In Search of Shakespeare and Austen: Travels in Time and Place

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Candidate Declaration

I hereby declare that:

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2. None of the material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis comprises six published works, preceded by four sections which provide context for the publications, and summarise their significance. The overall project is to examine an aspect of the engagement between contemporary culture and the figures of William Shakespeare and Jane Austen: a set of contemporary texts, including theatre productions, films, novels, and television dramas, which attempt to connect the present-day audience to the personal identities, and the historical worlds, of these two authors. The project explores the imaginative journeys that such works attempt, critically examining and appraising their techniques, particularly focusing on how the idea of travel between moments of time and/or place shapes these adaptations, as well as investigating how the engagement with the authors can be framed as acts of literary tourism. This exploration broadens, at points, into a more general discussion of the inherent excitement, and inherent jeopardy, of imagined and reported travel in time and place, including encounters in the experienced spaces of theatre, cinema and culturally significant sites.

At a theoretical level, the thesis draws upon previous research in relevant fields, especially those of adaptation, and literary tourism. It also reflects upon the paradox of popular and commercial fascination with the lives and personalities of canonical authors, in spite of influential moves in recent decades to challenge the canon and to decry interest in authorial motives and intentions. The focus on the idea of place and time travel in this study offers an innovative framework within which to investigate both the production of these texts and their consumption by readers and viewers. Such travels in search of the author are shown to help us to interrogate central questions in adaptation studies around the authenticity and fidelity of texts and performance. The chief aim of the thesis, however, is not to provide an all-embracing theory, but to bring out the sheer complexity of the phenomena it discusses, and to analyse and illuminate these complexities.

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FOREWORD

This thesis is in two parts. Part Two (the Appendices) is composed of the six existing single-authored publications in refereed journals or collections. Five of these are already in print, while the sixth is in press, at the time of submission. (Readers may find it useful to read the Appendices section first.)

In Part One there are four chapters which will provide relevant context for the published work. Those on Adaptation and on Literary Tourism explore two of the significant fields of critical study which help to situate the work in Part Two. Chapter Three contains two sections, one on Renaissance travel poetry and the other on *Henry V*. These are case studies exploring the key notion of 'jeopardy' in travel writing and in performance. Finally, a Conclusion draws together the most important findings that have emerged across the course of the project, summarising the complex interactions of Time, Place, Author and Performance in the contemporary representation of these canonical writers, William Shakespeare and Jane Austen

Chapter One: Introduction – Adaptation

I.

The articles which form the largest part of this thesis explore the representation of the lives and works of Jane Austen and William Shakespeare in filmic and novel texts of the late twentieth and early decades of the twentieth first century. These authors provide an interesting area for investigation as they are not only important canonical figures in literary studies, but also are recognisable and revered iconic figures within popular culture. Marina Cano claims that these authors 'are unique in being simultaneously popular and highbrow' (*Jane Austen and William Shakespeare* 8) and these facets certainly inform and shape many of the texts considered in this study. The articles show how the gaps and absences in the biographies of both authors provide writers and directors with novel opportunities for adaptation as they imaginatively travel across time and places in search of Austen and Shakespeare.

II.

All the texts explored in this study are to varying extents adaptations. They include a musical film adaptation of Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* (dir. Kenneth Branagh, 2000) and a touring Royal Shakespeare Company production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in which a different group of

amateur actors was integrated into the professional company in each performance location ('RSC Play for the Nation', 2016). Other aspects of the adapted theatrical experience are explored in the investigation of live broadcasts to cinema ('RSC Live from Stratford on Avon' and 'NT Live'). Other texts discussed in the thesis are not, or are not primarily, adaptations of Shakespeare and Austen's literary works, but rather adaptations of the authors' lives. Some of these adaptations of the lives are undoubtedly biopics or biographical novels: the kind of text which 'narrates, exhibits, and celebrates the life of the subject in order to demonstrate, investigate, or question his or her importance in the world' (Bingham 10). Others such as *Austenland* and *Bill*, are adaptations which comedically expose the very act of adaptive biofiction, though retaining the aim of celebrating the life of the author. *Austenland* and *The Jane Austen Project* both offer versions of Austen's life and times, although they utilise different tones and genres, the first being a filmic romantic comedy, and the second a time travel novel. The re-imaginings of Shakespeare's life discussed here (*Shakespeare in Love*, 'The Shakespeare Code' and *Bill*), though all film or television productions, are similarly diverse in style and content.

Adaptation in its various guises, therefore, characterises all the published works under discussion. All these texts are transformations of something which previously existed or was known, be that a theatrical text, a novel or the author's life, into something complementary but distinct, and often

distinctive. It is therefore appropriate at the beginning of this thesis to identify some key ideas that are intrinsic to the debates about adaptation.

III.

Adaptation in its broadest sense of 're-writing' is something which arguably has always been part of the creative arts. Hutcheon notes:

> Adaptations are so much a part of Western culture that they appear to affirm Walter Benjamin's insight that 'storytelling is always the art of repeating stories (1992:90). The critical pronouncements of Northrop Frye were certainly not needed to convince avid adapters across the centuries of what, for them, has always been a truism: art is derived from other art; stories are born from other stories. (2)

Before exploring some of the debates which surround contemporary adaptations of Shakespeare and Austen, it is worth a brief consideration of these authors' own utilisation of other texts. Julie Sanders amongst others has discussed Shakespeare's use of previously known fictional and non-fictional narratives noting:

> the inescapable fact is that Shakespeare was himself an adapter and imitator, an appropriator of myth, fairy tale, folklore, the historical chronicles of Holinshed, and the prose fiction and poetry of his day, as well as classical texts by Ovid and Plutarch. (48)

Whether Austen was herself such an active 'adaptor and imitator' is perhaps less clear cut. There is certainly evidence that Austen read widely and was influenced by other texts in her own writing. Stabler notes that Austen's reading of theatrical works and gothic fiction is clearly evidenced in her work, commenting that 'one of the most obvious features of Austen's early writing is its burlesque mockery of another work through a reproduction of its style in

an exaggerated form' (45). She also notes some 'direct influence' and admires the 'versatility of Austen's use of Richardson and her deft transformations of available literary traditions' (45). Austen's burlesques, as a kind of broad parody, may have an affinity with adaptations. As Hutcheon notes:

> Like parodies, adaptations have an overt and defining relationship to prior texts usually revealingly called sources. Unlike parodies, however, adaptations usually openly announce this relationship. (3)

It would seem that in her early work, Austen revealed such 'an overt and defining relationship to prior texts', which became more introverted in her later work. This is, of course, not to imply that Shakespeare is the more immature writer, unable to give up his reliance on sources. The cultural and aesthetic choices made by an early nineteenth century novelist and a Renaissance playwright are markedly different. In the Renaissance there is clearly 'a far more open approach to literary borrowing and imitation' with imitation 'learned and practised in schools' (Sanders 60). A Renaissance writer would learn from the ancients, but in the act of going back to the originals, and imitating them in their own work, they understood that their own writing would be enhanced. This is thus a very different concept of originality from that more commonly understood version of post-Romantic writing focused primarily on the uniqueness of an author's own individual imagination. Although we can say that Austen and Shakespeare undoubtably are adapters themselves, we also need to recognise that the history of adaptation shows how frequently attitudes have changed in response to different historical, cultural, aesthetic, material and even technological contexts.

IV.

Since the mid-twentieth century the study of adaptations has become a significant and enduring aspect of academic enquiry. At the centre of these studies have been explorations of texts by both Shakespeare and Austen. The academic interest in the adaptation of Shakespeare's texts arguably began in the 1960s and 1970s with the examination of the performance of Shakespearean drama in the theatre. While not the first group of critics to describe and analyse performance, their focus on the difference between page and stage offered a way of imagining and exploring a wide range of contexts for these performance texts.

In part this interest in Shakespeare in Performance was motivated by a desire to discover evidence in the texts that would reveal details of the stage and playing conditions of the Renaissance. This wish to reposition Shakespeare's play as scripts to be performed, rather than as texts to be read, was typified by John Russell Brown's *Shakespeare's Plays in Performance* (1966). This study combined a historical analysis of the Shakespearean stage with a parallel interest in performances of the plays from the twentieth century and earlier:

> Even the new form for theatre-buildings that was developed in London during the last two decades of the sixteenth century, with galleries surrounding a platform stage at two or three levels on at least three sides, would have encouraged a single point of focus. What we call today the 'up-stage' position from which an actor can best control his audience would have been more nearly central to the theatre. (Russell Brown 169)

The aim was to centre Shakespeare firmly on the stage and, as in the quotation above, to compare the past and present, thus highlighting the modern stage's affinity with the Renaissance performance space. All of this was a reaction against the Leavisite reading of plays, as constituted in the early University academy, where dramatic texts were read as if they were poetry or novels and were scrutinised to articulate, what Leavis and others, believed to be significant 'values'. Their interest in 'the adventures of the words on the page'[i] gave way to Russell Brown's view that 'the very words themselves can be fully known only if they are considered in their dramatic context' (22). This pioneering work was complemented by Russell Brown's work in 1974, *Free Shakespeare*, which was an exhortation to release Shakespeare from the excesses of academics and prescriptive theatre directors. The project to reposition Shakespearean drama within a performance context met with some resistance, prompting Richard David in 1978 to note rather ruefully:

> Specialist studies have been written on how the plays work in the theatre, and on the close and complex relationship between author, interpreter and audience. Nevertheless I suspect that much of this is no more than lip-service, and that scholars who in theory acclaim Shakespeare the theatre-artist are still unable to accept the implication of that theory or the conditions that the staging of a play in the theatre inevitability imposes on the playwright's art.
>
> These conditions may be categorised as being, broadly, the consequences of three characteristics of the art of the theatre: it is multi-dimensional, it is live, and it is ephemeral. (1)

Eventually, however, an awareness of David's three conditions did prevail, and now most critical interpretations of Shakespearean drama do engage with the notion of performance and the adaptive nature of stage production.

In the 1990s the study of Shakespeare in Performance was added to further by the debates initiated by cultural materialist and new historicist critics. Although primarily concerned with early modern performances, they foregrounded the significance of ideological and political formation to the study of performance. In *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (1994) Jean Howard stresses the need to engage with the ideological context in the theatrical spaces and performances themselves:

> in order to understand the ideological function of Renaissance theater one must attend – not just to the ideological import of dramatic narratives considered as if they were the equivalent of a printed prose tale – but also to the whole ensemble of practices attendant upon theatrical production at the public theater. That means one has to pay attention to the specifics of this site of ideological production and reproduction…. (13)

Howard, addressing the modern critic, insists that they take account of the 'specifics of this site of ideological production and reproduction'. In the work of Graham Holderness these 'sites of cultural struggle across which ideological contradictions intersect and engage in contestation, … are capable, both in criticism and performance, of offering a sceptical and demystified grasp of power' (42). One of the purposes of the exploration of these 'ideological contradictions' is to expose ruptures and fissures in the plays' ideological framework, which could indicate the possibility of political change, which in turn might provide a model for change in the late twentieth century. Interestingly, as with Russell Brown, the dynamics of performance, in effect an adaptation of the text, is understood to initiate a conversation with the contemporary world.

As well as the foregrounding of ideology and politics, the cultural materialist strategy of exploring the plays alongside a range of contemporaneous historical texts such as pamphlets, diaries, and letters highlighted the value of creating a contextual and intertextual interpretative framework for the study of Shakespeare adaptation and adaptation more generally. Such cross-fertilisation of critical debates is difficult to analyse exhaustively, but the preponderance of Literature studies academics involved in adaptation studies in the late twentieth century seems significant, as does the dominance of this theoretical position at a time when an increased number of adaptations, both of Shakespeare on film, and adaptations of novels, began to flourish.

What we can say at this stage is that the study of Shakespeare in Performance identifies a number of key issues around adaptation. First the transmedial adaptation of page to stage, although, arguably less challenging and contentious than novel to film, was initially somewhat reluctantly embraced as part of academic study. Secondly, the study of performance involved the consideration of much more than the words spoken, there are a significant range of 'multi-dimensional' (David 1) elements which contribute to the performance. Thirdly, adaptation inevitably involves a conversation between the text and the audience. And lastly, that conversation will be ideological and shaped by contexts and intertexts which surround the adaptation, as much as by those within the text. As discussed in the article six, for example, the RSC's 2016 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was ideologically

framed as a 'Play for the Nation' and a celebration of Shakespeare's role as a national poet in the four hundredth anniversary of his death. Yet there was an unstable context for this discussion, with uncertainty about nationhood and sovereignty, prompted by the debates about the UK's proposed exit from the EU. (See also Brockaw and Roberts.) The choices made by the production, such as the 1940s post-war setting, the inclusivity of the casting, and the mixing of professional and amateur actors all added to a complex ideological mix.

V.

The studies of Shakespeare in Performance and of adaptation are areas of academic investigation that emerge as parallel developments but begin to converge when Shakespeare on Film becomes a topic for sustained scholarly enquiry. Shakespearean drama as a subject of film has, of course, existed since the beginnings of film, *King John* being the first silent film adaptation in 1899. Interestingly, in his chapter 'One-reel Epics', Leitch notes how both Shakespearean texts, and early film adaptations of novels (such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1896) and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1912)) were:

> typically based on intermediary stage adaptations that had broken down the novelist's often sprawling narrative to a manageably limited series of dramatic scenes. (*Film Adaptations* 28)

Such adaptations, because of their limited length, relied much more than modern adaptations on their audience's existing familiarity with the texts being presented, so in essence they could fill out the missing details. (This raises questions about the late twentieth and early twenty-first century

audience's familiarity with the text adapted, which will be considered later.) The significance of theatrical representations to early drama and novel adaptations might be considered an on-going influence. In the film versions of Shakespeare's life considered in this study, it is to be expected that Shakespeare would be represented as a denizen of the theatre. Yet in the biographical films' detailed and lovingly created versions of Shakespeare's performance spaces, as discussed in article three, it is possible to see shadows of those early film progenitors' engagement with their own theatre. The RSC and NT 'live' cinematic broadcasting of theatre to cinemas similarly could be said to cultivate and extend the founding relationship between literature and film.

VI.

The study of Shakespeare and Film, and more widely Literature and Film has provided a broad range of definitions and taxonomies which categorise various kinds of adaptation. One of the central issues surrounding the study of adaptations has been that concerning their fidelity to the text they adapt. Critics have pondered, and at times struggled, with assessing the veracity and truthfulness of the adapted text which is produced giving rise to an almost moralistic discourse around fidelity and faithfulness at best, and at worst accusations of violation and desecration. As Robert Stam notes in his 'Introduction: Theory and Practice of Adaptation' there are many possible sources for such expressions of dissatisfaction and hostility towards adaptations born from:

> deeply rooted and often unconscious assumptions about the relations between the two arts. The intuitive sense of adaptation's inferiority derives, I would speculate, from a constellation of sub-stratal prejudices. (Stam 4)

Stam's speculations focus on perceived hierarchical differences between literature (here mainly construed as the novel) and film. The former is construed as gaining significance because of its longevity which gives it intellectual weight, compounded by the fact that, by definition, the literary text always exists before the film adaptation. The novel is also seen as prestigious, cerebral and transcendent particularly in comparison to the newer form of film with 'its lower-class origins in 'vulgar' spectacles like sideshows and carnivals' (Stam 7). In addition to identifying this hierarchical class difference Stam proposes that the dependence of film on bodily neural structures like sight and sound, rather than 'pure' intellectual thought, has the potential to reinforce an adaptation's inferiority. Moreover, 'adaptations are seen as parasitical on literature; they burrow into the body of the source text and steal its vitality' (Stam 7). Stam argues that this parasitism 'explains' the adaptation's perceived lack of new ideas and lack of energy. Consequently:

> Academic criticism purveys a series of such "double binds" and "Catch 22s." A "faithful" film is seen as uncreative, but an "unfaithful" film is a shameful betrayal of the original. An adaptation that updates the text for the present is upbraided for not respecting the period of the source, but respectful costume dramas are accused of a failure of nerve in not "contemporizing" the text. If an adaptation renders the sexual passages of the source novel literally, it is accused of vulgarity; if it fails to do so, it is accused of cowardice. The adapter, it seems, can never win. (Stam 8)

Such 'double binds' as identified here often lead to the conclusion that the adaptation is 'not as good as the book'.

In academic criticism this dilemma around fidelity has been apparent since the first attempts to consider this category of films. It is worth noting that attitudes towards the fidelity of adaptations were mostly founded in the study of the relationship between novels and films. The articles which make up this study do not directly consider this type of novel to film adaptation. *Becoming Jane*, and *Austenland* are based on existing texts – a biography of Austen by Jon Spence, and a novel by Shannon Hale respectively. Here these texts are not explored simply as adapted biography or adapted novel, and yet it is clear that adaptation plays an important part in the production and reception of the representation of the author's life. By exploring how fidelity was understood in relation to these studies of novels into films, we can see how the parameters of the debate continued, and continues, to influence the issue of adaptation, even when the discussion begins to embrace texts that are not directly based on literary texts. This section will thus briefly consider the influential works of George Bluestone and Brian McFarlane, who although writing forty years apart, were both prompted to explore the significance of fidelity to the examination of filmic adaptations.

George Bluestone's *Novels into Films* published in 1957 is often considered to be the first significant work about adaptation. Bluestone's motivation was to explore the conventions and values of both the film and the novel in an attempt to 'promot[e] film as a unique and valued artform in its own right' (Cardwell 73). It was hoped that this would raise the standing of film in the

debate and in turn help to question 'fidelity criticism'. Nevertheless, the discussion and the comparative studies of films and novels led to a position where the two kinds of text were mostly seen in opposition. Bluestone comments 'the cinema exhibits a stubborn antipathy to novels … the novel [is[a medium antithetical to film' (23). Paradoxically, this does not prevent him from praising some film adaptations, for example, applauding MGM's 1940 *Pride and Prejudice* for its success in capturing the spirit of Jane Austen's novel, leading Sarah Cardwell to observe that this is 'an interpretation inexplicable within the terms of Bluestone's own theoretical framework of medium specificity' (97). While Bluestone's work was able to explore some of the generic features and conventions of film, these were often positioned as the antithesis of the novel, and so the study made little ground in addressing the question of fidelity in adaptations. As Rochelle Hurst argues his rigid distinctions between film and the novel 'paradoxically perpetuat[e] the preoccupation with fidelity' as 'the novel/film binary simultaneously bifurcates and hierarchizes the binaric pair, locating the novel as the superior, preferred locus in direct opposition to the film' (185). Moreover, as Leitch observes the novel-to-screen approach, ignores all texts other than film, and Bluestone's study gives scant attention to any other types of adaptation. This focus on the relationship between novels and the film adaptation was duplicated in many studies after Bluestone's own, which Leitch believes also perpetuated a number of 'conceptual fallacies' (90). For Leitch this includes the fallacy that novels are about words and films about images:

> In *Rethinking the Novel/Film*, Elliott points out that it [the novel-to-screen approach] is based on a 'designation of novels as "words" and of films as "images" [which] is neither empirically nor logically sustainable.' (2003:14) since many novels depend on images, either inscribed or implicit, and even more films depend on words, written as well as spoken. ('Adaptation and Intertextuality' 90)

Nevertheless, Bluestone's study did foreground the adaptation as a focus for serious study, as well as cementing, for good or ill, the comparative study as the dominant approach in adaptation studies for many years.

Over the next few decades, the comparative study was refined by employing a number of different strategies. One of these was the categorisation of adaptations initially according to their intended fidelity to the adapted text. Geoffrey Wagner's taxonomy included the 'transposition' ('in which a source text is given directly on screen with a minimum of apparent interference'), 'commentary' ('where an original is taken and either taken and either purposively or inadvertently altered in some respect… when there has been a different intention on the part of the film-maker') and the 'analogy' ('which must represent a fairly considerable departure for the sake of making another work of art') (Wagner 222-6). While one effect of this taxonomy was to reduce criticism of those texts which were not attempting to maintain faithfulness with the original text, it still retained the idea of fidelity as a benchmark of adaptation and a means to determine 'success'. Since Wagner there have been numerous taxonomies suggested including those by Dudley Andrew, Kamilla Elliot and Thomas Leitch[ii] which have not all been based on ideas of fidelity. Cardwell suggests that:

> categorisation serves to propel adaptation studies forward, away from subjective value-judgements and age-old prejudices, and towards a more conceptually coherent, theoretically grounded and methodologically rigorous state. (60)

One critic who contributed to this 'methodologically rigorous state' is Brian McFarlane, who has had a major influence on adaptation studies and also addresses the fidelity question. The narratological approach proposed by Brian McFarlane in *Novel to Film* (1996) is still comparative in the sense of utilising case studies and comparing novel to film, but the comparison is initiated from the point of view of narrative. Bluestone believed that the language of film and the novel were completely distinctive and transference between the two was difficult. McFarlane saw 'two separate systems of signification' (*Novel to Film* 23), but, as Whelehan notes, he wanted to make a 'clear distinction … between those narrative features that can be readily transferred from one medium to another and those that require "adaptation"' (10). McFarlane's argument endeavours to show how 'the film-maker bent on "faithful" adaptation must as a basis for such an enterprise, seek to preserve the major cardinal functions' (*Novel to Film* 14). The cardinal functions referred to here are part of McFarlane's complex theoretical framework, which utilises some of the narrative components identified by Roland Barthes, Christian Metz and Seymour Chatman. In essence these cardinal functions which can be adapted include key points in the story, 'the hinge points of narrative' (*Novel to Film* 13), as well as 'catalysers' which link the narrative. Other narrative features are deemed less easy to transfer, and these include 'indices' which are more closely linked to language, to what McFarlane calls

'enunciation' (*Novel to Film* vi). But here again we have sub-categories as 'informants' (dates and names) which can be transposed, while the novel's 'indices proper', which deal with mood, tone, psychological states, descriptions of landscape, all have to undergo an adaptation to the different medium of film. Even in this brief account, we can see how McFarlane's more 'scientific' strategy is trying to 'offer an alternative to the more subjective, impressionistic comparisons endemic in the discussion on the phenomenology of adaptation' (*Novel to Film* vii). After noting that 'discussion of adaptation has been bedevilled by the fidelity issue' (*Novel to Film* 8), McFarlane offers a re-reading of the term and describes a faithful adaptation as something which stirs up 'the viewer's memory of the original text without doing violence to it' (*Novel to Film* 163). His interest in the possibility of fidelity in an adaptation is an important correction to what had come before. Cardwell comments on the contribution of McFarlane's work to adaptation studies:

> Such an understanding of the creation (and re-creation) of discourse does, significantly, offer a feasible explanation for the success of some 'faithful' adaptations, thus avoiding the absurd negation of the possibility of adaptation implied by some of the earliest theorists in the field. (59)

McFarlane's work therefore is significant as it neither claims fidelity is impossible in adaptations, nor claims it as the feature which assures a successful adaptation, but instead he tries to account for the occasions when film adaptations do offer a faithful rendering of a novel. In the conclusion to *Novel to Film*, he also proposes that his own 'modified structuralist approach… can only take us so far' (201), because adaptation needs to pay:

> attention to the ways which influences, not all of them literary, may bear on the film version of a novel points to one of the potentially most rewarding approaches to the processes of transition. The fact that the effect on the spectator of other texts (literary, cinematic, non-fictional) and other pressures (genre conventions, auteurist predilections, studio style, 'industry' matters such as use of certain stars let alone extra cinematic influences such as the prevailing ideological climate) is not readily susceptible to the quantifying possibilities referred to above, does not mean that the critic of adaptation can afford to ignore them. (201)

This interest in the intertextual features, up to and including the idea that the adaptation is itself an intertext, is, of course, a significant aspect of adaptation studies. This will be considered as part of the next section which explores how the comparative approach's interest in the 'exploration of process' (Cardwell 10) was developed in criticism of the twenty-first century.

VII.

Linda Hutcheon in *A Theory of Adaptation* notes 'we use the same word – adaptation – to refer to the process and the product' (7). Yet as we will see, her definition of process is somewhat different from that of the early comparative critics, for whom the analysis of the adaptation process was centred almost exclusively on the originating source novel, and how its author's supposed intentions, could be realised. This section will explore how this process model is challenged by critics such as Hutcheon, Sanders and Cardwell who notes:

> The strength of later approaches lies in their very decentredness, comprehensiveness and flexibility in placing adaptations within a far wider cultural context than that of an original-version relationship. (25)

Hutcheon identifies three different, but connected, aspects of adaptation. The first consideration is that adaptation is 'seen as a *formal entity or product*, an adaptation is an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works' (Hutcheon 7). This idea of the adaptation as 'an announced and extensive transposition' is also proposed by Julie Sanders who suggests that 'An adaptation most often signals a relationship with an informing source text either through its title or through more embedded references' (Sanders 34). In terms of the texts studied here, they all announce, to varying degrees, a connection to an existing text, such as *Love's Labour's Lost* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* or they reference in their titles the names of either Shakespeare or Austen. The film *Bill* (2015) is perhaps the least clearly signalled. Even so the title enables the film to suggest parallels with Shakespeare's life, while at the same time constructing a fictional parody of it. The use of a first name in the film's title implies a friendly familiarity with the playwright, perhaps not unlike Stephen Greenblatt's *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (2004) and such novels as Christopher Rush's novel *Will* (2007), both of which unpack biographical and historical detail to offer a reading that explores the man ('Will') that explains the literary genius ('Shakespeare'). The slight de-centring of 'Will' into 'Bill', in part parodies this 'creation' narrative, but still announces its relationship with the author's life.

The texts discussed here are also 'transpositions' 'in the sense that they take a text from one genre and deliver it into a new modality and potentially to

different or additional audiences' (Sanders 27). This definition embraces the more conventional transpositions in this study of drama to film, or novel to film, as well as theatre to live cinema broadcast which makes the theatre performance open to 'different and additional audiences.' Branagh's Hollywood musical version of *Love's Labour's Lost* offers multiple transpositions with its relocation 'not just generically but in cultural, geographic and temporal terms' (Sanders 27). The fictional recreations of the 'real' lives of authors are adaptations of a different kind, but they likewise are defined by their use of transposition. Hutcheon notes 'Transposition can also mean a shift in ontology from the real to the fictional, from a historical account or biography to a fictionalized narrative or drama' (8)[iii]. With Shakespeare and Austen particularly, where the biographical details are incomplete, there is greater scope for fictionalised accounts. The discussion of Austen biopics such as *Becoming Jane* and *Miss Austen Regrets* in article four has demonstrated how in these films Austen's creativity is interpreted as being prompted by, and at the same time in conflict with, her much speculated upon romantic encounters. This fictional embellishment of the 'real life' of the author is also seen in *Shakespeare in Love* where a background love story is employed to 'account' for the writing of *Twelfth Night*. In *The Jane Austen Project*, and in a more comic way in 'The Shakespeare Code', the time travellers, furnished with biographical questions from the future, are also interested in how romance may have shaped the authors' artistic work. In these texts where time travel is the shaping narrative, the transpositional and the transtemporal aspects of the time travel

genre itself further expose and reinforce the transpositional nature of the adaptations.

In addition to the transpositional and announced aspect of adaptation, Hutcheon suggests a second strand which helps to identify an adaptation. In this instance she is defining not the product but the process, and more specifically '*a process of creation*, [in which the] the act of adaptation always involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation; this has been called both appropriation and salvaging, depending on your perspective' (Hutcheon 8). Such a definition gives agency and autonomy to the adaptation itself, it is a 'creation', a separate text not simply a version of the originating text. Hutcheon's explanation of process is broadened to include 'appropriation and salvaging' which has the merit that it widens the types of adaptations possible, and yet on the other hand it seems insufficiently nuanced to mark out differences between a stage production of a play text, and a film such as *Austenland*. Other critics have attempted to calibrate the adaptation process a little more. Sanders, for example, goes some way towards suggesting that appropriation is different from adaptation:

> building on the subcategory of adaptation categorized by Deborah Cartmell as analogue … appropriation frequently effects a more decisive journey away from the informing text into a wholly new cultural product and domain, often through the actions of interpolation and critique as much as through the movement from one genre to another. Indeed, appropriation may or may not involve a generic shift and it may certainly still require the kinds of 'readings alongside' or comparative approaches that juxtapose (at least) one text against another which we have begun to delineate as central to the reception of adaptations. But certainly, appropriations tend to have a more complicated, intricate and sometimes embedded

> relationship to their intertexts than a straightforward film version of a canonical or well-known text would suggest. (34)

The equation of Cartmell and Wagner's 'analogue' adaptation with appropriation is an interesting one which helps to suggest that a text like *Austenland* which is indeed 'a fairly considerable departure for the sake of making another work of art' (Wagner 226) can be seen as a kind of adaptation. Although *Austenland* is an adaptation of Shannon Hale's novel, both novel and film create an adaptation of Austen's life and work which produces, a 'wholly new cultural product and domain' (Sanders 34). Whelehan further defines analogy as something which 'shifts the action of the fiction forward in time or otherwise changes its essential contexts… [it] must transplant the whole scenario so that little of the original is identifiable' (8). The film *Austenland* certainly shifts 'essential contexts' with the central location Austenland, a modern Jane Austen theme park, created from scenarios and motifs from Austen's novels. Paradoxically the action of the film shifts Austen's milieu 'forward in time' in order to create a world which goes back in time. It clearly also has, as Sanders notes, a 'more complicated… relationship to [its] intertexts' (34) and can be seen as an appropriation if 'read alongside' (34) these texts which include not only the novel by Shannon Hale, but also Austen biopics, such as *Becoming Jane* and *Miss Austen Regrets*, the 1995 BBC TV version of *Pride and Prejudice*, as well as details relating to the life of Austen herself. Whether it 'requires' this 'reading alongside' is a question for later.

