does very little to demonstrate that Shakespeare is a television scriptwriter.
essentialism that confines Shakespeare’s theatre to the theatre stage only. If we approach theatre on television as self-reflexive, is drama the only legitimate medium to comment on drama? As Carroll affirms, ‘this is clearly false’ (1995: 75). However, the view that theatre can only happen in the theatre is widespread. Regarding this, Sarah Hemmings says in the *Financial Times*:

Isn’t the essence of an excellent theatre show that it is live – that there is a rapport between actors and audience that cannot be achieved through a screen? Can filmed versions or live screenings of stage productions ever match up to the experience of *being there*? (My emphasis). (Quoted in Wyver 2012)\(^{17}\)

In both cases, I would choose being bold and answering that we can talk about different types of recording, different types of performance and different degrees of proximity with the audience. For a start, ‘being there’ does not guarantee that the experience at the theatre will be more pleasant than viewing a film. Musical theatre on film, recorded theatre, live concerts, television theatre and a large number of audiovisual theatre manifestations prove that, although it might be its most natural context, the stage is by no means the only place where theatre develops as an art. Besides, in agreement with Hemmings, filmed versions cannot match the experience of ‘being there.’ Bazin’s essays on theatre and cinema deal with the self-evident truth that filmed theatre does not equal live theatre. When dealing with this issue, Bazin quotes Henry Gouhier’s *The Essence of Theatre*. This book provides an account of what Gauhier regards as the nature of the stage:

> What is specific to theater (….) is the impossibility of separating off action and actor (…) the stage welcomes every illusion except that of presence; the actor is there in disguise, with the soul and voice of another, but he is nevertheless there and by the same token space calls out for him and for the solidity of his presence. On the other hand and inversely, the cinema accommodates every form of reality save one – the physical presence of the actor. (Quoted in Bazin 2005: 95)

These statements seem to presuppose that the authors’ intentions are reproducing the performance on the screen. In fact, this presupposition is not entirely misguided. Wyver himself admits having used the

\(^{17}\) By reducing the essence of theatre to ‘being there,’ Hemmings seems to be posing a question that only leads to one possible answer. Also, she seems to be ignoring that for many directors and actors, having the possibility of accessing archive or commercial recordings of stage productions such as Trevor Nunn’s, Bob Wilson’s or Ariane Mnouchkine’s is undoubtedly a source of inspiration and a repertory of ideas on how scenes can be sorted out. Olwen Terris, Eve-Marie Oesterlen and Luke McKernan’s work offers a selection of the different archives and libraries that hold an important amount of materials on Shakespeare on film in Austria, Canada, Czeck Republic, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, The Netherlands, Slovenia, Poland, Sweden, and the United States. See *Shakespeare on Film, Television and Radio (The Researcher’s Guide)* (2009b: 217-227).
Filmmakers have shown willingness to emulate the theatre. The desire to show theatre on the screen, as Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree’s short filming of *King John* proves, has been palpable since the end of the nineteenth century – see figure 1.18 In fact, there is no reason, even following renowned mainstream Hollywood film directors like Steven Spielberg, why film should not follow the strategies of theatre to engage the audiences:

> I’d love to see directors start trusting the audience to be the film editor with their eyes, the way you are sometimes with a stage play, where the audience selects who they would choose to look at while a scene is being played…
> There’s so much cutting and so many close-ups being shot today I think directly as an influence from television.
> (Quoted in David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson 2008: 210)

Nevertheless, although filmmakers have attempted many devices to legitimize cinema by emphasizing its resemblance with theatre, what is unquestionably true is that the actor’s physical presence is not fully recoverable in film.19 Talking about ‘essences’ dangerously leads to the conclusion that theatre and film are chalk and cheese. However, I think that if we talk about types of theatre or film as well as degrees of theatricality or cinematicity, it is possible to build many transversal bridges between the two arts, even if a total confluence should never be one hundred percent achievable.

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18 On the 19 September 1899, one night before its premiere, several scenes from Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree’s production of *King John* were shown at the Palace Theatre (London) as well as other European and American theatres. See Kenneth S. Rothwell (1999), Maurice Hindle (2015).

19 Regarding this, as Sarah Hatchuel says, ‘[w]hatever a film director may do, the actors on screen and the spectators in the cinema necessarily remain apart’ (2008: 123).
To make things worse for the Bard’s presence on television, in the light of what BBC Drama Chief Ben Stephenson said in a discussion at the British Film Institute (17 September 2009), it seems that the problem we are dealing with has less to do with contemporary drama in general and more to do with Shakespeare in particular. In this meeting, Stephenson claimed that contemporary writers must be privileged at the expense of classic plays, although, perhaps unsurprisingly, he also added the familiar chorus that the small screen would never be a substitute for Shakespeare in the theatre (Wyver 2009).

In response to Stephenson’s public statement I would like to allude to Gérard Genette, who says we should be cautious with our many edicts about what can and cannot be done in fiction (1990: 125). Are we sure we are not simply talking about personal taste or about audience rates rather than about a series of practical impossibilities? All in all, Illuminations Media chooses to try different roads to film nearly uncut Shakespeare texts on television rather than wholly dismissing the idea of filming drama or turning a playtext into a feature film in the strictest sense of the word. Since Shakespeare and theatre have enjoyed good health on film, can we say there is anything specifically wrong with Shakespeare on the small screen? Ignoring professional practices that from the early stages of cinema made use of the audio-visual medium on the stage, theatre and film purists have often attacked the attempts at translating stage plays to the small screen. In addition to this, many television professionals and scholars have opposed anything that on the small screen may seem remotely theatrical. With the publication of Troy

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20 Picture taken from “King John (1899) - 1st William Shakespeare Film Adaptation - William K.L. Dickson | Walter Dando.”

21 However, as Wyver says in his article “What’s TV’s Problem with Theatre?,” Stephenson has not even demonstrated any interest in promoting new playwriting on television. As Wyver continues, ‘[n] one of the luminaries of new British playwriting – Mark Ravenhill, Tanika Gupta, Martin Crimp, Lucy Prebble, to name just a few – has had [his/her] stage work shown on TV either. And when did we last see on screen the radical things being done by the likes of Kneehigh, Headlong or Complicite?’ (2013).
Kennedy Martin’s “Nats Go Home” (1964), a critical impetus against television studio drama gained relevance during the Golden Age of British television.

Television drama writers and directors in the 1960s argued against the British television excessive indebtedness to theatre. Regarding the problem of British drama ‘staginess,’ they advocated for the liberation of the camera from the confines of the studio so that television plays could achieve the same creative freedom as cinema films had. Tony Garnett referred to ‘studio drama’ as a ‘bastard child of two forms: the theatre (continuous performance) and cinema (various lengths of lens affording different points of view and sizes of image),’ presenting all the disadvantages of both forms of narration (2000: 16). To this, David Edgar again, regretted the bastardy of British television by referring to the ‘horrible feeling’ that, at the turn of the century, television was being subject to, amongst other things, ‘mutually sustaining, content-drained, hybridized forms’ (2000: 76). From being ‘nothing like the theatre’ to be outcast for bastardy, British television drama is, at the same time, interchangeably accused of ‘not being like the theatre’ as well as being a ‘stagy,’ ‘theatrical’ or even ‘half-breed’ form of entertainment.

As for Shakespeare on TV, Dominique Goy-Blanquet summarizes the debates which took place in the mid-1980s on the suitability of the Bard’s plays on the small screen. Goy-Blanquet distinguishes the following lines of discussion: Should television Shakespeare be presented via television naturalism? Should the television screen be seen as a threat to the grandeur of the plays? Of particular importance, as Goy-Blanquet continues, is the acknowledgment of Jane Howell’s filming of the First Henriad by

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22 Kennedy Martin criticizes television drama naturalism for excess of talking heads photographed in simple exchanges of dialogue. Following him, these televisual constraints should be replaced by freeing camera movements (1964: 25, 17). In an interview, Wyver regards Kennedy Martin’s piece as ‘a polemic and I think confusing polemic’ which ‘throws a lot of things into the mix, including a strong anti-theatre feeling’ (2016).

23 Many experts have been pointing at the inherent relationship between theatre and the medium of television. In 1948, when questioning the future of television, Cecil Madden said: ‘Some people ask where television drama is going, whether it aims to be a photographed stage play, a competitor to the film, or an illustrated broadcast. The truth probably belongs somewhere between them all’ (1948: 225). As Jacobs sums up, the overall impression left during the early 1950s was that television was a hybrid medium that combined theatre, radio, newsprint and film and could also enjoy immediacy and intimacy (2000: 28-29). In his work, Style in British Television Drama, Cooke explains how ‘television drama aesthetics have changed from what might be described as the ‘primitive’ era of live studio drama in the 1950s through to the ‘post-modern’ era of visual incongruity and self-reflexivity of the 21st-century’ (2013: 3). Of course, before British television drama developed as an art form, theatre was live broadcast on television. Rudolph Cartier’s Nineteen Eighty-Four became, as Cooke continues, a ‘ground-breaking’ televisual event that combined studio drama scenes with fourteen film sequences. That was not the first time that ‘tele-cine’ sequences had been inserted in a television production but it was the first time that it was done ‘in order to achieve dramatic effects.’ This innovative technique derived from German crime thrillers of the 1930s, thus challenging the ‘intimate model’ of British television drama in favour of more expansive and cinematic use of camera. The camera would become a fundamental element in the narrative process (Cooke 2013: 7-10, 41-43).
turning her camera into a ‘wholly transparent tool, offering to world audiences the simulacrum of an intimate theatre and a fictional stage play, without sight or sound of spectators’ (2008: 379).

Special attention is deserved by Michèle Willems’ studies of the BBC Shakespeare Series with more positive and all-embracing perspectives than purists of theatre and film studies did. Her collection of essays Shakespeare à la television (1987) embraced debate on the problematic relationship between Shakespeare’s text and TV’s inclination to naturalism, focusing on how the intimacy of the small medium could affect the ritual and rhetorical diction of the texts. She examined specific episodes of the series and, roughly, distinguished cinematic-visual ways of recording as well as more theatrical and stylized films. Two chapters in the English language are essential to understand how the BBC Shakespeare Series could be semiotically studied by paying attention to its variety of codes. Firstly, Michèle Willems’ “Verbal-Visual, Verbal-Pictorial or Textual-Televisual? Reflections on the BBC Shakespeare Series?” describes the different modes used by BBC directors to film Shakespeare: the pictorial mode, the naturalistic mode, and the stylized mode. She advocated for theatrical stylization:

The theatrical and the visual may be made to merge into the televisual. On the whole, although they are often considered as ‘just not on on television’, stylized productions manage this better than naturalistic ones. Producing Shakespeare with the resources normally expected on the small screen has too often resulted in attracting attention to the fact that Shakespeare did not write for television. (1994: 83)

Secondly, in the same volume edited by Anthony Davies and Stanley Wells, Neil Taylor’s “Two Types of Shakespeare on Television” describes the more cinematic ways to approach the filming of the plays by Elijah Moshinsky and Jane Howell’s more Elizabethan spirit. Howell’s style to recording was much more akin to energize the language of the theatre. She employed an Ensemble of actors through the four films. The wooden structure used as set was ‘punctuated by openings, ramps, and swing-doors, [which] created an equivalent of medieval multiple staging.’ At the same time, elements of modernity were provided by ‘the avowed inspiration of an urban adventure playground and the use of anachronistic features [such as] a vast area of parquet flooring for the ground level’ (1992: 90). Furthermore, as opposed to the frequent style displayed by Jonathan Miller, who tended to record with long takes, Howell made use of cutting, combining the theatricality of the set with the filmic quality that multi-angled shots and varied camera movement convey.

24 Michèle Willems wrote the paper “Documentaire historique our visio de l’histoire? Les deux tétralogies à la television” (1982). Nevertheless, and Shakespeare à la télévision was the collection of essays that meant novelty for the French academy.
In addition to this, Susan Willis’ volume *The BBC Shakespeare Plays (Making the Televised Canon)* involves a thorough study of the planning, the rationale, production circumstances, and stylistic patterns of this series. In this work, Willis distinguishes the work carried out by different producers in charge of the productions and the distinct qualities offered by several directors like David Giles, Howell, Moshinsky, Jack Gold, and Jonathan Miller’s painterly approach as director of some of the episodes. Not only does Willis prove the wide stylistic range of the series, but also confirms that ‘the series could not be shaped as carefully as a single film could be, since it involved thirty-seven separate works rather than one, nor was the series meant to have a uniform shape.’ Additionally, she proves that the series demonstrated ‘an awareness of the theatrical nature of the material and an awareness of the television medium.’ The different worlds created for the episodes provide intelligent and imaginative insights on Shakespeare’s texts, no matter how visually unappealing the productions were (1991: 317-318).

To this essential bibliographical corpus, we should add the basic contributions made by Kenneth Rothwell (1999) as well as H. R. Coursen (1992, 1993, 1996, 1997, 2002), respectively tackling the history of Shakespeare on the screen as well as specifically analyzing different productions of Shakespeare on the big as well as the small screen. Yet, a most important collection of essays, which leads us back to the French Academia, is the one edited by Sarah Hatchuel and Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin, featuring a collection of *Essays in Honour of Michèle Willems* and featuring a substantial amount of chapters on the impact of Shakespeare on television (2008). Mostly, these essays take Willems’ division of recoding styles into account and explore the resources of various versions of Shakespeare plays on television. Apart from offering substantial insights into Michael Elliot’s *King Lear* (1983), the essays tackle some BBC Series uncared for productions and, subsequently, focus on adaptations such as *The BBC Shakespeare Retold*. Also, *HBO Rome* is approached as a possible derived Shakespeare piece. This selection of scholars and basic works focused on Shakespeare on the small screen proves that there is growing interest in the *BBC Shakespeare Series* and it is worth studying the strengths of these productions. As Ruth Morse (2008) and Peter Holland prove in their respective chapters, the BBC holds

25 Apart from the above-mentioned scholars, see Michael Anderegg (2004); David Bevington, Anne Marie Welsh, Michael L. Greenwald (2006); Robert Hapgood (1986); Maurice Hindle (2015); Jack J. Jorgens (1991); Douglas Lanier (2002); Rothwell (1999); Mark Thornton Burnett (2007); Cartelli and Rowe (2007); Deborah Cartmell (2000); John Collick (1989); Henderson (2006); Barbara Hodgdon (1998); Graham Holderness (1992); Holderness (1992); Maria Jones (2003); Miller (1986); Daniel Rosenthal (2000); Willis (1991); Pascale Aebischer, Edward J. Esche, Nigel Wheale (1997); Neil E. Béchervaise (1999); Boom, Burt (1997); James C. Bulman and Coursen (1988); Burnett (2006); Richard Burt and Lynda Boone (2003); Deborah Cartmell (2001); Diana Henderson (2006); Graham Holderness (1988); Edward Quinn (1986); Ronald E. Salomone (1997); Robert Shaughnessy (2007); M. Welsh, Richard Vela, John C. Tibbetts (2003). They compose the main general bibliography tackling Shakespeare on television.
ambivalent positions on whether to carry on recording Shakespeare on television or merely content highly cultured audiences with random vernacular adaptations and the odd stage recording or truly embark themselves in the difficult task of recording a Second BBC Shakespeare Series, an idea which Sam Mendes toyed with, as Holland indicates (2008: 276).26

If we pay attention to the possibilities that technological advances offer, we will appreciate how recorded theatre constantly finds new ways of development. The possibilities derived from HD filming have facilitated the recording of live stage performances of ballet, classical theatre, opera and musical pieces. In addition, they have improved the quality of recorded theatre as we have known it over the last half of the twentieth century. Surely, the boundaries between the performing arts are blurring thanks to such advancements. At the same time, new possibilities of interpretation are offered by these advancements.

Scholars like Esslin have referred to both arts as drama. If, following Esslin, the category of ‘drama’ can be indistinctively applied to ‘film’ and ‘theatre,’ why do we need to present arguments in favour of their compatibility in the first place? Why should anyone then oppose the inclusion of drama pieces on the television screen? We should not dismiss the anti-television theatre arguments too quickly. Setting prejudices aside, much criticism against small screen Shakespeare have to do with the procedures rather than with the intentions pursued.

Jason Jacobs’ work proves that early British television professionals were always aware of the need to adjust recorded drama to the potentialities of television (2000). However, this apparent need to adjust to the television screen was not always sufficiently attended to when it came to filming Shakespeare. When accounting for Laurence Olivier and Judith Anderson’s television rendition of Macbeth, Wyver points at the conflict between the two media. As Wyver remarks, the actors ‘made no attempt to moderate their voices to television scale, and still spoke to the utmost recesses of an imaginary theatre, whereas their smallest whispers would have been heard by the unseen audience’ (2014: 107). Here, Wyver situates the fundamental problem of the ‘photographed stage play,’ which critics so much complained about. In a different article, Wyver and Carl Gardner explain how early television drama followed the stylistic patterns of ‘repertory theatre and radio drama’ by the book in faithful ways that ‘precluded any innovation of TV style or any attempt to develop a specifically televisual form for small-

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26 On the Shakespeare Retold Series, also see Maurizio Calbi (2013).

All in all, we can counter-argue many of these statements as well as others posed at the beginning of this section. Personally, I would suggest that the question of the ‘actor’s presence’ is, for a start, a self-legitimizing tautology. Gouhier’s argument on the actor’s companionship is, as Bazin says, unanswerable (2005: 95). But what room for discussion is left if the best that can be said against televised theatre is that actors are not ‘there’? In fact, how can we ensure that we know that constitutes a better or worse experience for the audience? According to recent surveys, people who attend live cinema performances or who download live cinema Shakespeare productions have not missed ‘being there.’ Can we then be sure that missing the actor ends up completely spoiling the pleasure of the performance or does it simply offer other interpretive possibilities? Are we sure that ‘being there’ is the only place to look at when we try to analyze the possible means of pleasure within televised theatre? Furthermore, can we say that the impact that film actresses and actors make on the audiences is meaningless? What would have seemed to be a bitter pill for the moralists, as Nicoll calls them (1936: 6-7), is that film actors may make as striking an impact in popular culture as theatre actors do. However,


29 In fact, an AEA Consulting study carried out for the Arts Council proves that Live Cinema performances have increased the numbers of people, even young audiences, seeing or streaming theatre events. Theatre audiences have not augmented nor decreased. Therefore, we cannot say that any damage has been suffered by live theatre at all. In addition, as the figures show, for the attendees, the importance of being in the theatre is only relative (2016: 13-14). When analyzing a recent live cinema recording of Ibsen’s *Ghosts*, directed by Richard Eyre, from the Almeida Theatre, critic Michael Billington goes as far as saying that recorded theatre is leading to a democratic revolution in theatre accessibility. As the critic points out, ‘[t]he film, of course, wouldn't exist without Eyre's original production; and you inevitably lose the permanent wide angled vision of designer Tim Hatley's transparent-walled set which you get in the playhouse. But, while I remain an evangelist for live theatre, I think it’s time we stopped pretending that it offers an un-reproducible event. A theatre performance can now be disseminated worldwide with astonishing fidelity. This represents, as I noted when I saw the first ever National Theatre Live transmission of Racine's (sic) Phèdre, a revolution which knocks on the head the old argument that theatre is an elitist medium aimed at the privileged few’ (2014).
does their presence in film reduce the reception of their theatre work? I would rather suggest that the opposite is often just as true. Certainly, this is true if we consider that members of the British audience can frequently see the same artists on the stage as well as the small and the big screen. As for overseas audiences, unless they are international commuters, the only way to experience these performances is through the TV screen or, at present, thanks to live cinema performances.

Continuing with the audience’s relationship with the performer, Bazin remarks that it is inaccurate to say that the screen does not put us in her/his presence. Rather, it does it ‘in the same way as a mirror (…) with a delayed reflection, the thin foil of which retains the image.’ When he more specifically refers to television theatre, Bazin adds that we cannot really regard the relationship between performer and viewer as an absence. In the case of television drama, the performer ‘has a sense of the millions of ears and eyes virtually present and represented by the electronic camera.’ On a different level, as Bazin continues, film can offer only a measure of what takes place in the theatre. Yet, this distance between the media is ‘not reduced to zero.’ Although time and space are lost, psychological balance is, per contra, offered through the television screen (2005: 97-98).

Secondly, Wyver, main creator of these films, as we have seen, is not uncritical with the way in which Shakespeare has been made on television. Yet, although his self-proclaimed intentions are to try different approaches from more traditional ways of recording – see Wyver 2016 –, he has published a number of articles and papers on the many achievements in televised Shakespeare productions and other television theatre plays. Regarding the BBC Shakespeare, thanks to Willis’ study (1991), we know that many efforts were made to improve the visual quality of the different episodes. Therefore, we are

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30 In his book, cited in Chapter Four, Keith Osborn, actor at the RSC, explains how the television stars David Tennant and Patrick Stewart were daily waited for outside the Novello Theatre by cohorts of Doctor Who and Star Trek fans (2010).

31 When pointing out at the differences between theatre and film, different scholars pay attention to how film allows the viewer to perceive the action from many different angles. Allardyce Nichol also differentiates the varied angles offered by cinema in contrast to the single perspective offered to the spectator in the theatre auditorium. In addition, Béla Bálazs points out at the different angles of vision in film. As the Hungarian scholar notes, in cinema, the distance between the viewer and the screen is variable and the changing angles provide the opportunity to perceive a much more varied and complex view of the dramatic piece (1952: 30-31). However, more interested in the points that theatre and film share, Bazin indicates that the different viewpoints used in film can suggest the many different perspectives offered to the spectator at the different parts of a guignol performance (2005: 91-92). Following Bazin’s idea, this variety of perspectives is a common feature for both theatre and film, even though the resemblance could never be absolute.

32 See Wyver and Wrigley’s blog.

entitled to see the *BBC Shakespeare Series* and many other TV Shakespeare productions in a certain positive light.34

In the third place, what the objections, no matter how justified, to specific programmes, such as the *BBC Shakespeare Series*, come to demonstrate is that the playtexts themselves do not suffice to create a televisual narrative and perhaps need to be more carefully translated to the specificities of the small screen than they have been. Regarding this point, we should simply accept that uncut Shakespeare plays on television are difficult to materialize in comparison with more vernacular and contemporary television film scripts. Yet, following Balázs, even if we accept that the pleasure derived from cinema is, originally, derived from mere fantasy-based identification and immersion, words ‘give rise to concepts and feelings.’ If films were originally thought of as entertainments, following Balázs’ reasoning, words increase ‘the possibilities of expression’ as well as to ‘widen the spirit’ of film (1952: 43).35 Surely, this does not mean that the words themselves suffice. The BBC Series experiment clearly proved that the mere delivery of the text did not suffice to interest the audiences. We can make this argument ours by agreeing that TV theatre needs to undertake modifications in order to fit within the code chosen. In this sense, Bazin argues that ‘filmed theater is basically destined to fail whenever it tends in any manner to become simply the photographic of scenic representation’ (2005: 107). However, this is not the same as confirming the metanarrative that theatre should not be recorded. As Jean-François Lyotard says, metanarratives have constantly worked toward the silencing of a plurality of voices. Likewise, homogeneity has been seen in metanarratives as an extremely useful ally against alternative perspectives (Lyotard 1984: xxiv). The metanarrative that theatre should not be filmed in television or the big screen – or, being more specific, that Shakespeare is unfit for the television medium or for the big screen – is being drastically questioned by a series of Shakespeare filmic television initiatives in this century. In short, even if the BBC Shakespeare Series had been a total artistic failure – which I do not think it is -, that would only confirm the need to continue finding ways of filming Shakespeare on TV.

In this light, I would like to quickly turn to the accusation of ‘bastardy’ to television as a hybrid form between theatre and film. In agreement with Jim Collins’ analysis of post-modernist texts, I would

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34 Research on different television Shakespeare manifestations are carried out. To find a thorough bibliography on Shakespeare TV studies, see José Ramón Díaz Fernández (2008).

35 In his work on Hollywood cinema, Celestino Deleyto remarks that Eisenstein’s ‘attraction montage’ derived from the excitement and the spectacular displays of the amusement park. Thus, pure entertainment has more to do with the origins of cinema than art house films have (2003: 49-51).
like to argue that if ‘bastardy’ is opposed to ‘purity,’ why should purity be a priority? In this sense, Bakhtin argues that ‘[t]hose genres that stubbornly preserve their old canonic nature begin to appear stylized (...) a stylization taken to the point of parody, despite the artistic intent of the author’ (2014: 6). In addition, Collins uses the term bricolage to refer to the intermingling of ‘seemingly incompatible discourses’ and speaking ‘a number of languages simultaneously,’ as we do in our surrounding culture, as opposed to sticking to ‘self-enclosure’ values (1989: 77). Regarding this idea, Julie Sanders emphasizes the innovative, as opposed to homogenizing and stale, features of hybridity (2016: 21). Surely, Wyver’s work embraces this principle by acknowledging the plurality of different artistic discourses within the television screen. In this light, I am going to borrow Primo Levi’s metaphor related to zinc to privilege the strength and solidity of mixed matter as opposed to the feebleness of pure matter. If television, as seems to be accepted, can be reinforced with as many artistic discourses as possible, why should this not be the case with Shakespeare or with theatre? Surely, the grey tonalities

36 In her essential Adaptation and Appropriation (2016), Sanders alludes to Homi Bhabha’s post-colonialist views on hybridity (See Homi Bhabha, “Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences,” in Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin’s The Post-Colonial Studies Reader, 1995, quoted in Sanders 2016: 21-22). However, she also refers to hybridization of ‘cultural artefacts’ as ‘irrevocably changed by the process of interaction’ (ibid: 22). Although I will be borrowing some of the terms collected in by Sanders’ book – citation, bricolage, convergence culture, intermediality, etc. –, my main standpoint will not be one that focuses on a dominant original work giving way to legitimate innovative works. Interesting and important as this discussion is, criticism on Shakespeare and Popular Culture and the authorship debate have sufficiently dealt with the problematic legitimacy of Shakespeare’s ‘original’ texts. The ‘original’ Shakespeare’s texts are, of course, inaccurate concepts. Such original texts as appearing in the Folio Editions are reconstructions of the performance playscripts. Henry Condell and John Heminges were responsible for the publication of Shakespeare’s plays and such editions were finalized after Shakespeare’s writing. Very likely, the King’s Men had several scripts which, being performance material, were constantly modified and re-written. It seems, then, that Shakespeare’s texts must be taken as anything but sacred. More detailed discussion on the original texts is available in James C. Bulman (1996), Graham Holderness (2001), Douglas Lanier (2002), Andrew Gurr and Mariko Ichikawa (2000), Gurr (1992), Henderson (2007), and Gurr (2004). Even aware of the fact that the ‘original texts’ – mainly those authorized editions we can find today in English departments – are social constructions that by no means represent the real texts, I am referring to the texts as the ‘original’ for the sake of economy and clarity. Likewise, I will be referring to Shakespeare’s text while being conscious of this authorial question.

37 In his chapter on “Zinc,” Levi defines this metal as ‘boring’ and ‘unoriginal.’ Yet, in its most impure state, it seems to work as a substantially dialogical and all-embracing metal. When zinc is in its purest state, its behavior is much more resistant to other metals. For Levi, this gives way to two philosophical positions: ‘the praise of purity, which protects from evil like a coat of mail; the praise of impurity, which gives rise to changes, in other words, to life. I discarded the first, disgustingly moralistic, and I lingered to consider the second, which I found more congenial. In order for the wheel to turn, for life to be lived, impurities are needed, and the impurities of impurities in the soil, too, as is known, if it is to be fertile. Dissension, diversity, the grain of salt and mustard are needed: Fascism does not want them, forbids them, and that’s why you’re not a Fascist; it wants everybody to be the same, and you are not. But immaculate virtue does not exist either, or if it exists it is detestable. So take the solution of copper sulfate which is in the shelf of reagents, add a drop of it to your sulfuric acid, and you’ll see the reaction begin: the zinc wakes up, it is covered with a white fur of hydrogen bubbles, and there we are, the enchantment has taken place, you can leave it to its fate and take a stroll around the lab and see what’s new and what the others are doing.’ With this analogy, I would like to emphasize the initial contention I formulated in section 0.1. The interaction between film, television and theatre in Wyver’s films constitutes the main point of poiesis in them. See Levi (1984; online version of the book).
perceived between theatre and film and the sources of artistic pleasure found in them are areas worth exploring within the television flow.

Wyver shares our confidence in the possibilities of technology. He emphasizes this point when claiming that uncut and un-radical versions of classic drama can be televised and appeal to contemporary audiences. Regarding this, the producer says:

HD cameras and audio improvements allow more dynamic versions of live performance than ever before. And if a fraction of the theatrical imagination of the last decade were applied to broadcasts, they could be transformed. How about recording with 30, or even 130, low-cost cameras? Or with just one? How could on-stage and backstage be combined? How might second-screen channels such as Twitter or Facebook reinvent our experience of taking part? (2013)\(^{38}\)

In addition, in this same article, Wyver argues that the BBC commitments presuppose the satisfaction of the audiences’ eagerness for minimum cultural standards, artistic creativity and original work (2013). In other words, the BBC is publicly obliged to constant experimenting and trying out of different methods that adjust theatre and the arts to radio and TV.

Bearing this principle in mind, Wyver mobilizes the hybrid nature of the films by taking advantage of the contrasts between the languages of cinema and theatre. In line with Bazin’s analysis of Olivier’s *Henry V* (1945) as well as with Howell’s work on the First Henriad, Wyver accepts the contradiction derived from combining such distinct media for what it is.\(^{39}\) This contradiction reinforces what Bakhtin has been referring to as the dialogical nature of literature, which is, by extension, applied to filmed theatre in this context. The step forward implicitly proposed by Wyver seems to be the exploration of the possibilities derived from the dynamic opposition between the two media. Following suit with Olivier’s experimental use of theatrical devices on the big screen in *Henry V* – see figures 2, 3, 4 and 5 –, Wyver’s works lay the evident theatrical structure of the films bare. However, their theatricality is inflected and re-energized through different mechanisms in different locations that, as I will be explaining in subsequent chapters, present a certain theatrical quality. For instance, the

\(^{38}\) In this, even Garnett, who stands ‘accused of having killed the traditional studio in favor of the move to location filming,’ admits that the current technological and acting skills could be adjusted to a new kind of television drama (2000: 17).

\(^{39}\) In this regard, Bazin says that ‘Laurence Olivier succeeded in resolving the dialectic between cinematic realism and theatrical convention. His film also begins with a travelling shot, but in this case its purpose is to plunge us into the theater, the courtyard of an Elizabethan inn. He is not pretending to make us forget the conventions of the theater. On the contrary he affirms them. It is not with the play *Henry V* that the film is immediately and directly concerned, but with a performance of *Henry V*’ (2005: 87-88).
employment of location as scenery for a theatre recording constitutes, as we will see, the starting point to set the elements of hybridity in motion. In addition to this, Wyver’s commitment goes as far as to keep the original texts relatively uncut avoiding excessive concessions on the matter. This is done even considering that the language of film is, arguably, less verbal than the language of the theatre. Thus, hybridity undertakes the serious task of discovering the potentialities of visuals for Shakespeare and makes use of the ample resources offered by both film and theatre within the same television narrative.

How did the Illuminations Media team come up with this working style, if it can be, at all, called a style? Let us now return to Warner’s problematic relationship with Ibsen and the small screen. As previously mentioned and as Wyver confirms, Warner was deeply frustrated at the results of the recording of *Hedda Gabler*. However, her frustration had nothing to do with any inherent impossibility to translate the performance to television but with the specific working procedures at the studio. As Wyver continues, studio policies and proceedings did not allow Warner much control over the recording process (2016). After a few months, Warner re-tried her chances with television drama and directed a

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40 Figures 2, 3, 4 and 5 are screen captions from Olivier’s *Henry V*. 
film adaptation of T. S. Eliot’s poem *The Waste Land* with Fiona Shaw as sole performer. In that case, as she wanted to avoid repeating the Ibsen experience, she contacted Wyver and Illuminations Media to film the poem as a Tx. documentary.\(^{41}\) This productive collaboration between Illuminations Media and Shaw continued in 1997 with the recording of her celebrated National Theatre production of *Richard II* – Shaw playing King Richard – for the television screen. These two films were the first recordings that, following Wyver, might be regarded as immediate precedents of hybrid television Shakespeare films (2016). What Illuminations had discovered was a different and distinct way of satisfactorily transferring strong poetic and theatrical texts to the television screen.\(^{42}\) Also, an additional innovation in the filming processes was the reliance on a single camera instead of on the traditional multiple cameras that had been the norm in British recorded theatre. This modification turned the filming into a much more empowering artistic experience for the creative team.\(^{43}\) Whereas this arrangement was perfectly common in Shakespeare film adaptations, it had almost no television Shakespeare precedent. Furthermore, rather than working inside television studios, Wyver decided to work in film studios, i.e. empty premises that facilitated the maneuverability of the props, sets, and cameras. Having said this, let us bear in mind that the productions were not fully intended as feature films. On the contrary, the theatrical qualities of the performances were, as we will later see, retained and tackled in varied ways. Doubtless, this is a feature to bear in mind when defining hybrid television Shakespeare films.\(^{44}\)

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\(^{41}\) The Tx. cultural films were an innovative initiative carried out by Illuminations Media in collaboration with BBC2. They consisted of a series of programmes that included Ian Macmillan’s *The Scholte Affair* (1998), Mark Karlin’s *The Outrage* (1995), *Children of the Revolution* (1995), Chris Petit’s *Negative Space* (1999). Mostly, the Tx. Series tackled reflections on art, documentary filmmaking, films on contemporary photography and the arts in general. See [http://www.illuminationsmedia.co.uk/our-history/](http://www.illuminationsmedia.co.uk/our-history/).

\(^{42}\) If ‘success’ means ‘a large audience,’ again, then I need to disclose the bitter truth that Wyver refers to the personal satisfaction at the creative process and the results themselves rather than the audience rates. When referring to *The Waste Land*, Wyver’s words literally are: ‘[A] lthough nobody watched it, nobody was interested in it, we were very pleased to do it.’ When referring to *Richard II*, again, Wyver says ‘Nobody watched it, but it was pretty good’ (2016).

\(^{43}\) Whereas in the television studio, directors need to constantly regard the presence of two or three studio cameras, a single camera permits higher maneuverability and to record the films shot by shot rather than in long sequences.

\(^{44}\) In Chapter Two I will speak more thoroughly about Warner’s *Richard II*. 

33
1.2. Definition of hybridity

1.2.1. Hybridity in British Television: Principles of Collision

Doran’s and Goold’s films are not meant to be feature films. They are television productions based on the slippage and the collision between theatre and film and between film and theatre. However, as already mentioned, they constitute neither the only nor the first examples of theatre-film hybridity in British television drama. As a few scholars suggest, British television drama has always been hybrid. In 1974, John McKenzie directed *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* (1974), a television production that mixes up elements from television, documentary film and theatre. This is an iconic example of the hybridity based upon Bertolt Brecht’s principles of collision. The German playwright advocated for the separation of different codes in his operas rather than integrating them in the way Wagner did (1977: 37-38). In this light, in opposition to television drama naturalism, McGrath (1980: 11) and Lez Cooke (2003: 66) write about television hybrid technology as capable of attaining Brecht’s sense of detachment.

Following this premise, by the 1970s British television writers and directors had assumed that the viewers needed to become makers of meaning. At that time, principles of collision, mostly employed in cinematic montage, became widespread in television using documentary techniques and socially oriented narratives. In this way, British television entered the world of the Avant-Garde. For Peter Bürger, Avant-Garde rejects the idea of the artwork as a representation of reality. Instead of this, the work of art is regarded as the product of patching up various fragments rather than as an integrated whole (1984: 70). This accumulation of fragments fulfilled the function of detachment that has been advocated by Russian Formalism and by Structuralist scholars. Besides, this principle rejects all notions of literalness that can be conducive to over-explicatory and tedious entertainments. Meanwhile, following John Caughie, British television film managed to reach intersections between popular culture.

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45 With ‘slippage,’ I will be referring to the act of sliding from one language to another and to the intermediate spaces resulting from this sliding. As an instance of slippage, we could refer to the ways in which a scene can be said to be filmic but makes use of theatrical language, e.g. the assassination scene in *Julius Caesar* (see section 9.3).


47 In 1978, Roman Jakobson refers to human language as one which loses interest as soon ‘as the name has merged with the object it designates,’ and that forces human beings to ‘resort to metaphor, allusion or allegory if (they) wish a more expressive term’ (1978: 40).
and the high art of modernism over this often called Golden-Age of British television drama (2000: 63-65).

1.2.2. Existing Definitions of Hybridity

Many scholars have already referred to these films as hybrid productions. Yet, what I intend to do is to narrow down the term to refer only to Doran’s and Goold’s above-mentioned films and no other types of hybrid screen versions, such as the RSC Live performances, independently screen-produced by Wyver.

Following Maurice Hindle’s nomenclature, they can be called ‘stage-to-screen hybrid’ productions (2015). Nevertheless, for the purposes of this dissertation, I regard Hindle’s definition as too generalizing. His chapter also applies the label ‘hybrid’ to many other types of recorded productions that do not share the features I am going to study, although I agree with his explanations. Likewise, Wyver has also referred to the films as hybrid. As the producer remarks,

It goes back to ‘not making a movie’. It’s a hybrid form, somewhere between a theatre piece and a film, and that’s why I find it interesting to do. It has been taken from the stage, placed in another world, and interpreted by the camera in a way that retains the essence of the original, but hopefully works distinctively in the new medium (My emphases). (Hindle 2015: 289)

In this passage, Wyver is referring to Doran’s Hamlet. However, it could well apply to any other of the films under analysis.

The previous definition can be compared with one provided by an Impact Case Study on Wyver’s work:

In a series of ambitious, large-scale television productions, as creative producer or co-producer [Wyver] has developed collaborative working methods and insights leading to a highly distinctive form of theatre-film hybrid for which there are few precedents in earlier adaptations. While his productions are filmed, variously, in

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48 The many live cinema productions in which Wyver is collaborating with the RSC can be regarded as theatre-film hybrid too. What surely defines them is that they are totally recorded in the theatre. As Wyver says, hybridity allows producers and directors to create their own rules in translating Shakespeare and theatre plays to television (Wyver 2015). Thus, he uses hybridity referring to productions such as Macbeth (2001), Hamlet (2009), Macbeth (2010), and Julius Caesar (2012), but he also refers to live cinema productions such as Richard II (2014). Consequently, we should assume that he includes subsequent recordings made in the last decade: The Two Gentlemen of Verona (2014), Henry IV Part 1 and Henry IV Part II (2015), Henry V (2016), Much Ado About Nothing (2015), Love’s Labour’s Lost (2015), The Merchant of Venice (2015), etc.
combinations of real-world locations and theatrical environments, they have engaged a range of film languages to create dynamic screen versions while still retaining a creative ‘core’ or ‘essence’ of the original.

This document implicitly opposes the commonplace that Shakespeare is not plausible television material. Furthermore, collaboration between theatre professionals, broadcasters and artists under Wyver’s leadership reconceives a series of original productions in ‘a new and effective creative form.’

What is more, this new form underlines the combination of ‘real locations’ and ‘theatrical environments.’ As already mentioned, the novelty of these productions is related to the acknowledgement of their theatrical origins and the selection of neutral locations that redefine the theatrical atmosphere of the original productions. This means that the recording sites, even if totally immersed in the gritty sense of reality inherent to location, do not point at a very definable time or place. Subsequently, the exploration of the inherent filmic possibilities provided by the space and by the work carried out by the stage directors and the creative team open roads for different theatrical and cinematic possibilities. Of importance in this respect is the fact that the directors record the films shot by shot instead of relying on the multiple camera system at the television studios.

Although at first sight it may seem self-explanatory, the term ‘hybridity’ can be problematic when used by Wyver, Hindle and other writers because, to some extent, they use it as an umbrella term. Wyver suggests that stage performances taken to television are regarded as hybrid, but he employs the term when he refers to the RSC live cinema broadcasts of Shakespeare plays too. Again, this is true, but I intend to differentiate live cinema broadcasts from hybrid television Shakespeare film. Whereas the former can be said to be improvements of the theatrical mode, the latter constitute different ways of working that emphasize the clashing and slippage between filmic codes, theatrical codes and televisual codes. Also, in his article on John Barton and Peter Hall’s The Wars of the Roses, Wyver applies the term ‘hybrid’ to the way in which the series consisted of a complete transference from the language of the stage to the language of multi-camera television performance (2015a: 23).

49 See http://impact.ref.ac.uk/casestudies2/refservice.svc/GetCaseStudyPDF/42139.

50 It is important to add that the word ‘hybridity’ has also been employed to refer to other Shakespeare film productions produced over the last five decades. These productions have also played with the boundaries between theatre and film. Sam Mendes uses the term ‘hybrid’ to refer to the television theatre productions of the 1970s, which were shot mainly on studio sets but featured inserted tele-cine sequences (quoted in Terrence Rafferty 2013). In addition, Hindle applies the term ‘stage-to-screen hybrids’ to films including Trevor Nunn’s Antony and Cleopatra (1972), Macbeth (1979), Othello (1990), The Merchant of Venice (2001) and King Lear (2008), Michael Elliot’s King Lear (1983), Richard Eyre’s King Lear (2004) and Kenneth Branagh’s Twelfth Night (1988) also fit this category. Although these examples can be rightly regarded as precedents to Wyver’s films, they do not so much embrace the filmic possibilities of the screen language. Also, Hindle
All this comes to confirm that ‘hybridity’ is a wide-ranging concept that involves the mixture of languages and codes in many different films or art works. However, Wyver confirms my specific point on these films when he affirms that they make obvious moves from the theatre language to the language of film (2014: 115-117). Thus, Wyver contributtes with another defining feature that truly affects hybrid television Shakespeare films: The exploration of filmic possibilities without ever letting the viewer forget that the recordings derive from stage productions.\textsuperscript{51} As suggested above, their peculiarities lie at their stance within a No-Man’s Land between the theatrical mode and the filmic mode. From this it follows that, as far as television Shakespeare is concerned, they can be regarded as new developments. This might be even more notorious if we consider that, in the current century, television Shakespeare productions tend to appear like films in all but name.

An additional name employed by Wyver to refer to crossings between different arts is ‘intermediality’.\textsuperscript{52} In a post written on 8 October 2013, he accounts for the different reasons why critics should become more intermedial rather than being confined to their strict film, literature, television, or arts department divisions. He defines ‘intermedial’ as something exploring ‘the connections and crossovers between […] theatre and television (…) or between literature, radio and the cinema’ (2013a).

Although he admits that cross-sections are recognized at critical and artistic levels, he denounces that tight-jacket means of analysis are still predominant when much is to be discovered within inter-disciplinary approaches to arts studies. From this, it follows, firstly, that, although the limits between theatre and film are not absolute, there is a certain consensus on their existing differences. In addition, although overall, as earlier suggested, ‘intermediality’ can be pointed out as a wide-ranging logic involving our productions, it is worth exploring their specificity.

includes Doran’s \textit{Macbeth} (2001), \textit{Hamlet} (2009) and \textit{Julius Caesar} (2012) as well as Goold’s \textit{Macbeth} (2010). Of all the films proposed by Hindle, the last one, \textit{The Hollow Crown} (2012), is not based on a previous stage production. Besides, although great attention is paid to the text and the verse speaking, the main narrative lies on visual language rather than on the text. Wyver’s works are clearly text-based and openly evocative of their theatrical origins.

\textsuperscript{51} Wyver calls films based on stage productions ‘doubled adaptations’ as opposed to ‘documentation’ and as inferior traces of theatrical origins’ (2014: 104). Their double character relates to ‘the interplay between the televisual, theatrical and cinematic elements of these adaptions.’ When Wyver emphasizes the rapid development of this type of adaptation he does it in relation to ‘the context of the rapidly developing contemporary form of live cinema, exemplified by the National Theatre Live and Live from Stratford-upon-Avon’ (ibid: 104). For Sarah Bey-Cheng, these productions can be termed ‘mediated theatre,’ which ‘may be broadly defined as any theatrical performance originally created for live performance (…) and subsequently recorded onto any visually reproducible medium including film, videotape, or digital formats, presented as two-dimensional moving images on screens’ (2007: 37).

\textsuperscript{52} Sanders defines ‘intermediality’ as ‘connections or interventions between different mediums and genres’ (2016: 214).
Having considered all these definitions, we can conclude that hybridity is an over-arching logic rather than a closed concept. These films are hybrid forms as they welcome the mixture of different languages – theatre and film – on the television screen. In addition, they are intermedial as, on a different level, film and theatre can be regarded as communicative systems that interact with one another within the same television context. Yet, I have thought necessary to minimally define the scope of hybridity in these productions. With the purpose of doing this, I am willing to examine its components.

1.2.3. Basic Components of Hybridity

At its simplest, to define hybrid television Shakespeare film, saying that it combines the languages of film, television and theatre should suffice. Nonetheless, this statement is problematic as any categorizing of these three different languages is bound to be simplistic and disregarding of the individual contingencies in different films, theatre plays and television programmes. The languages of these three media can resemble each other as well as cooperate. There are numerous instances in which a theatrical experience can be expressed in filmic terms. For example, the “Prologue” in the film version of *West Side Story* (Jerome Robbins and Robert Wise, 1961) – see figures 6, 7, 8 and 9 – is deconstructed and inflected in cinematic terms that expand the possibilities of the Broadway stage production – see figures 10 and 11. Also, it is often assumed that, whereas film is a predominantly visual language, Renaissance theatre mostly relies on the spoken word. Although this is undeniable, we should not ignore that Shakespeare’s company embraced the different possibilities offered by stage technology and

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53 With ‘over-arching logic,’ I am referring to a term provided by Henry Jenkins when referring to ‘convergence culture’ (2016). In my view, this same adjective can be applied to hybridity as it offers a wide range of possibilities rather than constituting a closed entity. As I explained in section 0.2, one of my objectives will be assessing whether hybridity in Wyver’s films can also be regarded as an over-arching logic.

54 The “Prologue” of *West Side Story* takes four minutes on the stage and ten minutes in film. Robbins and Wise completely deconstruct this choreographic piece and explore the intersections between realism and highly stylized ballet. An aerial shot covers a large part of the City of New York journeying through the different districts and neighborhoods – see figures 6 and 7 –. As the camera reaches the West Side, it zooms into a basketball court and we discover the Jets gang as they rhythmically finger-snap. A close-up features Riff (Russ Tamblyn) and the Jets are thoroughly presented with a tracking shot – see figure 8 –. As the gang walks through the court, the frame seems to stick at the gritty realism and violent tension of 1950s teenage film. Nevertheless, after the camera has shown that the Jets own – they make clear to two youngsters that they can play basketball with their permission – and protect – they carefully surround a little girl who draws a chalk circle on the floor – the ‘turf,’ it follows them as they start the real dance. This choreography resembles and even takes many more risks than what the spectator in the 1957 original performance might have seen in the theatre – see figure 9 –. Of course, the rest of the film continues this line of work and, consequently, it is somewhat longer and more complex than the original stage production – see figures 10 and 11 – must have been.
spectacular display was frequent in Renaissance performance. Also, extensive dialogue is not infrequent in film and television.\textsuperscript{55} In fact, television in general – and British television in particular – rejoices in dialogue and construction of characters through their speech as much as through physical features.

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\textsuperscript{55} We tend to associate verbal language to theatre. Nevertheless, televisual characters are defined in their speech as much as in their visual representation. In their analyses of \textit{Game of Thrones}, Jordi Balló and Xavier Pérez allude to how common it is that audiovisual fiction tends to strengthen itself through these dramatic devices. These two Spanish scholars refer to the ways in which film and television characters make ample use of speech. Most of the times, we tend to look at cinema and television villains, who are, amongst other things, enjoyed by the fans because of their speech above all other qualities. Furthermore, cinema and television make use of propaganda discourse, manipulating discourse, confessions, oral evocations and storytelling, voice-over mechanisms, filmed diary, as well as the frequent inclusion of one character’s last words. See Balló and Pérez (2015).

\textsuperscript{56} Figures 6, 7, 8 and 9 are screen captions from \textit{West Side Story} (1961).
What film and theatre languages do in hybrid Shakespeare television film is to self-reflexively collide and intermingle with varied degrees of convergence. Together with the different modes of Shakespeare recording inflected in the films, their theatricality – or ‘staginess,’ if we like – is rooted in the practice of site-specific theatre apart from live theatre recording, location recording, and mixed film genres. As mentioned above, elements requiring attention in the films are the locations. These sites provide the theatrical playfulness pursued by the creative team. The atmospheres of the sites push the recordings into different directions that make the narratives diverge from their stage origins in capricious dynamic filmic and, surprisingly, theatrical ways. What is more, these sites help exploring the onstage-backstage relationship within the films by way of featuring a large metonymic space together with a series of more private and specific spaces, which provide the actors with opportunities to embrace a more intimate, domestic and televisual acting style.59 Regarding the metonymic nature of the sites, when referring to Doran’s *Macbeth*, Wyver says:

Greg was clear that he didn’t want to shoot it in a studio with the sets that they had used in the theatre. He wanted to find a space, a location that had (...) a *vivid neutrality*, so not a space which kind of determines what the production in it [should] be, not something that was very specific, but nonetheless something that had on its walls,

57 Picture taken from Mroczka, Paul (2013).

58 Picture taken from “West Side Story images WSS on Broadway wallpaper and background photos” (2006-2016).

59 With metonymic space, I refer to how the economy of a given setting allows that very few elements suffice to clarify changes in time and space in the Elizabethan and Jacobean fashion. For instance, in Goold’s *Macbeth*, a big ballroom is used to record the scene at Forres, the banquet scene, Macbeth’s second encounter with the Witches and some of the scenes at Dunsinane Castle. The only indications of time and space changes the viewers are given are certain icons, indices and verbal references.
seats, windows, its floors more than what you [would have got] in a studio. [We wanted something] that had a kind of visual, and tactile quality, a history, an atmosphere that you could use to set the production in (My emphasis). (2016)

Doran’s example when recording *Macbeth* is followed by the other films too. All of them are recorded at specific locations that, in different ways, meet these demands. Drama theoreticians – such as Joanne Tompkins (2012) – specialized in the study and appliance of site-specific performance – have written about ‘site’ in its relationship to the concepts of the ‘host’ and the ‘ghost.’ These two concepts refer to how the spatial configuration of a production organizes the negotiation of meaning between the history of the site – host – and the elements added to the place for such production – ghost –. The confluences of these two variables in these films compose the theatrical setting, which will be fully explored and deconstructed in filmic terms. In agreement with this, paradoxical as it sounds, film language enhances the theatrical nature of the pieces. As Bazin says:

The more the cinema intends to be faithful to the text and to its theatrical requirements, the more of necessity must it delve deeper into its own language. The best translation is that which demonstrates a close intimacy with the genius of both languages and, likewise, mastering both. (2005: 116-117)

As already mentioned, this cinematizing of theatre language does not cut the language of the theatre down to size. On the contrary, the films do not at all renounce the classical verse speaking from their stage counterparts. The expectations on the performers do not just have to do with speaking but also with the physical training of Shakespearean actresses/actors. Such expectations can be perhaps summarized with Patsy Rodenburgh’s list of bullet points that make such a performer:

- To speak Shakespeare you have to be fit.
- Not just physically fit, but throughout the body, breath, voice and speech muscles.
- You have to be fit intellectually and emotionally and awake in your spirit.
- You have to be passionate, political and curious.
- You have to keep up with a writer who operates through his words and forms on every human level. (2002: 13)

All these acting rules relate to the need to become verbally and physically fluent and communicative individuals capable of handling Shakespeare’s verbosity with facility. As we will see in due course, Wyver, Doran and Goold seem to agree that general audiences are perfectly capable of understanding Shakespeare’s words and there is nothing elitist about distilling its language through the small screen.
In this sense, we can always go back to John Barton’s statements that it is the actors who need to clarify what the text means to the audiences. As he says:

It’s so easy for an audience not to listen, particularly with a knotty and difficult text. I may be cynical but I don’t believe most people really listen to Shakespeare in the theatre unless the actors make them do so. I certainly don’t. I know that it’s too easy for me to get the general gist and feeling of a speech, but just because I get the gist I often don’t listen to the lines in detail. Not unless the actors make me. (2014: 7)

Arguably, the text will be understood if the actors know their craft and manage to harmonize the iambic pentameter with the breaking down of the verse into thoughts and ideas conveyed while performing. In fact, if the reader watches the films, he will notice that the verse speaking is somewhat slower than it would have been in live performance. Therefore, the films exhibit a preoccupation with intelligibility as well as with preserving the theatrical values of the productions.

1.2.4. Hybrid Television Shakespeare Film: Centrifugal Movements

Hybrid television Shakespeare films are works of television film that foreground their combinations of the languages of theatre and film. As my analysis will try to prove, these media operate in centrifugal ways within the televisual frame that shelters them altogether. They collide and intermingle by way of combining theatrical environments with real world locations. Sometimes one medium displaces the other. At other times, the medium that was displaced returns and takes its initial predominance. Very frequently, the filmic frame finds itself in a state of slippage, i.e. an undefined space between both languages without sorting out their differences. Curiously, very often, one language – film or theatre – is enhanced by the other and vice versa. Also, sometimes one is used to explore the other – e.g. Hamlet uses a handheld camera to record the play-within-the-play – or serves as simulacrum of the other. At the same time, the films embrace many film resources and film genres while, as the Impact Case Study affirms, arguably, they also manage to retain the ‘core’ or the ‘essence’ of the original stage performance.

The theatrical environments bring about their site-specificity and the interaction of the ‘host’ and ‘ghost’ that I mentioned above. In addition, what defines these sites is that, very much in the fashion of Elizabethan theatre, they are not so specific as to clearly define the exact context of the performance. They convey this sense of ‘vivid neutrality’ that Wyver has spoken about. An additional feature related to this neutrality is that, as I suggested, the sites retain the metonymic expressiveness of the Elizabethan
stage, i.e. we can trust that the audience will not need very specific props nor furniture but language and ‘make-believe’ will suffice to determine context, time or place. However, other more private and concretized areas and real locations are used in contrast with these large metonymic spaces. Although the site and the unapologetically ‘Shakespearean’ acting help approaching the filming in theatrical terms, following Bazin’s advise, the film narratives, as I will try to demonstrate, constantly turn toward the cinematic language.

Although I have tried to separate my definition from any use of ‘hybrid’ as an umbrella term, I am also interested in exploring the plasticity of hybrid television Shakespeare films. Regarding this, I will be observing how they employ a series of filmic modes, genres and languages that are likely to be used in television film in general and screen Shakespeare in particular. Thus, my intention is to observe how the coexistence of genres undermines notions of purity within the films. In fact, the textual plurality in the films renders them centrifugal in their assemblage. With ‘centrifugal,’ I am referring to Bakhtin’s definition:

At the time when major divisions of the poetic genres were developing under the influence of the unifying, centralizing, centripetal forces of verbal-ideological life, the novel – and those artistic-prose genres that gravitate toward it – was being historically shaped by the current of decentralizing, centrifugal forces. (2014: 272-273)

Again, I am applying Bakhtin’s study on the novel to recorded theatre. Yet, I think the comparison makes sense as hybrid television Shakespeare film and its dynamics fit within the multiplicity of discourse tackled in Bakhtin’s work.

Therefore, to fully have a view of the possibilities of this type of hybridity, I am presenting the three different levels that determine the centrifugal impetus of these films. On the first level, the films combine the languages of theatre and film. While doing so, they make use of varied modes to record Shakespeare on television and film. As I will show in section 3.1, critics have elaborated certain categorizations related to Shakespeare on film as well as on television. Broadly speaking, these so-called modes include the filmic mode, the realistic mode, the theatrical mode, the periodizing mode as well as several other modes specifically used to describe types of televisual approaches to Shakespeare such as those in the BBC Shakespeare Series. On a second level, the audiovisual language employed is highly inflected and very often makes use of specific conventions and syntagmatic structures from film genres and genre films. On a third level, these hybrid performances extend their reach to transmedia storytelling and, as I will try to demonstrate in Chapter Nine, cross the fourth wall that separates performers and audiences in ways that do not reduplicate but modify the communicative impulse produced by the
Elizabethan theatre-going experience. Although I said that I wanted to distinguish hybrid television Shakespeare film from other types of hybridity, I will also analyze to what extent this specific kind of hybridity can be regarded as a wide-ranging concept that transcends the screen and moves across the fourth wall toward other media and platforms. As Wyver says, many creative artists can discover ‘imaginative and demanding and surprising and occasionally shocking ways of making classic drama leap form the screen and mean something very real in the lives of audiences’ (2009). Thus, an additional feature in hybrid television Shakespeare film will be related to convergence culture and transmedia.
2. JOHN WYVER AND ILLUMINATIONS MEDIA
2.1. John Wyver: Early Life and Career

John Frederick Wyver’s (12 May 1955, Bridge, Kent; see Figure 1 below) first continuous contact with cinema took place at the Gulbenkian Film Theatre at Kent University (Canterbury), where numerous films used to be projected for the students as well as the local population. As Wyver says, ‘(t)his is how I became hooked on [Jean Luc] Godard’s films and on cinema in general’ (2016). At university, he read Philosophy and Politics and formed part of the Film Society as well as the Drama Society. Thus, students’ theatre and university filmic impetus were the contexts where he took his first steps in production and performing arts.

After he finished university in 1977, Wyver applied for a job vacancy as a journalist in the *Time Out* magazine. ‘Really, almost as a joke, I applied for this job,’ says Wyver, who did not really think he had a chance of succeeding (ibid). To Wyver’s own surprise, the magazine offered him a writing position and he moved to London. Despite his lack of training in journalism, he spent the next three-and-a-half years writing about television. His work consisted of interviewing television personalities, previewing upcoming programmes, and writing articles and reviews on them. As Wyver points out:

I suppose that what motivated that was a concern or an argument to take television as seriously as other cultural forms, to develop a type of criticism that was as informed and engaged and as thoughtful as the one that the magazine in other formats applied to cinema, to theatre and to music. Because I think then and still now there is – particularly in this country, but I think elsewhere – a tradition of writing about television which essentially treats it as a joke or

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60 This section has been carried out mainly paying attention to the following sources: Illuminations Media (2016), Wyver (2000), Wyver (2008), Wyver (2013), Wyver (2015b), Wyver (2016), Hindle (2015).

61 Picture taken from *University of Westminster – Academia.edu* (2016).
as something to be the focus of other sort of comical writing, a writing that is about the subject or the people but not about the form of television. Of course, there’s more serious criticism than that but [what I have referred to is] a very dominant sort of mainstream form of writing about television. I wanted to understand it with the same level of seriousness [that is] applied to cinema. (Ibid)

At this point in time the groundbreaking disciplines of cultural studies and film studies were bringing up the methodological tools to apply this serious approach to television studies. In fact, Wyver’s drive coincides with Raymond Williams’ interest in popular culture as well as the academic impetus of the Screen Journal and other journals that started treating popular culture from an academic standpoint.

### 2.2. Illuminations Media

In 1982, British television saw the origins of Channel Four. Until then, there had only been three channels: two BBC channels and one ITV channel. The emergence of Channel Four facilitated the split between producers and broadcasters. Until then, the different heads of departments had been responsible for broadcasting. Often, the different broadcasts had been a personal identity card to the heads of departments. What Channel Four did was to stimulate the setting up of several independent production companies. The whole framework of the television industry was, thus, turned upside down as it liberated entrepreneurs to mount their own television businesses.

Wyver left his job at *Time Out* and went to set up Illuminations Media – named after Walter Benjamin’s book *Illuminations* – in association with Geoff Dunlop. Dunlop and Wyver began several collaborations with Channel Four. Their interests were focused on ‘the how, the why and which of the arts were presented on television’ (ibid). To their minds, the way in which the TV arts had been presented was too traditional, unexciting, and conservative. On this subject, in relationship to TV drama, Wyver clarifies:

> I don’t want to be so dismissive. It was a particular kind of approach. Some of it is very strong and very vivid and very significant. But generally, we thought it was too traditional. We wanted to make films about contemporary culture. (Ibid)

Most of Dunlop and Wyver’s work then focused on documentary programmes about the visual arts, cinema, dance, and digital media but they did not do any recorded theatre in the beginning. As Wyver says:
[A] lot of [our work consisted of] trying to find new forms, new ways of presenting the arts on television. We did a lot of that for Channel Four as the BBC started working for independent producers.’ (ibid)

Thus, in the 1990s, the relationship between Illuminations Media and BBC achieved a high level of consolidation. BBC commissioned the Tx. Documentary programmes. Most of these documentaries had to do with music, painting and arts in general.

Illuminations Media does not have a specific set of steps that we may regard as a working style. Nevertheless, it is worth highlighting some of the activities carried out by this edgy group that intends to maximize the potential of technology to enhance television narratives. Apart from their work in recorded performance, they have been involved in the phenomena of ‘inhabited television,’ which intends to break up with the hierarchical one-to-one communication system in television in order to collectivize the televisual experience to the utmost.62 Apart from this, this production company has recently undertaken the task of restoring a number of television theatre programmes that have been unavailable for a while.63 All in all, Illuminations is concerned with the applicability of technology to realize the arts on the small screen and on different media.

2.3. John Wyver and Academia

In addition to this, Wyver is not just a practician but also works as a researcher at Westminster University. His articles and publications focus on the fields of art and documentary, theatre, and general arts on the television screen. Specifically, he has written about Henry Moore, artist and television celebrity who appeared on several documentary films between the 1950s and the 1980s. He has also

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62 Illuminations Media began the series The Net (BBC2) in April 1994. This series facilitated the interaction and correspondence between the creators and about six hundred correspondents that were interested in networks and computers. As Wyver says, ‘[I]t was (…) the beginning of a unique and influential dialogue with the programme viewers’ (2000). In 1997, inhabited television was tried out with the third series of The Net. Now, Illuminations started working with BT Laboratories, Sony and BBC to build up The Mirror, which consisted of ‘six inter-linked virtual worlds.’ These worlds were connected to the themes tackled in The Net. Collective discussions were held by around a total of 2,000 registered users during the seven weeks taken by The Mirror. Later, the project Heaven and Hell – Live developed out of The Net but it incorporated live broadcast technology. Each of the participants in this event had an avatar. On August 19, 1997, this event involved fifty minutes, one-hundred-and-fifty users and was watched by twenty thousand people. To these projects, others like Avatar Farm followed. See Wyver (2000).

63 In 2013, Illuminations Media released a restoration of An Age of Kings (Michael Hayes, 1960) on DVD. Recently and, by the way, coinciding with the Brexit referendum, the company released The Wars of the Roses (John Barton and Peter Hall, 1965).
written about television and the arts in Great Britain in his book from 2007. In collaboration with Dr Amanda Wrigley, Wyver has been developing the three-year research project *Screen Plays: Theatre Plays on Television* (2011-2015) financed by Westminster University. The website that collects all the findings of this project presents several articles and research pieces about television plays that have been taking place in Great Britain since 1930. More than 3,000 television pieces are tackled in this large-scale research. As Wyver and Wrigley point out:

Concerned to establish and explore the specificity of the television medium, academic engagement with television drama has to date marginalised theatre plays on television and to a significant degree dismissed them as being… theatrical. (2012)

Wyver’s concern for the accusations against theatricality materializes into this written work on the problematic relationship between drama and the BBC public funding. As he continues in a series of different papers, the commonplace that theatre and television are incompatible things needs to be challenged (2008, 2013, 2016).

On a different level, Wyver’s inclination to documentary seems to determine the first *Macbeth* by Doran. The film was shot as a fly-on-the-wall documentary – aka *cinéma vérité* film – to rediscover the most surprising and shocking elements in the stage production and to give the viewer the sense that nothing could be taken for granted in this filmic narrative regarding whatever knowledge she/he may have of the original playtext. It reconfigures the meta-theatricality of the play in filmic terms while appealing to the horizons of expectations of the viewers who had been shocked by the many reports, news broadcasts and documentary films on the Gulf War and all the violent conflicts that had been broadcast on the small screen during the 1990s.

Wyver’s involvement in the academia, to my mind, leads to two phenomena that can be – and are being – potentially fruitful for British television. First, a practicing professional who works part-time as a scholar can help enhancing the communication channels of culture in practical as well in theoretical approaches to cultural analysis. The television school at Westminster University, amongst other things, leads students to theoretical as well as to practical ways of approaching television.

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64 See Wyver 2007.

65 See Wyver and Wrigley’s blog: [https://screenplaystv.wordpress.com](https://screenplaystv.wordpress.com).
However, Wyver is already a well-established media professional who keeps one foot in the academia. This means that Wyver’s interests are not simply focused on profit-based production policies but he seems willing enough to try out different ways of recording plays on television and exploring the many artistic roads available to film theatre on the small screen. The second consequence of Wyver’s double involvement in the professional world and the world of theory is that, working as researcher at Westminster University, gives Wyver access to television and film archives that would be otherwise restricted. Therefore, the amount of information and technical resources available for Wyver is, thanks to the situation, much bigger and the access easier than in other cases would be.

As a blogger and twitterer, Wyver also does a lot of extra-academia public diffusion of commentary, analysis and updating on British theatre, television and the arts. Much of this commentary is made through the miscellaneous Illuminations Media daily blog. There, Wyver keeps various followers updated as for upcoming productions, recordings, and, as if filling up a public journal, he generates a level of commitment from readers, academics, and researchers interested in subjects connected to theatre, television, live cinema screenings, films, television programmes, reactions to general comments on works made by Illuminations Media, television arts, and debates on the public funding of arts – or, rather, lack of funding – on television.

2.4. Directors Collaborating with Wyver

2.4.1. Gregory Doran

Doran (1958 – ) became Assistant Director at the RSC in 1989 and then became Associate Director in 1996. Subsequently, he became Chief Associate Director (2006) and, eventually, Artistic Director (2012). Apart from this, he has been awarded no less than five Honorary Doctorates by five different British universities. His vast theatre work includes Death of a Salesman, Cardenio, Morte D’Arthur, Twelfth Night, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Love’s Labour’s Lost, Antony and Cleopatra, The Witch of Edmonton, Coriolanus, All’s Well That Ends Well, The Taming of the Shrew, Much Ado About Nothing, The Winter’s Tale, Othello, The Merchant of Venice, King John, Timon of Athens, Henry VIII, Venus and Adonis, Titus Andronicus, The Odyssey, etc. His filmic work includes the hybrid productions I am studying in this PhD dissertation as well as The Winter’s Tale (1981), Richard II (2013), Henry IV Part 1 and Henry IV Part 2 (2015) and Henry V (2016). In addition, he has recently collaborated with Wyver for the staging and the live broadcast of Shakespeare Live! From the RSC (2016). This live event was transmitted by BBC on Saturday 23 April 2016 and, following suit with the
work carried out by Illuminations Media, combines elements from film – mainly in the form of clips with Shakespeare songs, Joseph Fennes’ touring around Shakespeare’s emblematic sites at Stratford-upon-Avon and short scenes from many recent RSC stage productions – and extracts from staged Shakespeare performances, comic sketches – such as the actors discussing the right stress for the ‘To be or not to be’ line –, Ian McKellen’s Thomas More speech pitying the foreigners and its clear resonance with the Syrian refugees as well as a series of musical numbers evoking the contents of many Shakespeare plays and sonnets.

His written work includes his account of a South African production of *Titus Andronicus* written in collaboration with Antony Sher. Apart from this, Doran collaborated with the Spanish playwright Antonio Álamo in the re-imagining of *Cardenio*, a play based on the encounter of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza with Cardenio at Sierra Morena in Miguel de Cervantes’ novel; reconstructed taking Lewis Theobald’s *Double Falsehood* (1727) as a point of departure and attributed to Shakespeare and John Fletcher. In his work, *Shakespeare’s Lost Play (In Search of Cardenio)* (2011), Doran accounts for the long process of reconstruction undertaken to bring *Cardenio* to the British stage at the Swan Theatre (Stratford-upon-Avon, 2011).  

2.4.2. Rupert Goold

Rupert Goold (1972 –) is current Artistic Director at the Almeida Theatre (London). As a drama student at Cambridge University, he admits that his main creative inspiration was Jonathan Miller’s post-colonial approach to direct *The Tempest*. As Goold says, rather than venerating Peter Brook’s *The Empty Space*, as most young directors did, his ‘handbook’ was Miller’s *Subsequent Performances* (Trueman 2014). All in all, his identification with Miller’s work comes to point at Goold’s advocacy for strong directorial intervention on classic plays. Essentially, this is what constitutes his main difference with Gregory Doran’s directing style, which tends to rely much more on the Ensemble of actors and their common readings of the text in strict seating sessions of rehearsals. Whereas Doran’s approach is much more consciously focused on the clues found in the text, according to Patrick Stewart, Goold has a strange ability to approach scenes somewhat out of focus and, at the same time,

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66 See [https://www.rsc.org.uk/about-us/whos-who/gregory-doran-artistic-director](https://www.rsc.org.uk/about-us/whos-who/gregory-doran-artistic-director)
tremendously in focus. As far as I see, Goold seems to be influenced by Branagh’s use of film genre conventions to frame Shakespeare on the screen. In fact, it is frequent, as we will see, that Goold abundantly interpolates scenes in Shakespeare’s films.

As for Goold’s theatrical professional career, between 2005 and 2013 he was Artistic Director to Headlong Theatre. One of his most significant hits was Faustus, which he co-wrote with Ben Power (2007). This production intended to be a fresh adaptation that would question Christopher Marlowe’s text and that, at the same time, would retain the poetry, danger and controversy that the original production might have offered to Elizabethan playgoers. Subsequently, between 2009 and 2012, he worked as Associate Director at the RSC and directed Shakespeare productions like The Tempest in 2007. He began his work at the Almeida Theatre, which ‘allows artistic freedom and, with only 325 seats, enables the kind of risky, swaggering programming he champions’ (Trueman 2014). At the Almeida, he directed Stephen Adly Guirguis’ The Last Days of Judas Iscariot (2008). However, his first hit as Almeida Theatre director was American Psycho: A New Musical Thriller, based on Bret Easton Ellis’ novel. In 2014, Goold directed Mike Bartlett’s King Charles III. His work on Shakespeare includes King Lear (2008), contextualized in the 1980s Liverpool, or The Merchant of Venice (2011), contextualized in Las Vegas. His 2007 production of Macbeth won him popular acclaim and it was taken to the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York. To contextualize this Macbeth, Goold took Antonia Fraser’s Gunpowder Plot into account. Also, he employed a series of political intertexts that would justify the casting of Patrick Stewart as a 60-year-old Macbeth. Having a veteran Macbeth would bring a depth and a ‘very obdurate, slow-thinking, stiff, granitic’ quality to the part that seemed to fit within a Soviet context (Dickson 2016).

67 See Interview with Patrick Stewart in DVD edition of Goold’s Macbeth.

68 As I will explain in Chapters Six, Seven and Eight, Goold makes use of filmic iconography. Additionally, like Kenneth Branagh in Hamlet (1996), he is given to insert parts of the narrative not specific in the playtext. In Macbeth (2010), the celebrated ‘Stasi Montage’ constitutes a major interpolation where Goold shows the many state crimes committed by Macbeth as soon as he accessed the throne. Thus, Macduff’s laments for dying orphans and widows in his interview with Malcolm are shown on the screen. Likewise, the Witches are the Bleeding Sergeant’s surgeons and kill him as soon as Duncan and his retinue abandon him. In Richard II (2012), Goold also displays a spectacular opening montage, another series of interpolations in which we see Harry Bolingbroke (Rory Kinear) and Thomas Mowray (James Puferoy) training for their upcoming single fight at Coventry. In the meantime, one of Richard’s attendants is shown painting a portrait of St. Sebastian and this particularly mystic and sensitive Richard (Ben Wishaw) displays a measure of erotic affection for the model as well as for the painter. Perhaps following suit with Christopher Marlowe’s treatment of subversive homosexuality in Edward II, the Queen surprises King Richard toying with his friends. Although Richard knows how to keep appearances up, Goold introduces an additional narrative which makes his connections with Scroop, Bushy and Green much deeper and dramatically effective than other productions do.
Recently, Goold’s Almeida production of Richard III has been screened in cinemas around the world. His work on film includes Macbeth (2010), Richard II (2012) as well as True Story (2015). As an interview with Tom Teodorczuk shows, Goold’s recent attempt to try his chances in Hollywood with True Story are indebted to his Shakespeare work on television film and the filmic sensitivity that his stage work has been showing (2015).

2.5. General Features of Hybrid Television Shakespeare Film

As already mentioned and as Wyver has argued, there is not a single Illuminations Media approach to record Shakespeare on television or the stage (Hindle 2015: 283). Nevertheless, there are certain minimal practical patterns that have been constant in the productions of Macbeth (2001), Hamlet (2009), Macbeth (2010) and Julius Caesar (2012). Firstly, the films are totally dependent on original nearly uncut stage productions. Except for Julius Caesar, they were recorded after their respective closings had taken place. What was commonsensical regarding the film productions was that, despite their lack of practical experience in film, the directors would be the ‘primary authors’ of the adaptations (Wyver 2016). In addition, the respective casts of the different productions would also repeat the experience on the small screen. They would be the ones who understood ‘the kind of vision of what the piece should be far better than any other else ever would’ (ibid). Except for Julius Caesar, they all had been touring away from the stage where they had been premièred, so the cast were in real command of the plays by the time of the recording. Likewise, the embarrassment of having to shoot the films in record time – which, as Willis’ book demonstrates, was part of the problem with the BBC Shakespeare Series – would be considerably lessened because there was a stage precedent to rely upon. In fact, overall there seems to be consensus amongst the actors interviewed that to adapt their work for the camera was a highly satisfactory experience.

However, we should pay attention to the directors’ lack of film training and how this problem was sorted out. Doran admits that he is not a film director but that he and his casts ‘primarily kn[ew] how to make things work on a stage, and that they h[ad] to make adjustments to [the audiovisual language] for these performance films’ (Sarah Olive 2015). The same thing could be said of Goold by the time he started filming Macbeth. Because of this, an essential component in these productions was the reliance on the work carried out by the Director of Photography (DoP). In fact, whereas the core of

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69 See https://almeida.co.uk/artistic-director.
the productions and all the elements derived from the stage movement and characterization were indebted to the stage director, the different visual qualities of the films were totally in the hands of different DoPs. Even if the directors had in their minds everything necessary to storyboard the production, they needed an expert hand to actualize what they had in mind. This determined the strong team-working awareness which vertebrates through the different films, although, as we will see in Chapter Nine, perhaps this idea has been further emphasized in the “Making-Off of *Julius Caesar*” (2012). As Wyver confirms, ‘if you get it half right, you bring that sort of team working together’ in any production (2016). Additionally, the conjoined efforts of different DoPs and stage directors have produced a dialogical result that has brought out the best of theatre and television film altogether, especially considering the scarce budgets the productions were provided with. This confirms the acknowledgement that relatively failed Shakespeare television productions, such as the *BBC Shakespeare Series*, may simply not have been carried out under satisfactory working dynamics. The intermedial road opted for in these films leaves no doubt that hybridity goes as far as to involve the voices of many different areas of expertise.

The third constant element that would make a difference with previous recorded plays was that the DoP would work with a single camera instead of multiple cameras. As mentioned in the introduction, multiple cameras had been the standard procedure for recorded television theatre and, as I already said, Warner’s *Richard II* had been recorded in this fashion. This single-camera approach became the main vehicle for hybridity and gave way to this type of filming. The different filmic organization into isolated shots would consistently establish a rupture with the traditional multiple-camera system that had always involved a high degree of dependence from the studio policies and more established ways of working and shaping the visual narrative. Thus, we need to emphasize the dialogical interrelation of technology and theatrical text in these specific pieces. In many ways, these productions are catching up with what

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70 As Wyver says: ‘Partly they needed someone to realize the perhaps beautiful, perhaps grainy or whatever images they wanted to make, to sort of be able to achieve the sort of images they had in their heads even though they had not the sort of technical capabilities or abilities to create it. But almost they needed somebody to hold their hands through the basics of filmmaking. I mean simple things like not crossing the line unless you wanted to make a particular statement, how a shot should be if you have people round the table (…) how and where you place the camera, how were people to look, how the disposition of the people would be in relation to the camera and the table. And so, a good DoP knows how to do that. So, he would bring that knowledge and share that with the director. It seemed really important, if we were going to work with a stage director. Then we were going to pair [the stage directors] with the right DoP and the right editor. And if we got those relationships right, then pretty much the rest of the things would be OK’ (2016).

71 See *Julius Caesar* (2012).
has been a tendency in British television drama since the 1960s and since Ken Loach’s and Dennis Potter’s films were released. Yet, as we will see in the following analyses, Wyver’s stance resists the notion that film narratives need to be totally de-theatricalized to be good television plays. Rather, he seems to be following suit with Bazin’s idea that theatre needs to embrace the language of film without entirely renouncing its own language.

The fourth feature in the productions is site-specificity, i.e. the use of real locations. Such locations would be chosen in agreement with specific directorial requests and necessities. All in all, what was pursued was the many times mentioned ‘vivid neutrality,’ as, so Wyver says, Doran calls it (ibid). As Wyver explains, when planning for Macbeth, Doran was certain that he did not want to shoot the film on a television studio using the same sets that had been used in the theatre, but an entirely different setting that would invigorate the filmic mise-en-scène while not losing the strange quality and symbolic theatricality of the context.

A fifth element of hybridity is the resulting differentiation between two main codes. The films oppose the language of the stage performance to the language of location. Whereas sections of the films made on exterior locations provide the surprising element of stark, hard and gritty reality, they also replace the most metonymic aspects of the stage language. Nevertheless, the interest in these films lies precisely in the confrontation of metonymic – staged-based – and metaphoric – more purely filmic – ways of dramatic performance. An additional element of excitement is constituted by how the text clashes with an environment for which it was not written. Additionally, theatrical spaces are more complex when we consider that these spaces have been very often built within real locations turned into theatrical installations. This is the case with the Oriental Centre, St. Joseph’s Church, the ballroom at Welbeck Abbey, etc. Following Tompkins’ concepts on the matter, the ‘ghost’ of the setting would be visited by a theatrical-filmic ‘host’ that reconceived the space in audiovisual terms. Therefore, as I will be constantly referring to the fact that one specific area is employed as a metonymic theatrical space and that different liminal surrounding areas work as more private or domestic spaces. We should be cautious in this respect and avoid any precipitate conclusions that label the metonymic areas as ‘theatrical’ and the mentioned liminal spaces as ‘filmic.’ Certainly, clear-cut correspondences will not reflect the transversality and the dynamics of confluence of the films.
2.6. Wyver’s Theatre Works on the Screen

In the following sections, I will be analyzing various productions carried out by Wyver. These productions are related to the recording of an amount of theatre and literary pieces on the television – and, exceptionally, the big – screen. With this, I expect to acquaint the reader with an amount of previous and subsequent work accomplished by the producer to obtain a general map of his oeuvre.


A first contact with performance in television took place through the Tx. filming of T. S. Eliot’s The Waste Land. As I said in the introduction, the film was directed by Warner and starred by Shaw. The original idea with this film was to present the poem as a twenty-five-minute piece of television drama, not as traditional recorded theatre. What came up from this project was a film version of The Waste Land, which featured each of the four parts of the poem in different film studios granting a lot of importance to the camera and the different background tonalities revealing the mood expected from the original text.


While The Waste Land was in process, Shaw and Warner were staging Shakespeare’s Richard II for the National Theatre. In this celebrated production, Shaw was playing King Richard, which was intended as a great cross-gender theatrical statement. Warner, Shaw and Illuminations Media started thinking about how to translate this stage production to television. Since in the 1990s BBC was still heavily committed to bringing theatre productions to television – see Interview with Wyver (2016) –, it was comparatively easy to receive the funding for the film. As Wyver says, ‘we hold onto the essence – whatever that means, but that’s the phrase we used – of the production, then tried to find a dynamic way of presenting that on television’ (ibid).

The film makes wide use of filmic resources, although the interior spaces where it is shot totally recalled the metonymic and symbolic theatrical origins of the production. As an instance of this, the Coventry encounter between Thomas Mowbray and Harry Bolingbroke is sorted out by having the lord appellants leave the set and bringing two actors waving clothes to simulate the horses’ galloping in

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72 The film was broadcast on BBC2 on March 22, 1997.
combat. The audience is invited to believe that the horses are about to clash and, thus, the simplicity of the theatre stage is reproduced on the television screen. Yet, film language predominates thanks to the freedom brought up by the camera.

The film opens with a meta-filmic display that uses montage to feature the camera operator handling the clapperboard. In the meantime, we see several close-ups of the praying Richard while the character’s voice is heard pronouncing the first appeal to John of Gaunt (Graham Crowden) in coordination with the opening credits. Within the confines of this reduced space, the camera engages with exchange shots that define the character’s emotions, silences and nuances. Details, such as little encounters between seemingly unimportant characters whispering to each other while highly pitched scenes take place are interspersed through the filmic narrative. This demonstrates that the filmmakers’ intentions go beyond the mere capturing of an archive performance.

An additional example of hybridity in this film comes in the scene where Bolingbroke (Richard Bremmer) meets York (Donald Sinden) in the forest. Branches and trunks of real trees are arrayed around the studio, thus clarifying that this is still a theatre play, although the camera performance mostly articulates itself in the filmic mode. In the following scene, the camera engages in dynamics that frame the exchange between Bolingbroke in a circular camera movement in low angle as he lectures Bushy (Nicholas Gecks) and Green (Henry Ian Cusick) before their executions take place. They are observed in high-angle as they receive Bolingbroke’s verdict. These shots and other mid and close-up shots present the features of this utterly ambitious while tormented Bolingbroke. A further tour-de-force is appreciated at Richard’s return to England, in which the studio floor is completely covered with white rocks and illuminated by a white-light background screen which provides a commentary on Richard’s divine pretensions and soaring imagination.

Curiously, this film production is the only one keeping the many repeated challenges on cousin Aumerle (Julian Rhind-Tutt) by Fitzwater (unknown), Harry Percy (Kevin McKidd) and the rest of the nobles who throw all their gauntlets on each other right before Richard’s trial. This scene is sorted out through a series of exchange shots in a little room that seemingly reproduces a small-scale version of the House of Parliament, where the different members sit in opposing rows.

However, what I regard as the scene of highest import is the last one. As soon as Richard in his cell hears music playing, a silent insert shows feet walking on the water channels towards Richard’s cell. Other little takes are included as Richard carries on with the lines in voice-over. One shot presents
Richard’s hand holding the killer’s knife. A continuing insert presents the killer stabbed by Richard and then the King defends himself and kills a second murderer. A watery wide shot shows Richard just about to run into another lord. After they struggle, the Lord Sexton manages to kill Richard, who falls on the stream in slow motion. Then we instantly cut to the ending credits while the paining Bolingbroke leans over Richard’s body and kisses the King on the mouth.

73 Figures 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 are screen captions from Warner’s Richard II.
2.6.3. Phyllipa Lloyd: *Gloriana, A Film* (2000)

This film derives from Phyllipa Lloyd’s staging of Benjamin Britten’s *Gloriana* by the Opera North. As Wyver says, this production:

[W]as also a mix of shooting on the stage and in a studio. And again that fuelled our interest into re-imagining private and public scenes, and also backstage scenes. That was an important part in moving or developing these ideas. (2016)

This performance assembles the cast for this production at the Grand Theatre in Leeds, where the camera freely moves exploring the relationship between the backstage and the stage – see figures 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16 –. The film opens with backstage preparations for the performance. The star Josephine Barstow is late and is seen getting ready in her dressing room – see figure 11 –. Private scenes are recorded within the backstage and we can see Elizabeth gossiping with Lord Cecil (Eric Roberts) about Lord Essex (Tom Randle), and Lady Rich (Susannah Glanville). All in all, the film employs a set of cinematic techniques such as voice-over and constantly plays with the meta-theatrical dimension of the whole narrative, thus emphasizing Elizabeth’s role as a monarch on the world stage. Additionally, many scenes are shot in specific sets arranged in film studios and even in Barstow’s changing room, where she addresses her final lines through a mirror shot as she removes her make-up – see figure 17 –.

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74 Image taken from OperaFresh (2011).

75 Image taken from “Benjamin Britten's Gloriana Opera North.”
2.6.4. Collaboration with Gregory Doran

In the light of the results obtained in these productions, Doran and Antony Sher contacted Wyver when they decided to start the recording of the stage production of Macbeth. Very quickly, Wyver managed to obtain the sponsorship and the financial support from Channel Four to make the film. Doran was interested, as already mentioned, in discovering a type of location that had a history of its own; a site-specificity that might reinforce the signification processes in the theatre production for the filmic narrative. In this way, Doran’s initiative is responsible of the idea of finding a liberating theatrical space that would keep the dialogical options for the film open. As soon as Doran discovered the London’s Roundhouse, he was convinced that the venue was the place where Macbeth would be recorded.

Thus, Macbeth was regarded as a great success by the viewership and the critics alike. There were two important conclusions derived from this production. The first conclusion was that a film like that one had been achieved on a comparatively cheap budget. As Wyver indicates:

I think we believed that we had found a new kind of form (...) Nobody had done Shakespeare on television like that before. [It] was still very dominated by BBC television Shakespeare, which was more than twenty years older and which was also done in a very traditional studio setting. These were overlaid unremarkable productions. And

76 Figures 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 are screen captions from Lloyd’s Gloriana.

77 Referring to Doran’s Hamlet (2009), Wyver says: ‘We didn’t want to make a radically different screen adaptation of it. But, we did want to find a visual language – a screen language – which would make it accessible and engaging for a contemporary television audience’ (Hindle 2015: 282).
that had put people off from trying to do Shakespeare on television. We thought we'd found a new form, a more
dynamic way of doing it. (2016)

Nevertheless, this powerful hiatus between theatre recording and film achieved by Illuminations Media
did not satisfy the financial expectations generated after the first filming. After Macbeth, they tried to
film Othello as well as Doran’s production of Antony and Cleopatra starred by Sir Patrick Stewart and
Harriet Walter. None of these productions were financed by Channel Four and the team soon discovered
that there was no interest whatsoever in financing any more of these films.

The situation changed when, in 2008, Doran started rehearsing Hamlet with David Tennant, the
star of Doctor Who, and Sir Patrick Stewart, who had been recently popularly acclaimed for his starring
role of Jean-Luc Picard in Star Trek. In the beginning, as Wyver and Doran had received a ‘lukewarm
response from the BBC’ (ibid), they decided to record the play live on stage as the Royal Ballet and the
Royal Opera House had started doing. The whole purpose of this was to get rid of the concerns and
complications of finding a broadcaster. What prevented this production from being the first live theatre
broadcast in the United Kingdom was that one member of the cast refused permission to be recorded in
performance. After the stage production had done its period at the Novello Theatre in London, Tennant,
Doran and Wyver decided they should struggle to preserve it. By the closing of the production in 2009,
BBC, PBS and Japanese television quickly offered the financial support to make the film.

As for Julius Caesar, the BBC wanted the film production to coincide with the Olympic Games
in 2012. The biggest challenge to respond to in this exceptional production would be how to conceive
the filmic narrative in theatrical and filmic terms when the production was not even ready for the stage.
The response was found within the text itself. This Roman tragedy clearly emphasizes the theatrical
character of the public scenes, so Doran decided to shoot them on the stage and then shoot the private
scenes on location.78 The private scenes were conceived as ‘behind-the-scene scenes’ (ibid). Therefore,
the processes of stage rehearsal and film shooting went in parallel.

2.6.5. Collaboration with Rupert Goold

There is one feature that is shared by Goold and Doran in their respective productions of Macbeth
and Hamlet. As already mentioned, the feature employed is the use of espionage and surveillance as a
filmic and meta-filmic device in the recordings. Whether Goold was inspired in his use of surveillance

78 Doran confirms this intention in “Making-Off of Julius Caesar” in the DVD edition (2012).
by Doran’s film or no, what is true is that Goold was, as Wyver says, an avid reader of the blogs which explained everything about the production of *Hamlet*. Whether Goold was influenced by Doran’s idea or not is for us to speculate about, although it is inevitable to think that Goold must have paid attention to this feature of Doran’s production.

Although in the beginning Stewart had not been very interested in doing *Hamlet* for the small screen, he was so impressed by the results of the stage production that he spoke to Goold about translating their *Macbeth* production of 2007 to the screen too. Of the four films, this is the one that has received the highest budget and the most flexible timing. As Illuminations Media had already experienced with *Hamlet* and the other *Macbeth*, they sought to use another location following the ‘vivid neutrality’ principle. Welbeck Abbey, with its network of tunnels and galleries, appeared as the most appropriate location to shoot the film.\(^79\) Apart from minimal changes, such as the construction of a kitchen, overall the location remained untouched.

### 2.6.6. RSC Live Cinema

Wyver’s inclination to make the most of the possibilities offered by HD technologies has been transferred to other media apart from television. Apart from hypothesizing about the possibilities of Twitter and transmedia storytelling as vehicles to promote Shakespeare, Wyver has been actively collaborating as an independent producer with the RSC’s Live Cinema screenings, that are ultimately much cheaper than hybrid television Shakespeare films. These performances can be considered ‘hybrid,’ although their dialogical quality is connected to how the live theatre experience is transformed into a cinematic one on big screens in events with large audiences simultaneously enjoying a theatre performance from different film theatres in the world. As Hindle states,

> [T]he wide use of digital film and sound technology in the century’s second decade has made the experience of watching high-quality Shakespeare on film productions clear and accessible for both movie-theatre and small-screen audiences. (2015: 89)

Thanks to the accessibility gained by such technological development, multi-camera approaches have surmounted the former difficulties experienced by earlier stage recordings. Wyver and Illuminations Media opted for this type of recording after being inspired by the New York Live Metropolitan Opera

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\(^79\) As Wyver pinpoints, ‘immediately [Rupert Goold] decided that these tunnels were where we wanted to shoot this *Macbeth*’ (2016).
HD worldwide broadcasts as well as London’s National Theatre Live. The first live production in which Wyver collaborated with the RSC was Doran’s Richard II (2013) featuring Tennant as King Richard. The purpose of this experience, as Wyver suggests, was to extend the communal experience beyond the theatre stage as much as possible (Hindle 2015: 90).