Thomas Leitch, while appreciating Sanders' 'admirable' work, has some concern over what he sees as Sanders decision not to 'to draw a categorical distinction between the two terms', adaptation and appropriation, noting that 'instead she distinguishes them only in terms of the degree of closeness they exhibit to the texts that inform them' ('Adaptation and Intertextuality' 88). This can certainly be seen in observations from Sanders such as 'But, as already stressed, appropriations do not always make their founding relationships and interrelationships explicit. The gesture towards the source text can be wholly more shadowy…" (Sanders 39). The 'shadowy' nature of appropriation is useful to identify, but on many occasions, Sanders uses the phrase 'adaptation and appropriation' as an overarching umbrella term, a single entity, which is not dissimilar to the way it is used in Hutcheon's analysis. Notwithstanding this particular wish for even more definition, the work of Hutcheon and Sanders represents an important attempt to rethink, and even maybe undermine the idea that the adaptation process is primarily about serving a single 'original' text. Their debates about adaptation are clearly subject to the review of other critics, such as Leitch, and also their own on-going consideration. This is clear from the number of amendments which have been made in the second editions of their works, and also in the inclusion of additional wider discussions on the impact of recent digital and technological developments on our understanding of adaptation.

One of the strengths of both studies is that they go to great lengths to avoid proposing that the process of adaptation involves a simple linear progression

'between text and hypertext, source and appropriation… In these phrases the appropriation is always in the secondary position and the discussion will always be couched in terms of difference, lack or loss' (Sanders 22). To avoid framing an adaptation as a simple linear relationship to another text, Sanders in *Adaptation and Appropriation* offers various analogies to explain the process and also the effect of adaptation. These analogies are drawn from music with adaptation compared to 'the musical metaphors of symphony and polyphony' (Sanders 43) and the 'improvisational qualities of jazz. Jazz riffs, themselves a model of repetition with variation, frequently make reference or pay homage to base canonical works'[iv] (Sanders 44). This description of the 'jazz riff' paying 'homage to base canonical works' helps illuminate the process of adaptation in a text such as *Austenland*, with the romantic arc of the heroine riffing around the plot of Austen's *Pride and Prejudice.* The film also seems to use the idea of the musical 'riff' more literally with its comic reimagining of the piano-playing Austen heroine singing an American hip-hop song by Nelly rather than a classical piano piece.

The arguments of both Sanders and Hutcheon are informed by the theoretical approaches of Gérard Genette. Sanders comments:

> Deploying a separate field of technology derived from the world of horticulture, Genette has written at length about the 'palimpsestuous nature of texts', observing that 'Any text is a hypertext, grafting itself onto a hypotext, an earlier text which it imitates or transforms' (1997 [1982] ix). Grafting is just one of several creative metaphors for the adaptive process favoured by this volume. (21)

Hutcheon also uses the idea of the 'palimpsestuous' text, but here Sanders highlights the significance of 'grafting' to the process. 'Grafting' like the musical analogies noted earlier, mitigates against the dominant linear process of describing adaptation (this text feeding into that text). The term 'hypertext' also provides an alternative to the terms 'original' and 'source' text, phrases which come with their own preconceptions, located as seen earlier in the idea of fidelity. Hutcheon likewise seeks to challenge the supposed derivative nature of adaptation claiming 'an adaptation is a derivation that is not derivative – a work that is second without being secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing' (Hutcheon 9).

The idea of the 'palimpsestuous' text is thus a way of describing the adaptation itself but it is also used by Hutcheon to explore the reception of the text. The third strand of her theory of adaptation is that:

> seen from the perspective of its *process of reception*, adaptation is a form of intertextuality: we experience adaptations (*as adaptations*) as palimpsests through our memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation. (Hutcheon 8)

This suggests that an adaptation is not only intertextual, but that its resulting palimpsestuous features are an important aspect of an audience or reader's engagement with the adaptation. While the idea of intertextuality derived from the work of Kristeva and Barthes has long been part of literary studies, Deborah Cartmell comments that it is 'perhaps the defining principle of any adaptation' ('Text to Screen' 27). The attraction of intertextuality to the study of adaptation is that it 'help[s] us transcend the aporias of "fidelity" and of a

dyadic source/adaptation model which excludes not only all sorts of supplementary texts but also the dialogical response of reader/spectator.' (Stam 7). Kristeva's assertion that 'Any text … is constructed of a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another' (Kristeva 37), means that all the texts considered here are an intertextual 'tissue of citations' (Barthes 39). The texts which are adaptations of the lives of authors, employ a variety of intertexts including existing biographies, the author's literary works, and also other biopics. The intertextual links between *Becoming Jane* and *Shakespeare in Love* have been discussed by several critics. Sonia Haiduc compares the depiction of the author in the act of writing in each film and comments: 'the similarities …are evident, down to the ink-stained fingers and the brutal disfigurement of the paper when the results are unsatisfying' (58). Lisa Hopkins also examines a number of parallels between the two texts, and in particular identifies how 'the debt [to *Shakespeare in Love*] is most notably visible whenever Anne Hathaway's Jane writes down good nuggets which she has heard' (*Relocating Shakespeare* 141). Ironically, of course, these are not random overheard phrases as the screenwriters have taken recognisable phrases from the authors' works and reassigned them to characters in the films. The aim is to demonstrate how these 'influences' are assimilated into the writers' work. It is significant that authorial creation, or re-creation, is presented as an act which synthesises the social and cultural intertexts that surround the authors.

This trope of the biopic where the creative artist transforms phrases from the world around them, is further parodied in *The Shakespeare Code*, where it is the time-travelling Doctor who deliberately feeds lines, some of which are Shakespeare's own, to the Shakespeare character. This provides the Doctor with a running joke around whether Shakespeare 'can have that' ('the play's the thing') or 'you can't, it's someone else's' ('Rage, rage against the dying of the light'). Discussing this recycling of textual fragments in *Shakespeare in Love*, Kamilla Elliot notes:

> But even as the film supports Barthes' view that authors recycle existing texts, it astonishingly omits any credit to Shakespeare's actual written sources. Its Shakespeare adapts speech, not texts.... ('Screened Writers' 193)

While one imagines it might prove rather undramatic to portray Shakespeare pouring over his source texts, these speech fragments play a significant role in the reception of this adaptation, and others using this technique. Hutcheon notes, as quoted above, that 'we experience adaptations (*as adaptations*) as palimpsests through our memory of other works' (8). Such intertextual references to Shakespeare or Austen's texts in these biographical films thus can be the source of pleasurable recognition. Both Hutcheon and Sanders identify that the experiencing of pleasure is an important aspect of our reception of adaptations. Sanders comments:

> part of **pleasure** of response for readers in these instances consists in tracing these relationships for themselves and according to their own reading experience.... (44)

and Hutcheon observes:

> Part of this pleasure, I want to argue, comes simply from repetition with variation, from the comfort of ritual combined with the piquancy

> of surprise. Recognition and remembrance are part of the pleasure (and risk) of experiencing an adaptation; so too is change. (4)

Hutcheon here identifies a 'risk', which one can take to mean that an adaptation might be different from one's 'remembrance'. Sanders also adds a different note of caution indicating that it is 'important to recognise that explicit soundings of intertextual relationships may close down, as much as open up, the possibility for interpretation' (41). Arguably, for that reason, *Shakespeare in Love* chooses the most familiar of Shakespeare quotations, but there is still, of course, no guarantee that every viewer will recognise these allusions.

Thomas Leitch in his essay 'Adaptation and Intertextuality' proposes that there are particular problems with Hutcheon's theoretical approach:

> Problems arise from this account's double focus on production and reception. In order for an adaptation to count as an adaptation for Hutcheon, it has to meet two conditions: its creators must intend it to be perceived as an adaptation; and its audience must so perceive it… If a given audience misses the intertextual reference of a particular adaptation, does it still count as an adaptation? Clearly not for that audience …. (95)

As noted above in relation to *Shakespeare in Love*, it seems likely that not all intertexts will be recognised by an audience/reader, but given these intertexts rarely occur singularly in adaptations, some of these will surely become apparent, especially if the work is 'announced' as an adaptation. Sanders in her attempts to distinguish 'appropriations' as something 'more shadowy' that 'do not always make their founding relationships and interrelationships

explicit' (39) seems also to suggest that there are gradations of audience involvement.

The significance of the 'reception' of the adaptation remains, however, central to any debate about adaptation. Hutcheon and Sanders tried to steer the debate past ideas about fidelity whereas others are reluctant to give this up as a determining factor in audience reception. Christine Geraghty notes:

> Faithfulness matters if it matters to the viewer. Many reviewers and critics … put themselves into the role of the viewer who has not only read the book but also wants the film to be faithful to it. But this is not the only position… There are many films based on previous sources that go unacknowledged as adaptation: the book is not well-known, the film does not draw attention to itself as an adaptation, and the publicity machinery ignores the original source. Faithfulness is not an issue, and the film in a very real sense is not an adaptation. (3)

Geraghty is, like Hutcheon and Sanders, claiming that the text needs to be announced as an adaptation, but suggests that once known to be an adaptation, the faithfulness of the text may matter to the viewer. After quoting Catherine Grant who asserts 'there is no such thing … as a "secret" adaptation', Geraghty notes:

> When this work is done, the film can be known as an adaptation by people who have not read the original, those who have read it and did not like it, those who have read it and cannot remember it, and any number of other permutations. Any single cinema or television audience will include people in different positions, and it would seem logical to look at the audience rather than the text to discover what those positions are and to measure the importance of faithfulness in particular cases. Reception work in this area has been limited…. (3)

Geraghty, alongside other critics such as Nino Dicecco, Casie Hermansson, and Colin Maccabe, are in some respects trying to turn the tide of the fidelity debate. She claims that 'I contest the relationship with an original source as

the main criterion for judging adaptations' (4), but she does suggest that fidelity has some bearing on an adaptation's reception by its audience, particularly where 'the adaptation might draw attention to its literary origins in its presentation of its own material' (4). Fidelity in this sense had become a kind of intertext.

VIII.

This chapter has explored a number of critical accounts relating to the topic of adaptation and investigated how some of these theoretical approaches help to examine the kinds of texts in this study. Adaptation studies is revealed as a popular and expanding area of intellectual enquiry, but one still seeking comprehensive theoretical definitions which would serve its increasing areas of interest. It is to be expected that any area of textual enquiry will be shaped by the developing wider theoretical debates about texts, but unlike some areas of enquiry, adaptation theory always seems to exist on slightly uneven ground. Thomas Leitch perhaps rather controversially suggests that 'recent theorists of adaptation have been … reluctant to define their field of study' ('Adaptation and Intertextuality' 88). He, and others, have suggested the cause of this uncertainty lies in the subject's antecedence, where teaching and research was undertaken by those in literary studies, and shaped by the literary critical practices of those involved in this new area of investigation to the neglect of film studies. Some claim this is where its bias in terms of literature was established, while others see a more intrinsic problem in the relationship between the 'source' of adaptations and the adaptations that

result. Nevertheless, sitting at the crossroads between literary studies and film studies it has been informed by both areas, but never completely owned by either.

From the discussion in this chapter, we can see that the study of adaptations continues to circle around issues to do with fidelity and intertextuality, although sometimes in new configurations. Intertextuality, for example, is now not only the relationship between a novel and a film, but also a range of intertexts including other films and novels, publicity and marketing materials, and production intertexts such design, music, and the casting of the film. The intertextual relationship between adaptation and a novel, or a performance of a play, is also now recognised as non-linear, with such adaptations and performances influencing an individual's re-reading of the supposed source text, as well as future adaptations of the texts. Although there has been a recent re-positioning of the role of fidelity in adaptations, on the whole fidelity as a defining feature of adaptation has continued to diminish in significance. Yet even if the significance of fidelity has been reduced, the concept still has shaped, and continues to shape the questions and critical strategies which surround adaptation studies.

In terms of the texts considered in this thesis, it is perhaps only the discussions of the RSC's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Kenneth Branagh's film version of *Love's Labour's Lost* that sit comfortably at the centre of adaptation studies. Even the RSC Live and NT Live are shown to test the

critical parameters of Shakespeare in Performance Studies and adaptation studies. In these productions the cinema performance has an intertextual relationship with the live theatre performance, and these multi-layered creations complicate issues around the production of meaning and the analysis of audience reception. The other texts explored, which involve consideration of the figure of these authors in contemporary fiction and film, are adaptations of a different kind. They are transformations of something which previously existed or was known, they are announced, they are intertextual, they will prompt in some readers a 'recall' (Geraghty 4) of previous knowledge about the author, and they give 'pleasure', which is in part derived from the audience/readers comparison between what they are watching/reading and what they think they already know about the authors.

While it is important to identify all these engagements with the idea of the author, be they biographical or a performance of their work, as different shades of adaptation, it is also revealing to ask what do they, as a group of texts tell us about the adaptation of Austen and Shakespeare? Fundamentally, these adaptations all reassert the significance of these authors to the contemporary world. The films which focus on Shakespeare all show that from a messy, fraught, frustrating, early life the canonical figure is born. Cartmell discussing biopics of Austen notes:

> Paradoxically, the biopic – in particular the film biography of an author- uses genre to both kill and resurrect the author. Unperturbed by concerns over the intentional and affective fallacies that so revolutionized the manner in which literature was interpreted in the mid-twentieth century, screen adaptations of Austen's work seem to

> doggedly cling to old-fashioned biographical approaches to fiction that equate interpretation with finding out 'truths' about the author. ('Becoming Jane' 157)

These 'truths', as noted earlier, are often connected with the author's romantic life, which is offered as an explanation for the author's creative life. *The Jane Austen Project* is the only text considered here which 'kills' the author, in the sense of anticipating and then reporting the death of Austen (although the aim of the time travellers is to extend her life). There are however no Barthesian examples of the 'death of the author' in the texts, as the authors remain centre stage throughout, their lives telling us about their work. The two theatre productions also assert the significance of the author for the contemporary audience. Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is proclaimed as a 'Play for the Nation', whereas RSC Live and NT Live celebrate the creation of vast audience communities worldwide. These texts therefore assert the significance of the author and not their demise.

One of the challenges for these adaptations of the lives of Austen and Shakespeare is that we do not have a comprehensive account of their actual lives. In some respects, of course, this is also an opportunity for the filmmakers and novelists which they grasp willingly, often drawing on rather similar evocations of the writing process itself. Judith Buchanan has observed:

> Literary biopics make a feature of shots that lovingly fete the writing process. We are familiar with the aestheticized views of desk, quill, parchment, inkpot, typewriter, the writer in a moment of meditative pause, the evocatively personal oddities that adorn the space of writing, the view from the window as a reflective space that feeds the imaginative process. (5)

In each of the film representations most of these features are present. In that sense the adaptation of the act of writing is seen as ahistorical, an individual personal experience unconnected with the world that surrounds the author. As discussed earlier, some of the film techniques employed in *Shakespeare in Love* to depict the writer at work are very similar to those in *Becoming Jane*, with their close focus on paper and quill and the writer's anguished torment as the words come halting forth. The act of writing in *The Jane Austen Project*, however, takes place away from the attention of the time-traveller narrator, who only catches glimpses of Austen's writing once she has left the room. (In an interesting way this has parallels with the modern reader who reads the works left by the absent Austen.) However, despite using similar techniques, the biopics considered differ markedly in terms of tone. All the Shakespeare ones discussed here, utilise comedy and are very self-aware and self-referential, whereas the tone of the Austen biopics is reflective, more serious and almost elegiac. The Shakespeare films all juxtapose comments and everyday events from the audience's own modern world, to create both an ironic distance and also, curiously, create an empathetic engagement with the author hero. Lisa Hopkins comparing the adventurous and sometimes radical filmic re-readings of Shakespeare's texts with the rather more conservative adaptations of Jane Austen's books, comments on the latter that:

> they are more likely to inhabit a secure, unified genre, or be criticized if they do not, especially if the Austen text at stake has been or is perceived to have been adapted without due sensitivity to the very

> specific cultural codes and social restrictions within which her characters operate. ('Shakespeare to Austen' 246)

What we can see here in the adaptations of Austen's life is that they also adhere to the same 'very specific cultural codes and social restrictions'. Even when the plot of the adaptation introduces the idea of time-travel, as in *The Jane Austen Project*, this often seems to be there primarily to record the minutiae of Austen's surroundings and behaviours, and they certainly do not introduce time-travelling sci-fi features like the homicidal aliens in 'The Shakespeare Code'. *Austenland*'s approach is, however, less conservative. The absence of the figure of Austen herself, and the comic representation of the inadequate immersive visitor attraction Austenland, encourages a self-referential tone closer to the Shakespeare films. Here the adaptation focuses less on the production of the Austen text and is more concerned with the exploration of its contemporary reception and consumption.

Yet, despite these varieties of tone, the adaptations share a preoccupation with the idea of loss. This, as we have seen, is often formulated as lost love, and occasionally lost children ('The Shakespeare Code' proposes that Shakespeare's grief at the loss of his son Hamnet is channelled by the aliens), but most interestingly for adaptations about writers, they all to varying extents focus on lost texts. In all these depictions of the authors' lives there are intriguing glimpses of a supposed lost text, or a fictional text about to be lost. Academic critics have speculated about a lost text *Love's Labour's Won*

supposed to be a sequel to *Love's Labour's Lost*, and in 'The Shakespeare Code' this lost play appears only to be hijacked by aliens for their nefarious purposes. Other fictional lost texts occur in the other films: in *Shakespeare in Love* there is an 'Ur- text' of *Romeo and Juliet*, comically named *Romeo and Ethel, the Pirate's Daughter*, and in *Bill,* a play, *A Series of Comic Misunderstandings,* is co-authored with Christopher Marlowe, but then accidentally thrown in the fire. Significantly, all of these imagined lost texts are significantly shown to be of dubious literary merit. In *The Jane Austen Project*, however, the time travellers do recover Austen's lost novel *The Watsons*, but on returning to the future it is ignored and appears to be of no interest to academics or general readers. There are a number of possible explanations for why in these author texts the lost texts remain lost, destroyed or ignored. Austen's lost text is recovered, but in the future world of the novel it loses its cachet as more Austen novels have appeared, and literary taste has changed in response to a different social and political climate. As discussed earlier, although both Shakespeare and Austen did use sources in the creation of their works, in the adaptations the creative act is shown as grounded in their own experience and imagination. In the Shakespeare films we also see them developing their writing craft in earlier works, which are subsequently lost. These lost texts are seen as expendable practice pieces for the budding author. Alternatively, given that Paul Franssen argues 'time travel narratives usually cut Shakespeare down to size' (228), the apprentice pieces might be included to show Shakespeare as an inadequate writer. Yet this does not seem to be the case in 'The Shakespeare Code' or

the other Shakespeare films considered here[v] where the extended development of the Shakespeare figures reveals them to be empathetical characters with embryonic canonical status. Lisa Hopkins suggests we do not regret the loss of *Love's Labour's Won* at the end of the 'The Shakespeare Code' because:

> This is, it seems, a Shakespeare play that no one much cares if we lose, but that is I think because its own importance is comprehensively eclipsed by the actual presence of Shakespeare. It is a part of his charm that he is himself unimpressed by his own work, dismissing *Love's Labour's Won* with 'The boys get the girls, they have a bit of a dance, it's all as funny and thought-provoking as usual'. (*Shakespearean Allusion* 180)

In this television episode, the mature, perceptive self-deprecating Shakespeare, having helped to save the world with his play, colludes with the Doctor to suppress *Love's Labour's Won* for the safety of the planet. The other Shakespeares, in *Shakespeare in Love*, and *Bill,* are represented as more immature writers, but they too do not mourn the loss of their early attempts. Instead they adapt their early work and in the case of *Shakespeare in Love* create *Romeo and Juliet*, and in *Bill,* 'Shakespeare' produces a new play which not only reveals his nascent creative talent, but also gains him the financial support of the Queen. These rewrites of earlier texts, in a somewhat metafictional way, are adaptations. They are 'haunted' (Hutcheon 4) by the lost texts (literally in *Bill* with the appearance of Marlowe's ghost) but they produce a 'new cultural and aesthetic product' (Sanders 45). Significantly the adaptations produced by the various Shakespeares are successful in distinct ways. In *Shakespeare in Love* the rewrite produces *Romeo and Juliet* which is

commercially and dramatically significant, in 'The Shakespeare Code' the adaptation is world changing (as it defeats the aliens), and in *Bill* the new play has political impact (defeating a Catholic plot and saving the life of Queen Elizabeth). Although comically presented, each film adaptation shows that adaptation can successfully enrich a prior text, and also that adaptation is itself a crucial part of the writing process.

This collection of texts are therefore adaptations which are distinct and distinctive. In the case of most of the author texts they self-consciously declare their status as adaptations, and they are sometimes also about adaptation. The adaptations of the life and works of the authors may be of different kinds, but they are all built on a desire to engage with audiences and reassert the significance of the canonical author to the contemporary world. Paradoxically, while being very much 'about the author', they utilise diverse intertextual frameworks, the awareness of which was supposed to diminish the significance of the author in critical study. Some of the texts are literally about time travel, but all the adaptations share the transpositional and transtemporal features of time-travelling fiction, as they are resurrected to speak to a new audience in new times and places.

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[i] This phrase was used by one of my University lecturers when I was an undergraduate at University of Warwick between 1976-9. I have sadly forgotten his name.

[ii] See Dudley Andrew (1984) who discusses transforming, intersecting and borrowing. Kamilla Elliot (2003) who explores: Psychic, Ventriloquist, Genetic, De(Re)composing, Incarnational, and Trumping. Thomas Leitch (2007) whose categories include: Celebrations, Adjustment, Neo-classic imitation, Revisions, Colonization,

(Meta)commentary or deconstruction, Analogue, Parody and pastiche, Secondary, tertiary or quaternary imitations, and Allusion.

[iii] Hutcheon also suggests that '**paraphrase and translation** analogies can also be useful in considering what I earlier called the ontological shift that can happen in adaptations of an historical event or an actual person's life into a reimagined, fictional form. (Hutcheon 2013. 17)

[iv] Michael Cunningham also used the analogy of jazz in a discussion of his 'adaptation' of *Mrs Dalloway*, in his novel *The Hours*, commenting 'What I wanted to do was more akin to music, to jazz, where a musician will play improvisations on an existing piece of great music from the past – not to reinvent it, not to lay any kind of direct claim to it, but to both honor it and try to make other art out of an existing work of art.' (Schiff 113)

[v] This cutting down to size of Shakespeare can however be see in *Blackadder: Back and Forth (1999)* where Shakespeare is knocked to ground and verbally abused by Blackadder for the unhappiness he has inflicted on school children forced to study his texts.

Chapter Two: Literary Tourism

I.

Literary tourism is one of the key recurring ideas in the articles which form part of this thesis. This chapter will investigate some of the aspects of this critical framework. It will also examine the extent to which some of the phenomena investigated in the articles – on literary adaptations, including the broadcasting of live theatre performances of Shakespeare to the cinema, as well as evocations of the lives of Shakespeare and Austen in television and film – can be construed as acts of literary tourism. It will be argued that the discussion of these artefacts as kinds of literary tourism extends and re-calibrates how we understand our contemporary interactions with representations of these canonical authors, and adaptations of their work.

II.

Literary tourism as a phenomenon has been, as Hendrix notes ('From Early Modern'), a significant aspect of how readers have responded to the works of writers since classical times. As a subject for academic enquiry, often focussing particularly on nineteenth-century texts and their relationship with literary sites, it is a much more recent activity, with a particular increase in publications on the topic from the late twentieth century onwards. However, Watson comments on the 'invisibility of literary tourism' to academic study and suggests that this has:

> Perhaps been the result of its troubling interrogation of the boundaries between those disciplines and sub-disciplines between which it has to date found itself situated: literary and cultural studies (especially work on travel-writing and the history of the reading experience), history and heritage studies, cultural geography, and tourism studies. (*Literary Tourism* 3-4)

Literary tourism inevitably seems to embrace a number of diverse disciplines and methodologies derived from history and geography as well as those from literary

studies. It is also an area of enquiry within tourism and business studies where the focus can be somewhat different with consideration of the management and organisation of sites which have literary associations. (See O'Connor and Kim.) Watson suggests a further reason why literary tourism has remained comparatively invisible to academics when she claims that it has been seen as 'embarrassing':

> The embarrassment of literary tourism is encapsulated in the very phrase, which yokes 'literature' – with its long-standing claims to high, national culture, and its current aura of highbrow difficulty and professionalism – with 'tourism', trailing its pejorative connotations of mass popular culture, mass travel, unthinking and unrefined consumption of debased consumables, amateurishness and inauthenticity. As a practice that tries to make the emotional and virtual realities of reading accountable to the literal, material realities of destination, it is bound to make literary specialists uneasy. (*Literary Tourism* 5)

However, it is precisely this paradoxical interrogation and intermixing of supposed high and low culture that makes the idea of literary tourism such a persuasive framework for the contemporary adaptations investigated in this study. Juxtapositions between high and low culture abound in filmic adaptations of cultural icons such as Austen and Shakespeare, in the transmission of 'high art' productions of the nation's leading playwright by the nation's premier theatre companies to the popular cinema multiplexes, and in the representation of the life, times and artistic practice of these 'esteemed' authors in artefacts designed for, and transmitted, via television and film. Moreover, it is important to note that while literary studies has embraced the study of 'travel writing', it for a long time was less engaged by the study of 'literary tourism'. This is again attributable to the opposition of high and low culture in the definition of 'traveller' and 'tourist'. As Buzard notes, up until the late eighteenth century the terms were more or less synonymous, but since then 'the tourist is the dupe of fashion, following blindly where authentic travellers have gone with open eyes and free spirits'

(1), with the additional suggestion that while the '"traveller' exemplifies independence and originality, the tourist(s) …go *en masse*' (2).

As well as these matters of 'high' and 'low' culture, the academic study of literary tourism provides a context for other areas which are appropriate to this study. Most centrally, literary tourism is preoccupied with the idea of the author, not as a Barthesian theoretical absence, but as the human creator of significant works of fiction. Literary tourism shows, or recreates for its visitors, what it takes to be significant aspects of the authors' life and works. As we will see below, the nature of that representation has been subject to a change in focus over time. The manifestations of literary tourism are many and include museums, exhibitions, theme-parks and, perhaps most significantly for this study, the writers' houses themselves. The historic house dominates discussions of adaptations of Austen's work, as well as bio-pics of her life, and they become the focus for off-shoots such as *Austenland*. From a consideration of these places or sites, critics of literary tourism have explored the significance of place and time, particularly how the two are inextricably interlinked in the creation of a version of a past place for the present time. In Stratford-upon-Avon an advertising banner proclaims '"Explore" Shakespeare's Birthplace: uncover the stories behind the world's greatest storyteller.' In the search for author, both in literary tourism and specifically in the texts discussed in this thesis, we can see this recurring preoccupation with the source of things, and a sense that the author's end is in their beginnings, rooted in ideas of place. The project of literary tourism seems to be to try and locate the author, construed as master, guide, literary genius (terms which may trouble a contemporary literary critic) in a particular setting, so that visitors are

encouraged to visit such sites to commune empathetically with that author across time. Ideas of time and place are thus continually interwoven.

Article three on *Doctor Who: The Shakespeare Code* and *Shakespeare in Love*, explores the representation of a related, but distinct kind of manipulation of time and place: time-travel. This television episode of *Doctor Who*, and the film *Shakespeare in Love* both conjure up versions of the past to give modern audiences access to the (supposed) time and place of Shakespeare, in order that they can 'understand' the genius of the author. This paradigm of time-travel is also utilised by those interested in literary tourism. Alison Booth poses the question:

> In what ways does literary tourism serve as time travel? The tourist, according to John Urry, seeks escape from the everyday. In literary tourism the movements of readerly imagination and travel mimic each other, often entailing a visit to a real-world setting transformed by author and reader into the space-time of characters…. [tourist sites] are backward glances, motivated by nostalgia or homesickness as well as attractions to the uncanny… Built attractions especially may introduce ghosts of the future as well; as in science fiction, the time travel is by no means uni-directional. Preserved sites, testimonials of haunting and encounter, and the practices of re-enactment seem to share the common impulse to deter the decay of time, to shore fragments against our ruin. (151)

Booth here proposes that literary tourism is similar to that of the 'readerly' experience in that we escape to another world mutually created by author and reader. The representations of the author considered in this study show that the creation of the literary place and its imagined author is not absolutely defined within a particular time, but instead may occupy a complex moment where the past, present and future intertwine.

The contemplation of such complex inter-relationships between time and place, in cinematic and television texts, and also in discussions about literary tourism, has perhaps not surprisingly prompted similar critical questions. In these representations of the author, what is the relationship between the authentic and the inauthentic, the real and the imagined and indeed what is the role of the creator and the observer? The responses to such questions are shaped by similar frameworks around the role of memory, and memorialisation, often linked to a nostalgic pull of the past, as well as questions around national identity. One of the key questions in the study of literary tourism and this study, and an issue which is often contested, is the idea of the tourist gaze. Is it possible for critics to assert confidently how tourists consume and experience the literary tours of which they are a part? Most critics who explore literary tourism address such issues, and most interrogate theoretical positions explored in the wider area of tourism studies, often negotiating positions between the works of John Urry and Dean MacCannell.

John Urry posits in his book *The Tourist Gaze* a number of different permutations for types of tourism, and the function of the tourist gaze itself. The types of tourist gaze identified by Urry are the 'romantic' (illustrated by the way a tourist gazes upon the Lake District) and viewed as 'historical and apparently authentic' (94), and the 'collective tourist gaze' (the example here being Alton Towers) where the gaze looks upon something 'modern and …predominately inauthentic' (94). As is implied by these terms, there are also implied differences in terms of the size of the participation. 'Romantic' signifies 'semi-private, quasi-spiritual … relatively few other visitors being even visible, let alone nearby' (Urry *Consuming Places* 197). This may be aspirational

rather than fully realised but is different in scale to the 'collective'. Such distinctions return us to the definitions of 'tourism' and travel' considered above. While Urry does not specifically consider 'literary tourism' in his work, he does explore the significance of literature and writers to tourism and heritage tourism. His influence on literary tourism has been in the idea that tourists 'gaze upon or view a set of different scenes, of landscapes or townscapes which are out of the ordinary' (1) and

> where everyday obligations are suspended or inverted. There is licence of permissiveness and playful "non-serious" behaviour and the encouragement of a relatively unconstrained "communitas" or social togetherness'. (11)

The similarity here to C L Barber's definitions of *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (1959) is pronounced. In both there is a focus on social custom and forms which create this movement to a 'festive' world, as a temporary escape. Urry further proposes that the production of the tourist experience needs to provide the moment 'that contrasts with the everyday and the mundane' (2). Both critics discussed here utilise aspects of literary theory. Urry's exploration of the 'gaze' as many critics have noted is based on Foucault's 'panoptic gaze'. MacCannell however in his response to Urry entitled 'Tourist Agency' refutes Foucault and Urry's idea that 'the powerful subject possesses the gaze while the powerless other is completely defined by its status as the object of the gaze' (28-29). MacCannell's theoretical parameters, as he explores how a tourist consumes and experiences the tour, are provided by Lacan and evidenced by Stendhal's *Memoirs of a Tourist*. MacCannell does not totally discard Urry's tourist gaze (suggesting it is 'installed by the institutions and practices of commercialised tourism' (35), but he does posit a 'second gaze' which:

> … is always aware that something is being concealed from it; and that there is something missing from every picture, from every look or glance. This is no less true on tour than it is in everyday life. The second gaze knows that seeing is

> not believing… On tour, the second gaze may be more interested in the ways the attractions are presented than in the attractions themselves. It looks for openings and gaps in the cultural unconscious. It looks for the unexpected, not the extraordinary…. (36)

In his examination of Stendhal's text, he offers a reading of the tourist as being interested in what is 'off to the side of the main attraction' (33), 'seeing past or beyond the tourist gaze' (33) and 'narratizing the unseen behind the details' (33). Yet Stendhal himself, paradoxically perhaps, also gives his name to a syndrome which is the consequence of the tourist gaze pursuing 'the extraordinary'. In *Naples and Florence: A Journey from Milan to Reggio (*1817*),* Stendhal describes his own 'profoundest experience of ecstasy … my soul, affected by the very notion of being in Florence, and by the proximity of those great men whose tombs I had just beheld', which gave rise to a set of physical symptoms, including 'a fierce palpitation of the heart' (302). To some extent, the texts in this study are pursuing this 'Stendhal Syndrome' where they hope that the literary tourist gaze will be focused on something 'extraordinary'. And yet curiously, in a complex balancing act many of the texts employ a range of comic self-referential devices, seemingly designed to show the audiences, in MacCannell's phrase, the 'ways the attractions are presented' (36).

III.

Let us now consider further the association between the author and a specific place, and how this might impact on our understanding of more recent filmic and theatrical encounters with authors and their work. There is certainly a literary tradition of associating imaginative work with actual places, whether that is the country house poems of the seventeenth century or the Romantic poets' engagement with significant

sites of personal emotional memory. Two of Austen's own novels have imagined places (*Northanger Abbey* and *Mansfield Park*) as their titles, and the narratives of all the texts involve the central characters in a rather peripatetic movement between different houses, and 'touristic' visits to places in Derbyshire, Lyme Regis, and Bath amongst others. This linkage between place and particular individuals or emotions is heightened in literary tourism. Harald Hendrix notes that place has been of significance since classical times with 'fellow writers longing for some kind of intellectual exchange or simply keen on expressing their admiration, and from other persons eager to honour poets, their works, or literature as such' ('From Early Modern' 14). Sometimes literary tourism involved meeting with living authors. Yet more often such visits to places associated with authors became acts of memorial and 'transform(ed) the rather passive admiration for a revered predecessor into a much more active intellectual exchange beyond the grave, a "conversation with the dead"' (Hendrix, 'From Early Modern' 14). However, Hendrix also notes that the places themselves in time were shaped less by a 'purely author-oriented perspective, limited to aspects like memory, worship and 'conversation with the dead', than by an interest in the literary work and the imaginative world of fiction it suggests' ('From Early Modern' 15).

For Hendrix this shift in emphasis from a simple interest in the author, to an interest in author and their works, is best illustrated by the figure of Petrarch, with whom he associates 'the first manifestation of a comprehensive literary tourist industry' ('From Early Modern' 15). Hendrix shows that after Petrarch's death in 1375, the memorials visited by tourists took the form of conventional tombs and monuments. After the 1520s, when his Sonnets to Laura began to influence Renaissance poetry, there was a

marked change in where and how his authorship was remembered. Visitors now sought evidence of this more 'personal' life apparently revealed in the Sonnets. This seeking of biographical detail, where 'Petrarch's admirers started to admire his predominately fictional emotions as real, and to read his poetry thus in a documentary fashion' (Hendrix, 'From Early Modern' 15), was first satisfied by giving access to the houses where allegedly Petrarch had written to Laura. These locations gave:

> rise to unprecedented expressions of literary tourism: the publication of maps indicating these very locations…, the construction of museum-like collections of literary conundrums including trivialia like fragments of Laura's alleged chamber-pot, and the rise of more or less organised tours of these attractions. (Hendrix, 'From Early Modern' 15-16)

Later 'literary conundrums' were presented at the poet's former home in Arqua from the 1540s onwards. Visitors were, and are still, given access to 'frescos illustrating, and exalting Petrarch's works together with various objects associated with his person, from his library and chair to the mummy of his beloved cat' (Hendrix, 'From Early Modern' 16). Such domestic artefacts appeared to satisfy the literary tourists' desire for memorial objects, allowing them to occupy a space informed both by the literary text and the biographical context from which the text was created. Hendrix comments on the paradoxical position occupied by the cat, which both allowed 'conversation with the dead' and was also:

> an object of jest, attracting ironical, teasing and even outright censorious comments, some of which were even formally inscribed into the marble slab surrounding the relic… To visitors to Petrarch's house the cat's mummy offered – and indeed still offers today – the opportunity to engage in this profane pilgrimage and yet simultaneously to criticise it. ('From Early Modern' 17)

These comments with their reference to relics and pilgrimages, serves to remind us of the significant framing narrative and association between literary tourism and one of the earliest forms of travel, the religious pilgrimage. Moreover, the quote illustrates

the move from a kind of literary tourism that seeks out the author in order to venerate him/her, and to seek enlightenment from the encounter, what Santesso calls 'interrogatory tourism' (379), to something that would become more akin to 'modern tourism' (Santesso 379). In such modern tourism, the individuals or groups travel to a specific place to seek a version of the author, which they, or the creators of such places, believe are encapsulated in the author's texts. Paradoxically, the version of the author thus conjured up or staged, as we see above, may also provide the opportunity for humour, as the gap between the authentic and the performed is exposed. Or as MacCannell has observed, the tourist 'knows that seeing is not believing… On tour, the second gaze may be more interested in the ways the attractions are presented than in the attractions themselves' (36).

This tale of Petrarch's houses and his mummified cat thus points us towards a number of significant features of literary tourism. In accessing an idea of the author, location and place are key to beginning that 'conversation with the dead'. These conversations, however, need to transcend time, and place becomes the literal and/or imaginative touchstone which enables that interaction to begin.

Place and time have also been shown to be of significance in recent contemporary texts which endeavour to dramatize versions of the lives of the authors Shakespeare and Austen, or give access to their works. These 'conversations' with dead authors are, one might argue, now taking place via the medium of film and television. Such modern technologies afford different opportunities to access places, but, as discussed in article one, the 'Outside Broadcast', for example, further complicates the literary

tourists' relationship with time. Not least because in these film and television versions, the authors are resurrected and presented to us as if alive. In addition, digital broadcasting enables cinema audiences to access a playwright's work in a different place but at the same time as a theatre audience in a remote location. They also offer the opportunity to share a significant place, the home of the author, as indicated in the RSC Live strap-line – 'Live from Stratford-upon-Avon'. Stage and, particularly, film adaptations of Austen's and Shakespeare's works and lives, utilise place, often specific National Trust locations, to represent the past, and to transport us to a place redolent of the 1800s or the 1590s. These places are signalled to the viewer as authentically historical, even sometimes utilising buildings with a connection with the author or their historical period. Yet even though these properties are in that sense doubly places of literary tourism, both in and out of the film, this paradoxically perhaps does not increase their authenticity as they are, of course, still offering versions of the past shaped in the image of the present. Watson has commented that we might see 'tourism as a form of adaptation' ('Introduction' 6), so could we now posit that adaptations are a form of tourism?

A number of critics have certainly explored the explicit influence of specific films on tourism, sometimes showing how 'the transformation of literary texts into moving images such as film and television enable more people to experience a new dimensional sense of place and culture temporarily and spatially' (O'Connor 2). This seems to support the idea that adaptations with their 'new dimensional sense of place' are a form of tourism. Yet the focus of O'Connor's article, and other similar studies, is rather more mechanistic and 'investigate(s) how regional or local stakeholders

capitalise on the impacts of books and subsequent feature films in certain destinations as promotional marketing tools which subsequently may influence and shape a new form of tourism patterns and trends in these destinations' (2). Thus films may prove a draw to bring tourists to a specific area, such as *The Lord of the Rings* tours to New Zealand. There is also extensive evidence to show that a range of audio-visual material is utilised at tourist and literary tourist sites to enhance the sense of a significant and authentic place.[i] But curiously it is also an example of how 'tourists travel to actual destinations to experience virtual places' (Kirschenblatt- Gimblett 9). There is thus a significant connection between tourism and film. Cinema has since its beginnings relished the opportunity to depict modes of travel, particularly trains, and utilised its unique skills to capture distant landscapes for the place-bound audience.[ii]

This is developed further by Sarah Gibson in her discussion of the Merchant Ivory films, specifically the adaptation of EM Forster's *A Room With a View*, when she proposes:

> These films are as much 'tourist attractions' as they are film narratives. The cinema in this model offers a virtual mobility to the spectator. Viewing films as tourist attractions reflects a shift from a discourse of tourism predicated upon physical and corporeal mobility, of the real movement of nationalized, racialized, classed, and gendered bodies, to a virtual mobility. In contrast to the corporeal movement conventionally involved in tourism, this virtual mobility does not require the spectator to leave 'home'. In viewing the moving images on the screen, the cinema audience become 'stationary tourist[s]' (Fussell, 1980:45). (Gibson 161)

Gibson identifies how in the adaptation of Forster's text, the visual representation of Italy and England 'enables the spectator to assume the subject position of a tourist … through the privileging of visual imagery over narrative action' (169). In most of the Austen texts considered in this thesis, the spectator likewise becomes a tourist gazing in long-shots constructed by the camera upon a variety of Country Houses and

gardens. In classic adaptations these tropes are the markers of a nostalgic Englishness. Yet, even though the impact is reduced via repetition, they are in Urry's sense, extraordinary as they represent something not part of the ordinary lives of most audiences, and thus mimic the tourist gaze. It thus seems possible, as Gibson suggests, that by utilising the idea of the tourist gaze in film, as we seek out the extraordinary, we are able to achieve 'virtual tourist mobility' (161) and a 'seat with a view'. Gibson's study however is critical of Merchant Ivory's virtual tourism, because it contradicts what she sees as the implicit criticism of mass tourism in Forster's novel itself. She suggests that there is a particular conflict in the film between form and content, which compromises the adaptation of the novel. Nevertheless, Gibson's study clearly shows how the dominant visual mode of film can offer a kind of hyper-realism which is useful in creating convincing portrayals of place. Perhaps the danger is that filmic places are so bewitching that they may become ends in themselves, isolated outside of 'real time', rather than becoming the catalyst for further encounters with the text, or conversations with the author.

IV.

But for a moment – let us return to Petrarch's mummified cat, and explore some interesting and significant parallels, between this cat and the numerous examples of taxidermy in the film *Austenland.* In this film which presents an immersive literary tourism experience for its heroine Jane, as discussed earlier, there are a range of stuffed birds and animals. These are displayed by the proprietors of Austenland to create a country house retreat in which the visitors can instigate their own 'conversation with the dead' Austen. Unlike Petrarch's cat at the beginnings of

modern tourism, there is no claim of authenticity for this post-modern touristic encounter, yet still these stage-props are derived from a similar preoccupation – a desire to create a sense of place true to the author. Petrarch's domesticity, signalled by the cat, is deemed, in the recreation of his home, to be compatible with, and give a site for, his romantic sonneteering. Austen's milieu in this film is derived from the social setting of her novels and informed by the country house settings which dominate cinematic adaptations of her work. Yet both mummified cat and the taxidermy in Austenland, are symptomatic and symbolic of a kind of petrification of history that is a potentially negative feature of literary tourism and the search for the author. The melancholic lifeless emptiness of many places of literary tourism has been noted by several critics. Anne Trubrek explains:

> Writers' houses tease us: They ignite and continually frustrate our desire to fuse the material with the immaterial, the writer with the reader.
>
> For me, writers' houses are melancholy. They are often obscure, undervisited, quiet, dark. They remind me of death. And they aim to do the impossible: to make physical–to make real–acts of literary imagination. Going to a writer's house is a fool's errand. We will never find our favorite characters or admired techniques within these houses. We can't join Huck on the raft or experience Faulkner's stream of consciousness. We can only walk through empty rooms full of pitchers and paintings and stoves. (1)

Alison Booth explores a similar reaction:

> Of course the recollection and arrest of time are elusive. A pilgrim never knows when she has arrived just as a collector never acquires the full set, while the very openness of an author's house to the public is a proof of that author's absence. (151)

In each of these quotes there is a sense that place fails to connect the visitor to the authors, who are represented in their absence by lifeless artefacts. The houses are stage-sets without actors. Austenland, although it has actors in abundance, similarly

remains unauthenticated because of the inevitable authorial absence and there is little recompense for this in the role-playing and surrounding taxidermy. Yet, as article four argues, in the filmic depiction of Austen's land/place, the experience becomes transformative for its tourist participants. Like the protests about Petrarch's mummified cat, the literary tourist's engaged response to the tour, even when it is a criticism of the poor representation of that author's life, may be the point. The graffiti at Petrarch's home, and at various National Trust and English Heritage locations[iii], is literally marking the visit and recording presence, and begins a conversation with the place and thus author. In this instance, it is not Urry's 'tourist gaze' but MacCannell's 'tourist agency' that seems most appropriate. The participants at Austenland, and the visitors to Petrarch's house know that 'seeing is not believing' (MacCannell 36). The film audience are presented with numerous shots of the taxidermist's art being used to set the scene, and we cannot avoid looking 'off to the side of the main attraction' to see 'past or beyond the tourist gaze' (MacCannell 33). Arguably, it is in those moments of creative engagement with the tour, even if the response is critical, sceptical or humorous, that the film tourist begins to experience something of the author's life and its significance to their own.

Austenland explores in a humorous way the shortcomings of literary tourism and shows tourists paradoxically in conversation with its potential emptiness. Emma Spooner, while commenting on some of the limitations of 'real' Austen tours, observes a different kind of conversation taking place:

> We think of the tour as having a historically verifiable core, the story of the author's life through authentic locations and objects, yet it is also the narrative of the traveller's self. The tour is the story of Austen's life, the story of how the tourist interprets Austen, the story of how the tourist travels to the Austen site, as well as the story of how the tourist defines themselves in relation to Austen locations and the responses they evoke… The literary tour, then, is not just about reconstructing the past, but also about creating a space where tourists can find a sense of self. (48-9)

The visit to the house of an author by tourists is thus seen as an opportunity for self-reflection and maybe self-improvement. Hendrix on the other hand examines the relationship with the literal emptiness of a specific authorial habitation, the home of Proust, and concludes:

> Writers' houses therefore are not just 'theatres of memory/meaning' but also tools to stimulate one's imagination. They have this function for the authors who design them and inhabit them, and it works the same way with the people who later visit them, as literary pilgrims or as tourists. These houses turned into monuments out of a desire to remember the authors who live there …but also to enable visitors, through "that moment of contact – practical yet mystical – between writer and reader," to come into contact with the imaginative world created by the author, and thus to participate in his imagination. (*Writers' Houses* 239)

Here, instead of general self-improvement, we have the idea that such visits promote acts of creative potential with an appreciation of authorial imagination. Interestingly both of these critics have highlighted an act of individual enlightenment amidst the collective public event of the literary tour. But they also suggest that the tourists are as individuals accomplished at reading the multiple texts created around place and location, with Hendrix describing the imaginative enrichment of such visits as akin to reading the work of literature itself. These comments reclaim the idea of the 'search for the author' as an interactive experience as much about the searcher as the author themselves.

V.

In conclusion there is evidence that the critical preoccupations of literary tourism have clear relevance for this study of the cinematic adaptations of the lives of authors and/or their works. In both kinds of text, whether the tourist site or the cinematic, we see a fascination with the representation of place and time. The study of literary tourism has highlighted particularly how these ideas are constructed and interrogated to initiate engagement with the literary figure, and so provide a helpful framework for our consideration of adaptation. These studies also explore the tourists' interaction with the site or place, which become '"lieux de memoire" or places of collective memory' (Watson, *Literary Tourism* 6), which in turn suggests different ways in which the critic might explore how an audience interacts with an adaptation about an author's life or work. More importantly, by analysing the particular aspects which make up acts of literary tourism, this chapter has proposed that filmic representations of the author are in themselves kinds of contemporary virtual literary tourism. In these contemporary revisitings of the authors, we travel virtually, but like those who went to Petrarch's home we are 'visiting and marking' (Watson, *Literary Tourism* 2), and still negotiating a complex set of relationships between place and time. Yet in these new acts of literary tourism, place and time experience further dislocation. The place that encapsulates the author's life, and initiates touristic engagement, is now viewed from afar via the techniques of film. It offers something extraordinary outside our 'mundane' lives but is experienced in the different time and place of the cinema or even within the ordinariness of the tourist/viewer's home.

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[i] The Shakespeare Birthplace in Stratford utilises film to establish biographical details about Shakespeare's life, and provides extracts from the filmed versions of his plays to illustrate aspects of his

life. The National Trust property, Chirk Castle, like many other properties uses 'home movies' to give an insight into the lives of earlier occupants of the place.

[ii] In early cinema the train journey is a frequent subject 'From the safety of a seat in the music hall, fairground or church hall … a British viewer could not only observe the world, he or she could also experience the unique sensation of travelling while sitting still…in 1906 a number of specialised cinemas, under the banner 'Hale's Tours of the World', opened across Britain, styling themselves in the manner of a train carriage and offering trips to 'the Colonies or any part of the world (without luggage!)' for sixpence. These cinemas took the realism of phantom rides to another level: the benches would shake and the images would be accompanied by the sounds of hissing steam and train whistles.' Christian Hayes, 'Phantom Rides.'

[iii] Examples of 18th century graffiti are preserved at Fountains Abbey, Ripon Yorkshire and Prior Park, Somerset. English Heritage's property Kenilworth Castle preserves Georgian and Victorian graffiti. They have become part of an on-going process of memorialisation.

Chapter Three: Exploring 'Jeopardy'

This chapter is made up of two sections which consider travel of different kinds and the significance of jeopardy. The first represents part of my critical evaluation of travel of the Renaissance period and travel more generally and explores how the poets' personal experience of dangerous sea travel could be said to inform the visceral emotional impact of travel images in their poetry. The second section returns to a consideration of live broadcasts of theatre to cinemas as acts of virtual travel. Here the chapter explores both the representation of time and place in Shakespeare's *Henry V,* and how these were embodied in the 2015 RSC production. In addition, it explores how the idea of jeopardy, that is that something could go wrong, might be helpful, as John Wyver has suggested, in defining the liveness of performance.

Both of these sections are lightly polished versions of, as yet, unpublished conference papers. The first was presented at the 'Spiritual and Materiality Conference' at Sheffield Hallam University in 2014, and the second at 'Adaptation: A day colloquium of the NECAH Consortium' at Sheffield Hallam University in March 2016. I am grateful to the participants at both conferences whose constructive comments helped me to shape these papers and future work.

3.1. '"Lyke as a ship that through the Ocean wyde" – images of travel, risk and jeopardy in the poetry of Wyatt, Spenser and Donne.'

This part of the chapter will examine some of the images of travel, particularly those associated with ships and sea travel in the poetry of Wyatt, Spenser and Donne. It is clear that such images have a long, and almost archetypal, history in the religious, social and political metaphors of biblical arks, ships of state, and indeed the 'ship of fools'. In an age of Renaissance exploration of the 'ocean wyde' such references have further contemporary resonance, and at the very least, as some critics have suggested, demonstrate the poets' engagement with new learning alongside their rejuvenation of classical and European models of writing. Yet this section is also interested in exploring how the frame of reference of sea travel gives the poet and reader an access to a visceral emotional experience that is a consequence of the inherent risk and jeopardy associated with such travel at this time.

A number of factors in Renaissance sea travel gave rise to risks in the sense of the '(exposure to) the possibility of loss, injury, or other adverse or unwelcome circumstance' (OED). Many of these risks are risks to physical and emotional well-being. As we will see, the technology of sea travel, including ships and navigational aids, was improving during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but stepping aboard a ship bound for the oceans was still a high-risk activity. For these reasons, there were also huge commercial risks involved in such enterprises, and there are instances where the physical risks were underplayed in accounts of those travels to try to mitigate any future commercial risks. The term 'jeopardy' is of course closely linked to risk. The

OED defines it also as 'Risk of loss, harm, or death; peril, danger' and 'a deed involving peril; a daring exploit'. Yet the term also carries with it the sense of 'a position in a game, undertaking, etc. in which the chances of winning and losing hang in the balance; an even chance; an undecided state of affairs; uncertainty; chance' (OED). Jeopardy is thus a moment of *frisson,* where success and failure are evenly balanced, and where events appear to turn on chance. For Renaissance seafarers the act of travelling is inevitably accompanied by risk and jeopardy where the absence or presence of the wind or the stars, for example, may create such a situation where 'winning and losing hang in the balance', and to land on uncharted land may prove to be a perilous activity.

Travel writing of the period reported the exploits of these adventurers, who negotiated the globe in the search of both knowledge and financial gain, and recounted stories of risk and jeopardy that seized the imaginations of readers. Accounts of journeys across the Atlantic to the Americas, and navigations around Africa to the centres of spices in India, and beyond that to the Ottoman Empire, China and the Far East, were captured in this newly emerging form of travel writing. As William H. Sherman comments:

> Travel writing emerged as one of the early modern period's most popular and flexible genres, and in a wide range of forms it educated and entertained readers, inspired national pride and commercial investment, and contributed to a public record of the world's "markets, trade routes, personalities, and cultures". (20)

Risk and jeopardy are obviously part of this education and entertainment. Significantly, commercial activity and capital investment was as central to the aspirations of most travellers and voyagers as the pursuit of knowledge. Livingstone notes that 'the

creation of wealth was both the cause and condition of geographical discovery' (38) with the international banking institutions helping to fund the expensive expeditions: the gold and silver they discovered was used to mint coin. The expense of the expeditions was in the cost of shipping, and the development of new types of vessel. Yet all vessels had some inherent risks attached to them. As Livingstone describes them, the north European Cogs were square-sailed, not particularly manoeuvrable, clumsy and 'clinker-built' with rough sides and overlapping planks. The Mediterranean Caravels were smooth sided, lighter, slimmer and faster and used 'lateen rigging- an Arabic tradition in which a triangular sail is laced to a long yard hoisted obliquely to the mast' (Livingstone 40). However, these features created further potential risks as they needed more men to help unfurl their sails, and they were unsuitable for bulk cargoes because of their light weight. In response to these difficulties, hybrid vessels were developed 'the most common of which was the carrack – a large, heavily built, square rigged ship with a lateen on the mizzen-mast' (Livingstone 40). For all these types of ships navigation was a developing science. In the earliest explorations the mariners still utilised 'deadreckoning: simply estimating the position of a ship by calculating length, speed, and direction of its daily course' (40). The Portuguese eventually found a means of establishing latitude at sea from the position of the sun or the stars, but even this depended on 'the availability of a set of tables for calculating the sun's angle, and the modification of instruments like the astrolabe for use at sea' (40). As contemporary accounts confirm, a serious risk during the fifteenth and sixteenth century voyages was the risk of getting lost in mid-ocean. Closer to land the smaller ships were able to hug the coastline and search for inlets or harbours. This in turn led to increased knowledge of topography and contributed to the development of more

accurate maps. The development of these maps again necessitated substantial commercial investment, as accurate mapping was expensive, and it also depended on the development of appropriate knowledge and the skilful utilisation of tools, such as the map compass. Accurate mapping was obviously essential for a successful venture in order to reach one's destination, and then be able to return later, but equally important was to establish dominion or power over the land being charted.

Raleigh's account of the *Discovery of Guiana* displays some of the risks of such sixteenth century voyaging. It is clear that his failure to establish a base in Trinidad, leads him to try to find the legendary wealth of El Dorado in Guiana. His exploration is founded on the earlier investigations of his own Captain Whiddon, and the knowledge of his Spanish prisoner Berreo, who Raleigh claims is an expert on previous Spanish expeditions searching for El Dorado. Nevertheless, the account makes clear that having arrived in roughly the right area, Raleigh has no other option but to scope and map the region to find access via a suitable inlet. Once he establishes a basis in the hinterland his account of Guiana demonstrates his fascination with the 'new land's' fora and flora, but this is also interspersed with his 'pitch' for further commercial investment.