Hindle explains the difficult process involved in the live recording of plays in this fashion. All in all, six cameras interact across three hours of performance. This approach involves that the team needs to achieve around eight hundred or nine hundred shots with a high degree of efficiency. This shooting is carried out throughout the performance and the audiences are not conditioned by the editing. On a more technical level, this specific approach mostly combines wide shots, close-ups, and mid-shots. The result of this is that ‘the viewer can explore a high-quality, finely detailed image in the same way as someone at the theatre spectacle itself might be doing, picking out the things that interest them’ (ibid: 90-91). Critics have pointed out at one specific scene in this production: the intimate encounter between Richard and Aumerle (Oliver Rix) – see figure 20 –. The long crane is employed to move from wide shot to close up. For Wyver, ‘the idea was to hold together the sense of Richard’s exalted highness of office and the intimate vulnerability he feels at this point,’ and, consequently, this shot moves ‘from the public spectacle to the private drama’ (Hindle 2015: 92).
At present, Wyver is concentrated on live performances. Since they finished filming *Julius Caesar* in 2012, it was never possible for the team to find the way to finance or get support from broadcasters to make more hybrid television Shakespeare films. The advantage of these film productions is that their creativity worked together with the smallness of the budget. As Wyver says, ‘[p]eople would let you experiment more if you can deliver something cheaper. And the fact that we could make *Macbeth* for – I think – 150,000 is proof of this’ (2016). However, contrarily to literature – where, strictly speaking, only paper and pen are necessary –, money seems a more unavoidable partner to make any kind of film, regardless of its simplicity. Therefore, at present, these hybrid television Shakespeare films are unlikely to be repeated.81

Of course, one way of interpreting this is to say that hybridity has simply given way to more transparent big screen-stage hybrid live performances which reconfigure the stage production in filmic terms and that let the cameras operate during the performance itself. Certainly, this constitutes a feat of

80 Figures 18, 19 and 20 are screen captions from Doran’s *Richard II*.

81 See Interview (Wyver 2016) in Appendix D.
high intellectual and muscular prowess in filmic terms. Every single element in the recording must be carefully planned and coordinated with other elements in the same way it was done with the pre-war drama screenings. In some ways, this feat resembles the excitement of broadcasting a football match or a live concert. What makes the difference is that multiple cameras and technological development have facilitated a higher level of control over the filming process. An additional difference between our films and these Live Performances is that the latter only require a fifth of the million pounds needed for a television film production (Hindle 2015: 90).

As Wyver comments, he and Doran have been hypothesizing on continuing filming on different kinds of locations. As Wyver goes on:

I’m also really interested in whether you can do this kind of thing on a lower budget. Can you make something more guerrilla-like, edgier, rougher – and cheaper? Because they’re expensive things, these films, and it’s very hard to get those budgets. (ibid: 289)

I returned to this question in our Interview to further investigate what was exactly in Wyver’s mind when he used the word ‘guerrilla-like.’ Wyver’s thoughts had to do with Orson Welles’ work on Othello (1952), i.e. a type of recording that featured less directorial control and that relied on a cheap budget. As the producer concluded, ‘It’s something for the future’ (2016).

2.7. Summary

Wyver combines his work as a producer and as a part-time researcher for the University of Westminster. His interests and commitment to television range from digital technology, recorded ballet, documentary and the arts in general to live theatre and the single-camera productions I am analyzing in this dissertation. The work of Illuminations Media has consistently stood for the spreading of the arts through the small screen and they have tried to apply technical and digital innovation to art works through this medium. As the corpus of documentary and artistic work carried out by the producer demonstrates, it is worth focusing on the relevance of the producer as a figure worth including in the study of televisual Shakespeare.

The way in which hybrid television Shakespeare films developed was partly accidental and partly a consequence of the frustrations derived from more traditional ways of television theatre recording. Thanks to the team’s creativity and the mutual complicities between the DoPs and the stage directors, we can rightfully say that Wyver’s work has taken a giant’s leap to re-conceive theatre on
television. What they have achieved, as Doran confirms, is ‘not a second-hand experience’ but ‘a
different experience’, as it involves a complete re-doing of the performance with many of the advantages
of the stage production. Apart from this, as Doran continues, ‘it’s going to reach many, many more
people’ (quoted from Wyver 2012).

As I will be insisting upon through the thesis, these recordings do not necessarily damage but
rather transform the theatrical qualities of the stage productions. In fact, different strategies are set in
motion to highlight and present the theatricality of the works in a new light. New ways of seeing the
meta-theatricality of the plays themselves can be found in the filmic treatments given by Goold and
Doran. As I also want to insist, the clear and honest recognition of this theatricality presents a different
stance from that of those television theoreticians and practitioners – such as Kennedy Martin – who in
the 1960s initiated a trend of disregard for theatre in British television. Rather than accepting these
‘universal truths’ about the impossibilities of recording Shakespeare on the small screen, Wyver has
made use of those means that might seem to be a hindrance to purist notions on the sacredness of the
text. I am referring to the potentialities of technology to foreground as well as deconstruct the theatrical
qualities of the productions in televisual terms.

Thus, the features of these productions can be summarized in the fact that they depend on a
previous stage production. In fact, this unapologetic claim for the theatricality of the films is invigorated
by the insistence on the idea that the stage directors should be the main authorial voices in the recordings.
This is a problematic decision if we consider that I have been insisting on the dialogical nature of the
films. Even though there is a high level of reliance in the DoP’s skills to visually convey what the stage
directors want, this complicates hybridity since, all in all, an authorial voice handles a large part of the
production. Yet, I think we can differentiate the directors’ theoretical intentions and the actual
realization of such abstract desires. After all, no matter what the director has asked, it is the DoP who
carries the recording out. Therefore, we can expect a wide hiatus between the stage production – in
itself, a rather unstable and uncontainable work of art – and the filmic results. The director’s lack of
experience in film is another indicator proving that surely the relationship between the DoP and the
stage creator must have been an enriching one. By extension, as far as the evidence suggests – mainly
from Making-Off documentaries, interviews, etc. –, the whole crew and cast have been highly
participative in the process despite the little amount of time granted them.

As I have also referred to, the use of a single camera has constituted another large step in the
liberation of the mise-en-scène from more constrained manners of recording theatre on television. The
single camera allows the chance to record a master shot and, then, stitch up all the single shots necessary
to this main narrative in the way films do. The freedom allowed to the DoPs and the directors in this
sense has augmented the quality of the productions. Beside this, even the site-specificity of the single
locations has been conjugated in audio-visual terms to enhance the metonymic qualities of the original
stage productions. All in all, as I expect to especially demonstrate from Chapter One onwards, there is
no reason to doubt the possibilities of theatre on the small screen. However, this promise involves a pact
or an agreement which, in line with Bazin’s work, requires that the medium of theatre is deconstructed
in various ways. If the theatrical medium accepts the peculiar rules of the hybrid game or, in other
words, if the authoritative prestige of live recorded theatre or studio theatre lend themselves to partial
disintegration and even filmic invasion, it is to be expected that theatre will be much more powerful and
muscular on the small screen.
3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
In this section I am setting down the theoretical apparatus with which I intend to support my initial contention. In the first place, I will differentiate the various modes that have been identified to record Shakespeare on film and television. Although these categories have been useful for me to grasp the theoretical terms necessary for my analyses, I do not mean to use them as water-tight compartments at all. It will be necessary to keep in mind that, as Deleuze points out in his study of the “image-movement,” film consists of mobile cross-sections. However, these time and space bound privileged instants or cross-sections compose large totalities, which, necessarily, remain always open and unfinished (1983). This principle is applicable to all cinema, although Wyver’s works foreground and intensify the different discourses interwoven in such large film-recorded theatre totalities that constitute hybridity.

In the second place, I will briefly determine the most important concepts adequate to understand the viewing process. I will do so by way of borrowing key theoretical terms related to reception theory and audience reception. Overall, what I will be examining is how films can determine the viewer’s reactions and how ensuing determinations can be contested. In the third place, I will be paying attention to the different theoretical concepts provided by scholars who have tackled intertextuality. As hybridity is the result of the combination of different modes, genres and media within the same television programme, I will be mainly making use of the theoretical approaches developed by Bakthin, Kristeva, Roland Barthes, and Gérard Genette. These scholars have provided the dialogical standpoint of hybridity as well as key terms of analysis that have also helped me to construct an eclectic paradigm to study Wyver’s films. This paradigm should admit a degree of determinism in the use of filmic signifiers. Nevertheless, this determinism will always be relative and subject to questioning on the viewer’s behalf. Finally, as my work intends to critically study the cultural meanings produced by hybrid television Shakespeare films, I consider relevant to keep in mind the relationship between Wyver’s work and larger issues affecting the films. All in all, these larger issues can be considered to belong to the realm of cultural studies. Many of the scholars affiliated to this discipline, such as Barthes, are also, in fact, concerned with intertextuality. Other scholars – such as Baudrillard – are sociologists who exist apart from the discipline of cultural studies. Thus, my purpose with this fourth theoretical cornerstone will be to help myself to obtain the basic tools to assess the cultural impact of hybridity as well as to provide myself with theoretical means to ensure a deeper study of the individual films. I will do so by analyzing the films as examples of transmedia and convergence. Considering all this, my hopes are that the readers
see the division into sections as purely organizational since each of these fields of analysis will help me build up a theoretical framework to develop my self-proclaimed objectives.\textsuperscript{82}

Before I start dealing with the section, let me inform the reader that, during the specific film analyses, I will occasionally refer to additional sources that have been necessary to complete the core theoretical framework. These additional sources relate to the field of drama studies, cultural studies, literary studies and philosophy. I will be referring to them with the purpose of examining specific contingencies related to individual chapters and to the overall dissertation.

Thus, I will be relying on Konstantin Stanislavski’s work on character building (2016) and on Declan Donnellan’s most recent book \textit{The Actor and The Target} (2005). These specific works will be helpful to explore how Doran represents Hamlet’s struggles in meta-theatrical terms. Additionally, I am relying on Rodenburgh’s work on Shakespearean acting (2002) as well as Barton’s script for the series \textit{Playing Shakespeare} (2014). As Wyver’s films do not at all hide their theatrical origins, these works are useful for us to get familiar with the rationale behind certain acting premises taken for granted by the RSC and, to some extent, by dominant classic British Shakespearean acting. On a more theoretical level, I will be relying on Jan Kott’s Grand Mechanism theory, first published in English in 1965 in the seminal work \textit{Shakespeare Our Contemporary} (1988).\textsuperscript{83} To analyze surveillance film and its impact on Goold’s \textit{Macbeth}, I will be relying on Foucault’s \textit{Discipline and Punishment} (1975), Deleuze’s works on the society of control as well as some of the works provided by New Historicism and Cultural Materialism in relationship with film and cultural criticism connected to surveillance society and surveillance cinema. Additionally, my analysis on the specific ways in which the theatrical mode and \textit{cinéma vérité} are employed in Doran’s \textit{Macbeth} will be supported by Baudrillard’s work on the cultural impact of symbols and simulacra (2008). Finally, Rachel Falconer’s intertextual approach used in \textit{Hell in Contemporary Literature} (2007) will be an essential cornerstone in my analysis of Goold’s \textit{Macbeth} as a katabatic narrative. These additional sources will be, as I said, helping completing the analyses of the productions, which will be always oriented to the wide-ranging concept of hybridity.

\textsuperscript{82} See section 0.2.

\textsuperscript{83} In reality, Kott’s works as another wide-ranging concept. Since the 1960s, as Wyver says, it has been – to a certain point – so taken for granted in Shakespeare in performance and cinema that very often it is not even mentioned (2015). Therefore, I need to point out that all these films are influenced by Kott’s work. Nevertheless, it will be in Chapter Seven, where I think that Kott’s influence is strongly emphasized by the selection of film genres that I will be referring to. Nevertheless, an analysis on Kott’s influence on the rest of the films is possible and even desirable, although it escapes the scope of this thesis.
3.1. Modes of Filming Shakespeare on Screen

As I said in Chapter Zero and Chapter One, hybridity in these films is associated to the way in which various media are employed within the same television programme. Let us first explain the different modes that, following the Shakespeare’s filmic and televisual histories, have been identified. In figure 1, the reader will find a chart with the basic four modes established for the former as well as the three modes identified for the latter.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shakespeare on film</th>
<th>Shakespeare on television</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theatrical mode</td>
<td>Stage performance recorded in the theatre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic mode</td>
<td>Theatre play recorded in a studio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filmic/poetic mode</td>
<td>Theatre play recorded on location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periodizing mode</td>
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</table>

Regarding this, Jack J. Jorgens identifies the first three film modes, including the theatrical mode, the realistic mode and, finally, the filmic – or poetic – mode (1991). To Jorgens’ categorization, Hindle adds the ‘periodizing mode.’ The periodizing mode is specifically associated to modern-dress productions. Wyver’s works are, in fact, modern-dress productions, following suit with their stage counterparts. Yet, the re-contextualization has been kept specific only to a certain extent, i.e. we do not really perceive that the contextualization alludes to a space or a given time but it is situated between the local and the global. In the case of our films, this ambiguity is deliberately related to the site-specificity of the film sets, which, as already suggested, retain much of the non-specific metonymic features of the

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84 The theatrical mode strives to catch the performance through preponderance of long takes and long/medium shots. At best, it can be regarded for its documentary value and constitutes an example of what is known as ‘free Shakespeare.’ On a less positive note, the limited range of camera work on the stage might render the viewing monotonous. The filmic mode is also known as ‘poetic mode’ as it heightens visual elements in harmony with the aural quality of the film, establishing a complex and challenging relationship between both aspects. Weiss’ classification is far more comprehensive and includes no less than ten modes of translation of a Shakespeare’s play into the screen (2000: 23-25), although I have not taken them into account in my own categorization because they are inapplicable for the type of work carried out by Wyver. Weiss’ classification criteria have much to do with the degree of fidelity to the original.

85 This mode primarily ‘takes the story and characters of a Shakespeare play and transports them wholesale into the cultural trappings and social dynamic of a distinctly recognizable historical period.’ Presumably, this historical period should be different from the Elizabetian/Jacobean period. Based on current theatrical practices, as Hindle continues, the periodizing mode allows the combination of ‘both realistic and filmic modes’ as one can appreciate in Shakespeare films made in the 1990s and the early 2000s (2015: 104-105).
Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre. Thus, all allusions to place will depend on the actors’ words and make-believe.

In the second place, let us examine the different televisual styles that have been employed to record Shakespeare – see figure 1 above –. As for this, Willis provides a three-fold location-related classification. Firstly, a stage performance can be recorded in the theatre. Secondly, the play can be recorded in the television studio, which represents a much more traditional manner of television recording. Finally, the film can be shot on location and, thus, transformed into something intermediate between a theatre play and a heritage piece of television drama (1991: 87).

Whereas we can observe that filmic Shakespeare films are classified around how the plays are recorded, television plays are classified in relation to the setting. Therefore, filmic Shakespeare is much more concerned with narrative language and visual metaphorical approaches. On the contrary, television has been more subject to the practicalities of location and television studio, although producers and directors like Jonathan Miller, Elijah Moshinsky and Jane Howell have proved exceptionally creative when inflecting their filmic abilities on the BBC Shakespeare Series. Certainly, although the chart above does not show this, Shakespeare television grammar and vocabulary, as other evidence suggests, tends to be much less varied and more predictable than in it is in film. Per contra, due to the verbal predominance of the small screen, television Shakespeare has traditionally accepted uncut or nearly uncut productions more easily than film has.

Apart from many recordings carried by the RSC, the BBC Shakespeare Series can be regarded as exceptional because it was conceived for the small screen, i.e. it was not preceded by stage productions. Also, there was comparative variety of direction and production approaches that characterized the different episodes. Regarding this series, Willems establishes three categories for the different recordings: naturalistic, pictorial, and stylized – see figure 2 below – (1994: 74). When confronting Miller’s and Messina’s styles in their productions, Willems states that the ‘stylized’

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86 As an instance of this, I would like to pinpoint the BBC Shakespeare Series episode of Henry VIII (Kevin Billington, 1979), that was entirely shot at Leeds Castle, Penshurst Place and Hever Castle. In fact, most of the films recorded over the first season of the BBC Series were made on location.

87 See Willis (1991). This is an essential reading to understand the complexities of the BBC Shakespeare Series regarding artistic direction and production policies.
production in television offers genuine enhancing of the textual meanings and helps the viewer in the process of decoding the words in contrast with the poetic background offered on the screen (ibid: 79-83). This demonstrates that at least some directors tried to break up with the confining boundaries of the television studio and the allegedly rigid strictures of BBC with a degree of variation. In figure 2 the reader will find a chart with the different styles to film Shakespeare on the big and the small screens that precede Wyver’s films.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shakespeare on film</th>
<th>Television plays</th>
<th>BBC Shakespeare Series</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theatrical mode</td>
<td>Stage performance recorded in the theatre</td>
<td>Naturalistic production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realistic mode</td>
<td>Theatre play recorded in a studio</td>
<td>Pictorial production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filmic/poetic mode</td>
<td>Theatre play recorded on location</td>
<td>Stylized production</td>
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<tr>
<td>Periodizing mode</td>
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Figure 2

The problematics of understanding Wyver’s approach to filming Shakespeare on TV can be roughly sketched through the establishment of the different modes employed and inflected within single filmic receptacles. Figure 3 below presents the different ways in which each of the four films have been articulated. As the reader can see, each of the films is rich in the way various modes are inflected within a single television narrative. Apart from the manners of inflection, I am including several other features related to the idiosyncratic nature of the films.
<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inflected theatrical mode/stage play recorded in a theatrical venue. Recorded with single camera.</td>
<td>Inflected theatrical mode/stage play recorded in a location that has been transformed into a studio theatre. Recorded with single camera.</td>
<td>Highly inflected theatrical mode/stage play recorded. Almost absence of theatrical mode. Recorded with single camera.</td>
<td>Single-camera theatrical mode/stage play recorded in a theatre stage as live performance. Recorded with single camera.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filmic/poetic mode.</td>
<td>Filmic/poetic mode.</td>
<td>Filmic/poetic mode.</td>
<td>Filmic/poetic mode.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre play recorded on location.</td>
<td>Theatre play recorded on location.</td>
<td>Theatre play recorded on location.</td>
<td>Theatre play recorded on location.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film-within-the-film with hand-held camera.</td>
<td>Insertion of documentary footage; highly developed film language.</td>
<td>Participation and blurring of boundaries between fiction and reality.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Film genre: <em>cinéma vérité.</em></td>
<td>Film genre: war film &amp; gangster film.</td>
<td>Unspecified film genre, although it can be intertextually connected with</td>
<td></td>
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88 The location used for the filming of *Macbeth (2001)* is the London’s Roundhouse, a celebrated venue for all sorts of spectacles, concerts and artistic events.
As I already discussed, ‘hybrid’ is a wide-ranging concept or an over-arching logic, especially if we consider that most television programmes and most mainstream film nowadays are affiliated to some type of hybridity. Regarding this, I would like to briefly go back to Bakhtin’s argument on the nature of texts. For Bakhtin – as mentioned in section 1.1 –, texts which insist upon preserving their canonized and monolithic nature will be doomed to be ‘stylized’, which, following the Russian scholar, as opposed to other uses of ‘stylized’ – for instance, those used by Willems to refer to the BBC Series -, probably also means ‘stale.’ As already said, our films are special in their display of rhizomatic confluences and connections between languages and modes, as this dissertation will prove. The chart above shows the intricacies of hybrid television Shakespeare films. The theatrical mode in the productions is a heavily inflected one. With ‘inflected,’ I mean that, although the settings resemble a theatre stage and although – as I mentioned in Chapter One – the mise-en-scène powerfully relies in visual metonymy, the camera uses cinematic forms avoiding the predominance of wide and mid shots. This theatricality is transformed, deconstructed, deformed and, at times, even suppressed. Whatever

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89 As I will later indicate, the context of this production is related to a conception of Julius Caesar as Shakespeare’s ‘African play.’

90 For a detailed discussion on Doran’s Hamlet as a surveillance film, see Sébastien Lefait (2013-2014).
happens, theatricality is acknowledged even if only to be replaced or unraveled. Also, ‘inflected’ means that the different modes are by no means taken as monolithic discourses within the films. Any filmic discourse entering the films is seen in interaction with other filmic discourses.

Perhaps the most difficult element to evaluate here is how the realistic mode and the filmic mode are inflected in the films. In Doran’s Macbeth, the election of cinéma vérité does not only convey a high level of realism in the filming but it also contributes to frame the mysterious and supernatural intricacies of the play in shocking ways. Stark poetry and realism intermingle through a combination of sweat, mud, realistic signifiers and filmic mechanisms, such as voice-over, strange editing, and often bizarre filmic syntax that shock the audience and disjoint the narrative in ways inexplicable for the film consistency.

On its behalf, Doran’s Hamlet combines the defamiliarizing effects of the theatrical use of St. Joseph’s chapel with outside scenes that bring the play down to the level of ordinary reality. As for the levels of poetry in these films, it is clear that Goold’s work is, by far, the most filmic of all. This film is not only much more reliant on cinematic performance and iconography than the rest but it also presents unfamiliar editing that combines documentary images with the stylized katabatic world created at the Welbeck Abbey. As for Julius Caesar, realism and the filmic mode intermingle in private scenes. However, Doran’s work is highly oriented to the textual delivery and is, therefore, very akin to the BBC’s and the RSC’s televisual traditions. The camera strongly relies on the actors’ delivery of the lines and very often the camera woos this African-accented approach to Shakespeare’s text. However, as I have suggested and I will later emphasizes, the filmic performance is frequently shocking in its use of voice-over as well as inserts, tracking shots and circular camera movements.

A feature that is unquestionably common to the four films is their reliance on the previously mentioned ‘periodizing mode.’ However, when the periodizing element in the stagings is translated to the small screen, this leads to the use of various filmic registers such as gritty documentary, slasher horror and other various mythological horizons. Such horizons can be reasonably taken for granted in contemporary culture. Following this premise, as I will be constantly commenting on, one of the most striking features in these films is their film genre-based intertextuality. This already well-established
tendency in film Shakespeare – particularly over the so-called ‘Brannagh Era’ but also in Welles’, Olivier’s and Zeffirelli’s Shakespeare films – is also shown on the small screen in these productions.\(^93\) Cinéma vérité, filmic self-reflexivity, surveillance film, slasher horror and J-horror as well as other film genres are definitely philosophically or semiotically related to the re-contextualizations of the playtexts. Goold’s contribution to televisual Shakespeare can be precisely highlighted for this emphasis on the so-called ‘Branagh’s style.’\(^94\) As Kenneth Branagh, Goold revels in his personal filmic and popular taste in the frequently untraceable network of intertextual references used in the same film discourse. For all that, there is no doubt that part of the appeal in Goold’s approach is precisely in his cinematic background and extra-textual filmic metaphorical richness.\(^95\)

3.2. Reception Theory

3.2.1. General Considerations

To properly analyze the mechanisms of appeal in these productions, it is necessary to review a series of concepts related to reception theory. The concepts I am dealing with in this subsection do not

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\(^93\) Genre-based hybrity has been consistently present in Shakespeare films, especially those made in the 1990s – the ‘Branagh era’, as Samuel Crowl calls it (2003) –, have done precisely this. If, for instance, we look at Kenneth Branagh, Franco Zeffirelli, Michael Almereyda, Baz Luhrmann and Richard Loncraine’s Shakespeare adaptations we will notice that postmodernity, intertextuality, mixture of styles, pastiche and parody heavily determine the films. Each of these films – and, by extension, all Shakespeare films including Olivier’s ones –, according to Elsie Walker, have foregrounded the clash between the Renaissance playtexts and postmodern cinematic performance, offering different narrative points of view and ideological positions (2006: 21). Olivier engaged in experimentation with cinematic Shakespeare too. Anthony Davies (1988: 48), Robert Herring (1948: 183-184) and Robert Shaughnessy (2006: 67-68) allude to Olivier’s mixture of theatrical and cinematic elements in Hamlet. Davies states that the oscillation between theatrical and cinematic elements in the film derives from Olivier’s lack of concern with commitment to one single medium (1988: 42). The long and continuous takes in the film convey the sense of continuity one finds in a theatre performance. Likewise, hybridity is discovered in the mixture of a film noir atmosphere and the Elizabethan characterization of the eponymous hero. In a similar fashion, as Davies says, Zeffirelli can work with the theatricality of the space and the realism demanded in his adaptation of Romeo and Juliet (1968).

\(^94\) In the Director’s Commentaries to Richard II, Goold relates his Shakespeare upbringing to Kenneth Branagh’s films. In fact, in this film, he also makes use of a wide range of filmic repertoire (2012). In my article on Goold’s Richard II, I deal with the filmic intertextuality the director employs (See Víctor Huertas 2014).

\(^95\) Very consciously, the rationale of the film is precisely to stimulate the audiences to catch the many filmic references in Macbeth (2010). In his blogs, Wyver encourages the audiences to spot cinematic references in the film. In one of his blog entries, he writes: ‘Let us know in the comments which references you spot, and do please tell us whether you think our approach does justice to the play’ (Wyver 2010). This proves that the idea of using filming references as strategies of appeal were consciously employed by a director who proves being inclined to use the ‘grammar of cinema’ on the stage too (See “Director’s and Producer’s Commentary” in the DVD edition of Macbeth, 2010).
only apply to film reception. However, the theoretical background offered by scholars like Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser can easily fit within this discipline. As mentioned in the introduction, part of my contention is that the coexistence of different media and modes in the four films constitutes the main pleasure and challenge for the viewer. It is then convenient to introduce the notions of ‘pleasure’ as associated with ‘cognitive’ challenge.

In this light, Jauss introduces the concept of Genuss – enjoyment – as the acknowledgment of a level of ‘legitimate cognitive and communicative function’ over the aesthetic experience. This rejects the notion that the aesthetic pleasure must be taken as sentimental or alienating. For Jauss, arguably, the aesthetic pleasure involves two clear movements. Firstly, a moment of ‘surrender’ (Hingabe) of the ego towards the aesthetic object takes place. Then, a second movement detaches the ego from the object. Therefore, the enjoyment becomes something based on the experience emanating from the object itself. Likewise, the experience called poiesis conjures up the experiencer’s active engagement towards the aesthetic object.96 Thus, I want to suggest that the viewer here is appealed to experience this active combination of pleasure brought about by the Brechtian collision and, also, slippage between different modes and media that, at the same time, are conjugated with the pleasure derived from listening to the verse speaking and the acting.97

The active engagement, as I want to argue, is focused on the inflections and transitions between media in the films. Considering these premises, it is relevant to approach Wyver’s films in relationship to their own intertextuality, in agreement with Jauss (1982: 17), who states that fiction works need to be studied in relation with contemporaneous texts. On a more practical level, in relation to this idea of situating the films within their contingency, the DoPs and the directors have had to decide on the film frame. In this context, the film frame refers to the recognizable cinematic genres that help materializing what Jauss calls the ‘objectifiable frame of expectations’ – aka ‘horizons of expectations’ – (1982: 21-22). This frame of expectations consists of a set of recognizable features associated to a specific type of narrative. The problem with the horizons of expectations, as Holub says, is that they are too difficult to determine (1982: 62, 65). This can also be true for film genre since Hollywood cinema self-consciously mixes genres within the same filmic narrative. However, generic mixtures do not absolutely obscure the recognizable syntagmatic and paradigmatic genre-based patterns one can identify in films such as the

96 Robert C. Holub defines ‘poiesis’ as the active engagement experienced by the reader when he makes contact the literary text (1984: 73-75).

97 As I said in section 1.2.1, televisual hybridity is based on the Brechtian principles of collision as opposed to those of integration. As I will be arguing, this Brechtian collision intends to be a source of engagement for the viewer.
ones we are analyzing. Therefore, if this genre-based premise is not dogmatically taken, a degree of moderate structuralist genre-based determination can be assumed as we interpret Wyver’s filmic texts.

If we combine structuralist views with less deterministic views, we will see that Iser’s notions of meaning, understood as the consequence of the text-reader interaction, comes to the purpose. The consequence of such an interaction is that the communicative potential of the filmic text can be expanded without limits. Therefore, following Robert C. Holub’s suggestions (1984: 83-85), the reader – the viewer, in this case – will not just recognize the underlying structures within a text but will also recognize many different textual perspectives throughout the reading process. Although reception theory has concerned itself with recognizing the author’s intentions through the reader’s sacrifice of his beliefs, this notion is contradicted by Iser, who thinks that reception theory should grant more interpretive responsibility to the reader (1976: 38). In addition, these consciously dialogical films work by their very nature to reject all notions of authorial monologism and monolithism. Although we may be familiar with the authors’ intentions – e.g. to film the ‘essence’ of the stage production –, neither are these necessarily fulfilled, nor is it desirable that they are, nor do we need to take them at face value. By the very nature of the clashes of codes and slippage energized by Wyver, the viewers are demanded to negotiate with the different transitions and shifts between codes rather than to have authorial meanings imposed upon them.

However, even acknowledging the Brechtian heterogeneity of the texts, a certain balance is required between what Barthes calls the ‘readerly’ – reader-oriented – and the ‘writerly’ – writer-oriented – elements of the text. These ideas are tackled in O’Lesser’s work. He says that, to be attractive at all, the appeals of a text must appear ciphered, i.e. they must be coded (quoted from Iser 1976: 45). Per contra, as Iser indicates, if the object of appeal is too specifically formulated, it will lose its interest (1976: 4). Following this premise, hybridity is a fitting way to energize the viewers’ interests in the sense that ciphers constantly change from one filmic genre or medium to another filmic genre or to another medium. For O’Lesser, a degree of obscurity in texts guarantees a level of reader’s agency and participation. Also, at the same time, it facilitates liberation from the psyche’s censorship. This way, the reader becomes the person capable of contributing to the meaning-making process because – in line with the Brechtian principles I mentioned in the introduction – he/she is not forced to take a passive position. Because the hiatuses between languages produce contradictory impressions, the reader will be challenged by the process of reading relatively non-determined signs in combination with a series of

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98 In section 3.3.4, I will tackle these two concepts.
relatively determined conventions. These aforementioned conventions are organized into structures that N. Luhmann calls ‘world-picture systems’ (Luhmann, N., Zweckbegriff und Systemrationalität, Frankfort, 1973, pp. 182, quoted from Iser 1976: 71). These world-picture systems compose familiar schemata in which aesthetic features coexist and irritate each other. This effect constitutes what Iser calls ‘coherent deformation,’ an effect that involves the convergence of two seemingly opposing features (ibid: 79-82). In these cases, ‘coherent deformation’ applies to the different modes and media inflected in the four films.

Thus, the viewers are expected to process the signs and mixed schemata afforded by the films and to revise their expectations whenever inconsistencies are detected. As initial narrative Gestalten are redefined, various interpretive possibilities are accepted. We could, in fact, following these ideas and in agreement with Iser and Holub, say that the lack of coherence in the films is what constitutes the muscularity within their narrative assemblages (Iser 1976: 121-123; Holub 1984: 90). This is the idea I presented in my initial contention: that the collision and slippage between the language of theatre and film are what constitute the sources of pleasure and challenge in these productions. Their strength, in other words, lies in their impurity as well as in their deformation.

3.2.2. Audience Reception

More specifically speaking about film reception, Patrick Phillips (2012) points out at the different ways in which cinema organizes its relationship with the spectator through devices such as camera movement, camera position, mise-en-scène, and editing. What Phillips regards as a determining cornerstone in the viewing process is the pleasure of looking and the pleasure of being exposed to mechanisms of interpellation. Such mechanisms in these films, as I have been proposing, are related to the clashing and the slippage affecting the theatrical and the filmic codes.

Following these premises, cinematic devices can be employed within the range of hegemony or outside hegemonic practices. This means that standardized or formulaic filmic patterns can be followed or challenged and, ultimately, rejected. The subject matter of discussion in audience reception is how

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99 I am using the term ‘irritate’ to refer to how one language invades the space occupied by another language in these films.

100 In their seminal work, Jean-Luc Comolli and Jean Narboni integrate their analysis of film with the larger social impact of capitalism. Following this article, ‘[b]ecause every film is part of the economic system it is also part of the ideological system, for cinema and art are branches of ideology. None can escape’ (1976: 24). Although genre and film are subject to institutional and ideological constraints, I prefer to rely on the Gramscian view that hegemony does not at all determine
are the viewers influenced by the established formula chosen by the artist. On the ways in which viewers engage in the meaning-making process, Philips mentions structuralist theories – which assume a level of determinism in the reader’s interpretation – and poststructuralist theories – which give way to a larger measure of indeterminacy in meanings and interpretations –. Borrowing from several disciplines, some poststructuralist preliminary conclusions would be, firstly, that the spectator carries out a narcissistic mirroring operation, although this may not constitute an impediment for the viewer to play with and rejoice in different positions, fantasies, and contradictory roles.

In *Scènes de la vie future* (1930), Duhamel referred to films as:

> a pastime for helots, a diversion for uneducated, wretched, worn-out creatures who are consumed by their worries (...) a spectacle which requires no concentration and presupposes no intelligence (...) which kindles no light in the heart and awakens no hope other than the ridiculous one of someday becoming a ‘star’ in Los Angeles.’ (Quoted in Benjamin 2009: 682-683).

In this light, cognitive theories have postulated that cinema is a more democratic but less challenging type of art than literature. Following this, drawing from Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, these cognitive approaches have maintained that cinema offers self-fulfillment in the form of variables of ‘affect’ and ‘excess,’ both of which are, supposedly, undemanding. Furthermore, Daniel Dyan’s perspective based on Marxism and psychoanalysis focuses on the entity called *l’absent* – the absent one –. *L’absent* commands a system of suture consisting of displacements in focus in shot-reverse shot sequences. Thus, a ‘fictional glance’ arguably channels and orchestrates the spectator’s visual experience and pleasure, i.e. the spectator is absorbed by the ‘ideological effect’ of the film (2009: 115). This impact on the spectator can be regarded as an effect reminiscent of Louis Althusser’s theory on the Ideological State Apparatus. If this does not suffice, drama scholars have also pointed out at the deterministic role of film – as opposed to theatre – on the viewer. Thus, J. L. Styan argues that, whereas the theatre spectator enjoys more freedom to decide how to construe the groups appearing on the stage, the camera decides and thinks for the spectator (1978: 205-206). Althusser’s work gave way to a corpus of texts written by critics affiliated to *Cahiers du Cinema*. Such critics, when dealing with Hollywood films, argue that meanings. Rather, meanings are a matter of social consensus or personal interpretation, even if ideological conformism is not infrequent.
they constitute an ideological discursive apparatus, like the one denounced by Althusser, which, all in all, attempts to determine the spectator’s perceptions (Celestino Deleyto 2003: 21).

Opposed to these views is the alternative perspective that the filmic framework allows various emotional and intellectual responses.\(^{101}\) Even though cultural pre-assumptions may exist before watching a film, as I will continuously insist upon, viewers still have the choice of opting for oppositional readings, negotiated responses or even aberrant readings. For a start, William Rothman considers that Daniel Dayan’s ideas against a tyrannical bourgeois system that determines reception are simplistic (2009: 119-123). In film terms, what these previous views did not consider, as Philip suggests, is that images, as received by the spectator, can be ‘detrimentalized,’ i.e. the viewer has the possibility of evaluating visual images and use them as bases to generate further mental images (2012: 128-129).

To this, Eisenstein (2009) and Braudy and Cohen (2009) add that the collision principles in cinema situate its meaning with Marxist dialectical principles.\(^{102}\) In agreement with this, Philips writes about how ‘moment by moment, the brain works with the stimulus’ received from film. This cognitive approach to audience response recognizes an ‘active spectator, even if much of the mental processing [accomplished by such spectator] seems entirely automatic’ (2012: 127).

More particularly speaking about the idiosyncrasies of television language, John Fiske and John Hartley argue that cinematic realism does not suffice in the medium of television. Plays on the television screen, following this, need to be transformed for this medium, in which ‘realism intersects with contradictory modes derived from nonliterate ways of seeing.’ The simultaneous employment of these often-opposed ways of performance produces that television is by far more comprehensive than film, judging by the richness of codes it offers (1988: 165). Therefore, the interdisciplinary features of television complicate its reception because the viewer is demanded to decode different messages produced by various modes and languages.

In addition to this, Fiske and Hartley borrow concepts from Barthes’ *Mythologies* (1973) and *Elements of Semiology* (1968) to find the ways in which sign systems can be received on the small screen. Barthes establishes three orders of signification that work as ‘myth-makers’ and as ‘connotative agents.’ The first order of signification is the sign itself. The second order of signification has to do with

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\(^{101}\) As I previously argued in relation with the concept of *Genuss*, emotional pleasure and cognitive pleasure are not mutually exclusive in this context.

\(^{102}\) Whereas words in isolation have meaning, taking Eisenstein’s views, shots, which are basic units of film discourse, cannot stand in isolation. Their meaning results from the interaction with other shots (2009).
the construction of ‘myths’ that are dynamic and are tested against concrete realities. Therefore, they do not need to be accepted as unquestionable. An additional second order way of interpretation comes from ‘connotation,’ related to how a sign communicates more than what it literally stands for. Connotation requires human intervention in the process of interpretation. As Fiske and Hartley clarify, television uses the same methods as film to convey connotation and these methods have to do with camera angle, lighting, music, soundtrack, etc. These elements are, doubtless, producers of meaning that go well beyond the mere surface value and that, to some extent, correspond to cultural shared conceptions.

Finally, we need to regard a third order of signification, which is called ‘subjective response.’ Relying on this, we cannot determine that the sign of ‘water’ means ‘purity’ any more than we can assure that it means ‘depression’ or ‘corruption.’ Whereas these last interpretations may seem extremely personal, when the filmmaker situates elements on the film frame, depending on its relationship with other filmic signifiers and the clusters of visual meanings arranged, the iconic impact of ‘water’ will influence the spectator’s reception in different ways. All in all, even though there is room for variation, the way in which meanings are interpreted will be inevitably related to cultural conceptions shared by given communities of individuals (John Fiske and John Hartley 1988: 41-46).

3.3. Intertextuality

3.3.1. Rationale

From the previous section, we can conclude that there is a balance between deterministic and non-deterministic features that organize the reception process. The same ideas can be applied to the internal aspects of the texts themselves and, as the reader will see, we can say that a foregone conclusion must be that structuralist – more or less, deterministic – and poststructuralist – more or less, anti-deterministic – positions will be in dialogue when we interpret the intertexts that compose a given art work. Likewise, because hybridity is, after all, a matter of intertextuality, the concepts related to this

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103 Even then, this does not mean that meanings will be at all unquestionable. In this sense, Laura Mulvey’s psychoanalytical approach to cinema provides a subversive vision on how films that ostentatiously embody patriarchal values can be read subversively (1975). This feminist view is completed by Fiske’s analysis of Madonna as a star figure. On the one hand, she stands as the icon of capitalist pop culture and the objectification of women. On the other hand, Madonna can be read as a female star who capitalizes on her own sexuality to disturb and subvert the same capitalist patriarchal order that wants to turn her into a sexualized object (1992). In his work on Hollywood films, Celestino Deleyto points out at Sharon Stone and her filmic persona, which embraces the patriarchal fear on the sexually aggressive and powerful femme fatale. As Deleyto shows, the actress uses her pose as a disguise to place a product and make a living as an actress (2003: 161).
literary theoretical corpus will be helpful to interpret the operations carried out by hybridity. If hybrid television Shakespeare films consist of the clashing and slippage between codes, intertextuality provides theoretical viewpoints on which to sustain the notions of pleasure that I have associated to those collisions.

3.3.2. Michael Bakhtin

Despite the Saussurean origins of intertextuality as a scientific discipline – mostly, considering the combinatory nature of the sign either within a paradigmatic axis or within a syntagmatic axis –, the obvious place to begin with if we want to associate these films to intertextuality is Bakhtin’s work, which is oriented to the social dimension of the texts.104 The first idea that will be useful for us is the basic notion that Bakhtin understands utterances as naturally dialogical. This indicates that the meanings of utterances depend upon previous utterances and the reception of other subsequent utterances. Because utterances and linguistic production are fully dependent on addressivity, it is important to talk about ‘genre speeches’ that sum up the expectations of appropriacy referred to a given type of speech. Nevertheless, genre speeches should not be misunderstood as closed entities without the capacity to dialogue with other forms of discourse. Opposing the dialogical nature of utterances and speech, ruling classes have tried to turn language into a monological phenomenon. In response to this, Bakhtin proposes a centrifugal and dialogical collectiveness as the main linguistic material against a centripetal appreciation of language that inevitably turns it into a monological entity. Also, As Bakhtin suggests, the social nature of communication should lead the utterance to a dialogical dynamic relationship with ‘another’s speech’ or the ‘speech uttered by another’ (2011). In short, Bakhtin’s notions on language admit that utterances are dialogical and polyphonic.105

Wyver’s hybrid approach works in line with this premise as it deliberately situates languages together in the same receptacle and there is not a desire to homogenize them. Thus, in their impetus to combine film, theatre and television, the four films work in a clear dialogical fashion. Apart from this,

104 See Graham Allen (2011), Bajtín (2011), Bajtín (2012), Bakhtin (2014). Let the reader notice that in the bibliographical references ‘Bakhtin’ may appear as ‘Bajtín’ because some of the editions I have used are Spanish translations. Nevertheless, in-text references will refer to ‘Bakhtin.’

105 Let me just clarify that, in this thesis, with ‘genre speech’ I refer to all the different codes employed by Goold and Doran to inflect the television text presented in hybrid television Shakespeare films. Of course, with ‘genre speech’ I am referring to ‘film genre’ too. However, this concept also includes the theatrical mode, the filmic mode, and all the different discursive strands I disclosed in section 3.1.
as I indicated in section 1.2.4, the operations carried out by the internal mechanisms of hybridity produce centrifugal movements that disperse any monolithical artistic purity.

In his studies on Dostoevsky’s work, Bakhtin introduces the concept of polyphony, understood as the aggregate of different voices or parts, character world-views, speech modes, ideologies, social stances, all of which collide within the utterance, that, in Bakhtinian terms, following Allen, comes to be regarded as ‘double-voiced discourse,’ aka ‘heteroglossia’ and ‘hybridization’ (2011: 23). To sum up, Bakhtin’s dialogical and polyphonic approaches to language involve the elimination of all thoughts that intend to regard utterances as univocal and definite. Therefore, returning to our initial statements about hybridity, we can reinforce the notion that the films find their own purposefulness in their linguistic richness. Such richness admits several language systems in coordination, acknowledging their relationships of difference and mutual acceptance, in the same filmic series of utterances. In other words, hybrid television Shakespeare films are a celebration of Bakhtin’s another’s speech.

3.3.3. Julia Kristeva

In Revolution of the Poetic Language, Kristeva defines intertextuality as ‘the passage from one sign system to another one that involves an altering of the thetic position – the destruction of the old position and the formation of a new one’ (1984: 59). Her most intrinsically intertextual work elaborates notions on the text as something created out of ‘the already said.’ Thus, Kristeva’s dialogical position seems to be unquestionable. Firstly, Kristeva’s political stance on poetic language is clarified in “The Ethics of Linguistics,” in which she explains how totalitarianism in society is precisely due to the inability to perceive the signifier separated from obligatory denotation imperatives. Thus,Kristeva’s notions seem to be in line with Barthes’ ultimate questioning of mythologies.

In addition, she questions the Western Aristotelian statement that an element cannot be A and B at the same time. Her approach to dialogism contemplates utterances as double-voiced and yet meaningful. For her, in fact, the whole purpose of poetic discourse is to escape the prohibitions and restrictions of artistic monological divine laws (1984: 70). A similar perspective can be taken on Wyver’s work, which, again, seems to refuse all sorts of monologism since the whole purpose of this

106 Let it be noticed that the Bakhtinian use of the word ‘heteroglossia’ does not necessarily refer to a clash of languages in separate utterances but the phenomenon can appear also within utterances and words. This idea is extended to hybrid television Shakespeare films as slippage between codes is fairly frequent within scenes and individual shots.

filming style is to make language systems dialogue with each other. Monolithism in this case seems totally out of question by the very nature of hybrid filming.

Whereas these assumptions can simply be regarded as applied Bakhtin, Kristeva’s contribution to dialogism comes also from the field of psychoanalysis. In this respect, she regards the semiotic language as one that rejoices in the erotic impulses and bodily drives of the initial contact with the mother. This kind of language is originated by a semiotic process related to the *chora*, i.e. the ‘receptacle.’ This concept is one that, following Leon S. Roudiez, Kristeva borrows from Plato to conceptualize her detachment from the language of intelligibility (1980: 6). The linguistic bliss originated from the incomprehensible language determines the very origins of avant-garde and modernist movements. Thus, the semiotic text opposes the symbolic text, which is associated to a more constrained, restricted, male-centred, and objective dimension of language.

Yet, it seems that this division between the ‘purely semiotic’ and the ‘purely symbolic’ are too extreme categories to literally regard them as clear-cut in these films. Matters of balance and accessibility determine that texts are never purely semiotic and, certainly Wyver’s films, having been financed by BBC, are not excessive in this sense. All the opposite, state-subsidized television plays undertake a commitment to reach as wide an audience as possible. In a certain way, the films are conservative in the sense that they prefer to keep the Folio texts as intact as possible. Yet, this does not mean that these concepts are not going to be useful to analyze various aspects of the filmic narratives.

However, Kristeva’s conceptualization of the text gets complicated as she introduces the idea of ‘transposition,’ defined as the ‘ability to pass from one sign system to another, to exchange and permutate them,’ and ‘representability,’ defined as ‘the specific articulation of the semiotic and the thetic for a sign system’ (1984: 60). As the text finds itself more unbounded, similarly to the state of bliss, the passage to the state of *jouissance*, as Young puts it, appears linked to the sense of loss and, by metaphorical extension, the sexual ‘coming’ consequent from the explosive thetic discursive flow (1981: 32).

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108 In “The Bounded Text,” Kristeva analyses the novelistic discourse as one that acknowledges a discursive ‘other’. Such acknowledgement involves a game of opposition between two ungenerous groups. Such linguistic groupings never reach ‘structural finitude’ although they may reach ‘compositional completeness.’ In this way, Kristeva’s conception of literary discourse rejects the Hegelian and religious notions of univocity (See Kristeva 1980).

109 This problematic connection between the individual and language will be applied in Chapter Five, where I analyze Doran’s *Hamlet* as a meta-theatrical self-reflexive piece.
In “Word, Dialogue, and Novel,” Kristeva again relies on Bakhtin to associate the nature of the novel to the acknowledgement of another’s speech. As she admits, the literary word is ‘an intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings’ (1980c: 65). In addition, she confronts the ideas of the polyphonic literature with those of monological literature. Whereas the epic discourse is monological in its focus on narration and description, the ambivalent discourse of the novel admits a wider range of voices. It admits the ‘dream logic’ as it breaks moral and social rules of language altogether by way of relying on more than one sign system. Specifically, Kristeva, again following Bakhtin’s ideas, uses the notion of Menippean and Carnivalesque discourses to highlight the ambivalent word. How does this apply to hybrid television Shakespeare film? The radical plurality of television discourse qualifies the small screen as a receptacle that admits the plurality of different discourses. In a way, the television receptacles fulfill the functions of the Carnival and Menippean discourse.

3.3.4. Roland Barthes

Barthes holds onto the poststructuralist attack on monologism and to the notion that the text is a matter of process and that unchallenged meanings do not exist in an art work. In addition, he conceives the text as something ‘woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages (…) antecedent or contemporary, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony’ (Allen 2011: 67). The levels of definiteness of the texts are, as mentioned in section 3.2.1, in Barthesian terms, to be determined by the *scriptible* – writerly – and the *lisible* – readerly – aspects of the language. Barthes’ innovation is founded on his qualifying the reader as a writer rather than a simple receiver. At the same time, the author needs to be acknowledged as a ‘scriptor’ who organizes whatever has been already said into a multiple compilation of texts, citations, retails and textures that blend and clash with each other. Thus, the multiplicity of cultural, social and linguistic meanings in given text, such as Wyver’s films, find their confluence in the reader – in this case, viewer –, who fulfills the function of site where the different texts intermingle.

In fact, Barthes’ structural analysis is devoted to study the different narratives within a single text. He carries out this analysis by way of isolating the different lexias that can be found in a textual construction. These lexias relate the text itself to larger social structures and notions from which

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110 A lexia constitutes a point of significance that connects our experience with the larger social intertexts and that confirms the impossibility of an ultimate meaning.
language cannot be separated. From this, it follows that the way languages are perceived and configured have also been conceptualized through the terms ‘doxa’ and ‘paradoxa.’ In fact, for Barthes, a text is a site of ongoing struggle between these two opposed poles, both of which roughly sketch the composition of the text.

If, as I have been postulating, the active pleasure and engagement the viewer can find in these films are related to clashes of codes, Barthes contributes terms connected to specific roles taken by the viewer when unfamiliar – writerly – ways of conjugating filmic texts appear on the television screen. At the same time, Barthes’ work serves as an additional stronghold to sustain the hypothesis that television discourses like Doran’s and Goold’s are capable of offering more pleasures if they are not founded on doxas or monological stances on the plays.

3.3.5. Gérard Genette

As an alternative view to the poststructuralist intertextuality scholars, Genette introduces the concept of ‘bricoleur’ – referring to the author and the critic – to pinpoint the narrative structures underlying a text by way of paying attention to ‘themes, motifs, key-words, obsessive metaphors, quotations, index cards, and references’ (Genette 1982: 5). In this way, elements from the literary system are consciously selected and assembled into a new literary work. Thus, a degree of stability in the interpretation – as well as an arrangement of signs – is recognized to the author and to the critic too, although they may not always be conscious of the textual material they are employing. In addition, Genette differentiates between modes and genres, as I did in section 3.1. when I isolated the different features applying to Wyver’s films – see figure 3 above –. In this regard, Genette’s concrete notions of intertextuality will help us avoiding the dangers of indulging in excessive intertextual

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111 ‘Doxa’ refers to the monological aspects of language and ‘para-doxa’ to its polyphonic aspects. Whereas the former accepts the premise that there might be a stable meaning in discourse, the latter recognizes the plurality of the text

112 As Genette confirms, ‘like any other activity of the mind, [literature] is based on conventions of which, with some exceptions, it is not aware’ (quoted in Culler 1975: 116). Nevertheless, this is not the case with Goold’s deliberate use of film genre to reconfigure his staging of Macbeth in televisual terms. Very explicitly, Goold confirms that he borrows many elements from slasher horror and all sorts of film genres. Therefore, although we do not need to religiously believe everything the author says about his own work, we can rightfully speak about some of the author’s intentions. See “Interview with Rupert Goold” in the DVD edition of Macbeth (2010).

113 Nevertheless, my definition of ‘mode’ corresponds to Jorgens’ and Hindle’s ways of categorizing Shakespeare on film and not to Genette’s definition of ‘mode.’ For Genette, modes are natural forms of language. Therefore, modes can be distinguished as ‘narrative’ or as ‘discourse.’ See “Frontiers of Narrative” in Genette (1982).
In order to avoid extremely disperse analyses, assuming a degree of determination has helped me situating the films within the comparatively closed range of specific film genres and modes, although, as I have been repeatedly assuring, my position is that these meanings will not be totally determining.

3.3.6. Film and Television Studies: Genericity

About the relationship between modern cinema and intertextuality, through a study of Francis Ford Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now*, Whaley confirms the view that intertextuality applies to film as well as literature (2007: 37-38). Most frequently, this notion is clearly articulated in terms of inter-genericity, which turns genres into interactive categories. This principle is perceptible in Hollywood film, even though it strongly relies on genre for its marketing. On mainstream Hollywood cinema, Deleyto notes that a great deal of the USA culture is defined through concepts such as hybridity, multiplicity and fragmentation. Such configuration is also reflected in this type of cinema (2003: 20). This cultural multiplicity is, likewise, reflected in Wyver’s willingness to reconcile theatre with the language of the screen.

114 With ‘trainspotting’ I refer to the mere past-time of spotting filmic references in a filmic product. Nevertheless, we should not underestimate the importance of this type of activity. Jim Collins identifies the current cinematic tendency to promote the audience’s agency as ‘bricoleurs’ who experience pleasure in the decoding of the intertextual structures within a film text (2009: 7). As I suggested, Genette’s theoretical work allows us a degree of control over the fastidiousness of eternal description. As for general narratives, Genette distinguishes the notions of ‘architexts,’ which, as Allen says, are defined as permanent ‘building blocks’ that compose the literary system in its totality (2011: 96). The architext builds a constant relationship with the text itself and, in combination with transtextuality, helps the constant transformation of the texts. What makes Genette’s approach to intertextuality slightly more structured than poststructuralist views is that he subordinates the study system to transtextuality. Transtextuality itself is subdivided into five categories called intertextuality, metatextuality, architextuality, paratextuality, and hypertextuality. Thus, Genette’s approach to intertextuality is highly pragmatic and a level of determinacy is possible when deciding the concrete elements within the texts. Intertextual traces can be detected and reorganized considering the larger whole. He distinguishes the notions of ‘dissemination’ and ‘rearrangement’ that need to be noticed if any structuralist perspective is going to be taken. Metatextuality ties one text to another text. Very often, without naming it, one text will cite and quote another. Regarding this, Goold makes ample use of metatextuality as he consciously quotes many films but so does Doran when he uses the theme of surveillance, which has been so widely explored in contemporary cinema. An additional feature examined by Genette is architextuality. Architextuality refers to the reader’s horizons of expectations and how the work of art is received. The paratext includes the peritext – chapter titles, notes, prefaces, etc. – and the epitexts, which are outside the text at hand. Hypertextuality refers to the union between one text B to an earlier text A, which needs to be regarded as a hypotext. This hypertextuality can manifest itself by way of a transgeneric architext, which would involve work on different genres, as well as pastiche, travesty, parody, palimpsest, etc. Texts can, thus, be transformed in many ways. Allen accounts for a series of processes that can affect a given text: self-expurgation, reduction, amplification, excision, etc.
Referring to cinema, Paul Watson says that ‘intertextuality’ refers to the manners in which a film may refer to other films (2012: 191). It is through genericity and genre that a community of viewers can be interpellated and hailed since a series of strategies are displayed to catch their attention. Not all views regard genericity as a positive aspect of filmmaking. As Jane Feuer explains, genre in film used to be pejorated as repetitive, predictable and mass-produced (1992: 142). However, many artists and critics changed their attitude when they discovered that film genre could liberate the filmmakers’ creative freedom rather than constrain it. All in all, film genres – as well as genre films – conjure up the spectators’ previous experience to establish a common stock of cultural assumptions. Filmmakers appeal to the audience’s expectations on popular narratives and seek to use that stock material to enthuse the spectators. In short, as Braudy sums up:

> [g]enre films essentially ask the audience, ‘Do you still want to believe this?’ Popularity is the audience answering, ‘Yes.’ Change in genres occurs when the audience says, ‘That’s too infantile a form of what we believe. Show us something more complicated. (1977: 179)

As Collins continues, current film invokes the ‘shared pleasure of intertextual recognition, the critical effect of play with narrative conventions, character and cultural stereotypes, and the power rather than passivity and nostalgia’ (2009: 7). These statements align themselves with Rick Altman’s assumptions that genres create ‘constellated communities of viewers’ (1999: 161). Thus, these viewers interested in specific genres often create fan communities that expect certain conventions to be fulfilled. In this sense, Robert Warshow affirms that these viewers accept a degree of originality, although they expect the fundamentals of the genre not to be altered (1971: 130). Yet, for Keith Grant, this fails to

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115 As Jane Feuer continues, ‘[t]hese standards of evaluation are based upon a romantic theory of art that places the highest value on the concepts of originality, personal creativity, and the idea of the individual artist as genius’ (1992: 142). Nevertheless, film genres do not follow this romantic conception. Even auteur films make wide use of film genre, which the directors personalize. Barry Keith Grant argues that American films – that have been consistently relying on genre formulas – originally considered the pluralistic nature of the social melting pot surrounding the film theatres and nickelodeons. A certain degree of reliance on formula facilitated that vast numbers of people belonging to different cultural backgrounds can understand mainstream films. Even so, as several critics have argued, genre films were never monolithic nor uniform and there is evidence of genre mixing from the early emergence of American mainstream cinema (2011: 5-8). This idea is confirmed by Jane Staiger (2003: 172).

116 To this, Peter Brooker and Will Brooker add that Tarantino films ‘can be seen as reactivating jaded conventions and audience alike, enabling a more active nostalgia and intertextual exploration than a term such as ‘pastiche’, which has nowhere to go but deeper into the recycling factory, implies. Instead of ‘pastiche’, we might think of ‘rewriting’ or ‘reviewing’ and, in terms of the spectator’s experience, of the ‘reactivation’ and ‘reconfiguration’ of a given generational ‘structure of feeling’ within ‘a more dynamic and varied set of histories’ (1997: 7).
explain the equal impetus of audience’s revisionism when it comes to demand the re-working of genres (2007: 21).

The main mechanisms through which film genre manifests itself, according to Watson, are ‘iconography’ and ‘self-reflexivity’ (2012: 193-195). Nevertheless, film genres can also be approached as paradigmatic and syntagmatic features paying attention to the plot, narrative functions, subject matter and the structure as well as other genre-specific features that appear in the film (Altman 1999).

For Jonathan Culler, nevertheless, the inevitable conventions that derive from specific genre expectations do not work to fix meanings but to set on mental processes or reading operations that engage in dynamics of ‘compliance’ and ‘deviation’ from the genres (Culler 1975: 147). This duality works in relation to the dynamics of compliance and modification of expectations I mentioned in the previous section on reception theory. Regarding conventionality, as Watson continues, communicative acts within genericity patterns turn into something accessible within a context of shared conventions and, so, the number of possible meanings – in line with Genette’s deterministic stance – is, to an extent, arguably delimited (2012: 199). Following this, the viewers can be expected to have a level of cinematic competence and to be able to recognize the conventions associated to a given film genre. Yet, it is important to bear in mind that, in a parallel opposition to that of structuralist intertextuality, Altman and Steve Neale agree that genre codes are not stable in meaning. The metaphorical meanings conveyed through genericity are not fixed but volatile and can lead to ‘post-generic configurations’ as well as a

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117 Icons consist of visual references that characterize a specific film genre. Self-reflexivity applies to films which self-consciously reflect or acknowledge their own status as genre films or which manifest their own filmic devices (Watson 2012: 193-195). As an instance of this, a dish of pasta can be regarded as an icon in gangster films. As for self-reflexivity, Tarantino’s clear references to Sergio Leone or to Japanese cinema are considered examples of self-reflexivity. In Shakespeare’s work, self-reflexivity constantly appears in the form of meta-drama when characters, for instance, openly address the audiences or when they clearly reckon that they are part of a theatre play.

118 As Fiske and Hartley – as well as Altman (1999: 25) – explain, syntagmatic relations are organized around horizontal chains into which signs are organized following conventions and rules – narrative structures –, whereas paradigmatic relationships depend on vertical units – shots, objects, camera moves, etc. – (1988: 50-51).

119 Christian Metz’s commentary on gangster films seems to summarize these ideas very well: ‘In American gangster movies, where, for example, the slick pavement or the waterfront distills an impression of anxiety and hardness… the scene represented (dimly lit, deserted wharves, with stacks of crates and overhead cranes)… and the technique of the shooting, which is dependent on the effects of lighting in order to produce a certain picture of the docks… converge to form the signifier of connotation. The same scene filmed in a different light would produce a different impression; and so would the same technique used on a different subject (for example, a child’s smiling face)’ (Metz 1974: 97).
variety of interpretations, especially considering that when films are seen at different periods they must be perceived differently.

Furthermore, the extra-linguistic cultural assumptions based on genre need not be taken at face value, but, all the opposite, we can personalize, revise and deconstruct these cultural assumptions, especially, as in the present case, when they are appropriated by two theatre directors working to translate a series of stage performances for public television. In this way, mainstream Hollywood film genres are appropriated by film BBC stage productions in such a state-subsidized television context. What Doran and Goold – especially Goold – do is to use the tools employed by cinema and use its very weapons to heighten the theatrical quality in the films. As we will see, these very resources will be useful to problematize the theatrical language of the film. Whatever happens, film genre is used in contrast to the language of recorded theatre.

However, what is an advantage for film and television is that their production circumstances are much more specifically akin to clarify what type of genre they belong to than literary genres are. When referring to the predictability of the audio-visual genre, John Cawelti defines the idea of ‘formula’ as ‘a conventional system for structuring cultural products’ (1970: 29). In this way, admitting that genre-based readings can be multifarious, Feuer establishes three different angles to approach genre. In the first place, films can be studied from an ‘aesthetic approach,’ oriented to the definition of genre ‘as a system of conventions that permits artistic expression’ and that assesses ‘whether an individual work fulfills or transcends its genre.’ Secondly, the ‘ritual approach’ studies the relationship between genre and the audiences as participants in a process that takes sets of beliefs and shared social or ideological positions into account. The ‘ideological approach’ regards genre as an element that ensures the reproduction of dominant views connected to the capitalist system (1992: 145).

Contrarily to this, Keith Grant offers a two-fold approach that will be useful in the analysis of Goold’s Macbeth. As Grant suggests, films can be analyzed by paying attention to their ritual dimension as well as to their mythical dimension (2011: 29-30). However, as we will see in the next section, the very often-referred capitalist dominant system and its dynamics are more multifarious than a first surface reading might indicate.

Following Tom O’Regan, this exercise in ‘indigenizing’ the dominant mainstream American forms can result into the widening of the resources of Shakespeare on the television frame and situate it in direct dialogue with film genre and the cultural issues that affect genericity. At the same time, the

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120 As I have already argued, relying on Fiske’s strategies to approach dominant readings, these can be challenged even in mainstream films. To this, Keith Grant adds that plenty of film genres and genre films have been subverting dominant ideologies and values (2011: 33).
acceptance of these resources in Shakespeare’s televisual filmscape does not necessarily imply the unquestioned acceptance of capitalist hegemonic values. However, the employment of filmic resources offers room for interpretation, parody and authorial positions in the narrative (See O’Regan 1996). In this respect, the reference to film genres in the films establishes an interesting relationship between the British television cultural values and the values associated to mainstream cinema.

As for Shakespeare on film, what is the place occupied by the plays regarding genericity, either televisual or filmic? According to Michael Anderegg, Shakespeare’s films can be taken as generic in their own right. That the text is regarded as an issue indicates that Shakespeare on film and television can be taken as a genre of sorts (2004: 1). Since genericity has procured financial success to mainstream cinema (see Watson 2012: 189), Shakespeare on film has taken advantage of film genre too. In addition, the hybridity of the films follows suit with the tendency Philips observes in cinema from the 1980s onwards: generic conventions have been intermingling within films (2011: 169). Regarding this, as a series of critics demonstrate, Shakespeare on film has always relied on gangster film, horror film, western film, British heritage film, war film and film noir.121 These film genres rarely act in isolation within the Shakespeare film and fairly tend to fit in interrelation with each other. For instance, the 1990s decade, featuring a generation of Shakespearean filmmakers championed by Kenneth Branagh, introduced postmodern cinematic realism in Shakespeare, which partly, following Crow (2003 7-8), can be highlighted for engaging in quotation, allusion, parody and pastiche related to Hollywood films, with specific attention to war films, western films, Disney films, gangster films, epic films, Indy films, documentary, etc.122 The most pessimistic reactions against this tendency have come from those scholars who, like David Harvey (1990: 44, 64), associate the fragmentary nature of postmodernism to a process of oppressive and destructive chaos rejoicing in shapes, fragments and banal patching up of narrative retails. This way, postmodernism is, in a very simplistic way, defined by Watson as an art ‘of aesthetic style which privileges surfaces over “deeper meanings” or “truths”’ (2012: 191). Per contra, in cinematic terms, genericity can be said to be a resource which does not only help in financial terms, but also helps to approach the art as a popular medium, as P. Hutchings puts it (1995: 189).


Following this, Shakespeare on film – particularly over the last decades – can be said to be intrinsically connected to inter-genericity and intertextuality. Potential intertextuality in filmmaking qualifies Shakespeare film as something more than a secondary narrative overshadowed by a script but as a cinematic reconstruction that needs to make use of the audio-visual and extra-linguistic cinematic repertoire. Whereas scholars strive for the reconstruction of the material conditions for performance in Shakespeare’s times – even elements of realism in Shakespeare performance have been accounted for by writers such as Gurr (1992: 180) –, the cinematic medium needs other types of visual signifiers that lead to recover Shakespeare’s narrative frame. Kathy M. Howlett refers to the film ‘frame’ as an entity to suggest how it contributes to arranging an interpretation that works in line with generic codes that may be found within the plays themselves (2000: 3-11). Having said that cinematic genres help screen Shakespeare with a repertoire of conventions, tropes, metaphors and various devices, it is necessary to clarify that cinematic tropes and image clustering do not simply quote films. All the opposite, intertextuality frames cinematically as well as culturally in ways that concretize the contextual circumstances of the plays in a contemporary light. Thence, cinematic tropes do not simply operate as formalistic devices but, following Watson’s chapter on film genre, they refer to various extra-textual cultural phenomena in the form of dynamic metaphorical constellations that are either renewed or that fade away (2012: 204-205). What is certain is that contemporary phenomena have the capacity to generate their own signifiers easily appropriated by cinema and Shakespeare film is no exception in this. These textual appropriations work in line with Jonathan Miller’s notion that art works lose their validity in their original contexts and that need to be reconceived so that they are understandable for us (1986: 30-31). A recent Shakespeare example of this can be seen in David T. Russell’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream film* (2016), which utilizes the language of fantasy film following suit with the *Harry Potter* films, teenage films, and a pseudo-Nazi dystopia film, which the director mixes up with gender-based and queer statements in favour of the blurring down of sexual roles in response to Theseus’ dictatorial and patriarchal rule – see figures 4, 5, 6 and 7 below –.
3.4. Popular Culture

So far, we have been discussing that strategies of appeal and intertextuality constitute dynamics of pleasure and bliss as they demand that the viewers jump from comfortable positions to more unsettling and challenging ones. My overall conclusion is that the viewers are not ultimately determined to read a film in a specific way but these films are explicitly arranged to give room to several possible readings – preferred, oppositional, aberrant and negotiated –. In fact, as we will be discussing through the next chapters, these interpretive possibilities are conjugated. The Brechtian principles of collision produce that modes and media make centrifugal moves in hybrid television Shakespeare films.

These are textual facts that were examined in the previous sections. Now I am going to sustain my initial contention with the contributions made by several writers of the field of popular culture. My

123 Figures 4, 5, 6 and 7 are screen captions from Russell’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream.*
intention is to, roughly speaking, clarify Wyver’s position regarding BBC’s public commitment to culture and what tools we can find in this discipline that help us address hybridity and its cultural impact.

3.4.1. General Considerations on Popular Culture

Wyver’s openly stated intentions are reaching a broad audience (Wyver 2015) and, as his continuous blog writing demonstrates, it is amongst his interests to promote excellence in culture. However, Wyver’s stance on excellence, as opposed to the binaries high and low culture, is not necessarily shared by all twentieth century thinkers. These binary oppositions – high popular culture and mass culture –, following the Frankfurt school, have been standing as paradigmatic. Theodore Adorno and Max Horkheimer oppose the terms ‘authentic art’ to the ‘culture industry,’ which involves a clear pathway to homogeneity and to a conformist culture (1979). For Leo Lowenthal, industrial culture depoliticizes the working classes and their revolutionary impetuses are replaced by false pleasures and mass culture impositions (Literature, Popular Culture and Society, quoted in Storey 2012: 65). Following Herbert Marcuse, the loss of subversion against dominant values and the subsequent elimination of critical thinking alienates cultural consumers (2016: 49). From this, one can deduce that this alienation reduces all kinds of dialogical discourse and leads to the reduction from two-dimensional culture to monological culture.

However, as John Storey suggests, we cannot be sure that, for example, popular music is monolithic as the Frankfurt School sustains (2012: 69). Can we truly say that popular culture constitutes such a massive brainwash? Although Marxist philosophers like Althusser (1989) sustain that ideological apparatuses police morals and cultural taste through hailing and interpellation mechanisms, others like Antonio Gramsci define the concept of ‘hegemony’ by admitting that dominant values are a

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125 Roughly speaking, as Storey says, the former – high culture – is true, European, multi-dimensional, engaging, individually created, imaginative, and disruptive. Following this commonplace, the latter is false, American, one-dimensional, un-engaging, mass-produced, distracting and unimaginative, as well as conformist (2012: 70).

126 I am working with an edition from 1998.

127 The figures show that eighty percent of industrial music records do not even manage to cover their cost (See Simon Frith, Sound Effects: Youth, Leisure and the Politics of Rock, 1983: 147, quoted in Storey 2012: 8).
Thus, there is no dominant language without negotiation between at least two cultural idioms. This means that the dominant language needs to engage in dialogue with the language of subordinate cultures. The linguistic balance – or, as Gramsci calls it, ‘compromise equilibrium’ – virtually depends on the dialectics of negotiation involving both resistance and incorporation of different linguistic elements from various cultural systems (2009: 76).

Therefore, what we understand as popular culture is a matter of negotiation and struggle for meaning where conformist and oppositional readings are feasible. The need to struggle for meaning, proposed in Barthes’ Mythologies (2000), opposes many conceptions that tend to regard cultural myths as natural facts. Consequently, these ultra-significant myths end up bereft of the truths they supposedly stand for. Following this, myths have the power to be perpetuated but they are not free from criticism or subversion.

British cultural studies have their own history when it comes to evaluate the relationship between classes and cultural taste. As the story goes, following Matthew Arnold, society is divided into the barbarian aristocrats, the philistine middle class and the working-class populace. Writing about the nineteenth century, Arnold claimed that the ‘highly instructed few’ had the moral duty to educate the masses (see Matthew Arnold, Complete Prose Works (Volume III), 1960-77: 591, quoted in Storey 2012: 22). These views were confirmed by more pessimistic regard for film, a supposedly cheap entertainment, which threatened to break down the standards of taste and, by extension, debase people’s emotional existences. In addition, such obscene acceptance of culture was regarded as the road to totalitarianism by a few other scholars. In addition to this corpus, Richard Hoggart’s emblematic Uses of Literacy denounced the ‘candy-floss’ world brought about by mass culture and the subsequent depoliticized, fluffy and weak mentalities derived from exposure to light and banal entertainment (2009).

Nevertheless, Raymond Williams and other writers – eventually, Hoggart included – engaged in the true construction of a ‘common culture.’ As Storey says, ‘Williams does want a common culture, whilst Leavisism wants only a hierarchical culture of difference and deference’ (2012: 48). In this regard, in their common work The Popular Arts, Stuart Hall and Paddy Whannel proposed the quest of ‘seeking to train a more demanding audience’ rather than moaning about the effects produced by the

128 As Neema Parvini says, ‘Gramsci’s great call for the proletariat to get their hands on the reigns of knowledge, overthrow this alliance between industrialists and aristocrats (in other words the intellectual bourgeois ruling class), and strive for an autonomous and ‘superior’ culture led by workers’ (2012: 59).

spread of inferior culture. All in all, the most important contributions made by culturalist scholarship are, firstly, that there is no need to evaluate one type of art with criteria belonging to another type of art, and, secondly, that there is no reason why a given cultural activity cannot be regarded as ‘real art’ while being rooted in popular entertainment. When referring to Charlie Chaplin, Hall and Whannel associate The Tramp’s films to a pattern that retains ‘much in common with folk art’ but becomes ‘an individual art, existing within a literate commercial culture’ (1964: 35, 59, quoted in Storey 2012: 52-54).

Following these premises, art does not need to choose either being art with a capital C or junk art. Therefore, the Frankfurt School’s assumption that one day ‘authentic culture’ would experience a second awakening can be re-formulated. This can be done since there is a recognition that the ‘common culture’ is in the process of constant construction. This idea is confirmed by Benjamin’s essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1973) when he recognizes that the textual reproducibility will pave the way for further interpretations. Benjamin’s recognition of a further dialogical position is summed up by the so-called ‘progressive reaction,’ which is ‘characterised by the direct, intimate fusion of visual and emotional enjoyment with the orientation of the expert’ (1973: 236). Benjamin’s enthusiasm on the democratization and accessibility of the meaning-making process for a wider representation of audience members can be related to the creative approaches granted by intermedial fictional works of art as the ones we are analyzing here. After all, as we saw in Chapter One, it is not an accident that Wyver’s producer company is called Illuminations. In addition to this, a culturalist perspective helps demonstrating that the binary categories in the end are much more complex than the Frankfurt School’s adjectivization proposes. We can say with a degree of accuracy that these binaries are examples of reductionism. Following Susan Sontag, we can confirm that the division between high and low cultures is less and less important than it has been (2009).

In this light, in agreement with Storey’s chapter on “The Politics of the Popular” (2012), we cannot assume that the population is composed either of ‘cultural dupes’ or the educated ‘élites.’ Rather, it seems clear that, although the mass media and the dominant cultural views may be willing to impose a certain reading on the consumers, it does not automatically follow that people unquestionably buy the industry-manufactured ‘preferred readings.’ As Fiske remarks,

> Popular culture is made by the people, not imposed upon them; it stems from within, from below, not from above. Popular culture is the art of making do with what the system provides (…) the fact that the system provides only commodities, whether cultural or material, does not mean that the process of consuming those commodities can be adequately described as one that commodifies the people into a homogenized mass at the mercy of the barons of the industry. (2011: 21)
In addition, as Fiske continues, people make do through popular tactics into what he refers to as a ‘guerrilla’ against dominant values.\(^{130}\) This notion invokes a concept of popular culture as:

> [P]otentially, and often culturally progressive (though not radical), and it is essentially optimistic, for it finds its vigor and vitality of the people evidence both of the possibility of social change and of the motivation to drive it. (2011: 18)

Where does that situate BBC and RSC Shakespeare productions? The leftist BBC’s and RSC’s impetuses are, arguably, oriented to promote the excellence of British culture and drama respectively. In addition to this, the rationale behind their public service seems to be that they are taking part into the popularization of Shakespeare. Yet, they seem to agree with Whannel and Hall’s stance on culture as a binomial that combines excellence with expertise grounded on popular art. Perhaps calling Wyver’s enterprise a ‘guerrilla’ movement in this sense seems exaggerated. But to what extent is not ‘guerrilla’ an exaggerated term in a society clearly dominated by consumerism? If we follow Baudrillard’s pessimistic views on the consumers’ society (2009), does Fiske’s so-called ‘guerrilla’ amount to even scratch the structure of late capitalism? An even more poignant question would be: If the BBC and the RSC are culturally dominant state-subsidized institutions, do they qualify to captain a guerrilla to promote Shakespeare on television, regardless how progressive such institutions might be? As we will later see, we will have the chance to explore – through Chapter Eight – whether Wyver’s hybrid works are capable of somehow conjuring some guerrilla spirit up.

### 3.4.2. Illuminations Media, BBC, Shakespeare and Popular Culture

If HBO and mainstream film have demonstrated anything, following Jordi Balló and Xavier Pérez (2015), it is that Shakespeare’s dramatic technique is alive and well in the twenty-first century. This is not the same thing as saying that, had he been born today, as the story goes, Shakespeare would

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130 In this section, I do not think that I am using the term ‘guerrilla’ in the same way Wyver does in Chapter Two. At that point, Wyver refers to a type of recording that is rougher, cheaper and, at all levels, less determined by a directorial vision than these four productions are. In this context, ‘guerrilla’ is clearly employed to refer to the power relationships between consumers and producers. As an instance of this, Fiske writes about youngsters who show their subversive behavior by ‘guerrilla tactics,’ such as spending the whole evening in a shopping centre without buying any products or by personalizing and adapting the products they buy to their own tribal taste.
have been writing scripts for *Eastenders*. In fact, there is no concluding consensus as for which audience was Shakespeare most inclined to comply with in the first place. However, it is beyond question that, one way or the other, as Luke McKernan states, Shakespeare has always been popular (2009: vii) and there is nothing clearer to demonstrate this than stating that his dramatic technique survives. To an extent, even the ‘dumbing down’ of Shakespeare’s texts is a sign of their popularity. It is true that Shakespeare’s texts as well as Shakespeare’s institutional value have been de-popularized over the centuries because of the self-righteous policies followed to foster – or rather mercilessly impose – its reading and its interpretation. Yet, as it is possible to deduce, from Douglas Lanier’s chapter on Shakespeare’s de-popularization, that the Bard has been parodied, eroticized and mocked highlights its popularity (2002). This has, to some extent, been tackled by film, television and other mass media that have not hesitated to use Shakespeare and even identify themselves with Shakespeare’s works. Yet, although – for better or for worse – Shakespeare is popular, its presence on television has, following several experts like Olwen Terris – see Appendix A –, rather gone unnoted by audiences within the larger background of British television drama at least until the early 2000s. Because of this, the BBC is strongly reluctant to subsidize it.

131 Wyver uses this reference to *Eastenders* in our Interview (2016).

132 Scholars have been debating on whether Shakespeare’s core audiences were the mainly privileged ones or whether the plays were truly addressed to broad audiences. Gurr argues that the King’s Men wanted to keep both audiences, especially as no evidence remains that the Globe closed neither with the opening of the Blackfriars nor when the company was granted the King’s patronage. Therefore, we can assume that the King’s Men audience-wise wanted to keep their chances as open as possible. For more detailed discussions, see Henderson (2007: 14), A. Jennalie Cook (272), Gurr (1992: 4, 26-27, 174-175), Lopez (2003). As I indicated in the Introduction, what Lopez seems to have demonstrated is that Elizabethan writers took for granted that the audiences – regardless of class – had sufficient oral literary competence to be able to understand and respond to the linguistic creativity of the plays.

133 Lanier associates the origins of Shakespeare’s un-popularization to the production of the Folio editions, which progressively turned Shakespeare the man of the theatre into Shakespeare the hero of the elitist eighteenth and nineteenth century self-pleased middle classes. Notions of decorum, bourgeois self-righteousness and Anglo-centrism became one with the development of English as *lingua franca*, the introduction of Shakespeare to the school curriculum, and the institutionalization of literature departments at universities. Such developments contribute to distance Shakespeare from mass audiences, who, overall, defensively took an opposed stance regarding art and entertainment. Artists who acted as self-appointed defenders of popular culture directed their skills for mockery against all the pseudo-intellectual bullying and paraphernalia surrounding Shakespeare, even to the point of denigrating Shakespeare’s figure as a Bard, not necessarily as an attack on the plays themselves but as a mock against the elitist behavior of the praetorian guard of high culture (2002: 21-46). As Wyver says, ‘[m]uch like the RSC, my [view] is [that] if you perform it very well and with conviction by good people, then audiences will understand it. But there’s a strong sort of sense that it’s difficult, it’s elitist, it’s for educated people only, and the loss of these imperatives of standing for education and broadcasting over the last twenty years at least, has lost access about extending the audience – particularly young people – of high culture’ (2016).

134 Assessing the impact of television Shakespeare on the British or worldwide audiences is not the goal of this dissertation. Yet I regard Terris’ work “Shakespeare and British Television Broadcasting 1936-2005” as fairly illustrative to examine
Regarding this, in his article “Television Industry (Minority Report),” drawing on the McCaster Report, Wyver distinguishes between ‘excellent culture’ and ‘elitist’ culture, the former being ‘the very opposite’ of the latter. His protest goes against the broadcasters’ second-guessing the audience’s inability to understand cultural events. Wyver relies on the report to further excellence in art programmes instead of the wishy-washy simplistic shows that somehow record cover but do not take innovation in television arts seriously. These shared beliefs of Wyver’s and the McCaster Report’s assume not only that there are audiences interested in art on television but that these audiences are young and clever ones that want to experience creative art (Wyver 2008). In this regard, although this seems to contradict the evidence provided by Terris – see footnote 133 –, what the Report suggests is that the audiences are ready to enjoy high culture, although they may not be necessarily so interested in uncut Shakespeare television films.

Following this, Tony Garnett (2000: 21), John Caughie (2000: 183-196), Dennis Potter (1994: 38), Wyver and Carl Gardner (1983), Mark Thompson (2002: 18) and Lez Cooke (2003: 139-165) discuss the intrusion of market-based hegemonic policies upon public service-based television. At worst, the quality of television has been undoubtedly inferior and less challenging, reliant on genre, repetition, and predictable programmes to satisfy the masses.

However, many constructive views can be seen in Fiske and Hartley’s writings, which argue in favour of the socio-centrality and the bardic role of television. In the first place, television establishes a sort of cultural consensus about shared perceptions of reality. Secondly, it involves individuals into the larger cultural framework that constitutes dominant value systems. Thirdly, television celebrates the achievements of one specific culture. Fourthly, it guarantees the status of the audience as a cultural community. Finally, it generates amongst the spectators a sense of cultural belonging (1988: 88). In this respect, television has the true power to generate a genuine cultural community. Therefore, as the

how ambiguous the presence of Renaissance theatre on television is. Comparatively speaking, this article presents poor figures when assessing the audience rates related to Shakespeare. In 2007, a poll conducted by Channel Four attempted to locate the fifty greatest pieces of television drama. Shakespeare did not appear in this poll. Regarding this, Terris concludes his article by confirming that ‘the nation’s appetite for Shakespeare has never been strong; the BBC has survived without Shakespeare’ (2009a: 38). Nevertheless, the impact of Live Cinema Performances and the possible consequences of Shakespeare’s Anniversary in 2016 may have contributed to redirect the viewers’ interests. Of course, this does not mean that Shakespeare’s dramatic technique and narrative schemes are not surviving and evolving in many ways through HBO series and multiple other manifestations. Perhaps it is time to be humble and simply recognize that uncut Shakespeare plays on television do not enjoy the same success that Shakespeare in other forms does.

135 As McCaster suggests (quoted from Wyver 2008), ‘Innovation must be central to the process (…) Too many organizations are trying to second-guess what their audiences want and are therefore cheating them out of the deepest and most meaningful experiences’ (quoted from Wyver 2008).
evidence suggests, the trick for TV Shakespeare seems to be finding ways to coexist with the cultural socio-centrality of television. Williams’ ‘common culture’ utopia can be achieved through the television flow and, in this way, Wyver’s dialogical approach to televisual Shakespeare is part of this ongoing process of creation of this common culture. Even if the audiences may, as Fiske and Hartley continue to suggest (1988: 106), tend to adhere to subordinate readings, at least, there are conditions for audiences to make their own choices. Still, when it comes to evaluate the work carried out by public television to promote Shakespeare, the results, as Terris’ data prove, have been rather negative. Despite the gigantic efforts carried by the BBC Shakespeare Series enterprise, television uncut Shakespeare has become a product for the teacher’s closet rather than for popular audiences.136 Despite this, if we manage to understand uncut Shakespeare on television not as a Shakespeare recording recipe but as part of a larger phenomenon of cultural revolutionary progress, we may have reason to be fairly optimistic in the light of the many manifestations of Shakespeare on television in this century. Therefore, is hybrid television Shakespeare film not popular simply because it does not reach HBO’s audience rates? I would not suggest this idea. I would rather suggest that, although these uncut productions are not predominant, they take part in the large twenty-first century Shakespeare enthusiasm, which includes, amongst other things, HBO narratives – and their frequent borrowing of Shakespearean devices –, Live Cinema performances, Wyver’s films, Shakespeare Re-Told series as well as many films.

136 Part of the problem to popularize Shakespeare on television is doubtless related to what has often been regarded as BBC’s parochial impetus. Although there have been voices that have defended the work of high culture guardians to preserve cultural capital (William Uricchio and Roberta Pearsons 1993: 9; Deborah Cartmell 2000: 3), Holderness takes a definitive position regarding the BBC Shakespeare Series. Rather than democratically extending the influence of Shakespeare on the audiences or embracing a more Elizabethan-like spirit, the BBC aligned itself with monolithic cultural authority (Holderness 1994: 219-223). This has involved a renunciation to the linguistic and the visual pleasures of the plays on the small screen.
3.4.3. Popular Culture: Rupert Goold and Gregory Doran

Goold’s work constitutes an example of what could be considered as a strange stance between a ‘guerrilla’ of sorts and an extremely ‘geeky’ approach to direct theatre and film. Goold’s credentials amount to a heavy reliance on popular culture in combination with high culture narratives. To my mind, Goold – see figure 9 – is one of the living proofs that whatever high culture is, in many respects, depends entirely on personal circumstances and background. Despite his often provocative, literary and shocking productions, he positions himself as somebody who rejects elitist views. He even goes as far as to define himself as a ‘populist.’ In this regard, he adds:

I think a lot of culture is boring, and I like people to have a good time at my shows (...) There’s a sort of Roundhead bullshit around culture: the more serious and difficult it is, the more it hurts you and your audience, the more worthwhile it is. It’s a form of bullying. (Trueman 2014)

As self-undermining as those statements might be, I want to believe that Goold is referring to the pretentious paraphernalia that often have more to do with power relations and snobbery than with true regard for cultural excellence. On the other hand, Goold is certain that audiences would prefer something challenging and thoughtful rather than easy-going and politically secure entertainments. Therefore, following this, the ideas of ‘fun’ and ‘enlightenment’ are not opposites. In this same interview with Trueman, he offers a trusting vision toward the audiences:

137 Picture taken from Department of Culture, Media and Sport (2014).
138 Picture taken from Tatler (2016).
The moment you try to second-guess your audience and shore up your financial position through safe programming, [they] smell it. If you don’t programme every show believing that it could change the face of theatre – if you go, ‘Oh they’ll need a comedy or something’ – it fails (My emphasis).

As we can see, for Goold there is a clear connection and marriage between excellence in culture and pleasure and large audiences are ready to welcome this binomial. If it is so, why does then Goold recur to references and conventions from Hollywood films? As we will see in the chapters dedicated to Goold’s Macbeth, Goold’s work carries a series of discursive hybrid operations out. First, Goold uses film genre conventions in a way that connects the educational values of the BBC and PBS to the unquestionable hegemony of Hollywood films. In the second place, this injection of Hollywood genre is employed as a series of brush strokes that compose a complex picture of ideological discussion in a BBC Shakespeare production such as this one. Is Goold employing these filmic conventions simply to avoid ‘being boring”? Or are these mainstream film icons likely to produce any disruption within the complex ideological temple of the BBC and the aura of excellence that surrounds this state-subsidized institution? Furthermore, if such disruption takes place, what does it say about Goold’s filmic text itself? How is hybridity mobilized in this respect?

Likewise, Doran – see figure 8 above – aligns with the notion that Shakespeare is a popular writer and it should aim at reaching a vast audience. The RSC resident director claims to come from the tradition of John Barton, Cicely Berry and Peter Hall, who also worked on these premises. Doran’s partner Antony Sher speaks about the RSC work in the following terms: ‘I was trained (…) to believe that Shakespeare isn’t an elitist artist, but a popular one’ (Sher and Doran 2001: 201). Wyver has made consistent efforts to popularize and generate debate about these films through a series of blogs that have collected many viewers’ reactions. At the same time, the films intend to retain their status as popularizing as well as culturizing products as they have been developed in association with a vast array of paratextual features.139

139 The DVD editions of the films have been released with varied extra material for the audiences to explore the productions in-depth. Doran’s Hamlet (2009) includes a Making Off documentary as well as the Director and the DoP’s commentaries. In addition, David Tennant stars the episode “David Tennant on Hamlet” for the Shakespeare Uncovered Series. Goold’s Macbeth (2010) offers director and producer’s commentaries together with interviews with Goold and the two leading actors: Kate Fleetwood and Patrick Stewart. Regarding Julius Caesar (2012), the DVD provides another Making Off documentary. Also, the RSC website displays blogging material on this production’s history, explaining the relationship between Shakespeare and Mandela. The Shakespeare Unlocked series offers a full documentary featuring Patterson Joseph (Brutus), Ray Fearon (Antony), Ciryl Nri (Cassius), and Jeffrey Kissoon (Caesar) carrying out an acting workshop in front of the camera, with the guidance of Gbolahan Obisesan, Doran’s associate director (See “Julius Caesar” in Shakespeare Unlocked, 2012). An alternative filmic narrative entitled I Cinna the Poet (2012), an associate RSC film featuring the story of Julius
All in all, in agreement with Wyver’s argument, the BBC’s position regarding Shakespeare seems to show tremendous insecurity regarding audience rates, although there was enthusiastic support by the institution when they financed Doran’s *Hamlet* featuring Stewart and Tennant, the stars in *Star Trek* and *Doctor Who* respectively. To my mind, the relationship between hybrid television Shakespeare film and popular culture is difficult to assess only observing the different modes and media chosen for the films, although it is interesting that film genres have been clearly employed as sources of appeal for the audience. Yet, what seems to me the most useful measuring tool to assess the contribution of hybridity to genuinely build up a sense of popular culture and community has been provided by the contributions of scholars who have approached convergence culture.

### 3.4.4. Relevance of Convergence Culture

So far, I have been explaining how the barriers between high culture and mass culture are almost broken or, at least, they should not be taken as binaries that stand for doxas without a thorough understanding of specific contexts and audience constituencies. However, as recent studies in popular culture demonstrate, this idea is easier to defend than to apply. Yet, following Wyver’s and Garnett’s arguments that technology can help enlarging audiences for Shakespeare and drama on television, I will establish a further connection between hybridity and the field of convergence cultures. To do this I will mostly rely on the work carried by Henry Jenkins, Fiske’s disciple. Both teacher and student claim to be ‘utopians’ engaged with the idea of convergence as well as popular culture as worth studying as it builds bridges between different communities of consumers.

Roughly speaking, as Jenkins says, ‘convergence culture’ is an ‘over-arching logic, having to do with the relations between different media systems,’ which involves the interaction of different platforms (Jenkins 2016). Following Storey, convergence ‘is not simply a matter of new technologies but a process that requires the active participation of consumers.’ Therefore, we need to regard convergence, as Storey continues, by paying attention to three different aspects. First, convergence culture consists of the distribution of a cultural product through different platforms apart from the original format in which the product appears. Secondly, technological development will be an additional factor contributing to developing convergence. In the last place, it is assumed that a community of

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Caesar from Cinna’s point of view, is available too. This film, directed by Tim Crouch, was released as part of the World Shakespeare Festival.
consumers will be taking an active part, as opposed to more passive ways of entertainment (2012: 216). As Jenkins (2006) and Fiske (2010) demonstrate, although the differences between high culture and popular culture are confusing, misleading and volatile, we can at least use one clear criteria to define genuine ‘popular culture’: it is made by consumers. Although such creation of common culture from below does not necessarily involve technologies, Jenkins’ work consistently focuses on transmedia as a potential instrument of popularization.