> I never saw a more beautiful country nor more lively prospects, hills so raised here and there over the valleys, the rivers winding into divers branches, the plain adjoining without bush or stubble, all fair green grass, the ground of hard sand easy to march on either for horse or foot, the deer crossing in every path, the birds towards evening singing on every tree with a thousand tunes, cranes and herons of white, crimson and carnation perching in the river's side, the air fresh with a gentle easterly wind, and every stone that we stooped to take up promised either gold or silver by his complexion. (Greenblatt, *Norton* 885)

Here the accessibility of this land to new explorers/invaders ('easy to march on') is noted alongside the promise of further riches in gold and silver. This is a land worth coming back to. He also notes later that both the land and also any investment in that land are secure and defendable:

> Guiana is a country that hath yet her maidenhead, never sacked, turned or wrought, the face of the earth hath not been torn, nor the virtue and salt of the soil spent by manurance, the graves have not been opened for gold, the mines not broken with sledges, nor their images pulled down out of their temples. It hath never been entered by any army of strength, and never conquered or possessed by any Christian prince. It is besides so defensible, that if two forts be builded in one of the provinces which I have seen, the flood setteth in so near the bank, where the channel also lieth, that no ship can pass up but within a pike's length of the artillery, first of the one, and afterwards of the other… (Greenblatt, *Norton* 886)

The references to the virgin land (in the potential possession of the Virgin Queen) together with the blending of the pastoral golden age with an edenic paradise, that could paradoxically be both converted by a 'Christian prince' and also commercially exploited, further emphasise the multiple purposes of such travel narratives. Raleigh's narrative curiously perhaps contains little description of the perils of travelling to Guiana by sea. His exposition about travel by water is focussed on his travails on the rivers of Guiana as his ships and canoes initially map and search the country. Yet part of Raleigh's 'pitch' for further exploration and exploitation of Guiana, is precisely that it is more accessible than other destinations such as the West Indies. He notes:

> The navigation is short, for it may be sailed with an ordinary wind in six weeks, and in the like time back again; and by the way neither lee-shore, enemies' coast, rocks, nor sands. All which in the voyages to the West Indies and all other places we are subject unto; as the channel of Bahama, coming from the West Indies, cannot well be passed in the winter, and when it is at the best, it is a perilous and a fearful place; the rest of the Indies for calms and diseases very troublesome, and the sea about the Bermudas a hellish sea for thunder, lightning, and storms.
>
> This very year (1595) there were seventeen sail of Spanish ships lost in the

> channel of Bahama, and the great Philip, like to have sunk at the Bermudas, was put back to St. Juan de Puerto Rico; and so it falleth out in that navigation every year for the most part. Which in this voyage are not to be feared; for the time of year to leave England is best in July, and the summer in Guiana is in October, November, December, January, February, and March, and then the ships may depart thence in April, and so return again into England in June. So as they shall never be subject to winter weather, either coming, going, or staying there: which, for my part, I take to be one of the greatest comforts and encouragements that can be thought on, having, as I have done, tasted in this voyage by the West Indies so many calms, so much heat, such outrageous gusts, such weather, and contrary winds. (Raleigh, 'The Discovery of Guiana')

Raleigh's commercial message is here clear – the perils of the sea await those who travel to the West Indies, but a profitable and safer journey awaits those who travel to Guiana.

Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffics, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (1589) while on the whole concentrating on what happens when the travellers make land, does include more examples of the perils of sea travel. Driven by a patriotic desire to celebrate English voyages, as noted in his full title, '*to the most remote and farthest distant quarters of the earth, at any time within the compass of these 1500 years'*, Hakluyt (who had himself not travelled widely) assembled and edited accounts which celebrated the achievements of Frobisher, Drake, and Amadas and Barlowe amongst others. His patriotic agenda perhaps meant he addressed the perilous challenges of such journeying more directly, in order that the full achievement could be clearly celebrated. Frobisher's attempt to find the northwest passage to China, is captured by Hakluyt's edition of George Best's first-hand account which includes descriptions of the extreme cold, food shortages and 'sudden storms', and explains:

> Thus with their strange and new prey [one of the 'savages'] our men repaired to their boats, and passed from the main to a small island of a mile compass, where they resolved to tarry all night; for even now a sudden storm was grown so great at sea that by no means they could recover their ships. And every man refreshed himself with a small portion of victuals which was laid into the boats for their dinners, having neither eat nor drunk all the day before. But because they know not how long the storm might last, nor how far off the ships might be put to sea, nor whether they should ever recover them again or not, they made great spare of their victuals … (Greenblatt, *Norton* 892-3)

It is worth noting that Frobisher, like Drake, and many others whose navigations are included in Hakluyt's work died at sea, along with many under their command. Sixty years earlier, the horrendous conditions on board the ships were recounted by Antonio Pigafetta as he travelled with Magellan. He notes:

> Wednesday, November 28, 1520, we debouched from that strait, engulfing ourselves in the Pacific Sea. [164] We were three months and twenty days without getting any kind of fresh food. We ate biscuit, which was no longer biscuit, but powder of biscuits swarming with worms, for they had eaten the good. It stank strongly of the urine of rats. [165] We drank yellow water that had been putrid for many days. We also ate some ox hides that covered the top of the mainyard to prevent the yard from chafing the shrouds, and which had become exceedingly hard because of the sun, rain, and wind. [166] We left them in the sea for four or five days, and then placed them for a few moments on top of the embers, and so ate them; and often we ate sawdust from boards. Rats were sold for one-half ducado apiece, and even then we could not get them. [167] But above all the other misfortunes the following was the worst. The gums of both the lower and upper teeth of some of our men swelled, so that they could not eat under any circumstances and therefore died. [168] Nineteen men died from that sickness, and the giant together with an Indian from the country of Verzin. Twenty-five or thirty men fell sick [during that time], in the arms, legs, or in another place, so that but few remained well. However, I, by the grace of God, suffered no sickness. We sailed about four thousand leguas during those three months and twenty days through an open stretch in that Pacific Sea. (http://www.gutenberg.org/files/42884/42884-0.txt)

These desperate conditions caused by the absence of food and water along with 'gross insanitation, serious congestion, and frequent drenching …brought scurvy. A deficiency disease, it was the dread curse of every seafarer; scurvy claimed more men on Magellan's round-the-world voyage than any other cause' (Livingstone 47).

The experiences of these adventurers as they traverse the 'ocean's wyde' quite clearly articulate the perils of such sea travel. The bodily hardship caused by lack of food and water, the uncertainty of violent storms or becalmed waters, and the loss of navigational markers all could result in the destruction ships and their crews. These were real risks and moments of jeopardy, which would vividly impress their readers, whether they were fellow travellers or 'stay-at-homes [who] encountered the rapidly expanding world … through eyewitness accounts' (Greenblatt, *Norton* 889).

Wyatt, Spenser and Donne were however not 'stay-at-homes'. All of these writers would have experienced the perils and jeopardy incumbent in all sea travel. Wyatt as one of Henry VIII's ambassadors travelled frequently to France, Spain, Portugal and Italy. Spenser's travels took him to Ireland in 1580 as secretary to Lord Grey of Wilton, where he held various minor government posts until 1598, returning to England periodically during this time. In 1588 nineteen ship of the Spanish Armada were wrecked on the Irish coast with the death of all but 600 men (Herron 90-91). Donne was engaged as a gentleman-volunteer as part of the Cadiz expedition of 1596 with Raleigh and the Earl of Essex, and the following year was involved in the unsuccessful attack on the Spanish fleet in the Azores (Labriola, Hammer). He may also have travelled to Spain and southern Italy in the 1580s cutting short his university career, and his biographer Walton 'tells us that Donne's ambition to visit the Holy Land was frustrated, as were his later application to become secretary to the Virginia Company and his hopes of going to Guiana' (Parr 62). Donne also travelled to Paris and Venice

with Sir William Chute during 1605-06. All three poets, therefore, had first-hand knowledge of travel by sea on which to draw in their writing.

It is this first-hand knowledge which I believe contributes to what I earlier called the 'visceral emotional experience' of the poems which utilise these images of sea travel. This is not to say that these poems are biographical in a literal sense of 'the poets went here by sea on a particular occasion', but more that the memory of such activities could be said to enrich and enliven their work at particular points. My first example of this is perhaps a fairly predictable one – Thomas Wyatt's 'My Galley Charged with Forgetfulness' which I will later compare with Spenser's Sonnet 34 from the *Amoretti* 'Lyke as a ship that through the ocean wyde'. Both poems are of course based on Petrarch's *Rima* 89. Critics often note at this point that 'Wyatt's humanist reading and his travels in France, Italy and Spain gave him a good enough grasp of languages and literatures for translating or imitating congenial poems by Petrarch, Alamanni, Sannazaro, Serafino, Bonifacio, Aretino, the two Marots and Garcilaso' (Fowler), which is an acknowledgement of the literary influences which Wyatt absorbed and collected during his European travels. However, if one places the poem alongside the travel writing, discussed above, the perils and jeopardy of the image of the sea voyage become more apparent. From the first line of the poem this is a ship/galley in some difficulty. It is 'charged' that is fully loaded, or as the Norton suggests 'freighted' with 'forgetfulness'. Wyatt suggests a particular kind of ship the 'galley' which is 'A low flat-built sea-going vessel with one deck, propelled by sails and oars, formerly in common use in the Mediterranean… The rowers were mostly slaves or condemned criminals' (OED) Despite the reference in the Norton Anthology to 'freighted' (perhaps

suggesting a use in trade) the galley was a mainstay of Renaissance warfare. The 'lord' of this vessel 'steereth with cruelness' (4) and the 'oar a thought in readiness'. The latter could depict the repetitive beating of the oars suggesting the crowding in of thoughts of his death, or else the metaphorical ship/ the poet is propelled through the storm of his emotions by macabre thoughts, personified as (possibly criminal) oarsmen, who are untroubled by thoughts of the speaker's possible death. The perils of the sea landscape here are very specific – the dark and cold of the 'winter's night', the proximity to rocks, the cruelness of the master, reckless oarsman, the rain, the cloudy darkness, the torn sails, the cords straining to keep sails and mast aloft, the hidden stars making navigation difficult, the fear of the sailors and oarsmen, and the despair that they will be unable to reach port. Of course, this is all metaphorical and not the work of a travel writer. Yet Wyatt utilises this extended image of sea travel to explore the speaker's current futile attempts to forget, and to reach the port with some resolution to his emotional storm.

The poem is generally presumed to be a love poem and was published with the sub-title "The louer compareth his state to a shippe in perilous storme tossed on the sea" in Tottel's *Miscellany* in 1557. Wyatt's version, like the original Petrarch poem, makes no specific reference to the 'loved one'. 'The stars be hid that led me to this pain' utilises the blazon imagery of the period and refers to the woman's eyes. This is a change from the 'stars' of Petrarch's sonnet which are 'two sweet familiar stars, reason and art drowned by the waves'/ 'Celansi i duo mei dolci usati segni;/morta fra l'onde è la ragion et l'arte' (*Petrarch: The Canzoniere*). Wyatt also removes the Petrarchan reference to Scylla and Charybis ('a mezza note il verno,/enfra Scilla et

Caribdi') preferring 'tween rock and rock' thus arguably down-playing the specificity of the classical high-style. His collective 'winter nights' rather than 'midnight in winter' captures the countless number of occasions when his night thoughts trouble him[i]. In his version of the Petrarchan sonnet Wyatt has ratcheted-up the perils of the sea, illustrated by the intensity of 'endless wind doth tear the sail apace/ Of forced sighs and trusty fearlessness' compared to Petrarch's 'the sail's torn by an eternal moist wind of sighs, of hopes, and of desire' ('la vela rompe un vento humido eterno/ di sospir', di speranze, et di desio'). The 'moist wind' of 'sighs, hopes, and of desire' is the customary pose of the courtly lover, while Wyatt's 'endless wind' and 'trusty fearlessness' (fear to trust) makes the relationship with the women more complex. The tearing of the sail in the midst of a fierce storm, like other images here, is, arguably, an image drawn from an event experienced by Wyatt at sea. Susan Brigden has recently argued that 'Thomas Wyatt was the prisoner of memory, the memory that was the territory of guilt and self-judgement. He would be compelled to remember what he tried to forget' (1) and she utilises this poem early on in her argument to propose that Wyatt's is the 'mind of the re-memberer, reconfigure of the dismembered, restlessly reminding itself of what is lost' (2). This is undoubtedly a poem about loss and the attendant wish to forget while at the same remembering. It is about despair and lack of hope, and yet curiously the immediacy of that despair is summoned up in the present tense, in this vignette image of the ship wracked by a storm at sea. The poem captures, perhaps from memory, the jeopardy of sea travel, and translates this metaphorically into a snapshot of the jeopardy of love, and in so doing seems to add a frisson of emotional intensity to Petrarch's model.

Edmund Spenser's adaptation of the same sonnet by Petrarch offers a slightly different response to the perils of sea travel. As with *Rima* 189 and Wyatt's version, Spenser's Sonnet 34 from the *Amoretti* is also about an estrangement from the loved one, which is likened to a storm at sea which masks the stars and makes navigation more perilous. In the first quatrain the simile 'Lyke as a ship that through the Ocean wyde' is established and the perils of losing the navigational star highlighted. Stanza two draws out the parallel of the loss of the star/loved one to the speaker who 'wanders now in darknesse and dismay/ Through hidden perils round about me plast'. The final quatrain offers a more optimistic outcome than the on-going despair of Wyatt and Petrarch with its hope that 'My Helice the lodestar of my lyfe/ Will shine again, and looke on me at last'. While the final couplet describes 'secret sorrow and sad pensiveness' this seems rather more restrained than Wyatt's 'trusty fearlessness'. Spenser's poem identifies 'hidden perils' that beset the speaker, but there seems little jeopardy as nothing 'hangs in the balance'. There is a confidence that 'the storm will pass', possibly because, as critics have noted, his 'Helice' is his future wife, not the distant, unavailable women of courtly love poetry. One might therefore say, if Wyatt's galley is a kind of 'Ship of Fools' populated by cruel lords and reckless oarsmen, Spenser's ship is the biblical ark seeking future safety and reconciliation.

Spenser returns to this image of a ship and travels by sea in a number of poems. In many of these the poet views the scene from the distance. In Book One, Canto 3 of *The Faerie Queene* he compares the joy of Una as no less 'then the glad marchant, that does vew from ground/ His ship farre come from waterie wilderness' (282-3). In Canto 6 he compares a ship's lucky escape from damage by a submerged rock ('As when a

ship, that flyes faire under saile …'), to the escape of the 'Elfin knight'. These images of near scrapes, or others of actual shipwrecks seem to predominate in Spenser's work.

Amoretti 56 concludes:

> As is a rocke amidst the raging floods;
> Gaynst which a ship, of succour desolate,
> Doth suffer wreck both of her selfe and goods.
> That ship, that tree, and that same beast, am I,
> Whom ye doe wreck, doe ruine, and destroy. (10-14)

In *Visions of Petrarch*, sonnet 2 he conjures up the image of a ship made of Ebony and Ivory, and sails of gold, which again strikes a rock:

> But sudden storme did so turmoyle the aire,
> And tumbled vp the sea, that she (alas)
> Strake on a rock, that vnder water lay,
> And perished past all recouerie. (7-9)

In *Visions of the World's Vanitie*, sonnet 9, the speaker describes:

> Looking far foorth into the Ocean wide,
> A goodly ship with banners brauely dight,
> And flag in her top-gallant I espide,
> Through the maine sea making her merry flight:
> Faire blew the winde into her bosome right;
> And th' heauens looked louely all the while,
> That she did seeme to daunce, as in delight,
> And at her owne felicitie did smile. (1-8)

This image of perfection is soon changed and:

> All sodainely there cloue vnto her keele
> A little fish, that men call *Remora*,
> Which stopt her course, and held her by the heele,
> That winde nor tide could moue her thence away.
> Straunge thing me seemeth, that so small a thing
> Should able be so great an one to wring. (9-14)

All these examples demonstrate Spenser's objectification of the ships, which are often viewed from the shore, rather than on the deck. One might speculate that the

perspective that Spenser adopts of being on-shore looking out to sea, could mimic the perspective from which he saw the ships of the Spanish Armada crash against the Irish coast. Yet while the ships in his poems are shown to be subject to the perils of the sea – rocks, storms, marauding fish –the picture nevertheless seems controlled and framed, consequently jeopardy seems absent. The perilous event even is assimilated into a controlling discourse of change, or mutability, or in this last instance, the folly of vanity.

The final poet I wish consider is John Donne, who arguably was the most travelled of these poets under consideration. The two poems which are generally presumed to have come out of specific engagement in naval activities in the Azores are the partner poems 'The Storme' and 'The Calme'. Unlike the poetry of Spenser discussed above, the speaker in both of these poems by Donne is on-board ship, and both take the form of Verse Letters to a friend Sir Christopher Brooke. The persona in the poem, which in this instance it is probably safe to assume is Donne, starts by excusing the brevity of his account, by referring to the miniaturist Nicholas Hilliard whose work 'is worth a history'. The opening passage resembles that of the Prologue in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, as the poet utilises this classical device to report events off-stage – or at least on land, and around Plymouth Harbour as the ships await the necessary wind. Yet as Parr notes, what is evoked is ' a process of duplicity, of disappointed expectations, and the highly contrived imagery is designed less to describe events… than it is to strip away superficial impressions of what was happening at Plymouth' (68) This negative view of the anchored ships creating 'withered prisoners' (18) and 'stomach starved crew' (20)

echoes perils identified in earlier travel works and also other works by Donne where he refers to ships as 'wooden sepulchres, a prey/ To leaders' rage, to storms, to shot, to dearth?' (Satire 3 18-19) and notes 'Long voyages are long consumptions, / And ships are carts for executions.' (Elegy 'Love's War' 25-26). Once underway, the fleet encounters the storm of the title and:

> Waves like a rolling trench before them threw.
> Sooner than you read this line, did the gale,
> Like shot, not feared till felt, our sails assail;
> And what first was called a gust, the same
> Hath now a storm's, anon a tempest name. (28-32)

The meta-poetic reference to the height of the storm being upon them in the time it takes to read the line of poetry increases the emotional immediacy of this narration. And this continues as in the face of this gale the men cower 'coffined in their cabins lie, equally /Grieved that they are not dead, and yet must die' (45-46). This is a 'ship of death' or potential death, where the even the fabric of the craft has its own 'sicknesses':

> .... the mast
> Shaked with the ague, and the hold and waist
> With a salt dropsy clogged, and all our tacklings
> Snapping, like too high stretched treble strings.
> And from our tottered sails, rags drop down so,
> As from one hanged in chains, a year ago. (54-59)

The tension of the taut and snapping 'treble strings' and the macabre image of the sails dropping like rags from a decomposing body in the gibbet, underline the gothic qualities of this ship in peril. The poem comes to halt rather than a conclusion, wavering at the point of jeopardy, with everything hanging in the balance 'we, except God say/ Another *Fiat*, shall have no more day' (71-2).

'The Calm' picks up the narrative a little while later noting 'our storm is past'. Yet the calm is equally if not more challenging than the storm. Becalmed unable to move 'earth's hollownesses, which the world's lungs are/ Have no more wind than the upper vault of air' (19-120). The deck in this phase of the journey is equally macabre with the rags of the gentlemen-volunteers' once impressive clothing lying on the deck 'feathers and dust' (18) 'all our beauty, and our trim, decays/ Like courts removing, or like ended plays.' And worse the bodies of dead crew 'on altars lies/ Each one, his own priest, and own sacrifice'. The meta-theatricality here, like the meta-poetic qualities of the previous poem, draws us in to see death reduced to a staged event where the dead are forced to play all the parts in the ritual acknowledgement of their own demise. This poem like 'The Storme' offers no narrative resolution and itself becomes becalmed:

> .... How little more alas
> Is man now, than before he was! He was
> Nothing; for us, we are for nothing fit;
> Chance, or ourselves still disproportion it.
> We have no power, no will, no sense; I lie
> I should not then thus feel this misery. (51 – 56)

The speaker seems to feel that the impasse represented by the calmed ship, is just a symbol of how man never really has, by his own actions or chance, the ability to realise his own intentions. Again, the poem concludes at the point of jeopardy, with nothing resolved, save a recognition that the presence of misery attests to the presence of his own sense.

Both of these poems by Donne thus in their representation of opposing facets of sea-travel have encompassed descriptions of peril and moments of jeopardy. I would

suggest that it is only in Donne's late religious poetry, such as 'Hymn to Christ, at the Author's last going into Germany' that the sea journey is no longer characterised by peril and jeopardy. This is because all ships have become arks, as Donne notes, 'in what torn ship soever I embark, / That ship shall be the emblem of thy ark' (1-2) and he ventures that to 'scape stormy days, I chose/ An everlasting night' (31-2). Jeopardy, the stormy night, is no longer an issue when the poet decides finally that nothing hangs in the balance because of his faith.

To conclude, I would argue that the metaphors of travel, particularly sea travel in these poems, are intrinsically linked to ideas of peril and jeopardy. In this they share some of the same preoccupations of the travel writers of this period, who explored and exploited the wondrous new discoveries while entertaining and educating their readers. While I have demonstrated that each poet uses these travel metaphors in different ways, I would propose that the presence of such metaphors introduces a visceral emotional intensity into the works which enlivens the classical and European models they are adopting and adapting. It may be that this comes close to what Greenblatt calls a 'romantic misreading' (*Renaissance Self-Fashioning* 120) that diminishes the extent to which these poets were self-fashioning rather than, as I am suggesting, being fashioned by their own emotionally rich memories and experiences. But so be it!

[i] Wyatt uses the image of the sea in 'Unstable dream, according to the place' where the dream is described as these 'tossing seas'.

3.2. '"They will have to go back" – Time and the Henrys – RSC *Henry V* in cinema and on stage.'

I.

This part of the chapter explores a comparatively new mode of adaptation – the broadcast of live theatre to cinemas. These theatrical adaptations were championed initially by NT Live in 2009, building on the success of the Metropolitan Opera's broadcasts, and then followed by a new brand 'RSC Live from Stratford upon Avon' (hereafter called RSC Live) in 2013, and more recently by Branagh Theatre Live (2015). The present case study focuses on the RSC *Henry V* production, directed by Gregory Doran which opened at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in September 2015, and was broadcast to cinemas on 21st October. I intend here to consider this RSC live production alongside the theatre production of the play which I saw with a group of first year university students the following day. The title of this section alludes in passing to the J.B. Priestley play *Time and the Conways*, because of its interest in the multi-layering of time, and also to a conversation overheard during the RSC Live performance of Shakespeare's play. *Henry V* is in itself a kind of historical adaptation aware of the centrality of time and space to its theatrical endeavour, so I will begin with a brief exploration of the text. The ideas of time and place are then extended to consider how in these hybrid 'live in the cinema' performances constructions of time and place have become central to our understanding and perception of their liveness.

II.

The 'They will have to go back' of my title could also be used to describe the imperative which lies behind the writing of a history play. So let's start with this basic statement … *Henry V* is, of course, a history play, and contains within itself an inherent fascination with the idea of time and the representation of a particular past. Moreover, the play teases away at how best to dramatize that past in an immediate live performance. The role of the Chorus repeatedly laments the drama's inability to present the past as it was, or perhaps more accurately as the figure believes it should be seen:

> O for a muse of fire, that would ascend
> The brightest heaven of invention.
> A kingdom for a stage, princes to act (1.0.1-3)
>
> …. Jumping o'er times,
> Turning the accomplishment of many years
> Into an hourglass… (1.0.29-31)

With these examples we see concerns presented about how the spatial and temporal limitations of the dramatic performance will limit the opportunities to portray the historical events. This, one might argue, is the lot of all history plays, and indeed all historical accounts, to be played in a time-bound present. Yet *Henry V*, more than other Shakespearean history, places this awareness self-consciously at the centre of its endeavour. The aim is to present the 'Life of Henry V' and, as many critics have explored, this is built on an interpretation of the past, derived from historical sources. Shakespeare's utilisation of the historians Holinshed and Halle, as well as various earlier *Henry V* plays, has been extensively explored by critics from Geoffrey Bullough *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (1960) to Diane E Henderson's *Collaborations with the Past* (2006). Henderson's notion of 'collaboration' affirms the significance of the Shakespearean present in the interpretation of the past of Henry V.

Yet instead of using this to produce a single reading she proposes 'a hermeneutic circle of interpretation back and forth between times, rather than an allegorical code collapsing back into the false clarity of one discoverable meaning' (238). In *Henry V*, she argues, Shakespeare, the 'nuanced collaborator' (239), weaves contemporary and historical representations of the Welsh and French, together with its preoccupations with Irish issues, which have mostly preoccupied recent new historicist critics. Shakespeare's credentials as an astute historian are further enhanced by such a reading and the image of Shakespeare the hack recycler of others work further recedes. Yet this still leaves us with the play's apparent uncertainty about its own project and its concerns whether its present incarnation and interpretation of the past, at this time and in this place will be dramatically convincing. After seven English history plays, one might question whether these anxieties about the project are genuine, or a rhetorical ploy. Nevertheless, the chorus repeatedly articulates the uneasy coalescence of historical and present interpretative time:

> But pardon, gentles all.
> The flat unraisèd spirits, that hath dared
> On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
> So great an object. Can this cockpit hold
> The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
> Within this wooden O, the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt?
> O, pardon! Since a crooked figure may
> Attest in little place a million.
> And let us, ciphers to this great accompt,
> On your imaginary forces work. (I.0.8-18)

This uneasiness is partly created by the place, the theatre, and, significantly, partly alleviated by those gathered in that place, the actors and audience, involved in a joint creative venture, the play. Thus, there are in the play itself various layers of time: historical time incorporating interpretations of the past in the present, and dramatic

time which tries to mend fractured unities caused by the recreation of historical time. Part of the process by which this is achieved is by encouraging audiences to 'entertain the conjecture of a time' (IV.0.1), which inevitably involves linking ideas of time and place ('imagine a time where….'). In Shakespeare's adaptation it is thus clear that the audience makes a significant contribution to the creation of historical and dramatic time and place.

III.

The publicity for the 2015-16 RSC production interestingly placed *Henry V* within two contexts one historical and one dramatic. First it was seen as part of a celebration in the '600th anniversary year of the Battle of Agincourt' and secondly it was lauded as the final part of a successful tetralogy ('culmination of a journey of plays', Hassall RSC trailer) which had begun in 2013 with *Richard II*. The set for the production was essentially that used for the production of the other history plays in the cycle. It utilised the full thrust stage of the RST, and used similar under-floor lighting to create dramatic effects, such as the black wooden floors of state rooms, or the muddy fields of Agincourt. Overall the stage was quite bare, with a minimal use of props including a throne, small cart, braziers, and a full-size figure of horse in armour for the French courtiers. Other effects were created, as they had been in the earlier plays, through lighting, with architectural shapes and falling rain being created by projecting light onto long strings of glass beads hanging from the roof of the stage. The costumes were a somewhat eclectic mix of the medieval with the modern. Henry was dressed predominately in russet brown leather with flashes of red, while Exeter's uniform had a suggestion of world war one and some of the soldiers at Agincourt wearing tin hats.

The flashes of red on the costumes of the English marked them out from the shades of blue worn by the French, whose costumes were more medieval. Presumably this was to suggest the emergence of the modern world from a medieval past. The most notably different costume was that of the Chorus, represented here as a rather elderly teacherly gent in modern dress with a baggy cardigan and a red scarf indicating his support for the English cause. He seemed to be envisaged as an amiable member of the company brought in to fill in gaps in the performance. On his first appearance, while the audience are still settling and the house lights are full on, the Chorus enters and taps the throne. As he starts to address the audience, Alex Hassall, the actor playing Henry, enters carrying a bottle of water, and takes the crown from the throne, prompting laughter in the audience. Later on this informal relation with the cast is emphasised when after his speech in Act Four – 'we shall much disgrace/ With four or five most vile and ragged foils' (IV.0.49-50) members of the cast urged him to 'shove off', so they could get on with representing the battle. This interpretation of the Chorus seemed to owe something to the informality of the war-reporter Chorus played by Derek Jacobi in Branagh's 1989 film, but was a long way from the symbolic nineteenth century female versions of the chorus – 'Clio, the muse of History' (Kean 1859), and the Chorus as 'Rumour' (Calvert 1872-15) (cited in Henderson 241-42). It was however different from all of these in the sense that he was seen and acknowledged by the other actors on stage thus developing the meta-theatrical dimension of the play.

Perhaps slightly ironically, given the pre-publicity of the production suggesting it would be a celebration of the battle of Agincourt, the representation of the battle scenes was

more in line with the Chorus's depiction of 'four or five most vile and ragged foils' (IV.0. 50). Arguably this kind of representation is a reaction against the cinematic excesses of Olivier and Branagh, but it also accords with Fitter's observation that this aspect of the play could have been a potential source of frustration for Elizabethan, and arguably modern audiences as well, in that 'this play of Agincourt in fact refuses to stage a single scene of combat' (265). In Doran's production, the exhortation to return to the battle of Harfleur ('once more unto the breach…') was directed to the audience by the lone figure of Henry wielding a sword.

FIG. 1. *Henry V*, 'Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more' (3.1.1), RSC, Stratford-upon-Avon, 2015. Directed by Gregory Doran, Alex Hassall as Henry V. (RSC Company Photograph).

The battle of Agincourt is similarly low-key and consists of a back wall projection of spears, the sound of explosions, and a sequence of individual skirmishes interposed with running across the stage.