3.5. Summary

As I already formulated, my contention is, broadly speaking, that the source of pleasure and cognitive challenge in these films is precisely rooted in their hybrid character. In the Introduction I defined hybrid television Shakespeare films as the operations of collision and slippage between the languages of film and theatre within the same televisual space. Over this section, I expect to have demonstrated that these three elements in these specific films are much more complex than we could expect. Whereas the word ‘hybrid’ could be perfectly applicable to any recording of any theatre play on film or television, the interest in these films is in the modes and film genres that collide within the film narratives. Thus, I have distinguished a series of modes that have been recognized for film Shakespeare – theatrical mode, realistic mode, filmic mode, periodizing mode – as well as television Shakespeare – stage recording, studio recording, recording on location – and the BBC Shakespeare Series – naturalistic mode, pictorial mode, stylized mode –. I do not intend to imply that neither Wyver nor any of the directors have at all attempted to apply those labels in their works nor do I mean that Wyver has used them as blueprints for the films. Nevertheless, these key terms have been helpful to provide the means of analysis of these productions. Therefore, Wyver’s productions combine and inflect the theatrical mode, the realistic mode, the filmic mode, the periodizing mode, recorded stage play on location, site-specificity, and transmedia storytelling. To this, we should add that these modes are heavily inflected in

140 As Nicholas Negroponte says, ‘[t]he monolithic empires of mass media are dissolving into an array of cottage industries… Media barons of today will be grasping to hold onto their centralized empires tomorrow… The combined forces of technology and human nature will ultimately take a stronger hand in plurality than any laws Congress can invent’ (Being Digital, 1955: 57-58, quoted in Jenkins 2008: 5).

141 Jenkins was Fiske’s student and writes the preface to Understanding Popular Culture (2010). In this preface, Jenkins redefines Fiske’s differentiation ‘between mass culture – the cultural “products” put out by an industrialized, capitalist society – and popular culture – the ways in which people use, abuse, and subvert these products to create their own meanings and messages’ (2010: i).
rhizomatic combination with film genre conventions. Yet, although I expect to have provided a general map with the dialogical coordinates of hybridity, these categories are going to be bases for specific study paying attention to the individuality of the films. Arguably, as my contention goes, the collisions and the slippage between these different linguistic discursive modes create the source of pleasure in the films. Nevertheless, let me remind the reader that categorizations will never be substitutes for thorough analyses of the films. Therefore, let me request her/his assistance to interpret these labels as coordinates or landmarks to explore hybridity, never overstating their importance, understanding them as means – not as ends – of critical analyses.

Reception theory provides the terminology and the theoretical premises on how pleasure is aesthetically experienced. If the different modes inflected in the films constitute the source of pleasure, reception theory postulates that such pleasure is not incompatible with cognitive involvement. Thus, this corpus of theory proposes the idea of genuss – cognitive enjoyment as opposed to sentimental enjoyment –. To this end, reception theorists explain this enjoyment through a first move (hingabe) of surrender and a second move of detachment that permits the experiencer to contemplate the art object. Because Brechtian collision facilitates that the viewer is more engaged in making meaning, hybridity promotes these effects, together with the effect of poiesis – active engagement – on the experiencer.

Paying attention to larger cultural surrounding realities around the text, reception theory insists upon the need to pay attention to other works of art near the art object. The horizons of expectations associated to a given work of art or that may be assumed to be part of the spectator’s cinematic competence are widely energized in Wyver’s films, particularly by way of recurring to film genre and to several ciphers and conventions that irritate one another to capture the viewer’s interests.

At a more specific level, audience reception clarifies the different positions regarding how viewers undertake the film narrative. For a start, film mechanisms consistently differ from those of literary language. This might make us think that film is somewhat more determining than literature is. To some extent, this idea makes sense since films tend to work within the confines of hegemony, whether it is to comply with it or to deviate from it. Thus, a degree of determinism can be assumed considering the many operations taking place over the viewing. All in all, the affect, the excess, the suture system and the ideological effects of film can be said to be somehow determining for the viewer. However, post-structuralist voices have gone beyond this deterministic reasoning and spoken about the other interpretive possibilities offered. For a start, although images are given to the reader – rather than

142 Transmedia storytelling is in this thesis only applied to Julius Caesar.
made by the reader, as in literature –, the viewer has the possibility to de-territorialize these images and generate subsequent images. Apart from this, it has been suggested that collision of signifiers in film favours its dialectical nature and the same effect takes place in television, although, in this case, dialectics and difference rely on televsual interdisciplinary features. Hartley’s, Fiske’s and Mulvey’s views appear as particularly progressive in the sense that they recognize a high degree of determination on the signs and visual features offered on the screen. However, they ultimately demonstrate that, despite the hegemonic values of a television programme or a film programme, ultimately the viewer has the agency to oppositionally or aberrantly interpret what he/she sees. All these things simply could be said about any film or any television programme. However, as I want to continue showing, Wyver’s films foreground and foster these notions by the purposeful collision and slippage between modes and media.

If we regard filmic discourses as texts, key concepts on intertextuality offer a wide-ranging set of views on how to analyze the dialectical nature of hybridity. Firstly, Bakhtin highlights the social and dialogical nature of communication as well as the need to be familiar with several genre speeches to be able to produce utterances. When analyzing novels, Bakhtin speaks about their centrifugal – as opposed to centripetal – features as well as to their recognition to ‘another’s speech’ as elements composing the richness in literary discourse. Together with ‘another’s speech,’ Bakhtin proposes the idea of ‘polyphony’ as the amalgamation of voices, discourses, characters, and world-views that interact in a literary piece. Can these ideas be applied to hybrid television Shakespeare film? Arguably they can if we regard dialogism as the combination of different modes and media. The film genres and modes that I have been speaking about operate in centrifugal movements and, of course, stand for the polyphonic principles of Bakhtinian intertextuality. Kristeva and Roland Barthes contribute to complete Bakhtin’s dialogical – as opposed to monological – considerations on the language of fiction. Nevertheless, Genette offers a more structuralist view that, first, recognizes a degree of determinism based upon the bricoleur work that – consciously or not – grants the artist and the experience certain evidences and patterns to hold onto and that, secondly, offers a degree of objectivity to the possible range of interpretations.

This same combination of determinism and non-determinism can be appreciated by the overall contribution made by film genre theoreticians. Film genres are said to emphasize popular pleasures as well as audiences’ horizons of expectations. In addition, film genres can generate communities of viewers and consumers that devote their attention to cultural products based on genre. Yet, although these genres are somehow determined by paradigmatic and syntagmatic relationships and even though
genres fulfill certain mythical functions, still there are views that defend the idea that genres do not fully determine the viewer’s readings. Again, genres, although pervasive in these films – especially in Goold’s film –, because of their interaction with many of other different codes, do not suffice to impose any definite meanings on the viewers.

A last theoretical thread I intend to follow relates to the discipline of popular culture. We have noted that film genres are employed to specifically energize the viewer’s experience and, very likely, they have been purposefully used to achieve televisual relevance. This is truer in Goold’s film, although Doran also tries his chances with cinéma vérité and is given to filmic experimenting himself. At all levels, although it seems clear that Shakespeare stands as a worldwide cultural icon, BBC productions hold an ambivalent position regarding popular culture. Yet, trying to analyze the extent of hybridity I have relied on the work contributed with by Fiske and Jenkins on convergence culture. Convergence culture involves the collision of old and new media. Therefore, the collision between theatre and film within the same television receptacle seem clear examples of convergence. To explore this idea, we have pointed at the notion of media storytelling as departure point to analyze the extent of hybridity in the small screen.
4.1. Introduction

Wyver and Doran decided that their transposition of the RSC 1999 production of *Macbeth* should be framed as *cinéma vérité*. The objective pursued was the re-conception of the interactivity and closeness to the spectator achieved on stage at the small and intimate Swan Theatre. Therefore, the redefinition of the meta-theatricality inherent to the play itself and the performance directed by Doran would take place in meta-filmic terms. Apart from this, it was expected that the combination of this film genre with the theatrical environment of the location would help exploring the realism one should expect when viewing documentary-based simulations of reality. Thus, this production was partly conceived as a piece of news broadcast in collision and interaction with the artifice of drama. For Wyver, using this type of hybrid filmic narrative involves that the camera operator responds to the events as they take place and strives to capture them, without a tripod, using ‘rapid pans’ and various tropes from fly-on-the-wall documentary film (Hindle 2015: 282). All this took place while not letting the viewer forget that this is still a Jacobean tragedy.

The venue where the film was shot was the London’s Roundhouse, a building that had been home for Centre Forty-Two. Since the 1960s this has been an arts venue and was used as location for another stage-originated Shakespeare *vérité* film production in 1969. I am referring to Tony Richardson’s transposition of his Centre Forty-Two *Hamlet*. As Judit Pieldner indicates when referring to Richardson’s piece:

… in order that the actual theatrical space should remain hidden more or less, the film avoids providing a thorough insight into action space; space compositions are limited by the bodies of the characters appearing in the foreground without revealing the actual spatial dimension of the background. Interestingly, the transformation of theatrical space into cinematic one in this manner – Tony Richardson seems to have made virtue out of necessity – acquires an additional layer of meaning: the camera, exempt from under the task of presenting the environment, can focus on the characters, on their faces, feelings, reflections and reactions, in this way a greater emphasis is laid upon acting, upon their interactions and interpersonal relations. (2012: 53)

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143 In this and all the chapters dedicated to *Macbeth*, I will be citing the text edited by A. R. Braunmuller (2003).

144 As Moschovakis suggests, ‘[b]y bringing the action closer to his audiences, Doran implicitly challenged them to account for their own relationship to a world in which warrior values were horribly realized’ (201: 38).

145 On meta-theatricality in the play, see Michael David Fox (2013) and James Wells (2013).
As Pieldner insists, Richardson’s film sacrifices long and medium shots of the theatrical mode for the sake of characterization. Even at public scenes, the camera insists on the claustrophobic predominance of close-up and accumulations of faces on the screen – see figure 1; then see figure 2 below –. Therefore, although the film is recorded in its original venue, the relationship between the two languages – theatre and film – is not visually energized but rather dissimulated. Per contra, Doran’s work in this Macbeth production more thoroughly explores the social world of the play in what is clearly a theatrical venue. Besides, it adopts a more centrifugal working dynamic, which makes a clear bet for coherent deformation and writerly manipulation of the narrative by deviating from the straightforwardness of traditional recorded theatre.\textsuperscript{146} Such deformation, as already pointed out, tries the coexistence of two seemingly opposing features – theatrical language and film language – and the environment is cinematically taken into account as much as the characters’ interpersonal relationships and the heteroglossia that characterizes the film. Perhaps one of the clearest ways in which theatre and cinema coalesce in this production is the way in which Doran’s camera combines scenes recorded at the backstage of the theatre as well as on the Roundhouse arena. The camera freely moves around these two spaces, de-centring what otherwise might have worked as a more classical and standardized studio or as a theatrical mode performance. In this way, the film chooses taking neither a clearly cinematic nor theatrical stance. Rather anarchically, it chooses to be both a recorded theatre play and a cinématé vérité film. Rather than renouncing the theatricality of the production as foreign to the alleged nature of film, Wyver and Doran embrace the contradiction produced by the clashing of codes.\textsuperscript{147}

\textsuperscript{146} As I explain in section 3.2.1 –, ‘coherent deformation’ is the association of two seemingly opposing features, such as the cinematic language and theatre language within the television frame. With ‘writerly manipulation of the narrative,’ I am referring to the fact that the authors – mainly, the director and the DoP – are choosing to challenge the viewer by rejoicing in a degree of narrative complexity as the film does not really become a film in the strictest sense of the word nor does it attempt to be a complete reproduction of the stage production.

\textsuperscript{147} In his two chapters on “Theater and Cinema,” Bazin proves that the language of cinema is indebted to theatre. In many ways, there is reciprocity between the two languages.
In this chapter I am going to analyze the relationship between the theatrical and the filmic modes that have been employed to adapt Doran’s stage production of *Macbeth* on the television screen. I want to contend that this transposition produces a problematic relationship between its components in this location. As mentioned in the introduction, the recording of a theatre play will never recover the entire theatrical experience. Therefore, let us assume that the act of recording theatre for television, following a Baudrillardian vision on simulacra, automatically leads to the disintegration of the original stage production. Acknowledging that this theatrical recording is irritated by *cinéma vérité*, I want to postulate that the theatre play survives at the cost of surrendering to the textual Gestalten of such film genre. 

In the same way, *cinéma vérité* is paradoxically challenged by the presence of theatrical conventions that struggle to remain within the frame. This slippage between different languages will reduce and problematize the theatricality of the stage production but, as Bazin indicates – see section 1.1 –, not at all to zero degree. Although we cannot reproduce the theatrical experience on film, nothing prevents the cameraman from invading a theatrical environment as the London Roundhouse. In short, the very strength of recorded theatre in this film will be found in the dissimulation and disintegration of theatre. With ‘dissimulation,’ I refer to Jean Baudrillard’s conception of the relationships between symbols and the realities they intend to represent. Thus, whereas ‘simulation’ represents something that does not exist, ‘dissimulation’ struggles to hide realities that are palpable and undeniable. Far from being a constraint for its recording, the impossibility of recovering the theatrical experience constitutes an

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149 Picture taken from Stuart Ian Burns (2005).

150 Let us remember that, according to Bazin, to be successful, the language of theatre needs to surrender to film.
empowering source of filmic pleasure. In other words, trying to cinematize the theatrical elements of
the original performance, we can truly explore the film in theatrical terms as several theatrical
mechanisms are revealed. In this regard, the DoP constantly moves backwards and forwards between
the backstage and the onstage of the London’s Roundhouse. Thus, it constantly reminds the viewer that
this narrative does not only derive from a theatre play but the different physical spaces in the theatre are
employed to distinguish public areas from liminal spaces which, ultimately, trace the characters’
positions in the social map of the play.

To develop my contention, in the first two sections, I will be paying attention to theoretical
aspects that determine my analysis as well as to the site-specificity of the film. Following this, I will
tackle how the theatrical mode is eroded by the vérité mode. Also, I will be paying attention to how the
hand-held camera psychologizes the stage production and, thus, revitalizes the actor-viewer interaction.
Also, I will be focusing on how voice-over mechanisms and other filmic devices enhance the
communicative problems experienced by the main characters. Following this, I will analyze how certain
particularly theatrical scenes are heightened and defined in opposition to the unintentional and
disorganized shooting of other vérité sections. The last part will focus on how the textual plurality of
the film shocks the audience by making use of uncanny addresses to the camera, horror film devices,
and the brusque clash between the vérité mode and the theatrical mode within single sequences.

4.2. Theoretical Framework

As mentioned above, the creators saw interesting the possibility of filming the production as
cinéma vérité. As Paul Ward indicates, cinéma vérité is a type of documentary film that, as opposed to
direct cinema films ‘has a foundation of interaction between filmmaker and filmed’ phenomena. This
means that the director and the cameraman are much more interventionist than they would be in other
types of documentary. Also, being this genre a precursor of ‘Reality-TV,’ interpreters in vérité film
acknowledge that they are being observed (2012: 210, 219). In this light, this type of documentary
follows suit with the Jacobean theatrical convention that characters constantly address the audience and
acknowledge their role in a theatre performance. As we will see, in this case, Sher is one of the most
meta-theatrical Macbeths ever seen on the screen as he clearly acknowledges the cameraman and his
presence in a documentary narrative of sorts. Considering the war atmosphere pervading the playtext,
the team would expect to really emphasize self-reflexivity in the film.

Following this premise, one of the self-reflexive goals in this production was to reconstruct the
play in cinematic terms as ‘if this was a war zone’ and Ernie Vinzce, the DoP, as already suggested, had
to carry the camera around as if he were catching all the events taking place (Wyver 2016). Therefore, most of the film is shot with the camera carried over the DoP’s shoulders trying to simulate the uncertainty of war reportage. This feature extended to scenes that evoke the state of war in Scotland as well as most other scenes. In this way, *cinéma vérité*, to envisage the beginning of the play *in media res* or as something akin to a war documentary, serves as a perfect excuse to slip into and cinematize the different spaces at the Roundhouse where the rest of the scenes take place.

Thus, Doran and Wyver introduced an anonymous character of sorts – framed through the DoP’s fictional glance – shaping the immediate experience of inhabiting a dark world shaken by war. At the same time, this irritation of the boundaries between theatrical detachment, filmic illusion and documentary reality situates the film at the level of a simulacrum. Nonetheless, this simulacrum, as Elizabethan theatre did, foregrounds its artifice through its theatrical style. This narrative piece becomes a cultural arena for struggle and collision between theatre and film and, if theatre – though disintegrated and dissimulated – is expected to be hegemonic, it will not be without resistance from film language. The same could be said the other way around: theatre resists and takes a stand to predominate too.

More specifically speaking about *cinéma vérité* and its relationship with larger social realities, many film documentaries have used the *vérité* mode to allude to the many conflicts of the last decade of the twentieth century. Documentary film, war reportage and all sorts of video diaries and filmic documentation have emerged to represent war, cruelty and the political stance of countries that have waged war one against the other. These videoed materials have brought killers in communication with worldwide audiences and, thus, the impact of war cruelty has reached many homes in ways seemingly immediate and straightforward. Yet, we should not be naïve about the fact that the viewer never receives the information unmediated. Documentaries are structured and edited and, in that sense, their realism is, at best, partial. At worst, it is a matter of interpretation and, in many cases, a clear forgery.

Baudrillard refers to this phenomenon as ‘simulation,’ which establishes the sign as not corresponding to the object represented but to the representation itself. The hyperreality that exists and does not require a real counterpart has given way to an age in which all referents have disappeared. According to the French philosopher, images undertake a series of phases that inevitably lead to

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151 As Wyver remarks, ‘often we didn’t really know what the scene was going to be. We didn’t, as in the normal way of drama, break the scene down, rehearse it, shoot a wide master shot, and then do detailed shots. Greg Doran would say something like, ‘So the scene is: Macbeth comes down those stairs, Lady Macbeth enters over there, they argue about the daggers, and then they rush out. That’s what happened on the stage, and this is roughly the equivalent to that, but in a real-world location. OK, that’s what’s going to happen, Ernie – Shoot it’” (2016).
simulacrum. Firstly, images are presented as the evidence of a deep reality. Secondly, these images mask and denaturalize the deep reality they want to represent. After this, these images do their best to mask all traces of artificiality. A final stage undertaken by images involves that, eventually, the image has nothing to do with any type of reality at all, as they have become pure simulacra (2008: 18). Yet, as Baudrillard insists upon, simulacra do not eliminate the violence and damage of war. Although simulacra do not accurately represent reality and wars are really narratives staged by contending parties, the damage derived from these organized wars is not less deep than it would otherwise be (2008: 50-51).

Applying this idea to Doran’s *Macbeth*, as we will be observing, the dissimulated theatricality of the film and the cinematic enhancing of this stage performance foreground the brutality and the images of war through various representations of blood, scars visible in the Witches’ faces and teeth, Macbeth’s agitated gazes at the camera, neurotic extreme close-ups featuring the Witches, exhaustion and sickness expressed through the constant use of cigarettes and tobacco, etc. Although this film in many ways exposes itself in theatrical terms, the viewer can perceive crude and stark evidences of violence one would expect in TV news.

Even so, knowing that this is a theatre play will never, as far as I am concerned, help the viewer to believe that these images are real. Following these premises, as Baudrillard postulates, the real will never be reproduced. Certainly, this film toys with elements that recall reality in combination with the theatrical detachment pursued in Jacobean drama. Nevertheless, the fact that it is recorded in the London’s Roundhouse and that, through many different camera movements and journeys, we are reminded that this is a theatre venue produces an intersection between the world of theatrical illusion and the realism of a film documentary. If we believe Baudrillard, in this film, we will only have images of the real and such images will be taken as more powerful than what they represent. In his work *What Is Cinema?*, Bazin explains how film has been developed to overcome mankind’s fear of death and to satisfy their desire for self-perpetuation through the representation of reality (2005). Yet, following Baudrillard’s notions, everything metamorphoses into the opposed element to survive. Institutions speak of themselves by way of negation to escape their real agony. Thus, contrarily to Bazin’s positive views,

152 Bazin’s “The Ontology of the Photographic Image,” the first chapter of Hugh Grady’s selection, sums up the process through which cinema derives from photography in the larger search for the reproduction of reality. As Bazin says, ‘cinema is objectivity in time. The film is no longer content to preserve the object, enshrouded as it were in an instant, as the bodies of insects are preserved intact, out of the distant past, in amber. The film delivers baroque art from its convulsive catalepsy. Now, for the first time, the image of things is likewise the image of their duration, change mummified as it were’ (2005: 14-15).
by way of simulating their own death, entities survive. An additional example of this effect is provided by Baudrillard’s analysis of the Beauburg effect. He talks about implosion of culture by the making up of controlled circuits that are all the time threatened with a massive short-circuit (2008: 86). Thus, it is through self-negation that mechanisms, as well as political ideologies, stand up in the face of adversity. In this way, thanks to the staging of their own death they can recover some glimpses of existence and legitimacy (ibid: 45).

If, as the French philosopher would say, self-negation is a mechanism to perpetuate an institution or a given entity, one of the ways of theoretically approaching hybridity in this film will be through Baudrillard’s reference to making art through anti-art (2008: 45). In this regard, relying on Kristeva’s rejection of the monological divine law, the prestigious values of recorded theatre are undermined. If we take theatre on television in this production as a self-denying mechanism, the results lead theatre to dynamics of explosion and implosion. Paradoxically, such dynamics work to favour theatre. If the film frame is inadequate to reproduce the experience of ‘being there,’ the theatrical space chosen for the recording is hopelessly inadequate to convince the viewer that this is a film. Thus, the viewer is forced to accept that the reality of the documentary and the artifice of theatre are conjugated in the production.

In this film, as already suggested, theatre is highlighted thanks to its willingness to be disintegrated into a plethora of filmic utterances and centrifugal moves away from its strictly stage origins. The nearly total disintegration of the theatrical mode and the consequent centrifugal effect of hybridity open the space for Brechtian collision and confusing slippage between the two different languages. Therefore, the viewer is expected to find the source of active pleasure by making sense of the writerly aspects of the production. Again, with ‘writerly aspects,’ I am referring to the need to negotiate with the intersections produced between theatre and film.

Finally, Baudrillard leaves us the two concepts of ‘simulation’ and ‘dissimulation.’ The former involves the pretense that there is something present which is not present. The latter involves the opposite: the pretense that something, which is present, is absent (2008: 11-12). Let us recall that this performance plays on the premise that it is a theatre play intending to be cinéma vérité. However, there are many powerful elements denoting its theatricality. As I have already suggested, such theatricality is undermined and, at the same time, enhanced by the presence of filmic features within the main narrative. As clarified in the introduction, following Noël Carroll’s analysis of the differences between film and theatre, theatre is not the only means through which meta-dramatic commentary can be made. In this light, this film uses film language to enhance the spatial theatricality of the Round House.
The writerly potentialities of the film work on the paradox posed by hybridity – which admits the coexistence of theatre and film within the same televisual frame – and my interpretation of recorded theatre in Baudrillardian terms. According to these premises, to survive, recorded theatre needs to accept its own disintegration. Nevertheless, it will be through its own disintegration that theatre resists in the film. As an instance of this, Sher’s interpretation as Macbeth is particularly important because he is the axis around which this intersection between the two languages is mainly structured. The actor’s apparently boundless energy determines much of the theatrical strength of this production and yet, part of his character’s distortion is that he is not capable of assuming the theatrical functions of monarchy. To feel safe from what seems an unintelligible language – or, in Bakhtin’s words, ‘another’s speech’ as I will later refer to –, Sher prefers to play safe in the liminal spaces of the Roundhouse – i.e. the backstage areas and the hidden wings of the political stage represented in the Roundhouse – and to avoid any type of spectacular self-representation as a monarch. In short, Sher’s Macbeth wants to enjoy the benefits of kingship without having mastered its language. The film itself shows how the character most interested in acquiring theatrical ability proves quite inefficient at it. Unsurprisingly, by underlining this trace of Macbeth’s character, the film clearly makes further meta-theatrical commentary.

On a different level, this dialogical relationship between theatre and cinema vérité will be tackled by way of applying intertextual theory, which will be helpful to analyze how the intersections between the two languages operate. The rehearsal process, following Doran, for the original stage performance took its point of departure from the idea that each of the actors had of ‘fear.’ When reading Doran’s chapter on the rehearsals for Macbeth, it seems to be clear that such notions had to do with the unexpected (Doran 2006: 11). This idea is confirmed by Wyver as he insists on the filmic attempt to feature the scenes in the most spontaneous ways possible, although he does not specifically refer to the idea of fear. Whether this sense of unpredictability is properly transferred to the small screen or not, it is something that I will not be assessing in this chapter. Nevertheless, although the feeling of unexpectedness that Wyver talks about may be transferred – or not – to the small screen, what is clear is that the film embraces a paradox, which may work in different ways that can often derive into the rupture of different horizons of expectations related to film or filmed theatre. In short, I am interpreting the unexpected as the clash of codes – theatrical and filmic – in this television film.

153 Once the creative team began working on the televisual adaptation, as Wyver says, ‘I think we didn’t talk about it being fear but about the unexpected. You never knew what was going to happen. Maybe you feared what was going to happen. Greg wanted this production to appear as if the play is not determined. He wanted the actors and the film to be taking place in a very immediate ‘now.’ Not with a sense of what’s to come (...) He [didn’t] want [people] to feel that something [had been] rehearsed (...) Whether that makes fear or no, I can’t tell, but that’s the impetus behind the production’ (2016).
Considering that these two discourses – theatre and film – will be intersecting, as I punctuated in Chapter Two, I am going to apply intertextual concepts to this specific work as it will be useful to explore the manner(s) in which different narrative lexias are inflected. Thus, I will study the clashes in the play through Bakhtin’s conception of ‘another’s speech.’ Following Bakhtin, in all areas of life and of creation our speech is supplied with words uttered by another, transmitted with different degrees of precision and impartiality, and, thus, the more intense, complex and heightened is the social life of those who use speech, the weightier will these elements of speech, transmission, interpretation, refutation, and evolution in the communicative processes be (2011: 75).

As also already mentioned in Chapter Two, Bakhtin’s work heavily relies on Dostoevsky’s works. The Russian author’s complex model of discursivity consisted of the confrontation of different codes, manners of discourse and speech genres (Bakhtin 2012). What seems to be Bakhtin’s utopia, following which many different discourses would coexist in interaction, has not been fulfilled in the age of hypermedia and ebullient textuality that we inhabit either.\footnote{Kristeva confirms this idea in Haus der Kulturen der Welt (2011). In this interview, she concludes that communication technologies have failed to create a global world where people communicate with each other. The interpersonal communication utopia pursued has, for the French scholar, not been satisfactorily fulfilled.}

Understanding the conflictive relationship between ‘another’s speech’ and the different modes and languages employed in this film production will be an interesting standpoint to figure out the complex status of theatricality as a simulated and dissimulated element together with the intended effects of unpredictability.

### 4.3. From The Swan Theatre to the London Roundhouse

Doran’s modern dress RSC production of Macbeth was première in 1999 at the Swan Theatre featuring Antony Sher and Harriet Walter as the leading couple. After a tour through Japan and the United States, the production was broadcast as a television film on 1 January 2001. Immediately after the stage performance concluded its run, Doran and Sher contacted Wyver to film the production for the television screen. As Doran says – perhaps following suit with Richardson’s Hamlet (1969) –, the intimacy provided by the small theatres where the play was performed lent itself to a television translation.\footnote{See “Making-Off” in the DVD edition, 2001.} As I have been repeating, Doran and Wyver were trying to find a setting that conveyed a sense of ‘vivid neutrality.’ As I also mentioned in Chapter One, as soon as Doran saw the London...
Roundhouse, proposed as setting for the filming, he ‘realized [that] that was the place where he wanted to shoot it’ (Wyver 2016).

The London Roundhouse had been restored at the time Illuminations Media contacted the site. The history of the building – i.e. the host – contained elements that totally link it with the powerful imagination-triggering visual energy perspired through the brick-walls or the lights cutting through the windows invading the arena. This arena used to be a gig venue and a concert hall. Furthermore, Richardson’s Hamlet had proved in 1969 how the corridors, galleries and rooms surrounding the arena might be brilliant spaces to search for the intimacy and the air of conspiracy that pervades Macbeth as well as to explore onstage-backstage dynamics. This way of filming theatre by establishing the contrast between the stage and the wings had been, as mentioned in Chapter One, already tried out by Wyver in Lloyd’s Gloriana.

In the nineteenth century, the building was commissioned by Robert Stephenson, Chief Engineer of the plan to set up a railway line between London and Birmingham (1833). The purpose of this building was the storing and the maintenance of engines and supplies for the service. Robert Dockray designed the Roundhouse and, thus, the one-hundred-and-sixty feet diameter circular space was divided into twenty-four bays. A turntable wheel at the centre of the room rolled to get the engines into the area. In addition, this building was topped by a conical roof that was supported by twenty-four columns. Thus, for many decades the building was employed as a warehouse for liquor and was widely admired by architecture and arts students. However, it was thanks to Arnold Wesker’s initiative in 1964 that it was turned into a cultural venue known as Centre 42. Wesker’s intention was that this initiative would spread the best existing high and popular cultures. The whole purpose of the place was to build:

[A] cultural hub, which, by its approach and work, will destroy the mystique and snobbery associated with the arts… where the artist is brought in closer contact with his audience, enabling the public to see that artistic activity is part of their daily lives. (Centre 42 Annual Report 1961-62, quoted from Roundhouse Trust Ltd)

Is this closeness with the audience somehow intended – or achieved – by the selection of a well-known venue like the Roundhouse for this television translation? The venue hosted Pink Floyd, Jimi Hendrix, The Who, Sex Pistols, The Doors, David Bowie, DJ Jeff Dexter, Black Sabbath, Genesis, Marc Almond, Elton John and the Rolling Stones as well as various Sunday night gigs. Also, it welcomed Richardson’s Hamlet, spectacles by The Living Theatre, Peter Brook’s Themes on the Tempest, Steven Berkoff’s Metamorphosis, or Kenneth Tynan’s Oh! Calcutta!, together with several other theatre productions. Is
the ghost in the venue powerful enough to evoke the utopias of the 1960s and create this sense of communal experience in the television frame?

In every decade, different bands and staging types were brought to the place until, in 1983, Thelma Holt, who had continued running the venue, decided to close it down. This decision was due to the impossibility of obtaining the sponsorship to programme the shows. After many people had shown interest in taking over the place, it was in 1996 that the Norman Trust bought the building to put it to use again. By 1999, the objectives for the Trust were clear: the house would be redeveloped into a ‘world-class performance space and a state-of-the-art centre for large numbers of young people to take part in new media and creative arts programmes’ (quoted from Roundhouse Trust Ltd).

From that moment on, different bands and theatre events, including the work carried out by the RSC, were presented in the venue, and, during the early 2000s, the Roundhouse became an arts hub destined to foster that young people could bring their artistic talent to the arena.156 Thus, the site was haunted by its own ‘ghost,’ which offered its own story written on the walls of the theatre. It seems interesting that this so-called ‘21st-century parable’ that Doran’s production has been – as we will read below (see footnote 157) – is made to collide with a cultural hub that was destined to embody the 1960s British utopias – see figures showing the building 3, 4, 5 and 6 below –.

![Figure 3](image1.png)  
![Figure 4](image2.png)

156 See Roundhouse Trust Ltd.
4.4. Simulating a War Zone

In this first section, I will tackle how the theatrical mode is, from the start, eroded by the vérité genre speech used in the corridors of the backstage area. The stage performance was initiated with the idea of exploring the immediacy of war reportage. Therefore, the first sequences – specifically, scenes 1.1 and 1.3 – develop as simulacra of vérité news broadcasts. This vérité frame portrays the Witches – Norma Dumezweni, Polly Kemp and Diane Beck – as alienated civilians victimized in an undefined war zone. They take refuge at the liminal space of the backstage area, although the viewer unfamiliar with the Roundhouse will not necessarily notice this yet. Following these premises, the film attempts to dissimulate its theatrical origins but it energizes the production through abundance of Point of View shots – henceforth, POV shots, extreme close-ups, medium shots, quick pans, close-ups and a plethora of jarring camera movements that invade the viewer’s initial perception. Paradoxically, as I argued in section 4.2, theatre is reinforced on the television screen by relative self-denial. Thus, this recorded piece embraces another’s speech from the very beginning.

157 Figures 3, 4, 5 and 6 taken from Roundhouse Trust Ltd.

158 The film is roughly situated in some undefined country in what seems an injunction between the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As I earlier suggested, following The New York Times, the stage production was ‘a harrowing and disturbingly funny parable for the dawn of the 21st century’ (quoted from Wyver 2016a). Yet, as Doran says, the idea was not to make the production directly apply to any specific contemporary affair. This ‘mud-caked’ world, as Doran calls it, could be conjuring up Passion Day, the Gulf War, and so on and so forth without over-specification (See “Making-Off” in the DVD edition, 2001).
The first shots invoke the horrors of violence and war. The grainy first shot features the panicky Witches pursued by the uncanny DoP’s lens. The viewers do not know who is pursuing the Witches, but at the time when the film was broadcast there were reasons to assume a horizon of expectations related to the Balkan genocides of the 1990s. Also, in many ways, this initial shot energizes the relationship of this film with Richardson’s *Hamlet*. In that production, Hamlet’s Ghost was framed through close-ups of Nicole Williamson and the total absence of the Ghost. In Doran’s case, the otherworldly positions are exchanged. It is the POV who frames the ghostly presence of a cameraman following the terrified Witches – the alleged supernatural agents – through dark tunnels – see figure 8 below –. Thus, whereas Richardson emphasizes the impact of the Ghost on Williamson’s expression in close-up – see figure 7 –, Doran mobilizes the ghostly presence through a forward attack on the Weird Sisters. At the same time, the vérité mode conjures up the anxiety and terror of war. This framing has unquestionably situated the film in dialogue with the contemporary media, which, following Hanus, can be related to the ‘risk society’ and to the idea that ‘[w]hat you see on TV should scare you’ (2009).

Figure 7

Figure 8

Figure 9

Figures 7, 8 and 9 are screen captions from the DVD edition.
As already mentioned, this beginning also helps exploring the relationship between the stage and the backstage. The Sisters take refuge in the Roundhouse tunnels and find shelter in a little room within the backstage galleries simulating some type of area escaping the reach of gunshots. As they utter the famous first lines, the Witches anxiously smoke cigarettes to then run away as they hear danger approaching. At that point, the audience is informed that they are not watching a war documentary but Shakespeare’s play MACBETH, as the title credit indicates – see figure 9 above –. The war simulacrum unravels its own artifice and challenges the affirmation that Shakespeare’s theatre play, even under the BBC’s educative filter, can survive as film.

Who are the Sisters in this film adaptation? In this contemporary setting, the Witches are clearly human, as Doran indicates, although they have certain powers to foresee the future and a certain command on the lights. As we appreciate before Macbeth’s arrival, the Witches manage to miraculously set the lights on at the backstage corridors. Where this power comes from is for the viewer to interpret. However, as we will see, this power does not amount to more than the ability to create visual effects. It does not help them to escape the brutalizing humiliation of rape, killing and massive bestiality. Naturally, as Doran puts it, these ‘sisters’ are ‘vindictive in response’ to power abuses (2006: 12). Likewise, Duncan and Macbeth’s rules are prejudiced against these underdogs as well as against the influence of all feminine element, which in this film is totally subjugated to the male-bonding dominant rules.  

Also, these Sisters are consistently brutalized and dehumanized, decomposed, denied all identity and deconstructed by the film frame, which reflects what other characters feel towards them. As the film continues, the varied alternation of shots filming the Witches in a reduced space contributes to underline their alienation. The third scene (1.3) elaborates on this idea. At this moment, the Sisters nail pieces of cloth and other trappings to a little crucified voodoo figure, arguably standing for Macbeth. They seem to be totally hooked on smoking, which keeps them alive and eager for blood. In addition, their agonizing frustration is discharged on the voodoo doll. The clearest signs of alienation are framed as a series of close-ups on their eyes, their dirty and damaged lips, their black teeth, their ears, their scars, and other specific facial features that point out at their degeneration. All these signs of physical

\[160\] In fact, women in this film are clearly left out as ‘another’ not only in social but also in spatial terms. As Victoria Bladen writes, several scholars have paid attention to the marginal role played by the Witches in the social world of the play. As Bladen continues, ‘The physical distancing of the sisters, however, is in stark contrast to the centrality of their effective presence and impact. They are intimately involved and concerned with political power’ (2013: 93). In Doran’s film, the impact of the supernatural is specifically perceived through the strange filmic atmosphere brought about by the clashes between the theatrical mode and the vérité mode.
injure show the characters as bits, shards, body limbs, eyes, cigarette-smoking mouths, etc. The First Sister (Dumezweni) wears a military coat and clasps her teeth with venom as she explains how the sailor will be ‘dry as hay’ (1.3.17). Another Witch presents symptoms of some contagious condition. Their scabs, dirtiness and dehumanized carcasses denote the corruption and degeneration of sickness and military violence. Through metonymic reference they are defined by their objects, their scars and their wounds rather than by wide shots or sufficiently developed takes offering integral visions of these androgynous and unappealing characters. The vision is neither pleasant nor sexy, contrarily to what has been the tendency in the last decade when filming the Witches in *Macbeth* films. Rather, the Sisters’ wounds are ultra-signifying utterances that enhance their resentment and oppression. In this way, the theatrical mode is curtly blurred by another’s speech – an unpleasant one – in the form of filmic snapshots of degeneration – see figures 10, 11, 12 and 13, below.

![Figure 10](image1.png) ![Figure 11](image2.png)

![Figure 12](image3.png) ![Figure 13](image4.png)

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161 When writing about filmic *Macbeths* in the twenty-first century Pierre Kapitaniak points at the sudden turning of the Witches into ‘young and pretty figures’ (2013: 64).

162 Figures 10, 11, 12 and 13 are screen captions from the DVD edition of 2001.
4.5. Return to the Theatrical Mode and Vérité Intrusions

In scene 1.3, as Macbeth and Duncan’s soldiers come into the Roundhouse arena, Doran engages in theatre-film and film-theatre slippage. Yet, let me point out that from the liminal backstage area we now move to the public space in the arena. The theatrical potentialities of this section are deconstructed in filmic terms. Whereas the scene commences as an openly spectacular statement of Macbeth’s powerful stage presence, we eventually explore the hero’s introspection by way of examining his intimate thoughts through series of close-ups and voice-over soliloquies. What begins as a simulated theatrical piece ends up invaded by a filmic plurality that dislocates the theatrical mode.

This scene has been cut into two but the horror elements associated to the Sisters are incorporated into the war Gestalten surrounding Macbeth’s triumphant entrance. As soon as the Witches end their chant (1.3.30-35), Doran takes us to the Roundhouse arena. This transition is cued by the drums that announce Macbeth and his soldiers’ arrival. This is the first time that Doran shows the entire arena and we are reminded that this is, after all, a recorded theatre play. Carried on his comrades’ shoulders, Macbeth appears in the public arena in which camaraderie and war adrenaline are celebrated in a macho display of testosterone.163 With his long cigar, Banquo (Ken Bones) resembles Fidel Castro and Sher’s beard and beret show him as some kind of blue-painted sinister and smiley nonchalant anti-Che Guevara. The scene opens with the soldiers’ chant (‘Oh hail Macbeth, Macbeth and Banquo, oh hail Banquo, Banquo and Macbeth’), which anticipates what will be the Witches’ prophecy hails and, thus, for the viewer familiar with the play, the two soldiers’ demise is hinted at.

Suddenly, the scene is transformed into an entirely different filmic textual plurality. The camera movement becomes jerky as the Sisters enter the arena. Different cuts and hand-held camera unintentional movements make the viewer’s perception more confusing than it has been so far. The difference between this approach and what the playtext suggests is that Sher is already well fed with the ‘insane root, / That takes the reason prisoner’ (1.3.82-83) as he cannot stop laughing at the Sisters, who do not even speak an understandable language. As viewers, we are invited to take part into Macbeth’s

163 As Sher says in an Interview, ‘[w]e emphasized this by the first entrance, very, very kind of war crazy; we brought him on the shoulders of his men, everyone chanting and screaming, and they’ve just had a victory – that real kind of war power, macho, crazy kind of state that they’re in’ (Robert Miola 2013: 126). The Interview can be found in the Extras of the DVD produced by Illuminations Media (2001).
intoxication as the hand-held camera constantly swings up and down, left and right, reproducing the imbalances of his deranged drug-driven mind.

The Witches come in a cursory tone mumbling the names of Macbeth and Banquo as the two captains hush them to be quiet. A series of close-ups reveal Banquo’s speech and Sher’s laughter while the Second Witch suffers spasms. Each of the Witches casts her prediction and each one is revealed in close-up as if she were cursing the warrior. A reaction shot shows Macbeth receiving the news that he will be Thane of Cawdor. Then, he remains self-absorbed, while the camera reveals Banquo in interaction with the Witches in another train of shots that alternate the Witches’ faces with Sher’s paralyzed stare.

Suddenly, this disturbing and dizzy sequence of shots is stopped. A wide shot shows Banquo and Sher isolated after the Witches – and all the other soldiers – have completely disappeared of the frame with a single film thrust. Suddenly, we are returned to the stability of the theatrical mode in a totally empty stage. Also, jarring and unintentional camera movements cease for a while. Why are they all suddenly disappeared? It is now that we perceive that it is in the recording itself that the shocking and murky elements in the film are configured. Has this been the Ghost of the long-forgotten 1960s raves at the Roundhouse that is invading the area? At this point, theatre simulation is quickly disjointed by this seemingly drug-driven experience.

4.6. Close-Ups, Voice-overs, Film and Another’s Speech

In this section, I am going to examine how voice-over and several filmic devices enhance the communicative problems experienced by the characters. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Bakhtin’s theory contemplates communication as a social activity. By turning this theatre play into a series of voice-overs, Doran emphasizes the Macbeth couple’s rejection of another’s speech.

As soon as Ross (Paul Webster) arrives, Sher’s speeches continue taking place in voice-over, thus signaling a step-in regarding Macbeth’s distancing from the male community. The theatrical convention of the aside is reconceived as voice-over and, thus, the viewers can sufficiently distinguish what these asides on the stage would have been like. Thus, also, this convention, which has been widely used in cinéma vérité to detach the character’s voice from the main action deconstructs and disintegrates the theatrical dimension of the film and enhances its filmic dimension. Thus, apart from the rejection of the theatrical loud speaking of thoughts for the sake of intimacy, there is a big contrast between Sher’s smiley mask and the stream of terror and fear in his mind at this moment – see figures 14 and 15 below.
We can see the utter dislocation between Macbeth’s warrior force and his clear state of horror at the prospect of becoming King of Scotland. Also, his trembling and hesitating voice matches the restless camera movement at this stage. The camera circles around Macbeth trying to show all the different coils of the thinking process he is engaged in. In this way, rather than addressing the spectator in a continuous shot, the camera invites the viewer to make sense of the discourse Macbeth is struggling to organize. Meanwhile, the camera moves in agreement with the unfocused horror images in Macbeth’s mind (1.3.127-141).

Making use of this recurrent filmic device, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth’s minds are interconnected. As opposed to Macbeth, Lady Macbeth is already out of the patriarchal community. From the enormous stage arena at the Roundhouse, the camera leads the viewer to the theatre corridors with its brick-walled galleries that somehow recall Welles’s constitution of an intermedial space – between theatre and cinema – in his production of Macbeth (1948).

The first scene featuring Lady Macbeth (1.5) emphasizes the character’s isolation in filmic terms. As for Lady Macbeth’s first appearance, she is sitting down drinking a glass of liquor. The lights cut through the window bars creating the effect that she is imprisoned outside the public arena. She is curt when indicating the Messenger who brings Macbeth’s letter that she wants to be left alone. The light coming through the windows illuminates her but the wide shot represents her as a figure inhabiting an empty house, a barren ground opposed to the public affluence at Duncan’s court that we saw in the previous scene. Thus, Walter’s Lady Macbeth does not expect much from the world nor from people.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Figures 14 and 15 are screen captions from the DVD edition.

¹⁶⁵ In a subsequent scene (1.6), we will be able to see the confirmation that the social relations of the characters in the film are based on male bonding and solidarity. Women are important since they bear children. Walter is excluded whereas Lady
In fact, she is terrified at accessing the arena. As she approaches the balcony, from where she perceives the Messenger returning to bring the news of the King’s arrival, she looks down on the arena as if trying to gather courage to access the space. Her fear and anxieties are clearly exposed inside the bath-tube water. Her naked body exposes her frailty as her voice announces the character’s neurosis. She intends to fight her isolation and feverishness in contact with cleansing water. The paradox here is that, although water is invoked in the play as a cleansing agent, in this scene, water is literally used to rid Lady Macbeth of her feminine qualities. Here Walter invokes the spirits and water serves as a catalyst to turn her milk into gall. The use of voice-over here represents the contrast between Walter’s uprightness and her resentful fury, anxiety, fear and self-deprecating frustration – see figure 16 below.

Macduff follows Duncan’s retinue because she needs to take care of the Macduff family. Regarding this idea, Rebecca Ann Bach writes about how Macbeth’s problems are connected to his focus on his wife and his own household rather than on the masculine social world where devotion to peers precedes devotion to one’s beloved ones (2013). This film confirms this idea in the adherence of the Macbeths to their liminality.
The refuge that the Macbeth couple take within the backstage of the Roundhouse to avoid being exposed to the experience of the public space is, again, emphasized through voice-over techniques as Sher’s speech ‘If it were done…’ is cut precisely when he starts referring to Macbeth’s social concerns (‘He’s here in double trust’, 1.7.12). Sher has been speaking in a mirror shot – see figure 17 above – where he reasons with himself.167 The cut situates Sher’s discourse at the immediate surroundings of the dinner in honour of Duncan’s victory. This series of exchange shots between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth sitting around the banquet table clarifies the distance between the couple – see figures 18 and 19 above – and the social world they inhabit. This filmscape is, again, a room at the Roundhouse backstage, which seems to be the barren grave-like territories inhabited by the Macbeths.

The table breathes masculine fellowship, where food and drinks are handed and shared, in parallel to what, later, will be a banquet scene where Macbeth will prove incapable of being the well-beloved orator that Duncan obviously is. Cigars are smoked and they stand for prosperity and well-being, as opposed to the sickliness of the cigarettes smoked by the Sisters. Once all these elements are traced by the camera – contrasted with Macbeth’s voice-over speech –, Sher stands up and leaves the room, provoking great shock and surprise amongst the guests. His smiley mask has been unable to hide a hysterical inner fear.

This scene clearly shows Macbeth’s inability to stand up to the part he wants to take as charming host. In other words, Macbeth cannot assume another’s speech nor is he prepared for kingly simulacra. His otherwise accurate self-analysis does not actually help him working out the alteration produced by Duncan’s invasion of his private space. In fact, whereas the text reveals a well-organized and articulate moral allegation against assassination, the camera reveals that Macbeth’s motives to abandon his

166 Figures 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 are screen captions from the DVD edition.

167 In our four films – as well as in Gloriana –, there are mirror shots in which one character soliloquizes. Is this an auteur imprint on Wyver’s behalf?
purpose have more to do with his inability to take the scepter. At this point, Doran manifests how Macbeth has not acquired the necessary theatrical skills for appearances that are needed in a monarch. In addition, the voice-over speech has done much to emphasize Macbeth’s rather solitary and introspective character. Indirectly, such introspection enhances the unwillingness of Macbeth as an actor who waits at the wings before stepping up to the political stage.

In fact, it is in loneliness where Macbeth seems more comfortable. A character designed to command the stage, he would rather remain behind the arras. Sher gains agility once he returns to the inner corridors at the backstage area and delivers his last lines: ‘I have no spur / To prick the sides of my intent…’ (1.7.25-26). These lines are directly addressed to the viewers, with whom Macbeth seems now ready to share secret thoughts out loud. Immediately, this turns into a domestic vérité scene in which Walter and Sher hotly debate on Macbeth’s lack of determination. When Walter refers to her giving ‘suck,’ the Macbeth’s issue is their isolation of the couple. A wide shot features the bitter loneliness and isolation felt by the Macbeths due to the loss of the child – see figure 20 above –.

When she manages to persuade Macbeth of how she will drug the guardians, the faces of the two characters appear in close-up. Sher is sexually aroused at Walter’s advance and he attempts to arouse her too. He invites her to ‘Bring forth men-children only / For [her] undaunted metal should compose nothing but males’ (1.7.72-73) emphasizing each of the nasal sounds. Lady Macbeth seems incensed by her husband and they kiss for the first time in the film. Yet, as soon as they decide to leave the corridor and return to the banquet table, Walter removes the dust from her body as well as from Sher’s suit. It is striking that this is the first time that the couple seems to openly show affection for each other in such clear terms. In scene 1.5, they seem to be too obsessed, nervous, and terrified at Duncan’s arrival to pay much attention to each other despite the warrior’s long absence. He arrives running and agitated and when is about to speak, she quickly interrupts him and advises him on how to stand in front of Duncan. After this, very precipitately, Lady Macbeth leaves Macbeth alone to take a cold shower at the water font. Now in this scene 1.7, for the first time, we have the chance to perceive to what extent the Macbeths’ life seems to be damaged by loneliness and the absence of the child Lady Macbeth has been crying about. Thus, the backstage area has proved proficient enough at displaying the sources of the Macbeths’ frustrations.

4.7. A Further Level of Disintegration

In the following two scenes, Doran continues deconstructing the production into smaller filmic bits that give way to a fabric of multi-layered audiovisual discourse. At the same time, theatricality is
emphasized by way of linking scenes 2.1 and 2.2 together through continuous editing. The speed of the performance and the edition lend themselves to relate this section to the immediacy and speed of Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre.

In scene 2.1, Banquo and Fleance (Gareth Williams) come into the arena at the Roundhouse. Fleance has been waiting outside the banquet hall and Banquo, again, is shown smoking a cigar as he leaves the room. Father and son walk together from the backstage into the arena. Banquo communicates his fears (2.1.6-9) in voice-over, which is the first sign of de-theatricalization in this scene. Sher quickly arrives and pretends to strangle Fleance in what seems a funny game between Banquo, Fleance and Macbeth, who acts as a sort of uncle to Fleance here. As soon as father and son leave, Macbeth perceives the dagger appearing in his imagination. He is alternatively shown in mid shot and in a wide shot trying to avoid the imaginary dagger as it comes. Yet, this cinéma vérité code is illustrated into documentary gaze as soon as Sher’s voice-over engages in the section on ‘Now o’er half-world…’ (2.1.49). He walks in slow motion in a simulation of a serial killer television drama as an alienated ghostly figure. Whereas in the previous shot, Macbeth is presented without the DoP’s judgement, now he is deliberately alienated as a case study, walking slightly curved and obsessive. This clash of codes proposes two perspectives: one that creates sympathy for Macbeth and another one, which objectifies him while his feverish voice simulates the narrative skill of the documentary presenter (2.1.49-56). The second view features Macbeth, again, without the DoP’s judgement. One of the visions is less controlled by the DoP and the other one utterly introduces the character as one who cannot choose but do what the story has him do. Very soon, we return to the cinéma vérité code, and Sher invokes the firm and steady earth (2.1.56-60). The result of combining these three perspectives is that we are invited to participate in Macbeth’s psychological argument, which is articulated through the struggling confluence of theatrical and filmic discourses.

The following sequence (2.2) opens with Lady Macbeth waiting on the arena right after Macbeth has left it. As she listens to the owl, she runs to the other side while the hand-held camera follows her closely. Macbeth descends the staircases he has previously climbed to assassinate Duncan and, in the meantime, Lady Macbeth’s voice conveys all the fear and desperation at the act of murdering. This lengthy shot has clarified that Lady Macbeth is totally unable to handle her own nerves. What is more, the vastness of the arena proves too exposing for her, who quickly runs away to take refuge at the liminal corners of the wings.

As soon as Sher descends the steps, she grabs him from the arm and takes him to a contiguous room with another flight of steps. The scene, following Hindle, takes place in this liminal location
outside the public arena (2015: 264). He sits down on the steps of the stairs while trying to work out what the crying voice is saying to him (2.2.38-43). All Lady Macbeth’s panting and desperation finally explode when she shouts at him for his infirmity of purpose (2.2.55). At that point, Sher violently reacts and seems to be about killing her as he raises the daggers against Walter. This brings all the realistic desperation of two murderers that are just about to kill each other when they do not have the nerves to handle the situation.

Rather than using the daggers to thrust them onto Walter’s panting body, he lowers his head as he hands the daggers that she is demanding from him. She pulls herself together after her husband’s momentary outburst and grabs the daggers. Lady Macbeth is recorded in the darkness in low angle, a fact that presents her as, ultimately, the most courageous character of the two. The camera pans back to Sher, who, in close-up, is only half-shown by the strong light on his prominent forehead and his bloody shirt. His speech here is entirely conversational as he takes advantages of the intimacy of the television lens. Thus, while embracing himself, responds to his own question: ‘Will all great Neptune’s ocean wash this blood / Clean from my hand? No’ (2.2.63-64). His quiet tone reinforces the actor’s proximity to the viewers by way of imitating the immediacy of video diaries. All in all, this filmic plurality continues dissimulating the theatrical origins of the production. In fact, Macbeth’s act has managed to erode the wellbeing of the Scottish state, a fact that is shown in an aerial shot in which all the thanes follow different pathways after their gathering to discuss Duncan’s murder. This dispersion, doubtless, shows that the community has been momentarily destroyed and disintegrated by Macbeth’s act.

4.8. Simulacrum and Kingship

Regarding the film’s theatricality, Doran relates it to the sacred duties of the monarch to appear in public in a hierarchical social structure. Thus, the King’s fellowship is composed of military leaders who know their place at court as well as the courtly protocols. Duncan (Joseph O’Conor) can

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168 This section clearly recalls, due to its lack of stylization, the video-diaries related to the Balkan Wars and the war conflicts of the 1990s. Sher speaks in confession following the style of Confessions of a Monster film, which portrays Herak, the soldier who participated in the killing and raping of many girls and children in Yugoslavia. Sher’s repenting words and the demystified reality of the frame recall Helker’s sincere cry at the trials that there was no place in the world for people like him (See Ramón Lobo 1993). The space itself is ultimately conducive to the kind of pain of those who have lived in fear and discovered the loneliness of crime and the nightmarish spasms of imagination after having killed. Macbeth thus reveals himself in this theatrical aside as one of us in his eagerness to touch the spectators with his own bloody hand extended toward the lens. If this liminal space manages something incredibly fluently is the construction of loneliness in the mind of a killer.
differentiate his kingly persona and his person. On the other hand, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth cannot tell the difference.

Duncan is a simple man amongst men. He is uncrowned, acting as the bald bearded venerable fellow who needs his warriors’ loyalties to keep the kingdom united. He did not have reasons not to trust Cawdor. He is genuinely hurt by Cawdor’s treason and cannot hide his tears when Ross brings the news. In fact, quoting Welles’s Macbeth (1948), Doran includes the character of the Holy Father (Trevor Martin), a priest who consoles Duncan as he, martyr-like, cries his bitter desperation at Cawdor’s betrayal.

The Bleeding Sergeant (John Killoran) enters framed in a POV shot running away and looking back at the mayhem he has left behind. Fear is potentially framed on the soldier’s visage. For Duncan and his retinue what imports is that the kingdom is being threatened. Fear is materialized while bombings and explosions interject into the Captain’s speech. Even though this mode follows vérité conventions, Doran lets the Captain deliver his speech in a long take. In this respect, the theatrical values of this text are protected from oblivion as the director does not break the speech down into smaller filmic fragments. Nevertheless, the vérité mode helps conveying the speech as a testimony or a piece of war reportage. In this way, the theatrical aspects of the film are undermined by heavy cinematic language.

Let us remind the reader that the clash of codes is never absolute in this production. As indicated in Chapter Two, the language of film presents cross-sections conforming totalities. The totality of this film is an open one that impedes every cross-section or filmic strand to be closed. Following Deleuze’s work on the “image-movement,” this whole formed by the film is a thread allowing each of the different points of intensity or sets – more or less filmic; more or less theatrical scenes – to be connected with each other, thus giving way to an an infinite network transcending all limits of closure (1983: 34). At the same time, this comes to indicate that theatre does not stop being theatre to zero degree nor does the narrative become a film in the purest sense of the word. The rhizomatic organization of different lines drawn by the camera maintains the slippage between these two codes, which constantly acknowledge each other.

In a subsequent scene, when Duncan is presented in ritualized fashion, Te Deum is sung by the soldiers under his commandeer in celebration of his triumph. Duncan is envisaged as an otherworldly being as he accesses the stage through a descending ramp that widens the distance between vassals and

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169 As we will later see, Goold presents a very different Duncan, who, very likely, attained power through corruption and not through his personal accomplishments or his service to the state.

170 In this precise scene, Goold quotes the bombings that, occasionally, interrupt the Bleeding Sergeant’s speech.
monarchs. The ramp simulates a threshold to the heavenly kingdom Duncan has descended from. Yet, the sets clearly proclaim their theatricality. The institution of kingship is represented as a symbol of grandeur and, thus, within the small screen, the institution is undermined in its theatricality. The artifice of the setting denounces the staginess of monarchy. What lies behind that threshold Duncan and Malcom disappear through? Very likely, for the viewer who acknowledges this film as recorded theatre, there is nothing but the backstage of the Roundhouse. In other words, we are asked to believe in the divine quality of the royal ceremony.

A different process takes place here that contrasts with the genre speeches inflected through the film so far. Rather than heightening the divine status of monarchy, the small frame highlights the artifice of this theatrical staging. A simple decorated wooden frame symbolizes the walls of the Royal Palace. Following Baudrillard’s challenging questions on simulacra, if Duncan’s power is represented with all its iconic grandeur, shall it continue being the supreme instance of power? Perhaps we should assume, as Baudrillard would suggest, that images do not represent anything but their own simulacra (2008: 15). The open theatricality of this scene underlines this idea very carefully. The more involved all the generals seem to be in their devotion to Duncan, the more intensely the Te Deum is sung by all the generals altogether. In a nutshell, the image of monarchy is stronger than the reality it stands for.

As for Macbeth, he recognizes the sacredness of kingship in literal terms rather than as a simulacrum piece. He lacks the theatrical skills necessary to be a monarch in the public eye. This is even more evident if we contrast Macbeth’s gazes on Duncan with how some soldiers are suspect of Malcom’s appointment as ‘Prince of Cumberland,’ a corroding decision for the elective monarchy in Scotland. Yet, the camera represents Macbeth’s perspective through a low-angle framing of Duncan’s divinely shaped figure.

Lady Macbeth is, likewise, incapable of dealing with the weight of the crown as, in scene 1.6, she receives it from Duncan, who hands it as a gesture of friendly humility. Duncan wants to affirm that, when he enters Macbeth’s house, he does it as a simple primus inter pares and not as their overlord. Yet, Walter grabs the crown and is expected to immediately deposit it within a casket carried by Ross, who acts as a sort of Lord Chamberlain. Thus, kingship as public ceremony and the crown as prop are, doubtless, utterances with which the Macbeth couple does not feel comfortable and where Duncan moves easily. The couple is, so to speak, politically illiterate.

This same situation is repeated as soon as Macbeth is crowned King of Scotland (scene 3.1). Doran re-edits Duncan’s first public apparition through Macbeth’s first public act as King. The same setting is employed to stage Macbeth’s entrance. Instead of having all the soldiers singing Te Deum, the
piece has been recorded and a canned version is listened through loudspeakers. Immediately, this cheap approach speaks about the quality of Macbeth’s monarchy – recently crowned, and financial cuts already? –. Or, perhaps, this approach to monarchy serves to precisely cry out loud that this monarchy was, has been and will always be a simulacrum and not a reality. Speaking about this act of public carelessness, although Sher’s Macbeth does not seem to align to any political views, it is irresistible to link this underlining of the simulacrum with the recent populist raise of Donald Trump as President of the United States and the Brexit as clear signs of how democratic institutions have been crumbling through the last decades and how this has served as pretext for many enraged anti-system outbursts against them. Perhaps the word ‘parable’ to describe this 2001 performance was more than usually appropriate.

This clear despise for institutionalism and political correctness cannot go unnoted in Sher’s performance. Macbeth has not bothered to dress Duncan’s white robes and still carries his military outfit under the royal cloak and the crown. This indicates that his kingdom will not necessarily be a peaceful one. Paradoxically, he carries the staff of power and the royal scepter, which means that, at least partly, he accepts the symbols of monarchy and the responsibilities associated. These royal signets contrast with his military demeanor and brusque movements. However, the most distressing sign of his uncomfortable position as a King is his fake smile. Rather than a smile of affability, Sher’s smile becomes a grin of self-deprecating malice and ironic surprise at finding himself where he is. Macbeth finds his kingship as big a joke as Banquo does. The more nonchalant he tries to be, the worst it becomes for his public face. He bluffs and tries to dissimulate his anxieties through that odious smiling mask and, then, uncovers Banquo’s boots with his staff to confirm that his former friend is leaving the court. As Rodenburgh states when referring to actors who ‘bluff’ by way of displaying ‘a fake sense of power on the body and voice’ – conducive to generalized emotions, ‘all sound and fury’ and ‘unfocused’ (2002: 17) –, Macbeth attempts to appear secure in power through his ludicrous merriment. If Macbeth had wanted to confess his tyrannical neuroses, he could not have been clearer or louder than he has been in his first public act. To make things even worse for himself, he repeats the Fleance-strangling joke, except that Banquo does not find it funny this time. His blank face is sufficient to inform Macbeth that his former fellow-soldier is suspecting him. Sher’s genial pointing gesture at Banquo is ruthlessly informative (Gotcha! You suspect me, you die). A foreigner in kingship, Macbeth tries to be more native than the natives and, consequently, his first public apparition results in a royal flop.

What works in very interesting ways in these scenes is that they begin as theatrical ceremonies that somehow delegitimize the theatrical ceremony of royalty. If the images represented within the film
frame, following Baudrillard’s notion on images, serve shattering the seriousness of ceremony and undoing the content of what they stand for, the stagy qualities of royalty announce that monarchy is not a sacred institution. Ironically, Macbeth is much more conscious of this than Duncan perhaps ever was. Also, ironically, what is tremendously poisonous for the political institutions in this film works well to manifest the theatrical impetus of the production.

Sher’s energetic, quick, speedy, intense and hyperactive demeanor jazzes up what might have been a stale theatrical mode hierarchical ceremony. As he flicks through the courtly protocols, he removes his royal robes and walks fast through the arena towards the backstage, as he is followed by the cameraman, with whom he shares his confidences on Banquo (3.1.49-73). Thus, Macbeth is fully conscious that he has been observed as a monarch in the theatre of the world and acts accordingly. In fact, the POV shot following Macbeth highlights the presence of the monarch in the public view through documentary. With this same eager impulse, the scene with the murderers is very quickly delivered on the backstage. The following scene is so fast that one can see that Macbeth’s decision to kill Banquo is as much a consequence of irrational impulse as from careful planning.

What links the film to cinéma vérité semantically as well as stylistically is the fact that the Murderers are soldiers. Thus, the production denounces the many war crimes committed by allegedly legitimate soldiers over women, children and civilians. Once the two soldiers have just left, Sher runs towards them and suddenly stops. Then, he shouts ‘Banquo!’ (3.1.140). Is he perhaps trying to warn his former friend of what is going to happen? All in all, the precipitation of the sequence has turned this unusually long scene into a furious long take from the arena to the backstage covering a whole dialogue with the two Murderers. Doran has driven unpredictability to a virtuoso exercise in sustained recording.

4.9. Radical Plurality of Texts

In this section, I am exploring how theatricality is enhanced by various other filmic discourses. If the Jacobean theatre is intertextual, polyphonic, paradoxical, and pluralistic in its conception and its reception, this television translation attempts to reconceive the energetic force of this dramatic production by taking this plurality into account.

The mechanisms that constitute the uncanny and the horror-based intertextuality of the film are the ultimate proof that this stage production can survive as recorded theatre because it de-theatricalizes

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171 The decision cannot have been totally spontaneous as a Servant leads Macbeth to the Murderers who already wait for him within the galleries in a small improvised office.
the piece. The strength of the production is that the theatrical element remains liminal while filmic genre speeches move in centrifugal directions and reconceive the production in visual terms. Likewise, the different film genre speeches are interconnected in a network that conforms an open totality, as opposed to a closed set of linguistic features. This guarantees the flexibility and fluency of the production and deprives it of the stagnating classical aridness of a traditional Shakespeare television recording or other poor theatrical mode recordings. The disruption of genre speeches proves that the film is articulated following Bakhtinian notions of polyphonic speech. Speeches uttered by ‘another’ – meaning, in this context, other genres, codes, languages and modes – constantly energize the reflux of hypertexts that de-theatricalize the recording.

A striking vérité mode effect is how characters break the fourth wall in the film. This is constantly done through the intervention of the DoP, the first ghostly presence which, deprived of a recognizable function, keeps constant communication with Sher, who, on his behalf, never loses track of what the camera does. What is the signification of Macbeth’s recognition that he is being recorded?

In this regard, he is not the only interpreter who ever speaks to the camera. The Porter’s scene very likely was meant to appeal the audience through direct reference to political events. A series of sequenced vignettes clarify this element in the scene. Firstly, the Porter (Stephen Noonan) vomits on the first of a row of lined-up toilets. With his husky and shouting voice, he is deformed, an underdog inhabiting the cellars of some haunted house of a cheap horror film. This uncanny creature addresses the viewer directly as he impersonates Tony Blair:

*Here’s an equivocator. An equivo-ca-tour. Hi, I’m an equivocator, who could swear in both the scales against either scale. In fact, I’m totally committed to the concept of equivocation (2.3.7).*

The lines in italics were extemporized by Noonan both in the stage performance and in the film. Even if Blair’s victory had proved an unparalleled success in British political history, his detractors on the left wing heavily outnumbered his supporters on the capitalist side. His personal quarrel with Gordon Brown on the possession of centrality was not forgiven by those who expected their leaders to put on a

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172 The lines in italics are extemporized by Noonan as he impresses Tony Blair’s accent.

173 The audiences were unlikely to understand the lines connected to the Gunpowder Plot in the Porter’s text, so what Doran suggested was to satirically reflect Tony Blair, then Prime Minister, and his policies. As Wyver pinpoints, ‘he was the legitimate figure to mock,’ so Doran was doing nothing else than what Shakespeare would have done in this specific speech (2016).
better show in the defense of the working class. In addition, his policies on the entrance of immigrants in the United Kingdom highly dissatisfied the conservative right. What is more, what the viewer of this film in 2001 did not know was that, two years later, in 2003, the Prime Minister would support George W. Bush’s Iraq War. This scene gains new relevance when watched today as its immediacy is multiplied with further meanings in the light of Blair’s recent confessions on Iraq.

Furthermore, the Porter’s direct address to the viewer and his interaction with the DoP produce a schizophrenic breach in the text, which in some ways explains the chemistry between the Porter and Macbeth in the production. Such disruptive force shared between the Porter and Macbeth gives them some of the mysterious quality that the Witches have. After all, they occupy a liminal space as underdogs in this world organized under Duncan’s wings. At the same time, they are the only characters who really break the fourth wall in a way which is immediate and that clearly addresses the viewer in a strange conjuration.

The roles of Macbeth and the buffoonish Porter – an abject monstrous creature and, at the same time, a casual political protester with the manners of a clown – merge together over the last scenes. The Porter becomes one of King Macbeth’s servants and is the one in charge of bringing the message of the Queen’s death. As soon as Sher’s Macbeth is abandoned by all the thanes, he hides himself somewhere in the rooms at the Roundhouse and, as he coolly smokes a cigarette, tries to analyze his position on a map. Suddenly, we discover that, in the company of his clownish Porter, Macbeth seems much more comfortable by acting the buffoon – see figures 21 and 22. In fact, his outfit in the last sequences portrays a very ludicrous stamp of a King. Dressed in black leather military coat, he carries his crown, sword and staff, which, with their gilded scales, do not match at all with the coarse military clothes he wears. These theatrical props of monarchy are totally de-authorized. Following, again, Baudrillard’s notions, the symbols of monarchy disintegrate monarchy. The crown and the scepter are ridiculous signs in a textual plurality of military warfare as carried by a monarch who refuses to be publicly seen and rules a little grave as a kingdom. Still, Sher seems keen on carrying the royal staff downsized as a mere theatrical prop, bereft of all the dignity conveyed to such a sacred object in the hands of the monarch. We could say that his outfit reflects the hybridity conformed by the symbolic power of the scepter and the crown seen in the small realistic frame of television cinéma vérité. This mode underlines the weakness and frailty of such spectacle-based monarchy. Yet Macbeth seems much more at home when bantering with the Porter and loudly riffing on the prophetic lines ‘I will not be afraid of death and bane / Till Birnam Forest come to Dunsinane’ (5.3.60-61), which he repeats three or four times like a mantra. Whereas this riffing on the lines de-authorizes Macbeth’s quality as a monarch and underlines the poor
quality of the symbols of power, Sher’s Macbeth is well past care regarding the dignities of monarchic self-fashioning. On the other hand, his theatrical energy flourishes even more and Sher achieves a powerful relationship with the grotesque and the impetuously heroic as he is ready to exploit his comic register as the Scottish forces come for him.\textsuperscript{174}

In fact, we can observe how institutions have lost all their meaning under Macbeth’s kingdom in the banquet scene (3.4). In that section, Macbeth continues demonstrating his disregard for royal ceremony as a tiny figure shown in a wide shot sitting at the table. The whole scene is shot as a brilliant exercise in fly-on-the-wall documentary irritated by the Witches. As soon as the guests leave the room, the table is turned over by them, who return to speak an unintelligible language rather than chorusing the ‘double double’ chant. As soon as Sher approaches them, he follows them through the dark tunnels simulating a déjà-voo of the first POV shot. Once the Witches are in a little dark room, the Three Apparitions appear masked as terrorists speaking with Sher’s own voice. These images are reduplicated as, after a sudden cut, Macbeth appears again at the ramp through which Duncan makes his kingly entrance. It is not an accident that Macbeth’s terrors are materialized through the image of Banquo’s Ghost coming from that ramp as ‘root and father / Of many kings’ (3.1.5-6). This prophecy is confirmed as different reduplicated images of Fleance running against Macbeth configure the succession of kings that terrorize him. This horror sequence has suddenly irritated the \textit{vérité} mood of the previous scene.

Something like this occurs in the final scenes. As mentioned above, Macbeth, a failed King, now tries to unleash his energy as a buffoon and attempts to find bliss in evil. This rejoice in perverseness is suddenly shattered as soon as the Porter brings the news of Lady Macbeth’s death. His last addressing

\textsuperscript{174} Goold follows suit with the idea of empowering the Porter. However, he turns him into one of Macbeth’s assassins.

\textsuperscript{175} Figures 21 and 22 are screen captions from the DVD edition (2001).
to the camera takes place as he delivers the ‘Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow’ speech. Never has the film been more meta-filmic than in this precise moment in which Sher ironically smiles at this tremendous absurdity that life has been. Yet, let the reader observe that this time Macbeth’s smile is miles more heartfelt than in the rest of the scenes. The irony is that he has found fluency in disgrace. He struggles against tears and decides to opt for a strange sort of cynic stoicism. So, in a brilliant *coup-de-théâtre* he abandons the room, runs through another corridor, opens the door that leads straight to the streets surrounding the London Roundhouse and disappears into the heart of Chalk Farm (London) – see figures 23, 24, 25 and 26 –. Macbeth blurs his identity with that of the actor as he abandons the building and lets us hear the car horns on the street. Thus, Doran fulfills his goals of making the filmed production unexpected and shocking. This filmic decision is perhaps not carefully explained, but what would be the purpose of explaining it when its whole point of the scene consists of its own absurdity? Is Doran perhaps trying to connect Macbeth with the man of the street walking through Camden Town? Is he articulating this rejection for theatre as a sort of call for a halt in the worldwide theatre of politics? Is this theatricalization of political power extended to film in metaphorical terms? What is clear is that in this section we are informed that the actor abandons the film sets as well as the theatre. In the most straightforward way possible, we are informed that this is nothing else than fiction.
This writerly illusion-breaking brush-stroke is re-energized as soon as Macbeth’s servant enters the cellar and finds the room alone after Macbeth has left it. Surprisingly, King Macbeth returns. Why does he return at all? Perhaps he feels a responsibility to the texts written for him and decides to live up to them or, simply, he feels that power and ambition are destructive but too attractive to abandon them. Somehow Macbeth’s character does not resist theatre and being part of it. As soon as he gets ready to fight, though, he falls onto the floor and the trees carried by the soldiers cover everything in shadows. The last of Macbeth’s couplets in the scene (5.5.50-51), which might be well exhibited as anthem to Macbeth’s prodigious courage, highlight his own impotence this time. Macbeth can only stand up and run away at the arrival of the trees, which, again, in a strange and unexpected way invade the vérité space with the artificial trees that are planted on the Roundhouse arena. The transition is made through a close-up of Macbeth being overshadowed on the floor. As he stands up he is already in the arena. The trees ostentatiously proclaim the theatrical artifice of the piece, and, for the first time in a while, the arena is employed in a genuinely Elizabethan way in the sense that just a few props suffice to simulate a forest.

4.10. Conclusions

In this chapter I have analyzed the way in which the recording of this stage production is deprived of its theatrical qualities and fully transformed into a hybrid art work mainly framed through cinéma vérité. Does that mean that the theatrical nature of the production is completely erased? In many ways, the language of theatre occupies a disintegrated position but, while this disintegration is clear in the sense that the vérité mode pervades the whole recording, many theatrical elements which would perhaps

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not be as clear in the stage production are fairly conjugated in this film. Acknowledging this paradoxical role played by theatre in this production, we will conclude this chapter by formulating the question of whether theatre needs a stage to be theatre.

In principle, we could say that the language of the stage is de-theatricalized. However, the vérité genre speech is employed in a multi-discursive manner. This ultimately reconfigures the theatrical values of the production. Such values do not entirely disappear. Since the production was carried by BBC in collaboration with the RSC and Illuminations Media, the viewers were probably expecting a more traditional rendition of the theatrical mode with a wide shot featuring the stage at the beginning of the play. However, arguably to the viewer’s benefit or shock, the authors do not do anything of the kind.

The paradox of this recording, if observed from a Baudrillarian point of view, is that it constitutes an exercise in simulation of reality. The play works as a simulacrum of a piece of war reportage in ways that shock the viewer. As we see it, we can contrast the filmscape with the obvious theatrical shape of the setting. The London Roundhouse may be familiar to the viewer as the celebrated venue that hosted Pink Floyd in the 1960s. This setting speaks about the failed utopias that came because of the postwar welfare state that would eventually produce the cultural outbreak of rock music, urban culture, and all sorts of disruptive demonstrations of counter-culture. The cultural sanctuary represented by the London Roundhouse is the ghostly context of this new ‘twenty-first century parable’ that alludes to the fin de siècle carnage featured in a series of war documentaries over the 1990s.

Paradoxically too, this de-theatricalization ultimately reconstitutes the theatrical energy of the stage production. It transfers it to the audiovisual language in televisual and filmic terms. The way in which this stage production survives is, following Baudrillard’s premises, by way of accepting its own demise. Because it denies itself, the theatre piece is refurbished and magnified on the small screen in ways that would be impossible to find in the theatrical mode. Plus, we are invited to closely explore different elements of theatre that would not, under usual circumstances, be accessible in the theatre. For instance, we are invited to see characters in close-up and extreme close-up and, also, we are invited to explore the contrasts between the liminal backstage areas where plotting takes place and the public arena at the Roundhouse. Thus, this theatrical piece situates its textual bliss in these contrasts. Altogether, different genre speech and Bakhtin’s another’s speech are configured through the collision and slippage between these modes and genres.

Therefore, what answers can we offer to the questions formulated regarding the disappearance of theatre in the film frame as well as the need to have a stage to regard this theatre performance as such? Undoubtedly, the theatrical values of the film survive in tangible ways if we observe how the
Jacobean text intermingles with the realism of film recording. Also, the contrasts between the backstage and the onstage areas materialize the differences between the liminal spaces where the Macbeths and other characters that occupy a marginal status within the power relations of the play find their hideaway. This contrast between the sections behind the scenes and those places where public institutions articulate the theatre of power ultimately problematize Macbeth’s role as a monarch in the public view. Because of his utter unfamiliarity with or unconscious rejection toward public institutions, Macbeth re-energizes the theatrical values of the production by pointing at the artificiality and unreality of the symbols that do not manage to represent realities but symbols only. If theatrical ceremonies need to be taken as simulacra and if simulacra are associated to theatrical values, cinema gains predominance over the theatrical discourse in the production. Yet, this de-theatricalization occurs in a theatre stage that has accepted the intrusion of film and, therefore, it becomes invigorated by film. Film explores the weaknesses and unrealities of the theatre, it uncovers its secrets by exploring the backstage corridors, lays bare the artifices of theatre and, by doing so, it acknowledges them. When Doran and Wyver declare their intention to work on this production focusing on abstract and ambiguous notions of unexpectedness, perhaps unknowingly they were referring to these intersections between discourses that ultimately constitute the strange qualities of the production.
5. THEATRICAL SELF-REFLEXIVITY IN DORAN’S *HAMLET* (2009)
5.1. Introduction

After finishing his work as Marcellus in Doran’s production of *Hamlet* in the stage version as well as the film version, actor, musician, singer and blogger Keith Osborn writes:

‘When will I be back? Will I ever be back? Will I ever work like this ever again?’ The ambiguous answer to this is always ‘… maybe never… maybe never! This terrible prospect chills my soul and I grimace involuntarily. ‘Nonsense, you most probably will’ reassures the angel on my right shoulder, instantly reminding me of the inevitable cycle of an actor’s life. Who knows when or in what capacity I’ll be playing my trade next? (…) *the readiness is all*… (2010: 217)\(^{177}\)

Osborn’s appropriation of Hamlet’s line refers to his own anxieties at the inevitable sways in the actor’s professional trajectory. After one season of work at the RSC, Osborn returns to his real job at the London City. This sad return constitutes a kind of tragic price to pay for the pleasure of having taken part in one of the most prestigious *Hamlet* productions ever. The angel on the right shoulder Osborn writes about has its opposite evil angel, who undermines the artist’s confidence once he returns to his ordinary life combining ordinary jobs with auditions. This problematic actor’s self-confidence is dealt with in Stanislavski’s work. In his book *Building a Character*, the Russian teacher, actor and director shares his experiences at the pseudo-fictional Tortsov’s drama school and accounts for Kostya’s celebrated characterization of the Critic, an abject creature who inhabits the actor’s skin, torturing him and making his life miserable (2016: 13-14). All this comes to confirm what the self-obsessive artist’s plight can be. As William Berry explains, the artist’s lack of self-confidence can lead to self-destruction derived from an excess of self-judgement produced by the inner critic (2011). In Stanislavski’s book, Tortsov – perhaps standing as Stanislavski’s alter ego – argues that ‘[u]nless the theatre can ennoble you, make you a better person, you should flee from it’ (2016: 214). In fact, when David Tennant – playing Hamlet – enters the main acting space in Doran’s film, while delivering the ‘To be or not to be…’ speech, the implicit conceit seems to be that suicide relates to Hamlet’s indecision on whether it is worth risking his entrance into the meta-theatrical acting space created for the film. Such space is framed as a small television studio theatre that, at the same time, is controlled by CCTV cameras. As Shakespeare critics have demonstrated, *Hamlet* is strongly pervaded by a component of meta-drama. So, I will go further than this and analyze Hamlet’s frustration in this film by associating him to an actor who has not

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\(^{177}\) All the references to the text of *Hamlet* used in this article are taken from the Arden edition of Hamlet (2006).
altogether learned to handle his craft and whose under-trained theatrical eagerness is conducive to his own death drive. In this very film, it seems, Hamlet’s degeneration is manifested through the misuse of dramatic and filmic skills. Hybridity is articulated in how Hamlet’s conflicts are represented through the specific use of the languages of film and theatre.

What I intend to demonstrate in this article is that Doran’s film adaptation of *Hamlet* is productively articulated around meta-theatre within the special confines of a simulated television studio performance shot on a real location: the church in St. Joseph’s College in Mill Hill. Specifically, I will try to show that the source of Doran’s Hamlet’s death-drive is seen in the hero’s desire to be accomplished as an actor. By extension, he wants to be an auteur toying with theatre acting and with filming, both dramatic manifestations colliding in the film. In this sense, toying with rather than committing into any of the two arts confuses the character. At the same time, it works as a source of self-reflexive irony on the film itself. As we will see later, the film was not at all intended as a film in the purest sense – if there is one purest sense for the concept ‘film’ – and yet the creative team yearned for an adjustment between the stage production and the visual language of television film. Thus, the self-reflexive patterns in the play, together with the uncanny hybridity of theatre and television film, relate to Hamlet’s own collapse due to his own mishandling of the two linguistic codes. In short, in this film, hybridity transcends its linguistic function and constitutes part of the dramatic material handled by the hero himself.

After dealing with the theoretical framework, in the first section of this chapter I will deal with how hybridity is configured by the filmscape. Secondly, I will examine how the social relationships between characters are, from the very beginning, mapped out in dramatic terms and how Hamlet’s frustrations quickly take a dramatic form. In the following section, I will explain how Hamlet engages with dramatic art and how his artistic block is revealed through interaction with other players. After this, I will analyze how Hamlet tries his chances with a different language – cinema – to discover the truth about Claudius’s crime. However, we will discover through Hamlet’s filmic impetus that the camera will reveal rather uncomfortable suspicions to the Queen. In the next scene, we will examine how such uncomfortable suspicions will be confirmed through Hamlet’s encounter with Gertrude. The last section will focus on how the last sequences will be presenting the turning of drama and film into disruptive forces at the Danish state.

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178 This chapter will be published as an article in *Epos, Revista Filología*, Volume 32, Issue 2016. Unprinted.
5.2. Theoretical Framework

The approach I intend to follow is concerned with the application of intertextual psychoanalysis to the relationship between the languages of cinema and drama in this television film. For this purpose, I draw the relationship between psychoanalysis and language from Kristeva’s *The Revolution in the Poetic Language*, although the work by other scholars will be helpful contributions to apply Kristeva’s theory to the contingencies of the film. In this way, Kristeva’s psychoanalytic conceptions on language map out the relationship between the characters. Moreover, given this linguistic and psychoanalytical orientation, specific attention will be paid to how Hamlet tries to attain language proficiency in both drama and film to overcome his initial anxieties.

Regarding *Hamlet*, several critics have approached it on film and performance from a psychoanalytical point of view. Yet, so far nobody has examined how this production presents the hero – and, by extension, other characters – as a performer. If performing is regarded as a language that needs to be learned, I intend to relate what Freud and Kristeva respectively referred to as the pre-Oedipal-Oedipal and the semiotic-symbolic dichotomies to concepts related to the development of acting skills. The rationale behind this association is grounded on the fact that drama follows a similar process to that of language learning. Following this idea, the performer needs to learn how to discover the playful possibilities of artistic creativity and, afterwards, learn how to polish his rough talents through the acting craft. Likewise, neither the human language nor the language of drama can be separated from the social contexts where they take place. Thus, in this film language and dramatic proficiency will be intrinsically connected to the coming to terms with the contingencies of this confined world that surrounds Hamlet.

As I already indicated in Chapter Two, for Kristeva, roughly speaking, the semiotic stage – a female-dominated and more liberating stage – precedes the symbolic stage – a male-dominated world where language must conform to notions of regularity and patriarchal correctness (Kristeva 1989). Freud

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179 Tyrone Guthrie’s staging of the play explored the Oedipal elements in the *Hamlet*. This performance was an inspiration for Laurence Olivier, whose film, in 1948, did not only feature a Gertrude much younger than Olivier himself but also employed a range of visual signifiers to convey Hamlet’s primeval Oedipal desires to replace his father. The reader may find more information about this in the following works: Rothwell (1999), Taylor (1994), Jorgens (1991), Bernice Kliman (1983), John Asworth (May 1949), Jay Halio (1973). Also, Zeffirelli’s 1990 film transforms the hesitant prince into a masculinized Hamlet who grabs a sword as an epic hero and rides a horse as in an Elsinore where Gertrude is the adored *prima donna* casting spells over everyone around her, especially her own son. See: Kathy M. Howlett M (2000); Rothwell (1999), Quinn (1991), Julia R. Lupton and Kenneth Reinhard (1993), Crowl (2003), Pilkington, Ace G (1994), Anthony Davies (1988).


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and Lacan orient their approaches to language and growth in a similar manner that acknowledges a previous stage in which language is undetermined, freer and spontaneous. Arguably, after a while, the child renounces his attachment to the mother to acknowledge the patriarchal and objective rules of the male world (2001).\footnote{181} The discipline required for acting works in a similar way to identity construction and language learning in the sense that certain codes must be learned and assimilated, but the rigor, the systematicity and the discipline of the performer should never be a stoppage to embracing the language of paradox, the liberation of the body, and the unlocking of the imagination. Therefore, drama resembles the richness of human language, which considers the poetic function as possible in real exchanges. The difference here is that the very language of drama embraces the paradoxes involved in harmonizing systematic rigor and the liberating creativity of the artist who goes back to a second childhood.

This return to a second childhood must be inevitably connected to the effect produced by the actor’s block. It is frequent that experienced theatre directors and instructors speak about the actor’s need to get over the dreadful effect of the actor’s block. In fact, for Donnellan, actors should not be evaluated on their talent but on their capacity for being more blocked or less blocked (2005: 5). In similar terms, Dario Fo refers to children’s education as a systematic process of destruction of freedom, which annihilates their possibilities to perceive and see things from divergent viewpoints. Thus, he refers to the actor’s need to recover the child’s capacity to embrace paradox (Fo 1998: 99).\footnote{182} In other words, Fo also speaks about the need to overcome block. In many ways, such blocking, which has been consistently built up through adolescence, needs to be overcome with acting training and performance. Therefore, acting techniques – at least, good acting techniques – are not means to constrain the performer, but to empower his/her performance.

As Donnellan indicates, the best technique vanishes and is not perceptible in the performer (2005: 3). This seemingly contradicts the need to take pains and perfect one’s acting technique. However, Donnellan himself and other theatre theoreticians, like Stanislavski, Brook, Michael Chekhov, Robert Hethmon and many others, emphasize hard work and almost the total transformation of the self when it comes to engage in proficient acting training. However, the contradiction is fictitious if we consider that good technique disappears in execution when an actor/actress is seen working on his


\footnote{182} In his book, Fo does not fully explain what he means with ‘paradox.’ Yet, theatrical practice and theatrical imagination simply suggest that dramatic paradoxes refer to the performer’s capacity to enact an imaginary situation that he/she consciously knows to be unreal. Such paradox vertebrates through all the dramatic art. Particularly, it points at the actor’s need to search within himself feelings, desires, emotions, resentments, and various definable states of mind with which he does not need to feel identified (1998).
craft with facility. Rodenburgh clarifies that ‘in order to act Shakespeare, you have to be a complete human athlete – not just a footballer or a philosopher, but both’ (2002: 13-14). In this respect, Stanislavski goes as far as to encourage conscious and specific technical work on every body muscle and every single sound of the language. What constitutes an additional paradox is that this ideal fashioning of the player as a sort of Renaissance person is in the end a way to discover what we must regard as the disinterment of the artist’s interred nature. This nature is the one that was presumably lost over the mirror stage in which the child started to try to overcome his childish condition. Nevertheless, the finding of one-self as an artist is necessarily to be reconciled with the acquisition of features of characters who may exist in our imagination or in real life. Therefore, as we will see, in this film Hamlet’s self-discovery will be filtered through the acting craft.

In the first section of this chapter I will deal with how hybridity is configured by the filmic setting. Secondly, I will examine how the social relationships between characters are, from the very beginning, mapped out in dramatic terms and how Hamlet’s frustrations quickly take a dramatic form. In the following section, I will explain how Hamlet engages with dramatic art and how his artistic block is revealed through interaction with other players. After this, I will analyze how Hamlet tries his chances with a different language – cinema – to discover the truth about Claudius’ crime. However, we will discover through Hamlet’s filmic impetus that the camera will reveal rather uncomfortable suspicions to the Queen. In the next scene, we will examine how such uncomfortable suspicions will be confirmed through Hamlet's encounter with Gertrude. The last section will focus on how the last sequences will be presenting the turning of drama and film into disruptive forces at the Danish state.

5.3. From Stage to Film

The meta-theatrical effect of Doran’s Hamlet is complicated as it comes from an RSC stage production. This production was subsequently translated to the television film screen in collaboration between Illuminations Media, BBC and RSC. According to Wyver, ‘[i]t was very important to the BBC to be able to say to the audience, the press, and to their stakeholders that they were bringing the RSC’s

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183 In a workshop with John Barton, Ben Kingsley indicates that performers need to remember that they ‘must be rooted in nature for the emotions to be contagious and real’ (quoted from Barton 1984: 19).

184 Beyond the requirements of acting as a professional discipline, Declan Donnellan argues that ‘[w]e develop our sense of self by practicing roles we see our parents play and expand our identities further by copying characters we see played by elder brothers, sisters, friends, rivals, teachers, enemies or heroes’ (Donnellan 2005: 2).
Hamlet with David Tennant to television, and to a wider audience’ (Hindle 2015: 281). What is clear, Wyver confirms in another interview, is that neither BBC, nor Illuminations Media, nor Doran wanted to do a film in the strictest sense of the word (2015). It is a hybrid form in which film and studio theatre are combined.

This fact complicates the relationship of Hamlet’s character with theatre in several ways. Firstly, following suit with Michael Almereyda’s Hamlet (2000), Tennant’s Hamlet recurs to the language of film and uses a hand-held camera to record short video diary extracts and parts of the play-within-the-play. The difference between both films – Doran’s and Almereyda’s – is that Doran’s embraces the clash between theatre and film by way of making these two elements interact and indirectly parody the prejudices against television recorded theatre. This intermedial paradox is ironically transferred to Tennant’s work on Hamlet as he tries to be proficient in both the languages of theatre and cinema. This production specifically underlines his role as actor, stage-manager and filmmaker. The grandeur of Tennant as a character who behaves as an artist within the play is in his impetus to be in command of all the dramatic resources available, i.e. his sense of identity and wholeness is intrinsically connected to his mastery of the symbolic systems of film and theatre.

The hybridity is well reflected in the frame created by Doran and DoP Chris Sieger. As mentioned above, the film was shot at St. Joseph’s College at Mill Hill. The chapel, the cloister and several other corners of the place were used to fashion a small studio theatre, which self-reflexively alluded to the theatrical origins of the production. For a start, most of the scenes take place in the nave of St. Joseph’s chapel. Even the cellargage scene was recorded in this space. Some other scenes were recorded in the cloister and others outside the college. Despite the evident lack of resources to finance a more lavish location, following suit with Donnellan’s suggestions on space, the smallness of the area can become an actual advantage for an actor (2005: 128). This is precisely what the metonymic economy of theatre allows to do in this film production. The setting and the acting are meant to stimulate the viewer’s theatrical imagination. Apart from this, the black curtains of the nave ostentatiously allude to the wings of a studio television theatre, and actors double up their parts as they would do in a stage performance. In short, the film, with its very few resources, intends to appeal to the audience’s imagination as they would in such performance.

Nevertheless, the translation to the screen involves a re-conception of the signifiers in the original production. Set designer Rob Jones needed to translate the massive mirror effect of the original to the screen to avoid the problematic relationship between mirrors and cameras in one studio set. To that end, Jones painted the walls, the pillars and the floor of St. Joseph’s chapel in marble fablon. This
produced the same mirror effect of the stage performance without reflecting images with the same intensity as a mirror would.

The DoP’s major contribution to the film is that the characters constantly see themselves in mirrors in very contained close-ups. The massive mirrors in the original did not leave much room for such an introspective approach. Gertrude, Claudius, and Hamlet see themselves in broken mirrors and thus confront their disfigured identities at a cinematic level, which points to the fact that the characters’ attempts to fit in the symbolic patriarchal world are futile. It also points out at how their fantasies on their ideal egos appear broken through these fractured visions of themselves.

This concept is complicated by the inclusion of CCTV cameras within the acting space. These cameras, following Lefait, create a sense of Brechtian detachment (2013-2014). Yet, they also expand the mirror effect as Hamlet discovers himself watched by these cameras. Right after Rosencrantz, Guildenstern and the Players leave him, he rips one of the CCTV cameras of the wall and declares: ‘Now I am alone’ (2.2.484). Curiously, Hamlet’s source of rebellious strength to tear this state of vigilance apart precisely stems from the knowledge that he is being watched in a recording. Far from restraining him, this ignites his desire to improve his theatrical and cinematic skills. All in all, the space provides a filmic realm in which characters know that they are acting in front of cameras but also, they are playing parts in their own lives.

5.4. The Patriarchal Order and the Dramatic Energizing of Frustration

As already established, one of the essential premises for dramatic art is that proficiency in performance involves the combination of two aspects. Firstly, the performer needs to rejoice in the pleasures of the semiotic power of creativity. Secondly, he needs to restrain and discipline his energy to act fluently. The paradox in performing is that one needs to be disciplined to be free. Any first-year drama student will need to work hard to recover his abilities to harmonize these two natures.

In agreement with this premise, Tennant’s work reflects Hamlet’s theatrical efforts to explore his relationship with what the political transition has turned his family into. His acting skills, teenage posturing – he dresses up like a skinny and dated James Dean and, later, as an apish Lord of Misrule with an oversized crown after the play-within-the-play –, and tomfoolery are masks intending to respond to the ruthlessness and small-mindedness of the patriarchal world. Not only does the mask work as a perfect antidote against block but it also liberates the actor to do things forbidden (Donnellan 2005: 110-111). Thus, Tennant uses a muscular T-shirt and lets his hair go spiky, acting at times as a sort of Puck,
to display his ‘antic disposition’. At other times, he poses as a ‘smiley villain’ while he maniacally rejoices in close-up at the discovery of his father’s murder by Claudius – see figures 1 and 2 below. When he acts as ‘King of the Apes’ – acting literally like an enthroned apish monarch – he visualizes the image of the monarch keeping subjects ‘like an ape in the corner of his jaw’ (4.2.16-17).  

The King portrayed as an ape doubtless alludes to the contempt Hamlet feels for his uncle and, by extension, for his father. In addition, portraying himself as an ape, ironically, also refers to the misdemeanor of the mediocre actor who contents himself with the aping of gestures without having really incorporated any inner life in his acting.

Unhappy with the part written for him in the succession, Tennant’s Hamlet certainly begins as a blocked character in this production. His position in the room situates him nearer the wings than the centre-stage and Claudius’ predominance clearly displaces a Hamlet who is incapable to take part in the political decisions taken. A reaction shot shows Tennant observing Gertrude (Penny Downie) and Claudius (Stewart) kissing at the wedding reception. This self-pleased and cheerful Claudius does not miss a chance to humiliate his nephew as, in a mid-over-the-shoulder shot, turning his cheerfulness into spiteful reproach, he attacks Hamlet for his ‘unmanly grief’ (1.2.94). How Claudius ostentatiously gives precedence to Laertes (Edward Bennett) before his nephew does not escape Hamlet either. In this specific approach, Laertes willingly lends himself to repeating the script Polonius – Oliver Ford-Davies – has written down for him. Yet, Laertes is so under-trained in public speaking that Polonius needs to

185 Doran finds this metaphor particularly striking and, as we will see, makes extensive use of it over the film. See Doran (2008), available in http://www.rsc.org.uk/downloads/hamlet_2008_scrapbook.pdf.

186 Screen caption from Hamlet (2009).

187 Ibid.
whisper the lines to his inexperienced son. The irony here is that Laertes’ clearly clumsier discourse is preferred to Hamlet’s by Claudius, who, under Stewart’s cheerful smile, rather favours people ready to play the parts he wants them to, no matter how inefficient these favorites might be.

Other than that, being performed by Stewart, Claudius presents a formidable masculine opponent to Hamlet. His Sean Connery-like demeanors and seductive voice bring on the charisma and the leading qualities of the sophisticated macho leader in a patriarchal order. In fact, in this scene we can find two actors – Stewart and Tennant – with a life outside this frame. The film features Stewart, the RSC veteran and Star Trek hero. Yet, Stewart’s victorious self-pleasing grin in an over-the-shoulder shot, when he patronizingly pats Hamlet on the back so he feels ‘as ourselves in Denmark’ (1.2.122), leaves no doubt that, contrarily to the part Stewart plays in Star Trek, he is a positively charming villain and will not be timorous to belittle Hamlet.

After this, as we know, Hamlet is separated from his mother, who leaves the scene hand in hand with Claudius. The traumatic separation of Hamlet from his mother is articulated within the social context of the film. Even though surrounded by the court, the camera reveals Gertrude and Claudius’ affection is real. She is perceived as beautiful, shiny, radiant, evoking the sensual power of Glen Close’s Gertrude in Zeffirelli’s film. Instantly, Tennant recognizes his plight in dramatic terms and feels ‘that within which passes show’ (1.2.85). He gazes at Claudius and Gertrude and a series of reaction shots present how he resents having been denied preference to speak up before Laertes.

The background in the shots featuring Tennant show the wings of the improvised studio theatre, thus indicating that the Prince has been left waiting in the wings of the play run by his uncle, who takes the stage centre. Whereas Hamlet’s position is eminently that of someone waiting to come on stage – and this idea will be again clarified before the ‘To be or not to be…’ speech, beginning precisely in the wings of the improvised studio theatre –, Claudius and Gertrude are already emceeing a spectacle that

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188 Patrick Stewart has an existence apart from this film production that situates him somewhere between the respectable and culture effort-based background of the RSC and the popularity that his charisma as Captain Jean-Luc Picard in Star Trek has generated. One of the premises of his specific charisma is that, despite being in his seventies, Stewart is still quite a masculine-voiced and attractive English actor. In the sixth episode of the first season of the series Extras (BBC), Stewart plays himself and parodies this specific persona that fans and popular culture have built around him. Thus, he interprets himself as a scriptwriter who takes the part of a hero with special powers, a ‘James Bond figure,’ whose specialty consists of making ladies’ clothes fall off. After this, he speaks on the phone to the female protagonist alluding to his own sensual qualities: ‘This is Patrick Stewart here. And the reason you’re hearing my rich, sexy voice is that Andy is not man enough to apologise himself.’ See “Patrick Stewart” (2005-2007).
seems somewhat labored. In fact, Gertrude collaborates in scripting the performance. Nevertheless, there are minor improvisations in the show. She seems shocked when Claudius gives precedence to Laertes. Very likely, this is because they have not agreed on that. Yet, Gertrude is still conscious of the part she must play and, willingly, whispers to Claudius the name of Hamlet’s university when he is incapable of remembering it. Later, Gertrude approaches Hamlet and the camera leaves them face-to-face in an over-the-shoulder shot. All in all, the scene leaves a much-unspoken pain, which connects mother and son. Gertrude shares Hamlet’s frustration, although she seems too trapped under Claudius’ power to try a re-union with her son.

Tennant’s collapse at the beginning of his first soliloquy reflects how his inner child has been removed from all the pleasures of totality. This collapse reveals a first clear cry of agony in Hamlet, who has been so far excessively restraining, i.e. blocking, his energies. At the same time, it anticipates what will be Hamlet’s inadequacy at acting. The very first thing he does as he is left alone is to fall on his knees and dedicate some good ten seconds to weeping before beginning the speech. Some drama teachers at the Actor’s Studio would have ridiculed him for such an over-explicatory demonstration of pain, especially in someone who has just sworn having ‘that within which passes show.’ Yet, many other drama teachers would have praised the fact that he is struggling against block. Very quickly Tennant’s Hamlet assumes a more puritanical and stern position. The speech begins in wide shot leaving the Prince isolated within the larger court context. Progressively, Tennant’s approaches to the camera indicate his eagerness for theatrical presence. He aims for the imaginary integrated self-image that the infant expects to experience with his own body. Thus, he searches for the camera maximizing his presence in close-up. His first attempts to fight frustration occur in filmic terms. Yet, rather than applying voice-over techniques to this piece, Doran decides to follow suit with Branagh’s approach and lets the character deliver the whole speech in an exercise of theatrical expertise.

In fact, as Hamlet grows more formidable in this scene, we discover that his puritanism is quite akin to the patriarchal order he so much hates, particularly in how Tennant ironizes the dexterity with which Gertrude runs to ‘incestuous sheets’ (1.2.156). This situates him in direct rivalry with his masculine role models in their stance for the rigorous rules of the symbolic world. Doran literally follows Ernest Jones’ interpretation, which claims that Hamlet feels the need to destroy his father as well as his uncle (1968). Not surprisingly, the viewer finds in the first scene that the actor who has

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189 For some reason, the guests in this film find Claudius’ paradoxes on ‘mirth’ and ‘dirge’ funny. They cannot help laughing at the King’s occurrences. Yet, this effect reinforces the fact that everyone in Claudius’ court needs to play a part that satisfies the King’s eagerness to be loved and trusted.
played the Ghost is no other than Stewart. This situates father and uncle at the same level. It also redoubles the iconic presence of the patriarchal figure that impedes Hamlet’s bliss in unison with Gertrude. The Ghost violently manhandles his groveling son when he appeals to his son’s nature to prevent the ‘royal bed of Denmark’ to become ‘a couch for luxury and damned incest’ (1.5.82-83). Like his brother, this Ghost scorns and despises unmanly attitudes. Yet, this unpredictable patriarch also suddenly caresses Hamlet while asking him not to taint his mind. This comes to prove the arbitrary weakness of a patriarchal system upholding rules that are neither truly stable, nor permanent, nor reliable. Hamlet’s rancor will be then manifested in that same scene as he wonderfully rejoices in the already mentioned close-up displaying his devilish smile at the discovery of Claudius’ guilt. In fact, Hamlet manifests hatred toward his uncle-father in the most theatrical terms. In a subsequent scene, as he is just about to kill him with a switchblade, he returns to the wings, and, slightly acquires the shape of a hunch-backed teeth-clasping pantomime Vice, voraciously and murderously gazing at Claudius.

5.5. Hamlet’s Encounter with the Actor’s Block

The court of Denmark is arranged as a studio theatre in which CCTV cameras register everything that takes place in the main hall. Within this space, characters come and go and seem to be trying to handle the script that has been written for them. This film frame considers the level of identification that occurs between characters. The characters in the film do not simply perform but also evaluate each other’s performance. Plus, some of these performances are recorded, as I have already indicated, by CCTV cameras, a fact that, in this filmic context, re-energizes the voyeuristic fascination of Big Brother. Thence, the characters are qualified by their acting skills in a symbolic world where everyone controls each other and where CCTV cameras register all the movements they make. However, the CCTV cameras do not constrain Hamlet’s eagerness to perform but rather stimulate it.

As I have been suggesting, people’s sense of belonging is, in this specific performance, measured by their dramatic skills. It is not simply that Hamlet’s identity is constructed in dramatic terms. The rules of this dramatic game apply to the rest of the characters, who somehow need to manage themselves in this hybrid space. This is clearly established from the wedding scene and continues when Laertes and Ophelia – Mariah Gale – are interrupted by Polonius in the steps of their entrance hall. Ophelia’s boredom at being lectured is even more justified when she finds out contraceptives Laertes is taking to France. Clearly, Laertes has been delivering lines to her but his act is a complete shambles. In addition, Polonius’ domestic iron rule in this film is clear in how he stage-manages the siblings’ actions. Both are forced to repeat part of Polonius’ litany on how to carry oneself in life. Thus, the three characters appear
in a wide shot repeating the chant (‘Neither a borrower nor a lender, boy …’, 1.3.74) that Laertes must have repeated hundreds of times. However, in subsequent scenes, Polonius does not quite manage to say his lines properly. The way he delivers his lectures seems at times rusty and hesitant. He gets stuck in the middle of an argument when speaking to Reynaldo. Later, his explanation on Hamlet’s madness is longer, more hesitant and awkward than it usually is when delivered by other actors. Polonius is too senile to continue his public service and, nonetheless, he struggles to stage-manage the court of Denmark.

Likewise, Rosencrantz – Sam Alexander – and Guildenstern – Tom Davey – have rehearsed their speeches. Firstly, they have done it on their own. Secondly, Polonius clearly has indicated them how to speak to the monarchs. Rosencrantz is a supposedly street-wise leather-jacketed fellow with a pretentious worldly pose, which contrasts with Guildenstern’s more serious and preppy guise. Funnily enough, it is Rosencrantz who whispers lines to Guildenstern as he tries very hard to impress the monarchs with his courtly discourse. Again, the old joke that Claudius does not distinguish between the two is played upon, which portrays Claudius as slightly careless of apparently insignificant details. Nevertheless, this defect works wonderfully with Gertrude, who willingly corrects Claudius’ mistake. Who knows whether Claudius is not even pretending not to know in order to show Gertrude how essential she is for him? Or maybe he simply does not remember all the details.

Yet, despite Claudius’ skills at pretending, this preparation to Hamlet’s entrance has all the traces of being a sitcom in which second-rate actors memorize their parts on the night before the shooting. On his behalf, Hamlet’s part in this house is to display his ‘antic disposition’ in the nastiest possible way. He is conscious of the fact that the CCTV cameras watch him all over the scenes where he meets Ophelia and Polonius. Therefore, he spends much of his time acting for the camera, challenging it, and exercising his talent for parody and excessive posturing or moving and walking like a zombie. As I already said, knowing he is being watched increases his desire to increase his ‘antic disposition.’

Yet, Hamlet confronts his own plight as soon as the Players arrive. Not only does the interaction between Hamlet and the Players acquire the features of a studio television RSC workshop – such as Trevor Nunn’s or John Barton’s TV drama workshops – but we witness how the Prince’s difficulties to be in command of the language of theatre are contrasted with the team-based spirit of the Players.190

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190 Here Doran seems to be making a point about the need to participate in an ensemble to truly pull out all the textual potency in the play. It is worth commenting on Doran’s rehearsal method, which, according to Wyver, is tremendously rigorous. Instead of blocking – i.e. arranging the stage movement for the actors –, he keeps the actors sitting and reading the text for some days. No one can read his/her own lines. What they need to do is to read a part that is going to be played by another actor. It is only after many days that the actors can play their own parts. The goal pursued with this way of working is to make sure that all the actors own the play and that they can work as a team. An additional treat in this method, commented
The Player King is portrayed by the veteran John Woodwine, himself a potential parental signifier as he is an RSC senior member. Now in the play, Hamlet’s theatrical ego is stricken as his preconceptions shatter when trying Pyrrhus’ speech out. He discovers here what the difference is between ranting in solitude and belonging to an ensemble of actors like those of, for example, the RSC. It is never as clear as in Hamlet’s attempts to be the great actor that his delusive search for truth proves futile. He discovers that he is actually incapable of properly delivering Pyrrhus’ lines. His speech is full of crampy and jerky generalized feeling which cannot truly get to the inner truths of the piece. This manifests a hard truth: no matter how much one may like drama, as Rodenburgh might put it, one needs to be able to do it. It is not simply, as Hamlet interprets, a ‘dream of passion’ (2.2.500) and letting oneself go with the flow of some hocus pocus inspiration. Whereas Hamlet manages to extemporize on his own and to overwhelm everyone with his bombastic ‘antic disposition,’ he is not capable of acting by listening and interacting with the other actors, which is, by the way, one of Doran’s – and the RSC’s – essential principles.

In this respect, Doran seems to be making a point on acting and what acting represents for the RSC. As Donnellan mentions, misery comes to the acting work when the performer pushes and shouts emotions out loud, a fact which indicates nothing else but precisely that: mere shouting and generalized feeling (2005: 54). Yet, Hamlet, a few hours after his embarrassing rendition of Pyrrhus’ lines, patronizingly lectures the Players on how to say their own speeches. ‘Beware of Jargon,’ says John Barton, ‘It can lead to talking about acting taking the place of actually doing it’ (2014: 10). Hamlet’s experimenting with theatre is resulting into a rather unpleasant and painful experience.

Doran highlights the team playing skills needed to engage in ensemble rehearsals, a principle he applies in his productions. However, at the same time, failing to embrace this is precisely where Tennant’s grandeur as Hamlet resides. This proves the point that Hamlet’s confusion lies in his inadequacy to find his way within the semiotic as well as within the symbolic realms. The other actors whisper the lines to him. Yet, he does not even look at them. He is incapable of being fueled by the Players’ patient support. As Donnellan points out, the actor’s block and fear are always manifested in an aggressive attitude against other factors like the script, fellow actors or the stage (2005: 5-6). In this

on by Patterson Joseph – playing Brutus in Julius Caesar – is that a single interpreter does not feel he/she has got all the responsibility in bringing out the potentialities of the character. All the opposite, this task is shared by everyone. Apart from this, although this could sometimes be – as Joseph suggests – utterly frustrating, the possibility of seeing how other actors structure one’s speeches can be empowering when it comes to make interpretative decisions (See “Making Off of Julius Caesar” in DVD edition of Doran’s film, 2012).
sense, rather than following Branagh’s paternalistic approach in the speech to the Players, Tennant’s Hamlet rages against them after they have shown him sympathy. So, his response to his inability as an actor is precisely to act as the commanding impresario and he speaks to the clown in a hostile tone. As Kostya says when embodying the Critic, ‘[i]gnoramuses are the ones who do criticize most’ (Stanislavski 2016: 14). Tennant embodies a Hamlet who has proven incapable of truly engaging in the craft of drama. Therefore, he will furiously abandon theatre and turn to filmmaking, with equally disastrous results.

5.6. Uncomfortable Truths

In this production, again, Doran emulates Almereyda’s Hamlet in the sense that a hand-held camera is involved in the Mousetrap. Nevertheless, what Doran does is to stage the Dumb Show and The Mousetrap and puts Tennant as Hamlet to record both performances with his hand-held camera. Thus, the film offers to the spectators a double perspective: one directorial vision and the vision Hamlet has of the play-within-the-play.

Contrarily to what occurs in other productions, Doran turns the Dumb Show into one of the jewels of this production thanks to Michael Ashcroft’s choreography. The show is presented as a little variété piece in which the monarchs are anthropomorphic animals. The King is a little chimpanzee who, when dead, runs away covered in a white sheet like a cartoon ghost. The Queen is an overweight crossing of a panda bear with a lascivious gorilla. Judging from this, Hamlet has not just written a dozen lines for the Mousetrap. I would even suggest that Tennant’s Hamlet may have staged the Dumb Show himself.191 Much of this representation features how Hamlet intends to reduce his father and trivialize his presence. The Queen in the Dumb Show – played by the male company clown – bounces her man boobs on Polonius and other members of the audience and unapologetically parades as an oversized royal oversexed creature. However, this is not enough for Hamlet. A black actor playing the part of Luciano stereotypically acts as the black man and, if this racist detail did not suffice, follows the rhythm of drums in an inviting and unambiguous sexual posturing. The Queen shies away from him until he unleashes a plastic extra-large coiled penis. All in all, Hamlet’s frustration at the monarchs’ sexuality seems written on the performance. This nasty racism and overt rejoice in disgust may be politically

191 Here the ‘dozen lines, or sixteen lines’ (2.2.477) that Hamlet proposes the First Player to insert in The Murder of Gonzaga seem to have been transformed into a complete Dumb Show.
incorrect but tremendously useful to clarify Hamlet’s repulse at his mother’s sexual relationship with the King.

Figures 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 are screen captions from DVD edition.
However, as *The Mousetrap* begins, he carefully studies the Player Queen – Ryan Gage – with his hand-held camera. We are invited to participate in Hamlet’s gazing at the Queen. Why would Hamlet suddenly pay so much attention to the Player Queen? Is he trying to discover in drama the sense of truth he cannot discover in life? He deconstructs Gertrude as two different personas considering his high ideal expectations on her through the stylized vision of the Queen performed in contrast with the grotesque mock Queen used in the Dumb Show. Gage’s delicate features manage to bring all the abstract beauty of a court masque. Hamlet’s camera shows this Gertrude in low angle and enhances his high expectations on the Queen’s promises of fidelity in *The Mousetrap*. However, seen in a wide shot through Hamlet’s hand-held camera, Gertrude challenges such notion: ‘The lady doth protest too much methinks’ (3.2.224).\(^{193}\) The hard reality Hamlet needs to confront here is that, after all, the real Gertrude perhaps never really promised anything to old Hamlet.

After Gertrude’s sarcasm, Gage turns and shares his contempt with us in close-up. This actor’s reaction in many ways brings his frustration at the lack of understanding Gertrude seems to be showing here. This might be the kind of feeling the grand actor feels when a member of the audience does not distinguish between fact and fiction. However, Gertrude is not ready to embrace such refinements and truly understands who is behind all this nonsense in the performance. Yet Tennant accepts Gertrude’s challenge from the other side of the improvised stage and sarcastically encourages her to believe that the promise of fidelity will be kept. In the television frame, we are given the chance to participate in this tennis match between Gertrude and Hamlet. What Hamlet does is to show black and white visions of Gertrude as a Queen. In discovering the hidden multi-faceted nature and the multiplicities of the real Gertrude, Hamlet demonstrates that, after all, the source of his frustration is not connected with his uncle but with her. This is the bitter truth which cinema has led him to. Yet, the fact that his vision is developed in theatrical and filmic terms complicates his own notions on Gertrude. In both cases, the filmed Gertrude and the theatrical Gertrude are confusing and incomplete accounts of a much larger character.

\(^{193}\) It is a typical Gertrude’s straightforward message, very much corresponding to Carolyn Heilbrun’s commentary on the character in the play and how her economy of discourse situates her (1990: 12).
5.7. The Closet Scene

In the stage production, Doran and the team decided not to go for the psychoanalytical reading of the closet scene (See Scrapbook 2008). As Osborn suggested, the fact that mirrors were displayed on stage had much more to do with the *theatrum mundi* metaphor than with any attempt to read from a psychoanalytical point of view (2010: 27). Nevertheless, in the television production, Tennant’s Hamlet roughs up and aggressively reproaches Downie’s Gertrude within her own intimate space in bed. He is momentarily seen as the Freudian *Nachträglichkeit* – Wolf Man – who rages against his mother for having been seen at sexual intercourse with the Wolf Man’s father. The eroticism of the scene is manifested in the Prince’s bullying and even physical aggression to the Queen. All possible sexual desire is inevitably mingled with Hamlet’s brutish reaction against his mother, who drinks alcohol, removes her hair extensions and takes pills to calm her nerves before seeing Hamlet.

When the Ghost enters the room, and discovers mother and son hotly messing up on their couch – Downie’s nipples observable through her nightgown, her body exposed to Hamlet’s gaze – Hamlet feels busted as if he had been caught sneaking into his mother’s bed. His delay is clearly scorned by Stewart playing the Ghost, who quickly intervenes and recovers his space on the frame beside Gertrude. The Ghost strokes Gertrude’s hair tenderly without her noticing, which shows how insignificant the memory of her husband must be to her. She is now inaccessible for him. At the same time, both are unreachable figures to Hamlet, who sees them in low angle, their heads joined together in a shot that brings on the uncanny picture of his momentarily reconstructed fractured family.

In this sequence, we see that Hamlet’s strategies with his mother from now on are far more overtly sincere and even devilishly charming. What is more dreadful is that he seems to be enjoying it as a dramatic exercise. He invites Gertrude to share in his plans to ‘blow’ Rosencrantz and Guildenstern ‘at the moon’ (3.4.210) while she embraces and cuddles him. This happens in what seems the most ambiguous contact between mother and son. It proves much more suggestive and intimate than Zeffirelli’s approach as it channels the rough-and-tumble in bed to a much more subtle and tender train of physicality. This proves psychologically dangerous for these two deranged minds. Momentarily, they seem to be reaching that happy comfort of the semiotic phase in which mother and son do not tell each other apart. Gertrude strokes Hamlet’s head and leans on his back, her fingers make progress into Tennant’s hair. This remains truly strange and not altogether shaped up by any sense of recognition. Suddenly, Tennant at once escapes Gertrude’s cuddling and then moves out to pick Polonius up. He rejects female tenderness and returns to the absolute rules of the patriarchal order.
However, Hamlet’s pain will be much deeper after Gertrude’s laughter, a *coup de grâce* in this approach to the scene. When he dictates to his mother to ‘throw away the worser part’ (3.4.155) of her heart, she bursts into laughter. The deep uncanny subversion of feminine resistance to patriarchal rule brings a blow to Hamlet’s desire for control of his mother’s actions. This apparently trifling moment certainly informs about the state of affairs. The Queen is ready to embrace her son but not to make concessions such as abandoning her husband. This is a hard truth that Hamlet cannot swallow. Right before leaving the room, he approaches Gertrude and, quoting Olivier, kisses her on the lips. This ‘Good night, mother’ kiss brings about the deadly confirmation for Gertrude that Hamlet is a madman, a notion his mother clearly has not accepted whenever informed by other characters. Contrarily to Olivier’s and Eileen Herlihie’s kiss – see figures 11, 12 and 13 –, this kiss is stale, deadly, dispassionate, narcissistic, deflated, somewhere between the withered sexual desire and the slight scorn toward a re-married mother – see figures 9 and 10 –. This dry erotic intimacy is not further exploited in the film.

Figure 9

Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 12

194 Figures 9 and 10 are screen captions from DVD edition of Doran’s *Hamlet.*
Doubtless, this means that Hamlet has renounced his mother’s bodily warmth and presence. His bloody thoughts turn to his video diary, later, as he perceives the taking-off Fortinbras’ army in helicopters. Tragically, the Prince’s perception is not sharp enough to perceive Gertrude as a complex human being, who, after all, still loves her son. Therefore, although in the final scene she knows – as a close-up clarifies that she suddenly realizes Claudius’ trick – that the cup is poisoned, she fully drinks it to spare the Prince.

5.8. The Broken Mirror and the Theatrical Dislocation of the State

Unexpectedly, the atmosphere of the film becomes more eminently noir and less hybrid in terms of modality. The familiar court of Denmark becomes now a stale and deadly place. Unfamiliar angles and canted framings explore new perspectives that have not been considered so far. Femininity, as we will see, has been shattered. Ophelia is now the abject creature, locked up and insane. Gertrude has been left out of management. At the same time, we are approaching the territory of the abject. Hamlet himself becomes the abject figure that knows too much.

From the expansive studio theatre, which precedes the play-within-the-play, we move towards a much starker and noir-like type of filming which brings out the darker sides of most characters. Claudius’ guards capture Hamlet and bring him into a cellar for an enquiry on Polonius’ death. With the utmost speed, Polonius has been replaced by Young Osric. Folder in hand, the young man accompanies Claudius at the interrogation. As Doran says, ‘he’ll be running the country soon.’

195 Figures 11, 12 and 13 are screen captions from Olivier’s Hamlet (1948).

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, this Osric knows how to keep up with his part without losing control, no matter how fake and pompous his foppish presence seems to Hamlet. Played again by Gage, Osric’s fake smile recalls Tim Curry’s sinister grin when impersonating devilish villains. As he turns his back to Hamlet, a close-up shows him undoing his self-complacent smile and a grimace of contempt replaces it. This moment of déjà vu recalls the same gesture Gage did to the Queen at the Mousetrap scene. This perfidious youth can act within the symbolic system and his uncanny presence acquires the status of a murderous double who, consciously, exchanges glances with Laertes when choosing the foils, a literally double-faced and a poisonous predator.

At the interrogation scene, Hamlet shown in low angle is presented as a figure totally subject to Claudius’ authority. The King, who rules the symbolic order, now lectures the performer who has tried to oppose him through his antics. When Claudius uses his thundering voice – by the way, Stewart’s thundering voice – to demand where Polonius is, Hamlet mimics such thundering: ‘In Heaven!’ His mockery is reaching dangerous proportions. Yet, such mock will be repeated by Ophelia in madness as soon as she listens to the King’s commanding voice trying to gain authority over the situation. This proves that his patriarchal rule is overtly slighted by repeated provocations by abject vassals’ horseplay. This sinister Bakhtinian use of the carnivalesque theatricality slightly indicates how drama in this noir framing acquires tones of subversion, danger, and even physical aggression. The theatrical and the filming frames in combination have acquired damagingly dangerous tones.

As I said before, a plethora of different angles present the space in different, darker and more fragmentary lights. Gertrude sees her own image deformed in front of the broken mirror. Suddenly and without much explanation, all the mirrors at Elsinore seem to be breaking apart. When Claudius and Laertes plot the killing of Hamlet, they are approached by a different camera angle, which destabilizes the harmonious sense of order and decorum searched for in the initial scenes.

The area has become a factory of havoc. Death pervades the ambience, especially after Gale’s Ophelia pays a small visit from the river shore, where her skin has been scarred and stained by thorns and mud. She appears in this scene as the feminine Other, half-naked, covered in branches, a vampire doll. Ophelia’s madness is manifested in purely theatrical terms as she appears in the main space where all the courtly performances have been taking place. In fact, she indulges in more fun and games, doubling Hamlet’s previous amateurish outbursts of dramatic impetus, jumping, dancing and even yelling. She manifestly threatens and bumps Claudius’ chest. Even to the point of ridicule, Stewart’s dominant pose is unmasked as he looks and reacts with fear at Gale’s assaults.
The deranged Ophelia has incorporated Hamlet’s tools of subversion as dramatic performance. It is with her song and slapstick that she begins her intervention in this madness scene. In this way, Gale’s approach unashamedly advocates for simply being and acting mad rather than engaging into complicated readings on the scene. The subversive power of the uncanny manifested in Ophelia’s feminine force demonstrates how the power of drama can break the narrow confines of the tight and controlling state of Denmark watched by CCTV cameras. Also, Ophelia is the character that most suffers the mutilations produced by the symbolic order. Her madness breaks out and all sense of rationality disappears from the television frame. Sympathetic to Gertrude and aggressive to Claudius, she acts as if her intuition informed of the King’s villainy.

After that scene, the film frame seems more driven to the idea of death and all traces of dramatic art start disappearing. In the original stage production, when Hamlet shoots Polonius, the big mirror cracks and collapses, thus indicating the crumbling of the Danish state. The collapse of the mirror facilitates the audiences’ view of Fortinbras’ army advancing. However, when this idea is transferred to television, as I suggested earlier, Doran has certainly brought upon many signifiers that may lead to interpreting the meta-theatrical power of Hamlet in unison with a psychoanalytical reading of this television film production. Rather than the larger state of Denmark, the broken image corresponds to Hamlet and the other characters’ Lacanian ideal ego. More specifically, it refers to the fragmentation and shattering of this ideal ego. As Hamlet kills for the first time, the metaphor of the broken mirror becomes a recurrent film noir metaphor, which generally works as another recurrent conceit standing for the distorted personalities of the inhabitants of an oppressive self-reflexive world. In this way, the film responds to Ernest Jones’ reading of Hamlet as a hero who cannot avoid fighting his enemies without destroying himself and his own self-image.

As Hindle points out, Tennant’s final mirror shot offers ‘a kind of background visual (sic) metonymic in the remaining hall scenes, telling witness of the disintegration of Denmark’s court, right up to the final moments of dueling and death’ (Hindle 2015: 270). For Hamlet, self-realization occurs in the last scenes as he envisages himself through the looking glass right after young Osric has come to mediate in Laertes’ challenge. The ‘readiness’ of Hamlet in that section delves in the idea that the end is approaching.

Hamlet toys with this idea as he serenely contemplates and gently bounces Yorick’s skull, which is shown in close-up between his hands, passing from one to the other. In this way, Doran’s camera underlines the quotidian traces of death and the ultimate irrelevance of our demise. Tennant even comically refers to the smell of the skull. An additional show of the irreverence with which death is
treated is seen in how the Gravedigger grabs two other skulls left around the grass and carelessly throws them to the dung heap as Ophelia’s funeral procession arrives. Likewise, Tennant has learned to imitate the triviality with which the Gravedigger treats the dead bones. Is he rehearsing his own death or toying with the idea that his place is within a tomb? He has come to terms with the notion that in the end there are no absolutes.

One of the ironies in the film is that the Gravedigger (Mark Hadfield) is the working-class ‘good old chap’ who, as an example of slightly incompetent acting within the play, laughs at his own jokes, one of the worst sins committed by the second-rate comedian. Is this some kind of statement against the ‘rules’ established by Hamlet for comedians that ‘will themselves laugh to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too’ (3.2.38-39)? In this case, Doran’s film seems convincing in stating that misusing drama can turn one’s life into what at best can be regarded as a poor joke. Curiously, Hamlet is at his most serene state when he stops trying to be an actor. Ironically, his performances become clearer, more calmed and reflective. In fact, during the graveyard scene, he heavily mocks Laertes’ alleged overreaction for Ophelia’s death and mimicks the deranged brother’s desire to jump onto the grave with the utmost contempt and venomous parody. Tennant, even in his last moments, even after returning from exile, cannot restrain his shenanigans. That is so even when he wants to pinpoint that mismanaging theatre is futile. Yet, as soon as he sees himself in the mirror, accepting that ‘readiness is all’, Tennant looks much nobler than ever in the film. He has decided, after all, not to perform at all anymore. Ironically, this realization takes place when Hamlet gets ready to visit the ‘undiscovered country.’
5.9. Conclusions

What seems to me one of the highest strengths in this production is that, rather than being put off by the current prejudice against screen Shakespeare, Doran and the Illuminations Media team embrace the opposed natures of theatre and film. It is more than clear that the two media can ultimately be as different from each other as chalk and cheese. Yet, this is not a reason not to bring Shakespeare to the television screen. The narrative space of television and its flexibility to include all the codes of realism, stylized performance, studio performance, newsreels, or television film itself constitute the perfect space so that the contradictory natures of film and theatre can encounter each other in a narrative of this kind. It is precisely in this confusion of languages that a televisual psychoanalytical reading of this film seems relevant.

The media of film and theatre present their own codes, which need to be learnt before – and while – they are put into practice. Following the main theoretical corpus provided by Kristeva’s psychoanalytical theories and those of drama studies, we have observed that the semiotic and the symbolic worlds are confronted since the television frame deals with the relationships between characters. Identification occurs at multiple levels, which certainly distorts our perception of one single character. For this reason, the irruption of the languages of film and theatre help underlying the complex dynamics in this television studio theatre where characters have been given lines to learn and deliver in public.

Not only is Doran obliged to reconcile – or revel in – the clashes between film and studio theatre but the theatrical self-reflexivity of the play is here revised. Self-reflexivity is visible in the fact that the opposition of theatre and film becomes precisely the paradox that Hamlet needs to handle. Because he uses drama as a means of struggling for his own peace of mind, his mishandling of the theatrical and filmic medicines produces more damage to him. Hamlet’s real plight is that, in this film, deep inside, he does not feel the quasi-religious veneration for the acting craft of the kind that is preached by Stanislavski.
6.1. Introduction

The Vice in morality plays used to address the audience to share his plans and mischiefs with them. After many centuries, villains continue smiling to the viewers in close-up.\footnote{If film monstrous killers are regarded as the Other, often their charming smile is featured in close-up with a quiet and cheerful acceptance that their personal \textit{katabasis} is a one-way trip. Following suit with Jacques Derrida’s recommendation – see footnote 203 –, these characters invoke their ghosts and – perhaps viciously – live and dialogue with them (2012: 12). Like those Others, in Rupert Goold’s \textit{Macbeth} (2010), Sir Patrick Stewart as the eponymous hero – see figure 3 above – smiles before taking his final

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\begin{figure}[h]
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\caption{Figure 3}
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\footnote{As Béla Balázs says, ‘[t]he hero’s subjective point of view only conveys to us close-ups of seconds, not time in a long shot. That is the nature of impressionism in film. We see only what makes an impression on the hero. Everything else is left out’ (2010: 45).}
katabatic leap.\textsuperscript{200} Just after Macbeth gets the better of Macduff (Michael Feast) and is about to sever his neck – see figure 1 –, the Witches (Polly Frame, Sophie Hunter and Niamh McGrady), see figure 2 above – make a final apparition in the place where Macbeth has been meeting them all the time: the ballroom at Welbeck Abbey. The Weird Sisters come accompanied by a strong white light – invoking Kubrick’s shiny tones over green surfaces – that fascinates the tragic hero. Before aiming the final thrust to Macduff, he addresses his last word to the Sisters: ‘Enough’ (5.8.38). As the image above shows – again, see figure 3 –, his last word is accompanied with a self-satisfied smile underlining that, even if aware of the game they have been playing on him, the day will be entirely his. He has learned to live with his own ghosts and has come to terms with his fate. However, this momentary distraction suffices Macduff to stab Macbeth. We only infer this because the camera turns towards the Witches, who disappear into some strange white light that has been pervading the narrative. Because of our knowledge of the playtext or because we may infer it, we know that Macbeth has been defeated by Macduff. Is this the end of Macbeth’s \textit{katabasis}?\textsuperscript{201}

As Morales Harley says, we can define \textit{katabasis} as ‘downward movement’ in the same sense as the Latin phrase \textit{descensus ad inferos} or ‘descent to the underworld’ (2012: 128). Literature, film and fiction have always manifested an interest in a journey through Hades, Hell, Gehenna, the Lake of Fire, the Second Death and all the afterlives different cultures and religions have fashioned. The expected structure of a katabatic narrative, according to this premise, consists of a downward turn – a change in direction towards the Avernus – and, subsequently, a downward movement – the following of the path towards the Avernus – (Sánchez-Escalonilla 2008).\textsuperscript{201} After this, the movement ends up raising the traveller up to the overworld again. The katabatic hero returns to the human world and, arguably, he will never be the same person again. As we will see, Goold’s filmic translation of his stage production of \textit{Macbeth} is framed as a katabatic narrative. In fact, having Stewart as Macbeth contrasts with his

\textsuperscript{200} This production had been premièred at the Chichester Theatre Festival in 2007 featuring Stewart as Macbeth and Kate Fleetwood as Lady Macbeth. After being premiered at the Chichester Festival in the Minerva Theatre, the production toured through London and New York. That means that the actors had been performing the play for about two years before they went to film the production for the small screen. The production itself was regarded by critics as shocking and edgy in the combination of technology and stage work. While the mise-en-scène was shocking for its cinematic outlook, the most commented feature was the re-contextualization of the play on the days of the Stalinist Soviet Union with King Macbeth as a totalitarian Staliniesque figure whose power was based on dictatorial control, surveillance and military strength.

\textsuperscript{201} Sánchez-Escalonilla recognizes that film heroes ‘usually must venture into underworlds,’ real or imaginary, as their classical predecessors (2008: 150). In his article on filmic \textit{katabasis}, this writer alludes to a series of films – from the obvious katabatic nature of Vietnam films to \textit{E.T.} or \textit{Cold Mountain} – that contain a katabatic narrative.
taking part as Picard in another more constructive view of katabasis in Star Trek: The Next Generation. While Picard’s character mindset, like Ulysses’ in Dante Alighieri’s Divine Comedy – see Canto 26 – equals the enthusiasm of the Renaissance traveller, this works in opposition to Macbeth’s tragic demise. Yet, Ulysses’ speech in Dante’s poem reveals that katabatic journeys are also exciting adventures toward the unknown. Does Macbeth’s smile constitute an indicator of anything remotely akin to an exciting adventure? Maybe even redemption?

As Goold declares, he has been keen on borrowing many resources from popular films and other films that may not be so well known to the viewer. Yet, as ex-director of the Headlong Company, his combined geeky and populist persona – as I referred to in section 3.4.3. – has been projected into a dual commitment to both high culture and popular culture (Trueman 2014a). Thus, while re-telling Macbeth through a clear paraphrasing of Dante’s Divine Comedy, he employs several Hollywood and Asian horror devices.

As I have been stating, the pleasure derived from these films lies within the collision, slippage and acceptance of difference between different film genres and recording modes. If, as I argued in Chapter Three, the most appealing and empowering element in Doran’s Macbeth was that the DoP irritated theatricality through cinéma vérité, Goold’s exploiting of the site-specificity at the Abbey follows suit with Doran’s production. Nevertheless, Goold’s world-picture system delves on the relationship between the katabatic film frame and references to popular culture. This is done without reducing theatre language to zero degree. Thus, this Macbeth is turned into a true dialogical narrative reaching the quality of a nostalgia film.

In this chapter, I am going to argue that Goold’s Macbeth has been translated from the theatre stage to the television screen as a filmic katabatic narrative. As Falconer says, drawing from Bakhtin, katabasis works as a chronotope (2007: 42). With chronotope, I am referring to the elements that constitute a given genre speech and that are related to a specific time and place. Nevertheless, following

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202 When he directed Lucy Prebble’s Enron, Goold put several velociraptors on stage to eat away the company’s debt. The actual dinosaurs appear on stage and they are given the documents so they feed on them. To this, he added a light saber dance in the Star Wars fashion. Also, he directed Anne Washburn’s Mr Burns: A Post-Electric Play, a play committed to the oral popular tradition derived from The Simpsons that re-uses the family’s narrative in order to frame ‘the wake of a massive nuclear fallout in America’ (Trueman 2014a). In addition to this, he has directed his own adaptation of Dr. Faustus with a text partly rewritten in contemporary terms. In this adaptation, the Chapman Brothers are art-dealers kneeling before the Ghost of their idol Francisco de Goya. In 2015, Goold gave a step forward toward film and directed his first Hollywood feature: True Story (2015). In it, he deals with the tribulations of a failed journalist who wanted to surmount the skies of the press media.
Falconer’s view on the chronotope of Hell (ibid: 6), I am going to analyze the film as a versatile and multi-faceted katabatic narrative. Thus, I expect to prove the muscularity of this narrative in association with different genre speeches: J-horror and slasher horror.

To develop this chapter, I am going to start by exploring our modern conceptions of katabasis in fiction relying on Falconer’s work. The katabatic features in the film will be analyzed in relation to the film genres that are interconnected with the katabatic narrative. In the next section, I will refer to the site-specificity of Welbeck Abbey. I will deal with how the architecture of the location has been fitting for the deconstruction of the original stage production into a richly visualized filmscape. To continue, I will describe how the very first sequence suffices to depict the katabatic Gestalten of the film. To continue, in the next section I will be dealing with the treatment of the Witches in the production. Afterwards, I will be tackling the social world Goold establishes in the play and how it is configured in filmic terms. Following this, I will be studying how the characters of Lady Macbeth and Macbeth are portrayed as demonic Others. The last section is going to focus on the narrative twists taking place in the ballroom, which remains the theatrical section per excellence in this hybrid film.

6.2. Theoretical Framework: Katabatic Narrative and Film Genre

6.2.1. Katabatic Narratives: Falconer and Bakhtin

To carry out this analysis, as I earlier suggested, I am going to rely on Falconer’s work on contemporary katabasis. Falconer acknowledges the existence of Hell in collective popular mythologies. Even for the secular imagination, as Falconer argues, the terrifying experience of Hell has survived through the centuries. Following this reasoning, relying on Bakhtin’s The Dialogical Imagination, Falconer presents the features of the katabatic chronotope (2007: 43; see footnote 202).

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Falconer defines the generic features of Hell as follows (2007: 43): ‘1. a person lost in a wood, labyrinth or trackless ocean; 2. a guide from the other world sent to recover the person lost; 3. a series of initiatory rites; 4. the discovery of a talisman such as Virgil’s famous Golden bough; 5. a threshold crossing, often through some gateway inscribed with an apotropaic message (for example, Dante’s ‘Abandon hope’); 6. a river crossing, usually in a leaky or damaged boat; 7. flocks of damned souls crowding the shore like birds or leaves; 8. a bad-tempered ferryman; 9. monsters and demons that flagrantly hybridize classical and Judeo-Christian iconography (as in the opening and closing scenes of Thomas Kyd’s The Spanish Tragedy (1585-87); 10. a Lethean lake of forgetfulness; 11. regions of Hell/Hades subdivided into circles or compartments by different kinds of threshold boundaries; 12. fiery and frozen zones; 13. a series of graded punishments increasing in severity as the traveller descends lower; 14. distortions of time (such as accelerations, mythic arrest of time, or regression to primal scenes, traumatic repetitions, or schizophrenic split or multiplied realities); 15. distortions of space (such as the telescoping of distances, compression and contraction, or extreme changes in gravitational fields); 16. a graded series of tests that the traveller must overcome, culminating in an encounter with the demonic Other (usually Dis/Hades, Satan or some
Beyond this, these journeys constitute ‘the transformative passage, the destruction and rebirth of the self through an encounter with the absolute Other’ (ibid: 1).

If Doran’s *Macbeth* was rightly approached as fly-on-the-wall war documentary, the savage 11-S attacks and the impact of the geopolitical conflicts in the Middle East called for a katabatic treatment of Goold’s political approach to the play. In addition, the pseudo-Soviet totalitarian state where Shakespeare’s Scotland is re-contextualized also invokes an injunction that calls for a recuperation of justice and wholeness in the present times regarding the past inherited from the past Nazi camps and Stalin’s purges. If, following Falconer, hell is a place to dialogue with our collective and individual specters, the injunction proposed by the film consists of thinking about how this postmodern palimpsest helps thinking about how the Other is envisaged in the current times.\(^{204}\) In this light, as Falconer confirms, after World War Two, Hell is not just a personal experience but also one that brings the past in contact with the present and, at the same time, bridges the present and the future (2007: 29). In this way, Goold’s film generates a Derridean, Freudian and Marxist postmodern world picture system in the form of a collective nightmare that bridges our past with our present. These are, at the same time, linked to popular genre-based conceptions on monstrous Others.\(^{205}\) However, neither will the katabatic

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204 ‘Injunction’ is a term used by Derrida, who refers to the need to impose a certain junction to elements that are out of joint. In his work, *Spectres of Marx*, Derrida alludes to Hamlet’s awareness that the time is ‘out of joint’ and the need to restore the order back. Roughly speaking, Derrida invokes Hamlet’s Ghost as a metaphor of the need to speak to the Ghosts of the European fin-de-siècle. To finally learn to live, so Derrida argues, it is necessary to speak to and with the Ghost. In Goold’s film, the ‘ghosts’ are, of course, the images and pictures of European totalitarianism and warfare. Considering that contemporary radical politics and worldwide unprecedented polarizations threaten the foundations of democracy, I find it interesting to read this film as symptom of the urgent need to revise many preconceptions that have employed the Ghost of Communism, as Derrida refers to, as a pretext to impose the Neo-capitalist and neoliberal as a panacea against the scars of misapplied Marxism. In this respect, if ‘injunction’ means ‘putting things back together’ – although Marx himself would have been conscious of their disparity -, the film invokes the need to dialogue with the past and heal past wounds (2012). From this, it follows that many misconceptions need to be revised too. In Chapter Eight, I will indirectly tackle this need for revision as the symbols used to demonize the Soviet Other are employed by Goold as means to invoke the viewer’s horizons of expectations.

205 At a deeper human level, even our modern psyche, influenced by the Marxist and post-Marxist frame of horizons and the Freudian psychoanalytic digging on the unconscious, still recognizes the idea of the exploration of the Self in terms of a *descensus ad inferos*. In fact, as Falconer suggests, Freud and Marx, as inheritors of the nineteenth-century archaeological tradition, are representatives of their contemporaneous search for the truth underground as well as underneath human consciousness and social relationships. Whereas Marxist thought linked out *katabasis* to the destructive power of capitalism, Freudian thought related to a katabatic experience associated to the so-called death-drive. The combination of these two forces and the subsequent polarization of the Self against the absolute Other, and, by extension, the collectivity, prove that the katabatic experience cannot be interpreted as something absolute but disperse and totally dependent on different subjectivities (Falconer 2007). Goold – who has admitted being interested in psychoanalysis (Trueman 2014) –, brings up this in metaphorical terms in his production of *Richard III* at the Almeida Theatre. Before the show begins, the spectators
encounter with the absolute Other lead to definite results nor will the encounter with the Other be always undesirable. As Falconer says, as she refers to Levi’s *If This Is a Man*, the katabatic experience can also be used to analyze the potential good in human beings. In line with this idea, Falconer considers whether Hell needs to be taken as an ‘ontology’ or as a Derridean ‘hauntology’ (ibid: 34). In other words, is Hell a place where human beings become whole or is it a place where identity is unmade? As I said at the beginning, where is Goold’s *katabasis* leading us to?

6.2.2. Film Genre: J-Horror and Slasher Horror

As I have already stated, Goold’s cinematic approach is consistently reliant on the semantics of mainstream film genres. Therefore, my analysis needs to be reinforced with key concepts related to film genre theory. As Keith Grant says, ‘genre movies are those commercial feature films which, through repetition and variation, tell familiar stories with familiar characters in familiar situations’ (2011: 1). Although thinkers like Matthew Arnold and those who in the 1930s and 1940s run the Frankfurt School regarded generic formulas as repetitive and conducive to a false consciousness, the conventions of film genre helped creating a shared stock of conventions and expectations. These, following Tudor, were assumed by a collectivity in a time in which the different cultural groups in the United States needed some common stock of myths to build up a sense of community (1973: 139). In this way, constellations of viewers were arranged around specific genres that had their own fan communities. Genres are, as Staiger says, recognized, by social convention (2000: 186-187). Also, they can be recognized through narrative structures. These conventions and structures can be fulfilled, played with, parodied or rejected. The degree to which the auteur owns these conventions and structures constitutes his originality (Ed Buscombe 2003; Altman 1999; Tudor 1973). Since the 1970s, as Collins says, Hollywood films have been hybridized film genres. As he continues, popular films demonstrate that contemporary culture is not uniform since they foreground the differences in style and differences in cultures in our larger civilization landscape (1989: 111). Yet, there are elements that slasher horror and J-horror have in

see a group of archaeologists digging inside a big hole in the middle of the stage. From this place, they extract bones that feature King Richard’s spinal curvature alluding to the recent research on Richard III’s grave carried out by Leicester University in Grey Friars. Goold is, doubtless, invoking the fracture of England in this production at the time in which the United Kingdom voted in favor of leaving the European Union.

206 Despite this, as Staiger has argued, generic hybridity has been present in cinema much earlier than in the 1970s. Following this, Hollywood films have never been pure (2003: 185).
common. For a start, slasher horror films are characterized by their appeal to human emotion rather than
to cognition or narrative content (Keith Grant 2011: 23). Unsurprisingly, J-horror has found an abundant
readership and viewership at the other side of the Pacific. Also, cheap slasher horror has, since the
1970s, brought up an amount of fascination to mainstream cinema viewers. Secondly, both genres may
be considered as progressive in the sense that they denounce the capitalist relativism and patriarchal
dogmatism surrounding their cultures respectively. Therefore, we can rightfully argue that Goold
appeals to a large audience’s horizons of expectations and that he is certainly using popular culture
resources, which, at the same time, are relevant chronotopes to explore human katabasis.

Roughly speaking, J-horror has been well marketed through the USA and Europe and its ghostly
narratives, pale-faced women and video-based murders are widely familiar. The syncretic merging of
Buddhist and Shinto beliefs in Japanese culture has derived into the emergence of a mythology in which
dead characters can inhabit multiple hells and enter the afterlife whenever they feel that something has
not been fulfilled. Goold’s Witches – and, to some extent, Lady Macbeth – are partly characterized as
Yuurei, i.e. ghostly creatures who, before leaving the world, need to fulfill some mission such as
revenging on whoever killed them. Inevitably springing from the Japanese patriarchal and enslaving
society, Yuurei have been generally portrayed as revengeful women. Before resting, these feminine
characters only focus on the mission they need to fulfill. As Macbeth arguably does in Goold’s film, the
victims harassed by Yuurei tend to take their own life because they cannot stand the presence of these
tormenting spirits. Our film plays with the J-horror convention that advanced technology does not help
human beings escaping ghostly revenge. In fact, how technology is presented determines the katabatic
character of the narrative, as all the facilities in Goold’s vision of Hell are rusty, old, decaying and
rotten. The pessimistic mechanical representation of Goold’s Hell does not encourage optimism about
technology. This universe connects different Underworld levels through a lift. In contrast to J-horror,
the more rationalistic and logical American slasher horror focuses more on action and specificity,
whereas the appeal of J-horror has more to do with what it understates. Also, whereas American horror
tends to end up with the extermination of the monstrous Other, J-horror does not leave the impression
that this monster has left the community at all. As for the slasher creature, it can be a woman, a working-
class fellow or some marginal type with special powers that escape human understanding. Additionally,
the slasher anti-heroes of the 1970s and 1980s like Freddy Krueger or Jason demonstrate that the
capitalist civilization has not succeeded in bringing peace and security to the middle-class capitalist self-
absorbed Western world. As Robin Wood says, the subject-matter of horror tends to be the
acknowledgment of what is repressed and oppressed in our civilization. Thus, the object of oppression
and repression comes in the form of the Other as a deviating life form (1979: 9-11). In this specific production, the slasher horror Other is mainly portrayed by the Porter (Patrick Nollan). Nollan plays this character in a way that seems to show that Goold, arguably Branagh’s follower, is borrowing many of Doran’s ideas and reconceiving them for his own production. What makes the difference between the Porter and the Witches – the J-horror Other – is that he can be killed and destroyed and they are part of the supernatural Freudian and post-Marxist nightmare we inhabit (See @_pruett 2011; Woods 1979).

6.3. A Katabatic Setting: Welbeck Abbey

According to Pope Benedict XVI, Hell is not a literal place. Also, the Catholic Church denies the existence of Hell’s physical existence. Nevertheless, as Falconer affirms,

> the chaotic spaces of the Catholic Baroque inferno still provide the dominant images of Hell in our time, in factual as well as fictional accounts of ghettos, war camps, prisons, hospitals, undergrounds, mines and other spaces of entrapment. (2007: 14)

This seems to describe Goold’s hell as some of the areas at the Abbey have been arranged as hospital facilities. However, the stratified setting and its filmic arrangement have been based on hell as a physical space in Dante’s and Botticelli’s fashion.207 His conception features different rooms with sinks and pipelines as well as a network of interlocked corridors. These rooms and the elements within them are united by a rusty lift that serves as connecting vehicle for the different underworld strata.

Anthony Ward’s original sets mainly consisted of a ‘white-tiled mixture of abattoir and hospital ward with its own doublegrilled lift’ (Billington 2007). This basic setting gave way to different indices and stage icons – screenings, physical theatre devices, etc. – that completed the stage performance. Happily, when the Illuminations Media team found Welbeck Abbey, it immediately caught Goold’s interest. With this premise in mind, he was also interested in having Sam McCurdy as DoP as he had experience with slasher horror movies.

Welbeck Abbey had a history of its own that would fulfill the team’s wishes to obtain more visual richness than what a traditional studio would have afforded. Founded in 1140 as a religious site, Welbeck Abbey has belonged to the aristocratic Cavendish family. In fact, the building nineteenth

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207 To fully appreciate the visual impact of Dante’s topographical views of Hell, it is interesting to look at Botticelli’s representation. As Parker argues, the geographical character of Botticelli’s hell is fully developed in ways only hinted at by Dante (2013: 93, 97).
century refurbishing was commissioned by William John Cavendish Fifth Earl of Portland. Amongst the reforms carried out by the Earl, Leonard Jack describes the particularly notorious network of tunnels that branch out below the main floor. Such network certainly helped inspiring Goold’s deconstruction of Ward’s sets. Referring to the tunnels, as Jack says, they are (quoted from “Welbeck Abbey History”):

Lighted by both natural light and by gas. The light is admitted from above through circles of plate glass, which are placed in round frames. Appearing at intervals of about every ten yards amongst the grass, these circular arrangements would puzzle any person who was not [informed about] the secret (…) Where the tunnel crosses a road, light is most ingeniously admitted from the side.208

Thus, the environment suggests a crypt receiving light beams from above in a landscape traversed by bleak entrances and exits. Moreover, the chiaroscuros produced by the windows and the interior shadows must have seemed, I would suggest, the embodiment of the confluences of the ‘foul’ and the ‘fair’ in the playtext. This gothic alternation of lights and darkness and the configuration of tunnels must have captured Goold’s imagination and inspired his own frame of horror horizons. In many ways, does it not resemble the perfect lightning plan for a massive theatre stage with many exits and entrances?

The underground section – which, by the way, apart from commissioned, was designed by the Earl of Portland himself – inspired a meaningful setting for the film: the ballroom. This is the most eminently theatrical area in the production as it offers the atmosphere desired to keep it as a theatre play with a heavy injection of film language. As the two pictures below show, the ballroom was arranged and illuminated to convey the desired theatrical atmosphere. As I will later discuss, hybridity in this postmodern nostalgia filmic piece is influenced by the theatrical inflection provided by the scenes recorded at this ballroom. Whereas the ballroom seems to be a sort of primary metonymic space, other surrounding rooms and spaces work as film-inflected backstage areas. Constituting a main space of encounter between Macbeth and the Witches, it is the point of confluence of the different narrative strands in the film and, at the same time, permits a reinforcement of the theatrical values of the stage production. Rather than annihilating these values, the intrusion of this theatre language in the film reveals the potential of theatre on television when the frame transcends the limitations of the studio and when a certain location is given the filmic and theatrical inflection through lighting and camera performance.

208 See Jacks, L., Great Houses of Nottinghamshire, 1881. Quoted in “Welbeck Abbey History.”
6.4 Katabatic Beginning

Nel mezzo dil cammin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura
Ché la diritta via era smarrita.

These are the celebrated lines with which Dante’s Divine Comedy poem begins. The film conjures up these lines in visual terms. Rather than opening with a traditional view of the stage, the viewer perceives footage featuring war scenes from the mezzo of the twentieth century. Likewise, the film begins in media res, in the middle of warfare and mass killing. These war extracts show the time in which the old Europe reached its middle-age crisis and discovered itself on the road to collective katabasis: death, war, fire, trains exploiting, a beach taken by soldiers, powder and smoke – see figures 8, 10, 11 and 13 below –.

The first thing we perceive is the grainy quality of the image and the Cyrillic letters featuring the opening title: MACBETH. Instantly, the film uses black-and-white footage featuring the fragmentary qualities of a scanty and archaeological filmic reconstruction. In this manner, the film instantly drives the viewer to the depths of what I earlier summed up as the Marxist and Freudian views on katabasis. Thus, Goold digs into our past by way of rescuing bits and scraps of old films from an

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209 Picture taken from Richard Moss (2011). The image shows the ballroom before being refurbished for the shooting.

210 Picture taken from Ann Winston Thym.

211 Goold and Wyver admit having used the archive footage at the beginning of the film.
abandoned archive cellar. Shards and scraps of footage are stuck up together with various pieces of what looks like a hospital scene as the Witches carry the body of a man – the Bloody Sergeant (Hywell John) – whose bloody hand hangs out of the stretcher and is perceived in close-up – see figure 7 below. Goold’s filmic statement is clear: He patches up a piece of recorded theatre with bits and shards of film archive material.
In various ways, Goold’s beginning blurs the boundaries between fiction and reality. Firstly, the supernatural is invoked in J-horror terms. As this genre often does, Goold uses distorted and terrifying video images that inform the viewer of his doom, except that, in this case, doom is past and collective. Likewise, the archive footage blurs the fourth wall reflecting the juxtaposition between contemporary war and terrorism and our immediate past, imitating Dante’s encounters with the real world in Hell. In this way, also following Baudrillardian premises I established in Chapter Three, the dissimulation of theatre catches the audience’s attention and challenges their preconceptions on recorded theatre.\footnote{Yet, curiously, the impact of bombings, fire, and explosion bring the viewer back to the immediate theatrical origins of the play, which, according to the text, began with ‘thunder and lightning’ as well as a state of war. The original circumstances were...}{\textsuperscript{212}}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{212} Figures 6-14 are screen captions from the DVD edition of \textit{Macbeth} (2010).}
When the montage concludes, the viewer is taken straight into the underworld. A parallel sequence of shots creates the impression that there is a world outside and an underworld inhabited by Duncan and his followers. The outside explosions also confirm this idea as the ceiling shakes and seems about to collapse. For all that, the already weak protective whole inhabited by Duncan and his generals is not safer than the overworld. The underworld corridors are organized like a hospital where the Witches are nurses and surgically intervene the Bleeding Sergeant’s wounds – see figures 14 and 15 above –. This surgery immediately conjures up the conventions of slasher horror. Our worst fears are confirmed as soon as the King and his followers leave the wounded man and the Witches disconnect his pacemaker. When the machine stops beeping, they remove the sergeant’s heart from his chest. According to Goold, this is precisely what he fears: finding death in the place where one should find repose and security.

Although the Witches are featured with a J-horror aura, they are truly aggressive and embody the qualities of the brutal monsters of slasher horror too. They are infuriated female Others that desire to cut men’s genitalia off, following Adelman’s reading of the Witches in Macbeth. In fact, the Witches will always appear using cutting tools. Firstly, we have seen them as they operate the Sergeant. Secondly, they hold knives and saws as they prepare for Macbeth’s arrival. Then, as we see them work in the kitchen in preparation for Duncan’s feast, they handle all sorts of cutlery while throwing their feline gazes onto the train of parading generals.

Thus far, we have traced the narrative paths that from the very beginning conjugate the hypertexts of katabatic narrative, J-horror and slasher. However, we should also pay attention to how the first convention pointed out by Falconer – a protagonist lost in the woods – is included too.

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214 As Pierre Kapitaniac says, horror film directors have always felt fascination for horror hospitals. In this film this idea is framed through the ‘shades of green’ in the ‘long hospital corridors,’ that are reminiscent of slasher horror examples like A Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors (1987). In that film hell flames are revealed beneath a hospitalized teenager’s bed (2013: 65).

215 See “Director’s and Producer’s Commentaries” (2010).


217 See footnote 202.
the parallel sequences – war footage and hospital scene – continue, some inserts literally present Macbeth and Banquo (Martin Turner) walking through the woods – see figures 9 and 12 above –, the same woods through which, not much later, Malcom and the Anglo-Scottish forces will assault Macbeth. This shot directly links Goold’s narrative with Dante’s poetic strength, the more so as Banquo and Macbeth walk in slow motion while Konstantin Simonov’s Wagnerian leitmotif enhances the sense of tragic doom affecting these two rugged soldiers walking through a real ‘selva escura.’

218 Dante’s first lines allude to the speaker as reaching his middle age crisis. It is not an accident that Macbeth and Banquo in this film are well past their fifties. As Goold confirms, he wanted to show Macbeth finding ambition ‘late in life’.

Also, not accidentally, this film is a *katabasis* for both Macbeth and Banquo. Banquo is not less ambitious than Macbeth and, very cleverly, Goold portrays him as an aristocratic type slightly superior to Macbeth in status – as their differences in uniform and relationship with King Duncan show – so that their rivalry is reinforced on the grounds of class. As the story progresses, Banquo and Macbeth will see each other as the fearful monstrous Other. Whereas Banquo sees Macbeth as a monstrous upstart, Macbeth’s drive beats for the meritocratic furious eagerness to reach power with his own hands. However, their tragic journey begins as they first encounter the Witches.

6.5. The Witches

As opposed to the damned souls in Hell, the Witches are in almost total control of this universe. Although they do not altogether own it, they understand the mechanism of Hell and play within the coordinates that their powers allow them. Such powers are clearly based on the manipulation of dead tissue and on the reanimating of dead bodies, as we see can see in their handling of the Sergeant’s heart. With this organ, they pump a mannequin into life.

220 Furthermore, they engage in the ritual mixture of

218 The main musical theme is a musicalized version of the Russian poem *Wait for me*. Simonov’s poem, written in 1941 was addressed to Valentina Serova, and evokes the 20 million Russian soldiers who died in World War II. The poem became so popular that soldiers used to copy lines from the poem to the letters they sent to their girlfriends when they were at war. The horrors and anguish and sense of loss of war brings upon the film contemporary concerns on Vietnam, World War II and the soldiers who gave up their lives in the current Eastern wars. It also alludes to Macbeth’s and his turbulent relationship with Lady Macbeth, who waits for him while he is at war. A translation to English is available in [http://www.pskovgo.narod.ru/poems/wait.htm](http://www.pskovgo.narod.ru/poems/wait.htm).


220 As Garry Wills writes, the Witches in Jacobean times were battlefield body snatchers (1995: 38).
rap singing and contemporary dance giving life to the mannequin as well as reanimating the dead bodies in the campaign hospital where Macbeth meets them.221

This power of reanimation of dead bodies invokes the element of terror associated to technology in J-horror as the more primitive Frankenstein films. Eric White perceives in ‘ubiquitous technological meditation’ the invasion of ‘posthuman otherness’ that alters life as we know it (2005: 41). As Goold presents them, the technological trope does not only illustrate the Witches’ power to reanimate the Sergeant’s body as well as other people killed in battle. Also, they manage to recreate the simulacrum of Banquo’s return from the dead in the banquet scene and in Macbeth’s visit. If their command of technology visualizes their victims’ internal horrors, Goold’s empowering of the Witches turns them into a living metaphor of the terrifying ‘media-saturated environment’ that Chika Kinoshita finds predominant in the genre of J-horror (2009: 106).

On a different level, the Witches’ reanimation of Banquo informs Macbeth of his imminent death in the J-horror fashion. All in all, the Witches can conjure up a nightmare of images and dancing corpses who, in strictly visual terms, terrify and torture Macbeth’s mind. This feature associates the Witches with the legions of ‘monsters and demons’ that, according to Falconer, inhabit the katabatic narrative.222 What Goold’s contribution brings is the fact that the Witches are editors, art-workers and filmmakers of sorts within this palimpsest of images. As Freudian or Marxian archaeological diggers, they extend the metaphor of hell as divided into strata as they re-interpret and dissect the hell of the mind through bits of film and various simulacra.

Apart from filmmakers and artisans in this underworld, the Witches are also stage-managers of Macbeth’s arrival and seem to be in perfect control of the timing and the staging of such arrival. In a perfect premiere, they calculate the warrior’s entrance time as he comes down in the lift. Their descensus ad inferos in the lift occurs in a sequence of parallel shots while the Witches prepare the mannequin’s animation framed with a series of musical psychedelic shots. As they rap their chant (1.3.30-35) at the backstage hospital corridors, the mannequin is given life. Also, it is given a pair of glasses that depicts his identity. However, what identity can a pumping heart and two glasses give? The mannequin is a piece of metal and a piece of flesh knitted by tubes and valves. If the Witches show the future to Macbeth, the mannequin announces the arrival of the victim of Late capitalism: the alienated man.

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221 With this, amongst other elements in the film, Goold complies with the ‘initiatory rites’ for Macbeth’s coming.

222 This is the ninth feature recognized by Falconer (2007: 43).
Defined by his clothes, glasses, objects, and functions, this mannequin is a clockwork orange with a pumping heart, held together with plastic valves, an artificial demi-human being.

Once Banquo and Macbeth reach the basement, a POV shot leads the viewer’s gaze through a dark passage. Rather than the ‘Abandon hope’ inscription, what the camera reveals is a massive nothingness of darkness more visually informative than any inscription would have been. The music that accompanies Banquo and Macbeth’s passage through the dark tunnel toward the ballroom ominously anticipates a sudden twist in the characters’ fortunes. Yet, the darkness and narrowness of the tunnel are invaded by light as they access the ballroom, revealed in a wide shot featuring the Nurses and the mannequin. The image recalls a cathedral entrance harbouring three equivocal saintly Maries: the Witches as mediators between the supernatural world and mankind. It seems, thus, that Banquo and Macbeth are about to take part in an initiatory rite that welcomes them to the congregation of hell.

The first test Macbeth needs to face comes with the interpretation of visual signs arranged by the misleading Nurses. As they disappear, and after Ross (Tim Treloar) and Angus (Bill Nash) arrive with the news of Cawdor’s treason and replacement, Macbeth is left alone to interpret the meaning of the mannequin abandoned by the Witches. Despite the mannequin’s alienating shape, Macbeth mistakes it with a token that, like Aeneas’ Golden Bough, seems to inform him about a time of plenty. Stewart pins up his medal – reflecting his appointment as Cawdor – as he proudly looks at the mannequin. Yet, what can we make out of this cipher left there for Macbeth? At one level, the mannequin invokes Protestant reservations against the visual divine representations that so much provoked the often-farcical impetus shown by the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Macbeth’s reading of the mannequin aligns the hero with a naive soldier who, like Renaissance Catholics, trusted roods, wet bloody napkins, relics, saints’ hair, and other different tokens. In this manner, the Nurses employ their ability for bizarre visual craft to guide Macbeth in the test awaiting him in the underworld. Yet, whatever he reads in the visual representation of the heart-pumping mannequin is something left unexplained to us.

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223 It is perhaps interesting at this moment to pay attention to Jack’s description of this hall: ‘Closely adjoining the library is a subterranean of magnificent proportions into which the light of heaven is admitted by about forty large octagonal sun lights placed in rows in the vast ceiling. It was suggested that the Duke [of Portland] meant this for a church, but there is nothing ecclesiastical in its appearances. No, it is not a church. It looks more like the very antithesis of a church – a ballroom, and what a ball room would it make!’ (See “Welbeck Abbey History”).

224 As Maurice Hunt explains in his article, it is generally accepted that, in Shakespeare’s times, Protestants privileged the spoken word and Catholics privileged icons, visual representation and miracle-playing. As an example of this, Hunt writes about fraudulent staged apparitions of Christ mounted through mechanical figures who moved, nodded and even touched naive Church-goers in the Jacobean period (2005: 386-390).
6.6. Hell as a Social World

Goold’s Hell functions as a place for socialization where supernatural and natural agents follow certain rules, although these may not be discernible for everyone. Clearly modeled on Foucault’s Panoptico, the social world in this film is not bereft of power relations. Duncan’s Politburo of generals constitute the highest rank in the Scottish hierarchy, where Duncan (Paul Shelley) is a rugged military type that, like Henry Bolingbroke, very likely took power by force rather than by right or election. On the other hand, Macbeth is clearly marked as a useful thuggish Other by his fellow generals as his coarse looks render him as belonging to a different statusphere. This marking of Macbeth as inferior in rank truly turns him into the Marlovian overreacher that so much has captured Goold’s imagination in fiction.\(^{225}\) Macbeth has been promoted through personal merits and claims a higher position. Then, it is not an accident that, as soon as Malcom’s nomination is announced, Stewart leaves Duncan’s room and a low angle shot presents him as a darkened resentful member of the rank-and-file hungering for more. Immediately after this shot, the lift is shown and thus the idea of climbing, soaring and pursuing higher ends is materialized.

This climbing desire in Macbeth is, doubtless, well detected by some of his comrades. Duncan clearly shows little regard for Macbeth, although he rewards him to keep him partly satisfied. As soon as Banquo is named Prince of Cumberland, a deep shot shows the generals cheering up while Macbeth’s solitary figure is left in the background. His desire to rise above his station is repulsive to Banquo, who observes Macbeth’s Staliniesque banner with contempt and horror in Act Three. This proves that, for Banquo and others, Macbeth has been nothing but the Other, a monstrous figure useful for the regime but that was not at all invited to take the lion’s share.\(^{226}\) Yet, as soon as Banquo challenges Macbeth’s authority – by ripping an intercom from the wall –, he also becomes the Other as well as Macbeth.

Nevertheless, a most interesting Other in the film is the Porter, who constitutes a vagrant figure who neither accepts nor understands society. His presence here is extended to limits previously unseen in a \textit{Macbeth} film. This is possible when Macbeth recruits the Porter to be one of his high generals in the new regime. However, this Porter used to be precisely a man with all the features of a slasher

\(^{225}\) See Trueman (2014).

\(^{226}\) Considering that Macbeth is consistently based on the historical figure of Stalin, the contempt with which Duncan and Banquo treat Macbeth amounts to reshape the ethnic prejudice felt by the Politburo towards the savage Georgian from the mountains (See Robert Service 2004).
monster. According to Carol J. Clover, slasher monsters are roughly human types inhabiting or frequenting underground spaces (1987: 196-197). Patrick Nollan’s characterization of the Porter fits this type. He inhabits some little dark room with rotten food and booze bottles scattered around the place with the TV screen always on. This man is a pure caricature and a deformation of Evil. Lowly individuals like this one increase the army of Others that construct the Axis of Evil represented by Macbeth’s Kingdom. The Porter’s receding hair and coarse looks make him look like a younger son of Stewart, perhaps a physicalizing of how Banquo and the Politburo have been seeing Macbeth: a resentful, ambitious and dangerous yahoo.

On a different level, the Porter is cinematically framed as a mainstream horror monster. He laughs like the Joker as he goes through the dark corridor to open the door. His speech, linked with the Gunpowder anxieties, is accompanied by the darkness of the tunnel in a ghostly invocation of what Guy Fawkes’s katabasis must have been. Thus, Goold does not only invoke the specters of the twentieth first century, but also those of the Gunpowder Plot. In addition, the Porter is a potential child molester who participates in a little slasher-within-the-film that Goold makes of the Macduff’s massacre. Previously, the Porter contemptuously receives Macduff accompanied by his wife (Suzanne Burden) and his three children (Hugo Docking, Lillian Dummer and Madeleine Dummer), who behave like slasher horror children. Like slasher horror kids, Macduff’s son and daughter perceive more in this world than adults do, or, perhaps, adults pretend not to perceive what is going on around them. This is particularly striking as we can see that the Porter urinates in the sink when speaking to Macduff. Then he, threateningly and obscenely, approaches the kids, who, instinctively, seek to protect themselves under their father’s wing. As he arrives to the table where the Macduffs wait for Macbeth, the Porter more than suggestively moves his pelvis towards the kids in a clear challenge to Macduff’s rank and authority. However, despite his perfect awareness of the Porter’s excesses, Macduff remains calmed. Considering that Macduff inhabits a violent military world, why he does not grab him by the neck seems as mysterious as the way in which parents in the Freddy Krueger films do not react either. However, slasher horror conventions help pointing out at the frequency with which adults ignore the Other. They fear that by paying much attention to the presence of the monstrous Other, many hidden and buried injustices for which they might be impeached will be uncovered.

In fact, Lady Macduff plays her husband’s game as she takes over Lennox’s ‘The night has been unruly…’ speech (2.3.49-56). She does it to find some comfortable conversation with Macbeth after the disagreeable scene with the Porter. She partly delivers the speech in inverted commas quoting her sulking daughter, who must have been trying to interpret the signs made by the thunder and the storm,
and that, at present, tries to keep on reading while ignoring her mother’s pontificating mock. Macduff’s
daughter knows exactly what happens and she would have been the perfect ‘Final Girl’ had she not been
dispatched by Macbeth’s thugs.

At the killing of the Macduff’s family, the smiley self-satisfied Porter is the first murderer who
appears, carrying a saw, enjoying the prospect of raping and cutting the kids down to pieces. From
behind, Macbeth himself comes, machete in hand, to personally give the family ‘to th’edge of the sword’
(4.2.150). To continue, the scene is effective in how it suggests rather than shows as the actual killing
is not featured. The scene cuts to a montage sequence of parallel shots in which Goold quotes
Hitchcock’s POV shot in *Psycho* as Ross enters the shower room and discovers a pool mixed with blood
and water. In the meantime, somebody plays the piano in an English concert hall. A little foot and a
broken toy are revealed as indications of the massacre and Ross cannot help collapsing and crying with
despair as the piano concert continues.

As Noel Carroll says, slasher films from the 2000s onwards would have normally assured the
re-establishment of normalcy and the saving of the family once the monster is destroyed (2005: 199).
Per contra, Goold prefers the nihilism of the *Saw* films or, if we prefer it, a more classical slasher way
of employing this film genre. Rather than the advanced technological ways of massive killing, Macbeth,
like the slasher monster – a role he gladly joins in with the Porter – rather uses the rudimentary weaponry
he has seen in the Witches’ hands. In fact, through physical and personal violence, Macbeth starts
finding his own way through his katabatic journey.

### 6.7. Macbeth and Lady Macbeth as Demonic Other

All prejudices on Macbeth’s unnatural brutality are confirmed and fall short when he – as Welles
did in his own 1948 film and, more recently, Justin Kurzel has Michael Fassbender do (2015) – decides
to take part in the Macduff’s massacre. In this sense, husband and wife complete each other as few
Macbeth couples do. She is the resentful figure who wants to eliminate Duncan and share in her
husband’s ambition. No feminist justification for her behavior is offered by Goold if not to state that
Lady Macbeth does not need to be anything less than evil. As Stewart clarifies, this much younger Lady
Macbeth is also more aristocratic than the coarse soldier she marries. She has had a child from another
marriage and is a disappointed woman in a world dominated by Duncan’s Politburo. To prevent a
weakening of the character, one of the premises with which Goold and Fleetwood started working was
that she would be presented as a strong-colour type rather than an excessively multi-dimensional humanized wife.\textsuperscript{227}

Following this decision, McCurdy’s camera reveals her as an infernal creature, associated to the Witches in stance and exceeds them in make-up, from her very first apparition. Mulvey and Fiske have been writing about the way in which women are downplayed on the screen. However, if we oppose the dominant readings on screen women as devils or sexual objects, we can follow suit with Fiske’s reading on Madonna and how the star’s sexual persona serves to empower her against the male-dominant consciousness that has been objectifying women. Following this, Fleetwood is clearly devilish and she does not simply want, in her naivety, to sacrifice her femininity out of her misplaced love for her ambitious husband. She is actively resentful against Duncan’s Politburo of self-satisfied gorillas.\textsuperscript{228}

Thus, perhaps following Mulvey and Fiske – see section 3.2.2 –, Goold and Fleetwood’s bold statement seems to be: Yes, she is evil. And yes, she is what men fear in women. And yes, this is what she is going to be. Why should she be justified on any grounds, as if women were not capable of evil as well as men?\textsuperscript{229}

For a start, she comes into the film as she reads Macbeth’s letter in voice-over and we cannot see her face but her back and her body as she descends in the lift to a different room in Macbeth’s household. Her own journey to Hell begins when she reads Macbeth’s letter clearly inviting her to take part in the assassination. As soon as she reaches the bottom floor, the scissor gates open and the blurred focus acquires clearer exposition. The light shows Fleetwood’s towering and fiendish Lady Macbeth for the first time. Her features duplicate the female fiend in J-horror fiction – although Fleetwood’s features are considerably more appealing; see figures 16 and 17 below – fiction and maximizes what Robert Hyland regards as Jungian man’s fears on female monstrosity (2009: 205). In fact, she is conscious of her strength and plays with her own ‘bad girl’ mood as she sensuously lullabies lines to Macbeth – ‘hie thee hither’ (1.5.23) – when he is not present. This suggestive lullabying echoes Macbeth’s singing of the line ‘And thane of Cawdor’ (1.3.115) apparently addressed to Banquo but, unconsciously, addressed to Lady Macbeth. This uncanny musical repetition takes place again – ‘he is

\textsuperscript{227} See “Interview with Kate Fleetwood” in the DVD edition of \textit{Macbeth} (2010).

\textsuperscript{228} Stewart confirms this interpretative decision in “Interview with Patrick Stewart” (2010).

\textsuperscript{229} Personally, I find that this decision does not at all belittle nor minimize the character. Foregrounding Lady Macbeth’s resentment and fury from the very beginning does not at all eliminate the character’s complexity. Rather, it makes a compromise with the fact that a feminine character like her does not need to do evil things just for her husband. If her decisions are over-justified by constant references to the child or by excessive pinpointing at Lady Macbeth’s worship for her husband, in theatrical terms, this may ultimately lead to the character’s relative weakening.
about it’ (2.2.4) – when Lady Macbeth waits for Macbeth as she leans on the sink. There is no doubt that they enjoy their own games and their complicity, which is constantly played up vocally and physically.²³⁰

Yet, she plays her charm with other men too. When Duncan and his generals come into the kitchen, slightly dressed like Nigella Lawson, she is supervising the work carried out by the chefs and the servants – amongst which we can see the Sisters –.²³³ She laughs at Duncan’s jokes and, conscious of her feminine powers, is able to incense incensing her husband’s courage in the kitchen when he decides not to carry on with the business. Fleetwood’s stare in close-up proves her more than fit to toy with the devil in a way unlike other filmic Lady Macbeths.

Thus, it is worth stopping at scene 2.2, that takes place in an ambiguous intersection between the outside world and the Avernus where the play develops, a slippage area between the language of theatre and the genre-based impetus of the film. The wide shots present Macbeth and Lady Macbeth often as isolated characters in the immensity of this vast filmscape: a cloister. Through the columns, we can see the light of dawn coming as if showing them an alternative road to Paradise. This beautiful depiction of

²³⁰ Scene 1.5 is cut into two subscenes. As soon as Lady Macbeth finishes her invocation, we cut to the kitchen. Lady Macbeth appears cleaning the tiles as she waits for Macbeth’s arrival. As soon as he arrives, he noisily leaves his gun on the kitchen table. Lady Macbeth raises her arms as if caught by a policeman and, as she turns to her husband, reveals her naked body under a very light and open cleaning uniform. Then, Macbeth carries her in his arms towards another table, perhaps evoking the famous kitchen scene in The Postman Always Rings Twice.

²³¹ Image taken from Jürgen M. Brandtner (2014).

²³² Image taken from Mark Frey (2002-6).

²³³ Goold explains that Lawson is a model for Fleetwood’s characterization in the kitchen scenes (See Director’s and Producer’s Commentaries).
that sinister cloister sacrifices the vérité realism Doran uses in this scene and poetically re-asserts the crossing through a threshold in a katabatic narrative. In line with the previous association of the setting to a church, the sink in the middle of the corridor invokes a font where characters clean their damaged souls. In fact, Lady Macbeth and Macbeth both wash their hands respectively in this sink in expectation of redemption.

As he comes, Macbeth throws the bloody daggers on the font and, for a while, both characters hesitate on their decision to follow the heavenly or the hellish routes. When Lady Macbeth returns the daggers to Duncan’s bedchamber, she comes back all covered in blood. She has concluded a job that Macbeth has left half-finished. A close-up reveals her half-smile after having finished Duncan off; a half-smile she has used on her husband several times to persuade him.

Gradually, we discover how much courage is this Lady Macbeth capable of embodying. Very soon, she removes her Nigella Lawson disguise and threatens the men’s hegemonic power as she becomes Queen. In scene 2.3, and unambiguously, she does pretend the fainting after Duncan’s corpse is discovered. Nevertheless, in scene 3.1, she unashamedly displays her arrogance at Banquo when she rides a beautiful black horse after they return from a hunting trip. She looks back on Banquo clearly making the point that this is her feud as much as her husband’s. It is only when, in that same scene, she is removed from Macbeth’s side that we start discovering that her strength is a total flop.

Gradually, we discover that Lady Macbeth’s strength totally fades and she becomes a marginal figure in the film as she becomes Queen. In scene 3.2, she waits for Macbeth in her private chambers –

234 Screen caption from Macbeth (2010).
see figure 18 above –. The camera pans from the presentation of the imperial Eagle toward a mirror shot featuring her in an unbecoming red dress as a flowerpot to be publicly displayed and then disregarded. This type of mirror shot, as Scott Snyder says, conveys the self-absorbed narcissism of the *femme fatale* in noir (2001: 162). The second-rate quality of her previous act as a powerful female is underlined by the cheapness of her dress and her less notorious – and more humanizing - make-up in this scene.

When she opens the dressing table, she finds a little shoe that must have doubtless belonged to her late child. It becomes a prompt to her sudden realization that she is entrapped in a sort of tomb. She has become one of Dante’s condemned figures in Hell. This idea is emphasized by the claustrophobic features of this little room illuminated in red light and where black lattices separate Macbeth the egotistic self-absorbed tyrant from a disappointed and objectified Lady Macbeth, as if they were a sinister version of Pyramus and Thisbe. As he comes into the room he grabs her breast without a trace of sensuality and then he goes straightforward to his closet to check that his gun is still there. For a while he is about to become kinder as he dances a few steps with her and, again, sings ‘So shall I love / And so I pray be you’ (3.2.30). However, instantly Stewart gets rid of her embrace and makes progress in his male chauvinistic display of power. From being the lowly working-class apologetic man who accepted Duncan’s back patting, Macbeth has become the soaring testosterone-driven brutish Georgian who is becoming more rejuvenated and pleased with himself. The dreadful savage yaho quickly grows up to be the little dictator. Yet, for Lady Macbeth, her katabatic journey is becoming a self-discovery of her smallness and insignificance. Gradually, this couple of monstrous Others are separated and alienated from each other even in this katabatic world. Nowhere does Goold show the character’s dumbing down better than when a long shot features Macbeth grabbing Lady Macbeth by the hand and pulling her as if she were some prop or an inflatable human being when they leave the banquet.

### 6.8. Goold’s Hell as a Theatre of Horror

I would like to conclude this chapter by pointing at the powerful ritualistic and theatrical elements in the film. The previously mentioned ballroom does not just constitute a receptacle where several horror and other film references explode in a radical textual plurality. Also, it represents a series of turns and steps down in Macbeth’s progressive katabatic descent.

Of course, the lift is very often used to show how Macbeth and Lady Macbeth continue their *descensus ad inferos*. They take the lift to abandon the crime scene after having killed Duncan. After this, they take the lift again to attend the coronation banquet as a montage features many political
assassinations and the preparation of the feast. After this, Macbeth takes the lift right after he gives the order to assault Macduff’s castle. Then, Lady Macbeth uses it when she abandons the sink corridor where she had met Macbeth while they discussed what to do with the daggers. Before doing this, she expects, a shadow of what she was, to get some sympathy from the Doctor – by the way, played by Paul Shelley –, whose resemblance to Duncan seems to ignite more her feeling of guilt. As she tries to wash her hands in the sink, she burns them with bleach. From the taps, blood spouts instead of cleansing water. After this, she leaves the scene in the lift toward her ending.

Nevertheless, the key moments in this katabatic experience take place in the ballroom, the area displaying all the theatrical energy of the film, a theatre of cruelty where Macbeth’s fears are dramatically re-enacted. If Hell is a territory for punishment and torment, Macbeth receives his greatest torments in this room. In this film, the voices of the tortured ones constantly pervade the soundtrack in subtle tones, especially over scene 2.1, in which howls and cries of pain are heard. Are these tortured war prisoners? We have no reason to believe that the voices of the prisoners are being given just treatment. For Robert Miola, Shakespeare and Dante portrait real human beings who groan, sweat, regret their sins and, capable of wide operatic vocal register, curse the gods and Fortune alike (2014: xvii). Goold follows suit with this idea and rejoices in the vocal possibilities of the play to enhance them in film. These uses of the actors’ vocal power make a statement on the theatricality of the piece. If there is something that raises Stewart’s Macbeth about other filmic Macbeths is that he makes wide use of his vocal range within a theatrical space as well as in the intimate space provided by close-ups and mid-close-up shots. In line with Goold’s original interest in the Marlovian overreacher, Macbeth has the chance to transcend the intimacy of the Jacobean stage and fiercely declare his devilish enthusiasm in the Artaudian cruelty theatre energized in the ballroom. At the same time, this is the play where Stewart displays his physical and vocal power to the fullest.

When he visits the Witches for the second time at a campaign hospital, he urges them to inform about Banquo and his descendants. Then the Witches lead him back into the ballroom. Again, the spatial continuity in the film is distorted as suddenly we find ourselves in a totally different space, the metonymic area where Macbeth and Banquo met the Witches. Also, it is the same space where, in a previous scene, Banquo’s Ghost appeared to Macbeth in the middle of the banquet and where he had to suffer the tragic re-enactment of his traumatic past. The specters were not invoked but thrust upon him and that occurs again in the ballroom. Thus, the ballroom turns itself into a theatre of punishment where

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235 In the next two chapters, I will speak about this second montage more in detail.
the patient Macbeth needs to confront his fears in the same place where the traumatic experience – his initiatory ritualistic commitment to evil – began. Banquo’s Ghost re-appears in this scene and a series of replicas of Fleance parade and line up as they stare at the tyrant. As Goold followed slasher horror conventions, it made sense to show the Ghost to the audience and leave that part completely explicit. Thus, Banquo is, as I earlier suggested, turned into the monstrous Other as well as Macbeth. If Macbeth is a scourge to a corrupt Scotland, Banquo’s Ghost is the scourge to Macbeth’s guilty political Stalinist tyranny.