All of the features described above are, of course, accessible to both the theatre audiences and those watching the performance in the cinema. However, it is in the 'packaging' of the production for the cinema and in the recording of the live performance for broadcast that some differences do occur. (A longer discussion of this liveness appears in my article 'Outside Broadcast'. Some of the argument is presented here to give a context to the *Henry V* 'live broadcast'.) The unique selling point of the RSC Live, and NT Live productions is their liveness, giving the cinema audiences an opportunity to share a simultaneous live performance with a theatre audience. Liveness obviously depends on a shared sense of time. David Tennant noted in a pre-*Richard II* RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon interview with Channel 4 'the idea is that you come to the cinema to share the live experience, to be effectively in the audience of a theatre performance rather than go and see a movie' (Tennant). At the heart of the decision to broadcast to cinemas, as opposed to transmitting via television or to produce a DVD (which seems to be being resisted by the NT, though not the RSC), or even to follow the route of Digital Theatre's internet activities, is refocusing on the sense of place for these performances, with a celebratory insistence on the significance of public theatrical space. As David Sabel, the originator of NT Live, notes in relation to the earlier live screenings from the Metropolitan opera:

> When you think of filmed theatre it's the exact opposite of what it's supposed to be: there in the space, seeing the sweat and feeling the emotion and heat of the room. How is that going to work? But when I went to see a Met broadcast

> I was surprised how connected I felt. I think a huge part of that is the shared experience; if you were watching it on TV, even if it was live, you'd go and make a cup of tea, but here you are buying a ticket and reacting and applauding together. (*Guardian*, Culture Professionals Network, April 2012)

This linking of shared time and liveness with place in these adaptations is obviously paramount. And yet in these hybrid productions of theatre in the cinema there are attendant challenges, given that 'Liveness' is usually thought antithetical to cinema. Artefacts viewed at the cinema are normally assumed to be complete and finished, and yet these adaptations are different beasts recorded and transmitted in real time. In an attempt to mark out these cinematic events as different from their normal film fare, most cinemas deliberately attempt to create a simulated theatre experience. The audience are, unusually for a cinema performance, shown to their seats, and provided with a cast list referred by the cinema staff as a programme. Programmes are in themselves interesting markers of liveness, originally providing information, not accessible elsewhere during the live event. Then in the period before the actual performance begins, the lights remain on in the auditorium, thus enabling the assembling audience to see each other, until the lights are dimmed at the beginning of the play. During the interval, which in itself is now normally only a theatre experience not a cinema one, the audience in what is a nostalgic throwback to earlier days of the cinema and theatre, can buy ice-creams from an usherette. Cinema auditoriums are of course in themselves public arenas – if sometimes made up of isolated groups and individuals. However, the creation of a heightened awareness of the shared, public occasion in these ways made a distinction between this particular live broadcast of a theatrical event, and other 'normal' cinematic experiences.

The 'liveness' of the cinema performance is also enhanced by a number of broadcast pre-performance activities. The transmission begins with adverts related to the RSC about membership, current and forthcoming productions, RSC merchandise, and images of Stratford. This reinforces the RSC Live strap line 'live from Stratford-upon-Avon' and promises cultural kudos and authenticity of place to enhance the significance of the event in a location usually associated with popular culture. The beginning of the broadcast proper starts with an establishing shot during which the camera moves from stage right across the front of the thrust stage. We see shots of the audience chatting, and a shot over the shoulder of a member of the audience reading a programme. By such means we are reminded of our shared temporal experience of watching this play together with this audience in a distant place.

A number of stills from early RSC productions of the play were displayed on the screen- Richard Burton, Michael Williams, Alan Howard, and Kenneth Branagh. This was followed by a direct address to the audience in the cinema by the presenter, Emma Freud, a stalwart of these events. She quoted *The Telegraph* critic, Dominic Cavendish, who had called the production 'the Shakespearean event of the autumn' (23 September 2015). These two aspects reassure the audience first that the tradition of the RSC means they are in safe hands, and secondly, in what is a recurring trope of this kind of performance, that this is something unique and special. (And for those who pick up the reference, that this is a better production than the much-hyped Cumberbatch *Hamlet* – currently playing, and to be screened the next month by NT Live.)

This was followed by a live interview with the director, Gregory Doran, during which he outlined how Henry follows his father's advice to keep 'giddy busy minds with foreign wars'; he also noted the huge character arc that was involved before Henry becomes an 'iconic figure of English history', calling it a journey to 'stardom', when he did not expect to become King of a country. Doran also commented that this was his first experience of directing *Henry V*, and it had proved a 'bit of a surprise', having expected it to be a bit of a 'boy's own play' after Olivier's version which celebrated the Normandy landing. Yet he noted that 'it was often done at a time of crisis', citing the influence of the Falklands on the 1984 RSC production, and the 2003 Hytner production influenced by the invasion of Iraq. The decision to do the play now was prompted by the fact that it was the 600th anniversary of Agincourt and also close to the recent commemorations of the Great War. The interview with Doran was followed by a short, recorded piece by James Shapiro emphasising the repeated references to God in the play, which he suggested were about Henry substantiating his claim to the throne. Another pre-recorded interview with Alex Hassall followed in which he suggested he could not imagine playing the role without playing Hal first. Yet he thought it important that the character grows over the course of the play in 'moments of time', becoming eventually a warrior king and heroic. He concluded by noting the play was not simply patriotic, or anti-war, but it is about the cost of war. The final interview presented was with Oliver Ford Davies, the Chorus, who outlined the function of the character as he saw it. He noted the Chorus was 'simply a member of the company' who narrates and pleads with the audience to utilise their imagination. He also suggests that the Chorus is an 'unreliable narrator' who tells us about honour and then shows some dishonourable scene. He goes on to note, that Shakespeare is

subversive: by contradicting the official history offered by the Chorus, he shows us war is more complex than the official line.

Such activities, as I have discussed in the 'Outside Broadcast' article, mimic much older conventions of outside broadcasting, which are similarly models of the few pockets of live television which remain (breakfast television, sports programmes). The use of pre-recorded material might seem the antithesis of 'liveness', but paradoxically such segments have become one of the conventions of live television in particular. They are utilised to build tension and expectation of what is to come. They also provide a kind of 'digital live programme' for the cinema audience. This aspect of RSC Live and NT Live has been much criticised by Peter Kirwan, amongst others, as this pre-performance material begins to shape the play for the audience too soon. It is certainly true that this material mimics information provided in the programme sold in theatres, and indeed includes the ideas discussed in pre-opening night newspaper interviews. Yet the point is that the audience at theatre productions have the choice whether or not to ignore this information, while those in the cinema do not, which Kirwan believes is often 'patronising and ill-advised. The imputation appeared to be that the provincial and international audience required elements of the production ... to be explained before they were allowed to see the performance itself' (blogs.nottingham.ac.uk).

These pre-performance activities are thus focused on persuading the audience that their visit to the cinema to see a play is special, unique, and authenticated by a leading brand, in this instance the RSC. Moreover, given that this type of production involves

two places and one time period, the introductory material is also trying to affirm the shared consumption of the play, in effect drawing the audience into one place. This is somewhat ironic given that the play repeatedly problematises that single place, the playhouse, as a site of historical meaning, and struggles to maintain temporal unity as it seeks to represent multiple points of time ('Turning th' accomplishment of many years/Into an hourglass' (I.0.30-31)).

However, this attempt to persuade the cinema audience that they 'have the best seat in the house' is largely built on constructing a version of liveness for the cinema audience. Here again, we encounter the hybridity of these adaptations. The broadcasts are film-like, but because they are live they can only use a much smaller range of camera shots and techniques to capture the performance. These broadcasts rarely, if ever, use full close-ups on the actors' faces, or encourage the actors to speak directly to camera. Such shots would be technically difficult, and more importantly they would disrupt the very live performance they are trying to capture. In most instances in this *Henry V* broadcast the camera contrives to be invisible and does not draw attention to itself with quick contrasting cuts. In comparison to the *Richard II* RSC Live much less use is made of the moviebird crane shots, which offered shots of the whole stage from on-high, or shot scenes at a height, such as when Richard is placed on a high bridge above the stage. This perhaps makes the production less interesting cinematically but might also indicate that the camera positions are being used to suggest symbolic differences between the two plays which start and end the tetralogy. In the first play, the rise and fall in the fortunes of Richard, the divinely ordained 'sun-king', suggested in the text by the numerous images of rising and falling,

is embodied in the camera work. The crane camera captures him high on the stage bridge/ battlements of Flint Castle and also down below the stage level in prison.

In *Henry V* less use was made of the vertical shots. This king is more earth-bound than divinely appointed, despite the repeated affirmations of him as God's instrument. Instead, the use of horizontal shots is utilised to affirm Henry's camaraderie with nobles and soldiers, with Henry often included with other characters in medium length shots. In the second scene of the play, where the clerics try to persuade Henry of his rights to the French throne, the camera catches him surrounded by advisers as they somewhat oppressively assert their point of view. With the arrival of the ambassadors, Henry retreats to the throne positioned centre stage, and in the speech following the revelation of the Dauphin's gift, which here emphasised the personal affront, is seen with a tennis ball held between two fingers. During Henry's retort – 'We are glad the dauphin is so pleasant with us' (1.2.264) the camera positioned centre stage begins to tighten its focus on Henry, and during the speech keeps moving in slowly, until Henry sitting astride the arms of the throne becomes the central image. Henry's insouciance is captured for the cinema audience at that moment and begins a sequence of moments when he is marked out cinematically as separate from the mass. There is a tighter focus here on Henry in the pre-Agincourt scene and also his courtship of Katharine. These examples indicate that two directorial hands are at work in these in cinema broadcasts. One is the director of the original theatre production, and the other that of the director of the film production company. They are thus, in John Wyver's words, 'double adaptations' (*From Theatre*...): created once for the theatre space, and then again for the cinema. Arguably, the moments analysed above create

cinematic interpretations that complement the theatre production. However, there were a number of occasions when the RSC Live version did not capture the interpretation in the theatre. In the theatre the conversations between the Bishops of Canterbury and Ely, and between Henry and Katherine in the wooing scene were played at the same point, stage right at the front of the thrust stage. The staging drew interesting parallels between the beginning and end of the war, and the involvement of women in both processes. The cinema audience was not aware of this spatial placing, as both scenes were captured in mid-length shots and they did not see the whole stage. This reduction in perspective may also be a result of the shift from stage to cinema screen as Fitter notes: 'The framed rectangle contains a world which is set out as the single object of the spectator's gaze, displayed in order to be known from a single point of view' (272).

IV.

This brings me finally, to the quotation in my title of this section – 'they will have to go back'. To conclude this part of the chapter I would like to consider briefly a couple of moments from the production, where something did not go as planned. Such moments are examples of what John Wyver, the executive producer of RSC Live, calls 'jeopardy', where the knowledge that something might go wrong gives a particular frisson to live events. The first occurred in the theatre performance, where during the wooing scene Henry and Katherine, the actors Alex Hassall and Jennifer Kirby began to 'corpse' and as they tried hard not to laugh, the audience recognising their struggle joined in with the laughter. (As an aside, it is slightly ironic that moments of corpsing (or dying) on stage often truly reveal the liveness of the moment.) I remember with

some fondness a series of theatrical mishaps I have seen (Orlando being thrown off the stage by the wrestler giving rise to the 'is there a doctor in the house'; a production of *Macbeth* where a sword became embedded in the only empty seat in the front row, and in a different production the collapse of a line of hooded ghosts on stilts in *Macbeth* – don't ask...), yet in my first-year students' reviews of this production there was an undercurrent of dissatisfaction with this moment with repeated references to how this had spoiled the production, how unprofessional the actors had been etc., all of which came as a bit of a surprise. Perhaps they thought this was what I wanted to hear. However, I know that for some it was their first visit to the theatre, and I suspect their response was dictated by the drama they watch in cinemas or on digital platforms, where production errors are edited out.

The second instance of something going wrong was in the RSC Live performance in the cinema where there was a breakdown in the broadcast. As Alex Hassell came alone on to an empty stage to urge on the audience, who were addressed as if his troops to go 'Once more into the breach', the sound disappeared, to be followed next by a loss of visuals. In the four-minute break that followed a member of the cinema audience turned to her friend and whispered, in what sounded like an attempt to reassure them both - 'They will have to go back'. 'They', of course, did not go back, and in this broadcast performance the play's famous exhortation urging the army forwards, 'Once more unto the breach' remained nothing more than a mute fragment. As with the earlier live theatre mishap, such a moment does raise some interesting questions about audience expectations and perceptions. I have surmised that the woman was reassuring her friend, but maybe she had seen one of the very early live broadcasts

where I believe, when there was a national breakdown in the broadcasting, that they did stop the recording and go back. Maybe it was more of a 'well the actors are still there, people, we can do this again'. Or maybe the nostalgic mode of the broadcast, brought to mind instances where film and television broadcasts were stopped and 'rewound'. Or maybe she anticipated a digital platform rewind or 'live pause'. Unfortunately, I did not get the opportunity to ask her! However, it seems that the hybridity of the event, with live theatre seen in a place where conventionally one watches complete and finished artefacts, caused some muddying of the distinctions between time and place and created confusion about what might be recoverable. Moreover, if I had only witnessed the second of these incidents, I might have been tempted to put this down to a failure to convince the cinema audience of the liveness of the event. But this, read alongside the previous incident, suggests that the greatest challenge to both kinds of performance is the dominance of cinematic conventions.

V.

So, in conclusion one might ask is there any evidence that these Live productions are evolving? In the last NT Live production of *As You Like It*, and the Branagh Live *A Winter's Tale*, there seemed to be less privileging of the idea of liveness as a unique selling point, and less pre-performance material, with no 'live' prefatory material at all in the Branagh event. There is also, somewhat paradoxically perhaps, a creeping 'cinema-isation' of theatre, with, for example, an increasing use of film trailers on the RSC website to promote not just RSC Live events, but also live theatre productions. The RSC Live productions have, unlike NT Live, been released on DVD, and *Henry V* will be released in this format on 1st April 2016. With this apparent blurring of boundaries,

the digital mediation of live theatre performance into cinema broadcast is clearly a process which invites continued enquiry. It is a phenomenon which encourages audiences in two different spaces to occupy a single shared time-bound experience by virtue of digital technology. And yet this technology, which appears to allow the cinema audience to be paradoxically in two places at once, also constructs and amends that experience, and by so doing occasionally leaves the audience in a liminal place between theatre and film and their different concepts of time.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION

I.

This thesis has examined the ways in which contemporary cultural artefacts, particularly films, novels and dramatic performances attempt to connect with these two canonical authors, Shakespeare and Austen. My research has resulted in six published articles or chapters. The published work considers different kinds of contemporary engagement with the author: texts which depict versions of the authors themselves, and texts which are adaptations of the texts both fictional and filmic. The latter also includes the innovative screenings of 'live theatre in the cinema' which is both concerned with the re-placing of a theatre performance in the cinema, and the re-presenting of the theatre production in a different medium. The focus for each publication has included an investigation of the imaginative strategy of either, or both, travelling across time or space in search for these author figures. The notion of 'time travel' has also been shown intrinsically to be linked to place travel, and the creation of place or space in these texts to be a significant aspect of the search for the author. In general terms, space is here indicative of a theatrical space, and place as a physical geographical location, but, as we will see, the terms become interchangeable given that the geographical, historical and even cinematic places are, in their presentation in these texts, performed places.

The searches for the authors in these texts are varied and innovative but in a number of key aspects they have been shown to be similar. This final section of the thesis will compare the travels in time and space instigated in these texts in order to demonstrate that the representations of the places and times, and authors, in those

places and times, are driven by the recurring themes of nostalgia, memorialisation, ideas of community and identity, and, of course, desire and pleasure.

II. Time and Place

It is perhaps inevitable that any artistic representation of the lives and works of Shakespeare or Austen is predicated on some kind of engagement with the past. The texts in this study all involve travel to various pasts in their representations. The theatrical and filmic productions of Shakespeare's comedies make use of the 1940s to interpret the sixteenth century texts. Several of the other texts studied here focus on the evocation of the historical landscapes of Shakespeare and Austen. *The Jane Austen Project*, *Shakespeare in Love*, *Doctor Who*: 'The Shakespeare Code', and *Bill* all assert either their Austenian early nineteenth, or Shakespearean late sixteenth century, credentials. In these texts the return to a specific historical time and place is necessitated by a desire to solve a mystery in the lives of the authors. Time-travel provides an opportunity for a fictional explanation of a lost period in the authors' personal history. In *Shakespeare in Love* and *Bill*, the search is for an elucidation about Shakespeare's so-called 'lost years', with *The Jane Austen Project* and the *Doctor Who* episode 'The Shakespeare Code' seeking to explore the loss of particular authorial works. In these instances, the films and novel endeavour to create fairly accurate historical accounts in order to offer 'plausible' fictional 'explanations' for the gaps in the known lives of Shakespeare and Austen.

Any representation of the past is however complicated. Holderness notes 'the past is not fixed and immovable, but alters according to the trajectory of the traveller's

journey' (*Shakespeare and Venice* 15) and in the texts discussed here the mediation of that past, through the travellers' voices from the present, and, even in some cases, the 'future' complicates the representation of that past. In both *Doctor Who* and *The Jane Austen Project*, the mediating voices are those of the time-travellers, who know how the lives of the authors work out, not just in the audience's present but in an imagined future. Also, in texts such as the filmic representations of Shakespeare discussed here, this knowingness is often a consequence of the self-referential film narrative which blends modern artefacts or activities into the depiction of the Renaissance. This can be seen in the appearance of objects such as the 'A Present from Stratford upon Avon' mug, and the parody of 1990s nouvelle cuisine in *Shakespeare in Love*. This intermingling of the Renaissance and the contemporary world is also seen in *Bill*, where the political machinations of the Spanish are described in terms of modern terrorist threat levels, where the current level of threat is described as being 'dark woad'. These anachronistic interpolations of different times and places are primarily designed to be comic and also to engage the viewer through humour in the reconstruction of these historical pasts. The opening sequence of *Doctor Who*: 'The Shakespeare Code', similarly creates a juxtaposition of the sixteenth century and the modern with the Doctor explaining to his companion, Martha, as well as the programme's audience, the sixteenth century equivalencies of 'recycling', 'water-cooler moment', 'global warming' and 'entertainment'. This dialectic relationship between past and present while indicating its strangeness, simultaneously facilitates the audience's temporary immersion in the historical place and time.

A further intensification and exaggeration of such clashes between the historical and the modern is seen in *Austenland*, where the age of Austen is created parodically in the modern world, first in the shape of an Austen themed holiday 'experience', and later as an Austen funfair. The film *Austenland*, as I have discussed, utilises and ultimately affirms the narrative structures of the Austen biopic, and yet in its presentation of the place, Austenland, it parodies many of the conventions of those same biopics. The place itself is comically exposed as a hapless inauthentic version of the world of Austen as created in those earlier adaptations. Yet *Austenland,* the film, makes more positive use of the inherent romantic narrative of the Austenian biopics and literary adaptations. The heroine, Jane Hayes, the modern-day Elizabeth Bennet, as a consequence of her 'experience' at Austenland is united with her Mr Darcy. *Austenland* consequently demonstrates the same fascination with the past as do the other texts in this study. In each text there is a layering of historical periods, past, present and sometimes 'future'. They all create textual and/or authorial 'origin stories' (Hatfull, 'Bill Begins' 168), that simultaneously explore the significance of the works and the authors for the contemporary world. This contemporary context, and its influence on the historical narratives, of course, also shapes the representation of the author.

One of the important conclusions in this study is that all the texts considered are kinds of literary tourism. The frameworks of literary tourism have proved valuable in exploring how the audience/readers' textual travels to another place/space and time may be understood. Most of the films, performances and novels provide an imaginative, rather than a physical, tourist location in which to engage with the time

and place of the author. Harold Hendrix, as noted earlier, proposes that visits to places associated with authors enable a 'more active intellectual exchange beyond the grave, a "conversation with the dead"' ('From Early Modern' 14). Even *Austenland,* which parodies a kind of literary tourism, provides the film audience with an opportunity for such conversations. This film also alerts us to the fact that all these virtual fictional tourist sites are, like many physical sites of literary tourism, partial or incomplete. And yet they are also redolent with emotion, and as John Urry notes, for tourists 'the pleasures of place derive at least in part from the emotions involved in visual consumption of place' ('The Place of Emotions' 82). Certainly, the cinematic visual representation of place and time seen in the film texts discussed here, seem to kindle a pleasurable emotional response. In part this may be triggered by what Hutcheon calls 'recognition and remembrance' of the adapted texts, which 'are part of the pleasure… of experiencing an adaptation' (4). Urry also suggests that the visual quality of film, like photography before it, serves to stimulate and focus the 'collective tourist gaze', adding that it is often defined by 'conviviality… a sense of carnival' ('The Place of Emotions' 78). Such 'conviviality' has been shown to be a key part of the author texts considered in this study. This fostering of emotional pleasure from a specific representation of place or geographical setting is even perhaps not limited to the visual film texts. In *The Jane Austen Project*, which depicts an act of extraordinary literary tourism, readers familiar with Austen's work will be reminded of places from the novel, which have been imaginatively enhanced by the author to provide moments of 'touristic' pleasure.

Yet if the visual experience of these texts is convivial with 'a sense of carnival', they also embody another kind of emotion – nostalgia. The attempts to retrieve the place and time of the past in both these texts and literary tourist sites, are as Alison Booth notes:

> backward glances, motivated by nostalgia or homesickness as well as attractions to the uncanny… Preserved sites, testimonials of haunting and encounter (151)

The sumptuous reproductions of place and time used in Austen adaptations and biopics create a sentimental longing, for a period and an author, who as Julian North comments is a 'canonical author whose life and work signify English national heritage and all that implies of the past as an idyll of village life in a pre-industrial society' (38). The utilisation of actual National Trust and English Heritage 'preserved sites' in these films, is an important part of 'a showcasing of landscapes' (Voights-Virchow 129) typical of the heritage film. For the regular readers of Austen's novels, the representation of such places may also feed a kind of nostalgic 'homesickness', a desire to revisit the world of the novels, and/or meet the author. A trait which they share with the time traveller narrator in *The Jane Austen Projec*t. Yet as noted earlier there is little developed description of setting in Austen's work, and so in many ways this longing for an Austenian place is both created and fed by the Austen adaptations themselves, where 'the reproduction of its core meaning … require[s] historical veracity and authenticity of location and costume' (Whelehan 8).

The fusion of author with their place and time is slightly different with Shakespeare. There is an undoubted nostalgic fascination with the Renaissance period, but the evocation of that historical period alone does not transport the viewer straight into the

memories of the texts, in a way it does with Austen. The filmic representation of an Elizabethan room does not have the same evocative qualities as an Austenian parlour in terms of remembering the texts. This may be because Shakespeare's canvas is less domestic, or that dramatic texts are less easily conjured by representing the playwright's daily life. This is not to suggest that Shakespearean texts are not the product of their own historical moment, but that the filmic representations have to work harder to emphasise this. This is achieved in part by littering the screenplays with quotations from Shakespeare's work such as the anti-theatrical cleric's comment 'And the Rose smells thusly rank by any name! I say a plague on both their houses!', which for those familiar with Shakespeare's work helps to suggest that its genesis is embedded in the minutiae of the historical period.

III. Time, Place and the Author

The representation of historical time and place is thus important to the search for Austen and Shakespeare in these contemporary texts. And yet it is also the interweaving of those historical moments with the world of the early twenty-first century which provides the context for the 'conversations' with the authors: conversations which are dominated by issues to do with the 'relevance' of the authors to the modern age.

The starting point in these biographical representations of Shakespeare and Austen, is that the authors are perceived as exemplary individuals whose work has achieved an immortality because of the way it explores the human condition in the most insightful ways, characteristics which are summarised in many of the texts as those of 'genius'.

This recognition of exceptional individuals is at the heart of most examples of the biopic, which as Bingham suggests:

> narrates, exhibits, and celebrates the life of the subject in order to demonstrate, investigate, or question his or her importance in the world (Bingham 10)

Biopics also rarely narrate, exhibit or celebrate the whole life. Instead texts such *Miss Austen Regrets* and *Becoming Jane* focus on a gap or absence in the contemporary world's knowledge of the author's life, which is dramatized and presented as a significant moment or a turning point. The mining of these fissures in their lives is also used to 'explain' how certain works came into being. Another common trait in these narratives, which forms an important part of the conversation, is the question of the author's romantic life, and its impact on their writing. This is seen most prominently in the romantic plots of *Shakespeare in Love*, *Becoming Jane*, and *Miss Austen Regrets*, but it is also part of the narrative of *Bill*, where the hero must redeem himself with his estranged wife, Anne; and again, in 'The Shakespeare Code' where Will recites his sonnet 'Shall I compare thee to a summer's day' to the Doctor's companion, Martha. This last text also explores Shakespeare's paternal love and suggests that his grief at the death of his son Hamnet has influenced his writing of *Love's Labour's Won*, and thanks to the Doctor's interventions will influence the writing of *Hamlet*. These conversations with the dead authors are seemingly dominated by modern notions of authorship derived from post-Romantic ideas that significant works of literature are inspired by extraordinary personal and emotional experiences. The expression of those emotions is aided by the author's ability to transform the everyday and the mundane into sparkling acts of verbal bravado. In *Shakespeare in Love* we see Will

inspired by the words and phrases in the Southwark streets, whereas in 'The Shakespeare Code' the playwright is fed phrases by the Doctor, many of which are Shakespeare's own. In *Shakespeare in Love* and *Bill*, Christopher Marlowe functions as the playwright's advisor/sounding board, a role played by the Doctor in the other film. Nevertheless, it is still the 'genius' Shakespeare who remains the refining and transforming creative force.

Given the significance placed upon the actual transformative act of writing in these texts, they all face the challenge of how to represent this in the films and novels. Each text faces the dilemma of how to depict this essentially private and solitary act, which is also visually rather unexciting. Film, as Judith Buchanan has noted, has developed a number of tropes to indicate that the creative act is underway. She notes of the television drama *Enid*:

> We recognise the anatomized elements of inspiration (poetic shafts of light, gazing into the middle distance), perspiration (clickety-clackety typewriter keys, busy fingers) and production (the words appearing on the page, the voice reading these) to which we have just been made privy and, drawing upon our foreknowledge both of Enid Blyton's literary output and, significantly, of how such film sequences work, we infer what this rich assembly of satisfyingly conventionalized visual elements should collectively now generate. (Buchanan 12)

In the Austen and Shakespeare texts the means of production has obviously shifted from typewriter to pen and paper, but all of the above are employed in the representation of the act of writing, and these visual tropes are key to establishing the authors in a particular place and time. The only text which does not show the author in the act of writing, is *The Jane Austen Project*, where the narrator, involved in the search for hidden texts, is only afforded glimpses of recently composed manuscripts

lying on a table. In each film and novel such a desk/table assumes a focal point as the place of authorship. These writing surfaces, like similar ones at literary tourist sites, are as Nicola Watson notes 'thoroughly clichéd… with no fanfare, and no claim to authenticity, a quill left casually on a flat surface does all the iconographic work required' (*The Author's Effects* 103). The significance of this iconography is she suggests driven by a desire to encounter some aspect of the author: 'the desire to enhome the act of inscription to a desk bespeaks an unspoken, almost unthought belief that the writer's desk retains an organic and precious memory of the pressure of the writer's pen' (Watson, *The Author's Effects* 110). Even though the desks in the films have no historical provenance (like some in the authors' houses which Watson discusses), when included alongside the depiction of the author they generate 'the organic and precious memory' of texts being written (*The Author's Effects* 110). Despite the various locations of the desk/table in these films, in bedrooms, sitting rooms, lodging rooms, even a prison, the iconography of the desk, the place of work, whenever and wherever it appears, signifies the enactment of authorship.

This trope of the author at a desk is used several times in *Shakespeare in Love*. The first occasion it is used ironically, and challenges the audience's expectations of biopics of authors, when Will is seen at a desk, quill in hand, not writing a play, but practising his signature. Later on, the iconography is employed to show Will inspired by Viola de Lesseps, and the callow youth is transformed into the serious writer, as he is seen at the same desk, engrossed in the writing of *Romeo and Juliet*, and then later *Twelfth Night*. Will's repeated attempts at perfecting his signature at the beginning of the film, obviously addresses the academic interest in Shakespeare's various signatures and

indeed the spelling of his surname. Yet it also suggests the modern practice of the 'autograph' and signals to the audience Will's desire to be famous.