Nevertheless, the last scene shot in the ballroom amounts to the elevation of Macbeth to the category of a cosmic devil displaying all his bodily and vocal potential in the large space at the Welbeck Abbey. Following suit with Doran’s Macbeth, Goold introduces scenes that are eminently theatrical. However, where they both differ is in the width of the lens and the desire to be spectacular. It is doubtless that Goold’s approaches intend to visually capture the viewer’s imagination with massive outbursts of Hitlerian tyranny. A shot presents Macbeth’s Servant trembling as he carries a file with reports to inform him about the arrival of the English army. This POV shot leads into the room where Macbeth is preparing for battle. The room is, of course, the ballroom. The table has been placed back at the middle of the room and Macbeth’s banner has been displayed again. So far, Stewart’s Macbeth has been slow, calmed, thoughtful, capable of tremendous vocal authority and humorous spontaneity, dictatorial haughtiness and boisterous pettiness. At times, he has looked impressive in his military outfit and, at other times, he has been almost like Charlie Chaplin’s ridiculous little tyrant Adenoid Hynkel. Nevertheless, in the last scenes he becomes muscular and heroic like a raging bull.

Also, his isolation has increased as only two people remain at his side: The Servant and the Porter, who is prepared for battle. As Boika Sokolova emphasizes, McCurdy’s camera work depicts the character’s increasing isolation with the constant blurring of characters through soft focus and the alternation of close-up soliloquies recorded in medium shot (2013: 154, 156). These close-ups slowly build up Macbeth’s katabatic journey to a powerful combination of fury and quiet acceptance of his evil nature. As he delivers the ‘Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow…’ speech (5.5.18), he only needs one take after Lady Macbeth’s corpse has been brought to him by the Witches. They bring her on the same stretcher where the Bleeding Sergeant was brought at the beginning. Is she going to live again? For a moment, the black-haired she-devil who invades the viewer’s space and safety looks like a dead carcass covered with a white sheet. The speech is culminated with the inserts of battle scenes outside the Abbey, where Malcom’s soldiers carry their AK-47s and shoot over the enemies. Thus, here Goold invokes Derridean specters through Macbeth’s rather than through Hamlet’s mouth. It is not an accident
that Macbeth directly addresses the camera here. After the battle scenes finish, we return to Macbeth in close-up as he expects some response from the viewers. Whether the audience can respond to Macbeth or no, like the Yuurey fiends in J-horror, Macbeth invades the home of the viewer, who is suddenly trapped by the katabatic experiences of war reportage.

As he abandons Lady Macbeth, he decides to confront the enemies on his own. Then, this katabatic narrative also turns into an action film in which different shots feature groups of soldiers and individual characters searching for Macbeth. The different levels of hell and the configuration of the space resemble that of a video game where enemies need to capture the monstrous Other lurking under some corner in the screen. Macbeth and the Porter shoot at Malcom’s forces in one of the corridors. The Porter is hit and then Macbeth runs away through the lift. As he leaves the scene, one of the walls features what seems a cracked map of Europe that falls under the threat of violence, disunion, political corruption and war with the Eastern Demonized Other who equally responds by demonizing Europe.236

When he gets rid of his military trappings, we only see Macbeth as the plain man who needs stimulants to increase his macho libido. In the wide ballroom, he presents the rugged features of a working-class soldier – again, the enraged yahoo – who has not been given the dues he truly deserves. As Macbeth mumbles the Second Apparition’s prophecy (‘… none of woman born / Shall harm Macbeth’, 4.1.79-89), Macduff enters the room and fires his machine against him. Nevertheless, he intentionally does not hit the tyrant. Why does he not hit him? As Goold suggests, here Macduff’s intention, in this way of filming the scene, is to slay Macbeth with his own hands.237 In fact, Duncan’s former Minister produces a military blade and moves against his enemy. Macbeth seems to wake up from his alcoholic oozing and shoots Macduff on the leg. Now, Macbeth smiles at his foe. Macbeth delivers his revelation of the powers that protect him as an intimate confession to Macduff. His self-satisfaction is only cut by Macduff’s clarification of his birth. To continue, a low-angle shot features Macbeth’s operatic fall as he realizes that a heavy joke has been spent on him: He is doomed and he will only fight his way down to the avernus. Yet, this gives him his strength back as he listens to Macduff’s taunts. The threats are answered back as Macbeth accepts the challenge. Yet these vocal feats are accompanied by Cork’s Wagnerian theme. Almost at an operatic scale, the tyrant’s end is filmed as an authentic theatrical punch line. Not only does he not repent his sins but he finds an empowering bliss in evil, if that is at all possible.

236 As Falconer points, the East and the West mutually demonize each other (2007: 8).

237 See Director’s and Producer’s Commentary.
Not only is he empowered by his own physicality but he discovers what sort of impetuous energy is provided by evil. Before attacking Macduff, he tries and shoots him. As his gun is discharged, he funnily nods and chuckles at the obvious masterstroke of destiny that has taken all his bullets from him. What is left for Macbeth to do but to simply embrace his punishment with a bottle of liquor? Before attacking Macduff, a merry Macbeth showers himself with all the booze.\textsuperscript{238} Thus, the generally problematic lines ‘Before my body / I throw my warlike shield’ (5.8.32-33) are appropriated to fulfill the third feature – the ritualizing stage – that characterizes katabatic narratives through the ritual bloody baptism undertaken by the tyrant.

As already mentioned, before Macbeth is ready to kill Macduff, the Witches appear and he smiles at them. What Macbeth has discovered is that he is already inhabiting a literal underworld: a land of the dead. So, contrarily to the Catholic assumption, Hell is a real place. At least, this is so in Goold’s Scotland. However, if he is truly in Hell, there is an advantage for Macbeth: he cannot die twice. If these characters exist in Hell, there is no dying road. All that is left for him is the fall into the very bottom of this postmodern Avernus. Dante himself does not truly move upwards to reach Paradise but he falls deeper into the last level of Hell. Macbeth’s route and journey to the bottom of the underworld are left for us to interpret.

Is it? Ironically, Goold’s last little display of provocation is related to the often-embarrassing directorial crux of how to present Macbeth’s death. Although in many ways, Goold literally follows the authorized texts, he comes up with his own alternative: letting his Ghost tour around the surroundings, after Macbeth the man is killed. The tyrant is dead but his Ghost roams about the place. Why completely kill someone when he may have been a ghost over the whole film?\textsuperscript{239} After all, if Macbeth is portrayed as a katabatic hero with the purpose of invoking our ghosts, what is the best way to do so if not turning him into a ghost?

The last sequences in the film involve the revision of the most iconic spaces in the underworld. The kitchen, the sink corridor, the dark rooms, the campaign hospital, the slasher hospital corridor, the basements, and plenty of other spaces are shown that have been part of Goold’s katabatic world. Again, as the conclusion of a video game, Goold highlights the playful physicalizing of this Dantean universe.

\textsuperscript{238} Stewart explains how this idea came to him accidentally over the recording process (See “Interview with Patrick Stewart” 2010). As for Goold, he refers to it as a sort of infernal baptism (“Director’s and Producer’s Commentaries” 2010).

\textsuperscript{239} Goold says in the “Director’s and Producer’s Commentary” that he wanted to suggest, in the end, that perhaps all the play had been a ghost story or a constantly re-enacted narrative.
raising many questions. One of these questions seems to be whether this has not happened already many times.\(^{240}\)

However, Goold’s masterstroke is the little equivocation he plays on the viewer who listens to the Director’s and the Producer’s Commentaries. As he says, ‘Many productions usually [feature] Donalbain or Malcom as a future Macbeth arriving, which I think it’s a sort a director’s breeding. Not that there is not a lot of that here’.\(^{241}\) I would suggest that, in fact, there is positive evidence of Goold’s ‘breeding.’ As the very last shot demonstrates, Goold’s addition to the stage performance is that Macbeth becomes an Orpheus. He searches deeper into Hell and finds Eurydice, who is no one else than Lady Macbeth. As already said, the very last shots feature a journey through the main spaces used in the Abbey – see figures 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 and 24 –. The last shot shows what seems to be Goold’s ambiguous statement. This shot features Lady Macbeth and Macbeth holding their hands in the lift in motion – see figure 25 –. Will they eventually make it to Paradise? Is their punishment concluded? Are these specters leaving any indication that mankind can still combat the fierceness of death and violence? Are they given a second opportunity? Goold makes his interpretation of the playtext, one that transcends the Kottian cycle of violence – although, as we will see in the next chapters, Goold’s reading is also political – and leads us to larger and more psychological questions on our world, our memories of the twentieth century and the possible injunctions that make these two temporal coordinates dialogue with each other.

\(^{240}\) Goold suggests this (ibid).

\(^{241}\) See “Director’s and Producer’s Commentary.”
Figures 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 are screen captions from DVD edition.
6.9. Conclusions

As I have been demonstrating, this film is structurally and visually constructed as a katabatic narrative. Most of the chronotopic features generally attributed to this type of work are present in various ways and, if that does not suffice, Goold explicitly admits having thought of this filmscape as featuring different levels of hell. However, this narrative structure has been fueled with the intertexts and the icons belonging to other film genres that are widespread in popular culture. Although there are many reasons to question the clear division between popular and high culture, it is undoubted that Goold’s style combines literary and theatrical styles with the lavish filmic styles.

Obviously, the film genres employed in the film might be taken as the imposition of globalizing values and marketing-based strategies that might be invading the impetus for state-subsidized culture. Goold’s toying with Hollywood in many ways clarifies that his background is indebted to film apart from theatre. However, these popular icons are, in many ways, equal in value to the icons and narrative frameworks that Dante exploited for his katabatic journey. We should not underestimate the potentialities of critical approaches to mainstream cinema and how much television theatre can benefit and be enriched by this contamination. Apart from this, the global colonization of mainstream cultures does not need to be taken at face value. For a start, American slasher horror provides the earthy qualities that define the sweaty and the bloody atmosphere of Dante’s world, a world of living characters. In addition, the Asian horror resources do nothing but speak of the conceptions Westerners have on the Asian Other. What the film ultimately portrays is the fears and anxieties that both the East and the West feel towards each other.

Goold’s theatrical trajectory tends to focus on the vast amounts of damage that the charming Marlovian overreachers can bring to large parts of the population. Yet, although his often-colourful displays have raised many an eyebrow amongst critics, I am prepared to state that Goold is a consummated Brechtian who rather prefers to use his colourful tricks to leave the audience with many different thoughts in mind. His reading of Macbeth through the filter of mainstream Hollywood cinema and katabatic narratives should not be necessarily confused with the director’s world-view.

Regarding this, in her work on katabasis, Falconer relies on Primo Levi to claim that the katabatic experience can pull up the goodness in mankind as much as their capacity for destruction. The question on whether katabasis constitutes an ontological or a hauntological vision can be posed for those who take the time to pay attention to Macbeth’s continuous descensus ad inferos even after the play is finished. This re-encounter can be paralleled with the second meeting of Orpheus and Eurydice. A more mature re-encounter between damaged parts helps the couple start again trying to close old wounds.
However, their ghostly presence seems to be summoning the specters that have been bringing out violence in the last century. As Derrida proposes, living with the ghosts and even speaking to our ghosts; accepting the existence of the ghosts, mankind can find the way to get beyond totalitarian and black-and-white visions. As Goold indicates, the last train of images featuring the spaces at Welbeck Abbey echoes the revisions of different spaces at videogames such as *Doom*. The film leaves a final question for the viewer: Is the katabatic experience a narrow, confined and canned video game experience? If it is, what is the finality in this exploration of hell? Is this revision of the different spaces an indication that the story is going to be repeated or are the viewers asked to reconsider what recent history has been and look at the present and past collective *katabasis* with more revisionary and progressive attitudes? In this sense, my position is that Goold transcends Kott’s political pessimistic reading and can lead to more constructive thoughts based on critical and dialogical dynamics with the past, no matter how unclear this point may seem in the film.
7. MACBETH “BRANDO,” OR AN INTERTEXTUAL COMMENTARY ON RUPERT GOOLD’S MACBETH (2010): WAR FILM AND GANGSTER FILMS
7.1. Introduction

As mentioned in the introduction, following Bazin’s response to criticisms made to film for not bringing back the presence of the actor to the screen, it is undeniable that film cannot recover the essence of a stage performance. But does that mean that film genres – like gangster and war films – completely obliterate the theatricality of a production when it is transferred to the small screen? Are there ways to enhance the stage origins of a filmed stage production through film genre conventions? As discussed in Chapter Two, hybridity in some of the films studied depends on a strong inflection based on conventions from mainstream film genre.247 In this chapter I am focusing on how this hybrid piece of recorded

243 Picture taken from Jake Herlich (2008).
244 Picture taken from Sarah Maslin Nir (2008).
245 Picture taken from “Marlon Brando as Vito Corleone in “The Godfather.”
246 Picture taken from Petrogulak (2011).
247 Likewise, in Chapter Three I explained how film genre conventions have been heavily employed to translate Shakespeare’s plays to the film screen.
theatre, Rupert Goold’s *Macbeth* (2010), is cinematized with a post-generic configuration of conventions from gangster films and war films. My intention is to explore how this stage performance is transferred to television film and how this injection of film genre conventions transforms it. As suggested when I isolated the modes and genres of hybridity – see section 3.1 –, the mere differentiation of stage performance and film language does not suffice to take the different possibilities of hybridity into account. Film genre inflection is a specific feature in hybrid television Shakespeare film that may even amount, as we will see in this chapter, to seriously obliterate the theatrical origins of the production. As I will try to demonstrate, these two film genres utterly dismantle many of the theatrical values in it. But does that mean that the theatrical values of the production are lost? In this specific chapter, hybridity will be specifically studied through these two film genres that, while not completely erasing it, problematize the elements that recall the stage origins of the piece.248

To begin with, Goold intentionally relates Stewart’s baldness to Marlon Brando’s characterizing of Mr. Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now* (1979).249 When Macbeth is about to confess to the Scottish Doctor how his ‘way of life / Is fall’n into the sere’ (5.3.23), he agitatedly washes his head in a basin and then covers it with a towel. To continue, he reasons his alienation from life, friends, family and subjects – see figures 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 –. The intimacy with which Macbeth addresses the Scottish Doctor matches the conversation between Kurtz and Willard (Martin Sheen) in Coppola’s anti-war film. In that sequence, Brando also carries this water-splashing gesture as his bulk and skull are perceived in the dark. After this, he addresses Willard: ‘Did they say why, Willard? Why they wanted to terminate my command? (My emphasis.)’ Is Stewart’s baldness an addition that links his Macbeth to Kurtz’s baldness? The baldness trope points out at Kurtz’s metamorphosis into an ambition-driven ivory-headed creature whose humanity has been absorbed by the very element he has cherished. As Matt Hannigan points out, the bald villain has become a filmic cliché (2000: 126). However, in the figures below, we may see that Macbeth’s depersonalizing baldness is used as a signifier that emphasizes the hero’s eagerness of redemption – as he tries to wash and clean his head – when he knows that others want to eliminate him.

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248 As suggested when I isolated the features of hybridity – see figure 3, section 3.1 –, I distinguished several variables to analyze the different general discursive modes that interweave in hybrid television Shakespeare films. The influence of film genre conventions in the chart demonstrates that film genre features constitute one of the main paths of hybridity in Wyver’s work. Film genre inflection may even amount, as we will see in this chapter, to seriously blur the theatrical origins of the production. In this sense, gangster and war film conventions in Goold’s production problematize the theatrical origins of the piece. But does it, against Wyver’s self-proclaimed repeated intentions, completely turn the recording into a film?

As an extension to this self-reflexive reference to Coppola’s film, Goold visually quotes the sequence in which the corpse of Sonny Corleone (James Caan) is presented to Don Corleone in *The Godfather* (1972). As the script reads, Don Corleone ‘draws down the gray blanquet’ to see his son’s body (Jenny M. Jones 2007: 174). Such gesture is accompanied by Brando’s most moving close-up – see Figure 3 above – in *The Godfather*: ‘I want you to use all your powers, and all your skills. I don’t want his mother to see him this way (…) Look how they massacred my boy’ (ibid 2007: 174).

Figures 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 are screen captions from the DVD edition.
This dramatic sequence is literally appropriated by Goold. Bunkerized against the English attack, Macbeth commands his army – or, should we say the Porter and the Servant? – to garrison Dunsinane. This sequence takes place in the same corridor where the film had begun and where the Witches had attended – and then finished off – the Bleeding Sergeant. After they hear the ‘cry of women’ (5.5.8), the Witches bring the corpse of Lady Macbeth on the stretcher they had used for the Sergeant. With a gesture, Macbeth commands the Witches to stop and he is left alone with the body. The corpse is completely covered with a blanket but we can see Lady Macbeth’s black hair hanging. Macbeth draws the blanket and Kate Fleetwood’s pale dead face is revealed to us. A long shot reveals Macbeth sitting down on the edge of the stretcher as he intimately addresses his dead wife. Suddenly, the lights go off and the couple is left in the dark. A close-up of Stewart parallels Brando’s address to Sonny as he delivers the ‘Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow speech…’ – see Figure 4 above – to Lady Macbeth. However, the last lines are directly addressed to the viewer. Is that an attempt to surmount the discontinuity between the actor and the viewers? Rather than keeping this scene at a purely cinematic level, Goold’s turn suddenly brings us back into the immediacy and the communicative power of theatre. This film, thus, constantly dismantles its theatrical origins but, as Bazin suggests – see section 1.1 –, never to degree zero. As in the Jacobean stage, despite everything, the hero still needs to share his thoughts with the audience.251 Residual theatrical features remain in the film and, as a consequence, they subtly grow stronger and more solid.

As a matter of fact, the filmic conventions I am tackling occupy a liminal position in relation to the theatrical elements in the production. As Laurence Olivier’s beginning of Henry V, the filmscape differentiates the stage and the backstage. Similarly, in Goold’s film a stage is framed at the ballroom (Welbeck Abbey). This ballroom constitutes a highly symbolic environment. In contrast with this, the marginal areas surrounding the ballroom embrace the more realistic language of film and, by extension, of war and film genre. In this respect, we can clearly say that Goold establishes a contrast between a public area and other liminal areas. The original stage production exhibited the icons and symbols that the spectators could find on the stage but, overall, they were asked to believe the actor’s words and the material evidences provided by Anthony Ward’s stage design. Part of this metonymic theatre economy is transferred to the film. Yet, most of the war and gangster features are displayed outside this public space in the ballroom. In other words, they are related to the intimate sphere of conspiracy, illegal violence, political treason, corruption, denunciation, the family, food rituals, and several other themes.

251 Let us, nevertheless, remember that direct addresses to the viewers are by no means impossible devices in feature films.
that are widely dealt with in gangster and war films and which, in this play, are mostly commented on in private scenes.

To observe this transformation of a stage performance into the specificity of the small screen, the gritty energetic reading provided by Jan Kott’s *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* will be helpful. This work will be useful to provide the common ground necessary between war and gangster films to analyze the film. In his chapter on the Kings, Kott writes about the notion and functioning of the Grand Mechanism. An illegitimate ruler plunders his way up to the throne and murders his enemies; after this, he tosses former allies out, and culminates his feats of butchery by liquidating any legitimate prince that aims at setting himself on the throne. After some time, the prince returns and vanquishes the tyrant. The mechanism has its cogwheels, in which Goold shows great interest. The cog-wheels metaphorically refer to the network of confidants, thugs, and executors, part of the state machinery, that out of loyalty or self-interest, carry out ‘bloody instructions’ in the name of the state (Kott 1988).

To carry this analysis out, I am going to address these film genres – war film and gangster film – paying attention to their mythical qualities. Secondly, I will tackle Goold’s use of cinematic montage to represent violence. War and gangster narratives share the common feature that they have a commitment to violence and to cinematically articulate it. Therefore, I will be tackling how representations of violence produce a cinematic turn in this production through the conventions offered by war and gangster films. Because genre speeches involve the understanding of paradigmatic relationships in film texts, I am also going to focus on the relevance of heads as icons of ritual violence and how they inter-textually allude to the filmic genre speeches that seem to have been decisive to configure the Gestalten of this recorded stage production.

After this, I will be analyzing the power relations in the film as Goold establishes them in line with Kott’s book and with the ways in which Kott’s Grand Mechanism seems to be also reflected in many other war films. In the next section, I will be dealing with the way male bonding and food rituals constitute the establishment of social family

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252 Kott says ‘No’ when he is asked whether gangster films may be regarded as extrapolations of *Macbeth* (Charles Marowitz 2001: 15).

253 It seems unquestionable that, as well as Western films, gangster and war films have a place in popular culture. When it comes to study film genre, as we will see, certain genre films and film genres can be addressed due to their mythical qualities.

254 In section 3.3.2, I refer to Bakhtin’s ‘genre speeches’ as types of discourse that summarize the features that fulfill all the expectations of appropriacy referred to a given genre. Also, in that chapter, I indicate that, for the purposes of this dissertation, I am regarding ‘genre speech’ at least as partial synonym to ‘film genre.’ As for Goold’s conscious choosing of war film narrative devices and genre-based icons, he admits having made use of war film repertoire in *Richard II* (See “The Making-Off of Richard II”).
relationships and the double-edged understanding of family as a protective institution in line with gangster films. In this way, I expect to come up with conclusions on how these genre-based filmic signifiers contaminate as well as leave an amount of room for theatricality.

**7.2. Theoretical Framework**

War films and gangster films can be rightfully said to be part of our contemporary film mythology. Restaurants like the Spanish chain *La Mafia* – which serves Italian food and displays posters and pictures of the Corleone family (see figure 10 below) – or the popular quoting of Robert Duvall’s Lieutenant Colonel Kilgore’s ‘I love the smell of napalm in the morning,’ – see figure 11 below – together with a series of parodies – such as Fat Tony’s character in *The Simpsons* (seen figure 11 below) –, the song *Burning Bridges* from Kelly’s *Heroes* – a strong anti-war film (see figure 13 below) – and other narratives clearly indebted to Coppola’s or other gangster and war films prove that these genres can be acknowledged as popular myths. In fact, as television series like *The Sopranos* or *Boardwalk Empire* – featuring the nonchalant and ruthless Al Capone (Stephen Graham) and more serious and self-conscious types like Charles “Lucky” Luciano (Vincent Piazza) – demonstrate, the Italian-American gangster has become a self-reflexive feature in popular television as well as contemporary fiction. As we will see, myth in this chapter can be examined as it points out at a shared stock of common narratives as well as a set of ultra-significant signifiers.

![Figure 10](image1.jpg) ![Figure 11](image2.jpg)

255 Picture taken from Revista Úalà (2013).

256 Screen caption from *Apocalypse Now* (1979).
For Joseph Campbell, myths are such when they are regarded as fitting within a general social validity (1988: 19). As Keith Grant remarks, the word ‘myth’ alludes to ‘a society’s shared stories, usually involving gods and mythic heroes, that explain the nature of the universe and the relation of the individual to it’ (2011: 29). To this notion, perhaps it is useful to add Kristeva’s definition of myths as language-driven experiences that subject stories to certain paradigmatic constraints. These constraints are likely to sustain fantasy up toward general understanding (1984: 88). Constraints help connecting the filmmaker’s individual fantasy and creative genius with the conventions of cinema. Following these premises, whoever uses mythemes assumes that the audiences will be familiar with them as they are based on previously stated popular discourse and which tend to present more or less determined meanings. If we regard this hybrid film as a nostalgia piece, following Frederic Jameson’s definition of nostalgia film (1984: 67), we can understand it as a means to energize the ‘common meanings and directions’ that, in Williams’ words, constitutes the ‘making of a society’ (1989: 93). In addition, with these allusions to what doubtless belongs to the horizons of expectations of popular film, Goold gives deserving recognition to ‘symbolic life,’ – understood as quotidian symbolic life – following Paul Willis’ definition (1990: 27).

257 Screen caption from “The Simpsons - Fat Tony and Chief Wiggum.”

258 Screen caption from Kelly’s Heroes (1970).

259 As Barthes says, ‘[m]ythical speech is made of a material which has already been worked on so as to make it suitable for communication: it is because all the materials of myth (whether pictorial or written) presuppose a signifying consciousness, that one can reason about them while discounting their substance. This substance is not unimportant: pictures, to be sure, are more imperative than writing, they impose a meaning at one stroke without analyzing or diluting it. But this is no longer a constitutive difference. Pictures become a kind of writing as soon as they are meaningful: like writing, they call for a lexis’ (2000: 110).
Yet, myths, when observed from Barthes’ viewpoint, can also work as empty signifiers that amount to meaning at surface level only. Likewise, these socio-cultural rituals foregrounded through mythical language can be interpreted and a variety of responses, as repeatedly mentioned in Chapter Two, is possible. With his example of the ‘Negro’ soldier appearing in the Paris Match Magazine cover – see figure 14 below –, Barthes demonstrates that a superficial reading of this symbol as sign of the prosperity of the French colonial empire can be read as a myth – understood as imposture or alibi that legitimizes the recruitment of black soldiers – or as propaganda (2000: 128).

Figure 14

Scholars who have written about Apocalypse Now and The Godfather demonstrate that the films attacked the racism against Italian-Americans as well as the Vietnam hypocrisy. In fact, as Mimi White remarks when writing about the beginning of the 1970s, the decade in which these films were produced exuded ‘dissatisfaction with the mainstream, white, middle-class establishment, the political leadership, the military-industrial complex, and the ongoing war in Vietnam’ (2007: 24). Therefore, they subvert the myth of the US upholding of egalitarian values. On a cinematic level, both films presented responses to more regressive and conformist ways of dealing with their respective film genres. Yet, despite their breaking up with previously established and conformist formula, these narratives became myths with

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all the dangers involved in becoming so. As Barthes suggests, the best way to fight against myth is to ‘mythify’ it in return (2000: 135).

Yet, the war and gangster film iconography is multifarious enough so that fixed interpretations are not expected. As we find references to *Apocalypse Now*, we can also find references to Spielberg’s *Save Private Ryan* (1998), which cannot be accused of being subversive as Coppola’s work is. Also, there are less identifiable references to other films such as the Belarusian *Come and See* (Elem Klimov, 1985), which does not at all belong to the American mainstream repertoire and which is less likely to be discerned by the average viewer. In addition, Goold does not want the viewers to be mistaken about the fact that Shakespeare’s soliloquies in this hybrid production must be treated as arias nor that the text is, in the end, the basis of the film. In fact, he uses the term ‘arias’ to refer to the soliloquies and, curiously, contrarily to Doran’s work in this scene, when Macbeth delivers the ‘Is this a dagger which I see before me?’ (2.1.33) speech, there is no attempt to break down the soliloquy take with inserts, aggressive editing nor any visualization of the imagery the text speaks about.

With all its complexities, as I suggested in the previous section, whether Kott agrees with or not – see footnote 251 –, Shakespeare has often been re-framed with different film genres. Certainly, *Macbeth* has been dealt with as an urban gangster film or, at least, as a crime film. For all that, what reciprocity can gangster films offer to the playtext within the television frame? Robert Warshow associates gangster films with tragedy in a modern sense since the individual confronts those politicians who really hold the strings (1948). Also, Steve Neale relates them to classical rise-fall narrative structures (2000: 16, 76-82). As for the specific ways in which ethnic conflict is energized in gangster films, there are elements that might put gangster films into dialogue with Kott’s conception of the histories. In the second *Godfather*, probably by accident – unless we discover that Coppola read Kott –, Michael Corleone echoes Kott’s sense of history when he affirms to the consigliere Tom Hagen (Robert Duvall) –, that ‘[i]f history has taught us anything, it is that you can kill anyone.’

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261 In TheaterTalk, Goold refers to these speeches as arias that the neither director nor actor can deprive the audience of (2008).

262 *Macbeth* has been associated to gangster figures on an amount of occasions. Miola alludes to how *Men of Respect* (1991) evokes Lady Macbeth’s lost child (2014: x). Wright’s adaptation (2006) features Melbourne’s gangland culture. Recently, the *Shakespeare Retold* Series has released a retelling of *Macbeth* (2005) as the head chef of a Glasgow restaurant. Joe Macbeth is relegated to the sweat and hardship of kitchen work while Duncan, the restaurant’s owner, takes all the credit when he appears on a cooking show. This re-telling situates *Macbeth* within the trashy atmosphere of capitalism and class struggle, personal merit relegated to the promotion to undeserving relatives.

Nevertheless, the hero who is willing to challenge big WASP sharks, such as Senator Geary, in order to protect his family will be ruthless enough to kill his brother, to block his sister’s marriage, and to separate his children from their mother. Both frames of horizons – Kott and gangster film – reveal the dreadful discovery that nothing will be respected ever again when it comes to climb the power ladder. Yet Pacino’s Michael Corleone, as Kott’s *Macbeth* (1967: 75), still dreams of a better world, in which the family will get respectability and the Corleone’s’ crimes will be wiped from memory.\(^{264}\) In the same way that Macbeth wants redemption, even if he cannot pray for it, the gangster ultimately dreams of finding a legitimate way to live and rejoice in the love of his family, that ultimate cherished group of beloved ones. In this way, gangster films need to be associated to both classical tragedy as well as to Shakespearean tragedy, although their conventions are consistently modified in relation to the originals.

The second filmic train of hypertexts employed in Goold’s *Macbeth* relates to war film. As in Doran’s *Macbeth*, there is in this film production a wish to exploit the soldierly figure of the eponymous hero.\(^{265}\) For all that, mainstream cinema has, roughly speaking, provided two figures. First, we have been given the figure of the dehumanized sergeant, who, heartily devoted to violence, embodies the Homeric warrior archetype.\(^{266}\) Then there are those warriors who pay a greater emotional debt for their involvement in war and lean toward reflection on its futility. Willard and Mr. Kurtz are opposed poles in *Apocalypse Now* (1979), which rightfully stands out, for Karl French, as a modern myth too (1998: 96).\(^{267}\) References to *Apocalypse Now* in Goold’s film concretize the opposition between the common men who shed blood in war and the technocrats who eat, feast and commission others to kill. Yet, these roles shift from one character to another. As we will later see, although Macbeth is a scapegoat of

\(^{264}\) Don Corleone shares Michael’s dream. In the first part of the Saga, the father confesses it to his son: ‘I knew Santino was goin’ to have to go through all this (…). But I never – wanted this for you. I work my whole life, I don’t apologize, to care of my family, and I refused to be a fool dancing on a string held by all those big shots. I don’t apologize – that’s my life, but I thought that – that when it was your time, that – that you would be the one to hold the strings. Senator Corleone, Governor Corleone, somethin’’ (Jenny M. Jones 2007: 206).

\(^{265}\) Stewart talks about how important for him the memory of his father – a regimental sergeant major – was as model to build up Macbeth’s physicality. See “Interview with Patrick Stewart” in DVD edition (2010).

\(^{266}\) That war in the twentieth and twenty-first century has become technological does not imply that epic warriors have ceased to exist either in military contexts or in fiction. Oliver Stone talks about the Elias and Barnes characters in *Platoon*: ‘I knew the originals of Elias and Barnes in Vietnam. I saw them as mythic people, as warriors. Wondered, what if these two guys, who I knew in different units, had been in the same unit? How would they co-exist?’ (Roger Ebert 1988: 433-34). For Lawrence H. Suid, George Patton – who saw himself as an ancient warrior – becomes imperial on the screen when portrayed by George C. Scott (2002: 275).

\(^{267}\) To investigate more deeply on intertextuality in *Apocalypse Now*, see Absjorn Gronstad (2005), Christopher Sharrett (1985-1986), Whaley (2007).
Duncan’s regime, after being crowned King of Scotland, Stewart’s Macbeth is, as Michael Corleone would put it, ‘part of the same hypocrisy.’ This is clarified as he, as an ex-peasant King, engages in food rituals to hire murderers for Banquo’s dispatch. Unable to modify the corrupt world he inhabits, he opposes and attempts to destroy it without the care for allegiances and realpolitik that Duncan had.

7.3. Detachment and Identification in the Representation of War Violence

In this first section I want to explore how the montage technique – an iconic resource in Coppola’s two films as well as a frequent device in gangster films and gangster television series – influence Goold’s treatment of violence. As already noted, the opening of Macbeth sets down a warfare tone. As Kott’s book indicates, war is not a vacuum but a continuum in Shakespeare’s tragedy. Thus, Goold’s overture, climaxes and finale subsume the film frame in a Wagnerian leitmotif. The use of melodramatic resources – such as this musical leitmotif – and documentary violence configure a world picture system where Kott’s pessimism and melodramatic nostalgia are conjugated.

As I commented on in the previous chapter, the overture takes place by way of featuring a montage of scenes showing the large-scale armed conflict in black-and-white documentary footage. As Goold suggests, this footage situates the conflict in media res in a way that provokes a Brechtian distance – which definitely connects the hybrid film production to the twentieth century theatre tradition – between the ‘imagined’ world of the play and the real world. As the audiences in the Globe Theatre,

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269 Holinshed’s narrative shows that Mac Bethad mac Findlaich (aka Macbeth of Scotland) had a claim to the throne, which his cousin Duncan tried to bar him from by appointing his son Malcolm as inheritor. Several cinematic narratives – Bogdanov (1998) and Brozel’s (2005) – emphasize Macbeth’s lower socio-economic status compared to Duncan and the frustration the hero experiences. Furthermore, Bogdanov and Brozel – and, lately, Kurzel –emphasize Malcolm’s incompetence or arrogance as opposed to Macbeth’s industry. A very interesting filmic development in this sense is Justin Kurzel’s Macbeth (2015) and how Michael Fassbender portrays the hero as a frontier guard who fights the Irish and Norwegian armies invading Duncan’s kingdom. A leader of a small community that has all the traces of being shaped as a rustic town in the American frontier, Fassbender’s Macbeth is a father-like chieftain who takes care of his men and his men’s children and feels emotionally involved in his commitment to protect them. So much so that the death of a young soldier produces a post-traumatic stress disorder in the hero. It is interesting to notice that, despite of being the savage killer that Shakespeare texts turns Macbeth into, Fassbender still maintains a clear bond with his servants, with whom he prays and whom he takes to Dunsinane Castle as soon as he is elected King of Scotland. See my review on Kurzel’s Macbeth in Yearbook of the Spanish and Portuguese Society for English Renaissance Studies, Volume 26, 2016 (201-208).

270 In Mark Joyce’s words, ‘the montage technique is based on the theory that when two pieces of film are placed side by side the audience immediately draws the conclusion that the shots must be directly related in some way. In other words, the audience tries to create meaning by combining two separate images.’ To Eisenstein’s mind, as Joyce continues, a maximum of impact could be achieved if it were applied in terms of collision, i.e. when two shots of different natures are
who were asked to appreciate the artifice of theatre as well as the story, the viewer is asked to fill in the blanks uniting the nostalgia-based turmoil seen through newsreels and a recorded theatre play. In fact, this cinematic succession of images imposes the newsreel on what normally should have begun as a classical wide shot featuring the theatre stage.

In addition to the surprise element contributed by Goold, a transposition of scenes takes place right at the beginning. Scene 1.1 is transposed after scene 1.2. With this, as Goold confirms, the idea that this is a war-dominated world is emphasized, and, at the same time, the Witches are included in the action when it comes to attend the Bleeding Sergeant on an improvised surgery table. The sequence goes as follows:

a) A stretcher is rolled through a hospital corridor.

b) War footage runs. Each of the images provides different types of war experiences: explosions, soldier’s escapades, machine guns in operation, masses of black smoke towering over the horizon, soldiers disembarking on a beach, etc. – images provided in Chapter Six. The impact of these snapshots may be explained by Bordwell, according to whom, ‘flamboyant physical stunts’ as these ones shock the audience (1993: 6). In this light, I would like to confirm Bordwell’s idea by pointing out at the fact that this beginning merges documentary realism with melodrama in line with the more British cinematic tradition – see Lawrence Napper 2012: 373. Yet, this melodramatic component also brings about the tragic atmosphere that Coppola adds to The Godfather through the operatic music of Pietro Mascagni’s Cavalleria Rusticana – see the opera scene in The Godfather III (1990) – as well as Nino Rota’s soundtrack and, to a different extent, to the sometimes too colourful and musical portrait of war in Apocalypse Now.

c) The melodramatic component is contributed by Adam Cork’s soundtrack. This first sequence features a musical version of Simonov’s Russian poem Wait for Me. Simonov’s poem evokes the 20 million Russian soldiers who died in World War II. It became so popular that Russian soldiers used to copy lines in the letters they sent to their girlfriends. Horror, anguish and war pain bring upon the film contemporary concerns while alluding to Macbeth’s relationship with Lady Macbeth, defenceless as they are at accepting separation due to war. Perhaps this extends the evocative power of the song to the social gap between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, which we will later speak about. In addition to this, the musical evocations reveal Macbeth’s smallness in the vast war landscape as he walks through the combined they produce a new meaning according to the following formula: ‘thesis + anti-thesis = synthesis’ (2012: 450-451).

271 See “Director’s and Producer’s Commentaries” (2010).
entangled and deadly forest. There, the branches of a tree – looking like dead matter or the scorpions in his mind – partly cover his grizzly appearance strolling through the field in slow motion after the battle. However, all in all, the atmosphere presents the alienation-romance duality of war and gangster film, following which the individual tries to reach self-redemption in a hostile and violent world.

In many ways, the film can be said to respect the structure of a Wagnerian opera as it repeats this leitmotif at specific climatic points. Nevertheless, the most important reason why this beginning – and, by extension, the whole film – can be called Wagnerian is in how it appeals to Wagner’s Gesamtkunstwerk, i.e. it is a work of art that integrates music, theatre and the visual arts. However, Goold here follows the use of the Hollywood montage technique, also in imitation of gangster films. Right after the killing of Banquo, Goold pays homage to The Killing of the Five Families Montage – The Godfather –. For Nick Browne, Coppola’s montage associates violence to ritual scenes (2000: 2) and, likewise, Goold’s montage sums up Macbeth’s dictatorial regime while cutlery is arranged for the coronation banquet. At the same time, Cork’s musical theme is sung by a Russian choir. Also, short sequences feature inserts of military street parades; Angus bugging some dissenting voices; executions taking place under shotgun; people taken through death corridors; and Macbeth and Lady Macbeth taking the lift down to a deeper level in the nightmare world. So far, this recorded piece of theatre is heavily cinematized.

272 Goold also relates this sequence to the Assassination of the Five Families and alludes to the double moral featured in that scene (See “Director’s and Producer’s Commentaries”, 2010).
This combination of melodrama and alienating war returns while the piece is played in the final war scenes. The leitmotif returns as Macbeth delivers the ‘Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow…’ (5.5.18) speech – as mentioned above, Goold quotes Don Corleone’s discovery of Sonny’s corpse – in direct address to the camera. Nevertheless, this time, contrarily to the first footage, the camera features Malcom’s soldiers making war against Macbeth as they enter the surroundings of Welbeck Abbey. The fact that by now the viewers should be well familiar with the only location used for the film helps emphasizing its metonymic theatrical impetus. However, this make-believe quality intermingles with the realism attempted by McCurdy’s state-of-the-art war frame. He divides the fifth act into almost thirty sequences, including whole scenes, divisions of scenes, and military inserts. As mentioned above,

273 Figures 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28 are screen captions from the DVD edition.

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hybridity works in this section since it lets Macbeth address – and wait for a response from – the audiences and, at the same time, inserts interrupt this theatrical flow and immediacy that is, at the same time, so frequent in television drama and news broadcasts.274

Wyver explains how the scene has been arranged. The final war scenes take place in a part of the Abbey where ‘a side arch opens out into a kind of cloister, over the central courtyard of which hangs an iron and glass canopy in a serious state of disrepair’ – see figure 29 below –. The sequence follows suit with war film style. As Wyver continues,

There are moments when it feels as if we’re trying to shoot the sequel to Saving Private Ryan, albeit on a budget that might buy lunch on a couple of days for a production like that. But our director of photography Sam McCurdy achieves edgy visuals with shadows, shapes close to the lens, torchlight flashes and tremulous camera movement. (2009)

This comment emphasizes that this film, although alluding to a large-budget feature film like Saving Private Ryan, has been developed by way of imitating the conventions of the Renaissance stage. The viewers are asked to believe that there is an actual war taking place. In fact, as noticed above, Wyver specifically mentions Spielberg’s Saving Private Ryan – and McCurdy, as we will see, explicitly quotes it –. Nevertheless, the only battalions or soldiers we see are Ross – a rather timorous civil servant, not really made carry guns –, Macduff, Seyward, Young Seyward, Lennox, Angus, Malcom, and the First Murderer. Apart from this, we do not see any Hollywood stars like Tom Hanks, Matt Damon or Vin Diesel but a what we might call a bunch of merry British actors trained at the RSC and who, contrarily to the cast in Spielberg’s film, did not spend any time living like real soldiers in preparation for the film. What is more, Macbeth’s army is constituted by Macbeth, the Porter and the Servant – although we do not see the Servant fighting, we see him carrying his AK-47 –. This might be a film but, as the Prologue in Henry V seemingly does for the fields of Agincourt, Goold expects us to accept that a ten thousand strong Anglo-Scottish army is arriving at Dunsinane, which, in this film, is the ballroom. Likewise, we are led to believe that the ‘false thanes’ are abandoning Macbeth. What ‘false thanes’? In fact, what we perceive as ‘Dunsinane’ is what, in previous scenes, we have perceived as Forres, the wasteland where Macbeth meets the Witches. War film conventions never fully erase the theatrical origins of the piece.

When the soldiers are just about to break into Macbeth’s lair – i.e. the Abbey –, it is Macduff who leads them into a clamorous and enraged ‘Blood and death’ that is choired by Malcom’s soldiers –

274 As mentioned in section 1.1, Bazin points at the fact that the television screen retains much of the essence of theatre since it gives way to an immediate contact between the performer and the viewer.
see figure 30 below —. This mid-shot featuring the soldiers as they cry in unison quotes the buddy-boy fraternity in Spielberg’s *Saving Private Ryan* as they attack a German squad in a ruined house. Nevertheless, this thrilling war cry and the fraternity exuded in the scene can be utterly put into question. If here Malcom’s soldiers decide to acknowledge, quoting the final scene in Spielberg’s film, ‘the one decent thing to do,’ it has not always been like this, as I will demonstrate over the next two sections. The film has consciously imposed the mythological horizons of expectations of a war film that apparently supports war as ‘the one decent thing to do.’ Yet, as we will return to ask in the following sections, how reliable are Malcom’s soldiers?

![Figure 29](image1.png) ![Figure 30](image2.png)

### 7.4. Heads

Perhaps, to dig into the filmic conception of Malcom’s partners as corrupt individuals, we should start first with the analysis of Macbeth’s character used as a scapegoat figure in this production. Let us now approach the impact of heads as icons of violence and brutality in Goold’s horror world. This icon helps deconstructing the theatrical performance and situates it more in line with a filmic text. In addition, the idea of a beheaded Macbeth evokes the tragic mythical figure of the scapegoat, which is a primary component in classical tragedy in performance: the killing of a goat before the performance begins. Also, it conjures up an injunction between the present times and the impact that traitors’ heads at the London Bridge must have made, according to Greenblatt, on Shakespeare (2004). Also, it refers to what Holderness and Bryan Loughrey call ‘the ritual slaughtering of many of the plotters and other Catholics’ (2001: 41).

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275 Picture taken from Wyver (2009).

276 Screen caption from *Macbeth* (2010).
The use of heads as icons of punishment help bringing to table the debate on whether these punished ones can be taken as criminals or as scapegoats. Several scapegoats in various formats are graphically represented in the film. Macduff shows Malcom’s pictures of people executed by Macbeth, which recalls Soviet executions of dissenting souls. In addition, the metaphor extends to more contemporary facts related to executions and their dubious legality. In this way, Macbeth’s head operates as a Gorgon piercing the eyes of his killers. The final representation of his head returns as a piece of warning against Malcom’s generals that the story is going to repeat itself. Let us see how this Kottian reading is articulated in filmic terms.

The head icon also pinpoints the technocratic power structure in the play’s landscape. In this political system, human beings are pieces of some larger institutional machinery where heads, hands and limbs are commodities at the service of the state. Heads and execution are linked through the scene.

277 Figures 31, 32, 33 and 34 are screen captions from the DVD edition.
in which Lennox shoots at Cawdor’s wrapped head, depriving Cawdor’s surrender of all the solemnity and dignity implied in Malcom’s account (Charles and Michele Martindale 1990: 62). In Polanski’s film (1971), Cawdor shows haughtiness when he jumps from the gallows, his death amounting to a spectacular tour-de-force. Nevertheless, in this film, Cawdor is turned into a tortured Prisoner of War (POW), whose execution is not granted more solemnity than what takes to blow his brains out. Thus, Goold re-writes Polanski’s *Macbeth* while presenting what Hannah Arendt refers to as the ‘banality of evil,’ a crude vision of how institutions get rid of enemies, arguably without a trial and with the coldness of a civil servant ordering and warranting executions. Let us notice that these scenes take place in private rooms and intimate spaces that underline Goold’s cinematizing of the piece and at the same allude to the closet and corridor Jacobean dynamics of plotting and betrayal. Thus, these sequences deviate from the codes of recorded theatre or the theatrical mode or, rather, inflect them by way of extending the frame to the backstage.

Still, this state apparatus prefers to keep a better self-image than the one I have presented. Immediately after the execution insert, Malcom clearly conceals the truth to Duncan when he accounts for how dignified Cawdor’s passing was. We will see in a subsequent scene – in which Lennox ruthlessly tortures Ross – that the execution room is one where very possibly Cawdor confessed his treasons, but, as I said before, he has certainly not been submitted to court martial, nor has the execution been public. This probably means that all legal procedure, as in Kurtz’s or Osama bin Laden’s killings, has been disregarded. In this sense, stage-to-film hybridity helps exploring the behind-the-scene scenes in this violent state where traitors are scapegoats. The sinister atmosphere of war film and gangster narratives helps conveying better how prisoners and witnesses are not treated following the appropriate democratic mechanisms. Goold emphasizes this idea by way of featuring the execution scenes in the backstage areas.

Thus, Handy’s hesitation at this execution speech (1.4.3-11) proves how Malcom produces a cleaner account on Cawdor’s death, which undoubtedly points at the double discourse used by power institutions. The way Handy handles the situation reveals that part of the monologue is being made up at the time of the speaking. As in many dictatorships, those who serve Duncan know that certain pages of history need to be written through a meta-narrative that sounds ‘well-constructed’ to the regime. Thus, whereas the official story is that Cawdor has died acknowledging the dignity of the Politburo, the viewer knows better than this. In fact, this is not surprising as Shelley’s Duncan, as I suggested in the

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278 Notice that this scene is recorded within one of the galleries at Welbeck Abbey. Thus, it recalls the intimate atmosphere of film noir.
previous chapter, does not exactly reflect the qualities of the legitimate king inclined to listen to and to protect his subjects. It is clear, therefore, that Duncan’s innocence is totally called into question and that this film emphasizes the idea that Macbeth’s wars are a continuation of previous cycles of violence. To legitimize this regime, Duncan’s state is read like an Althusserian State Apparatus that needs certain scapegoats. Macbeth’s head stands as an additional commodity that forms part of this regime. Per contra, Stewart’s skull as presented in the final scene, announces the ultimate terror that this scourge figure has exercised on the rest. In addition, as mentioned above, it also recalls Kurtz’s head in *Apocalypse Now*, which totally constitutes a filmic allusion to the mythical figure of the scapegoat.

Figure 35

In fact, this representation of scapegoats is disseminated through several body parts through the film. Macbeth’s mutilated body is part of the recurrent elements of violence expressed through filmic iconography. Most dreadfully, Goold quotes the iconographic burnt and butchered bodies in *Come and See* (1989), where the brutality of beating, rape, child abuse, humiliation to innocents reveals war as a true Apocalypse. The body of the bleeding Captain displays war wounds and surgical intervention from suspicious nurses – the Witches – while he narrates the nightmarish events outside Duncan’s refuge. The Bleeding Sergeant’s speech is heavily inflected in filmic terms through aggressive editing that incorporates multiple inserts with the Witches trying to heal the wounds and the cuts in his body. Rather than letting the camera film the whole Sergeant’s speech in one single tirade, filmic editing invades and interrupts its flow. In this way, the fracture at the Scottish state and the cuts in the Captain’s body are enacted in filmic terms through jarring editing and crosscutting. While the Sergeant narrates Macbeth’s

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279 As Sokolova confirms, this Duncan looks more like a ‘determined, rather testy, middle-aged general with an authoritarian touch, used to looking at death and ordering executions (…) Who knows how he came to power!’ (2013: 158).

280 Picture taken from Kelvin Green (2012).
heroic feats of prowess, the Sisters stitch the wounds. At the same time, this aggressive editing brings upon the massive thrust Goold throws upon the language of recorded theatre with an injection of heavy filmic editing mixed with a speech in which epic tones utterly correspond to the rhetoric of Shakespeare’s verse.

Likewise, body parts are shown in the kitchen scenes where fowl, rabbits and other game are cut into pieces. As a visual irony, a pig’s head is taken out of the stove hinting at Macbeth’s greediness and anticipating the exhibition of his head. In addition, the pig’s head indulges in the representation of ambitious traitors who replace one another, in line with Kott’s Grand Mechanism. Therefore, the head of the traitor indirectly stands as a cruel joke against the upstart’s ambitions.

This iconographic representation of Macbeth’s head does not simply situate the hero as a scapegoat who strives to become a scourge for the power structure. It also demonstrates that the monstrous Macbeth, as the Orwellian Pigs, is a dictator and not a revolutionary leader. His intention is not to change the system but to subjugate it and own it through totalitarian means. He does not replace Duncan’s unfair system of punishments and rewards by a meritocratic system. He simply places his servants in powerful positions and shapes his political identity using mythical representations of his own head in a massive red banner, mimicking the iconography of fascism and totalitarian power. Thus, as already mentioned in Chapter Five – and as I will further emphasize in Chapter Seven –, Goold shows Macbeth’s head on a blood-red backdrop that dominates the ballroom at Dunsinane. This potent representation of the King’s head accounts for the character’s desire to make a mark in history and, yet, there is not a plan, as I have said, that King Macbeth wants to carry out except for eliminating those who oppose him. In short, the spectacular and theatrical display of Macbeth’s regime’s iconography emphasizes how power is connected to theatre and to heightened performance. The uses of the theatrical mode in this film are totally oriented to the exhibition of Macbeth’s power over scene 3.1, the banquet scene as well as the Dunsinane scenes. In all these scenes, Macbeth’s banner predominates and proclaims the King’s power. Yet, this ultra-significant dramatic expression announces that Macbeth’s rule is also mythical and that he will not be able to oppose the Grand Mechanism and will be ultimately destroyed by it.

To continue, Macbeth’s head recovers importance when the foreign troops approach the castle. As earlier stated, Stewart, like Brando, washes his head and, after wiping it, hides it under the towel. The washing of the head has resembled some sort of futile baptism in search of ‘pristine’ innocence.
(5.3.72) to clean the corrupted waters of the state of Scotland.²⁸¹ When Macbeth decides to try his last chance against Macduff, he drops booze on his head as if undertaking some second baptism, which renews his strength-seeking pact with Hell. Then, Macbeth’s head, as I indicated, comes back in the final scene, this time it is Macduff who, all covered in blood – like Willard in Apocalypse Now –, holds Macbeth’s head, stripes of flesh hanging down, as an image of the horror mechanism. One head has replaced another head; another traitor has fallen to the force of the nightmare cycle.

7.5. Power Relations in Goold’s Scottish State

When explaining the rationale behind the setting of the film in the Soviet Union, Goold says that he got inspiration from the ‘Kremlin films’ he used to watch in the 1980s.²⁸³ These films, as Goold continues, delved in the dynamics that Kott has associated to Shakespeare’s histories. The pattern of violence is completely repeated in the films. As I earlier pinpointed, Goold refers to a group of ‘ageing generals’ gathering around and controlling the state.²⁸⁴ Then, these generals divide into factions seeking to eliminate one another. Also, socially critical American 1970s war films follow this narrative structure. As Sharrett suggests, the military top brass who assign Willard the termination of Kurtz share his murdering quality (1985-1986: 26). The Nietzschean Kurtz himself accuses them of being assassins as

²⁸¹ The corruption of water in the land is conveyed through the scene in which Angus and Lennox run away from Macbeth’s regime through a sewer near the boiler corridors where many executions have taken many victims off. Wastage and filthy waters metaphorically enhance the corrupted entrails of the Scottish nation.

²⁸² Figure 36 and 37 are screen captions from the DVD edition.

²⁸³ See “Director’s and Producer’s Commentaries” (2010).

²⁸⁴ See Interview with Rupert Goold in DVD edition.
we listen to his voice from the tape. Later, we will discover that he anticipates the future American defeat by alluding to their shattered morality and disbelief in ideals.

Although Goold’s iconography tends to privilege the Soviet background, Duncan’s reign resembles this narrative pattern. State corruption is seen by the filthy waters and sewers running underground the location. In this sense, the filmic inflection that affects this hybrid piece of recorded theatre is, as I have been suggesting, arranged to point at the internal mechanisms of the machinery and to reveal the corruption on the state. Macbeth alludes to the sickness of Scotland when he speaks to the Scottish Doctor. In fact, the sewers through which Lennox, the First Murderer and Angus escape reveal this filthiness and infectiousness in the country. Taking this premise into account, assassination belongs in both Duncan and Macbeth’s world. This is a world that he continues and extends as the film shows Macbeth’s chain of political crime.

The Bleeding Sergeant’s allusion to the ‘memoris[ing]’ of ‘another Golgotha’ (1.2.40) has been rescued through references to less viewer-friendly movies such as the ones coming from the areas of Eastern Europe chosen as context for the film. Klimov’s Come and See elevates Death to the status of goddess in the engineering of a sinister scarecrow dressed in an SS’s uniform and whose clay skull is progressively added ears, a big nose, hair and moustache to resemble Adolph Hitler. At times, the wind pushes the skull in a way that seems to revive it and the spectator may perceive a chatty skull rejoicing in its demonic ritualistic power.

This is a ‘strange image of death’ that, as the ones referred to by Ross, is transferred to Goold’s film in the mannequin fashioned by the Witches. The mannequin stands as the one of the cogwheels that Kott writes about regarding the Grand Mechanism: the bloody civil servants who shed blood while they do public service. Also, Macbeth, with his highly visual imagination, as already referred to in section 6.5, holds a sinister and intimate dialogue with the mannequin over which Duncan’s death is prefigured. Curiously, Treloar’s characterisation as Ross highly recalls the shape and apparel of this mannequin, thus offering a different view of the bureaucrat. This bureaucrat cries with impotence at knowing himself to be but a cogwheel in this remorseless violent state.
These apparently trapped technocrats, nevertheless, as we will see, make their own decisions. As I already suggested, Ross, Lennox, Angus and probably many others amongst Macbeth’s civil servants and military men are, willingly or unwillingly, not themselves clean and take several slices of the cake in Macbeth’s regime, from which they quickly draw back as soon as they find themselves in

285 Figures 38, 39, 40, 41, 42 and 43 are screen captions from the DVD edition.
political difficulty. As already suggested, like Kurtz – for Sharrett, a casualty to the failure of the American myth (1985-1986: 23) –, Stewart’s head concretizes Macbeth as a scapegoat for the incapability, the do-goodism, cowardice or sometimes open corruption demonstrated by these politicians.

In the previous section, and repeatedly afterwards, I referred to Macbeth’s head as an icon of the hero’s double quality of scapegoat and scourge to the Scottish state apparatus. When Malcom holds Macbeth’s head and invites his friends to attend his coronation at Scone, some of these so-called ‘friends’ are guilty of the death of Banquo, Lady Macduff, Macduff’s children and, arguably, many other innocents. In their respective films, Roman Polanski, Trevor Nunn, Jack Gold and Doran more or less explicitly suggest the arrival of a second Macbeth after his death. As Goold claims not to read the text in this light, as other film directors have done, one could think that what he leaves unexplained is what is going to happen to the traitors. Nevertheless, although he does not literally intend to, Goold deconstructs Kott as we notice that Malcom’s friends are the either incompetent or murderous civil servants that, inexplicably – or too explicably –, have survived Macbeth’s regime. In England, Malcolm sounds out Macduff very thoroughly, but what about the others? Are they going to be put on trial at all? Is Malcolm sure that Lennox – as appearing in this production – is not to be a second Macbeth?

At best, some of these characters became POWs pushed to confession and, on that premise, contradicted all notions of honour and seriousness expected from civil servants. At worst, the characters were self-serving opportunists taking advantage of Macbeth’s regime. Yet, rather than being accused of treason or judged at court martial, they are, in fact, invited to take part in the new government. If, as Goold indicates, he wanted to leave the impression that everything was finished, how can we be so sure that the cycle will not start inside rather than outside?

For a start, Lennox (Mark Rawlings) quickly intuits that Macbeth has killed Duncan. A close-up reveals his thoughts on the case as soon as he returns from Duncan’s chamber, but the thane decides to keep his mouth shut. In the next scene we instantly know why: he has been promoted to become Macbeth’s right-hand man and hitman. He leads the Murderers into the kitchen (3.1) and is also the polemic Third Murderer who supervises Banquo’s killing (3.3). On the train where the murder is committed, he shoots the Second Murderer and then appears on the banquet table, in which Ross is a cheerful and cowardly diplomat who ignores – or tries to ignore – what is going on around.286 In scene

286 Goold states that Ross is a “Le Carrièsque” figure in this film (See Director’s and Producer’s Commentary 2010). Contrarily to more heroic and action-based crime or espionage narratives like the James Bond saga or hard-boiled Dirty Harry films, Le Carré’s characters tend to be defenseless functionaries aware of the moral dubiousness of the system they find themselves in. In this sense, Le Carré places the narrative force in character’s psychology rather than in action. Ross’s
3.6, Lennox interrogates the diplomat on Macduff’s whereabouts. A blow in the nose and some gun pointing are enough to force Ross to squeal. Yet Ross is not a self-seeking traitor, but the impotent Le Carriesque hero. His inability produces the pain of guilt and impotence in him.

As for Angus (Bill Nash), he is less openly supportive of Macbeth’s regime than Lennox has been and yet he does not protect the Macduffs. In fact, he has been bugging different speakers, thus serving the apparatus of terror and totalitarian control as the second montage – the Stasi Montage, as Goold calls it (See Interview with Wyver and Goold 2010) – shows. In scene 4.2, he is the Messenger who dares ‘abide no longer’ (4.2.70) after informing Lady Macduff of the dangers approaching her. Being watched by Macbeth’s surveillance network explains his cooperation with the regime, and yet he is certainly involved in the killing, his part probably consisting of scouting and recognising the house before the wild bunch arrives. Ultimately, his drive towards ‘the one decent thing to do’ is more powerful in him than his scruples. Yet, although we may feel inclined to celebrate this bulky warrior’s nobility shown in low angle, there is no doubt that his eloquent discourse does not come from a totally innocent mouth. Yet, he runs away through the sewers, where the First Murderer – Hywel John, who doubles parts up – and Lennox join him. The Murderer, who has been instructed and coached by Lennox, does not resist the desire to strike him on the back as he brings the files on Macbeth. Nonetheless, from the floor, Lennox’s cynic smile returns the accusation to the First Murderer. After all, did not this self-pitying First Murderer cut Banquo’s throat and participate in the Macduff’s family’s killing? Against a more literal reading, this scene is turned into a turning point of re-evaluation of state loyalties. An implicit pact of silence seems to have been sealed between these three state cogwheels.

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psychological treatment works on different shades of the character’s stance on the world around him. From a cheerful man carrying out his diplomatic duties he is turned into a cowardly pigeon later forced to grab an AK-47.
7.6. The Gangster as a Rebel: Food and Bonding

Gangsters are rebels against the corruption practised by those who, as Don Corleone says, ‘hold the strings.’ Part of the Mafioso’s charisma relates to his ability to challenge corrupt politicians and other members of the dominant class. Certainly, this courage stems from filial obligation and family duty. Very likely, Fleetwood’s Lady Macbeth – who, as Stewart says, comes from a more aristocratic background – felt attracted to this man around thirty years her senior because of his soldierly and meriting qualities. Their bond is somehow related to this male-oriented mystique. If the family is the core institution in The Godfather films, bonding and fellowship in Macbeth establishes a commitment

287 Figures 44, 45 and 46 are screen captions from the DVD edition.

288 See Interview with Patrick Stewart.
between these two individuals. Yet, Macbeth’s family, contrarily to Macduff’s wealthy and abundant one, is inexistent.

The barrenness in Macbeth’s household is underlined by the dramatic irony of the ‘martlet’ passage in the play-text (1.6.3-9). This section is cut in Goold’s film but, by contrast, what Macbeth’s kitchen shows in 1.6 is an amount of dead game being chopped, cut and cooked for the banquet in Duncan’s honour. Plus, only distorted versions of filial figures are offered in the form of the Servant (Oliver Birch) – see figure 48 below –, who, with his childish features, stands as an alter ego to Macbeth and Lady Macbeth’s lost child.289

The Porter fulfils another filial function in Macbeth’s family. Resembling a younger version of Stewart, the Porter is not just a clown in the play but also one of Macbeth’s killers. Here Goold reads against the grain of Renaissance convention, according to which the Fool has the verbal privilege but does not have actual power. This clown speaks, probably rapes, and certainly kills. However, as figure 47 shows, Macbeth also looks at this Porter as a substitute for his son. This we can perceive in how he caresses the Porter’s head as he says ‘I ‘gin to be aweary of the sun’ (5.5.48). This line is turned into a pun that reveals Macbeth’s hidden and deep frustrations at the loss of his family: his wife and the child she engendered and lost.

Thus, the Servant and the Porter bring Macbeth back to its origins: The Morality Play, in which the Good Angel and the Bad Angel stand side by side with the hero. Stewart’s Macbeth is not an aristocratic warrior, but an Everyman. Goold hits right on the nail of Macbeth as a tragedy on human

289 In the Director’s and Producer’s Commentaries, Goold explains that the Servant in many ways resembles this lost child.

290 Figures 47 and 48 are screen captions from the DVD edition.
conduc at an earthy level, far from fashionable courts or the palaces of Thebes. Gangsters are Everymen in a jungle where Evil and Good are elements not totally separable from each other. The fact that hybridity takes this opportunity to explore the filmic opportunities provided by ‘backstage areas’ and film sets in this luxurious mansion pinpoints at the fact that genre film and film genre are the perfect means to psychologically explore elements that in the stage production could not be expressed with the same level of intimacy.

The quotidian character of this stage-to-screen hybrid work is emphasized through food rituals. In the chapter on the Kings, Kott writes:

I greatly admire those brief moments when tragedy is suddenly projected on to an everyday level; when the characters, before a decisive battle, or having woven a plot on which the fate of a kingdom will depend, go to supper, or to bed. (1988: 19)

In this fashion, Goold re-enacts domestic aspects of the play, which help establishing a connective network of familial relationships and loyalty by way of echoing food rituals in gangster films. Thus, it follows that most of life at Macbeth’s house takes place in the kitchen, the place where food is prepared and where murders are discussed. Goold and Wyver, as well as the reviewers, have often pointed out at Macbeth’s dialogue with the murderers, in which he prepares a meat sandwich. Although this scene has been kept intact from the stage production, it seems to gain new relevance on the television film screen as it undoubtedly alludes to the film icons related to food rituals in gangster films. The process of preparation of the sandwich conveys what Alessandro Camon calls ‘the double moral of the Mafioso,’ who is merciless with the enemy but kind-hearted to family and friends (2000: 59). Whether accidentally or not, both Goold and Brozel explore the idea of Macbeth as a cook or someone used to handle food and meat. For James MacAvoy’s Joe Macbeth, being a chef only involves ‘guts’ and ‘passion,’ not class or education. Thus, masculinity is totally related with cooking and handling of cooking tools. This association follows suit with many films where ostentatiously – and, very likely, rather conservative and familial – masculine types are seen cutting, preparing and serving food to each other. Of course, these rituals go beyond the mere displaying of masculinity. Also, they must carry on with their celebration of respectability, morality – whether we agree with the gangster’s sense of morality or not –, self-esteem, and loyalty toward one’s allies.

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Stewart’s Macbeth applies this theme to the initiation of the two killers – happening to be somewhat ‘green’ murderers – chosen to dispatch Banquo. This works in line with Camon’s suggestion that the Mafia epitomizes a point of confluence between the old aristocracy and the proletariat (2000: 60-61). Stewart reinforces working-class values on strength, endurance, shameless physical work and daily activity as marks of pride. In fact, before his encounter with the murderers, he has been hunting – and a few preys have been taken – and we see him returning on horseback after the hard exercise. All the actions carried out by Macbeth in the kitchen associate him with this earthy morality and the ‘kind of ordinariness’ that, in Andrew James Hartley’s words, transcend the ‘large-scale politics of the setting’ (2013: 83).
Moreover, food handling by this charismatic patriarchal gangster figures does not just establish a democratic bonding between dons and hitmen. On the contrary, it also demonstrates that loyalty is expected from these added family members. The uncomfortable embracing and hand shaking with a fastidious father-in-law or a leading male figure delivering food and drinks does not simply convey friendship but a veiled threat. Thus, Macbeth seduces the murderers by confidently chatting to them, walking around them, feeding them and then, occasionally, patting them on the cheeks – as a typical Mafioso gesture – and threatening them by seductively grabbing and caressing their necks and, suddenly, for no apparent reason, shouting at them to leave the room. All in all, this combination of charisma, paternalism and authoritarianism on Macbeth’s behalf can be pointed out as an example of how a myth – following Barthes’s work –, in this context, amounts to no more than surface level. After all, neither is Macbeth truly a gangster nor does he have a family. Apart from this, this sandwich looks ridiculous in comparison with a feast in the house of an Italian gangster. Featuring what many reviewers might have regarded as one of Goold’s superficial ‘forbidden-to-be-boring’ outbursts, Goold’s postmodern irony reveals Macbeth as wanting to play up his part in power even in the smallest of domestic details. In fact, this dismantling of the idea of the myth can be extended to the fact that this piece of recorded theatre is not really a theatre recording, not in the classical theatrical mode nor in the way studio theatre recordings have been traditionally made. Yet, it is not truly a film either but – as indicated by Tony Garnett (see section 1.1) – some bastard form that, doubtless, reveals much of the fracture of the world represented in it.

Yet, food and its significance in relation to the family has deeper and more serious meanings than this. When Goold explains why he decided on a kitchen as a setting, he explains that the play is a deeply domestic piece of drama. Therefore, the kitchen becomes a place where this couple converses

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292 Figures 49, 50, 51, 52 and 53 are screen captions from DVD edition.
and decides upon pressing matters.\textsuperscript{293} Notwithstanding, food and ailments in the kitchen go beyond this idea and evoke Lady Macbeth’s dead child as well as those other children who are bound to die in the play. It is not an accident that it is in the kitchen that Fleetwood taunts Stewart on his lack of manliness and resolution to carry out the task he had set for them both (1.7). Macbeth’s contradictory quality as ambitious but indecisive husband ignites Lady Macbeth’s frustration about her dead child. When Lady Macbeth refers to the child (1.7.54-59), a chocolate cake is taken out of the fridge. As referred to in section 6.7, in a later scene (3.2), in the Macbeths’ chamber, Fleetwood produces an additional \textit{memento mori}: a shoe that belonged to the child.

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\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{figure57}
\caption{Figure 57}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{293} See Director’s and Producer’s Commentaries in DVD edition.

\textsuperscript{294} Figures 54, 55, 56 and 57 are screen captions from DVD editions.
Immediately we can establish the appealing contrast between the chocolate cake, its delicious presence on the scene and the horror of the assassination plotting taking place in the instant. Fleetwood’s acting work conveys the idea of the lost child in a way that suddenly turns the cake into a pure optical sign of the earlier existence of the child: the cake becomes a *memento mori*. This is exactly what takes place when she observes the shoe, which recalls the death of the child.  

In another sequence (2.1), Fleance (Bertie Gilbert) is surprised while trying to seize a piece of cake from the fridge. Nevertheless, Banquo indicates him to leave it back on the fridge. When he asks Fleance about the hour, Banquo’s utterance ‘And she goes down at twelve’ (2.1.3) is a clear indication that Fleance should be in bed rather than munching. Then, Macbeth pats the embarrassed Fleance on the head and the child returns the cake to the fridge. However, as Wyver points at, this same image will be evoked as soon as Macbeth instructs the Murderers to kill Banquo’s son as he turns his steps again to the fridge. The fridge and the cake become dramatic icons that enhance what Jonathan Ivy Kidd has interpreted in the film as the dual nature of food as a signifier or ‘life’ as well as reminder that ‘death is inevitable’ (2008).

### 7.7. Conclusions

In this chapter I have explored Goold’s Macbeth in its association with popular films taken as myths. All in all, what seems to be the consensus in all the tackled definitions of ‘myth’ is that we can assume their relationship with a common culture. As Keith Grant has pointed out, film genres have mythical qualities and, in many ways, they can be addressed as ancient myths. This is true since they provide whole cosmologies of heroes, heroines, and stock characters that achieve an existence outside the narratives they inhabit. However, Barthes reminds us that, although myths are endowed with a pernicious sticky quality, their relationships with truthful concepts is a much more complicated one than whatever we can derive from their face value interpretation. In this sense, following Barthes’ work *Mythologies*, I have reached the conclusion that Goold’s use of fully rounded myths is dangerously effective but tends to replace the concepts and truths these myths intend to highlight. Therefore, the

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295 In the Interview with Patrick Stewart and the Interview with Kate Fleetwood, it is made clear that both actors agreed on Lady Macbeth’s backstory. She had a child from a previous marriage and this child is dead. These moments help revealing Lady Macbeth’s pain on the subject. See DVD edition.

296 See Director’s and Producer’s Commentary (2010).
surface-based arrays of signifiers in postmodern films – as this one – must be, at all costs, critically revised.

Having accepted the premise that mythical qualities tend to erase the truth values in narratives and the issues they stand for, my initial intention was to analyze how war film and gangster film genres were consistently used as iconographic and cinematic references in this *Macbeth* production. If we accept that the conventions of these film genres undermine the theatrical features of the film, how does that contribute to define the hybrid nature of the production?

The gangster and war films mentioned in the chapter were mostly made by Francis Ford Coppola and their relationship with myth works in two directions. Whereas these films have in many ways counter-argued previous myths on Italian-American Mafioso figures and on wars on foreign countries, they also generate their own myths. In this regard, film criticism has demonstrated that Coppola’s war and gangster films were essentially subversive myths that destroyed previous myths.297 Secondly, if Goold employs resources from these films in his visual re-conception of this stage production, how does that help enhancing the richness of the text?

In fact, the relationship between the text and film genres is a demanding and complicated one in the sense that what we may regard as mere retails are elements to be constantly questioned and dealt with. In the first place, these hypertexts do not work in isolation but are part of a complex cluster of references and signifiers that, as referred to in section 3.3.6, constitute a complex post-generic configuration of volatile and interpretable meanings. In the second place, the narrative structures and the iconography belonging to this filmic repertoire interact in often strange and absurd manners. Very often, Goold’s technique shifts from one style to another and he even mixes two styles in the same scene.298 Often, the reader will find veiled parodies, as the Spielberg’s reference, as the Spielberg’s reference, in my opinion, provides. Some of the ways in which the filmic references are used speak about deep ironic truths that affect the characters. For instance, as I already explained, the sandwich-making scene might be regarded as a mere shadow of *The Godfather*. In fact, this is precisely what it does: a miserable ham sandwich cut in three pieces is all King Macbeth offers his murderers for lunch. What kind of regime is that which does not even offer any sexy entertainment such as the Playboy girls in Coppola’s *Apocalypse Now* offer to the soldiers? If this is not enough, Stewart’s rather peasant-like upbringing lacks all the style,

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297 Read Camon (2000) on *The Godfather* as an over-used ‘cultural commodity.’

298 As Stewart says – and as I pointed out in Chapter Two –, speaking about Goold, “[h]e has – it might be almost like a split vision of seeing something profoundly in focus or ever so slightly out of focus, which shifts the content of the material” (See “Interview with Patrick Stewart”).
forms, and subtlety—no matter how illegitimate—one would expect at the Corleone’s household. This poor reference enhances Macbeth’s tragic plight as a ‘wannabe.’ At the same time, it speaks volumes about the immense isolation suffered by the Macbeth couple and their lost child. Furthermore, these references to other films, at the same time, announce that, for reasons of budget or choice of style, the film does never truly become a film in the fullest sense of the word.\footnote{Let us recall that Wyver compares the war scenes to Saving Private Ryan and yet he admits that they do it with a budget that would only buy one day’s lunch for Spielberg’s production. See section 7.3.} Budget is not a definite criterion to distinguish film from theatre. However, it is an important one if we consider that this small budget constantly invites the viewer to trust that very few elements and very few actors need to be sufficient to imagine that a large army is invading Dunsinane—here, an old mansion in Nottinghamshire. Film genre energizes the theatre recording but its hybrid nature is clear in the fact that it does not erase the metonymic qualities of theatre. However, does it not, at the same time, praise this quality that British films have of being able to create highly valuable pieces with a reduced budget? And does it not, at the same time, point at the unapologetic theatrical features of the production?

On a different level, many of the different icons and narrative structures borrowed by Goold match enormously well with a Kottian reading of the play. Nevertheless, this Kottian interpretation has removed the grey tones and nihilistic shades of Polanski’s Macbeth (1972) and Peter Brook’s King Lear (1971) in lieu of a more postmodern Hollywood palimpsest of images. The narrative conveys the nature of the Grand Mechanism, as these images undertake circular movements through the piece. The film uses montage scenes to frame the state of war and then uses montage again to point at the final battles. In fact, the montage is repeated in the very last scenes in which Goold’s camera patrols around the different settings. Also, icons such as the heads as signifiers of punishment undertake this circular movement that resembles the Grand Mechanism. Yet, how does this confluence of film genres that find a common ground in the theoretical bases provided by Kott relate to stage-to-screen hybridity and its dynamics?

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the parameters of hybridity in the four films under analysis do not simply have to do with the collision and slippage between the languages of film and theatre. These parameters also involve a strong flux of mainstream film genericity. In this specific chapter, I have mostly paid attention, as explained above, to how gangster and war films de-theatricalize this film performance. One of the assumptions made about recorded Shakespeare is that it never reaches the theatrical qualities of such performance. Goold seems to be making a strong filmic point in this regard. Yet, can we say that this eliminates the theatrical elements of the piece? In the first place, let us
remember that, although this chapter only focuses on how gangster and war film conventions are employed to cinematize the production, in other chapters I deal with other film genres that contribute to turn the film into a multi-faceted narrative.

The abundant filmic discourse Goold deploys doubtless problematizes the theatrical origins of the production and, thus, differs from a more traditional BBC recording of a Shakespeare play. As I have been suggesting, Wyver’s films have the peculiarity that they all consider a neutral theatrical space as a starting point. This theatrical space constitutes a central metonymic site that is the confluence of many rooms, corridors, passages and private spaces that seem to work as backstage. In this way, although Wyver’s films do not recover the essence of a live performance, at least they make the most of the possibilities of working on the contrasts between the backstage and the onstage areas. How do gangster and war films help enhancing these contrasts and, therefore, the hybrid features of the film? In this specific chapter, I have focused on how scenes that specifically seem to be quoting or alluding to war and gangster films occupy the liminal private spaces around the ballroom. This de-territorializing of certain scenes from their natural theatrical expression seem more at home at spaces that emphasize the illegality, the hidden apparatus and the darkest aspects of the Kottian mechanism that seems to be constituting this filmscape. Therefore, even though in this chapter I am not making particularly outstanding comments on how theatre is commented on in the filmic narrative, I am pinpointing at the absence of theatre in these sections. If we analyze the film paying attention to its gangster and war film features, theatre seems to be disintegrating.

However, can we say that this disintegration is total? Gangster films have been regarded as contemporary urban tragedies. War films make use of the scapegoat, an essential element in classic tragedy. The aggressive editing in the montage scenes in the film alludes to the Brechtian approaches to dramatic art. Some of the war scenes acquire the uncanny mixed quality of a news broadcast and recorded theatre as Macbeth directly addresses the audience in close-up while waiting for a response. Also, as already referred to, the war scenes appeal to the viewer’s imagination as they are asked to believe that very few resources are enough to represent the English army. All in all, the language of theatre is largely displaced in this film. Yet, it is never displaced to degree zero, as I argued in the Introduction. Eisenstein’s montage and the editing energized by Goold disrupts the classical perfection of a theatrical mode recording and this filmic fracture of images, to an extent, works along the
inconsistency of the Scottish state, an apparatus that seems to be constantly at war. Filmic disruption in this theatrical recording helps psychologizing the production more than a purer production would.300

Also, it shows up inner Kottian mechanisms that seem to have inspired Goold. The ultimate contradiction and inconsistency we can observe in how war and film genres are used is that, in line with Barthes’ reasoning on ultra-significant myths, the abundance of self-reflexivity against this theatrical setting produces that this film never becomes a film in the strictest sense of the word and, at the same time, there is little left to envisage it as a theatre play if we regard the war and gangster themes. These themes illuminate the brutal psychologies of the characters and, nevertheless, the latent theatrical qualities of the production never let it turn into film.

300 As already explained in Chapter Two, this idea had been already put into practice by Wyver’s team when they recorded Lloyd’s Gloriana in film. Queen Elizabeth’s private weaknesses were tackled in filmic terms in the backstage areas, which appeared in the form of private dressing-rooms or even film studio sets created for private scenes in which Essex and the Queen express their mutual love and, subsequently, their antagonism.
8. RUPERT GOOLD’S *MACBETH* (2010): SURVEILLANCE SOCIETY AND SOCIETY OF CONTROL
8.1. Introduction

We will annihilate his entire clan, his family! We will mercilessly annihilate everyone who by his actions and thoughts (yes, thoughts too) assails the unity of the socialist state. (Stalin, quoted in Service 2004: 340)

… Says the tyrant whose specter this film conjures up. ‘Yes, thoughts too.’ Much attention has been paid to the totalitarian features of Rupert Goold’s Macbeth. Stalin’s quote echoes the commission to massacre the Macduffs after knowing that the thane of Fife challenges Macbeth’s authority by departing to England (4.2.150-154). Like Stalin’s, the Scottish King’s tyranny extends to many other families – ‘New widows howl, new orphans cry’ (4.3.5) – who, as Goold explicitly suggests in several scenes, are decimated under his regime if they ‘talk of fear’ (5.3.37), or if, as Angus’ bugging implies in the ‘Stasi Montage’ – which resembles The Lives of Others (2006) - they speak inappropriate thoughts out.301 What neither Stalin nor Macbeth anticipated was that both the surveillance society and the society of control would end up penetrating the aforementioned secret thoughts and furthering linguistic and cultural subjugation.

Macbeth’s order to kill the Macduffs is, in Goold’s hybrid television piece, transmitted through an intercom connected to an institutional surveillance network. As Goold confirms – see Dickson 2016; Interview with Goold in DVD edition (2010) –, he was partly inspired by Macbeth’s line ‘There’s not a one but in his house / I keep a servant fee’d’ (3.4.131-132), alluding to King James’ vainglory at keeping an eye on his subjects’ privacies.302 Also, he continues, Goold relied on various books on the Gunpowder Plot – e.g. Fraser’s Gunpowder Plot (1996) – and on Shakespeare’s possible sympathies for the Catholic recusants during the Jacobethan period.303 Also, he must have been inspired by Gregory Doran’s film Hamlet (2009) and its display of CCTV cameras within the Danish State.304 In more multifarious ways than Doran’s, surveillance devices in Goold’s film frame the production as a pseudo-Socialist dystopia

301 As already mentioned, in this film, after the death of Banquo, Goold inserts the ‘Stasi Montage.’ This section consists of a series of short scenes where snapshots of state violence are shown. The police break into a man’s room; Alsatian dogs pursue several runaways who try to get across the border; men are led to execution; victims are buried, etc. In the meantime, the Witches – as Servants in Macbeth’s household – prepare the table for the coronation banquet.


304 As already mentioned, in an Interview, Wyver explains how interested Goold was in the recording of Hamlet (2016). On surveillance in Doran’s Hamlet, see Lefait (2013-2014).
with an eponymous hero based on the sociopathic Joseph Stalin. Yet, my intention here is to transcend those alleged parallels, no matter how justified, between Macbeth and Stalin and explore larger issues connected to surveillance in this stage-to-screen hybrid production.

My contention is that Goold’s recording of Macbeth engages with the surveillance film genre to explore power issues latent within Shakespeare’s playtext. In fact, in translating the stage performance to film, Goold cinematizes the production in a way that transforms the theatrical values of the film into an almost complete filmic narrative. Surveillance is not monolithic and exists outside the tyrant’s control. In fact, surveillance does not simply form part of the state apparatus in Scotland but it belongs to the formal structure of the film. This problematizes the theatrical values of the production. A major interrogation in this analysis will be whether, following cultural materialist premises, there is room for subversion within this totalitarian surveillance apparatus. Eventually, I will study how subversion seems to indicate or reflect a transition from a Foucauldian society of surveillance towards a Deleuzian society of control, where chaotic forces dismantle the Scottish state to build up an even more hands-on state of vigilance. As we will see, nevertheless, theatrical values of the production are never reduced to zero by this meta-filmic injection of surveillance genre.

Setting aside that Macbeth has been widely represented on stage as a European dictator – see Stegh Camati (2005, 341) –, the playtext can be studied in relation to the deal-making and mutual discrediting through surveillance, plotting, denunciation and delation by rival families taking place in the Jacobethan period. These plots often blew up in these families’ and the crown’s faces. King James, himself a watcher and confederate to those who wanted Mary Stewart’s execution, suffered distress with the public observance his subjects, as Stephen Orgel says, inflicted on him (2011: 29-34).

Regarding this, Richard Wilson analyses the supernatural parade of Kings in Macbeth as a court masque possibly including the figure of Mary Stewart in remembrance of James’ matricidal treason (2013: 290).

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305 Martin Amis associates Ross’ ‘Alas poor country…’ (4.3.166-174) speech with the ‘evocation of a terrorized society’ under Stalin’s rule (2003: 86). Also, Patrick Stewart admits having based much of his research for the part in Amis’ book and other sources accounting for Stalin’s brutality to portray his aged Macbeth (See TheaterTalk 2008).

306 Personally, I am not interested in making a statement against surveillance. Experts like David Lyon (2007; 2008) prove that an overall apocalyptic analysis of surveillance can be too simplistic and reductive. Nevertheless, I am interested in how Goold’s surveillance-based aesthetic choices affect the narrative structure of the film and how these choices help understanding the larger concerns under surveillance.


Arguably, the show of Kings and the apparition of the murdered Queen would unravel popular thoughts and suspicions over the Monarch’s involvement in the execution of Mary Stewart. Wilson’s hypothesis regards the parade of Kings as the laying bare of the King’s private guilty thoughts.

From this it follows that, as surveillance films often demonstrate, state and private spying against political enemies and opponents could be turned against those in power too. Thus, in this reworking of the play, Goold’s Orwellian nightmare connects the narrative to contemporary worldwide surveillance exercised ‘when [people] are thinking, reading, and communicating with others to make up their minds about political and social issues’ (Neil M. Richards, *Intellectual Privacy*, quoted in Richards 2013: 1935). As David Lyon asserts, ‘everyday life is suffused with surveillance encounters, not merely from dawn to dusk but 24/7.’ Communication technologies provide wide access to people’s thoughts and ideas through the storing of their readings, their messages, payrolls, bills, and different records which allow an approximate reconstruction of their private lives. If Weberian views regard state vigilance as safeguard for our freedoms, many contemporary scandals indicate its frequent unconstitutional, unlawful, and anti-democratic uses (Lyon 2008). Following this, the film speaks out contemporary contentions over surveillance and the control derived from such an activity. Yet, although this issue has been widely explored in *Hamlet* films and it is undoubtedly recognized as part of the playtext of *Macbeth* – see Arthur F. Kinney (2008) –, except for Welcome Msomi’s *uMabatha* (1970), Goold is pioneer in exploring surveillance as narrative structure in a filmic realization of this production.  

309 This specific Jacobean feature has not been developed in any filmic Macbeth except in Trevor Nunn’s *Macbeth* – directed for television by Philip Casson (1979) –. The frame in this film emphasized the darkness of The Other Place, the small and intimate theatre where the RSC had originally staged the performance. Apart from the intimate atmosphere that strongly emphasizes the actors’ work on the text, a specific scene manages to create the anxieties of surveillance. The scene 3.6, in which Lennox (John Bown) confers with a Lord, is framed as a very intimate exchange where the two thanes talk about the events after Duncan’s and Banquo’s death. Bown’s delivery of the speech is accompanied by a high dose of cynicism and irony that clearly flaunts the maxim of truth in the speech. In the middle of the conversation, Seyton (Greg Hicks), who is also the Third Murderer in this production, passes by interposing between the two thanes, producing uncomfortable tension and silence for a little while. As Seyton leaves the scene, it has been clarified that Macbeth’s rule is one where the walls have ears and eyes.
8.2. Theoretical Framework

Surveillance studies are intimately conjoined with popular fiction and European thought. John Michael Archer (1993) divides the association of power and intelligence into two different paradigms: the views of the Frankfurt School and the route opened by Norbert Elias. Elias studies Francis Bacon’s views of the monarch’s governance as an ‘angelical power.’ This ‘angelical power’ grants the monarch the ability to see what is denied to the subjects (Bacon 1999: 249). Elias continues talking about surveillance seen as a weapon used in the wars between small aristocratic units (1982: 331). The view presented by the Frankfurt School is mainly represented by Foucault’s analysis of the Panopticon. For all that, Goold’s vision of the Jacobean angelical power seems obviously to have been filtered through Foucault’s analyses of ‘Panoptic’ institutions. Foucault envisages power as a compartmented structure based on Jeremy Bentham’s prison model. This analogical space is divided into sections marking out those who present deviant conducts or abnormal behaviors (2012: 166). Moreover, also following the Althusserian analysis of institutionality, these localizations of space frame post-revolutionary institutions such as the school, the prison, the family or the hospital as essentially oppressive and determining for the individual’s conduct (2000). However, as Foucault continues, the boundaries between the statuses of watcher and watched are shifty and power is not possessed by a single entity. Therefore, who subverts power will be, following Jonathan Dollimore and cultural materialism, an essential question in this analysis (1992: 54). In continuation with this vision, Deleuze points at the cultural transition from a post-revolutionary disciplinary society – mostly characterized by institutions – towards the so-called ‘society of control,’ where surveillance is in the hands of corporations and/or individuals producing constant tabulations in power relations, undermining all the compactness of institutional apparatuses. Control becomes a slack, unhinged, smooth and depersonalized entangled network which, apparently, grants more freedom to the citizen but is effectively more controlling because the increases of surveillance mechanisms – i.e. via smartphones – have widely enlarged the possibilities to accumulate data and information (1990; 1991).

This seems to indicate that subversion is becoming a natural state in our current society if we oppose ‘subversion’ to institutional guarantors of private freedom and democracy. As already mentioned, popular fiction has tackled the abuses derived from surveillance. In fact, as also suggested, surveillance studies have been partly shaped by popular fiction (Lyon 2007). Regarding film, there seems to be a connection between the art itself and surveillance practices (Mathiesen 1987; Catherine Zimmer 2015). Additionally, the self-reflexivity of surveillance film retrieves the theatrum mundi
metaphor of Renaissance drama for cinema (Lefait 2003; 2013-2014). Thus, surveillance allows the viewer to reflect on the nature of the filming itself and then take a flexible position of detachment and identification in relation to the content.

Following McGregor Wise, although each period has defined its ‘surveillance imaginary’ with its collection of stories and narratives, due to the 9/11 attacks, surveillance films have highly multiplied (2016: 4). In narrative terms, in these films the hero is prosecuted by a manipulating government who, unjustly or not, impeaches him for some crime. At the level of form, as Thomas Y. Levin confirms, in these films surveillance transcends the psychoanalytical voyeuristic features of film and is turned into a perfect fusion of narrative style, with a repertoire of tropes – such as the ‘caught-in-the-act’ device (Zimmer 2015, 10) –, and content. Nevertheless, it is Dietmar Kammerer (2004) – with his analysis of Enemy of the State (1998), Minority Report (2002) and Panic Room (2004) – and, subsequently, McGregor Wise (2016: 10) who confirm the hypothesis that the surveillance hero handles surveillance mechanisms to defeat his enemies.

However, this type of narrative also widely demonizes what a Western state regards as the monstrous Other. Goold’s use of such Hollywood schemes within the BBC context can be read as supporting what Pierre Bourdieu has called the imperialist universalization of cultural prejudices (1999). After all, the pseudo-Soviet iconography, in line with Derrida’s work, seems to conjure up the totalitarian specter of hyper-utopian Socialism. In my view, rather than trying to explicitly compare Macbeth to a monstrous Soviet, we can think of these ‘residual’ Stalinesque features – borrowing Williams’ terminology (1977, 121-7) – as Western visions of the Other, which, following Edward Said, have not changed much (2003: xiii). In his analysis of the aftermath of May ’68, Robert Wilson underlines the importance of language as a means to subject the Other, for instance, by making reference to Tzevan Todorov’s *The Conquest of America* and how Hernan Cortez conquered the Aztecs by creating a sufficiently powerful linguistic system to subjugate their indigenous language system. As Wilson continues, Barthes’ socio-political myths (2000) proved more powerful than ‘flower power’ or the ideals of the revolution and, thus, discourses embodied by the New Philosophy embraced mass

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310 An entry in one of Wyver’s blogs challenges the film: ‘What extra this cloning of Hollywood currency has brought to this production? Could winning American audience with little knowledge of the play be one reason?’ (Wyver 2010).