This modern preoccupation with fame and celebrity culture shapes the conversation with Austen and Shakespeare in these texts. While it will come as no surprise for most audiences/readers that these authors did achieve success, their fictive success in the films often follows the trajectory of a contemporary talent show with a focus on obstacles overcome, personal tragedies inspiring artistic endeavours, and an emotional 'journey' leading to triumph. This narrative arc mirrors, and is facilitated by, the *bildungsroman* structure of biopics (Cartmell, '*Pride and Prejudice*' 239). Although Will in *Shakespeare in Love* is initially seen as 'Nobody – the author', he is by the end set on the path of success with a new muse and financial reward from the Queen. This achievement of what H. J. Jackson refers to as 'renown' or present fame, is also seen in *Bill*, 'The Shakespeare Code', and the Austen biopics. The notion of 'reputation', what Jackson sees as posthumous fame (2), is assumed to build upon the achievement of renown. In *Bill* and 'The Shakespeare Code' reputation is intimated at the end of the films through another stalwart of popular culture the 'makeover'. The authors are physically transformed into a pictorial image associated with, what Douglas Lanier, calls 'trademark' Shakespeare, which affirms their ultimate reputation as immortal authors. In 'The Shakespeare Code' the more mature Shakespeare, with his modern 'rock-star celebrity appeal' clearly has renown, so here the conversation with *Doctor Who*'s young fans is slightly different. Shakespeare's reputation is regenerated with the Doctor's celebration of the author's powerful use of words, which are harnessed in the episode to help them defeat the aliens. The fictional action here seeks to

challenge the idea that Shakespeare's work is difficult or boring by reinscribing Shakespeare as dynamic and heroic, so enhancing his reputation in the minds of the programme's young audience.

The author's genius is also signalled to the film audience by the enthusiastic applause which greets the performance of Shakespeare's plays in these texts. Somewhat paradoxically perhaps, the films celebrate the primacy of theatre partly in the way the camera lingers lovingly on the space of the playhouse buildings, and partly in the way the emotional energy of each performance is captured. Lisa Hopkins notes that the filmic frame gives the theatres '"real presence" in explicit or implicit contrast to the showiness and make-believe of film' (*Relocating Shakespeare* 82). Nevertheless in all of these texts, filmic devices are used to stitch the audience into the performance scenes, first by showing wide shots of the Elizabethan audience and then creating point of view shots which enable the film audience to feel part of the audience and its emotional response to the stage performance. Interestingly, when the applause comes at the end of the performance, the camera is situated on stage, and we share the applause offered to Shakespeare and the actors. The space of the stage at this point is now afforded a contemporary perspective and the play's success confirms the film audience's assessment of Shakespeare's genius and as Anna Blackwell notes 'it applauds contemporary culture's continued investment in Shakespeare's greatness' (32). Film has thus made it possible to participate in the historical moment, as well as providing the opportunity to metaphorically stand on the stage and commune with both past and present.

The representation of the consumption of the author's work in the Shakespeare film is thus significant. In the Austen films, however, there is less focus on the direct consumption of the texts as part of the historical representation. Reading, like writing, and unlike a theatre performance, does not lend itself to dramatic filmic representation. In these texts individuals report back on their reading of the novels, but there is very little focus on-screen on this activity.[i] Yet the conversations with Austen in the films and novel discussed here share some similarities with the presentation of Shakespeare. *Becoming Jane* and *Miss Austen Regrets* likewise suggest that renown is built on the success achieved by fiction created from personal experience and romantic disappointments. There is again a focus on the remarkable intelligence of the author as in *Miss Austen Regrets* where the Prince Regent's librarian notes to Jane 'your books reflect the highest honour on your genius, and your principles'. However, unlike the Shakespeare films we see no intimations of Austen's long-term reputation at the end of the narrative, in the sense of a 'prize' achieved. Even the endorsement by the Prince Regent, unlike the endorsement of Shakespeare by Queen Elizabeth, becomes a moment to be mocked by Jane herself. Yet the nostalgic tone of the pieces is arguably partly born of the film makers' and audiences' knowledge that this recognition was achieved posthumously. One of the final images in *Miss Austen Regrets,* of Cassandra burning Jane's letters, hints at how the life of the author was shaped by this action and the gaps created which the film has endeavoured to 'explain'. *Austenland*'s view on fame and reputation seems to be equally ambiguous. It parodies the inadequate ephemera of Austen fandom, but at the same time suggests that Austenland itself has provided a vehicle for the hero and heroine to access what it sees as the romantic narrative of the novels themselves. The most

sustained discussion of questions about Austen's immortality and long-term reputation in these texts, as I have shown, is provided by the novel *The Jane Austen Project*. The fictional futures projected in the novel show alternate fates for Austen's work, based on how past events integrate with 'future' historical, social and cultural contexts.

The search for Austen in these contemporary texts reveals a 'feistier' version of one of her own heroines who appeal to 'socially, sexually, and political enfranchised women' (Giddings and Selby 119). There is a paradoxical desire in the audience's wish to be immersed in a nostalgia of the past while hoping to find a kinship with Austen who will 'be like us', sharing modern preoccupations around financial security, a social life, significant relationships and children. In part this apparently contradictory balance is achieved, but only by providing fictive explanations for the gaps in the life of Austen as we know it.

IV. Time, Place, the Author, and the Performances

Three of the texts which are investigated in this thesis are not representations of the authors themselves, but of their work as interpreted in twenty-first century film and theatre performances. The three productions in the last twenty years, which were considered as part of this thesis, have been shown to represent different kinds of performative engagement with Shakespeare's work, and more importantly to explore different ways of utilising space and time to engage with audiences. Like the author texts, they too share an interest in ideas of nostalgia, memorial, and evocations of community and identity.

The earliest chronologically is Kenneth Branagh's film version of *Love's Labour's Lost* (2000), which in retrospect represents one of the last examples of the Shakespeare on Film boom that appeared at the end of the twentieth century. Branagh's own films of *Henry V* (1989), *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993), and *Hamlet* (1996) made a significant contribution to this output, and each like *Love's Labour's Lost*, chose a setting/landscape which was designed to provide a correlative which would illuminate aspects of the text. In the case of *Love's Labour's Lost* Branagh's decision to set the play in the 1930s and 1940s was governed by a desire to give a:

> very strong sense of place, and my instinct in being in the play in the theatre was that it most certainly needed that – it needed a strong sense of reality, a strong sense of location, a strong sense of a world in which you were happy to accept or understand […] why the King might engage in this three-year plan. (Branagh in Wray, *Shakespeare, Film* 174)

Time and place are thus seen as providing the modern audience with the context of 'a strong sense of a world' where the plot and the characterisation might be understood. Branagh's choice of the interwar years provided what he termed:

> one last idyll in the twentieth century before the world really would change forever. That sense of a stolen, magical, idyllic time which nevertheless had a clock ticking […]. (Branagh in Wray, *Shakespeare, Film* 174)

However, this sense of a 'stolen, magical, idyllic time' was derived largely from the historical aesthetic of musical film, which resulted in the deployment of a number of musical numbers and dance routines. This filmic time travel to such an imagined time and place is again redolent with nostalgia, which will be at its most acute for those familiar with the earlier films which were referenced in this production. As discussed in my article, the production has evoked a variety of different responses, especially

from academic critics who are divided on its successes and failures. It has been hailed as a postmodern success by Penny Gay and Samuel Crowl, the latter of whom notes:

> Branagh is a product of the postmodern moment dominated by a sense of belatedness; a sense that originality is exhausted and that only parody and pastiche and intertextual echo remain. Rather than finding such a condition enervating, Branagh's work seizes on its possibilities [...]. ('Flamboyant Realist' 26–27)

In contrast, Ramona Wray, who was particularly critical of the parodic British newsreels used by Branagh to comment on actions at the court, suggests that they make the American musical numbers appear 'symbolically freighted – at best, foolhardy evasion, at worst, political cowardice [...] a distractive indulgence' ('Nostalgic for Navarre' 174). Both of these readings are an indication that the 'search' for the author and his work in this production involved a complex negotiation of multi-layered time. In this film the audience not only had to interpret the significance of the 1930s to a late sixteenth century text, but also had to navigate the interpretation of these earlier filmic conventions within the context of the contemporary cinema.

Branagh, like many other 1990s Shakespeare film directors, had in earlier film productions utilised various cinematic tropes as he explored Shakespearean texts, such as those of the war film in *Henry V*, and the western in *Much Ado About Nothing*. His *Love's Labour's Lost*, however, encounters particular difficulties in its use of the conventions of 1930s and 1940s musicals. The most obvious is that he did not use professional dancers and singers, mostly preferring to use classically trained actors. Without this professional execution of the musical numbers, the film, according to Green, '*falls* into camp, helped along [...] by his 'melting pot' approach, to borrow an

image from Lehmann (188) to highbrow and lowbrow culture' (Green 87, original emphasis). This melting pot of highbrow and lowbrow culture also creates issues around the audiences' response to the Shakespeare text as well as the thirties and forties musical numbers. On the one hand the deletion of the Muscovite Masque and the Pageant of the Nine Worthies (a silent fragment of which appeared in the newsreel report), and the replacement of them with songs and dances, diminishes the metatheatricality of the Shakespearean text. And on the other hand, this subtle altering of the audiences' relationship with the play is compounded by its presentation of the American musicals. In the original musical films, as Feuer notes, the presence of an on-screen audience, in theatres, night clubs etc was designed to 'capture on celluloid the quality of live entertainment' (2), a device also used in most of the Shakespeare author films. With the musicals, the representation of an on-screen audience addresses a desire to recover some perceived sense of a loss of community that resulted from the transference of a theatrical form to the mass cultural genre of film. The end of Branagh's dance numbers were met with silence, with no on-stage audience to mark the conclusion of the 'number' in the on-film world. The 'let's put the show on here in the barn' motif of the earlier films if employed by Branagh may well have contextualised the less than professional abilities of his actors, but overall the film left its audience trying to negotiate an uneasy mix of high and low cultural modes.

This production has become something of a *cause célèbre* in its attempts to re-present Shakespeare's work to a contemporary film audience. In order to accommodate the musical numbers within the text, and with the desire, in an apparent reaction against

his four-hour *Hamlet*, to contain the production within a standard filmic length, Branagh retained only about twenty-five per cent of Shakespeare's text. The search for the play's significance was, like several of the author films, predicated on creating a nostalgic mood here drawn from the contemporary audience's memories of the earlier musicals. It seems that Branagh's aspiration was that the film would celebrate in a *fin de siècle* moment the parallels between 'the songs of wonderful writers like Cole Porter, Irving Berlin or George Gershwin whose lyrics are arguably as witty in their own way as Shakespeare was in his and just as full of conceits and verbal trickery' (Pathé - *Love's Labour's Lost* Official Website).

The juxtaposition of high and low cultural forms has also been shown to be significant to the 'live' theatre broadcast to cinemas discussed in the 'Outside Broadcast' article. Here it is not the transposition of the Shakespeare play to a different period which generates the high/low cultural dichotomy, but the drawing together of two different performance spaces: the cinema and the theatre, with the cinema normally associated with popular culture, and the theatres venues with high art. More than this, the two types of venues are distinct as the role of the audience is differently construed. As Pascale Aebischer and Susanne Greenhalgh note:

> Shakespeare's plays are among those that require the most direct interaction with theatre audiences. These interactive performance dynamics exert pressure on a medium which would otherwise lend itself most easily to forms of performance capture that, for the duration of the performance itself, deploy the fourth-wall convention and exclude the audience from the frame. (3)

One of the challenges for these productions is thus to counter the usual filmic codes and conventions, and to encourage the cinema audience to feel included within the

frame. This is particularly significant for these types of broadcast given their selling point is that they offer the immediacy of a live theatre performance to geographically distant audiences. The effect of this for the cinema audience is that when the broadcast is shared in real time the performance exists in one time but two places.[ii] In effect, the filmed broadcast allows the cinema audience to travel to another venue, the theatre, to see a representation of Shakespeare's work, even though their participation in the performance at that other venue remains unheard and unacknowledged in real time by the performers. Perhaps the most overt attempt to offset this can be seen in the theatre companies' encouragement to the cinema audiences to record their 'experience' before, during and after the performance, on Twitter and other digital platforms. As Erin Sullivan has noted 'discussion threads… allowed geographically dispersed audiences the opportunity to share their experiences of engagement, emotion and even transformative change' ('The Audience is Present' 73). Such activities are part of the 'constructed liveness' which also includes the 'dressing' of the cinema space, so it is more like the theatre. Showing audiences to their seats, providing them with a cast list, keeping the auditorium lights on until the production begins, and even refashioning the interval to evoke not only the theatre conventions but older traditions of the cinema, were all used to frame the performance. By so doing audiences are offered the opportunity to be part of a more communal sharing of the broadcast performance, creating something akin to a 'theatre audience's community of perception' (Jorgens 52).

In addition to this framing of the place/space where the performance is viewed, the broadcast presenters sought to raise audience expectations by stressing how the live

broadcast offered a unique and rare opportunity to access a significant theatrical event. The pre-performance material, with its interviews and features, was thought to be a further means of creating anticipation, and they were used extensively in the first broadcasts. A significant aspect of the RSC digital programmes is the foregrounding of the importance of the place Stratford-upon-Avon; an idea embedded in the strap line 'RSC Live from Stratford upon Avon'. The pre-performance material for *Richard II*, the RSC's first live broadcast, included a short film about the town, and in a newspaper feature about the performance, Gregory Doran commented: 'I … want to find a way of capturing something of the special experience of watching Shakespeare in his own town — there is something about Stratford, this is the air that he breathed' (Kennedy). This suggests that the broadcast is perceived as a kind of literary tourism. Moreover, the notion that a place is imbued with biographical traces of an author that will enhance a performance is intriguing and has parallels with the contexts sought by the author texts in this study. It is unlikely that Stratford was the air that Shakespeare 'breathed' while writing *Richard II*, but, as Nicola Watson indicates, the development of tourism in Stratford since the eighteenth century has been predicated on this same idea that Shakespeare's genius resides in his early association with the town and surrounding countryside. Watson's description of Garrick's 1769 Stratford Jubilee as 'a theatricalization of the biographical within topography' ('Shakespeare on the Tourist Trail' 205), chimes with Doran's aspiration to capture and commemorate in his broadcast production something of the essence of Shakespeare as distilled in Stratford. More generally, these cinematic productions show their literary tourist affiliations in these pre-performance segments by promoting a kind of virtual travel to

a particular theatre or stage, which will in turn, it is suggested by the presenters, provide further possibilities of onward travel to other historical times.

These RSC 'digital programmes', while maintaining both live and pre-recorded segments, have gradually been reduced in length. The pre-performance material for the Branagh Theatre Company's *The Winter's Tale* (2015), however, was entirely pre-recorded. Perhaps, as a director/performer there was no scope for Branagh to have such live interaction with the audience, or he did not wish to mimic the strategies employed by the RSC and the NT to conjure up a sense of occasion. Branagh's broadcasts, perhaps unsurprisingly given the commitment to film conventions seen in *Love's Labour's Lost*, overall employ more obvious filmic devices; the black and white broadcast of *Romeo and Juliet* to cinemas being a notable example, where quite clearly the audiences in the theatre and cinema were seeing a rather different version of the production. Such a decision however reveals, what has not always been made explicit by other theatre companies, that these broadcasts are 'double adaptations' (Wyver *From Theatre*), created once for the theatre space and once again for the cinema. While the actors may not 'change our performances to suit the cameras' (Simon Russell Beale), my discussion of various productions has shown that the shaping of those performances by the camera can produce a different interpretation. In NT Live *King Lear*, this resulted in the social and political context of the stage production being marginalised, and in RSC Live *Richard II* the camera work seemed designed to clarify the motives of characters, but it also led, in use of more closely focussed shots, to a reduced representation of the formal ritual nature of the play. The discussion of *Henry V* also revealed that the camera work drew subtle comparisons between the types of

kingship being explored across the broadcasts of the second tetralogy of history plays. In all the live theatre broadcasts to cinema, it is clear that the camera will always guide the eye of the cinema viewer to a greater extent than occurs in the theatre. Sometimes as Erin Sullivan has argued the camera creates a sense of theatrical space so:

> a broadcast can produce a visual sense of "being there" akin to that experienced in the theater. Though audiences are not present in the flesh inside the auditorium, they still apprehend the performance in a spatially comprehensive and emotionally involving manner … ('"The forms of things unknown"' 654-5)

While being 'akin' is not the equivalent of being the same, this does highlight the intertextual relationship between the stage and broadcast versions of the production. We can also see here how an interest in audience reception has become more central in recent critical appraisals of these live broadcasts. This is also the focus of Aesbischer and Greenhalgh's 2018 study in which they note their own

> phenomenological concern with reception. Our emphasis on medium specific modes of audience participation and the diverse ways in which Anglo-American and worldwide audiences engage with Shakespeare (and with one another) through digital media contributes to those debates and …prompts a fundamental reassessment of what constitutes audience participation, interaction and immersion within this hybrid performance and media ecology. (2)

The 'hybridity' of these performances is traced in the 'Outside Broadcast' article to the early twentieth century outside broadcasts, where the blending of different places was achieved through particular framing devices, tropes and conventions derived from radio, cinema and television. The echo of these earlier broadcasts gives the new live theatre broadcasts an ambiguous sense of time looking backward nostalgically to an older form while celebrating the innovative possibilities of new technologies.

Moreover, it is clear that despite their apparent digital savviness twenty-first century audiences are, like earlier audiences, occasionally uncertain about how to respond to a theatrical event outside its customary performance space or home. John Wyver has however noted that cinematic and theatrical audiences are unified by an element of liveness which he terms 'jeopardy' (Theatre to Screen), wherein the audiences are aware that something could, and sometimes will, go wrong. This heightened sense of excitement or emotion is certainly part of the cinematic audiences' travel to the theatre space. And yet, as the earlier discussion of *Henry V* explored, not only are the elements of jeopardy different within the theatre and the cinema, but when something goes wrong, they can be met with audience responses complicated, intriguingly, by the contexts of contemporary digital media.

It is clear that audience reception and liveness will continue to be an area for academic research, alongside other issues such as the commercial impact on theatres of such broadcasts, as well as the global impact of the Shakespeare brand and that of the theatre companies involved in the broadcasts. These are all important issues, but it is important not to lose sight of the fact that these productions have led to a democratisation of the theatre by making high-quality performances more accessible to audiences across the world. In so doing they have succeeded in creating different kinds of audiences for theatrical performances, as well as new audience communities for live theatre.

The final text considered in this thesis, a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which was part of the RSC 'Play for the Nation' tour in 2016, shares some of these

aspirations to create communities and democratise theatre. Like other texts in this study, the tour was conceived as an act of commemoration; here as a celebration of one of Shakespeare's plays in the four hundredth anniversary year of his death. The production staged at twelve different theatres across the UK from March to July 2016, combined a professional acting company with amateur actors selected from the local areas of the theatres. My article explores the production as staged at The Grand Theatre, Blackpool, where Shakespearean high art was presented within the popular seaside resort.

This production as a touring production was predicated on the idea of travel. Unlike the outside broadcasts, where travel to various destinations is simultaneous and the result of cutting-edge technology, this production, perhaps in reaction to this kind of innovation, seemed determined to return to, or be seen as, some earlier form of post-war theatrical touring experience. The RSC poster for this *A Midsummer Night's Dream* encapsulates some of these aspirations, depicting an old-fashioned coach, a kind of *charabanc*. This conjuring up of a jolly outing, a holiday experience in the company of the RSC and Shakespeare, embody both a nostalgic idea of a British 'nation' while also celebrating and initiating a simplified version of theatre making. This combination of nostalgia and a 'getting back to basics' theatrical performance, was also suggested by the place and historical time of the production's setting. Erica Whyman, the director, noted in a BBC Television programme that the 1940s setting provided 'a sense of place . . . one we could remember – within living memory' (*Best Bottoms*) and noted as well 'I have set the play in a Britain reminiscent of the 1940s because, like Shakespeare's remembered Athens, it was a place and time of great

change' ('A National Passion'). The sense of a remembered past, which was seen to correlate with the themes of the play, clearly informed the production, and maybe even the choice of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as the play for the nation, with Kimberley Sykes, the assistant director, suggesting in a post-performance discussion in Blackpool, that the audience would be familiar with the play from school days, that it was a play about identity, and that it was part of a national memory about Shakespeare. The particular aspect of this national memory which the production wished to draw from the play was:

> [it] is an enchanting play, full of wisdom, mischief and joy, but it is also about community, about people coming together from all walks of life and congregating in the name of peace and stability. (Whyman *Arts Professional*)

The play was not only itself deemed to be about identity and community, but these 'Shakespearean' values became part of the production's agenda to widen social and cultural engagement.

The most obvious feature of the RSC's social and cultural engagement was in its decision to cast amateur actors and local school children in the play. The return to the 1940s in this production could be seen as a wish to temporarily right the wrongs following the 'founding of the Arts Council in 1949' which while 'visionary … marked a fundamental split between the amateur and professional worlds' (Whyman, 'A National Passion'). The RSC Play for the Nation endeavoured to include different aspects of the nation's theatrical world into its celebration of Shakespeare.

In addition to this inclusion of different types of performers, the RSC, perhaps making a virtue out of necessity for the touring production, utilised a simplified set which represented a bombed-out theatre which could be easily transformed between the worlds of the play. As Peter Kirwan suggested:

> Pleasingly, given the tour's use of the country's network of grand Theatre Royals and the foregrounding of theatre making, the production itself was set in a run-down 1940s theatre. Costume baskets, ladders tatty red curtains and floorboards demarcated a space of play and celebration of the groups meeting in it.

This metatheatrical representation, while foregrounding the production's interest in 'theatre making', also extended the idea of the play for the nation. With its juxtaposition of the meta-theatrical set within the grand physicality of the host theatres, the production worked to synthesise and celebrate the theatrical history, architectural spaces, and maybe even geographical places of the venues on the tour.

The production's conversation with Blackpool itself was an interesting one. Despite the proximity of The Grand Theatre to the Golden Mile, the epitome of a carnivalesque popular seaside location, the production itself, perhaps disappointingly, did not incorporate any particularly northern characteristics. Despite Whyman's comment that the Poulton Drama amateur group had been selected as they were 'very entertaining as you'd expect from that bit of the world. Very strong sense of humour and they properly made us laugh' (*Best Bottoms*), the amateur company indicated that they tried to avoid broad slapstick comedy and did not use the seaside-prom stage properties they had tried out in rehearsals. The main northern contribution to the production in Blackpool was, however, in the voices of the actors, who, all bar one,

had a northern, if not always a Blackpool, accent. Arguably, for local audiences this creates an empathy with the speakers, and they are more likely to champion and support their local amateur group because of the familiarity of accent and the implied connection to their place and community.

Some of the discussions about this production have suggested it offered a wrong-headed version of 'nation' in the light of political debates around Brexit which were occurring at the time. However, it seems that rather than proposing a specific response to Brexit, the production was partly wrong-footed by the emerging wider political debate about nationhood. Nevertheless, the impact of Shakespeare in Blackpool did have important social and cultural ramifications triggered by the involvement of local people in the production. The Grand Theatre reported that audience numbers had exceeded expectations and that the audiences, partly those supporting family members and communities, were drawn from a wider than usual catchment area. Moreover, the production and its educational projects, by opening up Shakespeare to new audiences, and providing the opportunity to widen horizons, appear to have made a significant intervention in the lives and aspirations of some of the most socially deprived communities in the UK.

V.

To conclude, it is notable in these texts that the travels in space and time in search of the canonical writers Shakespeare and Austen are frequently configured within, and facilitated by, different kinds of popular culture including science fiction, Hollywood musicals, 'chick lit', romantic fiction, fan fiction, time travel, sea-side holidays, and,

more broadly even, the cinema itself. As Robert Shaughnessy notes popular culture comes with its possible contradictions:

> The 'popular' is itself hardly a singular or uncontested term or frame of reference: seen from some angles, it denotes community, shared values, democratic participation, accessibility, and fun; from others the mass-produced commodity, the lowest common denominator, the reductive or simplified, or the shoddy, the coarse, and the meretricious. (2)

The texts studied here, however, are largely characterised by the more positive aspects of 'community, shared values, democratic participation, accessibility and fun'. While this is not to say that this study found all the texts to be unmitigated successes, each one has been shown to initiate some kind of conversation with the dead authors through these popular frameworks.

Nevertheless, these filmic and novel texts are not without their paradoxes. First these texts utilise popular cultural reference points to frame an idea of the authors as high cultural canonical figures of genius. In doing so they are reclaiming the significance of the authors for the twenty-first century despite the mid-twentieth Barthesian claims for the author's demise. As Deborah Cartmell noted in her discussions of Austen:

> the biopic – in particular the film biography of an author- uses genre to both kill and resurrect the author... [and] doggedly cling to old-fashioned biographical approaches to fiction that equate interpretation with finding out 'truths' about the author. ('Becoming Jane' 157)

In addition, the lack of a complete biographical life for either of these authors gives the opportunity for these fictional accounts to speculate on these personal 'truths': truths which are also built on narratives from celebrity culture and from romance. This gives rise to another paradox that, despite the focus on historical space and time, the

construction of the writing lives of the authors is in one respect ahistorical: it is primarily the author's personal life, not the social, cultural, political context of the times, which is seen to ignite authorial genius. Yet in each text the filmmakers, novelists, directors believe there is a significance in 'being there' to see the work of the genius emerge and evolve in the place and time where it had begun. The 'there' whether place or time, or both, becomes for the contemporary audience an anchor, a foundation, a confirmation of authorial authority, a point of connectedness in the rapidly changing modern world.

In a further paradox, the modern fascination with these authors in these texts seems to wish them to be of their own time but also 'like us', or at the very least to 'speak' to us. The desire to find contemporary relevance shapes the place and time of the novels and films, but it also moulds the version of the author revealed in these texts. As Marjorie Garber has noted 'the search for an author, like any other quest for parentage, reveals more about the searcher than the sought' (27). Although these texts perform the task of memorialising Shakespeare and Austen, these acts of remembrance also affirm ideas about contemporary identity and its communities. In doing so the texts are in themselves engaging in an adaptive act as they embody 'a process of appropriation, of taking possession of another's story and filtering it, in a sense, through one's own sensibility, [and] interests' (Hutcheon 18). This search for the author's story in the texts studied here is predicated on metaphorically transporting the audience or reader to another time and place. By exploring the complex ways/iterations in which this place and time travel is constructed and facilitated in these different texts, this thesis has offered an innovative re-reading of

the frameworks which surround the representation of the author, and those which shape the contemporary audiences' engagement with the past.

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[i] This is rather different from some of the literary adaptations, where slightly bizarrely the characters read the novel they are part of. See opening of Joe Wright's (2005) adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. Cartmell notes 'She [Elizabeth] introduces the film by reading a novel, closing the book as she draws near her home, with a sigh of satisfaction, having just reached its conclusion. Close inspection reveals the book to be *Pride and Prejudice*, a witty acknowledgement of the film's source and status as an adaptation by subtly employing the device of the book opening into the film and a sly intimation that Elizabeth, like Austen, is in command of her own story' (237-38)

[ii] The Encore Live productions, of course, disengage this focus on one time, and instead become experiences in different times and different places. I would however argue that they still retain the sense of the one specific time in which they were created.

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APPENDICES: PUBLISHED WORK

Article One: Wardle, Janice. '"Outside Broadcast": Looking Backwards and Forwards, Live Theatre in the Cinema—NT Live and RSC Live.' *Adaptation*, vol. 7, no. 2, August 2014, pp. 134–153. https://doi-org.hallam.idm.oclc.org/10.1093/adaptation/apu017

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Article Three: Wardle, Janice. 'Time Travel and the Return of the Author: *Shakespeare in Love*, 'The Shakespeare Code', and *Bill*. *Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2018. http://www.borrowers.uga.edu/7169/toc.

Article Four: Wardle, Janice. '*Austenland* and Narrative Tensions in Austen's Biopics.' *After Austen: Reinventions, Rewritings, Revisitings*, edited by Lisa Hopkins, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-95894-1.

Article Five: Wardle Janice. 'Austen Past and Future: Kathleen Flynn's *The Jane Austen Project*.' *Persuasions On-Line*, vol. 40, no. 2, 2020. http://jasna.org/publications/persuasions-on-line/volume-40-no-2/wardle/

Article Six: Wardle, Janice. 'Shakespeare and Blackpool: The RSC's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2016): A Play for the Nation?' *Shakespeare in the North: Place, Politics and Performance in England and Scotland*, edited by Adam Hansen, Edinburgh UP, forthcoming March 2021, pp. 168-186.

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'Outside Broadcast': Looking Backwards and Forwards, Live Theatre in the Cinema—NT Live and RSC Live

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Abstract This paper explores the fairly recent phenomena of the live broadcasting of canonical theatrical and literary texts in cinema venues. It investigates how these productions are dependent on innovative technology and also utilise conventions and tropes from the earliest outside broadcasts. The paper considers ideas of place-shifting, necessitated by the productions existence in one time and two places, and considers how the performances are positioned as both ground-breaking and nostalgic. It is argued that the productions construct notions of 'liveness' and shape their own 'communities of perception', which help negotiate the theatrical and filmic blend of the productions. The paper considers how such broadcasts challenge the notion of 'live theatre' versus 'film' which has become a staple of adaptation criticism.