311 As already mentioned, Derrida explains that the Soviet monster has been often used by neoliberalism to present itself as a panacea against the tyrannies of communism (2012).

312 The recent worldwide risings of Extreme Right populisms openly proclaiming their xenophobia point out at this separation between national selves and the Others.
communication and deregulation, giving way to the Reaganite emergence of neoliberalism and its consequent blurring of boundaries between the real and the imaginary (1992).

Goold’s repeated use of Hollywood filmic conventions work on the Western prejudices about the Soviet iconography and uses an Orwellian Stalin’s banner to shock viewers familiar with the anti-Socialist propaganda corpus of myths denounced by Derrida when he regards a world order based upon a war cry against Marxisms of all kinds (2012: 63). Can we read these nostalgia-inflected icons with spectacles of contemporary relevance? For Sokolova, the film represents ‘the state of our modern world,’ although it is ‘re-sited to a communist past’ (2013: 169). In my view, this communist past where the film is recontextualized, in line with Derrida’s reading of Hamlet, invites us to speak to our Ghosts. Against more deterministic Althusserian and Baudrillardian views, following Deleyto’s work on Hollywood partisan cinema, it is certainly possible to read the film against the grain, relying on cultural materialism too (2003: 73). If these Hollywood clichés denounce Western terrifying visions of its past perceptions of the “Soviet monsters” – mostly framed through Cold War films and varied means of propaganda –, subversion is related to whatever we can make out of this imagery. The essentialist Soviet dystopia, which totalizes all the Eastern Block, presented by Goold gives way to see these eminently theatrical symbols as part of a semiotic system designed by capitalist discrediting myths. Let us remember that most of the totalitarian symbols in this production are displayed in a room which presents all the metonymic values of a stage performance. In some ways, these theatrical features highlight the illusions of the fascist mythological self-fashionings. If we apply cultural materialist premises, which reject the essentialist and totalizing visions of New Historicism, myths can be criticized and subverted. As Catherine Belsey affirms, meanings of texts are never single and do not unilaterally come out of the interpreters’ collective perceptions (1992: 41). Thus, I intend to analyze this film as a ‘site of struggle’ for these two views – a more deterministic and a less deterministic one, as the generalizing use of ghastly Soviet icons will be questioned by the possible fractures that a cultural materialist analysis could inflict upon the shell of this bias.

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313 In an ‘Interview,’ Goold declares having been inspired by Kremlin and Cold War films where essentially the Soviet ageing generals fight each other for power (See DVD Extras).


8.3. The Setting and Surveillance

As already mentioned, this stage-originated hybrid piece has been heavily cinematized but preserves much of its theatrical origins. As already mentioned, the main setting in the film is the ballroom at Welbeck Abbey as well as exterior settings chosen for different scenes. This room and the other facilities at the Abbey re-create Foucault’s ‘Panopticon.’ The ‘vivid neutrality’ (Wyver 2016) pursued in the election of setting reflects the symbolic qualities of the theatre. Amongst the many reforms carried out on this twelfth-century building, Leonard Jack describes the works by the Fifth Earl of Portland, with their multiple tunnels and corridors interwoven in the mansion. The corridors find their confluence in the ballroom, where the Earl used to hold his social gatherings (see “Director’s and Producer’s Commentaries” in DVD). Sam McCurdy, director of photography, achieved the green tones one would expect in Kubrick’s horror or in hospital-based slasher productions. In fact, as already mentioned, the Witches are killers who rip the Bleeding Sergeant’s heart off after he is left on a stretcher in that hospital. Also, it plays along the Foucauldian views of disciplinary institutions as places for punishment.

As soon as Macbeth is King, in the ballroom we can see the banner representing his effigy embodying the above-mentioned totalitarian Other. As main area of confluence in this filmscape, the banner underlines the qualities of this surveillance-based regime. In scene 3.1., Banquo confronts Macbeth’s image and speaks his suspicions on him out loud. Nevertheless, when he is about to leave the room, he discovers that a buzzing intercom has recorded his whole speech. From that moment on, we know that Macbeth’s regime depends on surveillance. The banner materializes Macbeth’s keeping an eye on the subjects and the intercom proves that he also hears everything they say – see figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. Likewise, this totalitarian icon underlines Wilson’s notion that it is ‘language which is ‘fascist’’ as ‘it compels speech and obliges those who use it to subject themselves to the order it prescribes’ (1992: 3). Per contra, Banquo is recorded as he speaks the subversive words not allowed by the regime.

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316 See “Welbeck Abbey History.”

317 In dialogue with David Cooper, Marie-Odile Faye, Jean-Pierre Faye, and Marine Zecca, Foucault compares the hospital with an institution that repairs the disorders society produces. In this light, as in the Soviet Union, the intensification of the pairing of the medical profession with the coercive police shapes the consolidation of a fascist section of hyper-normal citizens versus the abnormal society members (2012: 126-127, 142).
Figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 are screen captions from the DVD edition.
McGregor Wise affirms that surveillance films need to tackle the question of the limits of surveillance in the narrative (2016: 10). However, as already said, Deleuze recognizes power as diffuse and nonlocalized (1987: 52). In this light, Goold’s filmscape stretches an apparently unlimited surveillance out without totally leaving its centre: the ballroom, the site where this stage performance recording takes place. The cables interconnecting the rooms reach the Abbey cloister, where the Macbeths discuss what to do with the daggers (2.2). They also reach the kitchen, hospital facilities, the corridors, the mansion, and, eventually, the Trans-Siberian Express – in which Banquo attempts to escape – and Macduff’s mansion. However, as I will show, it is at the theatrical space where genuine subversion takes place. In a nutshell, the film deconstructs the stage values of the production and the features of surveillance film expand the limits of a recorded stage production.

### 8.4. Surveillance Between Different Factions

Surveillance-based power in this film is shifty and complex. As Dollimore indicates, power is non-monolithical (1984). Likewise, in this film, surveillance and, consequently, power, go from hand to hand. The first overt allusion to technology-based surveillance takes place when Macduff yells through an intercom from Macbeth’s kitchen announcing Duncan’s death (2.3.67-74). The institutional corridors at Welbeck Abbey are wired so we discover that Macbeth’s surveillance equipment has existed long before his crowning. Yet, these facilities do not necessarily guarantee people’s securities but only ensure that certain factions maintain their hegemonic power.

Thus, in this nightmare, characters spy each other. Macbeth is spied too. However, initially, the evidence gathered does not suffice to overthrow him. After the discovery of Duncan’s death, right after Macduff summons Duncan’s thanes to Macbeth’s kitchen, Goold quotes Welles’ filming of the scene by having Lennox (Mark Rawlings) and Macbeth exchanging glances of complicity after the bloody daggers are produced as evidence – see figures 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 –. Also Banquo, suspicious of Lady Macbeth’s fainting, conspiratorially indicates Macduff (Michael Feast) to ‘look to the lady’ (2.3.118). Later, being ‘caught-in-the-act’ through the intercom, Banquo is backfired by his own surveillance impetus. Although he has the grounds to accuse Macbeth, he lacks the political alliances for such an action.

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319 In Welles’ version, the Holy Father (Alan Napier) in extreme close-up scrutinizes Macbeth after he kills the grooms (see figures 7, 8 and 9).
Figures 7, 8 and 9 have been taken from Orson Welles’ *Macbeth* (1948).

Figures 10, 11 and 12 have been taken from the DVD edition of Goold’s film.
Meanwhile, surveillance forges new alliances. After scene 2.3, the Porter takes over some of the Old Man’s lines (2.4) at the Abbey courtyard. While smoking, he nonchalantly converses with Ross about the assassination and observes Macduff’s family when they leave in their car. At the same time, a long shot shows an outsider’s viewpoint watching them all through the bars of the mansion gate. Unquestionably, surveillance exists outside Macbeth’s rule. This means that Macbeth’s spies are not the only ones who watch – see figures 13, 14, 15 and 16.

Furthermore, at their meeting, Malcom (Scott Handy) and Macduff see photos of the people who suffer Macbeth’s tyranny in a landscape that recalls the Gulag. These images function as triggers for the rebellion against the tyrant – see figures 17, 18 and 19. Therefore, even Macduff is partly sharer in

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322 Figures 13, 14, 15 and 16 are screen captions from the DVD edition.

323 Nevertheless, these pictures also quote Polanski’s Macbeth (1971). The first time we see Jon Finch’s face in close-up it is shown against a background where several of his prisoners remain hanging from gallows in what seems an allusion to the twentieth century European executions as well as Medieval torture.
the power granted by evidence to build up a legitimate case against the dictator. In fact, in a later scene, which Goold calls the ‘Stasi Montage,’ a series of state crimes committed by Macbeth are shown in snapshots that make the viewer complicit with the diegetic surveillance activity. In fact, the Porter is shown watching military parades on television in a manner that invites the viewer to partake in surveillance activity – see figures 20, 21 and 22 –.
As for Ross, Lennox, the Porter, Angus (Bill Nash) and the First Murderer (Hywel John), they all collect information for and against Macbeth. While Angus bugs people’s homes to get information, the Porter spies for Macbeth, and Ross gathers files on Macduff. From the beginning of the film, Ross carries files on Norway’s defeat and Cawdor’s treason. Lennox collects files on those who want to oppose Macbeth. However, he also collects files on Macbeth himself. As he interrogates Ross, he is deliberately ambiguous in his explanation on Duncan’s death, Malcom’s imputation and Banquo’s murder. Before this, during Banquo’s killing in the train, the First Murderer knows that Lennox has been sent to oversee the operation and then he witnesses how Lennox shoots the Second Murderer after a short dispute. The state bureaucrats are inclined to accept any major inhumanity as mere administrative procedure. But whereas the Murder, Angus and Ross are swifter in turning against Macbeth, Lennox and the Porter embrace realpolitik and willingly collaborate with him. Ironically, Lennox’s files (‘I have a file / Of all the gentry…’ 5.2.8-9) on Macbeth are decisive to buy him a passage to join Malcom’s rebellion. Thus, all the same, no matter how slow many have been in changing sides, information is a safe-conduct to make an alliance with those in power. Thus, meritocracy is not as important as information.

8.5. Sons Watching Parents

Foucault’s analysis of power also regards the family as a major disciplinary institution. Yet, Macbeth’s regime is, while totalitarian, also subversive against the stability the family is expected to

324 Figures 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 and 22 are screen captions from the DVD edition.
provide. In relation to how families suffered the Stalinist regime, as Grossman says, ‘[i]n one hut there would be something like a war. Everyone would keep close watch over everyone else… The wife turned against her husband and the husband against his wife. The mother hated the children’ (Grossman, quoted from Amis 2003: 3-4). To some extent, Grossman’s passage describes Goold’s vision of the Macduff family’s division into different responses to political treason and family betrayal, some of them hostile to the mother. Lady Macduff (Suzanne Burden) tries to keep her children entertained with a pretense of normalcy while potential dangers approach. After her husband disappears, she attends one of the military parades and her worrying looks show that in the previous scenes she has been putting on a positive mask at the potential threats lurking at Macbeth’s kitchen.

Lady Macduff functions as the conservative agent who prefers to keep the established order as it is, no matter what. As Dollimore explains, in times of crisis, authoritarian reactions ensue. Deviant behaviors are then put under control. The seventeenth century was emblematic in its promotion of morality and condemnation of the anxieties produced by deviant behaviours. Also, he associates the religious control over the populations with a form of ‘internalized submission’ that, ultimately, relies on the internalization of guilt as a mechanism that forces subjects to accept authority (1994: 81-85). In this film production, as we will see, Lady Macduff is an example of ‘internalized submission’ since she constantly tries to convince herself – as well as others – that this totalitarian regime makes all the sense in the world.

Because of the bitter battle of wits with her bookish daughter and the milder conversation with her son, Macduff’s wife sees her smile turned into a grin. Like Roald Dahl’s Matilda, Macduff’s daughter reads books and is critical of what her mother thinks and does. She questioningly addresses her: ‘Nay, how will you do for a husband?’ (4.2.39). But the most sharpening accusation comes when she addresses her scathing accusation at her mother: ‘Then you’ll buy ‘em to sell again’ (4.2.41). How is her mother so naive as to sell their father out and uphold this orchestrated farce about his treachery? As opposed to this confrontational attitude, Macduff’s son’s approach is more sensitive and kinder as he prefers to plainly ask questions.326 Here Goold, as already suggested in Chapter Six, introduces a

325 It is certainly poignant that Goold has chosen the bookish child as the one with the most critical sense in the house. In many of his interviews, Goold shares the advantages of having been a ‘geek’ in his early years. As he continues, ‘I was a geek at school, and when my daughter was born, Lucy Prebble, who wrote Enron, said, “I hope she’s beautiful but not too beautiful,” and I know exactly what she means. I really treasure the feeling of being relatively socially excluded through my teenage years and I think it is good for your character’ (Jessica Salter 2010).

326 Goold distributes Young Macduff’s lines between the son and the daughter. A third youngest daughter, a silent part, helps further developing Goold’s study of the family as an institution tarnished by Macbeth’s subversive regime.
dramatic statement, from which it follows that perhaps the children, even if not completely understanding the whole picture, are certain about the many flaws that both the regime and the official history of their father’s treachery manifest. For these children, that their father is a traitor is simply a wasteful thought. Therefore, they questioningly bomb their mother with doubts that undermine her act. In some ways, the children establish the conservative resistance to the subversion on family values that the tyrant is generating.

In this scene, Goold dangerously alludes to the many incidents related to children denouncing their parents accounted for in the Stalinist era. Under Stalin’s regime, as Amis points out, how ‘children who denounced their parents became national figures, hymned in verse and song’ (2003: 154). Previously, he refers to how ‘some parents killed their children. And other parents ate their children’ (ibid: 141). Is this a situation in which the family is just about to face such a serious split? The murdering squad does not give us time to know. In any case, Macduff’s daughter’s questions are fissures in this disciplinary state. She sees the flaws of the system as surveillance is not being employed to capture criminals but for private feuds.

However, even if this family split is rather timorous, Goold works on this idea in the ‘Stasi montage.’ In this section, one of the families scrutinized by Lennox’s secret service is assaulted at home. As mentioned above, a little boy talks to Lennox and directly points at his mother. As the mother discovers the officers coming, she starts running away leaving her child unprotected in Lennox’s hands. Then, Lennox leaves the child, whom he has involved in the arrest of the mother. The fact that the child does not intentionally accuse her does not fundamentally alter the cruelty of the situation. In fact,

327 Figures 23 and 24 are screen captions from DVD edition.
regardless of how the Stalinist violence of the film has been domesticated by BBC’s policies against too explicit violence, how Macbeth’s regime destroys families is made clear. In this matter, Macbeth’s surveillance is subversive against the conservative disciplinary and regulative principles embodied by such an institution as part of the larger social framework. However, this subversion does not propose any better alternative.

8.6. ‘Banquo and Macbeth all hail’ (1.3.67)

The first man in this production who, with some sarcasm, seems to be startled at Macbeth’s kingship is Banquo. As we have appreciated, this Banquo does not shy away from appearing to be a threat to Macbeth’s subversive regime. Macbeth and Banquo’s mutual watch starts in the ballroom – scene 1.3 in the film –, where Banquo becomes a watcher as he starts keeping an eye on everything Macbeth does and thinks, particularly as he whispers to a mannequin dressed with a military jacket and reanimated by the Witches with a pumping heart – the Bleeding Sergeant’s heart –. As already seen in Chapter Seven, when the King embraces him, Banquo makes sure to let Macbeth see how little he matters for the élites of the kingdom. Is the peasant Macbeth perhaps thinking of high-flying with his betters? Later, in scene 2.1, the camera shows Macbeth in canted frame and Banquo, again, towering above his rival. Banquo asks Fleance to quickly come back to him and threateningly makes clear to Macbeth that he will not do anything dishonorable. As mentioned above, he confides his suspicions on Lady Macbeth’s fainting to Macduff and then openly addresses Macbeth while stating his suspicions of ‘treasonous malice’ (2.3.125) – see figure 265. Very likely, with this, Banquo has spiced himself up for Macbeth’s barbecue and a reaction shot where Stewart shows his dangerous visage – where he truly looks like the revengeful Georgian peasant that Stalin was – proves this – see figure 25. The reader will remember how Banquo’s speech is registered through the intercom in scene 3.1. After the speech finishes, following suit with how David Tennant – as Hamlet – removes one of the CCTV cameras from the wall in an outburst of rage, Banquo furiously removes the intercom from the wall. Subsequently, his encounter with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth takes place at the courtyard of the mansion. Banquo and Fleance (Bertie Gilbert) are caught, in their travelling clothes and suitcases in hand, by a hunting party as they try to leave the country. Therefore, the excuse that they might delay for an hour ‘or twain’ does not seem the best alibi to justify their obvious attempt at desertion. As for Macbeth, on horse, he boisterously and even threateningly urges Banquo not to miss the feast – see figures 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31. His theatrical stature increases as he deduces that Banquo is trying to gather foreign alliances to turn against him, which gives him a pretext to eliminate his rival. In line with
Greenblatt’s belief on subversion to consolidate power (1994), Banquo’s subversion has been contained and, consequently, has helped confirming Macbeth in power.
8.7. Genuine Subversion: Diegeticized Surveillant Omniscience and Supernatural Powers

As already suggested, surveillance blurs the boundaries between form and content in the filmic narrative. As Levin refers to when analyzing Francis Ford Coppola’s *The Conversation* (1974), surveillance films have the capacity to ‘move away from the thematic to a structural engagement’ in the film narrative. When the protagonist (Gene Hackman), as Levin continues, tries to find out the surveillance mechanisms in his apartment, the viewer discovers that the locus of surveillance ‘resides in a space that is epistemologically unavailable to [the hero] within the diegesis’ and, thus, surveillance becomes ‘the condition of the narration itself’ (582-583). Arguably, this ‘diegeticized surveillant omniscience’ has been frequent in CCTV-based surveillance films of the 1990s onwards.

We can rightfully say that a similar effect takes place in Goold’s *Macbeth*. We have already pointed out at the anonymous vigilant presence at the courtyard. However, there are other instances of surveillant omniscience, such as the ‘Stasi Montage,’ where several bits of state violence and documentary footage with military parades are shown while the servants prepare the table for the banquet scene. Also, some extreme long shots feature Macbeth and Lady Macbeth as they appear covered in blood in a wide cloister corridor after the killing of Duncan. At that point, they seem to be under vigilance by some hidden angelic mechanism. Since the Witches are the ones who stage-manage this institutional and nightmarish plot, it is not difficult to relate this omniscient surveillance to the supernatural. Contrarily to other types of controllable subversions in the film, the Witches’ power amounts to the beginning of a complete subversion, which starts eroding this unchanging and stagnant institution.

328 Figures 25-31 are screen captions from the DVD edition.
As Terry Eagleton states, the Witches represent the ‘unconscious’ of the play. This unconscious takes an aggressive turn which deconstructs the order versus chaos binaries (1986: 2-3). They exercise their power through the play and their presence de-regulates the already flabby but essentially hyper-rational, totalitarian and bureaucratic organization of surveillance in Scotland.

In fact, their surveillance seems to take place mostly around the ballroom, which preserves all the make-believe of theatre. As already mentioned, this area constitutes a sancta sanctorum of the subversion-surveillance binomial in the film. Firstly, the Witches and Banquo see and watch over Macbeth’s murderous thoughts. Yet, Banquo’s watch backfires when he is caught by Macbeth’s intercom as he challengingly looks at the tyrant’s banner. Although Macbeth has been doubtless caught by Banquo – ‘and I fear / Thou played’st most foully for’t’ (3.1.2-3) –, this does not at all discourage him in his murderous rule. However, it is at the ballroom that Banquo’s Ghost returns as bloody witness to Macbeth’s treacherous assassination. Eventually, Macbeth’s last encounter with the Witches presents how the source of filmic integration between thematic and formal surveillance is articulated.

The Witches’ powers depend on their technological control, no matter how rusty and dated this technology may seem to be. In scene 4.1, the kingly parade happens through repeated takes featuring Fleance’s entrance in the room. This editing turns the Witches into film auteurs of sorts. Mimicking a rudimentary digital reality, the visions line up in front of Macbeth. If the Witches’ powers are connected to technology, it is not strange that they extend their powers to the audiovisual potentialities of an editing room. The court masque mentioned in the introduction becomes a surveillance feast where Macbeth’s thoughts of Fleance and ‘Banquo’s issue’ are visually arranged. It is not simply that, as Eagleton says, the Witches figure the subconscious but are also capable of giving it a pseudo-filmic form. Macbeth’s lack of understanding of where this omniscient level of surveillance comes from represents the true meta-filmic subversion for his tyranny. Thus, the theatrum mundi metaphor is recovered in the production as the hero sees himself as part of a visual narrative framing the whole event. If Macbeth can extend his command on the Scottish institutional apparatus through symbols and images of fascism, the indefiniteness and the deregulated strength of the Witches’ surveillance suffices to make Macbeth’s communist dystopia give way to the liquidity of more Baudrillardian simulacra in the form of scraps of filmic narrative and a disorganized amalgamation of surveillance footage replacing this decayed horror state.

The proof that surveillance based on visual retails exists outside Macbeth’s rule and within the filmic structure is the last sequence, in which different settings are shown as different levels in a video game. Thus, the viewer is invited to patrol over the kitchen, the corridors, the hospital facilities, the
campaign hospital, the dark tunnels of the abbey, and, finally, the lift, where Macbeth and Lady Macbeth take their last journey. Surveillance follows its own channels, aligned to the neoliberal spiral of liquidity and decentralization denounced by Deleuze, which ends up eliminating all sense of consistency and real freedom. In fact, these last shots seem to encapsulate the film into the computer-based confines, bound to repeat its narrative with very few possibilities for the player except for those programmed by an unknown creative community of designers and programmers. In the “Director’s and Producer’s Commentaries,” Goold, in fact, alludes to these last shots as the patrolling at the final stages of a video game. This reference embodies the Deleuzian paradox that, whereas the coordinates of surveillance and power appear as diffuse and untraceable, yet it situates the watched within the very narrow confines of a video game that will be repeated over and over. The viewer is made complicit in this effect as, like the Porter in the previous scene – where he watches the military parades on television –, he watches the different scenarios of this massive scrutinized matrix, perhaps unaware – or not – that he is one more spot in it.

8.8. Conclusions

Does surveillance eventually lead to subversion in this film? Certainly, the surveillance frame subverts the traditional mode in which the BBC has recorded stage Shakespeare productions on the television screen. Although this production is completely theatrical in the sense that it pays homage to the RSC-originated verse speaking rationale, it is unusually – for British recorded theatre – inflected with a plethora of Hollywood film conventions. The fact that the film, as a Shakespeare adaptation, still

329 In fact, Goold’s self-proclaimed intention here is to pose the question that perhaps all this will happen again (See “Director’s and Producer’s Commentaries”).

330 Figures 32 and 33 are screen captions from the DVD edition.
constitutes a feast for the ear as well as a visual event clarifies the complex stance of this hybrid production. Therefore, formal aspects of surveillance film primarily struggle with the BBC’s traditional house rules of studio drama or live recording.

Goold’s affiliation to Hollywood generic conventions seem to align him to the hegemonic cultural presence of American films, which control the main channels of distribution but which, at the same time, use surveillance films as critical narratives against the dangers derived from surveillance malpractice. Surveillance films and series of the last two decades, such as *The Wire* or *Prison Break*, confirm Deleuze’s belief that that post-revolutionary surveillance disciplinary values are - although the process is not at all linear - being replaced by values of the society of control, where power consists of random shifts and tabulations that resemble the dynamics of the game show rather than the hyper-rational dynamics of totalitarian civil rule. Parallel to this, Goold’s film reflects this process as it sees a disciplinary world where tyranny based on listening, reading and hearing, mostly in the hands of localized subjects and civil servants, gives way to an emergent more visual tyranny based on re-editing of incomprehensible images designed by unreachable entities. Thus, in line with the prediction that history will become a composite of texts, the film features surveillance as a source of rebellion as its images embody omniscient surveillance constituting a real cinematic subversion. Such cinematic subversion poses the question: What kind of world is left after Macbeth’s regime is overthrown? Apparently, as Malcom’s generals return and exhibit Macbeth’s head, everything comes back to normal. However, is that so?

Goold’s semiotic arrangement of filmic signs is problematic as it is, apparently, too symbolic and slightly too archetypical for a thorough materialist analysis. A problem I have found when trying to discover evidence to support an analysis from a cultural materialist perspective is that the film is, after all, an essentialist totalitarian surveillance-based mythical construction. Despite Sokolova’s recognition of elements that allude to our contemporary world, the visual narrative is still too unspecified. All references to the Soviet totalitarian dystopia may, as previously said, amount to no more than scraps and shards of Western paranoid visions on Marxist failed utopias. However, the subconscious insights provided by omniscient surveillance show the scratches and holes of this Foucauldian nightmarish construction. A more malleable, less predictable, less organized and much less localized type of surveillance seems to run in parallel with the growth of post-Reaganite neoliberal thinking. Following an opposite route to the Lacanian and Freudian analogies on language and growth, the hyper-rational and institutionalized analogical system of discipline and surveillance in Macbeth’s world has given way to a much more semiotic and infantile shapeless succession of images, who peep through the little
fissures in the shield of the regime. As Wilson suggests, capitalism does not simply involve economic change but also linguistic change (1992, 2). Thus, the chaotic language of omniscient surveillance breaks all rational boundaries pinpointed in the Foucauldian space. Following Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt’s work, the transcending of national boundaries favors the development of massively entangled networks of control (2000). In this light, state control in the film gives way to an undefined unreal macro-system of simulacra, re-editing, repeated images, unintentional and disorganized snapshots. Yet, this does not mean that control has ceased.

It is not accidental that the communist Derridean Ghosts in the film have been defeated by marginal figures like the Witches or other feminine characters. To an extent, Macduff’s daughter’s scrutinizing on her mother’s hypocritical stance for the regime seems to point at the crumbling system of discipline and punishment. Whereas the visions that pervade Goold’s disciplinary state fulfill the Western’s nightmares and clichés stigmatizing the Eastern Other, the feminine subversive element, contributed by the Witches and Lady Macbeth, doubtless, foregrounds the marginal, the creative, and the bloody altogether. Whereas Macbeth’s totalitarian surveillance-based regime is self-referential and relatively ostentatious, the control mechanisms – seemingly in the hands of the Witches – are not visible at first sight. Nevertheless, except for Macduff’s daughter’s searching and cantankerous gaze, the subversion by the feminine individuals does not truly lead to encouraging or positive glimpses at a Utopian tomorrow beyond Macbeth’s downfall, clearly materialized when Malcolm exhibits his bloody head, a piece of meat which caricatures the magnificent Staliniesque banner showing the vigilant Macbeth. However, Macbeth’s severed head is not more connected to Macbeth’s body than omniscient surveillance is to the visual texts it intends to edit and patch up. The control society replacing the disciplinary society seems to underline the frustrating truths discovered in 1968 on the dominance of communication technologies and confirmed by Barthes when he claimed that power ‘carried for all human eternity is language’ (1982: 459). New languages will be spoken and new systems of surveillance will slowly pillage the apparatus in Scotland over Duncan’s and Macbeth’s regimes. People will need to learn these new languages and they will be inspected as they do it. Rather than eradicating the Stalinist threat quoted above, a new liquid surveillance will unravel, analyze, manipulate and, if necessary, edit and reconfigure these thoughts. In other words, Goold’s vision sees subversion as replacing an essentialist myth of socialist tyranny for another – perhaps also essentialist – myth of a liquid and undefined regime of far-reaching control of the unconscious.

For the purposes of this thesis, it seems tremendously convenient to analyze the scene of the parade of Kings as a confirmation that the Witches’ power is ultimately connected to surveillance of
Macbeth’s fears, which they materialize in hybrid terms. Although this scene is recorded at the ballroom, the theatrical space per excellence, this is the section in the film where the categories of cinema and theatre are, to my mind, more intensely blurred. Aggressive and ostentatious cheap takes of Fleance’s walk through the ballroom within the large immensity of the theatre invokes the magic of virtual reality and the bare means with which Wyver has successfully cinematised a recorded stage production while never letting the viewer forget that it is a stage production. Ultimately, this may amount to prove that the language of film, even if powerful and strongly inflected through film genre, does not suffice to eliminate all traces of theatricality. The language of theatre incorporates the language of film as discourse of difference within its own textuality. Whereas the lack of lavishness of this series of repeated takes may be taken as a domesticated version of Julie Taymor’s, Michael Almereyda’s or Baz Luhrmann’s highly lavish ways of recording, this difference can be explained in terms of degree. Clearly, the visual subversion pursued by the so-called New Wave is not achieved by Goold’s production. Nevertheless, it takes a clear position for maintaining the metonymic theatrical values of Shakespeare’s text.
9. DORAN’S JULIUS CAESAR (2012): A CONVERGENCE MEDIA NARRATIVE
9.1. Introduction

@shaksper How many ages hence shall this lofty piece of television be wondered at in homes and classrooms yet unbuilt? #JuliusCaesar. (Wyver 2012a)

The above quote comes from one of Wyver’s blogs.331 As already mentioned in the first two chapters, in such blogs, Wyver, amongst other things, keeps many followers updated on past, ongoing, and upcoming Illuminations Media productions. As the reader knows, the quote riffs on Cassius’ questioning of how many times shall the ‘lofty scene’ be played ‘[i]n states unborn and accents yet unknown’ (3.1.111-112). My intention is to present @shaksper’s quote, which Wyver refers to in his own quote, as an instance of the interactivity generated by Doran’s hybrid television production of Julius Caesar (2012). @saksper, like Cassius, invokes historical judgement of the film as the first stage performance of Julius Caesar at the Globe Theatre appealed to the audience’s involvement. Such appeal to the audience must have been relevant over the first performances of Julius Caesar if we consider that the Elizabethan playwrights had good reason to take some knowledge of Julius Caesar and the so-called ‘tyrannicide debate’ for granted (Miola 1985).332 Likewise, the audience seems to be requested to participate in history’s judgement and to take a stance on whether Caesar’s assassination was a necessary evil or a rash savage action committed by a self-righteous élite group. However, in a very specific sense, @shaksper’s quote invokes homes and classrooms as arenas to evaluate the social impact of Shakespeare’s ‘African Play’.333 This could be read in two ways. Either this Julius Caesar will be enacted at schools and television and, by extension, make an impact in society in general, or, simply, it will make an impact just on some homes and some schools and, consequently, like the BBC Shakespeare Series, will be confined to be materials for the teacher’s closet.

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331 All the extracts from Julius Caesar come from Daniell’s Arden Shakespeare edition (1998).

332 Following Miola’s article, the Counter-Reformist and Reformist debates on the legitimacy of challenging the Monarch’s authority frequently helped itself with the example of Julius Caesar to justify or delegitimize attempts to overthrow a tyrannical King (1985).

The interactive purposes of the play and this present adaptation seem to be confirmed by Wyver. As the producer remarks, Shakespeare was treating the people of Rome and the real audience as if they were only one.\textsuperscript{334} Also, as he continues,

The intention is to contrast the ‘public’ scenes of the play – the opening and closing, as well as the climactic Forum scene, all of which will be shot in the theatre – with the predominantly ‘private’ scenes (everything else) to be captured on location.\textsuperscript{335} In the public scenes the intention is to play with the slippage, which is undoubtedly in Shakespeare’s text, between the on-stage populace of Rome and the audience in the auditorium – when Mark Antony makes his appeal to ‘Friends, Romans, countrymen’, he is speaking to the crowd around him and to all those in the theatre – and through our film, we hope, to a much wider audience beyond. (2012b)

Can we regard Wyver’s affirmation on the audience of \textit{Julius Caesar} as true? The last Shakespeare Globe On Screen production of \textit{Julius Caesar} situates Wyver’s assumption as sufficiently true.\textsuperscript{336} Yet, how far does our television film produce this breaking of the fourth wall within classrooms and homes? To what extent does hybridity encourage the involvement of members of the audience into the conflicts of the play? Can we consider this film a turning of a theatre production into an opportunity for enhancing the ‘socio-centrality’ of television?\textsuperscript{337} Can we extend the concept of hybridity beyond the confines of the television screen and apply it to a series of epitexts derived from this production? However, if we

\textsuperscript{334} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{335} Matilda Wainwright, the art director of the production, explains that the stage sets are modelled on the FNB Stadium in Johannesburg. This setting created the impression that the play would run like some sports event. As for the film, the connection between the stage setting and the location was that the different spaces selected from the location – the Oriental Centre – would stand as the boxes of this stadium. See “Making-Off of \textit{Julius Caesar}” in the DVD edition (2012).

\textsuperscript{336} This performance was filmed in 2014 and directed by Dominic Dromgoole. The recording opens with a view of the audience queueing to enter the Globe Stage while we can observe how the Globe Terrace is invaded by actors. In Elizabethan apparel, Murellus (Sam Cox) yells at the audiences on the dangers of what Julius Caesar might be trying to do. From an upper window, we can see the hands and the face of a prisoner who publicly announces her confinement for contesting Caesar’s power. A couple of puppeteers parody the political conflict between the Republicans and the Caesarian party. Other cast members play games and dance together. To continue, a tracking shot follows some of the citizens as they enter the groundlings carrying a big trunk, which they place near the stage. Afterwards, one of the citizens and the lady prisoner – who seems extremely happy with being handcuffed – start dancing, singing and rousing the audiences with ‘hoorays’ for Caesar. Music accompanies the feasting and the general Carnivalesque joy until Murellus enters the stage and starts yelling at the audience and at the citizens. Although the rest of the film does not truly engage very much with this concept any further, the statement seems that the play calls for an almost total confusion between audiences and actors, between reality and fiction. See \textit{Julius Caesar} (2014).

\textsuperscript{337} See section 3.2.2 and Fiske and Hartley (1988).
can, how can we be sure that hybrid television Shakespeare increases what Wyver has referred to as the common treatment of the fictional and the authentic audiences as one?

As already suggested, a clearly fundamental purpose in this chapter will be to discover whether Wyver’s hopes on treating the audiences at the Roman Forum and the audiences on stage and beyond the stage as one are, even if only to some extent, achieved. If they are fulfilled, an additional purpose of hybridity is to reach an understanding of the extent of such achievement and of how we can assess the different concrete participation opportunities offered by the RSC. Additionally, as they serve to fulfill the fourth objective in this PhD dissertation, it is my intention to assess the potentialities of hybridity to carry this evaluation out.

Perhaps a good starting point for this should be the definition of what I understand as ‘audience’ within the scope of this chapter, regardless of whether my concept of audience coincides with Wyver’s conception or not. A thorough sociological examination of the audience participation is, at present, out of my reach. However, in this chapter, I can, at least, count on the study of the ways in which the film develops the dialogical drive of hybridity with interventions by different amateur actors, students, and other audiences who have accessed the educational resources derived from the production. As the reader will see, a degree of clarification regarding this fundamental point of departure has been obtained through a series of epitexts derived from the film and the stage performance. Amongst these paratextual materials, I am counting on a Teacher’s Pack, some testimonies from amateur actors who have taken part in the production, and, also, other filmic epitexts intended to increase audience participation even outside the theatre.

Following these premises, hybrid television Shakespeare film in this chapter needs to dialogue with convergence culture and transmedia. Regarding transmedia, Lynda Hutcheon and Siobhan O’Flynn state that the current ‘hybrid media landscape’ is one in which fan communities want television programmes and movies to land on cyberspaces too (2013: 181). However, the scope of this production is somewhat more modest. Although internet facilitates the RSC’s and BBC’s educational enterprises, the trans-medial impact of the film has more to do with derived filmic products as well as education-based resources to increase audience participation on the cultural debate offered in the film.

Yet, it is still significant that, modest as it is, the film can be studied within the parameters of convergence culture studies. As mentioned in Chapter Three – see section 3.4.4 –, following Jenkins (2016) and Storey (2012), convergence is an ‘over-arching’ logic which involves the relation between
different media systems by using different platforms. Also, convergence is fundamentally based on audience participation and the re-working of a cultural product, which needs to take a distance from its original conception. This re-invention of the cultural product, again, needs active involvement on the consumers’ behalf. In a different work, Jenkins defines convergence culture as the landscape ‘where old and new media collide.’ Also, he clarifies the relationship between different media systems by pointing at convergence as the realm where corporate – made by the producers – and grassroots – made by the audience – media intermingle. Apart from this, convergence establishes varied and unpredictable interaction patterns between consumers and producers. As he continues, ‘convergence represents a cultural shift as consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content.’ This emphasizes the idea that convergence is less connected to delivery technologies than to the relationship between ‘producers’ and ‘consumers’ (2008: 2-3).

To what extent can we say then that this film builds participation bridges between the RSC/BBC and public service beneficiaries? In due course, we will tackle the BBC and the RSC’s public commitment to education and how their take on Shakespeare in this specific production is, at least intentionally, oriented to fostering a participative appropriation on the audience’s behalf. Thus, the consideration of convergence and transmedia in this chapter is relevant as they help reformulating what might be Wyver’s question: Can hybridity in this film serve to build up a reception of *Julius Caesar* as a genuinely popular product? In this specific case, with ‘popular,’ I am referring to the conception presented in section 3.4.4., which identifies ‘popular culture’ with one made by the consumers. Analyzing hybridity in this film production in this light proves that, as I indicated in section 1.2.4, hybrid television Shakespeare film is an elastic concept rather than a watertight formula.

So far, I have been dealing with how the languages of television, film and theatre are inflected within the same television programme. In this chapter, I am going to contend that Doran’s *Julius Caesar* (2012) extends the dialogical and centrifugal reach of hybridity beyond the clashing and slippage of film and theatre languages. In this film, Wyver and Doran introduce the production into a spiral movement of convergence in several ways and with varied results. Far from simply standing as a film based on a performance, as Doran suggests, it attempts to be both: a recorded theatre piece as well as a film shot on location. At the same time, it displays a range of epitexts that reinforce, complicate and expand the dialogical nature of the production. The thread that connects these epitexts is the way in which, according to what Wyver seems to be suggesting, the film fosters ‘interactivity’ and

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‘participation’ from communities of viewers and consumers. To an extent, this pattern of participation will be intrinsically connected to what I regard as Doran’s particularly word-based approach to the filming in this specific occasion.

To develop this chapter, I will start by defining various concepts connected to convergence cultures that will be necessary to evaluate the extent of hybridity in this production. In the next two sections, I will proceed to analyze the stage-to-screen and screen-to-stage hybridity that constitutes the film. I will explain why, in my opinion, Doran’s film embraces convergence culture as a means of giving the audiences two films rather than only one. Regarding this, convergence and transmedia begins with the interaction between the RSC and Illuminations Media. To continue, I will employ the next two sections to deal with how hybridity is extended to foster and increase participation from audiences and students into the process of creation. This will be done by providing a series of examples of experiences, exercises and opportunities that intend to confirm Wyver’s notion that audiences at home – and then schools – are also included in the meta-theatrical equation presented in the play.

9.2. Theoretical Framework

As already indicated, the rationale behind this chapter stems from the idea that hybridity in this film encourages audience active engagement and these processes of interaction will be critically examined. Many scholars confirm the idea that Julius Caesar calls for a high level of interactivity with the audience.\(^{339}\) What hybridity here amounts to is to bring a high amount of audience participation and interaction in the already transmedial conception of the film. This development is neither necessarily intentional in the same way in which The Matrix and its paratexts are, nor does it amount to a far-reaching cyberspace-based communal constituency. However, at least, through different roads, it has aimed at different audience constituencies with the purpose of involving them into the issues discussed in the production. In fact, it has attempted a degree of audience involvement and even creative empowerment.

For a start, I want to remind the reader that the first strand of convergence in this film is founded on the recording process itself. Contrarily to the other films, this one was not made after the stage performance was finished but it was recorded while it was being rehearsed. In the “Making-Off of Julius Caesar”, Adjoa Andoh and Patterson Joseph – playing Portia and Brutus –, speak about the correlated

experiences. As she remarks, elements found out in the direct interaction between characters in the film could be employed in the stage production. In this sense, the stage performance was enriched by filmic language and vice versa.\textsuperscript{340}

To find the tools to analyze the transmedia and convergence-based framework in the film I have been paying attention to the work of several scholars involved in the fields of Adaptation Studies and Convergence Cultures. Specifically, the works written by Jenkins (2008) and Hutcheon and O’Flynn (2013), together with a variety of already-mentioned epitexts useful to analyze the extents of ‘interactivity’ and ‘participation’ pursued in this production have been used. Firstly, for Jenkins, these two concepts need to be differentiated from each other. Whereas ‘interactivity’ relates to the way in which specific delivery technologies offer us choices and possibilities, ‘participation’ is based on socio-cultural agreements, protocols, and dynamics. The former is medium-specific; the latter are bottom-up assumptions that depend entirely on the negotiations by audience members and audience constituencies. In fact, as I will be showing the reader, a great deal of the participation required from members of the audience will depend on Shakespeare’s language itself, which is, doubtless, one of Doran’s trademarks as a director.

In fact, the scope of hybridity seems to be much deeper than we should expect as, in fact, the film cares for words since it makes some implicit political statements on the RSC’s stance for Shakespeare, words and all. Therefore, the relationship between the cultural values represented by Shakespeare’s language and the popularity attempted by the common efforts of the RSC, BBC and Illuminations Media acquire complicated textures when the film seems to be choiring Rodenburgh’s honest statements on Shakespeare acting, which, amongst other things, emphasizes the need to train speech muscles.\textsuperscript{341} In this regard, the RSC website shows an example of how important voice work is for the artists selected for the different performances:

\begin{quote}
We work with the body as well as the voice, helping actors to build vocal and breathing stamina, flexibility and muscularity as well as to make connections between text, voice and character.

Text and voice coaches also work on the understudy roles, offering actors the time and space to ‘play’ with the text and organically develop their performances.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{340} Andoh speaks about the freedom found in the intimacy of the television screen. By filtering the groundwork carried out on rehearsals, as Andoh continues, the actors can find creative freedom in the little space provided by television. Additionally, the actress points at how, in this specific case, what was tried in the film also gave way to different ideas employed in the stage production (See “Making-Off of \textit{Julius Caesar}” in the DVD edition, 2012).

\textsuperscript{341} In section 1.2.3, I refer to Rodenburgh’s bullet points for the training of a Shakespearean actor.
Vocal warm-ups take place before every performance to help actors prepare their voices focus their minds.

Although, as I will later insist upon, the African re-contextualization of this performance will not be the main element of discussion in this chapter, it will be important in relation to verse speaking. As the reader may know, much of the power in this film derives from speaking and from the accents of the speakers.

In addition, again, as Jenkins explains, convergence culture has more to do with the dialogical relationship between media than with the creation of new delivery technologies. Therefore, the starting point of the recording works in line with a convergence-related impetus as Illuminations Media, BBC and RSC have participated together in the original film as well as the stage production. If, following Jenkins, convergence involves the interaction of corporate groups, then, as already mentioned, the consumer needs to become a cooperative participant in the creative process itself. Therefore, cultural products can be collectively assimilated, debated, questioned, reframed, recast, re-motivated, and even re-created by a collectivity of cooperative consumers. In this light and, as I already clarified, what determines the impact of convergence is that consumers do not expect to just passively take what the artwork offers but they need to be included in the creation process and, sometimes, even take the reins of what is going on. As Jenkins goes, ‘Audiences, empowered by these new technologies, occupying a space at the intersection between old and new media, are demanding the right to participate within the culture’ (2008: 24).

It is my position that this participatory demand by consumers needs to be seriously taken and that, to some extent, the means through which this film has attempted to enlarge participation responds to such an idea. Convergence cultures lead to the transmedial opportunities to expand consumption for fan communities and individual consumers. In this process, transmedia is an essential component. Hutcheon and O’Flynn define transmedia productions as ‘primarily designed as extensions of films, TV series and console games that function as the central “tent-pole” production’ (2013: 181-182). Additionally, Jenkins provides a more complex explanation:

In the ideal form of transmedia storytelling, each medium does what it does best – so that a story might be introduced in a film, expanded through television, novels, and comics; its world might be explored through game play or experienced as an amusement park attraction. Each franchise entry needs to be self-contained so you don’t need to have seen the film to enjoy the game and vice versa. (2008: 98)
Nevertheless, the self-contained nature of transmedia storytelling is more an idea than a reality.\footnote{342} However, all in all, trans-medial artworks respond to the desire to get more out of an artwork enjoyed by the audience. As an instance of this, Jenkins provides an interesting account of the conflicts between the Star Wars fan communities and how Lucas has kept a complicated relationship of tolerance and restrain to the fans’ eagerness to engage in further creation on the saga.\footnote{343} A more recent – and successful – example has been the BBC Sherlock series. This narrative has broken the fourth wall between viewers and characters through John Watson’s blog and several Twitter accounts of different characters. In Doran’s film, the audiences are expected to be familiar with the film as well as to use and enjoy the materials alongside the viewing.

9.3. Two Films Interlocked: Alternation of Public and Private Scenes

Unlike the other productions, Julius Caesar was recorded on film while rehearsed for the stage, although parts of the performance are included in the final edition. The purpose of this section is to examine how stage-to-screen and screen-to-stage hybridity operate in Doran’s Julius Caesar. The stage production opened on 28 May 2012 in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre (Stratford-upon-Avon). As it has been widely commented on, this performance contextualized Shakespeare’s Roman tragedy in some unspecified African country. The raison d’être for this re-contextualization comes from the supposition that Julius Caesar is ‘Shakespeare’s African play.’ As Doran says:

If you look at the history of Africa in the last fifty years, since many of the countries started to gain their independence, you see a pattern emerging quite often of leaders coming to power on a wave of popularity, then beginning to pull power to themselves in a one-party state — frequently then being overthrown in a military coup, and then, unfortunately, plunging the country into civil war (…) Well, that is the plot of Julius Caesar. (Jeff Lunden 2013)\footnote{344}

Although Doran’s re-contextualization of the play in Africa has raised controversy, as it exceeds its scope, in this chapter I will not be dealing with it.\footnote{345} Although the recasting of Julius Caesar as

\footnote{342} Nevertheless, occasionally, as the case with The Matrix trilogy is, often the only way to make sense of some parts of the films is by accessing the video-game version.

\footnote{343} See Chapter Four in Jenkins (2008).

\footnote{344} In different interviews, Doran reformulates this idea in the same terms (Emma Brown 2013; “Making-Off of Julius Caesar”).

\footnote{345} This production brought about certain controversy on some aspects. Firstly, the film and the stage performance produce a general impression of Africa and, rather than recognizing the complexities of the whole continent, it seems to have been
Shakespeare’s ‘African play’ has met varied degrees of acceptance, the popular appeal of the production seems to me more focused on its hybrid conception than with its unfortunate multi-cultural overgeneralizations. Also, some consensus exists as for the quality of verse speaking demonstrated by the actors.

The broadcast took place on 24 June 2012 in Channel Four at 8 pm while the stage production was still running. Let us remember that both the recording and the rehearsal process went in parallel. For all that, part of the film – the public scenes – was recorded at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and the other parts were filmed on location. The location chosen for the filming is the now defunct Oriental Centre, a shopping mall specialized in Asian food and the sale of Asian products on Edgware Road (London). The Centre was extremely popular amongst the Colindale workers and inhabitants. Likewise, it used to be host for various events celebrated by the London South Asian community.346 For Wyver, ‘[that was not] the obvious place to reproduce a modern African state.’ Nevertheless, as the producer continues, the team used ‘the different spaces and the different areas across [that] big site to find the sort of equivalence of the scenes that had been done on the stage, but also responding to (…) the building.’347 The fact that this production was not even concluded as it was being filmed changes the original mindset of sticking to the ‘essence’ of the stage production. In this case, influence from the film on the stage play was inevitable too.

Within the now abandoned Centre, the galleries, arcades, escalator, old stalls, corridors, fire escapes, halls, and destroyed rooms served as vividly neutral settings for most of the scenes in the film. The decayed conditions of the building, the surroundings and the inner spaces at the Oriental Centre created a supreme playground for actors and filmmakers alike. While not referring to any specific chronotope, it combines the decayed atmosphere of Dawn of the Dead with the possibilities of featuring a space where people hide and pursue each other in war scenes.

arranged as an essentializing myth made of retails from different African motifs, although the influence of Nelson Mandela’s impact in South Africa is significant. Secondly, although they were praised for their verse speaking, the actors are British black actors and not genuine African actors. Therefore, calling this Shakespeare’s ‘African play’ seems misleading. In addition, the fact that this performance coincided with the London Olympics 2012 which attempted to celebrate British multiculturalism was, in some respects, an unhappy coincidence with the event. See Colette Gordon (2015), Andrew Cowie (2016).


As I have already indicated, the first and clearest mark of convergence takes place within the same filmic narrative as the two media find themselves in direct collision. Thus, the viewer is presented with the advantages of recorded theatre and the textual insights of psychological drama. I will be particularly paying attention to how Shakespeare’s language is employed in the film and how attention to the text will be retaken as a connecting convergence theme. As I would like to separately tackle the different filmic treatments received in the production, in this section I am only going to establish the clashes between the two main codes. Over the next section, I will be focusing on how the theatrical mode is employed.

The film opens in the theatrical mode on the stage of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. The Soothsayer (Theo Ogundipe), a half-naked shaman covered in clay, leads a tribal dance in celebration of warlord Caesar’s victory over Pompey. Flavius (unknown) and Murellus (Marcus Griffiths), two members of the Republican police force, enter using their lashes to remove the crowds from the stage. However, as soon as the policemen exit, a group of singer-dancers carry on celebrating Caesar’s arrival.

When Caesar (Jeffrey Kissoon) and his followers leave the stage, scene 1.2 is divided into two sections. They all leave the stage through the front exit and the next shot presents a corridor on location. A quick transition from the theatrical mode to the filmic mode has taken place and the people’s cheering provides continuity to the editing. The camera pulls back as Cassius (Cyril Nri) follows Brutus into this corridor and the private atmosphere establishes the conspiratorial tone of Cassius’ persuasion. The Average Shot Length (ASL) in this sequence is 9.2 seconds, which gives way to the characters’ exposure of feelings and thoughts altogether. Most of the performance develops as shot-reverse shots underlining the persuasion intended by Cassius and how he gradually seems to be affecting Brutus’s mind. Close-ups and over-the-shoulder shots confirm such nuances in Brutus. As Joseph says, ‘Shakespeare is great roared. Shakespeare is sublime when it’s just spoken.’

When he attentively listens to Cassius’s statement ‘Men at sometimes are masters of their fates’ and the lines which follow (1.2.137–140) – see figure 2 –, the camera enhances a line that, because of the film connection to African politics, seems emblematic.


The slowness of this line brings the viewer immediately in contact with contemporary resonances with Henley’s lines in Clint Eastwood’s Invictus (2009): ‘It matters not how strait the gate / How charged with punishments the scroll, / I am a master of my fate, / I am a captain of my soul’. Morgan Freeman’s quoting of Henley’s poem recalls Mandela’s actual use of Cassius’s lines when preparing the manifesto for the Youth League of the African National Congress, which, following Ashwin Desai (2012: 16), collected these lines: ‘The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars / But in ourselves, that we are underlings…’ (1.2.139-140).
Doran’s psychological close-up features how Brutus continuously feels that these are chiseled in his mind and they are turned into a species of personal motto. In this as well as in a series of subsequent close-ups, we can notice how seriously Doran takes the rhetoric aspects of the play. Apart from the fact that the recording heavily relies on the speaking abilities of the characters and the additional value of the Eastern African accents selected by the cast, we will notice how very frequently Doran shoots takes in which one character in close-up listens to another character’s speech. Thus, the viewer is invited to appreciate the little emotions and reactions that each of the thoughts and utterances thrown like firebolts produce on the listener. In this case, the listener is the character paying attention to another character but I am also referring to the viewer as listener as he/she is invited to participate in this receptive task.

As soon as they hear Caesar coming, both friends leave the corridor and wait upon Caesar in a contiguous room. As Caesar sees Cassius, he stops and addresses him without the slightest effort to hide his contempt. Doran turns Caesar’s address to Cassius into another filmic oral tour-de-force. Caesar chews every thought and idea on his rival’s physical and intellectual qualities. In the meantime, the

350 Screen caption from *Julius Caesar* (2012).

351 Ibid.

352 Doran repeatedly argues that his African inspiration has much to do with Mandela’s experience at Robben Island (See “Making-Off of *Julius Caesar*”). As some writers explain, Mandela and his associates organized the so-called ‘Robben Island university.’ Many qualified prisoners started a literacy syllabus through which they attempted to keep the anti-Apartheid fight alive. For Mindgi, reading allowed him ‘to grow out of the prison walls’ (quoted from Desai 2012: 38). In this film, Caesar’s scorn at Cassius for his reading habits is significant as it recalls the bullying suffered by those prisoners who were often forbidden to read and study in prison (See Aswini Desai 2012).
camera shows how Cassius experiences a great deal of pain while receiving the insults and this automatically situates the character at a greater level of sympathy than in other productions. It is precisely in how the atmosphere of terror and dictatorship is generated that the DoP makes a particularly sympathetic work for Cassius. As Caesar talks, a tracking shot presents all his followers as we listen to no less than seventeen lines of abuse – 1.2.197-213 – and, at the same time, we are invited to take part in the impact Caesar’s words are making on the rest.

The way we are involved in this assessment of Caesar’s behavior is by our observance of the tracking shot that features a circumspect Antony (Ray Fearon), who slightly looks Cassius over the shoulder; Trebonius (Segun Akingbola), Caska (Joseph Mydell), and others, who attempt to seem neutral at Caesar’s taunts. Several questions are generated as for what the private thoughts of Caesar’s followers must be on his open conflict with Cassius. Instantly, as viewers, we are exposed to the clear dictatorial policies followed by Caesar as the actors’ mute expressions undoubtedly announce that nobody who challenges the tyrant’s voice goes unpunished. Very likely, some of them are not being completely honest with Caesar. Even Antony, who will clearly take a stance on Caesar’s side, does not seem entirely convinced that Cassius deserves such treatment. With this tracking shot accompanying Caesar’s taunting of Cassius, we are encouraged to fill some gaps related to Caesar and Cassius’ previous relationship.
The women, Portia and Calphurnia (Ann Ogbomo), are the ones who show more open-faced and honest feelings of pain and sympathy toward this epic deadly hatred between the two former friends. Whereas Calphurnia shows her pity toward the ‘spare’ outcast Cassius, Portia cannot hide her skepticism about Caesar’s ruling skills. Whereas Goold’s *Macbeth* delighted more in filmic reference, quick editing...
and visual feasting, Doran’s African *Julius Caesar* is approached in the simplest textual terms using the camera to emphasize the ideas, thoughts and utterances in the text. In fact, as we will see, the camera does not only focus on how listeners receive the words but in how thoughts follow one another as they are uttered. The statements seem to be clear: Yes, the lines are complex and that is the reason why they deserve careful attention from the viewers. Likewise, they deserve careful exposition on the actors’ behalf, even on the small screen. To sum up, those who watch the film are equally regarded as viewers and listeners.

The scene is further fragmented as Brutus pulls Caska’s sleeve. The three characters enter a gentlemen’s restroom so they find the privacy necessary to speak their minds in what we have already perceived as a terror state. The scene takes place in medium-long shot with Caska occupying a central position and cleaning himself. Almost constantly, the frame shows them as if they were being observed by some hidden presence. This produces that their conspiratorial tones are moderated and, at the same time, Caska’s utterly ironic tones reflect that he still does not quite trust his friends. Despite his bodyguard demeanor, Caska proves being a critical thinker who has found the Lupercal as big a joke as Cassius has. His description of the three attempts at crowning Caesar and the rabble’s stinky breath are visually associated with how he urinates and how he washes himself afterwards. Mydell manages to suggest the disgusting effect of Antony’s populist – and probably pre-arranged – public show of affection to Caesar. After Caska and Brutus take their leave of Cassius, the main conspirator is left alone in the room. Although Doran’s camera has given enough evidence of physical contact between the two friends to let us understand that their friendship is genuine, Nri’s approach to the mirror in the toilet shows that he does not discard deceiving Brutus for the sake of the conspiracy. The mirror is scratched and the vision of the splits work as a metaphor of Cassius’ shattered state of mind. As Nri says, Cassius is a manic-depressive man who desperately needs to be loved and reckoned by others. This he delivers clearly to the mirror as the camera zooms into Cassius’s plotting and manipulating maneuvering.

What the camera is demonstrating so far is that there is a connection between the space, the width of the lens and the sincerity of the characters. As we leave the public space and the theatrical mode, we get into more personal one-to-one dynamics where wide shots and exchange shots tend to

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355 Again, as we will see in the next sections, the acting techniques used by the Assistant Director and the actors are unveiled to the taxpayer through some educational materials.

356 Nri explains his own characterization as Cassius in this sense. See “Making-Off of *Julius Caesar*”.

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predominate. Yet, close-ups move deeper into the character’s inner thoughts, revealing additional layers of meaning that complete what they previously talked about. As Wyver confirms, the relationship between power and theatricality, manipulation and staginess, is already present in the play, although ‘maybe Greg pulls it out more’ (2016). Nevertheless, the nuanced camera performance expresses this dual nature of the play in a dynamic that takes us directly from the public sphere to the innermost private thoughts of the speakers as if we were gradually penetrating the deeper truths in this populist autocracy. Paradoxically, these private scenes also make certain statements about theatre as they relish in verse speaking and gliding between the metonymic language of theatre and the more specifically realistic language of film television.

The next scene (1.3) happens at a ‘market-place,’ a section in the Oriental Centre that was re-arranged as a local food market. A French telephone booth, pallets, exotic plants, strong primary colors, and a bit of rain recreate the warm urban ‘African’ setting. When Cassius suspects that Caska might be a traitor, he produces his panga and, for a moment, both men breathe the tense silence before a fight. Yet, Caska breaks the tension by offering his conspiratorial hand to Cassius. In this scene, we can recall how Doran relies on Wyver’s style as he combines the theatrical setting with a few props and textures that almost reconstruct the authenticity of an African street by way of narrowing down the camera width and employing very few effects, all of which, roughly speaking, keep the impression of slippage between theatre and film.

In the next sequence (2.1), a flat courtyard protected by bars and a series of long wide shots recreate the orchard at Brutus’s domus. With its 23.01 minutes, this is the longest scene in the film and features an Average Shot Length of eleven seconds. The beginning of the scene and Brutus’s first speech – ending with ‘Then, lest he may, prevent’ (2.1.28) – amounts to twenty-five lines of verse speaking on a single take. The problem is sorted out as the camera tracks Brutus’ walk around the orchard. Despite the close intimacy that Brutus reaches with the spectator, Joseph still employs the rhetorical and the explicatory gestures he would use in the theatre. The idea that Brutus’ argument needs to be verbally developed in front of the camera – not in voice-over – and that the actor’s gestus cannot be downplayed just because it is a film still predominates.

Apart from this, Doran introduces the character of Young Lucius (Simon Manyonda), who is shown as protégée or adopted son to Brutus. The scene continues with the arrival of the other conspirators and the heated discussion between Brutus and Portia, who is self-conscious of the political

\[357\] Pangas are broad-bladed African machetes.
role women are denied in that male-dominated world. This scene is followed by another domestic sequence (2.2) taking place in another courtyard and an upper level joining the stairs with Caesar’s balcony. Caesar and Calphurnia discuss his attendance to the Senate and Decius Brutus enters through the courtyard to persuade him.

Again, Doran demonstrates that the oratorical importance of the play is conveyed in visual terms in this scene as well as in the forum scenes. Decius Brutus (Andrew French) is shown in close-up as he speaks to Caesar. At this point, the close-up resource is used to project the hypocritical and silver-tongued way the seemingly sympathizing senator manipulates the tyrant. The close-up emphasizes Decius Brutus’ wolfish expression as he slightly scalds Caesar’s alleged inclination to stay home because his wife has had bad dreams. These piercing close-ups have revealed the power of words to modify other character’s perceptions.

The figures below – 10, 11 and 12 – feature the Senate escalator where Caesar is assassinated. How do they resemble the entrance of the Roman Capitol is for the viewer to work out as it is part of the vivid neutrality pursued in the film? This is one of the most iconic examples of Doran’s ability to make the most of the vividness of an urban landscape in audiovisual terms. The stark and urban decay in the location conveys the idea that these senators run an institution lacking the luster and the monumentality of European and Western public buildings. Almost a deformation of the Roman Curia, it is not difficult for the viewer to acknowledge this space as one where blood has run free and daggers have done their worst.

The essentially theatrical blocking of the scene is irritated by an array of filmic inserts. For a start, Artemidorus’ speech (2.3) is transposed to this scene and partly delivered voice-over as the conspirators and Caesar come into the place. The Soothsayer is framed in low-angle as he looks down on Caesar and warns him that the Ides of March have not gone yet (3.12). A series of deep long shots, medium shots, and close-ups determine and frame the different micro-sequences within the scenes in the same way in which asides would be conveyed on the stage. In addition to this, a series of reaction shots show the non-verbal communication between different conspirators. As Caesar responds to Metellus Cimber’s plea, he makes ample use of his vocal powers to deliver the grandiloquent speech that situates him at the heights where the Northern Star dwells. Subsequently, the killing proceeds mostly in a series of shots that combine normal speed with slow motion. A reaction shot shows the Soothsayer extending his hand to Caesar while he is butchered. As the killing is almost finished, we return to normal speed and Brutus yells while stabbing Caesar on his intimate parts. Another close-up presents Brutus turning his face from the killing while we return to slow motion and other conspirators.
continue stabbing the dictator’s corpse. To continue, after Brutus has gathered up courage, a series of close-ups emphasize his enthusiastically genuine fanaticism as he asks the senators to ‘stoop.’ After this, Cassius and Brutus share a close-up in which they invoke the evaluation of history and they claim the repetition of this liberating act many times to come at many different theatre stages.

The tensions and the dangers in the scene are, again, conjugated in filmic terms when Antony comes in. We are invited to take part into Antony’s inner thoughts in voice-over as his address to the ‘mighty Caesar’ (3.1.148-150) takes place. The POV shot following Antony’s gaze features the voracious and half-naked Republican killers gathering around Caesar’s friend. Yet, Doran’s circular camera movement depicts Antony’s dealing with the situation as such movement turns him into the central figure in the frame. First, Antony uses the most soft-spoken tones to request the exhibition of Caesar’s body at the market-place (‘That’s all I seek, / And am moreover suitor that I may / Produce his body to the market-place’, 3.1.226-228). At this point, the conspirators are shown in a tracking shot, again, paying attention to Antony’s desires and mocking him at his face. Yet, as I have been suggesting, these tracking ‘listening’ shots work their effect all the time. After Antony’s request is accepted, the circular movement situates the Roman consul visually in charge. In visual terms, a power shift has taken place and Antony has seduced and taken command of all the cinematic focus if not of the men. Thus, the camera now follows Antony’s handshaking with each of the conspirators in what seems a quote of Brando’s quiet ferocity while his handshaking the men measures their strength.358

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358 See Julius Caesar (1953).
360 Picture taken from Illuminations Media. “Julius Caesar.”
Immediately after this scene, we return to the theatrical mode. The capitol scene (3.1) straightforwardly begins with Brutus’s speech and continues with Antony’s. As Hindle puts it,

it is entirely appropriate that the filmed action moves back from location to the RSC arena theatre space, where each performer can raise or subdue his voice at will, according to the effect each claims at to win across the populace, whose reactions are skillfully recorded. (2015: 279)

I agree with Hindle when he highlights the vocal freedom the actors experience in this scenery. Nevertheless, we should point out that the range of vocal possibilities in low-medium tones is well explored in the filmic and more private scenes too, being this, in fact, one of the trademarks of the production. The difference between one approach and the other – filmic and theatrical – in this specific film is how rather than whether in relation to words and verse speaking.

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361 Picture taken from Illuminations Media. “Julius Caesar – Trailer.”

362 Figures 13 and 14 are screen captions from the DVD edition.
The forum scene is followed by a little meta-filmic sequence. The killing of Cinna the Poet (3.3) is framed as a necklacing – once a favorite method of Winnie Mandela’s – operation. The scene lasts less than two minutes and presents thirty shots with an ASL of 3.4 seconds. Compared to most other scenes, which present a much higher ASL – occasionally amounting to seventeen seconds per shot in one scene –, this one chooses a rapid cinematic editing. Firstly, it is filmed as Cinna communicates his dreams to the audience in close-up. A wild bunch of plebeians surrounds him carrying gasoline and car tires. One of the plebeians records the event with a phone camera. By taking advantage of this resource, Doran alludes to the many videos that have circulated featuring this kind of savage example of mob violence. A circling movement turns the scene into confusing exchanges of close-ups and medium shots with the gang gulping around Cinna. Constantly, the poet is presented high angle in subjugation to the craziness of the crowd. Then, gasoline is poured over his face and film-within-the-film shots alternate with the master shot. Finally, he is necklaced and Doran changes the lines ‘Tear him, tear him!’ (3.3.35) for ‘Burn him, burn him!’ Yet the poet manages to escape as the car tire is left burning on the floor.
From this mise en abyme scene the film continues with the ‘proscription’ scene (4.1). The nearly two-minute scene is recorded as a single take with inserts of executions. The predominantly wide shot emphasizes the quiet release of animal tensions between Octavius (Ivano Jeremiah) and Antony. While the former stands soldierly, the latter informally sits with his feet on the table. A seemingly casual and laid-back Antony plays with a little whip and, with a glass of bourbon in the other hand, attempts to embody a negotiating persona. Standing erect, a cold and frigid Octavius hardly dissimulates how quickly he will get rid of the veteran friend of Caesar’s.

363 Figures 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 are screen captions from the DVD edition.
The sequences between the ‘quarrel scene’ and the final scene attempt to use the filmmic mode as they feature real sceneries that, as Doran suggests, are situated between the global and the local in the Oriental Centre. The wide spaces give way to narrower escapes until the viewer sees Brutus’ humiliating defeat at a fire escape. In the meantime, the scenes are all shot within the spaces at the Oriental Centre with all the features of a war film.

Surprisingly or not, Shakespeare’s lines easily find their way into the food court, the kitchen, the flaked walls, brick-walls, rubbishy rooms, fire escapes and other narrow escapes within the site. The simplicity of the area provides enough room for wide shots so that the actors can easily project their voices and their body work as if they were in the theatre stage. After Octavius and Antony retire to prepare their attack, Cassius merrily spins around while waving his club in triumph. A further theatrical note is given by the fact that the viewers need to accept that six men constitute Brutus’ army. In addition, these sequences unveil how many actors play different characters and no efforts are made to conceal this theatrical convention.

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364 Figures 22 and 23 are screen captions from DVD edition (2012).
366 In Coriolanus, Ralph Fiennes uses a similar location to film the battle at Corioli. See Coriolanus (2011).
After Brutus commits suicide and Antony’s soldiers find his body at the fire escape, Octavius’ speech begins in the fire exit. Right in the middle of the speech, Doran cuts and we see Octavius finishing the speech on the stage. Octavius occupies the forestage while Antony remains on the background, always behind Caesar as his mastiff. He is reminded that his momentary power was but a theatrical trick and his presence is left in the background.

\[367\] Figures 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28 are screen captions from DVD edition.
As we can see, the theatrical mode is alternated with the filmic mode. Yet, this filmic mode works on a transparent textual premise. There is no attempt to sacrifice any of the textual complexities, thoughts or nuances in the text in lieu of visual elements to support or visually correlate the narrative. The filmic rhetoric opts for simplicity rather than for lavishness and filmic metaphor so that the spectator can fully concentrate on the text and on how words work their impact on the listeners. At two different levels, the words are employed as main filmic tools, perhaps equaling film morpho-syntax in importance. Yet, the visual narrative enhances this textual delivery through several resources. The first level affects how the audiences receive the words. We cannot possibly predict what the different viewers’ reactions have been. Nevertheless, as Wyver says, it is most likely that the main viewership of these films will be people who are already interested in Shakespeare, i.e. we are speaking about a film addressed to a fan community (2016). As we are speaking about an audience with a degree of specialization – or who, at least, read *Julius Caesar* at school –, most of these fans will be necessarily expecting to discover how specific scenes and speeches have been sorted out.

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368 Figures 29, 30, 31 and 32 are screen captions from DVD edition.
Secondly, generally, the transitions from the theatrical mode to the filmic mode carry out a centripetal move that directs the viewer’s attention to the characters’ intimate thoughts. This movement is gradual and ends up with very clear close-ups that reveal such unspoken ideas and ideological positions, whether these are uttered or not. Thus, it is frequent that Steve Lawes’ camera work concentrates on how one character listens to another. As we have seen, many specific shots are designed precisely to convey the idea that actors need to be, above all, good listeners. These camera devices take place in the form of tracking shots or circular shots that enhance the impact of one character’s speech by showing how a circle of listeners are overtaken by their words.

Although the differences between the language of the theatre and the language and cinema are more emphasized in this film than in the others, we should distinguish the greyer tones in this apparently stagnant division. Even the scenes recorded in the filmic mode never fully let us forget that this is a theatre play. Sometimes the gesturing is too heightened for the film frame and, on occasions, the interpreters will self-consciously highlight the theatrical dramatic force of the scenes. As Kissoon’s Julius Caesar falls, he deliberately raises his cloak and covers his face in a grand gesture that underlines the meta-theatrical features inherent in the playtext. As Cassius’ self-consciously historical and self-reflexive commentary expresses, Julius Caesar is also conscious of the fact that his death is part of a performance that has taken place many times and which will be many times performed. Thus, in line with Umberto Eco’s analysis of repeated narrative structures, part of the popularizing appeal in this production has much to do with what the audience already know and with how will these known scenes be sorted out on this occasion.369

9.4. Dealing with the Theatrical Mode

As the previous section suggests, hybridity in this film is arranged as it gives way to two films in one. The private scenes – recorded in the filmic mode – mostly enhance the psychological arrangement of speeches and the impact that words make on listeners through a variety of reaction shots. Although the heightened delivery of the theatrical mode is not careless of words, the way in which these scenes are filmed produces a different effect from that produced by the mere use of deep shots framing

369 In his analysis of the different James Bond novels, Eco concludes that ‘the reader finds himself immersed in a game of which he knows the pieces and the rules – and perhaps the outcome – and draws pleasure simply from following the minimal variations by which the victor realizes his objective’ (1979: 160)
the totality of the stage. As for the impetus behind this use of the theatrical mode, Wyver comments (2012c):

Our aim was to capture these scenes in a way that is visually distinctive and different from standard auditorium shooting. In part, we want to see what it is possible to achieve in original ways in the theatre, and of course we also want to make something that will cut with the very strong images that our director of photography Steve Lawes and the rest of the crew conjured up in our location of Oriental City. And I hope we have done that – certainly what we watched on the monitors suggested that we might well have done. But because we were not mixing it live, we still [had] to edit the footage from the three F35 digital cameras in the auditorium, the XD CAM ‘news camera’ on stage, and also a small automatic digital camera that we mounted high above the stage.

This demonstrates the stimulus behind this first scene and the other scenes recorded in the theatre as well as how they distinctively pursue the theatrical mode. In fact, the very beginning of the film makes a clear statement about the RSC’s preference for the language of theatre and the roaring potency of verse delivery.

Nevertheless, the success in this way of using the theatrical mode lies precisely in the clear de-theatricalization of the public scenes. As Jacobs suggests in his work, what determines the quality of television drama is related to the different technical resources available during its recording (2000). Thus, the types of camera mentioned by Wyver – F35 digital camera, XD CAM, and the small automatic digital camera – permit high levels of flexibility, maneuverability and further details in stage recordings. In many ways, these resources have facilitated that the DoP has de-theatricalized what otherwise would have been a mere archive recording or a filmed performance mostly based on depth of field and too general views on the events on the stage.

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370 In Chapter Four I argued, in line with Baudrillard’s thinking, that an ‘image,’ i.e. a visual representation of something or a ‘simulacrum’ was enough to replace the content truth of such symbol. Thus, the strength of recorded theatre was since cinéma vérité utterly and pervasively contaminated the theatrical mode. In this film, by way of undermining the theatrical mode, as Jorgens defines it (1991), we discover that a routine of wide shots and mid-shots over the Royal Shakespeare Theatre stage is displaced by an entirely different dynamic that favors the intrusion of different cameras within a theatre venue.
The film begins in close-up showing the Soothsayer’s face. Thus, the single camera breaks the conventional establishing shot in the theatrical mode. After this close-up, the Soothsayer is shown in long shot surrounded by the Roman crowd, all composed by Black British actors dancing around him. The lens glides from long to mid shot and then it features individuated takes with the different members of a crowd of characters who happily celebrate Caesar’s arrival. The camera woos the energetic dance and the collective enthusiasm, the beauty and liveliness of the amateur actors recruited as members of the crowd as well as the involvement of all those professionals taking part in the event. In fact, an additional sign of audience participation in this production is that most of the first scene is dedicated to the amateur actors invited to take part in the public scenes. In fact, as already mentioned, the camera often lets us see the faces of individual members of the crowd, which throws some light on the different individualities of these people: the passionate young girl, the working-class everyman, the book-learned passer-by, etc.

We can also listen to Tayo Akinbode’s song *The Vibes of March* played by his band, which is openly visible on the stage. The actors and the different individuals – the Cobbler (Ricky Fearon),

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371 Figures 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41 and 42 are screen captions from the DVD edition.
Flavius, Murellus, etc. – are shown in low angle so that we can see their features magnified as grand theatre performers. Suddenly, the audiences are also contained within the frame and, also suddenly, the camera records the scene from unlikely positions within the stage itself. If the viewer watches carefully, it will be easy to discover that, amongst the crowd members, there are two cameramen recording the event. Therefore, what they are filming is, probably, part of the footage employed for the final editing. The beginning emphasizes its own self-reflexivity and meta-filmic power. Being this one a politically dramatic event, it makes sense, as Wyver says, that cameramen appear to film Caesar’s arrival (2016).

Caesar’s entrance is highlighted as the camera records the ramp leading to the stage. He is shown in mid-long shot, but, very quickly, a series of mid-close shots develop the stance of this Amin-like actor, who smiles at the welcoming dancers and even dances with them. The Soothsayer is granted a series of mid-close shots as he agonizingly invokes Caesar’s attention and warns him on the Ides of March. Caesar and Cassius are shown low angle as they listen to the Soothsayer’s warning and Caesar is given the time necessary to ruminate the shaman’s words. When Caesar explains to Antony that Calphurnia needs to be touched for her barrenness, two reaction shots show Portia’s total disgust at Caesar’s affirmation. These shots immediately reveal who Portia is in political terms. What is interesting too is that these shots reveal the ordinariness of Brutus and Cassius in the public arena as the camera never gives them any psychologizing relevance until the theatrical mode is abandoned for the filmic mode. In fact, their interventions rather take place in wide shots and they always take a background position. Is this deliberately meant to be a metaphor of how, as Cassius will seem to suggest in the next scene, Caesar has displaced Brutus from the political and the theatrical arenas?

In any case, these wide shots establish closure between the beginning of the film and the last shot, where Antony is left on Octavius’ background. On a different level, the theatrical mode helps invoking the strength of Brutus’ and Mark Antony’s speeches. The recording of both speeches in this context collects the sweat, the roaring and the feedback from the crowds that express their reactions to the discourse of both characters. Clearly, Antony’s emotional appeal is superior to that of Brutus. However, Joseph’s delivery is not less passionate and energetic than Fearon’s is, nor is the actor’s strategy of appeal less effective. The problem is that Antony takes more time to develop his ideas whereas Joseph’s statements are too flat, quick and histrionic to be convincing. Whereas the theatrical mode enhances the figure of Antony the player, it also emphasizes the figure of Brutus the fanatic. Against all odds, his unreasonable and categorical speech resembles the rant we can listen from the television screens when radical terrorists present situations in black and white terms. Rather than the paused, measured, serene and calmed deliveries of many other actors who have played Brutus on the
screen – James Mason or Richard Pasco –, Joseph’s sweat and pith reveal the radical and infantile self-righteousness for what it is: a too categorical piece of rhetoric that underestimates the intelligence of those who listen. It is precisely because of his over-explicative delivery and the excess with which he gestures to the audience that, as an audience member, I would regard the speech as a total flop. The smiley and kind-hearted Brutus portrayed by Joseph does not presuppose much intelligence from the others and his condescending tone is evident.

Yet, the speech still works because Brutus has not spared any emotional vocal and physical outbursts and it works its effect. However, one of the great dramatic qualities of Joseph’s Brutus is how much he needs to be in the right all the time and how much he displays some of Hamlet’s secret theatrical vocation. His figure is often shown as a tiny low-angle figure addressing the masses, which underlines his alienation from the people. Yet, he strives to overcome them with discourse. As he pauses for reply, he raises his hand with a grand gesture and, contradicting the indications in the text I am using as a reference, he does not even leave space for pause.372

Yet, Antony’s carefully organized speech operates in much subtler ways. Fearon reasons with the audience and urges them to think about what they are seeing and cunningly leads them to the analysis of Brutus’ speech through his ironic and pithy nuances. In addition, Antony is framed in wide shot, low angle, medium shot and a plethora of shots, featuring the irony and the ambiguity of the speech. In addition, the speech is spiced up with the ‘Africanness’ haunting the production. Fearon displays the beauty and strength of the Eastern African accent. His statements are reinforced by the shortness of many of the syllables. Yet, beyond the emotional strength of the lines, Fearon never forgets that the verse is still written in iambic pentameter and the ideas, thoughts and emotions are conveyed through accent and verse-speaking as much as in the outburst of emotions required at that moment.373 He jumps,

372 Following Daniell’s edition, strictly speaking on pausing, a long pause should follow ‘None, Brutus, none’ (3.2.35) uttered by the crowds. Yet, Joseph does not leave much time for such a response from the audience. Literally, Joseph requests the crowd’s intervention but cuts them before they can come up with any careful contradictory response.

373 The actors in this film tend to use only five vowels instead of the twenty recognized for the English language in the International Phonetic Alphabet. Central vowels, such as the ones in cat, bird or better, may be half-open or open as in bath or letter. Thus, Antony’s regarding Caesar’s words sound more like this: ‘might have stood against the waaarld.’ Also, the second syllable in evil is replaced by a short “i”. To continue, the schwa one expects in the second syllable of the word honor becomes an ash or a half-open sound, so Brutus requests: ‘Believe for mine hona and have respect to mine hona’ (3.2.14-15). Only diphthongs with longer glides somehow remain untouched but those with a shorter glide are almost eliminated. In addition, diphthongs tend to be monophthongized and centring diphthongs tend to be pronounced as opening diphthongs, i.e. lia, ea, ual. Final consonants tend to be dropped when two appear together. Therefore, the vowels enunciated in the film tend to be flatter and somewhat sharper and more expressive of the frantic energy and urgent rhetoric violence of the speeches. Thus, the word hand tends to be pronounced as han or hen too. Also, final vowels can be added to closed syllables. These vowels are inserted, according to Joseph Schmied, depending on ‘the occurrence of palatal or velar consonants in the
winds, bounces and then moves like a television presenter or a Methodist minister, turning the speech into a mountebank piece that aligns, as Liebler says, Antony’s speech with the turning of the political podium into a market (2013: 66). The end of the speech is culminated with the repetition of a chant celebrating the name of Caesar in what turns to be a furious dance that ignites the crowd. It is only when Fearon notices that he has won the crowd that he indulges in theatrical outbursts of energy. Whereas Brutus’ speech has consisted on thunderbolts of logic, Antony’s voice has appealed to the speaker’s intelligence, even if trying to manipulate it. However, the diversity of shots has also been higher with Antony’s speech. In what might seem a too literal way, the richness of Antony’s speech corresponds to the higher variety of shots and angles employed to frame it.

All in all, the theatrical mode is deconstructed with the use of multiple digital and flexible cameras that break the theatrical scene into different fragments ranging from wide shots to medium shots and close-ups. Also, a variety of angles are employed. Not only are shots constantly conjugated but also different angle possibilities are exploited. An aerial shot displays the body of Julius Caesar in a way that suddenly turns all the characters as little tiny figures in the same way we perceive them when we sit in the upper second circle. The experience of the theatre is dissimulated and, thus, refurbished in diverse ways as the lens constantly plays with as many positions as possible. Following this premise, the variety of angles with which Antony’s speech is framed also accounts for the polyhedral nature of his speech in comparison with Brutus’ curt self-legitimized pontificating.

environment (e.g., [hosIpItalI] for hospital or [splrlèÌ] for spring), or on vowel harmony (e.g., in [bUKU] for book).’ Many words in East African English present a secondary stressed one would never expect in RP English. For instance, words like admiration and admirable, which present the stress at different syllables equally influence derived forms like admiration, which in East African English would be stressed as [ad’malre ’Sen]. Mark Antony, then, speaks of Caesar’s [am ’biti ’on] and Caesar urges the augurer’s ‘[o ’pini ’ons] of success’ (2.2.6). Finally, East African English tends to give a well patterned stress to syllables so it is infrequent to find two or three unstressed syllables. This consistently modifies the rhythm, which produces a sense of unfamiliarity to the British or standard English-speaking viewer (Schmied 2006: 193-194).
9.5. Audience Participation

In line with Jenkins’s analysis of the popular nature of convergence culture, I would like to postulate that one of the defining criteria to separate mass media – following the extreme views of the Frankfurt School of mass culture as American, alienating, poor and destructive – from popular culture – made by the people – is the degree to which the consumers are empowered to participate in the cultural event.

As I have already pointed out, a strikingly trans-medial feature of this production is related to the fact that Doran, the BBC and the RSC truly attempt to enhance the political themes of the play at an extra-theatrical and an extra-filmic level. A further thread of hybridity is introduced when Doran welcomes the intervention of amateur actors for the public scenes. This idea is underlined in the recording, which, as I already said, features the individuated characters created by the members of the crowd.

In a video call-out on the RSC’s website – currently unavailable now –, associate director Gbolahan Obisesan announced that an amount of twenty-five amateur volunteer performers would be required to take part in the performances. As Obisesan clarifies, the goals of this recruitment were the following: ‘We just want [their] commitment and enthusiasm. What we’re looking to create is a real community spirit around the production’ (quoted in Trueman 2012). The volunteers to perform for the Royal Shakespeare Theatre production would not be required any acting experience and they would not tour around with the cast members for the West End production nor for successive tours. The stage production in different world stages has followed the same procedure.

374 Picture taken from BAM (2013).
As the Vox Populi, Vox Dei blog demonstrates, ‘[w]ith every production, the RSC [has cast] its Roman public anew from the local community’ (2013). In this blog, a series of amateur actors that participated in the Harvey Theatre production are interviewed on various fundamental aspects around the excitement pursued by Doran with this production. Firstly, they were questioned on their feeling at having taken part in the event. Of the three artists interviewed, two admitted that Shakespeare then felt much more connected to their local community and their own human experience. Ashley Theagene speaks about the background actors’ involvement in the production: ‘I'm sure everyone thinks we're backstage in quiet contemplation of Shakespeare’s words, but we’re constantly snacking on whatever we have to share. Constantly’ (BAM 2013). Therefore, the ensemble spirit of the production seems to be exemplified by these commentaries. On a more important level, the background artists’ involvement in the production goes beyond the sharing of their brief ‘happy experience’ at the RSC; they are even asked to share their views on the political matter of the play itself. The evidence here is somewhat scanty and the question is perhaps too obvious and simple to be asked: ‘Which would you choose: corrupt democracy or beloved monarch?’ The three interviewees doubtless preferred the first option considering that, at least, that gave them the choice to fight corruption back.

As I said, the evidence is too poor to come to magnificent conclusions on the background artists’ involvement in the production but I hope that this serves to, at least, try to illustrate the level of interactivity and participation pursued in this production. This has, to a certain extent, expanded the role of the audiences to the point of making them members of the play itself through the inclusion of non-professional artists that were invited to contribute to the show with their own voices. However, when it comes to speaking about voices, it is important to remember that these are not frequently heard over the play itself. Despite the thrill of the experience, none of the amateur members of the cast were allotted many lines. Plus, their role was entirely confined to play the plebeians. Although conscious and serious work on background artists is an interesting dramatic exercise and although it tests in theatrical terms Brechtian and Marxist approaches to the plebeians, we still need to remember that participation is limited and confined to a few individuals in the Roman mob. The big shots are still left for the professionals.

9.6. Shakespeare Unlocked Episode and Teacher’s Pack

In his chapter on the Harry Potter Wars, Jenkins gives us Heather Lawver’s school-story. The home-schooled Lawver mounted a web-based fictional Hogwarts school paper called The Daily
Not only did the paper attract a staff of 102 children from many different countries but also, with the help of professional volunteers, they developed a range of skills based on digital literacy practically on their own. Thus, despite some opposition from Warner Brothers and some fundamentalist Catholic circles, through this cooperative network, many skills pursued in Literature curricula normally starting in middle school or higher education were, with varied degrees of proficiency, achieved earlier by pre-teenage students. The same sort of impetus seems to be driving the Royal Shakespeare Company’s educational enterprises and commitment with schools. Yet, how efficient and empowering have these attempts been?

Let us cross the Atlantic Ocean and briefly look at two cultural materialist accounts on Shakespeare and the British education system. In his 1985 article on Shakespeare and Education, Alan Sinfield denounced how the teaching of Shakespeare at schools had fallen into two dangerous binaries. On the one hand, certain exam questions were too monolithic in their expectations of a correct answer. Ironically, these ‘correct answers’ would have to naturally come from the students’ own minds and critical assessments on the plays. Thus, those students destined to be university graduates would ‘naturally’ get the right answers and those who would not would be destined to vocational training and unqualified professions. On the other hand, even when progressive ways of teaching were applied, answers to exams have been predetermined to be right in their willingness to impose an approach based on ‘feelings’ or ‘amusement.’ These ‘feelings’ and ‘amusement’ were, paradoxically, set down as academic evaluation criteria. So, whoever did not feel thrilled by the Shakespeare experience would not get the answer right. These two extremes, roughly speaking, avoided any engagement with the more complex social and political questions within the playtexts.

More specifically speaking about *Julius Caesar*, in 1998, Holderness and Marcus Nevitt discussed how the political right wing coming to power in 1992 started a campaign to dismiss the intellectualism of the progressive ways of teaching Shakespeare. Although John Major’s government undertook the mission of demanding Shakespeare in the curriculum, *Julius Caesar* being one of the plays exacted, the government’s ‘back to basics’ policies encouraged the rapid answering of short answers to exams have been predetermined to be right in their willingness to impose an approach based on ‘feelings’ or ‘amusement.’ These ‘feelings’ and ‘amusement’ were, paradoxically, set down as academic evaluation criteria. So, whoever did not feel thrilled by the Shakespeare experience would not get the answer right. These two extremes, roughly speaking, avoided any engagement with the more complex social and political questions within the playtexts.

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375 The website The Daily Prophet is currently unavailable.


377 Sinfield refers to one GCE exam question: ‘Give an account of the scene where Caliban first meets Trinculo and Stephano, making it clear in what ways you find it amusing, and what other feelings you have about it’ (2003: 172).
comprehension questions. In these box-ticking questions, anti-populist and anti-plebeian responses were favored. Thus, students had to inevitably regard the Roman crowds as ‘dupes’ if they wanted to pass their tests. As Holderness and Nevitt conclude, ‘had not the teaching unions been resolute in their position to Major’s administration and stood by their conviction of the validity of progressive teaching methods our “youths and wildness” might indeed have been buried “in his gravity”’ (2013: 267).

Within this progressive versus conservative paradigm, the Royal Shakespeare Company and BBC have tried to extend Shakespeare to the schools. As we know, Doran’s working philosophy admits that Shakespeare’s text belongs to the whole ensemble rather than to an individual actor or to the absolute truths handed out by the director. In this section, it is my intention to examine how hybridity was extended through convergence culture for educational purposes. The materials I am going to analyze here are the episode on *Julius Caesar* in the *Shakespeare Unlocked* series as well as a Teacher’s Pack accompanying the episode. The episode, produced by a collaboration between the RSC and BBC, came accompanied with the release of a Teacher’s Pack for Key Stage 4 and 5 English and Theatre Studies. The rationale behind the release of the Teacher’s Pack is established in the so-called “Stand Up for Shakespeare Manifesto.” The impetus behind this Manifesto was the assumption that school kids needed, as soon as possible, to be encouraged to change their negative opinions on Shakespeare. As Michael Boyd said:

> Shakespeare wrote plays, and young children are geniuses at playing. Ask them to comment on a great work of literature and they will shrink away. Give a child the part of Bottom, Tybalt, Lady Macbeth or Viola, and watch them unlock their imagination (...) Shakespeare remains the world’s favourite artist because his living dilemmas of love, mortality, power and citizenship remain unresolved, vivid and urgent today. (Official London Theatre 2008)

In addition, as we can deduct from this and other Packs, the RSC is concerned with spreading Shakespeare’s word. Nevertheless, this spreading does not come unconditionally: the texts examined are RSC’s performances.

The *Julius Caesar* Pack reads works in the RSC’s direction and shares the impetus of the Manifesto. As the Pack indicates:
We know that children and young people can experience Shakespeare in ways that excite, engage and inspire them. We believe that young people get the most out of Shakespeare when they, like actors, experience and explore the plays actively. We want young people to: Do it on their feet, see it live and Start it earlier.\textsuperscript{378} (2012: 1)

Inexplicably, the Manifesto disappeared from the website, which was remade. In its place, the section on Shakespeare and Education in the RSC website was substituted by a much simpler motto bereft of the political implications in the Manifesto: ‘Our aim is to make Shakespeare vivid, accessible and enjoyable for young people aged 5-25 and their teachers’ (Royal Shakespeare Company 2016a). Whether the disappearance of the word ‘Manifesto’ had to do with any avoidance of politics or whether it was because the website was re-thought as a more professional-looking and concretized page, it radically expanded its content. The website features various accesses related to Teacher’s Professional Development, Online Resources, Free School’s Broadcasts, as well as a section on Conferences and Workshops for students from Stage 1 to the Sixth Form.

The \textit{Shakespeare Unlocked} episode features the complete scenes 1.2, together with the assassination scene as well as the capitol scene. For each of these scenes, the actors and Obisesan do not only comment on their own textual analyses on the characters but they make their points through practical work at the rehearsal room. These rehearsal experiences are shown in black-and-white to the audiences as several other inserts feature Fearon, Nri, Obisesan, Mydell and Joseph speaking about the parts.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.45\textwidth]{figure44.png}
\caption{Figure 44}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.45\textwidth]{figure45.png}
\caption{Figure 45}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{378} Referred to in the bibliography as BBC and RSC (2012). Also, accessible at \url{http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/shakespeare/pdfs/ShakespeareJuliusCaesar.pdf}.
As for the first scene, different exercises are tried out to assess the impact of the words and the speeches on the hearer. In a first exercise, Nri and Joseph establish the ‘thought’ before uttering the chunk of text that comes at a specific time. Through these exercises, they discover Cassius’ strategies to maneuver Brutus into telling him what is going on within him. As Joseph says, one of the discoveries through this rehearsal is how much pride he finds within Brutus’ heart and what is the problematic relationship his Brutus finds to reconcile his Republican pride with his own personal pride. An additional exercise carried out by the actors, the ‘staging circle,’ consists of having the characters sitting in chairs and having Nri use them to approach Joseph, who tries to avoid Nri’s influence. In this section, they also explain how the two actors draw on the characters’ shared past by way of quoting a piece of philosophy learn by rote at school. A third and most poignant exercise consists of having Nri pinpointing Joseph’s

379 Figures 44, 45, 46, 47, 48 and 49 are screen captions from the episode “Julius Caesar” from Shakespeare Unlocked.

380 In the film, when Cassius asks Brutus if he can see his own face, Brutus smiles and starts reciting the next lines as if he remembered some chant given to both by some teacher during their school days. Cassius joins Brutus and they both choir ‘for the eye sees not itself / But by reflection, by some other things’ (1.2.52-53).
body with post-its whenever he feels that a word in his speech is being poignant. Therefore, Nri pinpoints Brutus at ‘narrow world,’ ‘colossus,’ ‘we,’ ‘petty men,’ ‘peep about,’ ‘dishonourable,’ ‘fates,’ ‘fault,’ ‘ourselves,’ etc.

To my mind, the most interestingly convergent element in this episode relates to how the crowds are treated as truly individuated human beings, perhaps responding to Holderness’ and Nevitt’s protests on the right-wing’s multiple-choice ‘back to normalcy’ examinations. Therefore, Obisesan puts Fearon and Joseph to the test of having to truly convince five members of the crowd with their reasoning. Thus, they see themselves obliged to ponder on the thoughts and release the lines with truthfulness. In their exploration, a general conclusion produced by the cast was that Brutus uses emotions as well as Antony, but, as opposed to Antony, Brutus’ argument lacks the ‘punch’ necessary to win the crowds. As Ray Fearon says, Brutus’s argument is ‘a good argument, but it ain’t good enough.’381 This ‘ain’t’ might obviously allude to the sexy impetus with which the political right tends to disguise its rigidity by using informal language. Later, they discuss why Antony wins the crowd: he always needs to say more things to persuade them. Therefore, in a first exercise, the five members of the audience turn their backs on Joseph and then he is required to deliver the speech. The actors then turn to Brutus as they listen to some convincing commentary. Afterwards, the actors are asked to explain what phrases or words were more efficient. As for Antony’s speech, Fearon must approach the exercise in a slightly different way. Instead of having the five actors turning his backs on him, they stand in a row and face him with some six or seven meters of distance between him and them. Therefore, Fearon needs to attract them with his oratorical skills. Again, the actors, through their own experience of receiving Antony’s words, can explain why one speech works better than the other.382

381 See “Julius Caesar” in the Shakespeare Unlocked series (2012).
382 Kingbola and Samantha Lawson (Citizen) explain what makes Brutus’ and Antony’s speeches efficient. Yet, there seems to be consensus that the power in Antony’s speech relates to how the character makes the plebeians think rather than categorically patronize them as Brutus does. Ibid.
So far, the episode succeeds in making a point about the importance of language, the importance of listening and even the relevance of the crowd’s protagonism and diversity. Yet, we need to see whether this material was conducive to any level of participation. The Teacher’s Pack unfolds the

\footnote{Figures 50, 51, 52, 53 and 54 are screen captions from “Julius Caesar” from *Shakespeare Unlocked* (2012).}
exercises in dialogue with the scenes rehearsed and presented in the episode. Roughly speaking, we can divide the ideas proposed into two main categories.

A first type of exercise is oriented to understand and decode how the actors have structured and organized the performance. This first type includes the use of words to describe Cassius’ and Brutus’ characters; explaining the sets; underlining important passages in Brutus’ and Cassius’s arguments; comparing the students’ own notions of ‘honour’ and ‘pride’ to larger social and political contemporary issues as well as to the ideas Brutus has on honour – after having listened to Joseph’s explanation –; fill-in-the-blanks exercises applying nouns and action verbs to encourage tactical thinking when approaching Brutus’ and Cassius’ first dialogue; discussion on who is in charge in the play; performance choices – to a great extent, based on the choices taken in the film –; highlighting Cassius’ provocation words as well as Brutus’ self-defense for not taking part against Caesar; labelling what characters say before, during and after the assassination; assessment of the plan to assassinate Caesar; and, analyzing rhetoric devices in Brutus’ and Antony’ speeches.

A second type of activity encourages the students to react and re-think the staging of a given scene as well as to write on what they have seen. Of this kind, the Pack encourages the students to draw the ‘hoped-for’ Rome in contrast to other drawings of a dystopian ‘feared’ Rome; playing the ‘staging-circle’ in groups; exhortation activities; staging an alternative assassination with a series of choices offered – ‘the reluctant assassination’, ‘the fearful assassination’, ‘the efficient assassination’, etc. –; researching into the lives of Roman commons; creating a personal history on one of the citizens; creating role-cards for Roman citizens and subsequent role-playing; using the three components of rhetoric – ethos, logos, and pathos – to build up their own inducement speeches; analyzing the plebeians’ lines in detail to understand their different relationships and divergent positions; or debating why Brutus’s invitation to speak is political suicide. In the end, we need to come to the last page, which, finally, presents an exercise encouraging students to come up with their own directing proposal. This encouragement begins with two questions: Why would they – the students – direct it? Which historical period would they choose? Yet, the activities return to the film itself. Thus, the reader now will find questions on how this production relates to our own time or why Doran chooses Africa or calls it a ‘fantastical political thriller’; a commentary on its relationship with Nelson Mandela; why does John Kane think that Julius Caesar is Shakespeare’s ‘African play’; and ‘what do the actors say is happening to the world today which makes Julius Caesar a play for our time?’
As far as we can gather, the *Shakespeare Unlocked* episode and the Teacher’s Pack promote a specific type of convergence-based dynamic that attempts to encourage students to stand up for and embrace Shakespeare. Nevertheless, most of the teaching ideas were oriented to develop critical assessment and thinking based on the conclusions and opinions already gathered from the actors and the Associate Director.

This is not the same as suggesting that the RSC’s efforts can be reduced to a pack of limited choices. There are factors to be considered here, such as the teachers’ personalized use of these activities and the individual responses the students can make to the premises established by the performance. In addition, the students are encouraged to respond to the play in creative ways covering a wide range of skills. Nevertheless, Doran’s reading on the play – pluralistic as it appears to be – seems too dominating in the pack itself. Why is convergence not extended to other productions? Why doesn’t the Teacher’s Pack compare this production with Mankiewicz’s or the more recent *Caesar Must Die*? On a different level, the pedagogic impetus in the pack succeeds in encouraging the students to dismiss and challenge the notion that the Roman ‘mob’ is as fickle as Brando’s famous smile in close-up suggests. Yet, although I lack the necessary evidence, I doubt that the excitement equals the one experienced within fan communities. As Raph Koster affirms when discussing a *Star Wars* franchise game, people also need ‘the experience of being Han Solo or Luke Skywalker rather than being Uncle Owen, the moisture farmer’ (2005: 12). Following this, it seems that the RSC’s educational drive goads the students passingly well to critically assess the text and actors’ interpretation on the text. Also, it makes a fair – and not unnecessary – political point about the need to give Caesar what is Caesar’s and the plebeians what is the plebeians’. However, there is comparatively little ‘standing up’ as Brutus, Calphurnia, Portia, Caesar, Cassius, or Antony. If I were a drama student, I would rather go for those parts, especially when, in a classroom, this is not incompatible with other people trying them too.


Danny Bilson, vice president of intellectual property development at Electronic Arts (USA), arranged a ‘summit’ on ‘multiplatform entertainment’ in 2003. In this conference, Bilson claimed that films had, from the very beginning, to be trans-medial (quoted from Jenkins 2008: 107). As the vice president says, ‘[i]f there’s something I love, I want it to be bigger than just those two hours in the movie theater or a one-hour-a-week experience on TV. I want a deepening of the universe… I want to participate in it. I’ve just been introduced to the world in the film and I want to get there, explore it. You need that connection to the world to make
chapter, I have been regarding convergence culture applied to Doran’s *Julius Caesar* through transmedia storytelling. Also, I have been analyzing the elasticity of ‘hybridity’ in Doran’s film due to the set of epitexts gathered around it. As a response to the film, it is worth mentioning the stage production and film version of Tim Crough’s *I, Cinna the Poet* (2012). This theatre – and, by extension, recorded theatre – piece has been regarded as a ‘way of complementing Gregory Doran’s acclaimed African staging of the Roman tragedy in the RSC’ (Dominic Cadenvish 2012).

As Crough says, the play intends to make students reflect on power, powerlessness, political upheaval and on how they can understand their stance in the world they inhabit (Royal Shakespeare Company 2012a). If, as Wyver indicates at the beginning of this chapter, the rationale of this production is to treat the audiences in the auditorium and the audience in the play as one, a premise in my analysis has been how this can be extended to a larger screen audience. This eagerness to involve the audience includes the educational intentions of Crough’s spin-off. Furthermore, Doran’s performance ignites this motivation for using the playtext as a ‘revolutionary text-book’ or as a ‘citizenship text-book’.\(^\text{385}\) Again, words are sublimated as means of artistic expression and as means of engaging the viewers and the audience – mostly, school kids – into participatory culture.

*I, Cinna the Poet* was staged at The Swan Theatre and purposefully echoed the African setting of Doran’s work. Yet, this show made certain demands on the students to whom the production was addressed and, as Kate McLuskie says, worked on analogies between poetic and political freedom (2012). The audiences were encouraged to follow the writing prompts provided by Jude Owusu – playing Cinna both in this play as well as in Doran’s production – around the issues of ‘power,’ ‘war,’ ‘conspiracy’ and other keywords from Shakespeare’s playtext.

Cinna re-tells and interprets the events around Julius Caesar’s assassination and he also evaluates his own relevance as a poet and the usefulness of words to modify reality. A major conflict developed in this production is how the man of the street can feel powerless at the substantial differences of power between men. To encourage the students to think on the different positions taken by society members, he initiates a world-clustering exercise that correlates types of words with different social classes. As Cinna uses these terms and explains what human class corresponds to them, the different types of words

\(^{385}\) Drawing from his experience in South African and the relation established between *Julius Caesar* and the recent African history, Doran establishes an analogy between Shakespeare’s play and a ‘revolutionary text-book’. In this respect, it seems that the RSC educational enterprise is focused on teaching democratic values to young learners. See “Making-Off of *Julius Caesar*.”
appear on the screen so that the viewers – i.e. students – see them as they appear grouped and colour-coded – see figure 55 below –. Thus, he associates prepositions – e.g. ‘to,’ ‘as,’ ‘in,’ ‘of,’ etc. – to the lowest ranks in society. To continue, he uses a series of words to refer to relatively powerless people who compose the broad social picture. These people are associated to words like ‘teabag,’ ‘leader,’ ‘butcher,’ ‘dagger’ or ‘corpse.’ As far as I see it, the ordinary quotidian quality of these words intends to present the wide spectrum of the middle classes, although Cinna does not clarify this point. Afterwards, Cinna links politicians to words such as ‘off,’ ‘disgusted,’ ‘ambitious,’ ‘fearful,’ ‘mighty,’ and ‘faithful.’ Finally, he refers to terms that, arguably, are related to dictatorship and absolute values, such as ‘gods,’ ‘heaven,’ ‘soul,’ ‘evil,’ and ‘terror.’ These last words, according to Cinna, are such that, because of the strong concepts they evoke, lead men to murder and fanaticism. These last ideas related to murder and mayhem are confirmed by inserts that show street turmoil, state funerals, burning cars and other evidences of street violence that immediately retrieve the viewer to the recent news stories on undefined African wild savagery. Whereas categorizing words for children might be a useful exercise to organize vocabulary, we yet need to ask to what extent applying prepositions on the plebeians offers a too simplistic and distorted vision to the intended audience. If one of the goals in this production has been to empower the audiences or to generate some sense of democratic impetus, to what extent is the recreation in the belittling of the poor man of the street one that offers any encouragement at all to the viewer who may feel as a member of the crowd?

![Figure 55](image)

Apart from this, I want to pinpoint two highlights of this show. For a start, the character of Cinna confronts the harsh realities of seeing how words are totally powerless, despite his initial expectations.

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386 Screen caption from *I Cinna the Poet* (2012).
on them, as he discovers that Flavius and Murellus have been killed. To continue, he watches on television the succession of breaking news: Caesar goes to the capitol. After this, more news are heard that Caesar has been killed. Subsequently, Brutus and Mark Antony are seen together at negotiation. Breaking news come again saying that both Brutus and Antony will be speaking to the nation. Brutus convinces the audience. As both Antony and Brutus deliver their speeches, Cinna makes interjections on the different speeches of both speakers. An idea that is overtly emphasized is the process by which Antony’s speech starts not being very convincing until he reaches the climatic power that poetic discourse can bring to move hearts. Owusu interjects at Antony’s speech with sarcastic comments like ‘Of course! He was a politician! His job was to kiss babies!’ or ‘Of course he did not take the crown! He was pretending! He would have taken it afterwards!’ However, later, Cinna, as the crowds, is supremely confused by Antony’s exhibition of Caesar’s toga. Owusu represents the process by which an everyman sees himself as inevitably helpless at the power of Antony’s imagery even if he is not unaware of the fact that Antony’s speech is manipulative.

Figure 56

Figure 57

Figure 58

387 Figures 56, 57 and 58 are screen captions from I Cinna the Poet (2012).
Cinna is aware that there is violence on the streets and he leaves the flat. When he returns, he does it as a Ghost – see figure 57 above –. He has been killed on the streets and does not know why he was killed, whether for being part of the assassination, or for not being part of it, or simply for having the wrong name in the wrong place at the wrong time. He also speaks about an old man, a woman and several people who appear dead and how civil war incenses hostilities and the cooling of relationships.

The Ghost’s final addresses to the audience come in the form of writing prompts. A last task given to the students is an exercise of fast writing on three questions: ‘Write how he [Cinna] dies’, ‘Write why he dies’, ‘Write his last thoughts and feelings.’ These last exercises are meant to let the students come up with their own conclusions on how and why dissenting voices are suppressed. However, McLuskie, again, presents the problematic stance on the dialogical interactivity and participation of this show as well as the film version that was video-streamed for schools. Whereas this narrative generates participation and writing skills amongst the students, what McLuskie doubts is whether the dominant position of the actor – who acts as a teaching figure – will not be excessively traditional and discouraging as for the promotion of critical thinking and personal reflection.388

9.8. Conclusions

The starting point of this chapter has been Wyver’s suggestion that the audience in the auditorium and the audience on the stage were, in this play, treated as one. My purpose has been to examine to what extent interactivity and participation have been fostered through this hybrid production and its many hypertexts and epitexts.

As my intention was to examine interactivity and participation, I have relied on Jenkins’ work on convergence culture. The film itself is an example of transmedial convergence narrative because it literally puts two films in one. The theatrical and the filmic modes are not as integrated as in the other three productions. In fact, they are deliberately made to clash with each other within the film frame. This forces the viewer to be constantly shifting his/her perspective between the psychologizing penetration of television film and the spectacular displays of the theatrical mode. As I have discussed, the powerfully defining element of language as means of persuasion in the play has been emphasized in

388 McLuskie writes: ‘That may mean that more children experience an RSC performance than ever before; it may be an effective use of the kit that has been a priority for school funding over the last decade. It may give some teachers learning resources to supplement their own creativity. However […] it returns us to the teacher-knows-best learning that some of us hoped had disappeared forever. The children may end up knowing more repeatable information but I wonder if they will be moved to writing or action beyond the set classroom tasks or even to thinking independently about why they should care about Cinna the poet’ (2012).
two different ways. The filmic mode deliberately slows speech down and displays several camera resources to heighten the importance of words and discourse. Long tracking shots feature how people utter their words but, most importantly, they feature how people listen to each other in the play. This constitutes an extremely important point as the participation goals established in subsequent materials – Teacher’s Pack, Crouch’s film, etc. – aim to get audiences used to words and the impact that words can achieve. In this respect, Doran’s film constitutes a radical tour-de-force that challenges all assumptions against Shakespeare’s language fitting on the small screen.

When it comes to indulging in the theatrical mode, paradoxically, Lawes cinematizes it by way of breaking the otherwise too predictable train of wide and medium shots into unlikely and varied shots from three different cameras. Therefore, a main technique employed to privilege one character’s speech over the others consists of a variety of shots applied on him as well as the dynamics of alienation or identification with which the camera treats another character. Thus, as we have seen, the treatment of Antony’s speech is not only richer in verbal terms but also in visual terms. This visual variety in Antony’s speech accompanies the success of his discourse.

An additional strand of convergence has been connected to two other interrelated discourses derived from the film: The Teacher’s Pack and the Shakespeare Unlocked episode. Whereas the BBC’s and the RSC’s initiatives are varied and complex, they still do not seem to go beyond making the point that the plebeians need to be treated with greater depth than they usually are. I do not intend to imply that this point is unimportant. All the opposite, it should be applauded. However, the initiative can be more widely developed.

In addition, most of the exercises presented are highly dependent on what ‘authorized’ actors have said and done on their roles. Is the RSC replacing one academic prophet with a stage prophet? What is certain is that neither are the students encouraged to design, create and be particularly entrepreneurial in their pedagogical choices nor are they given many chances to deeply work on the central characters in the play. At this point, how can the RSC and the BBC convince students that Shakespeare is for everyone if only trained RSC actors and actresses can play the main parts? Is Shakespeare for everyone only in small doses?

We need to be cautious before judging too harshly here. As for this chapter, I have not managed to collect any evidence on the impact this Teacher’s Pack and its application may have had in classrooms. Many of the results will depend not on what the wordings dictate but on what teachers want to do with them. Nevertheless, the RSC’s self-proclaimed mission of urging the students to ‘Stand Up for Shakespeare’ might seem a bit too constrained yet. All in all, as Crouch’s film also proves, what
these epitexts are good at demonstrating is that uncut Shakespeare’s popularization is comparatively satisfactory through transmedia and hybridity. Yet there are a few obstacles that need to be overcome to enlarge audience participation. Perhaps sometimes a bit more of Han Solo-playing – as mentioned above – would have helped. Nevertheless, I would rather embrace whatever accomplishments have been made than dismiss the whole enterprise that, all in all, has indeed taken the difficult road of showing the specific impact of the text in a specific production and how this can be used as interpretive tool. Furthermore, they have taken this impetus to different scenarios. I think, in this context, although the results are important, we can still applaud and, like Oliver Twist, request to have some more.

For all that, I would like the reader to remember the series of questions I proposed right at the beginning of the chapter – see section 9.1 –. I hope I have provided some answers to those questions, although by no means are my conclusions definite and final. First, I think that the fourth wall has been pulled down to an extent with this production as several audience members have been able to participate in the performance. Amateur actors – who, after all, are the audiences too – have taken part in the production in different countries. Also, students and users of the Teacher’s Pack and Crough’s film have engaged in participatory activities related to this film. Thus, the audiences, to some extent, have been involved in the production beyond the television screen. Have the audience in the auditorium, the audience on the Roman Forum and the audience at home been treated as one? To an extent, a great level of participation has been proposed, although further steps need to be given to reinforce the relationship between consumers and producers in more consistent and clearer ways. Hybridity has extended itself beyond the confines of television, theatre and film discourses and the centrifugal strength of Wyver’s productions can be said to expand the range of immediacy that theatre is capable of, although the starting point has been a television film.
10. CONCLUSIONS
My initial contention took Lopez’s study of the Elizabethan stage as point of departure. Following Lopez, the source of pleasure for the Elizabethan audiences had to do with the different textual appeals in the playtexts. These textual self-reflexive components – meta-theatricality, puns, hyperboles, deviating narratives, bizarre textual constructions, etc. – would be sources of cognitive pleasure for many audiences. In fact, Lopez goes as far as to imply that many audiences would enjoy those tropes regardless of their social station. I have taken these inclusive views on the flexibility of the Elizabethan texts as a starting point to hypothesize that Wyver’s works present a similar set of strategies of appeal to those of the Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre. Such tactics are based on a fundamentally hybrid and dialogical approach to translating Shakespeare to the television screen.

In this dissertation, I have applied this hypothesis to Gregory Doran’s Macbeth (2001), Hamlet (2009) and Julius Caesar (2012) and Rupert Goold’s Macbeth (2010). The films have embraced the language of theatre through site-specificity, the exploration of onstage-backstage dynamics, classical verse speaking, the filming of nearly uncut productions and the Elizabethan stage economy based on metonymy rather than on literal representation of time and place. In addition, the productions under analysis set the language of cinema in motion by borrowing a few devices from film genres as well as from traditional approaches to film and television Shakespeare.

The prolegomenon that constituted my point of departure – see section 1.1 – is the evident impossibility of fully recovering the experience of live theatre on the small screen. Is there any inherent and unsurmountable incompatibility between the media of television and the language of the theatre? The evidence shows that technical equipment and expertise have always taken the task of improving the visual quality of British television theatre recordings seriously. However, these attempts have produced mixed results with varied degrees of satisfaction and divergent views on how to approach television drama. Roughly speaking, these approaches are divided into those that favour filmic and realistic ways of recording and those that choose to pay tribute to the theatrical qualities of the playtexts. Wyver’s stance on theatre recording is clearly in favour of continuing the British experimental tradition of theatre recording on television by making use of a range of means. To analyze the different tactics used and modes deployed, I have helped myself with the different recording categories provided by scholars such as Michèle Willems, Jack Jorgens, or Maurice Hindle. I hope not to have used these categories as mere labels, precincts or watertight compartments but as theoretical tools to mobilize a series of analyses on the different operations carried out by hybridity. As far as I know, neither Wyver nor Doran nor Goold

389 Nevertheless, under no circumstances am I suggesting that Wyver’s strategies of appeal are equivalent to Shakespeare’s.
have systematically used these terms to refer to their own works and, as for this dissertation, I expect that they have been helpful to isolate what I have judged as the most prominent discursive strands of hybrid television Shakespeare film. Mostly, as I will be recalling, these hybrid dynamics are based on the slippage, the collision, the acknowledgement of difference and the rhizomatic dynamics between these different discourses presented in section 3.1.

For a start, Wyver’s works combine the theatrical mode – aka live recording –, theatre recording on location as well as the filmic mode. This filmic mode is inflected with many resources from mainstream film genre that belong to the audience’s horizons of expectations. I have taken for granted that audiences are familiar with horror films, slasher films, gangster films, war films, cinema vérité and other schemata that we tend to assume as belonging to the stock of popular culture. If the creators assume this cinematic competence on the viewers, what the films do, as mentioned above, is to engage in varied dynamics ranging between clear collision of codes – filmic and theatrical – or slippage between codes within the television frame. I want to underline the idea of slippage, which, as I said in the introduction, conceptualizes how neither theatre language nor film language really take over one another in the production. Whereas one language often predominates over the other, we never lose the impression that these films are recorded theatre plays nor are we led to believe that they are films in the strictest sense of the word. The verse speaking carries the RSC and Shakespearean training trademarks with it and the filmic narrative devices certainly undermine the traditional theatrical values of recorded theatre.390

I hope that the analysis of the different films has contributed to qualify my statement. Also, I hope that the conclusions serve to illustrate how the objectives presented in section 0.2 are fulfilled. In the following subsections, I will be disclosing the conclusions drawn from this whole dissertation.

10.1. First Conclusion

The first objective that I set down for this work responded to the need of creating a tool-box to analyze and critically approach hybrid television Shakespeare films. At all times, my main contention has been that the interest of these films lies on the slippage and collision of languages produced in them. Originally, the productions were thought of as recordings of specific stage productions. Being conscious that the choice of keeping the full text intact and mixing various media is an ambitious one to film

390 Let us remember that Goold’s Macbeth was not staged by the RSC. However, the quality of the verse speaking is very connected with the training that has predominated since the 1960s. In fact, Stewart, Fleetwood, Feast and Shelley have extensively worked at the RSC and the National Theatre. Stewart and Fleetwood began their careers at the RSC, so their acting is intrinsically indebted to that background too.
Shakespeare I considered that the obvious and simplest place to begin with was Bakhtin’s work on the polyphony of language.

Following his studies, languages are systems that, above all, acknowledge the need to bear the communicative context in mind always. This way, Bakhtin opposes dialogical to monolithical conceptions on language. From this, it follows that dialogical approaches to uncut versions of Shakespeare on television might heavily rely on diversity of media. Let us remember that, as Lopez insists upon, Shakespeare’s work intended to appeal to a wide spectatorship through the intellectual pleasures derived from language. Following Bakhtin’s premises, I have focused on how hybrid television Shakespeare films incorporate intermedial polyphony to Shakespeare’s language.

To continue, we have relied on Bakhtin’s work because it highlights the interest of genre speeches as abstract sets of rules – vocabulary selection, syntax, structures, etc. – that need to be conjugated and inflected within the same text. I have applied this concept to the television receptacle constituted by the films. Proficiency in many televisual and filmic speech genres guarantees that the different media employed in Wyver’s works carry out centrifugal, rather than centripetal, filmic operations. If, as I stated in my initial contention, the interest in the films relates to heteroglossia and the amalgamation of different languages, Bakhtin’s work serves as main theoretical basis to study the minimal principles upon which hybridity stands. In a nutshell, the strengths of the films are based upon their centrifugal operations. All in all, these operations lie on dialogical principles and on the flexibility to embrace a variety of genre speeches. In this case, as I specified in Chapter Two, I have been using the term genre speech as an umbrella term to refer to film genres as well as different modes of discourse, although the term is indebted to Bakhtin’s analyses of genre speeches in ordinary verbal language.

As hybridity intends to capitalize on the textual plurality of intermediality, inter-genericity and transmedia, one of the questions that have been asked is to what extent the Cinema Apparatus is determinant to the viewer. This constitutes one of the areas of our theoretical paradigm, which includes reception theory, audience reception as well as intertextuality. Given the fact that cultural consumption is founded upon notions related to pleasure, we need to analyze whether pleasure is active or alienating, i.e. does pleasure impede the audience’s engagement and interpretation of the different meanings produced by the film text or does pleasure create ‘cultural dupes’ who simply receive meanings pre-cooked for them? These opposite views respond to structuralist – more or less, deterministic – as well as poststructuralist – more or less, non-deterministic – views on what signifying systems in cinema operate on the viewer. Structuralist studies on the cinema apparatus, such as Narboni’s and Cormolli’s
work, seem to indicate – in association with Althusser’s over-deterministic Althusserian views – that the film frame renders the spectator passive under the power of the audiovisual narrative.

In this thesis, I have opted for the Gramscian perspective that, although acknowledging a level of filmic determination, these hegemonic positions do not ultimately dictate the readings that may ensue the viewing activity. In this sense, I have relied on Fiske’s progressive views on popular culture and the different positions taken by readers when it comes to negotiate meanings with television programmes. Thus, in no way should we expect a unique response from a single television programme nor do we have reason to believe that the viewer will always react in the same way to that television programme if it is repeatedly viewed.

In addition, Kristeva’s and Barthes’ works on intertextuality have helped to critically approach the hybridity operations at an intertextual level. All in all, Kristeva and Barthes reckon textual meanings as non-monolithical and free from determination. In addition, whereas Kristeva recurs to psychoanalytical principles to distinguish the semiotic and the symbolic languages, Barthes offers the concepts of ‘readerly’ and ‘writerly’ texts. Kristeva’s concepts have been helpful to approach the playful use of intermediality in Doran’s Hamlet. As for Barthes’ concepts, I would like to clarify that they are conjugated in the films always under the premise that no text has been fully writerly nor fully readerly. These films do not attempt to hide their difficulty and, occasionally, the viewer is demanded to carefully and attentively listen to long texts and to find the consistency in the coherent deformation formed by hybridity. At other times, the viewer is given facilities in the form of film genre and several direct appeals connected to direct addresses to the camera, spectacular display, and a plethora of textual mechanisms that attempt to emphasize the readerly aspects of the plays.

Regarding the fact that the viewing activity is unpredictable, we have postulated that hybridity positions the films in a dialogical dynamic interrelation of film texts and modes of recording that, arguably, rely on Brechtian principles of detachment and active pleasure rather than on the homogenizing of self-contained and self-fulfilled cultural products. Although the films appeal to and invoke different frames of horizons, these are constantly contrasted with other schemata. As the viewer’s cinematic competence is constantly conjured up, a world-picture system dislocates, displaces, coexists with and irritates another. The sense of pleasure derived from this radical textual plurality invokes Barthes’s jouissance, which is compared to an orgasm. In this sense, I am willing to affirm that Wyver’s work is certainly aiming at a kind of filmic and theatrical orgasm as the inflection of different languages and modes is capriciously interwoven, and, sometimes, producing interesting situations of slippage. As I have been saying, these films are not different from most film and television works of the last decades.
The originality of these productions lies on their choice of codes – theatrical and filmic – within the same receptacle.

Sometimes specific demands on the viewer’s imagination are made. Although Goold’s film is, arguably, the most cinematic of the four, there are times in which the viewer needs to accept many theatrical conventions that would be taken for granted on the Elizabethan stage but not in film, e.g. the many spaces that operate on the principles of metonymy rather than metaphor – such as the ballroom at Welbeck Abbey or the Roundhouse arena – heavily rely on the spoken word and do not offer visually informative references of time, place and situation. Very often, the viewer is reminded that these are theatre plays and that the viewer should come to terms with the contradictions between the two languages. After a great deal of cinéma vérité, suddenly Doran fills the London Roundhouse with false trees and the viewer needs to accept that Birnam Wood has moved to Dunsinane simply because the text says it and because the camera mobilizes this effect. What kind of making do can the viewers achieve in this respect is, as for now, unpredictable but these inconsistencies certainly produce a degree of challenge for them. In short, the viewer needs to accept that Doran and Goold have not truly made up their minds as for whether they are doing a film or a recorded theatre piece. In fact, they exhibit and exploit their eclecticism, which is, in fact, as I have been arguing, the main appeal in the films. The languages in the films are presented as different, as opposed to another type of dialectics that ends up swallowing up one type of discourse by another. Theatre resists and keeps a rhizomatic relationship with the audiovisual language required for a television adaptation. This rhizomatic relationship between the languages turn these productions into a flexible totality which, following Deleuze’s studies on film, understand connections between different sets as possible and akin to the language of cinema. The different discourses and linguistic strands in the different films clash with each other and their difference is foregrounded rather than softened. The different lines of convergence between film and theatre have been observed considering that the dynamics of slippage of collision have helped maintaining a struggle for signification and meaning between these discourses in a series of artistic exercises which, while theoretically intending to stick to the ‘essence’ of the original stage productions, have actually problematized such an essence and opened up Pandora’s box for a much more complex and cinematically inflected way of translating a Renaissance text to the small screen than a transparent and straightforward live performance might be. At least, I regard these hybrid television Shakespeare films as much more linguistically rewarding in their valiant acceptance that the film frame decides not to

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391 See Deleuze (1983)
oblige any of the formats and modes I displayed in section 3.1 and chooses to have a finger in every pie
with many of such modes at the same time, very often in direct contradiction with each other.

One of the optimistic assumptions of cultural studies and popular culture studies is that – as the
opposed to the views of the Frankfurt School –, the audiences do not need to be taken as cultural dupes.
Although the Shakespeare Re-Told Series, Justin Kurzel’s Macbeth, HBO allusions to Shakespeare,
Luhrmann’s, Branagh’s or Almereyda’s Shakespeare films are definitely valuable and powerful artistic
achievements, it is my position that recording uncut productions should be regarded still as an appealing
exercise. It is certainly possible to appreciate productions of these characteristics without necessarily
being part of the cultural patriciate. The fact that the audience rates for these productions have not been
significant does not mean that the results are negative considering that Shakespeare on the screen has a
much wider existence beyond these productions.

Wyver, Doran and Goold choose not to second-guess the audiences and the risk to acknowledge
that film and theatre are different discourses and that this clash of languages is a contingency to be dealt
with in the television screen. In many ways, the whole team – in cooperation with RSC and, with ups
and downs, with BBC – takes the problematic view that, if the text is well delivered and the production
well directed, there is no reason why Shakespeare – as earlier said, words and all – should not be fit for
television in this format. In no way, do they regard ‘excellence’ as synonymous with ‘elitist.’ Also, they
seem to take a clear position that contradicts the meta-narrative I protested at the introduction. As for
Wyver, he has been actively arguing against the notion that Shakespeare does not work on the television
screen. Beyond that, he has been pioneer in finding innovative ways to record Shakespeare on TV by
way of exploring different effects, such as making the camera intrude on the backstage of the theatre
and establishing relationships between backstage and on stage areas. Also, he has introduced the single
camera in uncut recordings on the text and, following Doran’s suggestion, has developed the
resourcefulness of site-specificity to transpose long theatrical texts into the film screen in order not to
fully eradicate the theatrical mode. Again, the purpose of these films is not to eradicate any discourse
but problematize it and exploring how the relationships between the different modes produce different
effects and lead to different opportunities on the screen.

On a different level, the discipline of cultural studies helps analyzing the effect on the theatrical
and the filmic dynamics by paying attention to larger social concerns related with hybridity and
dialogical positions employed in order to fulfill Williams’s utopia of the ‘common culture.’ 392

392 See section 3.4.1.
appealing to the audience with film genre devices and a number of camera movements to cinematize the recorded performances, it is clear that the team manages to engage in a complex relationship with the viewers used to a variety of different registers and codes. In a manner of speaking, they seem to be attempting to please as big a viewership as possible, although that certainly involves the risk of not pleasing anyone.

Different theoreticians that are ascribed to the discipline of cultural studies have helped analyzing specific films from different angles to assess the cultural impact of hybridity in relationship with intermediality, transmedia and inter-genericity. From Baudrillard, I have borrowed the concept of ‘simulacrum’ to analyze how the theatrical elements in Doran’s Macbeth are fully dissimulated – sometimes disintegrated – in a way that enhances the theatrical strengths of the production. Foucault and Deleuze have been relevant to analyze Goold’s film as one related to the surveillance genre. Barthes’ work on Mythologies has consistently reinforced the genre-base analysis that I carried out on gangster and war film horizons of expectations in Goold’s Macbeth.

Even though, in Chapter Two, I approached the problematic relationship between Shakespeare and popular culture, my purpose, as I have been saying, was never to discover whether these films were popular or not. Yet, in the case of Julius Caesar, hybridity has helped developing trans-medial dialogue with various communities of viewers in the form of documentary programmes, epitexts derived from the production that, all in all, have attempted to foster participation from members of the audience. The results of the Teacher’s Pack, the film I Cinna the Poet and the subsequent epitexts derived from the film are not yet fully evaluated. Yet, my preliminary conclusions on these forms of transmedia are critical in the sense that the dynamics of interaction and participation proposed are somewhat limited and restrained in comparison with the many different forms of convergence and transmedia that have been studied by experts like Fiske and Jenkins. Whereas the RSC and Doran’s efforts to extend hybridity to the classroom is potentially progressive in its fostering of close reading and cultural materialist reading, it is my suspicion that they do not truly empower the students to be theatrically skilled or to live up to the self-proclaimed intentions of the so-called Shakespeare Manifesto.393 This does mean neither this is not an important step into popularizing Shakespeare nor that hybridity and transmedia have been a failure when applied in Julius Caesar.

We also need to remember that, contrarily to following Fiske’s path of delving into what has been regarded as trash or useless culture, the RSC, Wyver, Doran and Goold have attempted the difficult

393 However, this conclusion remains open to modification and criticism as I have not had the possibility of obtaining any information of the results of this specific set of exercises based on Julius Caesar.
task of occupying a central position in-between Shakespeare as epitome of English literature – that, rightly or wrongly, has been elevated to the rank of high culture – and popular culture, which is the realm to which, following the team, Shakespeare truly belongs. This road back to uncut Shakespeare’s popularization involves a delicate process of negotiation. Whereas Branagh did find film genre, popular references and a degree of literalism beneath Shakespeare’s text, Illuminations Media has rather followed a more eclectic text-based path in recording the texts as uncut and as complex as can be.\(^{394}\) The negotiation between film textures, intermediality and transmedia is not an unconditional one as the preservation of the text is one concession that these hybrid films have not made.

This generates some legitimate questions, probably as legitimate as my own response against the mantra that I denounced at the beginning of this thesis. In *Mythologies*, Barthes denounces central political positions as inert and as pillars of the long-standing stale bourgeois apparatus that corrodes the Western cultural landscape (2000).\(^{395}\) Are Wyver’s, Goold’s and Doran’s neither-norists who intend to jazz up Shakespeare’s difficulty with a few scraps and shards borrowed from film generic conventions? Do they unconsciously foster left-wing purist efforts to do Shakespeare’s texts up with a bit of cinematic editing? Are the BBC, the RSC and Illuminations Media altogether preaching and ranting and blaming a Tory government for their carelessness of the arts from a Shakespearean pulpit? I would suggest that Wyver’s position has not been hidden at all. The producer has been constantly confirming his opinion that the BBC should foster excellence in culture. Shakespeare is certainly included within this paradigm of excellence. As for Goold and Doran, their take on Shakespeare openly makes a bet for popularization while sticking to their guns on the importance of the text. I do not think that this necessarily means that their position is elitist. Rather, I regard their position as the very opposite.

In some ways, there are elements in these productions – particularly, in *Julius Caesar* – that, I think, might be regarded as questionable. As I said on the chapter on *Julius Caesar*, the students and other viewers likely to use the Teacher’s Pack are invited to the film intertextual orgasm and yet very little reference is made to how other companies or films have tackled *Julius Caesar*. As I also said in that chapter, I think a less teacher-centred approach and some more opportunities to play and rejoice at being the ‘big parts’ in the play might be a much better strategy to motivate drama students.

\(^{394}\) Although Branagh is well known for his *Hamlet* (1996), he usually heavily cuts Shakespeare’s texts.

\(^{395}\) Barthes refers to this position as ‘Neither-norism,’ which consists of ‘stating two opposites and balancing the one by the other to reject them both.’ In this position, Barthes sees reality reduced to analogues that, by emphasizing equality, cancel it. Also, he recognizes a degree of ‘magical behaviour’ because the centralist view rejects acknowledging reality by refusing to take the embarrassing and intolerable position of choosing (2000: 153).
Nevertheless, I would prefer not to consider hybrid television Shakespeare films as recipes but as ways of approaching Shakespeare’s texts in dialogical terms with the possibilities of the media of television and film.\textsuperscript{396} I hope to have demonstrated that Wyver’s work has attempted to fully engage with the languages of film, television and theatre on the small screen by way of relying on these strong dialogical principles that recognize their differences but also find several spaces of confluence between the different genres and modes recognised. In fact, although Wyver has actively and unashamedly employed terms such as ‘high culture’ and the need to spread it amongst the youth, he has explicitly said that creators need to be ‘realistic’ and not expect the governments to publicly finance all sorts of artistic manifestations for art’s sake. Furthermore, Illuminations Media is a private producing company that works to obtain sponsorship to carry out these films but that does not expect the tax-payer to pay their personnel salaries. Whether the answer to sort the problematic relationship between these films and audience rates relates to the need to continue exploring and insisting upon the possibilities of this format or with studying different ways of recording Shakespeare performances with cheaper budgets is something which is not within the scope of this thesis. At least, I hope some questions have been generated regarding a series of problems that I think should be tackled.

Finally, although I agree with Jenkins’ notion that, by taking popular culture seriously, we have the possibility to realize the utopia of a better world, I certainly hope this utopia includes uncut Shakespeare performances as well as Star Wars and I hope that the utopia of the ‘common culture’ does not equate ‘uncut Shakespeare’ with ‘elitism,’ no matter what the past may have been.\textsuperscript{397} Very likely, hybridity is a form of filming that has the potentiality to be progressive in this sense. In fact, the stage-to-screen live performances have done much to democratize theatre attendance. An additional issue which needs to be dealt with is how hybridity can be used to sort out one of the other problems Shakespeare tends to experience on the television screen: comedy. Can Wyver’s ideas be applied to

\textsuperscript{396} As Wyver says, ‘I’m not sure that there is a typical Illuminations shooting approach’ (2015: 283). Following this argument and paying attention to the different ways in which hybrid television Shakespeare films work, I hope to have demonstrated that Wyver’s films do not intend to be a definite television Shakespeare recipe, although certain common patterns have appeared. However, the Illuminations Media working methods have managed to challenge many standing prejudices on the plausibility of shooting Shakespeare’s texts for the small screen.

\textsuperscript{397} Writing about fandom, Jenkins proclaims his intentions: ‘As a utopian, I want to identify possibilities within our culture that might lead toward a better, more just society. My experiences as a fan have changed now I think about media politics, helping me to look for and promote unrealized potentials rather than reject out of hand anything that doesn’t rise to my standards’ (2008: 258).
plasticize uncut Shakespeare’s comedies or problem plays by way of making use of different modes, film genres and varied recording inflections?

10.2. Second Conclusion

As I have been trying to assert through the thesis, the interest of these films is related to the different media conjugated within the frame. A second objective that I set down for this work was the critical analysis of the processes through which the languages of film and theatre engaged in dynamics of collision and slippage. Let us remember that the creative team originally wanted to maintain the essence of the stage production while developing a visual language for it.

In this respect, the DoP’s work has been crucial as it is in all filmic processes. Much of the impetus behind this production is that the pleasure for the viewers will be, among other things, found in how the texts are delivered through the small screen. I believe we can conclude that there is a certain commonplace that Shakespeare’s text – as Joseph says – is ‘sublime’ when it is simply conversational in front of the camera.\(^{398}\) However, Doran and Wyver do not simply convey the speeches in a naturalistic way but several registers, sometimes amounting to heightened speech, are applied within the filmic frames. Apart from this, the spectators are more than once given the chance to listen to the texts directly from the stage performance or nearly with the same level of energy as if the performers were on the stage.

Even Goold, as mentioned in Chapter Six, who is supposedly the most filmic of the two directors, treats the soliloquies as arias one cannot deprive the viewers of. All in all, as I have been saying – particularly when writing about Julius Caesar and Goold’s Macbeth –, the delivery of speeches has been consistently taken care of, thus maximizing Shakespeare’s verse on the small screen. Rather than restricting the vocal qualities of the plays, Wyver’s films explore several different vocal possibilities ranging from theatrical projection to the lowest and most psychologizing tones. The flexibility of the spaces derived from site-specificity has allowed that this happens. The lack of specificity of the settings has produced that neither the shooting nor the acting are determined and that more dialogue with the language of theatre is possible.

In short, hybridity produces a different range of theatrical physical and textual quality that, rather than choosing among one or two options, makes ample use of many different vocal possibilities. This

allows the RSC and Chichester Festival Shakespearean classically trained actors to remain what they are: classically trained actors in front of the small screen. At least, this allegedly purely theatrical element is conjugated over the performance and the actors and actresses are given the chance to make use of their stage experience to explore the possibilities of the TV set.

Yet, these ‘arias’ have needed to be reconciled with the language of cinema. Thus, the four films have been recorded with a single camera paying attention to individual shots rather than following a traditional multiple camera approach that has been recurrent in studio drama. From this it follows that the DoP’s work, according to Wyver, has been essential to use ‘the images to express the director’s vision’ (Hindle 2015: 284). The relationship between the stage director and the DoP has worked in close partnership. As Wyver continues:

The director by and large won’t be able to say, ‘I think it should be a medium close-shot, with an out-of-focus foreground, and a dolly shot on this line to the right.’ You know? That isn’t how most theatre directors work. But the stage director may say, ‘At this point, Hamlet is bemused, lost, trying to think through what his life is about, and then he has an idea and at that point everything changes.’ The DoP might respond, ‘Well, why don’t we do it with this kind of shot and this kind of camera movement? That’ll underscore what’s in the performance and the text at this point.’ So the production process is full of those little collaborative discussions. (ibid: 284-285)

The partnership between the stage director and his theatre background and the DoP constitute much of the secret of success in hybridity. One of the ways in which we can detect the Bakthinian’s acknowledgement of ‘another’s speech’ is precisely in how the DoPs have willingly lent their abilities to fulfill the stage director’s necessities. Yet, as we will see, the directors have also willingly embraced the language of film and managed to enhance the theatrical qualities of the film through the camera.

All in all, the filmic turn of the productions sets the precedent that Shakespeare stage performances on television need to be envisaged in terms of form and not simply in terms of how to recover ‘the original.’ Also, the idea that ‘the text itself suffices’ is challenged in these performances. Although the productions are undoubtedly text-based, the text has been filtered through the cultural and semiotic codes of television and film. This is not the same as saying that the language of television works against the text but it simply comes to demonstrate that, within the confines of television, the

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399 Film acting requires different skills from those of theatre acting. Sigfried Kracauer suggests that the need to be natural, casual, dependent on physique brings the actor to occupy the category of function, i.e. the actor is one of the objects amongst many others (2005: 325-327).
texts need to explore different routes to achieve the levels of intensity of energy that the stage grants them.

Therefore, to record the plays, Doran and Goold have entirely relied on the frame. Several film genres have been employed to visualize the stage performance. Thus, Doran employs cinéma vérité, horror and surveillance conventions. This gives him the opportunity to explore a range of filmic possibilities: quick pans; unexpected and jarring camera movements; unintentional circular shots; POV shots; voice-over; montage; mirror shots; direct addresses to the camera; mise-en-abyme shots; sections recorded through a hand-held camera; CCTV shots; theatrical mode scenes; phone camera shots, etc.

As for Goold, his film strongly relies on the postmodern patterns of ‘nostalgia films’ and makes ample use of conventions from katabatic narratives, slasher horror, J-horror, gangster, war, and surveillance films. Particularly, Goold makes use of montage, a rapid cutting rate, direct addresses to the camera, parallel shots, alternation of wide, mid and close-up shots, etc. Apart from this, he makes use of documentary and archive inserts and takes advantage of the site-specificity of Welbeck Abbey to explore its theatrical possibilities.

As for Doran’s Macbeth, Hamlet and Julius Caesar, they explore meta-theatricality, meta-filmic devices and audience participation in the films themselves. Rather than denying the theatrical origins of the pieces, Doran indulges in the theatrical origins of the productions and uses them to his own advantage to involve the viewer in the discussion on whether Shakespeare can be contained on the small screen or not. Rather than trying to demonstrate to the anti-television theatre brigadiers that the television experience equals the experience at the theatre, Doran rather accepts their verdict and explores theatre or drama at least as concepts in filmic terms by way of enhancing its self-reflexivity and its possibilities.

At times, in Goold’s and Doran’s films, actors directly address the viewers. Sher’s Macbeth speaks to the DoP as if he were addressing some war correspondent and Stewart addresses the viewer and remains in silence waiting for a response. In different sequences, Noonan and Sher break the fourth wall by way of referring to contemporary politics or by abandoning the set, thus reminding the audience that this is, after all, fiction. The reliance on J-horror film in Goold’s Macbeth, to some extent, also helps blurring the fourth wall. However, the most important sign of interaction with the audience is how Julius Caesar, following premises in the playtext and Wyver’s hopes on the involvement of the audience on the auditorium and the audience of the stage as if they were one, attempts to involve the audience in trans-medial terms. Thus, audience members appear on the theatre stage, in the classroom and at home. In this manner, the films attempt to think differently about the ways to ensure communication between
the audience and the performers. By no means are these ways to ‘recover’ the experience at the theatre but ways to approach such interrelation between audiences and actors in different ways from those of the theatre stage. As I have been insisting upon, recording theatre on television does not at all – nor does it attempt to – recover the experience of ‘being there’, i.e. in the theatre. However, the disintegration of the theatrical experience is neither reduced to zero degree nor does it involve that the language of theatre disappears. It is in this space between zero degree and the enormous filmic inflection in the productions that I find many elements worth exploring.⁴⁰⁰

Regarding the language of cinema in these films, as Wyver says, one could say that Goold is much more filmic than Doran is (2015). Yet, this statement requires revision and this very likely depends on what we understand as ‘filmic.’ Goold exhibits a much wider proficiency in film genre and film quoting. His working style follows suit with Branagh’s Shakespeare productions and their relish in film quoting and exploration of the possibilities mainstream cinema offers. In intertextual terms, Goold’s work is more powerful than Doran’s. Yet, the strength in Doran’s work has much more to do with the original and thoughtful ways in which his films explore the relationship between film and theatre without trying to make much emphasis on film genres, although he makes use of them too.

For a start, Doran’s Macbeth combines vérité techniques with the stability and the order of the public spaces created for monarchy and its representation. In Hamlet, as we saw, hybridity was distilled through Hamlet’s problematic relationship with his social identity and his eagerness to approach his conflicts in theatrical and filmic terms, being proficient in neither of them. As I suggested, this tragic artistic schizophrenia reflects Hamlet’s fragmented nature, which utterly rejects the semiotic for the symbolic. As for Julius Caesar, Doran theatricalizes the filmic mode and cinematizes the theatrical mode. In the former mode, he heavily works on the need to listen to ‘another’s speech.’ Much of the recording consists of having a character or a series of characters listening to long speeches and letting the words work their impact on them. On the contrary, when Doran engages in the theatrical mode, he determines who is in power by way of granting him a much more polyhedral presence on the screen through a higher variety of types of shots and angles.

To sum up, both directors manage to mobilize centrifugal strategies in the films. The difference between them is that Goold mostly structures his centrifugal intertextuality relying on film genre and a

⁴⁰⁰ The next conclusion will be particularly illustrative in this sense.
rapid cutting rate while Doran tends to work in close relationship with the meta-theatricality inherent to the playtext.⁴⁰¹ This relationship is, by extension, analyzed in filmic terms.

10.3. Third Conclusion

As I have pointed out several times, Wyver never wanted to do feature films in the strictest sense of the word. At all times, we need to remember that these are not purely filmic adaptations where the language of cinema needs to prevail over the dynamics of theatre. The relationship between the two languages is one that acknowledges difference. Although there are scenes and whole sections that are more filmic than others, these productions have been intended as hybrid forms that combine the rules of theatre and film on the same chessboard. But, as the third objective indicated, part of my intention has been searching how the theatricality of the productions is enhanced in the recordings.

Fortunately, thanks to the conditions of flexibility permitted by hybridity and the unexpectedness of this way of recording, the producer has found a way to create his own rules to film Shakespeare. Although this way of recording has proven too expensive in comparison with Live Cinema recordings and the BBC is not willing to finance this type of production at present, at least we have moved in a different direction from more traditional BBC and RSC approaches to recording that allow the viewers to simply, as mentioned above, think differently about the relationship between theatrical Shakespeare and television film.

Although I have been insisting on the move from the theatrical to the filmic move and the slippage and clashes between these two modes, I do not wish to imply that the theatrical mode is worthless. Ultimately, this all comes down to offering different screen Shakespeare experiences. However, to my mind, the experience offered by hybrid television Shakespeare film is much more problematic and complex in the sense that it makes meta-theatrical commentary on the films in ways one could not do by way of engaging in the transparent recording of a theatre production, which requires other types of muscular and agile on-the-spot skills. Although, thanks to HD technologies and new ways of recording have increased the quality of live cinema performances, Wyver’s work on the theatrical features of the productions works in interesting ways. It does not fully reject the theatrical mode but rather inflects it, breaks it down into different angles and multiple perspectives, deconstructs it in a

⁴⁰¹ Goold also carries this operation out, as we will see, although his employment of filmic signifiers contributes to make this relationship between film and drama much more multifarious.
different space that rightfully stands as a metonymic space. This space, as Wyver said, attempts to reconstruct an equivalence with the stage production but, furthermore, it enhances the imaginative power of theatre on the small screen and demands the viewer to complete the construction of space and time in the bits and scraps offered by these unspecified locations.

There are two major ways in which these film productions highlight their theatrical origins. The first one works in line with Bazin’s presupposition that, to truly record theatre, the director needs to acknowledge the language of film. On several occasions – particularly, in Chapter Three –, I have referred to this phenomenon as ‘de-theatricalization.’ At its simplest, what I mean with this term can be simply referred to as deconstruction of the theatrical mode. This effect is normally mobilized at the opening scenes. Except for Julius Caesar – which, although with a close-up shot, starts on the theatre stage –, none of the films open with any reference to their theatrical origin. Doran’s Macbeth commences with a POV shot pursuing the Witches through the tunnels at the Roundhouse; Hamlet begins with CCTV shots recording Barnardo and Francisco at the cloister; and Goold’s Macbeth begins with a sequence of parallel shots featuring inserts from war black-and-white archive footage. Although Doran’s Macbeth recalls its theatricality by making use of the arena, the film performance in those sections is heavily inflected in filmic terms as the DoP makes use of unintentional shots and unpredictable camera moves. Doran’s Hamlet turns the chapel into a piece of studio drama where curtains and wings are visible to the audience. At times, we even see Tennant walking through the wings and waiting for Gertrude and Claudius to exit so he can come into the public space and deliver the ‘To be or no to be…’ soliloquy in a very cinematic close-up. As for Goold, he contaminates the theatricality of the ballroom with elements from J-horror and bizarre editing where figures, such as Fleance’s replica, disrupt the simplicity of the metonymic space. At least, by opposition, the effect of de-theatricalization intends to dissimulate the theatrical origins of the pieces. Yet, this dissimulation announces and reinforces such theatricality.

Finally, the films thoroughly exploit what Wyver has considered as one of the many possibilities offered to creative minds ready to work under cheap budgets: exploring the onstage-backstage relationship. Without exception, all the productions distinguish a public space and liminal areas that operate as backstage. This idea was explored by Wyver in Gloriana and has been continuously put into practice again in the four films. Whereas the public space tends to act as an equivalent to the economic flexibility of the Elizabethan stage, the backstage areas are, roughly speaking, places employed for private scenes or more psychologizing scenes. I do not mean to imply that there is a correlation between backstage and film and onstage and theatricality. It is rather the opposite: there is not a direct relationship.
between these two binomials, which rather act, as already mentioned, in rhizomatic and entangled ways. In fact, all sorts of combinations are tried. The language of theatre is heavily used on backstage and onstage areas and the same principle applies to film.

The most obvious example of this is certainly *Julius Caesar*, where the creators themselves relate how the arrangement of the different spaces had to do with an understanding of the public space – on the theatre stage – and the private spaces developed in film. Nevertheless, such arrangement is not a simple one. As I have already said a few times, even within the theatrical space, diverse camera movements sometimes let us peep through the private thoughts of certain characters. Additionally, the location spaces sometimes acquire theatrical expansion and quality, as it is the case with the food court and the parley scene where Antony, Brutus, Octavius and Cassius meet before the battle. That scene brings us back to the theatrical ways in which a few soldiers stand for a whole army and how the threats and bantering between the characters acquire all the physicality and vocal energy that theatre demands.

Perhaps the clearest example in which the public area is made to contrast with liminal surrounding areas is Doran’s *Hamlet*. The nave of the chapel has been painted in marble fablon so that the floor and the walls recall the mirrors used in the stage production. Apart from this, this public area, as I already said, lets us see all the entrances and exits used by characters on different occasions. In many ways, this production recalls the more traditional British television theatre recordings on studio, except for the fact that the single camera lets the DoP to work on individual shots. Therefore, the space can be used with high levels of flexibility. This public area is also inflected by the influence of different spaces, such as the cloister, Polonius’s house, Gertrude’s room, a cellar, and several other different spaces subordinated to what the public space should be in the Danish court. The rhizomatic network generated by hybridity gives way to several spaces and time periods of high intensity where the action concentrates in specific areas with their own specific filmic, theatrical or filmic/theatrical poetics. Additionally, Doran also turns this metonymic space into the place where Hamlet and the Ghost meet, which produces a strange clash between the alleged rational environment dominated by Claudius – who, like the Ghost, happens to be played by Stewart – and Hamlet’s dreamlike visions of the Ghost. Apart from this, this theatrical area is under surveillance. So, frequent *mise-en-abyme* inserts are included in the editing to remind the viewers that surveillance also affects those who have power. Also, momentarily the CCTV cameras turn this space into a political Big Brother set where characters are observed within their private spheres and in their different interactions.

Roughly speaking, the London Roundhouse arena is employed as the space of belonging whereas the liminal areas are places where the Macbeths live in their self-confinement. Thus, they hide
far from the public space that a monarch needs to be familiar and comfortable with. The first time we perceive this area, we leave the rotten liminal backstage hideaways where the marginal Witches and Duncan’s retinue take refuge from the dangers of the battle. There we see a triumphant Macbeth for the first time. Yet, very quickly, we discover that Macbeth is not proficient at handling his theatrical stance within this space and the vérité camera reflects his deranged mind that cannot stop processing images of death and horrible imaginings. Now and again, Macbeth returns to the public areas and, all the same, he furiously returns to liminal spaces, to the closet scenes where plots are devised. In many ways, this dialectical relationship between the arena and the liminal rooms underline Macbeth’s and Lady Macbeth’s beastly qualities and unsociability.

Goold’s film also follows suit with this principle. However, it is interesting to observe that his camera work expands and complicates the relationship between the more theatrical space – the ballroom, where the banquet scene takes place – and the other spaces. For a start, the ballroom is not simply a section for public scenes. In fact, some public scenes occur at outside locations, at private rooms, the hospital corridor, or even at the kitchen. Very often, this massive theatrical area is used for very private and confidential experiences, such as the first meeting with the Witches, Macbeth’s bugging of Banquo, the parade of Kings, the siege at Dunsinane and Macbeth’s final fight with Macduff. Although the banquet scene takes place in that area, much of what happens there works to reinforce how the characters seem isolated and struggling with a hostile environment.

Apart from this, several locations in this film help reinforcing the katabatic features of the piece. We are given to understand that it all happens underground and there is an entrance through which characters decide to confront the demonized Other. The lift follows uncertain directions and, each time, seems to take steps downward to what seems a postmodern version of Dante’s hell. This dream-like filmscape is divided into interconnected floors that depict the decay and rottenness of the institutions that once ruled this Scotland. Some spaces deliberately play with the doubleness of the ‘foul’ and the ‘fair.’ The ballroom lets the light enter so the forces of evil embodied by the Witches coexist with heavenly forces. The cloister lets the sunlight break through its holes and columns. Thus, the large corridor inside the cloister seems to be a threshold between heaven and hell that the Macbeths need to cross.

Two film genre discourses employed by Goold – gangster and war films – are helpful to thoroughly explore the different secret corners and private spaces on the backstage areas. Following this premise, these two genre speeches serve to explore the Jacobean themes in the playtext that, in the film, are transposed as references to food rituals, institutional assassination, illegality, informing,
imprisonment and other themes that altogether help conveying Kottian visions of Macbeth in the film frame.

Thus, through a variety of filmic resources, these films do not dismiss the theatricality of the films. In fact, they pay homage to it by way of distancing from the so-called ‘straightforward’ theatrical mode. To my mind, the variety of angles, shots, focuses and movements does not undermine the theatrical qualities of the production. All the opposite, it makes it more complex and multi-dimensional. Furthermore, by cinematically fostering the relationship between these texts and the dramatic art, film helps generating many questions about drama and how Shakespeare’s works are not simply entertaining stories beautifully spoken but also – together with Elizabethan theatre – statements about what theatre can be. I will insist, again, that, hopefully, considering this notion could open the doors toward the difficult task of finding more ways to film Shakespeare’s comedies, highly underrepresented on the television screen.

10.4. Fourth Conclusion

The fourth objective of the thesis was discovering to what extent the concept of hybridity works as an ‘over-arching’ logic in the same way transmedia storytelling and convergence culture do. As many scholars – Jenkins (2008), Fiske (2010), Hutcheon and O’Flynn (2013) – demonstrate, there are potentialities in convergence culture and transmedia to build up a grassroots movement through different platforms and media. Wyver’s constant involvement in the Illuminations Media blog demonstrates that hybrid television Shakespeare film, amongst many other theatre and television productions, have been commented on and debated by a few followers who discuss the productions and their views on them.

My initial hypothesis was that the sources of pleasure in the films should be found in the interaction of different languages within the same filmic receptacle in hybrid television Shakespeare film. The audiences are demanded to conjugate different languages – film, television and theatre –, intertexts, and, ultimately, a polyphony of discourse within the same television film narrative. Following Bakhtin’s theoretical premises, I have associated hybridity to the centrifugal movements taking place in novels. These centrifugal movements involve that art works embrace many other discourses, voices, world views, standpoints, and visions within the same receptacle. Thus, heteroglossia in the films should transcend the already complex dynamics of collision and slippage between film and theatre. To what extent can the pleasure and the interest in hybridity be expanded through centrifugal plurality of discourse has been in some ways discernible through the study of additional materials that have
accompanied *Julius Caesar*. All the films have been accompanied by an amount of additional materials – director’s and producer’s commentary, Making-Off, etc. Nevertheless, I have analyzed *Julius Caesar* by examining mechanism of participation and interactivity offered by these materials.

As already said, for Wyver, *Julius Caesar* is a play in which the audience at the auditorium and the audience in the Roman crowd are treated as one. He even goes as far as to imply that the audiences at home will be included in this binomial. As @shaksper, a participant in one of Wyver’s posts, suggests, ‘homes’ and ‘classes’ will be places where this production will many times be played in the future. In some ways, this statement clarifies much of the popularizing drive of my analysis. First, the audiences at home will be invited to regard themselves as participants. In the introduction, I quoted Wyver’s conviction that Shakespeare on television could produce that the text should slip from the screen and mean something real and meaningful in the viewer’s experience. Secondly, students at schools have been regarded as potential Shakespearians who will be setting their hands on the texts. To promote the play in participatory dynamics, the RSC and BBC develop many initiatives.

For a start, a few taxpayers were invited to participate as members of the public Forum. Thus, several members of the audience were given the chance to be inside the theatre play and, furthermore, to appear in the film production and take part in the community experience intended at the RSC. To continue, the Teacher’s Pack has proposed a series of classroom dynamics to understand and comprehend Shakespeare’s text through the bias of this performance and, at the same time, the students are given the chance to research the back story of Roman citizens as well as to engage in the decision-making for putting on *Julius Caesar*. This transmedia storytelling experience is completed by Crouch’s *I Cinna the Poet*, a film watched by students and viewers who are asked to think about the subject matter of the play from the perspective of an everyman who happens to use words to make a living. Thus, the students are asked to reflect on the political issues of the play and even take their pen and write about them.

All in all, these initiatives, to some extent, have followed suit with the premises of convergence culture to empower the audiences as participants in the construction of a common culture. Although we have agreed upon the fact that Shakespeare plays have always been popular, television Shakespeare productions still need to explore the potentialities of television language by way of utilizing and mobilizing the interaction and participation resources offered by television. What the educational initiative in *Julius Caesar* manages to do is to take steps towards the construction of this ‘participatory culture’ while not stepping down from the premise that Shakespeare also needs to be given to the audiences ‘words and all.’ In fact, as we saw in Chapter Eight, most interaction and participation
dynamics intended were based on language in general and Shakespeare’s language in particular. Personally, I think that the question – Is it possible to popularize Shakespeare ‘words and all’ through the television screen? – is worth asking. Also, it is worth exploring it through trial and error in specific television hybrid contexts. Such filmic procedures embrace syncretism, dialogism and the agglutination of different recording modes to muscle up theatre on TV.
REFERENCES

It is only fair to mention the work of José Ramón Díaz Fernández, “An Annotated Checklist of Shakespeare on Screen”, published in Cuadernos de traduçao, 1 (7), 2001, 259-291. This document has provided the basic reading list to commence the research on Shakespeare on Screen.

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**Films and Television Programmes**


*As You Like It*. Dir. Kenneth Branagh. Perf: Bryce Dallas Howard, Adrian Lester. BBC Films, HBO Films, Shakespeare Film Company, 2006. DVD.


“Julius Caesar.” *Shakespeare Unlocked*. BBC, 2012. DVD.


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402 My acknowledgements to John Wyver, Tom Allen and the Illuminations Media Team for facilitating me the files to view this production, unavailable in June 2016.


Websites

403 Ibid.


APPENDIX A: BRIEF HISTORY OF SHAKESPEARE ON TELEVISION

The purpose of this section is to situate hybrid television Shakespeare film within the larger landscape of British television drama. As Bignel et al. suggest, all television products need to be studied through the dynamics of interaction and negotiation between different professionals (2000: 28). Following this premise, hybrid television Shakespeare films belong to a televisual frame totally indebted to theatre and to the slippage and collision of the stage and the screen media. Nevertheless, according to a survey carried out by Terris, Shakespeare is not even considered when it comes to evaluate the greatest hits in British television (2009a: 38). As I pointed out in Chapter Two, over the current year, British television has paid much more attention to Shakespeare than in previous years because much attention has been paid to the Bard’s Death Anniversary. In fact, as Wyver suggests, perhaps television and cinema – helped with the Live Cinema screenings by RSC, NT Live and Shakespeare’s Globe Live –, together with other media-based means of narrative, are gradually showing more interest in finding new visual languages for Shakespeare (2016). It is my intention to set television Shakespeare against the larger background of British television to briefly sketch how different directors and producers have attempted to reconcile the Bard’s language with the language of the small screen.

Although Cooke’s periodization of British television does not intend to be teleological, the reader will find it useful to obtain an overview of the path which television Shakespeare has been treading. Cooke divides the history of British television into seven periods beginning with the ‘early development of Television Drama’ (1930-54) and then moving through the raise of popular drama and social realism (1955-61). After this, a period in which British Television finds its maturity and effervescence follows (1962-9). This continues with a period of abundance of historical drama, realism and ideological agenda in television (1970-9). The Thatcher era is also regarded as a period in television terms too. Subsequently, during the 1990s and early 2000s, television drama was reinvented and driven

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404 See Jacobs (2000).
towards cost-effective policies. Finally, Cooke’s chapter studies British television the landscape of the Digital Age (2002-2014).  

Gardner and Wyver identify three stages which will be much more useful to this chapter than the previous ones as they focus on the development of the ‘single play.’ They establish a first period from the beginning of public television to the emergence of Independent Television (ITV) and commercial television. ITV put an end to the monopoly of BBC, which had had its hegemony during the ‘Reithian era,’ with John Reith as Director General of BBC. A second period begins at the postwar period – the mid-1950s – and concludes with the wildness of the free market economics brought about by the Thatcher administration in the mid-1980s. This second period encompassed the so-called ‘Golden Age’ of British television and it represented the coexistence of television devoted to public service and ITV’s more audience-friendly approaches. Between the 1950s and the 1970s, as Terris writes, around fifty Shakespeare plays were transmitted by British Television (2009a: 20). The third period involves the end of television as public service and applies to the current landscape of television (Gardner and Wyver 1980). Then, as Terris continues, by 2009 only eleven Shakespeare productions had taken place on television since the end of the BBC Shakespeare Series (2009a: 20). This evidence demonstrates that the BBC Series were not successful in promoting Shakespeare but rather failed to do so. Further than that, it arguably produced some anxiety on channels, which became rather reluctant to accept Shakespeare on television.

Let us now examine how Shakespeare on television appears in contrast to the well-established relationship between television and theatre. Cooke opens his discussion by establishing various forms of pre-war television drama. Amongst them, it is interesting to point at British television broadcast excerpts from specific plays from the Alexandra Palace television studios. To this, he adds the inclusion of ‘full-length adaptations’ of literary works or theatre plays that were transmitted as live broadcast programmes from the studios. Finally, ‘live outside broadcasts’ were transmitted from theatres in London (2003:11). Wyver and Wrigley refer to Pirandello’s The Man with the Flower in his Mouth as the first adaptation of a stage play broadcast on 15 July 1930 as well as to a plethora of extracts from theatre plays between the 1940s and the 1950s from BBC and ITV (2012).

As for Shakespeare, the first manifestations of the plays on the technological media had taken place in 1890 with the voice of Edwin Thomas Booth reciting Othello’s speech on the Phonograph.

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Afterwards, in 1899, Herbert Beerbohm Tree gave his rendition of a series of scenes from *King John* that were recorded by British Mutoscope and Biograph Company motion picture cameras (McKernan 2009: vii).

Generally, many attempts have been made to bring Shakespeare to television but the small medium has shown its incompatibilities with the playtexts. Since 1937, John Wyver accounts for no less than thirty-seven television screenings of Shakespeare in performance (2014: 104). Yet, Terris agrees with Wyver’s statements when he affirms that television technology did not help shaping any aesthetics specific for theatre on television, a fact that was notorious in the first Shakespeare television performances from the 1930s and 1940s (2009a: 21). The problems emerging from the so-called ‘photographed stage play’ derived into a lack of commitment to turn Shakespeare’s play scripts into real television scripts and final television products.

This apparent inconsistency between the theatricality of the texts and the smallness of the television screen, together with other factors such as the absence of the performer, had – as mentioned in section 1.1 – given way to a view that Shakespeare’s plays should never be on the television screen. In 1937, The Listener staged a debate between Harley Granville Barker (1937) and Alfred Hitchcock (1937) on the suitability of Shakespeare to the screen. Whereas Granville Barker argued that film was a flawed medium to harbour the grandeur of Shakespeare’s plays, Hitchcock answered that the filmic medium had to be thanked for making the widely uncared for Shakespeare accessible to the audiences.406

All in all, again, this debate comes to pinpoint the differences between the stage and the screen. However, it also pinpoints at the complex relationship between theatre and the popularizing possibilities of television. By extension, it informs about the need to carefully consider the requirements of each medium before they are combined. Even though film and television have made extensive use of Shakespeare to legitimize themselves as artistic media, it seems that this relationship between the high culture represented by theatre and the screen media has been a rather unequal one. Much of the interest of television makers in using the classics was in taking advantage of their prestige rather than in using them as working material or playscripts. In many ways, Shakespeare on the small screen embodies the mutual – and sometimes unfortunate – dialogue between the stage language and the television language.

In the following pages, we will be paying attention to the most significant performances of Shakespeare on television. Thus, I will be focusing on individual pieces carried out over the 1930s as

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well as the Post-War period and plays recorded over the Golden Age of television. After this, I will focus on the isolated productions, which were made after the Golden Age, paying attention to Tony Richardson’s *Hamlet* (1969) and the lights and shadows of the controversial *BBC Shakespeare Series* (1978-1985). After this, I will be highlighting some of the most relevant achievements of the last decades of the twentieth-century as well as those of the last two decades.

1. Dallas Bower: *Julius Caesar* (1938)

Dallas Bower’s *Julius Caesar* (1938) is the first Shakespeare television landmark accounted for by Terris (2009a: 21) as well as Wyver and Wrigley (2012).\(^{407}\) As Wyver says, Bower was ‘committed both to experimenting with what television might achieve and to the masterpieces of the European high art tradition’ (2012d). Also, Bower is the first British director who thought necessary to turn the theatre play into a piece of television fiction. This currently unavailable live broadcast took place on July 24 at 9:05pm by BBC. The cast – which included around thirty people – had to gather together again on two more occasions for subsequent transmissions. According to *Screen Online*, this was a most ‘ambitious’ modern-dress 141-minutes production of the Roman play. Inspired by Orson Welles’ production at the Mercury Theatre (New York), this staging featured Caesar’s guardians wearing fascist uniforms and Julius Caesar himself was characterized as General Franco. At the same time, Brutus was represented as a modern gangster and his wife, the decadent Portia, appeared smoking cigarettes.

The technological innovation of this television film was completed with James Hartley’s orchestra and the number of screenings – featuring gunfire, explosions, airplanes, etc. – from British Movietone and the Film Library which served as background to the production. Although Dallas Bower denied having been influenced by Welles’ production, it is not surprising that the boiling fascist theme in the 1930s was a common source of inspiration for many *Julius Caesar* performances. Positive reviews were given to this challenging rendition of Shakespeare’s politically controversial play: ‘The play, stripped of its classical trappings, [became] a present-day drama of power politics, and the atmosphere of intrigue and unrest but too real in certain countries [then]’ (Times, “‘Julius Caesar” in modern dress, 1 August 1938, p. 6, quoted in Wyver 2012d). To this, Wyndham Goldie adds:

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\(^{407}\) To organize this subsection, I have relied on Purser (1999); Wyver (2012d); British Universities Film and Video Council; Wyver and Wrigley (2012); Terris (2009a: 21), Brooke (2003-2014).
[T]he contemporary central European settings, Julius Caesar as a Dictator, gunmen in uniform armed with revolvers ranging streets and cafés and the like revealed the amazing topicality of the play. So that although some of the detail was exasperating yet the production as a whole was continuously interesting because in it television was giving us something fresh, something we have not had, as yet, from the theatre (Grace Wyndham Goldie, “Television: now then, Ally Pally!”, 11 August 1938, p. 307, quoted in Wyver 2012d).

Dallas Bower did not just commit to engage with the potentialities of television performance but it also wanted to align this performance to contemporary realities. Thus, the film was approximated to the category of semi-documentary narrative that helped itself with a classic text to speak about contemporary circumstances.

In subsequent broadcasts, the television viewers had the chance to enjoy Peggy Aschcroft’s rendition of Miranda’s speech as well as her intervention as Viola in Twelfth Night (1939). This full-length production was transmitted from the Phoenix Theatre with Michael Redgrave as partner to Ashcroft. The Scanner, from Radio Times, announced the event referring to the three cameras that were employed to transmit it:

There will be three cameras in the auditorium – one in the centre of the circle and two close together in the orchestra pit. These last two cameras will be fitted with different lenses so that changes can be made from mid shots to close

\(^{408}\) Picture taken from Wyver (2012b).
shots and vice versa without any change of angle – viewers will not feel that they have been suddenly snatched out of a theatre seat and planted in another with every camera change. (Quoted in Wyver 11)

An anonymous reviewer comments on the technical problem derived from recording live theatre for television and how the audiences juggle to overcome the obstacles of reconciling these two languages:

The impression given was one of extreme restlessness. Viola was now a tiny figure scarcely distinguishable from half-a-dozen others equally diminutive and now rather more than life-size, taking up half the screen and hiding the balcony at her back. So with all the others. The result was to falsify the fluid grace of the production and to tempt viewers who were not preoccupied with the technical wonders of the apparatus to close their eyes and to treat the affair as broadcast [radio] drama. Then there was much to enjoy. (Quoted in Wyver 2011)

To this, The Observer adds that the poor lighting and the clumsy camera movement trying to follow the rapid stage action showed that this broadcast was not ready for the language and technical constraints of television at that time (quoted in Wyver 2011). Therefore, this full-length performance was already accounted for as not proficient enough for the small medium.  

3. Post-war Period

409 See Terris (2009: 21), Wyver (2011); British Universities Film and Video Council website.

410 Picture taken from Wyver (2011).
Following Terris, the post-war period gave way to a rise in entertainment possibilities. Within this state of affairs, ITV appeared as a Conservative cultural victory in trying to undermine the BBC’s cultural establishment (2009a: 22-24). Ruled by the Canadian Sydney Newman, ITV imitated the BBC’s *Sunday Play* event and gave way to a series of single plays in the form of the *Armchair Theatre* programme (Cooke 2003: 8). Within this context, Shakespeare’s texts were tried out by ITV and BBC alike. Nevertheless, each of these institutions pursued their own ontological aims. Whereas ITV strove to achieve economic benefit, the BBC carried on their innovative line of intellectually stimulating productions.

Terris states that over this period drama established itself as popular in both state and private television. However, Shakespeare on television was also observed as a product that only appealed to the cultural élite. This fact proved utterly poisonous for upcoming Shakespeare television performances. Despite this, many attempts to broadcast Shakespeare were made. Amongst these we can mention Peter Brook’s *Hamlet* (1956) and *King John* (1952), John Barton’s *Henry V* (1953) and *Troilus and Cressida* (1954), a French *Othello* by the Comédie Française and others. Yet, these productions did not reach high audience rates. On the other hand, television Shakespeare fared better in the educational sector (2009: 24-27).

### 4. The Golden Age of British Television

In the 1960s, BBC flourished with a new television programme called *Wednesday Play*, which survived between 1964 and 1970. The period that ranged between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s is known as the ‘Golden Age’ of television. For Cooke, this nomenclature is somewhat ‘illusory’ and refers to the autonomy enjoyed by television producers before the cost-effective impositions of the 1970s and those of the Thatcher period (2003: 66). Critics like Bignell et al (2000), Plater (2000), McGrath (2000: 48-51), Shubik (2000: 39-41) and Cooke (2003: 66) allude to this so-called ‘Age’ as a period where autonomy, creativity, fantasy, seriousness, challenge, daring statements, experimentalism and demands on the audience were the rule rather than the exception. According to this myth, audiences were used to being surprised through experimental screenings and novelty while, at the same time, new drama writing was encouraged. Technical experimentation went as far as to combine the use of 16mm cameras for documentary filming with studio drama, inclusion of voice-overs, etc. In 2000, McGrath, the alleged ‘main progenitor of the idea of the Golden Age,’ came to advocate for the autonomy for filmmakers and the necessity of a return to such creative independence even in the present century (McGrath 2000: 53).
In his thorough work *Television Drama (Realism, Modernism, and British Culture)*, Caughie connects the range of televisual styles in the British twentieth century with the larger cultural issues of Drama, Popular Culture, Television Criticism, Literature and Cultural Studies. Caughie acknowledges – despite the fears of nostalgia and sentimentalism – the value of an idea of a ‘Golden Age.’ He compares the way in which old traditions begin to be revised and written anew to the Spanish *Siglo de Oro* and to the raise of Elizabethan drama.

Nevertheless, this circumstance must be analyzed within the larger paradigm of the British 1950s. The traumatic humiliation that Britain suffered at the Suez Canal (1956) showed the ‘reeking wounds’ of the British Empire. The contagious disillusion at the disappointing and crumbling myth of the British protagonism in the worldwide sphere gave way to the eruption of a generation of literary writers known as the ‘Angry Young Men.’ This generation voiced their frustration and fury against the conformism and unfulfilled promises made by the establishment. Paradoxically, a great flux of creativity and critical thinking were spurred by this apparent disaster.

Within this prolific cultural paradigm, a theatrical event came to influence the British theatrical experience. In 1956, the Berliner Ensemble visited London. This moment meant the meeting of Bertolt Brecht’s style with British drama. In fact, we can say that the Brechtian style has been a major feature in British theatre on the stage and television over the second half of the twentieth century. This way of interpreting theatre encouraged the bare-laying of dramatic devices and a detachment from the events under representation. In the application of the Brechtian principles to British television drama, these television programmes contrasted with its American counterpart, which worked in line with Lee Strasberg’s, Harold Clurman’s and Stella Adler’s theories. These American artists encouraged inside-out interpretation and identification rather than the Brechtian detachment embraced by British theatre professionals.

Another important cultural event influencing the flourishing of television was the rise of Cultural Studies as an academic discipline. This came from the hand of Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Edward Thompson, Richard Hoggart as well as a series of television directors educated at Oxford and Cambridge. These made their passage through the arena of political debate and through television as a public medium. On a different level, voices such as Kingsley Amis’ *Socialism and Intellectuals* (1957) and Lindsay Anderson’s “Get Out and Push” (1957) protested about the patent ‘nanny state’ Britain had turned into. An emergent social consciousness had turned literature and arts to content rather than the

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411 These two Works are referred to in Caughie (2000).
mannerisms of what they took as a degenerate Modernism. So, new social concerns increased the necessity of turning fiction into a creative force capable of mobilizing the audience’s minds and awareness on larger political and social issues too. In short, social contents became intrinsically connected to form when it came to devise visually innovative ways of filmic and dramatic storytelling.

ITV was captained by the energetic Sydney Newman, who took an interest in the plays performed at the Royal Court Theatre – specifically, John Osborne’s *Look Back in Anger* (1956) –. He encouraged a type of drama that relied on original writing and the use of realism. This also involved the elimination of everything that looked ‘classical’ or ‘stagy,’ in total opposition to the ‘patrician codes’ which had prevailed in the state-subsidized BBC system. Although there were voices which spoke against Newman’s barbarism and lack of theatrical education, under his supervision, the television programme *Armchair Theatre* contributed to major advances in the expansion of acting spaces in the studio-based drama pieces. Social relationship, social space and social situations began to matter and became subject matter of television drama.

As Caughie indicates, the BBC counter-attacked ITV’s insistence on giving the audience what they wanted. At the time, the BBC advocated for the improvement of television as a means of public service and as a means of production of the programmes which offered the best quality possible. This conception would be in opposition to the over-sugared triviality which represented a lurking danger on television.412

Shakespeare went along with these developments in television too. Wyver confirms that recordings were produced by way of combining extracts from prestigious RSC productions – such as Peter Brook’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1970), which appeared in an arts programme – and the odd studio production – Michael Elliot’s staging of *As You Like It* (1963) – (2014: 104-105). However, Terris emphasizes the importance of this period for Shakespeare by relating it to the ‘Golden Age’ of the 1960s. He includes Shakespeare within the debate of realism versus naturalism, which opposed the emergent social realist drama to the ongoing BBC theatrical practices on television. As I pinpointed in section 1.1., the attack on naturalism came through Kennedy Martin’s controversial “Nats Go Home,” in which he advocated for a visual language adapted to the small screen. Likewise, television language needed and deserved to stand on its own and disavow its allegiance to theatre. Terris connects Peter Dew’s series *An Age of Kings* (1960) to naturalism and his subsequent series *The Spread of the Eagle* (1963) to realism (2009: 27). Following suit with Peter Dewes, John Barton and Peter Hall directed the

412 See Caughie 2000: 57-84.
series *The Wars of the Roses* (1963) featuring the complete *First Henriad*. Thus, not only does Shakespeare proliferate in the ‘Golden Age’ but also gives further steps into the reconciliation with the language of television by its entrance into the dramatic serial. This approach guarantees a different way of accessing Shakespeare through smaller doses in the form of short episodes contributing to a larger narrative arch.

5. **An Age of Kings (1960)**

At the end of the 1950s, according to Wyver, BBC was concerned with the conservative government’s plans to provide public television with an additional channel. The BBC succeeded in making an impression on those with the responsibility of shaping the Pilkington Report through the creation of the first Shakespeare dramatic serial, which was viewed by more than 300 million viewers (See DVD Booklet 2013). As mentioned above, Dewes’ *An Age of Kings* (1960) meant the first interaction between Shakespeare and the format of the dramatic serial. Directed by Michael Hayes, the series consisted of fifteen episodes featuring the complete *Second Henriad* and *First Henriad*. Arranging the series into episodes represented a clear attempt to sequence and to connect the events of the different histories in the fashion of Victorian installments. Additionally, unlike Shakespeare, the plays were shown in chronological order, which alters the technical progression evinced in the plays. For Michael Brooke, considering ‘the standards of the time, it was a highly prestigious undertaking, with each episode costing £4,000 (a big budget in 1960), 600 speaking parts, and thirty weeks of rehearsal prior to shooting’ (2003-2014a).

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Wyver (see DVD Booklet 2013) and Stewart (1998) confirm the grand success amongst the audiences who did not fail to oblige the series. Not only was the event a success but it was also the first internationally sold Shakespeare television series. In the United States it made a mark in National Educational Television (NET) – a precursor to Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) – and was partly financed by commercial entities such as Humble Oil or Refining & Co. The series reception in America paved the road for further British television imports such as *The Forsyte Saga* (1967), *Brideshead Revisited* (1981) and a long etcetera of British television products that have been acclaimed from the other side of the ocean. Wyver points out that this one ‘remains the only occasion when a single company and production team [took] on for television all eight of Shakespeare’s major History plays,’ an event which ‘more than five decades after it was first seen, (…) retains a clarity and an immediacy, a sense of scale, a narrative power and a poetic depth that is similarly unparalleled’ (See DVD Booklet 2013).

Wyver’s Booklet, Brooke (2003-2014a) and other sources refer to some of the highest points in the production. They emphasize the tightly arranged visual narrative that generates a ‘sense of drama as a political thriller’ and how most of the performance takes place in ‘close-up and claustrophobic two-and three-shots.’ The series does not attempt at the spectacle one could expect from its contemporary contemporaries.

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415 The more contemporary *The Hollow Crown* (2012) and *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses* (2016) in some ways parallel this achievement. Yet, except for the second series – all of it directed by a single director and featuring the same cast – and although there are certain elements of continuity, it was never intended as a progressive narrative carried out by an ensemble of actors. Rather, it pursues realism and presents high levels of irregularity as the films were commissioned to different directors who independently worked on the films.
siblings *The Hollow Crown* (2012) and *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses* (2016). However, it engages in consistent work on the text and some moments of bravura, including David Williams, as King Richard, facing defeat as he is stabbed against the cell bars; the exposure of the actors taking off their costumes and patting each other’s backs at the end of *Henry VI Part 2*; Eileen Atkin’s dying scene as Joan La Pucelle while an extreme close-up focuses on her eyes and ‘a writhing dancer’ is superimposed on each iris. Despite the technical bravery and success of this series, its level of technological narrative does not approach the current strengths of television. As Hoberman points out, ‘its true successors are “Mad Men” and “The Wire,” serial dramas that strain the confines of the small screen with their large characters, compelling situations and narrative density, if not the power of Shakespearean English’ (2009). Also, the reader should notice that this series did not hide its theatricality despite its entirely televisual nature. Although the verse speaking is surprisingly adjusted to the small screen, the viewer can still appreciate the distinct poetic quality of the performances.


In 1963, Peter Dews mounted *The Spread of the Eagle*, a second attempt to transfer Shakespeare to television in serial format. Nevertheless, the plays selected for this venture – *Coriolanus, Julius Caesar*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* – do not form a continuous narrative line and only two characters, Octavius Caesar and Mark Antony, re-appear at different episodes. For Brooke, this lack of continuity in the narrative lines may have been the reason why it was much less successful than its predecessor *An Age of Kings* (2003-2014b).

The title was not taken from Shakespeare but from the Eagle symbolizing the power of the Roman Empire. Thus, this venture intended, in Brooke’s words, to portray the deeds of great characters as well as the monumentality of the Roman civilization (ibid).

Wyver refers to the critical reviews of the period, which emphasized the mediocrity of the *Coriolanus* episode. This part took the first three episodes in the series. What seems most striking is the way in which ‘lengthy developing shots on a single camera’ were freely employed in a series of bravura sequences, amounting to 7 minutes and 40 seconds per shot (2012e). Despite the lack of popularity of the series, especially compared to the previous *Henriads*, some television personalities were featured. Paul Eddington, who would be the starring character Jim Hacker in *Yes Minister* and *Yes Prime Minister* played a young Brutus. Keith Mitchell played a ‘bare-chested Antony who [took] the forum scene very
fast with a finely facetious manner. However, one of the most important developments in *The Spread of the Eagle* was that it marked the movement of Shakespeare out of the studio in line with the cinema vérité techniques incorporated by Ken Loach, Peter Watkins and a number of others, leading to an adaptation of Shakespeare’s blank verse into shorter segments and a more complex visual narrative than the one that had been tried in its predecessor. As Terris says, ‘television plays were now becoming films in all but name’ (2009: 31). *The Spread of the Eagle*, doubtless, followed suit with this idea. Therefore, in some ways, the current *The Hollow Crown* as well as the *Shakespeare Retold* drama serials are indebted to Dewes’ efforts.

![Figure 4](image_url)

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416 Mitchell repeated the part in the *BBC Series*.


418 Picture taken from Wyver (2012e).

The Royal Shakespeare Company is pioneer in fashioning what might be regarded as a proto-hybrid way of televising Shakespeare. The reason why I am using this term is that the RSC’s productions did their best to display the theatrical origins of the pieces while trying to find a visual language for them. In 1970, Peter Hall and John Barton mounted the scholarly *The Wars of the Roses* series including *Henry VI Parts 1, 2 and 3* as well as *Richard III*. The series was shown in April 1965 in three parts. This somewhat free adaptation of the three plays constitutes one of the biggest successes for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Insecurities over the impact of *An Age of Kings* were left aside and, being this such a remarkable theatrical achievement, those in command of the BBC, Sydney Newman included, decided that the play had to be shown in television. Mike Blakewell, head of Drama in BBC at that period, and Wyver (2015a) account for the concerns derived from adapting the theatre play to the television small screen, not from the studio but in the theatre itself.419 The powerful presence of a big metallic cage, broadswords and ‘metal grilles’ on the stage performance would be lessened on the small screen. The cameras in the theatre would require the same freedom they had in a studio (Michael Bakewell’s “The Television Production”, quoted in Barton and Hall 1970: 231-232). Wyver explains how this was achieved (2012f):

[h] alf of the seats in the stalls were removed, the stage was extended out into the auditorium, and a platform was built across the stalls for cameras and sound booms to move on. One camera was lifted high above the stage, another placed in the orchestra pit ‘to give a kind of death’s eye view’, while a hand-held camera was also used in some of the battle scenes.

As Bakewell indicates, the best way to convey the spirit of the performance at Stratford was trying to accommodate such spirit to television, for which concessions would have to be made to the small medium (Bakewell 1970: 234).420 In an essay on *The Wars of the Roses*, Wyver explains the ‘range of camera techniques that resist[ed] coherence, and the consequent undermining of an overall sense of dramatic unity.’ This derived from the use of multiple cameras, which ‘expose[d] the tension between [the production’s] theatrical origin and the imperatives of television’s presentation’ (2015a: 24).

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419 In his essay on *The Wars of the Roses*, Wyver (2015a: 27) accounts for all the technical complication and how the equipment was organized to bring the theatrical world to the studio.