Keywords *Outside broadcast, theatre, cinema, Richard II, King Lear, liveness.*

I

This paper will explore the 'outside broadcasting' of theatrical productions during the early twenty-first century. In considering this fairly recent phenomenon, I have opted for the term 'outside broadcasts' (as opposed to the more contemporary usages, 'simultaneous broadcasts' or 'digital broadcasts'),[1] because so many of the contexts and features of earlier, twentieth century 'outside broadcasts' are recalled in these more recent transmissions. The contemporary 'outside broadcasts' of live theatre share with that earlier tradition the desire to exploit technological advances; they embrace similar cultural and ideological aspirations; and there are nostalgic undercurrents in these digital broadcasts which, in terms both of audience engagement with the productions and of the mission of the theatrical companies involved, seem to hark back to an earlier age of broadcasting.

As Bolter and Grusin note, 'new technologies of representation proceed by reforming or remediating earlier ones' (339). I will argue that this reforming or remediating is particularly relevant in relation to the understanding of ideas of public and private space, and to the perceived, and constructed, 'liveness' of the event.

The term 'Outside Broadcast' is first documented by the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) in 1924. The broadcasting of events from locations outside the studios of the recently formed British Broadcasting Company (BBC) into the homes of its radio-listening audience became one of the hallmarks of the Reithian BBC. The first outside broadcast, on 8 January 1923, was a performance of the British National Opera production

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of *The Magic Flute* from Covent Garden. Such events came to exemplify Reith's mission for the BBC to bring improving high-cultural events to a larger and more diverse audience via the radio. His mantra was to 'educate, inform and entertain …. [O]ur responsibility is to carry into the greatest possible number of homes everything that is best in every department of human knowledge, endeavour and achievement' (Reith 34). The development of radio broadcasting in the 1920s and 1930s included the development of a classical musical programme which was built, at Reith's insistence, around live musical events transmitted from London, primarily because London was deemed to be the centre of culture for the whole nation. In the development of light entertainment for the radio, 'the BBC producers continued to think of light entertainment in terms of its original habitat, the theatre and the music hall, and wireless merely as a means of relaying shows from that habitat or, at best, as the place to re-create it' (Crisell, *History* 37). This initiative to extend the audience for cultural events, made possible by new broadcasting technologies, challenged and expanded listeners' understanding of the appropriate place(s) to engage with high culture such as opera and music. It confused some audiences, caught between the public space of performance and the private space of consumption. Crisell notes that the domestic audience, for example, were unsure whether, in their own homes, they should stand while the national anthem was being played (*History* 9).

With the advent of television, the outside broadcasting of cultural events continued, progressively surmounting technological problems, such as the daunting number and lengths of cable required to operate in public arenas. This advancing technology created 'an uncoupling of space and time in the sense that movement across distances no longer involved delay: "the same time" no longer presupposed "the same place" (Thompson, 1995, p.32)' (Crisell, *Liveness* 4). The possibility of inhabiting the same time gave immediacy and 'liveness' to outside broadcasting while also creating 'new possibilities of being; of being in two places at once' (Scannell 91). As with radio, the merging of public and private spaces was explicit, and occasionally challenging, in these television outside broadcasts. The utilisation of the visual helped create a sense of occasion and effected a novel merging of public and private space. It enhanced the 'liveness' of the event with 'television's intimacy … seen as a function of its immediacy — the close proximity of viewer to event that it enables — and the fact that events from outside are transmitted into the viewer's home' (Auslander 16). Auslander goes on to note that 'the position of the television viewer was often compared with [that of] a theatre-goer with the best seat in the house' (16).

Following the success of the broadcast of the Coronation Procession of George VI in May 1937, 1938 saw a number of Outside Broadcast firsts for the BBC. These included sporting events such as Wimbledon, the Derby, the FA Cup final (curiously, only the first half), and rugby from Twickenham, and nonsporting events as diverse as the Chelsea Flower Show and Neville Chamberlain's 'Peace in our time' speech on his return from Berlin. In this year the BBC also televised part of a J B Priestley play from the St Martin's Theatre in the West End. 'One camera was in the foyer to capture the atmosphere of the audience arriving. The second was backstage to interview the performers and the third was in a box in the auditorium to televise the first part of the play *When we are Married*' (Nick Gilbey). A week later, there was a live broadcast of the musical

comedy *Under Your Hat* from the Palace, which utilised a similar camera set up. *The Radio Times* on 18 November 1938 promised that 'three cameras will be used … one to show celebrities as they pass through the brilliantly lit foyer to the auditorium; another will be installed in Cicely Courtneidge's dressing-room, giving intimate glimpses of the two stars back-stage; and the third camera will have a box to itself in the auditorium to televise part of the first act' (quoted in Wyver). These theatre broadcasts continued for much of 1939 but were suspended with the advent of war in September.

In these early outside broadcasts, we can see parallels with the recent transmissions of live theatrical performances. As the camera placement shows, even the structure of the first television outside broadcasts of live drama had a similarity with what we would see in the twenty-first-century productions, with footage of the audience, and informal interviews with the cast, accompanying the transmission of the play itself. Both innovations offered exciting exploitation of new technologies. Just as the first BBC venture into outside broadcasting was the successful transmission of an opera performance, the initial National Theatre Live project was modelled on the success of the Metropolitan Opera Company's successful transmissions of live performances from 2006 onwards, transmissions made possible by the availability of reliable high-definition satellite receivers in a large number of cinemas. Moreover, the Reithian mantra 'to educate, instruct and entertain' seems to underlie the corporate messages of both the National Theatre (NT) and the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC). David Sabel, the leader of the initial intern project at the National Theatre, and now Head of Digital, set out the broader remit of his department as follows:

> I talk about it in three ways. There's access, and NT Live is a really good example of that, using digital to extend experiences, distribution and democratise access. There's amplification which is about content, engagement and insight. We have a strong belief that with the National's public remit, the performance shouldn't begin and end with the rise and fall of the curtain; you want people to go online and find on their mobiles a digital place where they can continue the conversation and learning. Then there's innovation. NT Live is obviously that, but the other area we are actively looking at is where digital and performance meet. (*Guardian*, Culture Professionals Network, April 2012)

The themes of democratisation, innovation, learning, and engagement are clear here, and in the RSC's expressed desire to

> [t]ake its productions in this way to new audiences. Audiences that perhaps can't get to Stratford upon Avon, because they are not in this country, or because they are quite a long way away, or perhaps for younger audiences, to people who don't have the habit of going to see the RSC in Stratford upon Avon. (Wyver, *Production Diary* 12)

The ambition to bring the remote viewers the equivalent of the 'best seat in the house', which was part of the mission of the original television outside broadcasts, also reappears. David Tennant noted in a pre-*Richard II* RSC Live from Stratford upon Avon[2] interview with Channel 4 'the idea is that you come to the cinema to share the live experience, to be effectively in the audience of a theatre performance rather than go and see a movie' (Tennant). At the heart of the decision to broadcast to cinemas, as opposed to transmitting via television or to produce a DVD (which seems to be being resisted by

the NT, though not the RSC)[3], or even to follow the route of Digital Theatre's internet activities, is refocusing on the sense of place for these performances, with a celebratory insistence on the significance of public theatrical space. As David Sabel notes,

> When you think of filmed theatre it's the exact opposite of what it's supposed to be: there in the space, seeing the sweat and feeling the emotion and heat of the room. How is that going to work? But when I went to see a Met broadcast I was surprised how connected I felt. I think a huge part of that is the shared experience; if you were watching it on TV, even if it was live, you'd go and make a cup of tea, but here you are buying a ticket and reacting and applauding together. (*Guardian*, Culture Professionals Network, April 2012)

David Tennant contrasted *Richard II* Live with his film version of *Hamlet*, claiming that the former would have a very different feel and that 'you will smell the sweat' (Tennant).

The strap line of RSC Live—'Live broadcasts to cinemas around the world from Shakespeare's home town'—stresses the cultural kudos of such an evidently significant location. Gregory Doran explains that 'I … want to find a way of capturing something of the special experience of watching Shakespeare in his own town — there is something about Stratford, this is the air that he breathed' (Kennedy). The focus of NT Live on London, as the home of the National Theatre, likewise seems to imply there is cultural significance in location. We are given access to the 'original habitats' of these theatrical occasions, recalling the glamorous immediacy evoked by the early outside broadcasts.

II

In general terms then one might suggest that these 'new' ventures are rather Janus-like: looking forward in embracing technological advances, while at the same time looking backward in displaying ideological assumptions and modes of operation reminiscent of earlier outside broadcasts.

In order to develop this analysis, we need to explore some specific features of these productions. Central to my argument is the concept of the role of place. I propose initially to explore how the notion of place is constructed, both as a space for the audience to watch and as the representation and utilisation of theatrical space in cinematic terms. The location in which these new live outside broadcasts are viewed, a cinema, is in many respects the key here. 'Liveness' is usually thought antithetical to cinema. Artefacts viewed at the cinema are normally assumed to be complete and finished, but here, as with the earlier radio and television outside broadcasts, the RSC and NT productions were created from, and marketed around, the fact of this apparent uniqueness—that they were transmitted live. I will want to argue later that this is a 'constructed' liveness, but it is nevertheless a quality not usually part of the cinematic experience.

There have, of course, been a number of attempts in film adaptations of drama, particularly of Shakespeare's plays, to recreate the sense of a theatrical performance on film. Jack Jorgens' taxonomy of types of Shakespeare on film suggested three modes of directorial interaction with the text: theatrical, realist, and filmic, which according to Peter Holland mark 'different and increasing distances from the forms of theatre' (50). Jorgens' definition of the 'theatrical' filmic adaptation is one where 'the look and feel [is] of a performance worked out for a static theatrical space and a live audience' (7). Again this is, of course, a crafted 'look and feel' with cameras often positioned to

reflect the view of a theatre audience, and as Holland notes 'such films are usually made up of very long takes, the camera's long breaths trying to match the sustained acting paragraphs of the theatre rather than the rapidity of shots and the brevity of editing normally used in the cinema'. (51) These adaptations are thus an attempt to create a theatrical experience on film but are according to Holland unsuccessful because of an absence of 'the theatre audience's community of perception' (52).

In the NT Live and RSC Live broadcasts, there was an attempt, we might argue, to create this 'community of perception'. Before the broadcast, at least at the Odeon cinema in Preston where I have seen many of the productions, there appeared to be a deliberate attempt to create a simulated theatre experience. On each occasion, the audience were, unusually for a cinema performance, shown to their seats, and provided with a cast list (which incorporated information about forthcoming events and is available to each cinema from the theatre companies' own sites). In the period before the actual performance began, the lights remained on in the auditorium, thus enabling the assembling audience to see each other, until the lights were dimmed at the beginning of the play. Cinema auditoriums are of course in themselves public arenas—if sometimes made up of isolated groups and individuals. However, the creation of a heightened awareness of the shared, public occasion in these ways made a distinction between this particular live broadcast of a theatrical event and other 'normal' cinematic experiences. Certainly, there were some members of the cinema audience who applauded with the theatre audience at the end of the performance, and others who seemed unsure of the 'correct' response, like the early radio listeners uncertain how to respond to the national anthem. There was also, especially given the mature age profile for many of these live events, a sense of nostalgia for this shared sense of occasion. This effect was enhanced in Preston when, during the Interval, which in itself is a convention of theatre but no longer of the cinema, there was a constructed nostalgic moment in which ice creams were sold by cinema staff from traditional usherette trays. This creation of a distinctive and performed public space for the broadcast we were about to see went some way towards creating Holland's 'community of perception'.

The preperformance and interval interviews and documentaries included in the transmission itself may also have been intended to create and extend this sense of 'community'. Although the live performances have varied slightly, they have all been prefaced by a kind of 'programme' through the digital moving image, featuring interviews with the cast, including information about their preparation for the production and their roles, historical background or academic readings of the text to be performed, and occasionally discussions about the particularities of stage or lighting design. Part of the content of the *Richard II* RSC Live material echoed that in the print programme (the interview with Helen Castor). The format of this 'digital programme' is, I think, borrowed from the introductory and interval talks at the BBC Proms, a model which in itself is ultimately derived from early outside broadcasts. Moreover, the association of these features with television is significant. Auslander notes that television retains some of its ontology of liveness:

> As a camera-bound medium, television might well have striven to be cinematic; but instead it strove to be theatrical. The answer to this question lies in the way in which the essence of

> the televisual was understood, from television's earliest appearances, as an ontology of liveness more akin to the ontology of theatre than to that of film. Television's essence was seen in its ability to transmit events as they occur, not in a filmic capacity to record events for later viewing. Originally, of course, all television broadcasts were live transmissions. Jane Feuer (1983) argues that the definition of television is an ontologically live medium – even though television ceased long ago to be live in an ontological sense. (12)

The intimacy of the interviews, the direct address to camera, the dropping in of prerecorded features, and the adoption of a chatty bonhomie (all features of the remaining pockets of live television such as breakfast shows, daytime magazine programmes, and live sporting events) helped cultivate the audience's paradoxical sense of the liveness of the event in the cinema. One might argue that the whole event was more televisual than cinematic, but this would be to deny the essence of the public nature of the occasion. Television may provide the stylistic model for the 'liveness' but cinema provides the public space.

The parallel with the Proms broadcasts (despite the fact that many of these are now prerecorded) reinforces the sense that the audience are present at a much anticipated high-cultural event. As with the Proms broadcasts, some of the interviews in the RSC and NT Live events take place in the auditorium (an example being Gregory Doran's with Suzy Klein before the RSC live production of *Richard II*). These interviews give the cinema audience their first view of the theatre audience, again reinforcing the view that they are all part of a shared communal experience derived from a chain of linked public spaces. The preperformance talks typically stress the uniqueness of the filmic events—'first time from the RSC' (*Richard II*), 'first time from Donmar Warehouse' (*Coriolanus*). This 'uniqueness' is, perhaps somewhat paradoxically, even cited in the preview to the NT Encore performances, where the opportunity to relive a live performance is offered as a means to participate in the current celebration of 50 years of the National Theatre (Encore *Frankenstein*, *Habit of Art*). The interviews stress not only that the events are unique but also that they represented a rare opportunity to see ground-breaking productions no longer accessible in the theatre—because tickets were either in short supply or sold out, or, in the case of some 'encore' performances, because the productions had closed. This strategy of drawing attention to limited availability might seem pointless, given that the film audience have already purchased tickets and are already in the cinema. Yet, such statements create for the audiences distinctive brand images of the NT and RSC, as institutions so successful that demand for their wares outstrips availability. This in turn heightens expectations in the audience about the performance they are about to see, and seems to aspire to nurture an intense 'community of perception'. This is supported by NESTA's (formerly 'National Endowment for Science and Technology') report on 'Digital broadcast of theatre – Learning from the pilot season: NT Live' which notes that

> NT Live presents the live transmission as more than a regular cinema screening: it is branded as a special event. There is a positive response. Eighty-four percent of NT Live cinema audiences 'felt real excitement' because they knew that the performance they were watching was taking place that evening. Watching the show with others was also an important factor.

Part of this 'real excitement' is created as, John Wyver noted at the De Montfort Conference in 2014, by a sense of 'jeopardy': the awareness that in live performances

something could go wrong. Stephen Purcell suggests that this jeopardy or risk was so overstated in the BBC4 live broadcast of *Richard II* in 2003 from the Globe that it became '"hyper-live" (a liveness, to paraphrase Baudrillard, "without origin or reality"; 1994: 1)' (213)[4]. This tendency towards the 'hyper-live' can perhaps be detected in the NT Live and RSC Live productions, but it is the 'watching the show' live with others, in the public space of the cinema, that is likely to be the significant factor for the audience. The public sharing of the performance and the preperformance activities may be a nostalgic rarity for many members of the audience, overaccustomed to watching either film or time-shifted television drama.

I have suggested that these preperformance activities contributed to the creation of a shared public space and the 'liveness' of the occasion, but it is fair to say that they were not uniformly applauded by the critics. From the first NT Live production of *Phedre* (2009) onwards, there have been some who have been critical of the preperformance material. Peter Kirwan in his *Bardathon* blog about *Phedre*, commented upon the 'social divide and mediation' it produced.

> The discussion about the nature of the NT Live experiment was welcome and useful. However, we were then subjected to several minutes of interviews with cast and creatives, discussion of directorial and design decisions and snippets of rehearsal photography and audio footage. This was, of course only for the screen audience's benefit, and I felt it was patronising and ill-advised. The imputation appeared to be that the provincial and international audience required elements of the production (including the back-story to the play) to be explained for them before they were allowed to see the performance itself, directing the viewer's thoughts before the curtain rose.

In the recent NT Live and RSC Live productions, there has been less of what Kirwan calls 'patronising', but there is still a tendency to 'direct the viewer's thoughts', as I will argue in my discussion of NT Live *King Lear* which follows. There is an inherent risk in these 'digital programmes' of steering the audience to a view of the play more decisively than with a theatre programme, where the audience member has more choice whether to read before the performance, later or not at all. However, we should note that these prefatory interviews seem to have evolved and become slightly shorter over time. Kirwan noted in his blog about *The Comedy of Errors* in 2012 that 'NT Live has finally (apparently) realised that the extensive framing … is unnecessary'.

The framing continues, nevertheless, and still enrages some critics. *The Guardian* review of the NT Live *Coriolanus* in 2014 was still requesting that they 'cut the chat and get on with the show' (Ryan Gilbey). Gilbey notes that 'the effect here evoked neither theatre nor cinema but bad arts television' and added that the experience was like watching DVD extras. Certainly on this occasion, the interval interview with the director, Josie Rourke, in which Emma Freud reported that Tom Hiddleston had been named 'the sexiest actor on the planet' by MTV, seemed to strike a curious note. Presumably this focus on the 'star' (similar to the dressing-room interviews in the first televised live theatre performances in 1938) marked an attempt to engage the wider audience for this production, which here will have included those more familiar with Hiddleston's popular film roles. The move to include such diverse and varied additional material, including fanzine 'chat', could exemplify what Auslander calls the 'attenuated incursion

of media technology' (26) in contemporary live performances. These incursions result in what Auslander calls 'mediatised' live performances, where the content, as we saw earlier with the mimicking of live television programmes as diverse as the Proms and live football coverage, is dictated by the audience's expectations of other media (TV, cinema, DVDs, CDs, internet), and where the audience also 'model their responses to the live event' (27) on their experiences of those other media. Arguably, in productions such as those discussed here which are built on the coalescence of television, cinema, and theatre, any 'live performances' must become more 'mediatised'. There was further evidence of this mediatisation, or expansion across the digital platform, when during the preperformance features the audience were exhorted to seek out podcasts and internet sites and to utilise Facebook and Twitter to provide feedback on the productions. The resultant conversations seemed to provide further reinforcement for those audience(s) that they had participated in a shared live and significant public event.

III

But what of the cinematic representation of the theatre space in these live productions? The expressed ambition of both the National Theatre and the RSC was that the audiences in the cinema would feel part of the theatre audience. John Wyver commented on the production of *Richard II* that 'we want this to replicate, in a certain kind of way, the experience you would have if you were sitting in a theatre in Stratford' (Production Diary 12). Doran, as quoted earlier, wanted the audience to experience 'the air that he [Shakespeare] breathed'. This 'replication' of an experience elsewhere, a kind of literary tourism with its implied access to the vicinity of Shakespeare himself, implies a kind of space-travel (maybe even time-travel) effected through the utilisation of cinematic devices, with the wholesale imaginative transfer of the cinema audience to 'the air of Stratford'.

The simultaneous mental occupation of two spaces, in this case the cinema and the theatre, is a feature of all live outside broadcasts. The two spaces are interdependent, with the transfer *in* of material to the cinema space providing the basis for an imaginative transfer *out* to the theatrical location. But the ability of the cinema audience to imaginatively transport themselves to the theatrical location is dependent on the effective use of cinematic technologies and techniques. These 'live broadcasts' are shaped by two directorial hands: that of the director of the original theatre production and that of the director of the film production company. They are thus, in John Wyver's words, 'double adaptations' (*From Theatre*): created once for the theatre space, and then again for the cinema. This process begs a number of questions. Do the cinema audience really see the same production as the audience in the theatre? If not, does this matter? If some difference is introduced, would this discredit the idea of a shared live event? The dilemma is further compounded by the fact that the dispersed audiences are located in a *cinematic* space, where they have been conditioned to become adept, whether consciously or unconsciously, at interpreting complex, cinematic, codes and conventions.

It would seem that something of this dilemma is recognised by David Sabel.

> It's been done poorly in the past, so as not to disturb the audience watching in the theatre. But Nick [Hytner] says it's like filming a sports match; you take the audience's eye to where the

> ball goes. If we've done our job, you should feel you saw a piece of theatre, not a film, even though there were probably lots of close ups where the director was choosing what you see. (Sabel *Guardian*, Culture Professionals Network April 2012)

This implies a style of camera work which directs the eye of the cinema viewer without drawing attention to itself, yet nevertheless still employs the full grammar of filmmaking. (This is something akin to Jorgens' classification of film adaptation—the 'realistic'.) The wish to utilise the full gamut of film techniques, albeit in an understated way, is echoed in Gregory Doran's comments on the filming of the RSC *Richard II*:

> It's a magnificent opportunity to share the experience of theatre with the widest possible audience, but I think it's very important that we find a way of re-imagining it for film; it mustn't be like having a security camera peering at the stage. (Kennedy)

Both companies, it seems, recognised that they would after all need to 'disturb' the theatre audience: for the filming of the productions, rows of seats were removed to accommodate the cameras, and audiences were offered reduce priced seats on the evening of the performance. So in one respect the cinema audiences were not, on that occasion, seeing and sharing the same 'live' performance as the theatre audience, since the latter were able to see the paraphernalia of the outside broadcast crew. The productions, however, were filmed and broadcast in real time, with no breaks for resetting cameras. The aim was to make the filming as unobtrusive as possible for the theatre audience and not to seem intrusive for the cinema audience. John Wyver, the *Richard II* RSC Live producer, explained that

> we want to enhance it, by giving close-ups of certain moments, giving you developing shots which, I hope without being intrusive, feel like they make it interesting and exciting to see on the big screen. I don't think there is any sense in which it has changed the way the director, Gregory Doran, and the cast have put it on the stage. There is no sense in which we are trying to alter what they are doing. We are trying to reflect that for the screen. (*Production Diary 12*)

In this statement, there is something of the paradoxical aspect of these, and arguably any other, outside broadcasts. On the one hand, they are selling the audience an opportunity, in Stephen Purcell's words, to 'be there' (212), to have that seat in the stalls for this 'significant', live, and unique performance. Yet, on the other hand, the cinema broadcast is inevitably constructed from a grammar, a set of techniques, which are different from theatre. Even at their most unobtrusive, outside broadcasts will provide opportunities for additions, not only interviews and background material but also enhancements, developing shots, and reflections, all created by the director and the film production company team.

The NT Live production of *King Lear* broadcast on 1 May 2014 demonstrates some of these paradoxes. As with other NT Live productions, there was an initial address from the National Theatre stage, which, although it was accessible by the theatre audience, was marked by its direct address to the camera as specifically for the cinema audience. Emma Freud, standing on the stage of the Olivier theatre, reported that the production was being 'beamed' into cinemas, it was a 'sold-out' performance, and what is more it was happening only a week after Shakespeare's 450th Birthday. The event was thus positioned, as discussed earlier, as unique, special, and celebratory. We were

reminded that *King Lear* is 'enduring', 'challenging', and a 'timeless piece about ageing and madness'. As part of this heightening of anticipation, the practitioners also came in for praise, with Simon Russell Beale referred to as the 'greatest classical actor' of his generation, taking part in his seventh partnership at the National Theatre with Sam Mendes over the period of a 25-year career. This introductory address was quite brief, in line with the trend noted earlier, and included the promise of a short film about the production at the interval.

The performance began for the cinema audience with an establishing shot of the stage: a mid close-up focussing on a bright, slightly misty circle, suggesting the setting sun. As the camera pulled back, this image was revealed as being part of the curved back wall of the set, containing a door, and in front of this midstage were three desks, set side by side, each with a microphone and two chairs. In front of these was a single floor-mounted microphone, with a chair beside it, with back to the audience. On the floor was traced the sign of a cross in white, the central line of which was elongated on a walkway into the audience.

Many of these live outside broadcasts include such placing shots. In *Frankenstein* (2011), the egg-like pulsating sack from which the creature emerges is the initial focus, and then a wide-screen shot of the Olivier stage follows. In *Coriolanus* (2013), 'the mob' is seen graffiti-ing messages on the back wall, and then the camera pulls back to reveal the full studio space at the Donmar Warehouse. These opening shots are perhaps designed to mimic the theatre audience's scanning of the stage to get their spatial bearings in the early moments of a performance, but, significantly, the cinema audience are guided and offered a specific view as they locate themselves within the theatre space. It is this guidance or directing of the audience's view which has been the source of much of the criticism directed at the outside broadcasts. The inability of the cinema audience to direct their own gaze is held up as the antithesis of the supposed freedom of the theatre audience. While such an analysis arguably overlooks the theatre director's use of a range of devices, including stage design, lighting, and music, to shape a theatre audience's point of view, it is certainly true that the viewpoint of the cinema audience undergoes a further level of manipulation and construction.

The focus on the physical space of the stage enables the cinema audience to acclimatise themselves to the 'other place' they are concurrently sharing with the audience in the theatre. Yet, that image of the stage gives access to a set of assumed values and codes which may be in direct opposition to those of the Cineplexes or even Arthouse cinemas. This is partly an opposition grounded in the presumed gap in the cultural hierarchy between film and theatre. Yet, as Mark Thornton Burnett notes, it also has something to do with theatre's rootedness in time and place in the face of globalization.

> The traditional resonances of theatre, and its historical association with forms of communion, are placed in oppositional juxtaposition with the inconstant operations of the global marketplace, a procedure linked to the ways in which 'memory practices', because of their 'temporal anchoring', implicitly 'contest the myths of cyber-capitalism and globalization and their denial of time, space and place'. (Burnett 8)

Burnett, citing Andreas Huyssen, is here discussing 'filmic representations whose narratives prioritise theatrical shows and stagings of Shakespearean texts' (7), rather than

NT Live or RSC Live. Yet, his implication that the juxtaposition of stage and film may revive our awareness of the 'forms of communion' associated with live theatre may help to explain why contemporary cinema audiences might respond to theatrical 'liveness', to the 'traditional resonances' glimpsed in the outside broadcasts. The 'temporal anchoring' (Huyssen 37, quoted Burnett 8) of the theatre may be an antidote to, or at least a distraction from, a sense that the world is becoming increasingly fractured and fragmented, time-shifted, and prerecorded.[5]

It may be paradoxical, then, that the theatre companies have created a global market for these broadcasts, where the commercial advantages to both NT and RSC are obvious, as well as Complicite and Manchester International Festival. Audiences estimated at sixty thousand for RSC Live *Richard II* are clearly of financial benefit to the companies, with the added opportunity to raise the cultural capital of their brands worldwide. This commercialisation has been roundly attacked by critics such as Chris Goode, who commented on the decision of the National Theatre to broadcast the work of Complicite as

> '[w]rongheaded' precisely because it treats a piece of theatre as information, as streamable content... and therefore by extension it is worth sacrificing the form of the encounter in which the content is principally designed to be shared, in order for the content to reach more people and therefore make more money.

Goode implies that the distinctive qualities of live theatre are being exploited and undermined by such rampant commercialism; others have suggested that the future of smaller theatre companies may be under threat because of the success of NT Live and RSC Live (Hemley). At the very least, these broadcasts are ideologically ambivalent, poised as they are between an imperative of commercial gain and a democratic ambition to make subsidised theatre available to many more people.

IV

I want to look now, more closely, at the broadcast performances themselves. I begin with an account of the broadcast version of one of the key scenes in *King Lear*: Act One, Scene One, the testing of Lear's daughters. The aim is to combine documentation (as the broadcast is not commercially available) with an analysis of how the shaping of the scene by the camera, which was the work of the camera director Robin Lough, partially altered the theatre director's, Sam Mendes', declared intention for the production. Commenting on this scene in the theatre programme, Mendes notes,

> I felt for us to fully understand both the violence in the play and the reason why Cordelia makes her choice, we needed to exist at the beginning of our story in an absolute monarchy, a dictatorship. It is a violent world, in which Cordelia's refusal to conform becomes a political as well as a personal statement. Lear has not heard the word 'no' for many years.

As described above, the stage with its formal tableau of desks and microphones is used to present the testing scene as a public event, part game-show, part select committee hearing. At the beginning of this section of the scene, after a slight pause of anticipation following 'the king is coming', Lear sweeps on to the stage followed by his daughters, their husbands, and about twenty to thirty supernumeraries who position themselves

around the edge of the 'chamber'. The king sits in the chair at the front of the stage with his back to the audience, while Regan and Goneril sit at the desks, in pairs with their husbands. Cordelia is seated at the third desk, stage left, with an empty chair beside her.