420 See Michael Bakewell’s “The Television Production” (Quoted in from Barton, John and Peter Hall, 1970).
8. After the Golden Age

Isolated landmarks took place during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Amongst these, we can account for *Hamlet at Elsinore* (Philip Saville, 1964). This was the first time that a full-length Shakespeare play was shot on location and was carried out at Kronborg Castle (Elsinore, Denmark). For Brooke, Christopher Plummer’s greatest achievement as Hamlet was how, out of pretending madness, he ended up becoming truly insane. Stuart Burges’ *Othello* featured the opportunity of seeing a recorded document of the renowned Laurence Olivier on stage. The attempt resulted in a rather exaggerated interpretation on Olivier’s behalf and manifested the problems of recording stage productions without adapting stage acting to the language of film (Hindle 2015: 86). McKernan (2009: 16) also highlights other two Olivier’s television performances: *The Merchant of Venice* (John Sichel, 1974) and *King Lear* (Michael Elliot, 1983). Nevertheless, in cinematic terms, perhaps one of the most interesting samples we can offer to the viewer is Tony Richardson’s *Hamlet*.


This film is based on a stage production at the London Roundhouse. There was not a defined set and the bricks within the Roundhouse itself were often the only background left for the spectators. Mostly, the film featured a black emptiness as backdrop. It lasted 112 minutes and eliminated Fortinbras’ scenes. In this space, Richardson could ‘put the actors into immediate contact with the audience instead of being stuck behind the picture-frame of a proscenium’ (Manvell 1971: 127-128). This film established a precedent in turning a stage performance into a real film. Perhaps it is Doran and Goold’s most important predecessor as it used a theatrical space while it engaged with complex cinematic language. Most of the production was shot by creating close-up on characters’ faces in single, two- and three-shot exchanges. Very often, as mentioned in Chapter Three, the frame was packed with the faces of many different characters, particularly at those scenes where Claudius and Gertrude appeared as leading masters of ceremonies. The Felliniesque atmosphere at the monarchs’ wedding party recalled the permissiveness of the 1960s in the United Kingdom and the United States. The jollity in the atmosphere constituted a powerful dramatic prompt for Hamlet’s overtly puritanical resentment. The ‘Pleasure Principle’ which Taylor finds ruling the ambience in the film was expanded with the

421 See Brooke (2003-2014a), British University Film and Video Council.
inclusion of Marianne Faithfull, ‘a [then] current pop star with a high-profile sexual image thanks to her media roles as Mick Jagger’s girl friend and the star of Jack Cardiff’s 1968 erotic fantasy, *Girl on a Motorbike*’ (1994: 188-189). Nicol Williamson’s furious and speedy Hamlet performance and his raspy nasal voice positions the character in clear subversion to the permissiveness of the period. For Taylor, ‘this Hamlet is full of half-repressed infantile anger which renders him a neurotic outsider, spasmodically distressed and overwrought’ (ibid: 188). All in all, this production perfectly adjusted to the scale of the small screen, thus giving one step further into reaching a proficient filmic language for Shakespeare films. 422


Between 1979 and 1985, Cedric Messina and Jonathan Miller undertook the production of the complete canon through the so-called *BBC Shakespeare Series*. The purpose of recording the series was to provide the average viewer with an orthodox boxset of videotapes with a complete Shakespearean canon based on Peter Alexander’s texts. One of the premises of these productions was that the texts would not be cut and that they would be performed in Elizabethan period costumes. Thus, they would constitute a sort of visual Folio edition. Likewise, they would become a definitive interpretation of the plays with an eye on the video-tape market and on the educative sector. Radical approaches were neither allowed nor encouraged and that meant that prestigious RSC directors like Barton, Hall or Brook were not invited to direct any of the episodes. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the level of success was rather low. Although the series managed to cover the production costs, as Terris shows, *Romeo and Juliet*, the first play shown in the series, managed to get 1.9 million viewers compared to the 17 million viewers obtained by *The Forsyte Saga* (2009a: 32). 423

The dullness of the series was compensated by attempts at innovation by Cedric Messina’s successors, Jonathan Miller and Shaun Sutton. Due to this, directors like Jane Howell, Elijah Moshinsky and Miller himself engaged in more artistic and experimental representation of the sets, more efficient attempts at reconciling the language of the theatre with the language of the small screen, and certain

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attempts to combine cinematic skills with television language. Despite the patent constraints on the series, Brooke accounts for certain positive points that came about through its transmission:

Chief among them was the fact that its completist remit meant that several of the more obscure plays received their first television adaptation, and in most cases the BBC version remains the only one. Happily, such productions as Henry VIII (tx. 25/2/1979), Cymbeline (tx. 10/7/1983), Pericles (tx. 11/6/1984) and Titus Andronicus were considered amongst the cycle’s most impressive achievements, with Henry VIII subsequently voted the best production of all by the Shakespeare Association of America (2003-2014c).

The BBC Shakespeare Series has been pejoratively treated as conservative, dull, traditional, and unimaginative. Being neither true theatre nor television nor cinema, but something completely bound to house rules and second-guessing on the audience, we can rightfully say that the series constituted an awkward step forward in innovation in television Shakespeare. Unfortunately, obtuse management, difficulties in timing and shortness of budget seriously worked against the productions. Nevertheless, regardless of their imperfections, there are valuable elements in the films. For a start, Messina himself introduced realistic location, following suit with cinéma vérité techniques. Two of the episodes in the series are recorded in this way: Henry VIII and As You Like It. Henry VIII was recorded in Penshurst Place, Hever Castle and Leeds Castle. James Tyler’s music and Alun Hughes’ costumes – based on pictures such as Holbein’s portrait of Henry VIII – contributed to create a Tudor atmosphere. Nevertheless, generally speaking, Messina’s style pursued realism because that is what television audiences would be expectedly used to. Following this, Alvin Rakoff, director of Romeo and Juliet, states:

You’re asking the audience… to do a hell of a thing: the most real medium in the world is television; they’re watching the news at nine o’clock and they’re seeing real blood and real violence and suddenly we’re saying, ‘Come to our pretend violence.’ I’ve done stylised productions before, and it takes the audience a hell of a long time to get with you. You could do Romeo and Juliet against white or black drapes but I think you’d alienate a hell of a lot of the potential viewers. I would love to have tried to do Romeo outside in a Verona town somewhere… In a medium which is halfway between theatre and film I was trying to go for visuals, trying to go for the words. (Quoted in Fenwick 1978-1986:19).

To this clear demonstration of second-guessing and this supposed need to make Shakespeare realistic, Willis responds that perhaps the audiences had not been given enough opportunities to experience

\[424\] See Brooke (2003-2014d).
television in different, more stylized, ways (1991: 93). Obviously, the most important failure of conception in this production may have had to do with the obsession with associating the language of television with the language of reality instead of embracing the imaginative potential of television and making the most of a small budget. Realism in recording worked wonders in Franco Zeffirelli’s *Romeo and Juliet* (1968). However, a small budget and an excess of text can prove awkward if one pursues a rather lame realistic approach. If a lesson can be learned from the first BBC Shakespeare films is that a futile seek for realism when the budget does not suffice for it can prove disastrous and that a television director would better embrace and explore the stylized nature of theatre on the small screen.

Nevertheless, it was with the arrival of Jonathan Miller that more experimental filming methods were encouraged. Not only did Miller encourage experimentation and granted large amounts of freedom to directors but he decided to indulge to the fullest in his interpretative creativity within the confines proposed by BBC. He acknowledges that directing a play necessarily involves directorial interpretation. Otherwise, classical plays become stale (1986: 21). Miller’s interpretations came mainly from casting decisions. Such decisions were unusual in Miller’s case. Very often, they derived into surprising and bizarre interpretive styles. For instance, casting John Cleese as Petruchio was, at the very least, working against the grain of tradition. Even more bizarre for the audience was the decision to approach Petruchio as a seventeenth century English Puritan husband who *truly* attempts to educate his wife, a fact that Miller justified by way of closely reading the text in relation to the puritan early seventeenth century conceptions on marriage. But his most specific televisual feature was the employment of Renaissance paintings as bases for the visual landscape of Shakespeare’s worlds. He followed BBC’s requisites to the letter and, thus, helped his mise-en-scène with settings that recalled Vermeer’s style as well as the style of other Renaissance painters. His response to the house rules were, thus, not realism but stylization and painterly approaches. Even so, his use of camera was not extremely creative and to avoid the eternal exchanges of looks between actors, he was much more inclined to shoot long takes where groups appeared together and, thus, exchanges were framed within these large televisual paintings.\(^{425}\)

Elijah Moshinsky followed Miller’s painterly approach. Nevertheless, his camera work and filmic capacity were far more developed than Miller’s. His episodes also emphasized the use of light and the magnificence of chiaroscuro, trying at all costs to keep everything indoors. He also engaged in further cutting, re-arrangement of scenes as well division of scenes into smaller chunks. Also, characters in Moshinsky’s films exuded sensuality. An instance of this is the erotic scene in which Iachimo (Robert Lindsay) approaches the sleeping Imogen (Helen Mirren) in *Cymbeline* (1982). Generally, Moshinsky’s recordings approached the plays from a much more filmic perspective.\(^{427}\)

The most abstract director in the BBC Series was Jane Howell. She acknowledged that what BBC was attempting to do was television theatre. In this respect, much like Wyver and Doran, she thought there was no need to hide the theatrical truth implicit in Shakespeare’s text. Therefore, Howell constituted another important precedent for Wyver’s work. Following this premise, she privileged Brechtian acting over realistic acting and the performance styles were overtly theatrical – ‘stagy,’ if we prefer that word –. Her approach was, in this sense, intellectual as well as playful and dynamic. She used a unique set which served as an abstract imaginative playground – e.g. in *Henry VI I, 2 and 3* and *Richard III*, she built up an adventure playground for the actors – with many possibilities for the ensemble to explore the dramatic possibilities of this area to the fullest. Not only did the sets bring about

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\(^{426}\) Picture taken from Nunn (2014).

\(^{427}\) See Willis (1991).
a large amount of interpretive possibilities, but she also engaged in extensive camera work and cinematic language, including slow motion and clever strategies to film the battles. All in all, Howell precedes Wyver, Doran and Goold’s hybridity in the rich use of camera together with an unashamedly theatrical and abstract staging of the plays. Thus, Howell, explicitly, made the statement that theatre is, after all, theatre, even on television.428

11. RSC Productions

The RSC, allegedly holding the authority on Shakespearean innovation in performance, took up television as a medium to show the skills of the performers in response to the BBC Series. Not only did they engage much more thoroughly with the possibilities of television – in terms of variety of shots, camera movement, camera angle, and television performance in general –, but they based their productions on stagings. In relation to the BBC Series, that was an advantage as it allowed actors to carry out no less than about one hundred performances before everything could be recorded. They had already filmed extracts from Brook’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream on television, but it was in 1974 that Jon Scoffield directed Trevor Nunn’s 1972 production of Antony and Cleopatra for television, a very strong production in terms of casting. Predominantly, this production favoured tight close-ups and, on occasions, as Brooke says, the frame was shown out-of-focus to create the effects of a mirage (2003-2014f). In this way, there was a contrast established between the coldness and the clarity of Rome and


429 Screen caption from Jane Howell’s Richard III.

430 Screen caption from Henry VI Part I.
the exoticism and heat of Egypt. These very simple elements emphasized the actors’ performance and the interest in conveying the text for the audience’s understanding.

In 1978, Trevor Nunn directed a musical version of *The Comedy of Errors*, which embraced the language of television as it did not only include musical numbers by Guy Wolfensen and lyrics by Trevor Nunn but it was also made in front of a live audience. The audience’s presence was registered through laughing-tracks or odd inserts showing it. Following this, Philip Casson collaborated in translating Nunn’s already acclaimed *Macbeth*—featuring Sir Ian McKellen and Dame Judy Dench—for Thames Television. This production was deliberately claustrophobic and restrained in framing. Following this premise, the minimalist elements in the stage production were even more reduced in the television version, emphasizing the importance of the text, expressing everything mostly in close-ups and generally leaving aside all sorts of visual distraction. For Brooke, ‘it was a *Macbeth* of the mind, with Shakespeare's text to the fore and the audience trusted to use its collective imagination to conjure up horrors far more potent than anything stageable’ (2003-2014e). Also, as Brooke continues, Dench ‘lets out an unearthly scream partway through her sleepwalking soliloquy, vividly conjuring impressions of Munch’s iconic painting *The Scream* (1893) or Beckett’s stream-of-babbling-consciousness play *Not I* (1972)’ (ibid). In 2008, the RSC released Nunn’s *King Lear* for television, a production featuring a higher level of definition than any other of his productions.

**12. Last Decades**

With the arrival of PM Margaret Thatcher to power, the Tory government intervened in the national television as far as to ban plays such as *Scum* (1977) and *Boys from the Blackstuff* (1982). Television corporations like Thames Television attempted to deal with contemporary issues and to use television to establish a political agora and an arena for political struggle in the 1970s. Eventually, these films were associated to the miners’ strike which ended up Edward Heath’s right-wing rule (Cooke 2003: 101). A series of radical plays such as *The Cheviot, the Stag and the Black, Black Oil* (1974), *Days of Hope* (1975), and *Brimstone and Treacle* (1982) provoked political agitation too. So, the promotion of commercial television by the conservative government brought about the demise of the single play in the late 1970s. Cooke points at the shift from the era of public service to the era of ‘cost-

431 See Brooke (2003-2014g).
effectiveness’ in television (2003: 96). Programmes dedicated to television single plays like The Play of the Month or Armchair Theatre did not find room in the new designs for television. Resentment due to the replacement of creativity for cost-effectiveness and the lack of courage of BBC to protect the banned programmes from political intervention raised voices from experts and scholars (Wyver and Gardner 1980 48; Cooke 2003: 97; Richard Kelly 1998: 105). In an interview with Emma Brown, Doran says:

Mrs. Thatcher was really axing public subsidy for the arts. What's depressing, in a way, thinking of her legacy (...) the arts in the UK are still having to justify that it is a profitable business rather than a frivolity. It's one of the greatest UK exports, one of the reasons people come to the UK, and yet we're still having to justify our existence in terms of funding. (2013)

Following Cooke, the disaster of the end of the single play seems to have put an end to the convergence that was taking place between television and cinema films, which had begun with the introduction of location shooting on 16mm cameras in films like Up the Junction (2003: 138). Thus, as Terris carries on (2009: 33), Shakespeare in the 1980s and 1990s saw only a handful of productions such as Deborah Wagner’s Richard II (1997), Kenneth Branagh’s Twelfth Night (1988), David Thacker’s Measure for Measure (1994), or Richard Eyre’s King Lear (1998).

Broadly speaking, the 1980s and the 1990s had replaced the single play with the dramatic serial within this framework of market-based economy embraced by BBC. Regarding this aspect, in 1982, Ellis spoke out loud about how the television series was receiving all the influence of the rising film industry in Great Britain, which meant that the small screen embraced the codes of the larger screen, thus turning to programmes with larger budgets like those of The Borgias or the historical dramas which would constitute a British import (1992: 175). However, Cook refers to the agreement to eliminate social issues and challenging productions in favour of dumbed-down material which has been predominant since the beginning of the cost-effectiveness era (2003: 162). Following this line of thinking, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, Andrew Davies complained that producers in television did not have any more control on the television dramas produced but it was all in the hands of entities without background in drama or in script-reading (2000: 66). Nevertheless, the ‘Digital Age,’ which began in the middle of the 1990s, and the emergence of digital channels boosted the creation of new television narratives that contributed to add a high degree of variety to this cost-effective policy-marked era (Cooke 2015: 213). At present, we can say that technology constitutes a liberating element that facilitates the recording of Shakespeare plays on the small and the large screens.
Shakespeare has been incorporated to the development of dramatic serials within the paradigm of literary adaptations such as *Middlemarch* and *Pride and Prejudice*, giving way to a variety of creative attempts to bring Shakespeare down to the serial format. Thus, Andrew Davies attempted to write two modern adaptations of *The Tempest* and *Othello*. Also, during the 2000s, BBC commissioned the *Shakespeare-Retold* series. Despite BBC director Alasdair Milne’s condemnation of the absurdity of changing Shakespeare’s language (Snoddy 2006: 8), the series employed a vernacular language to, as Terris indicates, bring Shakespeare to the audiences rather than the audiences to Shakespeare (2009a: 36-37).


The internationally acclaimed *The Hollow Crown* made its way through the British television in 2012 and, like Doran’s *Julius Caesar*, coincided with the London Olympics. It featured the complete *Second Henriad* with the masterly production of Sam Mendes. The four films consisted of lavish productions entirely shot on location, completely blurring the boundaries between cinema and television, particularly in the first episode: Goold’s *Richard II*, which makes extensive use of film genres and visual metaphors. Richard Eyre directed *Henry IV Part 1* and *Henry IV Part 2* with the charming presence of Tom Hiddleston – see figure 6 below - as a young, handsome, sympathetic and opportunistic Prince Hal, sharing the screen with a sickly and decadent Simon Russell Beale – see figure 8 – as Falstaff. The chemistry between the actors points at what might be construed as an alternative father-son relationship. Hiddleston’s humane and merry demeanor seems to match Falstaff’s world, and yet, despite his apparent lack of manipulative selfishness, he is still conscious of his role as a Prince. His celebrated ‘I know you all...’ speech is delivered voice-over as Hiddleston walks through the streets of East Cheap, patting fellows’ backs, playing football with the little boys, kissing and hugging the ladies, truly studying the language of the people amongst whom he pretends to feel at home. Thea Sharrock employs the same actor for a culminating *Henry V*, which, in line with Olivier and Branagh’s television adaptations, eliminates the scenes that present Hal as a ruthless murderer and focuses on the valiant and heroic gallantry at Agincourt. However, contrarily to Olivier’s and Branagh’s deliveries, Hiddleston tries a more modest approach at Agincourt as he addresses his speech to a small circle of soldiers in what seems a clear conversational tone. In fact, the film opens with the burial of King Henry V, which somehow anticipates the coming of the second series, as Anton Lesser plays Exeter in both.
In 2016, BBC has celebrated Shakespeare’s Anniversary with *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses*, a three-episode second part to the first series. This second season comprises the three parts of *Henry VI* in two episodes and dedicates a final episode to *Richard III*. If the Shakespearean explosion of the 2012 London Olympiads gave way to a conclusion of the first series with Tom Hiddleston’s rising as Prince Hal and his burial as King Henry V, consciously or not, the second series was made to coincide with the extremely controversial Brexit. At a time in which the British nation faces one of its greatest historical crises, *The Wars of the Roses* appears as a more than applicable topic because of its numerous resonances with the Shakespearean texts.

Although this second series displays elements of continuity with the first one – i.e. as already mentioned, Lesser plays Exeter in both series and, also, Westminster Palace is used as location in them –, in many ways it departs from the 2012 structure. Whereas the first four episodes were treated as self-conclusive films by three different directors, in this second series Dominic Cooke is single director for the three films and, in association with Ben Power, is responsible for the cutting and editing of the four long Shakespeare scripts. They did so by way of eliminating everything not strictly applying to the feud between the Houses of Lancaster and York.\(^{432}\) Per contra, on some scenes, such as the public sequences taking place at Westminster Hall, the actors have the chance to display their vocal and physical projection in conditions like those of the theatre stage. Thus, Cooke makes a clear statement that just because the recording is filmic does not involve sacrificing the textual power of the playtexts.\(^{433}\) In fact, both series feature multi-generational casts of RSC-trained British actors who do not hesitate to display the theatrical vocal and physical projection required by the texts, which are continuously harmonized with filmic narrative editing. What may perhaps be regarded as Cooke’s most significant achievement is how he manages to keep a clear, varied and straightforward narrative line while being capable of making casting decisions – including Ben Miles (Somerset), Adrian Dunbar (Plantagenet), Stanley Townsend (Warwick), Benedict Cumberbatch (Richard Gloucester) – see figure 7, below – and a fierce Sophie Okonedo (Margaret of Anjou) – see figure 11 below –, that perfectly illustrate for audiences unfamiliar with Medieval history who is who in the complex Plantagenet genealogical tree.\(^{434}\)

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\(^{432}\) Amongst others, Jack Cade’s rebellion, as well as scenes related to Sir John Talbot and Joan La Pucelle, are mercilessly cut.

\(^{433}\) See “Making-Off of *The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses.*”

\(^{434}\) Basing his portrait of Richard III on a real physical deformity, Cumberbatch makes his first entrance at the end of the first episode as his father calls him from the hall. A long shot features a dark clumsy shadow that swings as it moves towards us as in a horror film while we can perceive its withered arm and its lameness. Through the next episodes, then, we can perceive much of Sherlock’s patronizing and sociopathic tones in Cumberbatch’s portrait of Richard. As Jasper Rees says, “[a] silent
14. Conclusions

This chapter, which, contrarily to my self-proclaimed intentions in the introduction, attempts to roughly describe the forest where Wyver’s films are planted, has attempted to situate our four films – Goold’s and Doran’s films – in perspective. This brief history of Shakespeare on television is indebted to the work carried out by scholars like Olwen Terris, Kenneth Rothwell, John Caughie, Lez Cooke, Jason Jacobs and, of course, John Wyver – producer of our four films and television scholar – and

witness to his little brother’s murder, his [Richard’s] bloodlust twists into axe-wielding malevolence the closer he edges to the throne. It is a gripping account of pure psychopathy’ (2016).

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435 Screen caption from Thea Sharrock’s *Henry V* (2012).

436 Screen caption from Dominic Cooke’s *Richard III* (2016).

437 Screen caption from Richard Eyre’s *Henry IV Part Two* (2012).

Amanda Wrigley. Although much of the interest of this dissertation has been focused on the means through which Wyver’s hybrid television Shakespeare films try to reconcile the Shakespearean texts with the audiovisual language of television film, it has been necessary to clarify that, as these scholars demonstrate, the goal of reconciling these languages has always been a priority for British television creators. Failing to acknowledge this would have been tremendously unfair and would have been damaging for the seriousness of this research.

Nevertheless, this brief history of television Shakespeare has not paid much attention to the possible relationships that Shakespeare on television must have had with Shakespeare on cinema. Although one of the premises of this PhD dissertation has been that television and film languages need to be independently acknowledged, a further path to tread is the dialogue between film Shakespeare and televisual Shakespeare. In her essay “Rescuing television from ‘the cinematic’: the perils of dismissing television style,” Deborah L. Jaramillo protests about the late tendencies in television scholarship to praise television because of its similarities with cinema (2013). Categories are always problematic and, as Wyver and Esslin have indicated, there are many reasons why the arts should be studied in integration rather than as separate chunks. However, in agreement with Jaramillo, I considered that this dissertation needed to focus on television as core subject matter of study. This does not mean that further research should not be made by following more holistic approaches to analyze hybridity in Shakespeare films.

Also, regarding my exposition of Bazin’s ideas in section 1.1, an additional premise to consider is the dismantling of the ideas that ‘staginess’ and ‘theatricality’ need to be considered as bad decisions on the film or the television screens. This next step needs to be taken if more complete and thorough studies on the intersections between film, theatre and television languages are to be carried out.

As far as I have been trying to show, the obvious place to begin with to analyze these intersections is how stage performance recordings have been pursuing the harmony between the audiovisual and the stage languages. From Dallas Bower’s recording of Julius Caesar to Dominic Cooke’s The Wars of the Roses, it has been clear that the screen language has been a preoccupation for Shakespeare producers and directors on television.

In this light, attempts to screen Shakespeare by adjusting it to serial formats have been particularly striking. Peter Dewes’ The Age of Kings, the BBC Shakespeare Series and many other attempts to transform Shakespeare’s plays into television series mark a strong stage of development to popularize Shakespeare’s texts on television. Setting aside that, following Balló and Pérez – see footnote 54 in the introduction –, television series – such as those produced by HBO – are undoubtedly indebted to Shakespeare’s narratives, Shakespeare productions using the original texts in this century have been
regarded by producers and audiences in many varied forms, such as BBC films, RSC Live Performances, Globe Live Performances, National Live Performances and feature film. Therefore, although data regarding audience rates for individual productions are not encouraging, what is true is that Shakespeare plays on television are still discovering new grounds and territories worth exploring.
APPENDIX B: COMPARATIVE CHART WITH FEATURES OF ELIZABETHAN DRAMA, BRITISH DRAMA AND MAINSTREAM FILM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elizabethan Drama</th>
<th>British Television drama</th>
<th>Film</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main unit: scene.</td>
<td>Main unit: segment.(^{439})</td>
<td>Main unit: single shot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predominantly verbal.</td>
<td>Predominantly verbal and aural.(^{440})</td>
<td>Predominantly visual.(^{441})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes place in a public playhouse. The reception is collective. There is immediate interaction between actors and audience.</td>
<td>Generally, oriented to domestic atmospheres in private spaces. It provides more intimate communication with the audience, although the audience-actors</td>
<td>Generally, oriented to large audiences in public places.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{439}\) Segments are ‘self-contained’ scenes which feature incidents, meanings or modes. These segments tend to last around five minutes and are arranged in groups in a mere cumulative fashion – as in news broadcast – or as a coherent sequence – e.g. the episodes in a serial narrative – (Ellis 1992: 148).

\(^{440}\) For Jorgens (1991: 2) and Hodgdon (2006: 99), film and television allow us to listen to Shakespeare’s text better than the theatre since the soundtrack is manipulated separately from the visual track. The advantage of independent work on the soundtrack is that the quality of the sound improves and reaches higher levels of virtuosity. Additionally, the frequent use of voice-over in television leads to an easier access to the character’s feelings and thoughts, thus increasing the sense of ‘immediacy’ which is associated to television.

\(^{441}\) For Peter Brook, the challenge of translating the text to the screen medium consists of finding ‘ways of shifting gears, styles and conventions as lightly and as deftly on the screen as within the mental processes reflected by the Elizabethan blank verse onto the screen of the mind’ (quoted in Reeves 1972: 38). However, even film has been distinguished by striking and powerful dialogue that often conveys the atmosphere, tone and mood of a filmic text.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>communicative vector is discontinuous.(^{442})</th>
<th>Often derived from a literary source. Literary aspects are emphasized.</th>
<th>Often derived from a literary source. Visual aspects are emphasized.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Derived from various</td>
<td>Often derived from a literary source. Literary</td>
<td>Often derived from a literary source. Visual aspects are emphasized.</td>
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<tr>
<td>narrative sources,</td>
<td>aspects are emphasized.</td>
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<tr>
<td>chronicles, narrative</td>
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<tr>
<td>poetry, Greek/Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>literature or drama,</td>
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<tr>
<td>miracle or mystery plays</td>
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<tr>
<td>and other plays from the</td>
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<tr>
<td>same period.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cutting rate: Inapplicable.</td>
<td>Slow cutting-rate.(^{443})</td>
<td>Generally, fast cutting-rate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It privileges action and</td>
<td>It privileges representation, contextualization,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>narrative progression.</td>
<td>cause, description and lingering around the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most scholars agree that</td>
<td>topic at hand.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>the duration of the</td>
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<td>performances in the</td>
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<tr>
<td>Renaissance time was</td>
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<tr>
<td>much shorter than in</td>
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<tr>
<td>contemporary performances.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total immediacy.</td>
<td>In its origins, immediacy was part of the</td>
<td>Film has never been immediate in its delivery but</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>excitement of its</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

\(^{442}\) Television allows the interpreters to simply speak the text and take it to the level of ordinary conversation. For directors like Jonathan Miller one of the greatest achievements of television has been to demonstrate how domestic and conversational Shakespeare’s lines can be (1986). Patterson Joseph, Peter Brook, Patrick Stewart and other actors have constantly rejoiced in the possibility of whispering, speaking, thinking the lines rather than roaring them – See The Making-off of Julius Caesar (2012), “Interview with Patrick Stewart” in Goold’s Macbeth (2010), and Looking for Richard (1996) –. Sir Ian McKellen comments on the possibilities of studio spaces to work on Shakespeare’s lines: ‘Have you been struck, watching your actors at a conventional level in this studio with the camera very close, how speeches have taken on a life that you haven’t heard before? You may recognize it because you sit in the rehearsal-room… But it’s so rare in the theatre – even in the small theatres where we sometimes work – to get that intimacy in which the audience can catch the breath being inhaled before it is exhaled on a line, and feel the excitement and certainty that what is happening is for real. The voice is wonderfully communicated but it isn’t projected. The force behind it isn’t exaggerated; there’s nothing getting in the way. That’s a level at which I like to work’ (Barton 2014: 185).

\(^{443}\) For Caughie, such slowness is not just due to technical limitations of the medium but to the audience expectations. For early television viewers, their way of entertainment meant a type of refinement and more cultural engagement compared to those audiences who enjoyed mass entertainment (2000: 43).

\(^{444}\) Weiss indicates that performance times in Renaissance drama tended to be between 120 and 200 minutes (2000: 29).
viewing. Very often, this immediacy is reinforced by direct address to the camera.\textsuperscript{445} has always been the product of careful editing, even screen tests, before public projection. The final product is manipulated by the director and the editor. In principle, characters do not address the audience. The spectators are rather treated as voyeurs who observe the events from a window into the world of the film.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Privileges continuous performance.</th>
<th>Privileges continuous performance. It does not condense events.</th>
<th>Privileges edited performance. Film tends to show bits and fragments and it is up to the spectator to fill the sequential gaps.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on stage movement. Character is built through action, proxemics, kinesics, etc. All in all, characters on stage tend to be archetypes and stereotypes.\textsuperscript{446}</td>
<td>Emphasis on psychological and social character development.</td>
<td>Emphasis on narrative development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variable length of scenes.</td>
<td>Longer shots and scenes.</td>
<td>Shorter shots and scenes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{445} Today, television is often pre-recorded, but many programmes still stick to the principles of ‘immediacy,’ which, following Caughie, are essential to understand television. In the 1950s new recording technologies were developed allowing the repetition of broadcasts and drama productions, further discussion on strengths and weaknesses of productions, adjustment to the viewers’ demands as well as to engage in trade with the American market and with other English-speaking markets (Caughie 2000: 31-32, 52).

\textsuperscript{446} The notion that characters on stage tend to be stereotypes is proposed in Weiss (2000). What she means with ‘stereotypes’ is not clarified in her work. However, most Shakespeare critics would argue that Shakespeare’s characters are far from stereotyped.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequent use of soliloquy, monologue and aside to share thoughts with the audience.</th>
<th>Inner speech is privileged through extensive use of close-up and voice-over.</th>
<th>Greater variety of shots and less emphasis on individual feelings of characters even though close-ups and voice-overs are not infrequent.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It displays a plethora of strategies to engage the audience’s attention. It uses the power of theatrical language, it appeals to the spectator’s imaginations, it gives choice of interpretation, it appeals to the spectator’s eye and ear; it appeals to the spectator’s emotions, intellect, curiosity, humour and patriotic feelings. The performance is dependent on the spectator’s reactions.</td>
<td>It does not expect full viewer’s attention. Thus, it relies more on verbal discourse, which allows the viewer not to be constantly paying attention to the visual narrative.</td>
<td>It assumes full attention from the viewer. The space where films are projected determines the spectator’s attitude and attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance, sword-fighting, jigs, and comedy were popular entertainments in Renaissance Theatre. Nevertheless, more challenging genres developed over the 1590s and the 1600s, such as the revenge tragedy, the history play, the romance, the Elizabethan tragedy, the Jacobean drama, the problem play, etc.</td>
<td>It tends to approach daily experience, although the range of possibilities and styles is not limited.</td>
<td>It is the realm of fantasy. It knows no experiential limits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is focused on performance, events, movement of people.</td>
<td>Performance is privileged over time and space.</td>
<td>It is more demanding on the spectator’s abilities to gap-filling whenever certain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A play constitutes the evening spectacle in a playhouse. It competes with other plays and spectacle – bear baiting, boxing, etc. – in different playhouses around the area. Television tends to arrange distinct items within the same range of experience, i.e. a television programme exists in a schedule, which features other programmes. Often, two or more programmes may be thematically connected.

Films constitute individual artistic creations, although they may be subject to tendencies, fashions and contemporary issues that manifest themselves in film form.

Plays may offer Prologue, characters who present the play to the spectators to indicate the beginning and situate them in the action (See Prologue in *Henry V*). Also, plays tended to end with a jig danced by all the actors in the production, whether this play was a tragedy, a comedy or a romance.

It arranges title sequences which are manufactured and repeated. In dramatic serials, narrative summaries are offered which present the highlights of previous episodes. Occasionally, insights on subsequent episodes are also offered.

Films have opening title sequences, but these are never repeated.

Plays move in progression toward a conclusion. Nevertheless, some plays are serialized.

It alternates segments or shows simultaneous scenes but their arrangement is not progressive. It is rather circumspect and moves backwards and forwards. Television serials never end and conclusions are eliminated or delayed. It sets the ground for constant innovation within a well-defined clear pattern.

Film sequences tend to move in clear progression. Everything moves towards a totalizing conclusion. Films are totally independent pieces, even when they have been made by the same director.
Mainly evolved from Medieval and classical theatre. | Evolved from radio. | Evolved from photography. |
---|---|---|
Emphasizes Brechtian distantiatiion and acknowledges its own theatricality. | Emphasizes Brechtian distantiatiion. | Attempts to create a feeling of identification from the spectator. |
Visual language tends to be metonymic and symbolic. The elements on the stage do not represent the sceneries they verbally refer to. Conventions grant language the authority to indicate time, place, weather, atmosphere, etc. | Generally, image in television tends to be literal, straightforward and bereft of excessive details. Meanings tend to be simple. Television is rich in metonymic language. | The film frame is rich in signifiers and it approaches painting in the complex of the composition. Meanings are multifarious. Film is rich in metaphors and metonyms as well as in references to different film genres. |
Some companies – like the King’s Men – were privileged by the monarchs, but members of the companies shared in the benefits of the production. They depended on the audience and market imperatives were present. | BBC Television drama is the product of the need to fulfill cultural imperatives for taxpayers. ITV engages in commercial television and its agenda are openly audience-seeking. | Mainstream cinema is completely subject to marketing strategies and production requirements. Auteur cinema or independent cinema have greater freedom. |
Characters are mainly built up through verbal language, movement, action, posture, costume, etc. Actors tended to specialize in one type of role: | Characters are built out of incidents and their relationship to their social context. | In mainstream cinema, characterization often depends on the roles established by the conventions of a film genre (e.g. the Final Girl, the |

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447 Critics such as Coursen (1993: 24) and Weiss (2000: 42) have pointed at the difficulties of filling the screen with details that do not necessarily help in concretizing the meanings of the original texts for the viewer. This generally problematizes translations of Shakespeare to the film medium. On the other hand, television is much more verbal than film and it allows more substantial verbal exchanges within its frame.

448 As Wyver confirms, BBC does not want to extensively produce Shakespeare stage-to-screen films (2015).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the villain, the lover, the lady, the King, etc. Actors like Richard Burbage or Ned Alleyn became renowned for their personal approaches to acting.</th>
<th>Gangster, the Can-can girl, the cowboy, etc.). Very often, they represent ideal egotistic realizations of the spectators’ fantasies.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Renaissance actors were trained for the stage.</td>
<td>Actors in British television have traditionally been trained in the drama school or the RSC. It is not infrequent that British actors work in cinema, theatre and television. Also, this television is peculiar because of its link with drama and broadcast of plays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actors in mainstream cinema are often cast for what they are rather than for what can enact.</td>
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</table>

449 Interpreting Shakespeare on the small screen is intimately connected to the apparent need to serve the textual delivery with a degree of justice. In Shakespeare theatre acting, the interpreter’s training is rooted in the works and practice of Cicely Berry, who established a tradition of combining ‘exaggeratedly emotional, poetic delivery and rational, unemotional speaking’ to release the thoughts within the language of Shakespeare (Robert Gordon 2012: 177). The tradition associated to Peter Hall and Peter Brook, which is inherently associated to the RSC, is the one that, following Crowl (1992: 6-7), splits up with the actor-manager tradition, embodied by Sir Laurence Olivier in the 20th-century, and from which a versatile group of interpreters emerged. Thus, Gordon points out that the way to approach drama that has distinguished British actors in the last decades draws from Barton’s approach to combine scholarly respect to detail and to communicative meaning-making to replace sentimentality for ‘muscular’ stress of sense over sound (2012: 170). Nevertheless, although the RSC has distinguished itself for utterly refusing the star system, there is little doubt that David Suchet, Lisa Harrow, Peggy Ashcroft, Judy Dench, Patrick Stewart and David Tennant – interpreters in Goold and Doran’s films – enjoy prestige-rooted star status amongst the spectatorship for their work on popular television as well as for their theatrical credentials. Thus, the idea that interpreters act as texts applies to the films if we agree with Watson’s considerations on the star as an ‘image constructed in a network of intertextuality’ (Watson 2012a: 169). The election of these interpreters works as a device to attract the audiences, no matter how shy the attempt may be. Doubtless, in casting Benedict Cumberbatch as Richard III and Andrew Scott as King Lewis in The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses, Dominic Cooke is appealing to the vast audiences of Sherlock. It seems, in this sense, that the BBC follows suit with Branagh’s productions but it has chosen to cast British cultural representatives of cinema, theatre and television. BBC, the RSC and even the American PBS seem to accept the fact, in line with the BBC Time Life series, that state-subsidized theatre and television Shakespeare need to be spoken with a British accent. Furthermore, the RSC interpreters and the quality of their performance undoubtedly enjoys the prestige and the Shakespearean pedigree that, in addition, guarantees the quality control the audience expects. This gives way to discussions based on the possible ethnocentric impetus of the productions. In this respect, for Salter, there is no racist or ethnocentric agenda in the Shakespearean acting space, but interpreters who are cast by the RSC are expected to follow suit with the iambic pentameter as well as the performative guidelines of the RSC (1996: 115-117). What is undeniable is that much of the acting skill required relies on how the text is delivered. As Barton suggests, the audiences are entitled to a rendering of the texts ‘as they would to hear an orchestra play the right notes in the right time’ (1985: 45). How that suits
Very likely, some characters – Hamlet, Falstaff, etc. – became familiar to audiences. Characters tend to become familiar figures for the audiences. Actors tend to aim at star quality and become immensely more important than the characters they play.450

the television medium is a matter worth considering and that has been partly solved by the hybridity conditions of the films. Repeatedly, as indicated in the dissertation, Goold himself refers to Macbeth’s soliloquies as arias that the audiences cannot be deprived of (See “Director’s and Producer’s Commentary” in Goold’s Macbeth). In film, Anthony Davies has recognized the need to come to terms with the heightened delivery required in Shakespeare (1988: 15). This has not always been the case with popular Shakespearean cinema, especially whenever – as in the case of Zeffirelli, Hoffmann, Luhrmann, Almereyda, etc. – they have wooed broader audiences by way of getting rid of large parts of the text.

450 Film acting requires different skills from the ones required by theatre acting. Kracauer suggests that in cinema the need to be natural, casual, dependent on physique brings the actor to occupy the category of function, i.e. the actor is one of the objects amongst many others (2005: 325-337). A more illuminating way of viewing this seems to beworthen’s suggestion that performative bodies are signifiers on the screen and, at the same time, writers of the text in the sense that they become interpreters and explorers of themselves and the meanings of the play as visible parts of the narrative (1996: 20-21). Also, Jorgens continues that the way in which they are photographed and the choices made by the editor in terms of body portrayal – e.g. in what position are faces photographed, if they are powdered, bleeding, sweaty, dirty, clean, shaved, masked, etc. – are essential segments of cinematic performance too (1991: 23). For instance, Brando’s presence as Mark Antony alludes to Riefenstal’s propaganda films in the Third Reich. Thus, Antony embodies the iconic representation of fascism and Shakespeare’s speech is transferred to the realities of twentieth-century European totalitarianism. In this sense, casting decisions do not go unnoticed in cinema. On the premises of Film Theory, actors hold the status of signifiers. Watson points at the nature of the actor – specifically, the star actor – in his/her quality of ‘commodity,’ ‘merchandising product’ or in his ‘ability to be liked by numbers of people’ (Watson 2012a: 169). Thus, actors are not simply people but personas who acquire the status of a multiplicity of signifiers related to body language, physique, voice work, muscle movement, blushes, athletic skills, age, feminine beauty or masculine up-bearing, socio-cultural and/or generational associations, specific actions, etc. All these are regarded as signs. From this it follows that actors appear as texts within the final product. They contribute to develop a syntactic signifying network that determines our reception. Very often, the elections of interpreters in Shakespearean films have responded to the need of combining authoritative British Shakespearean credentials with the commercial drive of popular American stars. On marketing and box-office policies, Mankiewicz’s Julius Caesar (1952) is an example of mixture of different acting qualities. Whereas John Gielgud epitomizes British acting pedigree, Marlon Brando brings the animal force that attracts teenage audiences. Thus, the inclusion of a certain interpreter in the cast brings additional intertextual meanings to the performance due to the interpreter’s personal and idiosyncratic features, i.e. Glenn Close as Gertrude and Mel Gibson as Hamlet establish a sexually tense thread that situates the characters somewhere between nineteenth-century romance, western wild passionate myth and a dangerously erotic twentieth-century re-working of A Streetcar Named Desire. Likewise, the election of Gerald Butler to play Aufidius in Fiennes’ Coriolanus (2010) adds up to the character’s earthiness and closeness to the Volsci, perhaps as a reminiscence of the masculine and heroic comradeship displayed by the actor in 300 (dir. Zack Snyder, 2006). DiCaprio has been linked with adolescence and rebelliousness, reminiscent of the melancholic teenage icon James Dean in Rebel Without a Cause or Richard Beymer in West Side Story. As feminine objects of desire, Glenn Close as Gertrude and Jessica Lange as Tamora exude the sensuality and dangerous magnetic erotic intensity of their acting personas in Dangerous Liaisons (1988) and The Postman Always Rings Twice (1981). There is little doubt that the audiences in Zeffirelli’s Taming of the Shrew (1967) were as attracted to the double love story, that of Petruchchio and Kate and that of Burton and Taylor physically fighting each other. Chillington Rutter refers to the glamour and femininity of the English court depicted in Loncraine’s Richard III, in which the American Annette Benning (Elizabeth) – accompanied by Robert Downey Junior’s charismatic and play-boyish Lord Rivers – appears as an upset who out-foxes McKellen’s physically unwelcoming Richard (2007: 250-252). Branagh’s Irish background and working-class
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Very flexible in use and recycling of theatrical and narrative sources.</strong></th>
<th><strong>It is highly capable of inflection to the point of mixing genre, fiction, non-fiction, etc.</strong></th>
<th><strong>Mainstream cinema is, in terms of genre, as given to inflection as television drama.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Codes of television and film are not applicable.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Television can adopt the filmic mode of narration through the so-called television films.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Film does not employ the codes of television.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main purpose: entertainment.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Main purpose: entertainment.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Main purpose: entertainment.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>There is interaction with the audience.</strong></td>
<td><strong>No interaction with the audience.</strong></td>
<td><strong>No interaction with the audience.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The spectator inhabits the architectural space where the production takes place. He freely decides where to focus the attention.</th>
<th>The editing decides on the point of view.</th>
<th>The editing decides on the point of view.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Action, space and time are continuous.</td>
<td>Action, space and time are not continuous because they are subject to editing.</td>
<td>Action, space and time are not continuous because they are subject to editing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The body of the actor feels the possibility of expansive movement.</td>
<td>The body generally feels more confined. Yet, objects, furniture and space can become important.</td>
<td>The body generally feels more confined. Yet, objects, furniture and space can become important.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW WITH JOHN WYVER. LONDON, 19 FEBRUARY 2015

HUERTAS: What audiences have you expected to attract with your DVD productions?

WYVER: We expect a broad audience. It is all thought for a general audience who is interested in Shakespeare. We’re interested in audiences that may not be able go to the theatre very often and yet want to see the performances. We want to stimulate people’s interest in Shakespeare. And encourage them to access the plays.

HUERTAS: So, there is an audience for Shakespeare on television film.

WYVER: Yes, there is an audience. Not a mass audience, but it is a real one. BBC has a responsibility to reflect and develop British culture, maybe not for a big audience, but it needs to fulfill certain cultural imperatives and to justify why they are there. So yes, there is, in that sense, a significant audience. And public money is destined to sustain the BBC. It is important to demonstrate that they’re doing their best to promote culture.

HUERTAS: Could we say that BBC, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the production and filmic translation of stage productions are living up to a certain educational responsibility?

WYVER: Not directly. What we are attempting is, firstly, audience development, and secondly, providing opportunities so that the audiences can experience Shakespeare. Because I love Shakespeare, I hope there will be people that can share in this enthusiasm. The films themselves are surely good materials for educators.

HUERTAS: Your last productions are not film adaptations of stage productions, but you are recording the stage productions live. Why is it so?

WYVER: Translating the stage productions for the film medium is far more expensive. The cost amounts to four times more than a theatre broadcast. You can’t get a return for something that is so
expensive. Also, television is not really interested in producing much Shakespeare. Even when the production has been successful, television is hardly interested. They want to have a small number of plays recorded for reasons of prestige, for cultural advancement. But [the BBC does not want to finance] lots of them. The reasons have to do with money. There is not such a big audience for the plays and they’re time-consuming. What is exciting about broadcasts is that you don’t need TV money. You can just film the production and show it on cinemas. That produces a good return. You don’t spend so much money. Plus, I don’t see the cinematic way as necessarily the best one. It’s very exciting to watch the recording, with real level of acting skills. So, in some ways, Rupert Goold’s Richard II is very beautiful and impressive, but I think Greg Doran’s Richard II is not inherently worse just because the former is done on film. I think you can really make a good piece of recorded-theatre done in all its integrity. I like both forms. However, Rupert had eight times the budget to shoot Macbeth that Doran would have had for any other production. Rupert did Macbeth in three weeks of filming, which involves paying for hotels, meals, all sorts of stuff. But Greg Doran only needed one night to do Richard II.

HUERTAS: On a more technical level and due to the nature of cinema and the differences between the film and the theatrical medium, do you think that the language of film is a hindrance to the Shakespearean text?

WYVER: I don’t think there is nothing that in the language of film inherently works against the language of Shakespeare. I believe that some directors care more about language than others. But I didn’t see any reason why cinema couldn’t still be a vigorous and precise way to convey Shakespeare. Greg’s Hamlet is probably not as cinematic as Goold’s work. You could say that. Rupert’s productions are more lavish and done in different locations. They’re beautifully filmed. One the other hand, one half of the text in Richard II had to be cut, as there are lamentable pressures to cut. Our Hamlet for television doesn’t show the full text but it keeps most of it. That’s an issue, but I don’t think you can’t bring both the text and the visual element together. Baz Luhrmann’s William Shakespeare’s Romeo + Juliet is one of the best Shakespeare films, with variable quality in the verse speaking, but there is also beautiful verse speaking, and strong visual imagination.

Wyver is referring to Goold’s Richard II, the first episode of The Hollow Crown (2012).
HUERTAS: The four films are extremely contemporary. The former takes place in the Arabian Springs, the second occurs in a generalized Soviet Union, and Elsinore is full of CCTV cameras all around. Why is it so?

WYVER: What we try to do is to speak to the audience in the present tense. Shakespeare needs to speak to a current audience. The greatness of Shakespeare is that you can always remake it. The text is so open, so rich that you can actually do it.

HUERTAS: Did you have Jan Kott’s writings in mind?

WYVER: Jan Kott is, of course, a reference. Peter Brook, Peter Hall and John Barton were the ones that introduced Kottian readings of Shakespeare in the 1960s. I don’t know if anybody reads him, really. You don’t hear people talking about Kott, maybe because now he has become common sense. Brook was very affected by Jan Kott, and when the RSC was formed, Kott was a useful weapon to bring Shakespeare to performance. I think it is not an issue anymore. The fact that he’s from Eastern Europe and he has been totally immersed in the context of the Cold War gave his writing much urgency, more value amongst many people, that saw him as a really expressive voice against communist dictatorships. Now I think there are other issues. Now the question would rather be: is the director imposing a contemporary vision or has he found clues in the text that help him bringing these contemporary elements to the performance? Greg Doran would never start from deciding on the context. He would start from the text to find things in it. It is within the text that the contemporary resonance needs to be found. So, it’s about the ideas, the time and relevance that stem from Shakespeare’s poetry. Some people see Goold’s work as imposing in terms of setting because the context may not fit well. Someone would ask whether his Macbeth as head of a totalitarian state came up as something deliberate in Goold. Personally, I don’t believe he imposed anything on it.

HUERTAS: Is there in both directors a desire to use Hollywood film genre tropes in the film frame?

WYVER: Rupert is very keen on that, but not just Hollywood tropes. There is a sense that Greg is a man of the theatre and Goold is much more a man of the cinema. Not that Greg is not so interested in cinema, but Goold has watched a huge amount of films. He has watched Japanese horror films, Russian war films, such as *Come and See*, a very brutal war film. Also, he uses *Saw* and Korean horror. So, he
looks for a lot of different signifiers in films, which he takes to the stage. He thinks of performance in 
film terms too. For him, it is exciting to think of theatre as a film, and it was exciting for him to be able 
to take *Macbeth* to the screen. Nevertheless, we didn’t have a Hollywood budget.

HUERTAS: Yes. One can see in Goold’s *Macbeth* the contrast between what maybe he would have 
liked to do and what he managed with the limited budget he had, which is very stimulating for the 
imagination. What about production policies? What are the constrains that you find when carrying out 
the Shakespearean cinematic enterprise?

WYVER: As a producer, my work is to respect the director’s vision. I try to realize in the best possible 
way what the directors want to do. There are minimal constrains in terms of budget. There is a degree 
of taste. You can’t have very explicit sex, not very brutal violence. You’re aware of those things. It’s 
not difficult. Beyond that, you trust the director. One point of interest in *Hamlet* was that BBC wanted 
it to be seen as a stage production to the nation. They didn’t want to change it much. The only instruction 
was that they didn’t want a movie. They wanted to recognize what the people had seen on the stage 
production, but something of a balance was necessary. Hybridity is so interesting in this sense, because 
it is a place where you can make up your own rules.

HUERTAS: You’re writing in many blogs on the Shakespeare productions. Why did you start doing it? 
And what has the response been?

WYVER: It was a thing I wanted to do myself. It was a way to make sense of what we do. I always do 
it for myself, as a kind of diary. It’s personal. Some people are interested, and there is a high interest in 
reading them. So, it’s exciting when you see that people want to know about your production. Part of 
the excitement came with *Hamlet* because there was a great expectation with David Tennant being the 
main part. It was also the time when blogging was very exciting. Now technology and habits have 
moved on. Now I do twitter and much less blogging. I like the process of writing more than 140 
characters. I try to make notes and characterize the process in other forms of writing.
APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW WITH JOHN WYVER. LONDON, 21 JUNE 2016

HUERTAS: My research is focused on four of your films: Gregory Doran’s *Macbeth* (2001), Greg Doran’s *Hamlet* (2009), Rupert Goold’s *Macbeth* (2010), and Doran’s *Julius Caesar* (2012). All of them are hybrid performances for television. Of course, the live cinema productions you’re currently working on can be said to be hybrid in many ways. But I’m interested in this earlier type of hybridity that is more connected to a mixture or dialogue between television film and theatre, whereas in the other case we might be talking more about cinema and theatre.

WYVER: Yes. There can be more complicated definitions. But yes.

HUERTAS: That’s precisely what makes them interesting. Because when you get to analyze what hybridity is, there are many different aspects related to it. It could refer to film genre, to film and television, to film and theatre, as well as television, film and theatre. These elements overlap. The reason why I chose these films is because I thought that the pattern found in all seemed worth studying. Roughly, my contention in this PhD dissertation is that the interest in the films lies in the mixture of the languages of film, television and theatre within the same visual receptacle.

WYVER: I’ll help in whatever way I can. Let’s try. Let’s start exploring it.

HUERTAS: Let’s start by exploring your beginnings on television. Your initial interest on television is explained in your book *Visions on Art*. Your origins are to be found in documentary. Art documentary. And that’s how you decided to be involved in television. We could say that this is your vocational drive here. How does that lead to Shakespeare in general and then to these specific productions?

WYVER: I went to school in Canterbury and I used to visit the Gulbenkian Film Theatre and student film societies on the University of Kent campus. This is how I became hooked on Godard’s films and on cinema in general. I left university in 1977 and I had read Philosophy and Politics, but also I had spent a lot of time running the film society and doing theatre. Effectively, [I did this] as a producer in the student theatre. And I didn’t know what I wanted to do but I knew that I wanted to work in film and television in some way. There was a job advertise in the *Time Out* magazine, the London guide. Really, almost as a joke, I applied for this job to be the television editor. I was more surprised than anybody that they gave me the job. So, I came to London and I hadn’t had any journalist training or anything,
but I spent three and a half years writing about television for *Time Out*, writing features, interviews with people involved in television, previews of upcoming programmes that would be broadcast in the coming week. I suppose that what motivated that was a concern or an argument to take television as seriously as other cultural forms, to develop a type of criticism that was as informed and engaged and as thoughtful as the one that the magazine in other formats applied to cinema, to theatre and to music. Because I think then and still now there is – particularly in this country but I think elsewhere – a tradition of writing about television which essentially treats it as a joke or as something to be the focus of other sort of comical writing, a writing that is about the subject or the people but not about the form of television. Of course, there’s more serious criticism than that but that’s a very dominant sort of mainstream form of writing about television. I wanted to understand it with the same level of seriousness that is applied to cinema. I also wanted to write about it as film documentary and, in a different way, about theatre. I did that and developed some quite good things. I think it was at that point when the study of film was changing very rapidly here. This all went under the influence of Cultural Studies and Media Studies, influenced by Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall, and, partly, the influence of Film Studies together with Structuralism and then poststructuralism altogether. All this sort of filtered in British culture through the *Screen Journal* and people like Stephen Heath and Coleen McCabe. So, there’s a lot of really really interesting serious complex rigorous writing about film and I wanted to bring some of that into the journalistic tradition. Even then I was interested in how could I work at the boundary between being someone with an academic approach and someone with a more popular approach to film and journalism. So, I did that for three and a half years. Then there was a dispute at the magazine. I left. I was involved in another magazine. That coincided with the beginning of Channel Four. And when I was at *Time Out* I wrote a lot about the debates towards Channel Four. And when I was at *Time Out* I wrote a lot about the debates towards Channel Four. So, then there were still only three channels: two BBC channels and one Independent Television (ITV) channel. Channel Four was going to be a fundamental change in the development of British Television, which is what happened in 1982. It went into the air. No more was it going to be the model a broadcaster-producer or producer-broadcaster, like the BBC had been, but the functions of the producer and broadcaster were split. Channel Four was a broadcaster and it was a publisher of programmes made by other producers. It didn’t produce programmes itself. That stimulated the setting up of hundreds of small independent production companies for the first time. It changed the basis of the industry completely. It was suddenly possible to call yourself an independent producer and make programs as an independent producer, which hadn’t been possible previously. And so, with a colleague who had some more experience in television than I, we set up Illuminations Media to make programmes for Channel Four. He and I were interested in the
how, the why and which of the arts were presented on television. We thought of [art in television] as very conservative, very unexciting, very traditional. Of course, I don’t want to be so dismissive. It was a particular kind of approach, some of it is very strong and very vivid and very significant. But generally, we thought it was too traditional. We wanted to make films about contemporary culture. So, that’s what we did from 1982-1983 onwards. Mostly, we did documentary programmes. And we made a lot of programmes about the visual arts, about cinema, some dance performance, but not really any theatre. We also made programmes about digital media as well. A lot of it was about trying to find new forms, new ways of presenting the arts on television. We did a lot of that for Channel Four with the BBC as the BBC started working for independent producers. In the mid-1990s, the BBC asked us to produce and edit a series of creative documentaries about the arts we eventually called Tx. So I selected and made four series of programs under the title Tx. Most of these documentaries were about painting, or music, or whatever. I found directors that I thought were interesting and told them what I wanted to do. One of the people I approached was the theatre director Deborah Warner. And Deborah said she wanted to make a film of T. S. Eliot’s poem *The Waste Land* with Fiona Shaw performing in it. She and Fiona had been working in many projects. We developed this as a 25-min theatre show. We didn’t present it as theatre, though. Deborah wanted to do a film version of it. So, we did a 25-minute very imaginative film version of *The Waste Land* with just Fiona Shaw performing in it. And a lot of this comes from that film because, although nobody watched it and nobody was interested in it, we were very pleased to do it. At more or less the same time, Deborah and Fiona were starting to work on a production of *Richard II* at the National Theatre, in which Fiona would play King Richard. So, it was a big statement of cross-gender casting. Then it was shown in Salzburg. And Deborah and Fiona wanted to make a television version of that. So out of the work of *The Waste Land* we started thinking about how to make a television version of *Richard II*. Eventually we did that for the BBC. I really had no idea how to do it. But we stumbled through it. The BBC at that point still had a commitment – this was in 1996 –to doing some performance on television. Between then and now they lost that commitment and only now they are rediscovering it. But then maybe they would make nine programmes a year on theatre productions. So, we were able to persuade them that this should be one of them. A channel in France wanted to produce also because the executive producer there was a big fan of Deborah Warner’s work. And then we could put together a co-production. So, in a sense it’s the sort of ‘pre’; it’s the film that comes before the quartet that you’re talking about. It’s hardly been seen. It’s almost not known. But we’re trying to release it on DVD.

HUERTAS: It just seems impossible to find, yeah.
WYVER: It’s really hard to find. But we’re trying to release it. So, we really didn’t know what we were doing but we knew there was a theatre production that we wanted to reflect in some way. We hold onto the essence – whatever that means, but that’s the phrase we used – of the production, then tried to find a dynamic way of presenting that on television (emphasis mine). Deborah had done this process – not with me involved – in a production of Ibsen’s *Hedda Gabler*. They turned a stage production into a conventional television studio and shot it with multiple cameras in the way conventional studio drama was made. Deborah felt she had no control over that. She was very frustrated at the lighting, framing, and that kind of visual language. And we wanted to control that. So, we stumbled towards this hybrid form. We took the sets and the cast into a studio. But it was a film studio, not a television studio already equipped with cameras, sounds and lights. We took a film studio, which essentially is an empty space. We rebuilt the sets in there, and took a single camera, not a multiple camera, into that space. We started shooting it with one camera, doing individual set-ups, individual shots of the different aspects of it. And Deborah had not directed like that at all before; I had not produced like that before. Now it is done but it’s really not bad (*Laughter*). Even if none of us really have looked at it for a long. So it went on television again. Nobody watched it, but it was pretty good. Some nice notice was given to the film. However, there was no kind of clear rationale that we could say led us to say: ‘This is the kind of thing we want to do. Let’s go and find an example of it’. We did *The Waste Land*, Deborah and Fiona then wanted to do *Richard II* and they asked me to help producing it. We almost stumbled into it. There’s one other film in that progression, a film between *Richard II* and *Macbeth*, which we did with Phyllipaa Lloyd’s film version of Benjamin Britten’s opera *Gloriana*, which was also a mix of shooting on the stage and in a studio. And again, that fueled our interest into re-imagining private and public scenes, and also backstage scenes. That was an important part in moving or developing these ideas. So then quite soon after that, Greg Doran and Tony Sher were doing their production of *Macbeth* for the RSC. I didn’t know them at all. But Greg and Tony knew Fiona and they decided very late in the run of the stage production that they wanted to film it in some way. They had done one production, one recording of their production of *The Winter’s Tale* at the Barbican, and they weren’t hugely happy with the way that it turned out. They were more interested in what Deborah and I had done with *Richard II*. So, they asked Fiona to talk to me and Tony’s agent rung me up. And asked me whether I was interested in trying to do this for them. And we had really no time. The production had been on a tour to the States, Japan; it had come to the London theatre, to the Swan Theatre. There were four weeks or something of the run to go. They said: ‘We want to film it immediately at the end of the production. What can we do?’ Fortunately, I had a good relationship with the man who was then running Channel Four. I asked him
whether he was interested in doing it for television. He said yes and he found the money very quickly. So, we were able to move towards doing it. Greg was clear that he didn’t want to shoot it in a studio with the sets that they had used in the theatre. He wanted to find a space, a location that had – this is the phrase he used, which I have written about a bit, I think – a vivid neutrality, so not a space which kind of determines what the production in it will be, not something that was very specific, but nonetheless something that had on its wall, seats, windows, its floors more than what you would get in a studio. Something that had a kind of visual, and tactile quality, a history, an atmosphere that you could use to set the production in. So, we went and looked for spaces. The Roundhouse was empty at the time. It had been restored. As soon as Greg walked in he realized that was the place where he wanted to shoot it. So, that’s where everything came from. So, we wanted to do a Shakespeare play from the stage. We had the idea of doing it with single camera, not in a conventional multi-camera studio. And then we had the idea of shooting it into location. And these are the absolute three key components of this form that came into the Shakespeares of the early 2000s.

HUERTAS: And you continued until you developed the idea of live cinema. Are they connected in any way?

WYVER: After Macbeth, which was regarded as a big success and was done comparatively cheaply, with very very good reviews, I think we believed that we had found a new kind of form. As you said before, nobody had done it quite like that before. Nobody had done Shakespeare on television like that before. Shakespeare on television was still very dominated by BBC television Shakespeare, which was more than twenty years older than our productions and which was also done in a very traditional studio setting. These were overlaid unremarkable productions. And that had put people off from trying to do Shakespeare on television. We thought we’d found a new form, a more dynamic way of doing it. We thought people would want to do more, but we found that we couldn’t interest the broadcasters at all in funding other films like this one. So, we tried several projects. We tried Othello and Antony and Cleopatra but nobody was interested in them. And I was doing other things; Greg was doing other things in the meantime. We got nowhere. But in the beginning of 2008, Greg was starting to prepare Hamlet with David Tennant. It was clear that this was going to be a great production. David Tennant was playing Doctor Who, so there was going to be lots of attention. So, we said surely we wanted to make one of these films for this production. However, there was a lukewarm response from the BBC. Opera and ballet were starting being played at cinemas. So, we thought: Can we apply that to theatre and not worry about the broadcaster? Through the summer of 2008 we tried to put together making Hamlet as a live
cinema broadcast, which was before National Theatre Live started, and would have been the first live cinema production in this country. But we needed to get the permission of all the cast. And one of them wouldn’t do it. So, the plan fell apart. We abandoned the idea and only at the beginning of 2009, when the production was transferred to London – it had been a huge success, there was a lot of interest in it – , Greg and David Tennant wanted to preserve it in some way. It was the case that we could go back to the BBC and say: ‘We couldn’t do this live but we want to do a single camera version.’ And by that stage they were interested in this project and we found more money from PBS and from Japanese television. Thus, we were able to make it during the summer as a big production. Having done that and Julius Caesar after this, when Greg became artistic director of the RSC, and we had done those films together, he knew he wanted to go back to Live Cinema. That was very important for the RSC. So, the RSC asked me to walk with them to produce that. But thinking of what we’d been doing with the first Macbeth and Hamlet, I’d been very skeptical about doing multi-camera work either in live or in recorded work. Much like Deborah I had the sense that you couldn’t control that process very well. You couldn’t control the lightning; you could control neither the camera work nor the framing nor the mise-en-scène. So, I’ve been very dismissive of that process. And I wanted to work with a single camera because I thought that gave us more control. But by the time we came to do the Live Cinema, partly because the technology had developed in so many interesting ways, I found that there is an expressive language in Live Cinema that seems to me very well worth exploring. So, I was very excited then to pick that up. And now we’ve done ten of those with Greg and other directors. And we want to carry on doing more of them. So, our energy and focus has gone into that kind of work and we’ve not been able to develop another single camera film piece like Macbeth, Hamlet or Julius Caesar. And also, the broadcasters don’t have the money or the interest to support that. And I regret it. I regret that we haven’t been able to continue doing it. Maybe at some point we’ll be doing films like these. For the moment, we are concentrating on doing the Live Cinema productions.

HUERTAS: I truly hope you will. So then when you say that these BBC Shakespeare productions – or perhaps even 1970s RSC productions – were different, and when you talk about your approach as more dynamic, do you refer to the camera work?

WYVER: I mean the camera, yes. I think in fact I mean that the single camera allows you to create a visual language that is more controlled than in a studio. Nonetheless, you can also bring more excitement, distinctiveness, precision and energy to the way in which you film something. So, we found it all together in this work dynamic.
HUERTAS: Of course, anything involving people involves team playing. But there’s a sense that cooperativeness is an unusually important element in your productions.

WYVER: I think in any film like these, if you get it half-right, you bring that sort of team-work together. Certainly, when you bring a new team together, in a location, out of the studio, then you have more opportunities to find new ways of doing things. People don’t fall back into the conventional patterns of working as they do when you’re in a studio, where there is an accepted way of doing things. I think yeah, I think that being away from the studio, and bringing a different group of people, and forging a sense of a particular way of working, then that allows you to try more things more easily.

HUERTAS: In this working constellation, the figure of the DoP is an essential component because there were four different DoPs. And who the DoP was going to be in each production seems to have been a very important decision.

WYVER: Yes. Almost before that, the important decision we made then was that the stage director – Deborah initially, then Greg, then Rupert – would be the film director. So, we didn’t want another figure to be the film director. And Deborah had not, Greg had not, and indeed Rupert had not directed film before. But I was convinced that she or he would be the right person to work with the actors directly and that they understood the kind of vision of what the piece should be far better than any other else ever would. So, they should be the primary authors of the piece, but they needed somebody to realize what they had in mind. Partly they needed someone to realize the perhaps beautiful or perhaps grainy images they wanted to make. They needed to be able to achieve the sorts of images they had in their heads even though they did not have the technical capabilities or abilities to create them. Almost they needed somebody to hold their hands through the basics of filmmaking. I am referring to simple things like not crossing the line unless you want to make a particular statement; how a shot should be if you have people round the table – it is very a difficult thing to shoot people at dinner table –; where you place the camera; how are people to look; the disposition of the people in relation to the camera, etc. A good DoP knows how to do these things. So, he or she would bring that knowledge and share that with the director. This working philosophy seemed really important, if we were going to work with a stage director. Then we were going to pair them with the right DoP and the right editor. And if we got those relationships right, then pretty much the rest of the things would be OK. We worked hard to find the right DoP. In each case, we tried to find someone who fitted the kind of vision we had of the film. So, with the first Macbeth we wanted someone who almost was a war cameraman. We didn’t to want to create something beautiful. We wanted to capture what was happening almost as if it all was a
documentary unfolding. So, we got this brilliant guy called Ernie Vincze, a very experienced cameraman. We wanted to treat it as if this was a war zone and he was going in not really knowing what was going to happen and he would be catching it as a very good documentary cameraman. And that’s the sense we had of it. Shooting everything over the shoulder and often with very little preparation. We shot it very fast. Sometimes the preparation would involve something as simple as Greg saying: ‘Lady Macbeth enters over there, Macbeth enters over here and they run the staircase. That’s what’s gonna happen. Now you work out how it happens.’ And they would do two takes or thereabouts because the actors knew the lines, the characters, etc. Therefore, they could do it all perfectly and Ernie would respond to it as if he almost didn’t know what wasn’t going to happen. And that element gives a lot of excitement to the film.

HUERTAS: Are you speaking about the dagger’s scene?

WYVER: Yeah, the daggers scene is an example of that, but with *Hamlet* we wanted something very different, which was more beautiful, elegant and controlled. We had a very different kind of feel. So in that case we talked to a number of DoPs and Chris Sieger seemed to be exactly the right person to do that. Greg and him hadn’t worked together but found the way to work very quickly and it was a brilliant collaboration. After this, Rupert wanted someone who had done horror films. He liked the fact that the Sam McCurdy, our DoP for that film, had done a couple of cheap slasher movies. And Rupert wanted that kind of quality. It was all about casting with the DoP and ensuring that he would build the relation with the director in a very positive way. The same principle applied to the editor. It was very important with all of them [that we should be] editing from the second day. We shot it on the first day, the editor would edit on the second day, assembling what we’d shot on the first day, so we would look at the evening of the second day. So, we were constantly looking at what we’d done and sometimes to reshoot or rework it so that everything would have a sense of direction. So, it was very important to have someone who could do that very quickly, very effectively, although it was done in a very rough way. Despite this, it gave us a real sense of what we’d achieve very shortly after recording. In a movie, you think you’ve done well if you get three minutes. In a television film drama, you think you’ve done well if you do a fifteen-minute episode in ten days. We tried to double that, i.e. we wanted to do at least thirty minutes in ten days. And we could only achieve it because the actors knew their parts really well, although there was still a bit of hurry. As for *Julius Caesar*, I don’t remember what the kind of rationale was. As for *Julius Caesar*, the BBC wanted it filmed but they wanted it very quickly after the stage production would open. They wanted it to be on television to coincide with the London Olympics.
Unlike the other three films, they wanted to film it while the production was still on stage. In each of the other productions, the stage production was finished and then we shot it. So, we hadn’t quite worked out how to do what the BBC wanted. We thought that in this different hybrid form we would shoot the private scenes of the play, as Greg envisaged them, as behind-the-scene scenes, as film scenes before this production went on stage. So, he did some rehearsal for the stage. Then we shot the film scenes and we did more rehearsal for the stage. Then they took it onto the stage and the public forum scenes were shot in the theatre. We did it live with several cameras during the performance. So, we needed someone flexible enough to do that. It was really hard to shoot it as film before coming on stage and then integrate stage elements in the final product. I think it was very successful and it’s a really difficult way of doing it. But it was another challenge and a way of taking the play somewhere else.

HUERTAS: Were there people in the audience?

WYVER: Yeah, we did one in Stratford including one cameraman in the crowd. But because it was a contemporary African setting, you could imagine there could be a cameraman. They were not disguised, they were cameramen, and you could feel the presence.

HUERTAS: Very exciting beginning that one. But thinking about things that had been going on before, did you find any inspiration from those films from the 60s and 70s, etc? I am referring to television drama plays and, of course, previous Shakespearean work.

WYVER: I knew them very well. I don’t think we necessarily took any specific things from that. There were things we wanted to avoid. We did not want to feel that everything was overlaid. I don’t’ know whether there are any specific references to any old television plays. For the first Macbeth, we took many specific things from vérité and documentary. So, we look at many vérité and war reporting drama pieces. Beyond that, I’m not sure we had many specific influences. There’s a television film version of John Ford play ‘Tis Pity She’s A Whore with Roland Joffè as director. I always thought that’s a truly magnificent different distinctive piece of television drama based on a classical play. I don’t know any other sort of specific influence.

HUERTAS: I thought some of the most cinematic pieces of the BBC might have been influential. I was thinking, for example, of Elijah Moshinski’s pieces or Jane Howell’s pieces?

WYVER: Moshinksi’s work had a strong visual quality and a very rich one, I think. The First Henriad by Jane Howell was very distinctive too. I think we felt that they were a long time past by the time we came to do Macbeth. I don’t know – we were trying to invent something different, I guess.
HUERTAS: There seems to be a connection between budget and creativity.

WYVER: People would let you experiment more if you can deliver something cheaper. And the fact that we could make *Macbeth* for – I think – 150,000 is proof of this. It’s not cheap but it was comparatively cheap for a piece of television drama. BBC was prepared to allow us to have a go at it. *Hamlet* was twice that expensive. But they had the security that it was going to work because of David Tennant. They knew, even if it wasn’t very good, we would get more attention because David was in it.

HUERTAS: And also because of Patrick Stewart?

WYVER: Yeah.

HUERTAS: Because of how realistic it looks, I have the impressions that the dagger scene in Doran’s *Macbeth* is extemporized. Were there any happy accidents connected to a sort of extemporized way of framing the film? Or were perhaps any interesting things that occurred during the shooting of the films that were incorporated to the final editing? Was Goold also driven to this kind of extemporizing?

WYVER: I think for the *Macbeth* Rupert knew very clearly what he wanted. He has got a very visual sense of what he wants and is very specific about it. Once we found the location he didn’t physically storyboard it but mentally storyboarded it. So, there is very little improvised in that way.

HUERTAS: What about Doran’s productions?

WYVER: I think Greg’s *Macbeth* is the most improvised in visual ways. By the time they got to *Hamlet*, they didn’t know exactly what to do in the whole thing. But Greg and Sieger planned part in advance and part on the day. So Sieger would work out the master shot, break it down into smaller shots that were necessary. But it was all under Greg’s direction. So, there’s very little that is improvised at the moment of shooting, even if the plan was developed quite late. I wouldn’t call that process improvised.

HUERTAS: I wish we could recall this article “Nats Go Home” by Troy Kennedy Martin. He talks about the fact that British television drama is a bastard child of theatre and film. Is that attitude sort of going on? How has it changed since the 1960s’?

WYVER: That’s enough to write another dissertation. “Nats” is an important piece. But it’s a polemic and I think confusing polemic. It’s not a careful argument. It throws a lot of things into the mix, including a strong anti-theatre feeling. It allowed Troy and others to develop a new kind of drama in the mid-60s in different ways and that was very important. I think there was a resistance to the theatre and to the
legacy of the theatre, which is still quite strong in some ways and was reflected in different ways because all the exciting work seemed to be created for television. People making it felt impelled to make something that was just pure television and left behind the sort of backward looking quality of the theatre. That was a very strong impetus in the 60s, the 70s and the 80s. Maybe good things got lost, but there was a very strong sense that theatre was not a good thing for television. Also, there had been a lot of discussion about and resistance to theatre and literature in British cinema. This is the way in which British cinema is seen: as a very literary word-bound theatrical form. I absolutely don’t think that’s the case, although there are examples of that. There’s an example of a Truffaut’s quote saying that ‘British’ and ‘cinema’ don’t go together. So, that’s the sort of anti-theatrical anti-literary argument developed by people wanting to develop cinema and television. Strong arguments amongst practicians and amongst critics have taken place. And maybe now they’re starting to get beyond that. Or maybe they’re not. Now we can create a new form that celebrates that it is grounded in the theatre. And we shouldn’t dismiss that.

HUERTAS: At one point, in an interview with Maurice Hindle, you say you’d like to do something more ‘guerrilla-like’. But I wondered if you were thinking about anything specific then. I couldn’t help just thinking of Julius Caesar being shot like Beasts of No Nation or The Last King of Scotland.

WYVER: I think this. I’m very proud of these four films. But they’re quite controlled. And that’s much of their strength. They’re quite classical in many ways. There are elements that are quite traditional, quite classical. I’m interested in what would happen if you had half – or a quarter – of the budget used in the films. Could you do something really low budget and have a different quality? It is an interesting idea. We talked about whether we could go and film Julius Caesar in Tunisia. It just seemed so expensive. But yeah, it would be really interesting to do something very different. And I’ve been trying to find ways of making the live cinema rawer, more immediate and less controlled. I love the classical perfection of it, but I wonder whether there’s a completely different film language for Shakespeare. But it’s just an idea.

HUERTAS: Anything like Olivier’s Henry V?

WYVER: It’s a wonderful piece. But it’s still very controlled. I was thinking more in Orson Welles’ Othello and Almereyda’s Hamlet, which are very kind of particular. It’s something for the future.

HUERTAS: I’m looking forward to seeing it and writing about it. I’ve got a question on popular culture and high culture. Especially for Shakespeare on television, there is something that tends to happen in
these documentaries like *Looking for Richard* and the recent *For a Muse of Fire*. I can see a repeated pattern. It seems they constantly try to appease the audiences on the difficulties of the text and then they end up explaining that the text is truly convincing and poetic. Is the text really a concern?

WYVER: I think it is. Much like the RSC, my approach is if you perform it very well and with conviction by good people then audiences will understand it. But there’s a strong sense that it’s difficult, that it’s elitist and that it’s for educated people only. Likewise, the loss of these imperatives of standing for education and broadcasting over the last twenty years has separated audiences – particularly young audiences – from high culture. That’s where the very strong concern comes from. Part of the argument is, if you’re using public money for Shakespeare, then you have an obligation to try and make those plays available and accessible to all the public. Everybody’s taxes are paid so everybody should be able to approach it and enjoy it. In the political culture, the whole idea of an élite culture has been very much attacked and very much dismissed, whether in television or more broadly. I think that’s where all this worry and concern come from. I understand it and I think that Live Cinema brings Shakespeare to new kinds of audience. However, I still think that it is for audiences that are already interested in Shakespeare. It is important that people understand, listen, and are exposed to Shakespeare. That’s the best way to make it accessible.

HUERTAS: Perhaps the productions sell themselves with interested people, but did you manage to enlarge the audiences then?

WYVER: In some way we did. But by and large only people who already knew and liked Shakespeare were interested. If you get David Tennant you will get more viewers, of course. But I still think most of our audiences are people who are interested in Shakespeare already.

HUERTAS: Even if there’s this notion that if Shakespeare had been born today…

WYVER: He would have been writing for *Eastenders*, yes! It’s nonsense. Shakespeare isn’t born today. Shakespeare was born in a very specific historical context, for a very specific context with a very different set of power relations. Why would one match that to *Eastenders*? Clearly, he was able to find a language and a narrative form that worked for an aristocratic group or for a popular audience. We have a real understanding of that. But we have no sense or understanding that it was like *Eastenders*. It’s written for Elizabethan theatre, but it’s so brilliantly written that it can be used to fit any other sort of context.
HUERTAS: Were there any specific points in which conveying the lines on television was too difficult a process? It all seems tremendously easy when you watch it.

WYVER: We wanted to stay close to the theatre piece and we wanted to stay close to the stage performance. The *Hamlet* stage production was played in front of a huge mirror that reflected the audience. When Hamlet shoots Polonius the mirror cracked. You can’t do that unless you want to make a very specific “Brechtian” statement about self-reflexivity and want to include cameras into the film. It is difficult to use camera in front of a mirror. So, the purpose of that mirror was to suggest that Elsinore was this place that was constantly watched, overheard, that there was nowhere that was private from the gaze of others. Apart from this, we developed the CCTV cameras and the 8mm camera used by Hamlet. The material qualities of those other media were included. That is the sort of translation of the visual metaphor that was forced on us for the difficulties of shooting in front of a mirror.

HUERTAS: And it gave the production a totally different quality.

WYVER: It did but it holds onto the same ideas of the original stage production.

HUERTAS: But when it comes to working on the lines, were there any specific difficult points?

WYVER: The actors inhabited those lines. There was no point where we couldn’t make the lines work. I think in most of the cases there was no reason why we couldn’t hold onto those lines. Because the actors are quite good, quite practiced, quite capable to extend their performance from the stage into a screen context.

HUERTAS: You can see that in their performance, particularly in *Hamlet* and *Julius Caesar*, perhaps.

WYVER: Greg has this six or seven-week rehearsal process. Half of that is devoted to understand every word in the text. Everyone must understand every line. As an actor, you do not just learn your own lines but also what everybody else is saying at every moment. Greg is very rigorous to do that. For the first three weeks, they just sit around a table. They don’t move; they don’t block; they don’t play with swords. It’s like a kind of seminar. It is a rigorous interrogation of the words. And I think that’s what makes his productions work extremely well, because the actors understand the text. They would speak in such a way that we understand the lines.

HUERTAS: Perhaps this is too optimistic, but these four productions as well as the Live Cinema performances, and, of course, *The Hollow Crown* series, seem to be really making a statement that
Shakespeare’s language must be preserved on television. Are we experiencing any kind of Renaissance of theatre on television?

WYVER: Certainly, there are far more live and recorded productions of classical theatre made now than ever before. That’s a great thing. They’re made in different contexts. Some of them in cinema, some of them alive, some of them recorded, a few of them on television. They’re distributed and disseminated in different ways. In the last three years, we’ve had three really strong productions of Hamlet that have been transmitted and recorded – Rory Kinnear’s, Benedict Cumberbatch’s, and Maxine Peak’s productions – as Live Cinema. It’s never been the case that we’ve had three Hamlets screened in such a short time. And I think that changes how you think about recorded performance. Maybe that’s a very good thing. Maybe the fact that there are so many more high quality screen versions – if that’s sustainable in a financial sense – is a very good sign. I don’t see it as a Renaissance. I think it’s a sort of context where there are new possibilities.

HUERTAS: Going back to the productions themselves. In many ways, so the story goes, Shakespeare managed to make everyone happy. He knew all the dramatic registers. I wonder if you think that this hybridity, this specific way of shooting it, somehow combines aspects of popular culture and more challenging aspects?

WYVER: I don’t know that the form does that. I never thought about it in that way. I think what the form is trying to do is translating the stage production into something that is immediate and vivid for an audience watching on a screen. That audience is wider than the audience at stage production is. And I guess it is inevitable that the screen version has inevitable resonances with whatever is on that screen. But I don’t think there’s anything specific about this way of presenting the plays and the productions that does what you’re suggesting beyond the plays themselves having that capacity.

HUERTAS: The film productions have managed to connect with audiences through forums and social networks.

WYVER: But also, stage productions. They’re wider for television. You get more of that. But I think you get that activity in the theatre as well for the RSC. You must recognize that these audiences are big in theatre terms and small in television terms. It’s a quarter of a fifth of the size of most popular drama audiences. It’s still quite specific and still quite niche. Still the audience is much greater than the theatre, though. However, I don’t know that there’s anything specifically popularizing beyond the way it reaches a wider audience than in the theatre.
HUERTAS: The three plays we are discussing are political plays. Does that make them fitter for the television format?

WYVER: There are very few successful TV versions of the comedies. But there are great versions of Macbeth and Hamlet. Maybe Julius Caesar has not been so frequent. Tragedies seem to be more suited to the screen. Because they don’t have this sort of collective pleasure that comedies have. I think they were made for TV because they were familiar plays. It would be much harder to do Cymbeline or Coriolanus. People have a much wider sense of these plays. That’s not the case with many others. They’re political plays, absolutely, but all Shakespeare is political depending on how you present it. Each of these productions have a strong contemporary quality. So, they’re not distanced in fancy dress in Elizabethan clothes or togas and that sense of wanting the plays to speak immediately to a contemporary context has this strong sense in the RSC since John Barton and Peter Brook began their own work. Even Rupert’s play is not an RSC production but he fitted it into that tradition. These are not historical reconstructions. They are absolutely directed to have a contemporary resonance.

HUERTAS: Speaking more specifically about the first Macbeth and politics, there’s this funny part: this Tony Blair impersonation by the Porter. It is interesting that the scene was done in 2001 for the 1st of January and that, a few months later, the 11S attacks happened and then two years later Tony Blair decided to support George Bush’s war. What thing made Doran include these satirical comments on Blair even if the worst had not come to the worst yet?

WYVER: He was PM, the main political figure. He had been elected after a long period of conservative rule. In the beginning, there had been much support and enthusiasm about him. But, as always, there was one element of cynicism too. At the beginning, he wasn’t the kind of hated figure he would become. The level of distrust and unhappiness with him then was not that high. But he was the figure in power and the legitimate figure to be mocked. That scene is something that one of the actors would have improvised around and would have used a place for contemporary comment and contemporary caricature. So, Greg was doing nothing more than what we believed Shakespeare would have done at that time. It speaks to concerns about the Catholics and James I. So, it’s a very difficult speech grounded in the specifics of early Jacobean politics.

HUERTAS: Is it frequent that the RSC adds or re-writes text in a production?

WYVER: No. In most productions, there may be small additions. Only with The Wars of the Roses did John Barton write extensive new elements to what appeared to be Shakespearean verse. The texts are
adapted by different directors but there is a strong tradition at the RSC of respecting the text, making cuts – especially with *Hamlet*, because it is so long and difficult, unmanageable –, but, although there’s not a sanctity about the text, there’s a respect for it.

HUERTAS: So, was it difficult or embarrassing to do that addition then?

WYVER: I don’t think it was particularly controversial or complex.

HUERTAS: In that performance – and that’s what Doran writes about somewhere – the cornerstone is the idea of fear. Does that in any way lead us to cinema vérité?

WYVER: I think we didn’t talk about it being fear but about the unexpected. You never knew what was going to happen. Maybe you *feared* what was going to happen. Greg wanted this production to appear as if the play was not determined. He wanted the actors and the film to be taking place in a very immediate ‘now’. Not with a sense of what’s to come. He wanted to convey the sense that, even if we know the play, we should be thinking something like: ‘Maybe this time he’s not going to kill Banquo’. He didn’t want you to feel that something had been rehearsed. Whether that makes fear or no, I can’t tell, but that was the impetus behind the production.

HUERTAS: Let’s talk about the ‘Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow…’ speech with Tony Sher. That’s one striking scene and a striking way of shooting it.

WYVER: The moment when he goes out into the street, I think it comes from something that happened in performance. Tony had given that speech and then had walked out of the room of the stage. And everyone was very surprised about that on the stage. Nobody knew what had happened. There was a sense in which they wanted to create that deep feeling of strangeness, of shock or surprise. In a way, they wanted to break through the fourth wall that was there. Something new was taking place. I don’t know whether it was planned. It wasn’t exactly improvised. But I don’t think they planned it properly. I can’t remember, honestly.

HUERTAS: This brings me to Sher constantly speaking to the camera. The same as Macbeth, of course, would do in a performance. But I found it particularly dynamic in this film as the cameraman is literally following him and sort of ‘dancing’ with him in this narrative process.

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WYVER: Of course, what he does is trying to make the audience complicit with the character, trying and build this stronger bond between the character and the audience. That’s a key factor in the stage production as in Richard III. I think it was a factor in the stage production. But I can’t remember it being much discussed in the film. Essentially, that was the way of building a connection with the audience in what, I imagine, was what Tony did on stage.

HUERTAS: Doran didn’t want to do a film. Yet there are specific moments in which he does very filmic sections. When he shoots the ‘Is this a dagger’ speech, the editing shows Sher in the vérité mood. Then there is a cut towards a more detached Twin Peaks-like way of shooting in which he walks as a psycho-killer in a serial thriller. Then we come back to the original vérité mode. What were they trying?

WYVER: I think it’s better for you to interpret that rather than trying to find the author’s intentions. But clearly Rupert is more cinematic, whatever that means.

HUERTAS: And funny Rupert’s dagger speech is much more traditional and straightforward.

WYVER: Yes, but Doran is much closer to the theatrical original even in Hamlet. And that’s certainly the case. For Rupert – I think Rupert has a different kind of approach to the original stage production. It was very important for him also [to hold onto the original performance] but I don’t think he has concerned so much about it.

HUERTAS: Is there any kind of dialogue between Hamlet and Rupert’s Macbeth?

WYVER: None at all, I think. They were made very close to each other. So, we started doing Hamlet. Patrick Stewart was on the stage, so it was difficult. We didn’t have much time. Once we managed to finish he had been very happy in the process. Everything worked for him. I think he was quite impressed that the production team had done it penniless and in such as quick time. BBC had interest from PBS to do a Macbeth. Patrick was impressed by how Hamlet had seemed to go. We did something that wasn’t elaborate; yet, it was worth it. I used to do a blog about what had happened at the end of the day. And Rupert apparently started to read this. And he became engaged by the kind of blogs that I wrote. So, he and Patrick talked. Very quickly, he asked us if with the PBS money we could make the Macbeth film. Some of the same production team worked on both. We shot Hamlet in July and we shot Macbeth in November, but, as far as I know, there was neither dialogue between Rupert and Greg nor between DoPs nor any kind of echoes or similarities. Maybe there were echoes due to the surrounding culture.
HUERTAS: Specifically, I’m speaking about the espionage element in both films.

WYVER: I don’t think there was any explicit exchange.

HUERTAS: Obviously, that espionage in *Hamlet* is connected to Almereyda’s version. But as far as I know, no other *Macbeth* film has worked on this motif.

WYVER: I think it’s true.

HUERTAS: In our previous interview, I really had everything I needed from Goold’s *Macbeth*. Plus, there is a lot published on it. It all seems to constantly come down to film genre and what it does. Although there’s one thing we haven’t talked about – the location, which is incredible. It gives itself to the atmosphere.

WYVER: Once we’d done *Macbeth* in the Roundhouse and *Hamlet* in this abandoned college in Mill Hill, we knew we wanted to find something very specific for *Macbeth*. We looked for all sort of possible locations online. We saw a handful of these locations, including these tunnels and spaces underneath this country house. And immediately he decided that these tunnels were where he wanted to shoot his *Macbeth*. So then once we got that and negotiated access, we got the DoP and the designer working through where were they going to shoot the scenes. We did the spaces up. Also, sometimes we used the spaces very literally. So, the chapel and the anteroom were called ‘the England scene’. And pretty much this is how the spaces are, whereas the kitchen we built it in one of the empty rooms. We constructed the kitchen much like it’d been onstage. So, we used the location in there.

HUERTAS: Let’s move to *Julius Caesar*. There’s one interesting question about theatre and politics in the play itself: how Antony and Caesar use the theatre to gain power. This idea seems to work also extremely well here, don’t you think?

WYVER: True, I think it’s in the play. Maybe Greg pulled it out more. Brutus can’t absolutely speak to the crow in the way Antony can. He doesn’t have the popular touch. And Caesar and Antony are men who speak to crowds and that’s why they have that close relationship.

HUERTAS: I think this way of doing Antony’s speech as Live Cinema is proof of how brilliant this form can be. It is truly theatrical. Fearon really enjoys the heightening tone of the speech. You just want to roar with him. I imagine people at home thinking ‘I’m going to shout the lines’.

WYVER: Yeah.
HUERTAS: This production is supposed to be in Africa but it’s not specifically set in a literal African context, so the argument goes. How does that work?

WYVER: I think Greg didn’t want to say ‘This is Nigeria’ or ‘This is Zambia’. I think he wants to work with aspects of some kind of pan-African notion of identity related to the Soothsayer and the Ghost and all of that, and some ideas of post-colonial politics and their complexities. Whether that is an illegitimate appropriation, I don’t really see it like this. I think Greg wants to draw on the power of the African context to provide a kind of fresh, distinctive and maybe slightly surprising way to the text while not being too specific. He doesn’t at all want to do anything too literal.

HUERTAS: But there was, of course, the coincidence of all these ‘African’ films coming on, such as *Invictus*, *Mandela*, and so on and so forth.

WYVER: I don’t know whether it comes from the films. It also comes from his interests and concerns. He has worked in Africa for a long time. He and Sher have had a partnership for a long time. Tony is South African. So, they’re really concerned with the situation in South Africa. Greg is concerned with the ways in which Shakespeare seems to have been important to Mandela and many others. So, there are connections to Mandela and so forth. I don’t know how you tease out the balance of all that. But I think you shouldn’t underestimate the personal involvement on it.
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