This scene was captured for the cinema audience by utilising a range of camera angles. Lear is seated with his back to the theatre audience, interposed between the audience and the daughters. For the cinema audience, the camera positioned behind the chair shows the back of his head with the daughters in the frame. This seems to emphasise his dominance of the scene, as noted by Mendes earlier, and demonstrates his absolute power, in the early part of the scene at least. Each of the daughters is seen in medium close-up, as they offer their response. This enables the cinema audience to see more clearly the fairly small detail that they need to pull the microphones, which are facing their husbands, towards themselves before they speak, an action which illustrates the inherent patriarchy of Lear's kingdom. Goneril and Regan are more clearly delineated and contrasted in this production than in many others. The more restrained, repressed Goneril, arms tight to her body, standing behind the desk, is caught in medium shot as she responds to her father, and then the camera follows the more demonstrative Regan, as she comes around the tables to sit on Lear's knee. The heads of father and daughter are seen close together over the back of the chair. The camera moves slowly to the tables for Cordelia's 'nothing', and then pulls right back behind Lear to show the Fool sitting on the walkway into the audience. This is something of a revelation to the cinema audience, belatedly introduced to the character, while the theatre audience have been aware of his watching presence throughout the scene. As Lear rails at Cordelia, the camera tracks Russell Beale as he wanders around the table, while a longer shot shows him shouting and overturning some of the tables. Lear's banishment of Kent is recorded by the camera from Lear's point of view, at the level of the seat from the front of the stage. The pairing of Kent and Cordelia in the same shot reinforces their affiliation. With Kent's exit through the audience (only the 'good' characters seem to leave by this route), Cordelia is forced to stand on a chair as Lear reveals her fate. The camera views Cordelia from below, so that the cinema audience see her from Lear's seated position. Both audiences share the same aural perspective, as the (slightly distorted) sound from Lear's on-stage microphone captures his heavy breathing and his venomous delivery of 'better thou hadst / Not been born than not t'have pleased me better' (1.2.239-40). Cordelia is allowed to descend from the chair to hear the deliberations of her potential suitors. When Burgundy withdraws his suit, Lear's laughter is amplified by the on-stage microphone; later the camera pulls back to show Lear rise from his seat to break apart the joined hands of Cordelia and France, before watching him make a shuffling exit through the rear door.

From this brief description, it is clear that capturing the 'liveness' of this key early scene in the play involved a number of artistic choices. The camera angles in the scene certainly drew out the detail of the production's central focus on the absolute power of the king and also highlighted the inherent patriarchy of the court. There were also benefits in terms of characterisation with the contrasted behaviours of the daughters vividly delineated, including the pathos and power of Cordelia's individual act of defiance. Nevertheless, this 'double adaptation', as it attempted to capture the on-stage

interpretation, seemed to diminish the public and political significance of Lear's actions, which Mendes has declared was a significant aspect of his production.

> [S]o it's a play about the start of a war and the end of a stable nation and how those two things the personal and the political are inextricably linked. On the one hand it's the great play about homelessness: what it means to lose everything you have. On the other, it's about losing a country and a descent into political chaos that has, in Shakespeare's vision, no obvious catharsis.

The 'descent into political chaos' is marked in this production by the presence of a large number of supernumeraries representing a world beyond the noble families. Mendes notes, again in the theatre programme, that

> Lear begins surrounded by soldiers in the form of knights. They are his personal army, his Stasi, if you like and I wanted to make sure that we made them real on stage, to give them real presence. They also alter the scenes in which they are present.

In the love-test scene, as described earlier, they enter with Lear and form a semicircle of silent figures observing the action. In his 'Talking Lear' Platform, Simon Russell Beale also notes how this political dimension was informed by Peter Brook's and Grigori Kosintsev's film versions of *King Lear,* both of which include numerous extras captured in powerful close-ups showing the poverty-etched faces of the king's subjects dispossessed by authoritarian power politics. Nevertheless, in the NT Live filming of this second scene, the potential resonance, nay even the presence, of these supernumerary figures to this production seemed largely occluded. In the medium shots of the daughters' declarations to Lear, they were, it is true, occasionally glimpsed with their faces lit from the side in a manner reminiscent of Kosintsev's figures. But the camera angles selected for the outside broadcast instead seemed to favour a narrative about family politics rather than Mendes' desired expanded focus on the wider political significance of the play.

The dissipation of this political context continued in the *King Lear* NT Live interval talk. The reminder of future events, and the somewhat incongruous exhortation to 'have a good night', was presented by Emma Freud live from the theatre and followed by a prerecorded set of 'talking head' features. Most of the features presented by Mendes and Russell Beale were digital versions of parts of the theatre programme. However, the issues discussed were less focussed on the overall vision of the production than on actors' preparatory work on characterisation: Russell Beale shaving his head to help him address the idea of the King as a bully and dictator; Kate Fleetwood and Anna Maxwell Martin trying to distinguish Goneril and Regan, so they are not interchangeable evil sisters; and Olivia Vinall as Cordelia 'not going to play the game' as she recognises her father has become a dictator. These observations might retrospectively have informed the cinema audiences' understanding of the family dynamics in the first half. Yet, the discussion about Russell Beale's research into Lewy Body dementia and how this had influenced his playing of Lear could be said to extend its influence into the second half of the play. The close-up camera work of the first half of the performance had clearly caught the detail of Russell Beale's physical presentation of Lear which involved hand tremors, repeated scratching of his skin, and a stooped shuffling

walk. This was now 'explained' and the audience's sympathy for Lear ratcheted up for the second half of the performance. This focus on individual and team strategies, given immediacy by the talking head style of the filmed material, again invites parallels with the constructed 'liveness' of other outside broadcasts, such as sporting events. Moreover, it creates a watching experience for the cinema audience that is more directed than that of the theatre audience, who have liberty to ignore the paper programme until after the event: the digital programme in the cinema is more difficult to ignore, and instrumental in creating a heightened filter of perception through which to view the remainder of the play.

Some of the camera angles utilised by Robin Lough would be familiar to film directors involved in creating cinematic adaptations of literary texts. But the outside broadcasts are working from a more reduced palette, with some filmic choices unattainable in a live large theatre space. *King Lear* from the Olivier theatre made little, if any, use of suturing, a fairly common feature of recorded television drama and cinema. Yet, for *Coriolanus* at the Donmar, a studio space theatre, NT Live was able to utilise a number of shot-reaction-shot sequences, perhaps, most powerfully in the final Volumnia and Coriolanus interchange, where tight close-ups revealed the tearful effects of his mother's pleading on her son (5.3.149ff). These differences reflect what is technologically possible to record in variably sized theatre spaces and do to some extent resemble the viewing experiences available to the live theatre audiences in these venues (since reaction shots are more difficult to perceive for some audience members in a large auditorium).

One camera shot notable by its absence in the *King Lear* broadcast was the direct address to the camera. Speeches such as Edmund's soliloquy in Act One, Scene Two, his aside to the audience about his father later in the same scene (1.2.116), and Lear's 'let me not be mad' speech (1.5.45) were all delivered over the camera to the theatre audience beyond. While direct address to camera in the performance, instead of just in the supporting material, could have further enhanced the immediacy of the experience for the cinema audience, it would inevitably have altered the live performance for the theatre audience, and thus undermined for the cinema audience the perception of unobtrusively witnessing a live theatre event. Similarly, full-face close-ups which are a standard shot in many films were noticeable by their absence.[6] Arguably, such shots would make it necessary for the actors to amend their performances, and as Russell Beale noted in *The Guardian*, 'there's a strict rule, as far as I can see, that no one ever asks us to change our performances to suit the cameras'. This commitment not to change the performances means that in the *King Lear* broadcast, the most frequent shots were medium close-ups (head to waist) and long shots either from the front or sides of the stage. Perhaps the most adventurous shot was prompted by the bold stage effect of Lear and the Fool rising on a platform during the storm scene. In this crane shot, the point of view was from a level below the platform, although at a higher point than for the audience in the stalls.

In the RSC Live *Richard II* broadcast, a slightly wider selection of camera angles and shots was employed. In one of the RSC Production Diaries John Wyver, the producer, revealed the substantial temporary alterations that had been made to the stalls in the RST (Royal Shakespeare Theatre). The removal of rows of seats accommodated six

cameras, including one on a track, as well as the massive Moviebird 44, used for crane shots. The transmission and real time editing occurred in Outside Broadcast trucks, positioned next to the theatre (Outside Broadcast trucks are also used for NT Live). The opening scene began with an ambitious crane shot which showed the Duchess of Gloucester (Jane Lapotaire) from above, draped over the coffin of her late husband. The coffin has the coat of arms of Woodstock, and a sword lies on top of it, and as the camera slowly tracks down, and back to a position at the front of the stage, we can see the coffin is positioned towards the back of the thrust stage. The camera now at the front of the stage gives us, in an extreme long shot, the customary opening establishing shot of the stage's design and dimensions. The court, including the Queen (Emma Hamilton), seems to shrink back behind the old proscenium arch of the theatre and is captured on screen like a medieval illuminated painting. Gloucester's two brothers, Gaunt (Michael Pennington) and York (Oliver Ford Davies), enter along walkways on either side of the auditorium, and, still in extreme long shot, we see them bow ceremoniously and then comfort their grieving sister-in-law. The camera moves in a little to show them greeting each other, and as Gaunt steps back, we see Bolingbroke (Nigel Lyndsay) comfort his father. Following a trumpet fanfare, Richard (David Tennant) moves through a small group at the rear of the stage to stage right at Proscenium arch level. Richard addresses the first words of the play, in a rather conversational manner, to his uncle, and a small group of family members surrounding him. Mowbray (Antony Byrne) positioned on stage left on the other side of the coffin, is marked as the outsider, not as finely attired as the royal family but wearing a chain mail vest and a rough tunic with his own, rather faded, coat of arms. A reaction shot catches his unease as Richard mentions Mowbray's complaint. The hearing of Bolingbroke's and Mowbray's complaint is staged in front of the coffin. Richard's 'high-stomached are they both and full of ire; / In rage, deaf as the sea, hasty as fire' (1.1.18-19) is played as a flippant aside to the theatre audience and caught on film in a medium shot. The two combatants kneel with their backs to the audience. Although all the actors have radio mics, these speeches are more muted as they face away from the audience, and it seems that the sound levels have been adjusted to mimic the way the speeches would be heard in the theatre. Bolingbroke's accusations are seen in medium shot, and then on 'thou art a traitor and a miscreant' we have a reaction shot introduced from behind Bolingbroke, with Mowbray in half profile. There is then a quick shift to a crane long shot on 'traitor's name' which Bolingbroke shouts out to the auditorium. Mowbray's reply is caught in medium shot, with the camera then pulling back to see him spit at Bolingbroke. Bolingbroke's throwing down of his gage is caught in an extreme long shot, which also shows Richard moving backstage to talk to the favourites. As Richard returns to the front of the stage, Bolingbroke shouts his accusations about 'all the treasons' (1.1.95) to the audience, and a reaction shot shows Richard steelily catching Mowbray's eye on 'he did cause the Duke of Gloucester's death'[7] (1.1.100). On Richard's line 'we were not born to sue but to command' (1.1.196), he strikes Gloucester's coffin with his sceptre, and a long shot captures the court's surprise. One of the final shots of the scene sees a medium shot which nicely summarises the scene with Bolingbroke and Mowbray face to face, the coffin behind them, and Richard in the distance behind them in conference with the favourites.

As we can see from this account of the opening scene, the cameras were used for a number of purposes. It is clear that this was not a neutral recording of the performance, and was far from just capturing and documenting what happened on stage. As in the NT Live *King Lear*, Robin Lough uses the camera to help the audience follow a key—but it has to be said in this instance, a potentially rather confusing—scene. Gregory Doran's decision to stage the scene around Gloucester's coffin had the benefit of linking Gloucester's murder from the lost play *Woodstock* to this opening. The camera's adaptation built on this 'explanation' with the reaction shots between Richard and Mowbray, communicating Richard's unease. While not, on the whole, drawing attention to the camera's movements, the choice of shots shaped an interpretation of the scene for the cinema audience, which implicated Richard in the murder of Gloucester. Doran, although playing down his own role in the 'capture' of the performance, notes that 'I was able to say we need to get that line coming from that actor. And all the more important, and more difficult, to make sure you register that reaction shot from that character there' (Doran, Director's Commentary). Lough's camera work then captured these significant moments and pieced together a narrative about Mowbray's actions, his estrangement from the court, which came to a climax when the camera focussed on him exclaiming, to the Duchess of Gloucester who is not usually in this scene, that 'this is my fault' (1.1.142). This gave a clarity to the scene but one which seems rather oversimplified. Compared with NT Live *King Lear*, this recording of *Richard II* seemed to use more reaction shots, with the camera often facing the character speaking in a midshot, while capturing the back of the person being addressed in the foreground. This tended to reduce the declamatory and ritual nature of the play and seemed in line with Doran's desire to make the language more accessible.

The production also made quite conspicuous use of the crane shot. As well as the opening of the production, it was used again most notably in Act Three, Scene Three on the bridge representing the battlements at Flint castle. This scene is played entirely out to the audience with Bolingbroke not looking at Richard behind him on the castle walls. This section is also broken up into public passages and Richard's more intimate conversations with Aumerle, as he prepares to 'come down' (3.3.176) to the base court. Richard, in this interpretation, is apparently moved by Aumerle's tearful response to his plight, and this leads to a moment in the scene where he kisses his cousin. The use of the crane shot which moved in very slowly at this point delivered an intense midshot showing Richard embracing the distraught Aumerle. Wyver notes that the 'cameras were employed to draw out the story, one of desperate sadness … nobody in the [theatre] audience got this view'. This example indicates how the broadcast did on occasions create a different version of the production for the cinema audience.[8] Doran and Wyver have also explained that for them this high shot had a symbolic significance. They hoped that the focus on Richard in this crane shot would here show Richard at the highest point on the wheel of fortune before his descent begins. In the cinema, however, at least for me, the scene on the bridge felt dislocated from the overall physical space of the stage, and became more filmic in character, undermining the sense of capturing a shared theatrical experience. In this instance, and in a later close-up of Tennant in the prison scene, the theatre audience's view was not authentically captured.

The broadcast did, however, quite successfully include views and sounds of the audience in the theatre. In the NT Live productions, the audience seem almost accidentally captured on camera during many of those performances. In contrast, the RSC broadcast consistently included shots of the theatre audience seated around the thrust stage watching the performance. In addition, they were heard to respond: gasping as Mowbray spat at Bolingbroke, and laughing with Richard as he tried to distract Aumerle at Flint. The visual presence and the audible responses of the RSC theatre audience seemed important indicators of the performance's 'liveness'. The broadcast did not offer audience reaction shots; yet, their presence strengthened the cinema audience's conviction that the event was a shared, live event.

The RSC Live *Richard II* was, in May 2014, the first of these outside broadcasts to be released on DVD. So, before concluding this discussion, let us briefly reflect on the 'afterlife' of this broadcast.

First, the recording of the live performance is apparently as it was broadcast originally in the cinema. It can be viewed uninterrupted in its entirety, although in keeping with the DVD configuration it can also be accessed via 'chapters'. Secondly, in this DVD the recorded broadcast has obviously lost its chronologically live dimension, and it now occupies both a different time as well as a different place: it is perhaps this which makes it seem now more like the Globe theatre live recordings, or those available online from Digital Theatre. Thirdly, the DVD experience is even significantly different from the recorded 'Encore Live' performances shown in cinemas, which are in essence reshowings of the whole broadcast as if it were live. Primarily this is because on the DVD, the preperformance interviews and additional material, which it has been argued here helped to construct a sense of 'liveness', have all been removed from their positions in sequence around the broadcast. These are now presented in new configurations as DVD 'extras'. Some of the live material, such as the interval interview with Michael Pennington and Jane Lapotaire, has not made it to the DVD. Maybe this is because Lapotaire nearly swore in the live version, but more likely it is because the interview covered material about the rehearsal process now available elsewhere on the DVD. Some things do remain, although, somewhat ironically, these are repackaged as the conventional DVD extras they had once been compared with. They include 'Playing with Light' a discussion of the production's lighting design, which had also originally been part of the interval material in the cinema, and Helen Castor's film about the historical context of the play, which had begun life as a Production Diary on the RSC website before being used as part of the cinema broadcast. Gregory Doran's live interview with Suzy Klein from the auditorium on the night of the live broadcast has been replaced by his Production Diary 'talking head' from the RSC website. Symbolically, perhaps, he is now seen sitting in an *empty* auditorium. Doran does also feature, however, in that stalwart of the DVD format, 'the Director's Commentary', where he discusses the production with John Wyver. This commentary, if selected, obliges the viewer to occupy a different time zone from the production it describes, and inevitably notes what 'we did', rather than the 'what we are doing' or 'about to do' which typified most of the material in the live broadcast. It contains some useful insights into the original theatre production and some interesting discussion about the rationale for certain artistic choices in the broadcast. The commentary also emphasises the innovative and experimental

nature of the 'liveness' of such outside broadcasts. Yet overall, the DVD does not offer a complete and accurate recording of that event. Instead, the RSC Live *Richard II* DVD seems to have been constructed for another purpose: to be an educational resource or commemorative souvenir.

V

This exploration has shown how the RSC Live and NT Live broadcasts both look forward, in that they are facilitated by innovative new digital technologies, and look backwards, as they recapitulate aspects of a long-established format: the outside broadcast. As we have seen, the central challenge for these contemporary outside broadcasts is to create a sense of 'liveness' for audiences, who are accessing the productions at a distance in a different kind of public space, the cinema. They achieve a kind of place-shifting by utilising established techniques and strategies from radio and television. Their versions of 'liveness' and 'communities of perception' are crafted and constructed: the events in the cinema are understood as 'live' by their audiences, precisely because they are based on these models from other forms of media, particularly television, where live experiences are customarily signalled according to certain conventions. And yet despite, or maybe because of, the constructed nature of this innovative live format, the venture seems driven by a nostalgic longing for the experiences and values of that distant place, the theatre.

The premise that the broadcasts fully satisfy that longing, that they offer the 'same' performance, and an experience equivalent to a 'seat in the stalls', seems naive in the light of the analysis in this paper. Yet, is this sufficient reason to raise the spectre of 'fidelity' again in adaptation studies? Perhaps, in the spirit of the solution which Robert Stam offered those troubled by earlier questions around fidelity (27), we should see such broadcasts as in an intertextual relationship with the live theatre performances. We may also need to rethink the binary opposition of 'live' versus 'recorded', which has been an intrinsic part of the academic study of stage and cinematic adaptations. With their distinctive tropes of production and consumption, these contemporary outside broadcasts offer a new mode of literary adaptation, with a complex set of attendant questions about the nature of 'liveness'.

NOTES

[1] There was a wide-ranging discussion about how these 'live theatre in cinema' productions should be described at the one-day conference 'From Theatre to Screen – and Back Again!' at De Montfort University, Leicester on 19 February 2014.

[2] RSC Live from Stratford upon Avon will from now be abbreviated to RSC Live.

[3] At the time of writing, there are no DVD recordings available for any of the NT Live productions. This, as noted by the attendees at the 'From Theatre to Screen – and Back Again!' conference (February 2014), makes academic investigation of these performances more challenging. However, it is interesting to note that the early outside broadcasts of live cultural events were not often retained for further showings. Primarily, this was due to the cost of the film itself, but Andrew Crisell notes 'that this was as much a reflection of ideology as of cost. Television was live and liveness deals in ephemerality, not permanence. Live material dissolves – perishes – and perishability is at once the source of its preciousness and its worthlessness' (*Liveness* 22). It is doubtful whether the National Theatre consider these 'Live' productions 'worthless', and it does hold all of the master tapes of NT Live as well as viewing copies of the recordings, which are open to anyone to view upon appointment with the NT archive. Nevertheless, the NT has to date resisted

the urgings of its audience (particularly the vociferous *Frankenstein* bloggers) to release DVDs of the productions, citing on-going discussion about the performers' rights. This information is now attached as a standard reply to all emails to NT Live:

> DVD Enquiries
> Please know that if you are enquiring about a DVD of a National Theatre Live broadcast that currently National Theatre Live does not produce DVDs. This is because National Theatre Live is filmed with the specific intent of it being shown on cinema screens and although it doesn't replace the theatrical experience it tries to emulate it as much as possible. We very much appreciate your desire to see the release of DVDs of our broadcasts but unfortunately there are no immediate plans to do this due to our rights agreements we hold with our artists. We will, however, continue to evaluate this decision.

This is an indication of the level of enquiries received and of course, this decision also maintains the marketability of the 'uniqueness' of future broadcasts. The RSC on the other hand released *Richard II* on DVD in May 2014, and this is discussed later in this article. In May 2014, the Shakespeare Centre Library was unable to confirm that they would hold a master copy of the live performance in their archive but suggested this was likely.

[4] My thanks to Stephen Purcell who kindly gave me access to his forthcoming chapter before its publication in June 2014.

[5] I am aware that Christie Carson argues something rather different with reference to the audiences at the Globe when she suggests that audiences flock to the Globe 'as a result as a rebellion against the increasing atomization of the computer world, and a hunger in the real world for the participatory nature of the newly democratized online environment' (127).

[6] See Erin Sullivan on this aspect with relation to RSC Live: *Richard II*. She argues that facial close-ups 'trap the actors' bodies within the confines of the camera frame, imposing stasis on a moment that in the theatre is unbounded and alive with possibility'.

[7] The production altered 'plot' to 'cause' in this line.

[8] Another occurred in the prison scene with an intense close-up of Tennant which represented another view not available to the audience.

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Academe and academy: Kenneth Branagh's *Love's Labour's Lost*

ABSTRACT

This article argues that Kenneth Branagh's film adaptation of Shakespeare's Love's Labour's Lost *(2000), although not a commercial or a critical success when released, continues to raise issues pertinent to contemporary adaptation studies. By investigating how Shakespeare's 'academe' is represented through the idiom of a different kind of 'Academy', that of the Hollywood musical of the 1930s/1940s, we can uncover tensions created by the opposition of high and low culture, and the intermingling of the cinematic and the theatrical. In this film adaptation of a play, the relationship between the cinematic and theatrical is further complicated through the model of the early Hollywood musical, which itself seeks, through its inbuilt conventions, to maintain a connection with live theatre and its community. Although Branagh's adaptation may be deemed a failed experiment, it is representative, in its exploitation of the interaction between the cinematic and theatrical, of a continuing, complex conversation between the genres, exemplified by the use of cinematic techniques in the theatre, and the broadcasting of live theatre into cinemas.*

KEYWORDS

Branagh
Shakespeare
Love's Labour's Lost
Hollywood musical
theatrical
cinematic

> Navarre shall be the wonder of the world,
> Our court shall be a little academe,
> Still and contemplative in living art.
>
> (Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost*, I.i.12–14)

I

In 2000 Kenneth Branagh, one of the late twentieth century's most prolific and influential performers and directors of Shakespeare's plays, created a movie version of *Love's Labour's Lost* in the style of a 1930s' musical comedy. This has become something of a cause célèbre in its approach to adaptation, eliciting a variety of responses from academic critics, some of whom use a postmodern critique to applaud the production (Crowl 2003; Gay 2010; Severn 2013), while others, following Frederic Jameson rather than Linda Hutcheon, use one to highlight its failings (Wray 2002; Holste 2002). Branagh's adaptation is bold and, even though the director expected it 'might provoke hostile debate' (Griswold 2000: 9), it has proved even more challenging to audiences and critics than he initially supposed. Its combination of the play's 'academe' with the Hollywood Academy style of 1930s' golden age musical comedy has opened up debates about the text's relationship with modernity/postmodernity, the appropriateness of Branagh's chosen historical context and, most importantly, the connection between 'high' culture, as represented by Shakespeare's text, and the 'low'/popular culture of romantic musical comedy.

In addition, the film invites us to consider the relationship between the theatrical and cinematic modes. Branagh's film is, of course, not alone in utilizing a cinematic genre to explore a Shakespearean drama. Loncraine's 1995 film adaptation of *Richard III*, just a few years before Branagh's production, made extensive use of the gangster genre in its tone and visual representation. Lurhmann's 1996 movie *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* placed the contemporary MTV genre at the heart of its interpretation and style. While *Love's Labour's Lost*'s historical retrenchment into classic Hollywood cinema could be seen as a reaction against this MTV mode, the commercial success of Luhrmann's film encouraged Branagh and others to assert more directorial interpretative freedom. Branagh notes:

> we have broken away from the various earlier periods of Shakespeare movie making that were linked more closely to theatre […] Now these stories are free for exploration in a way they weren't before. The canvas is blank again.
>
> (Griswold 2010)

This comment presupposes that it is possible to break away from the theatricality inherent within a Shakespeare text, and overlooking the fact that theatrical conventions and genres were often replicated in the new media of film, as is evident in classic film musicals. The possibility of working from a 'blank canvas' may be more problematic than Branagh suggests and may explain why in Branagh's production the relationship between the cinematic and the theatrical is often an uncomfortable one.

II

In Shakespeare's play, the 'academe' is established in the first scene. The King of Navarre and his courtiers pledge to transform the court into 'a little academe,/

Still and contemplative in living art' (I.i.13–14). The aspirations of the King and his three friends are, as H. R. Woudhuysen notes, to pursue 'the art of living, the *ars vivendi* of Stoic philosophers; practical learning, knowledge, which has to do with the business of life; the living quality of art' (1998: 113). It should not then be art in a vacuum but a study of art focused on its practical application. The plot of the play demonstrates that this academe remains an unfulfilled aspiration thwarted by romantic intervention. Yet in another sense it is the style of *Love's Labour's Lost* that is 'living art': the play itself its own 'academe', with its welter of late sixteenth-century tropes and conventions creating an exuberant artifice. The play also hints, through its stylistic echoes, at the disagreements among various factions in contemporary literary circles. Much critical activity has been expended in attempting to identify all the contemporary literary and historical references in the play. Editors of the play text may conclude with Woudhuysen that

> there is a difference between Shakespeare's drawing on these elements in a general or diffused way and his consciously deciding at this point in his career that he would write a play that directly alluded to or even was 'about' them.
>
> (1998: 72)

Yet it cannot be denied that the style of the play reflects an Early Modern aesthetic preoccupation with the form, content and purpose of artistic endeavours. The project of the King and his nobles in the play is reinforced by the decision that this study must be conducted in retreat from the everyday world, so that the men become

> […] brave conquerors – for so you are,
> That war against your own affections
> And the huge army of the world's desires.
>
> (1.1.8–10)

This passage, while drawing upon the Renaissance debate about the merits of a contemplative life, indicates that such disengagement is hard won, and wittily presents through its metaphors of warfare how, from the start, the 'academe' is embattled by affections and desire. The imagery also demonstrates the play's fascination with language itself as something that can either obfuscate or enrich. The linguistic fireworks provide the text with a distinctive character, but they also present particular challenges. Miriam Gilbert notes:

> [c]ritics recognise its verbal exuberance, but they do not always admire it, perhaps finding the characters so intoxicated with language that they seem merely witty speakers rather than characters worth exploring. Students find the play 'difficult' to read because of the intricate puns, and directors approach the play, blue pencil in hand, ready to cut the lines which seem to them obscure and inaccessible; the play's vulnerability to cutting derives from the repetition of certain passages (most notably Berowne's long speech at the end of IV.iii) which were clearly revised, but not clearly cancelled.
>
> (1996: 6)

These are some of the reasons that the play has presented difficulties to theatre practitioners since its earliest performances. They may also account for

the play's comparative neglect and its disappearance from the English stage between the 'first decade of the seventeenth century and the third decade of the nineteenth' (Gilbert 1996: 21). In the twentieth century the play experienced a revival and there were eleven different productions at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. There have been, to my knowledge, no previous film versions of the play before Branagh's, although the play has been adapted for television twice, as a one-off in 1965 for the BBC, directed by Roger Jenkins, and as part of the BBC TV Shakespeare series in 1985, directed by Elijah Moshinsky. It is clear, as Miriam Gilbert's valuable account of performances of the play indicates, that nearly all productions of *Love's Labour's Lost* in the twentieth century have modified the text to some extent. Most productions have emended the text either by cutting it or rearranging it, many have used the visual arts as a correlative to the artificiality of the play's language (e.g., a Peter Brook Stratford production [1946] adapted paintings by Watteau), some have examined the play in terms of their own contemporary motifs of engagement and retreat, some derived from popular culture, and all seem to have pursued adaptation in the spirit of mining a vein of supposed authenticity.

III

Branagh's film is in this tradition of adaptation. Its most notable features are the removal of about three-quarters of the text and the transformation of the play into a classic musical comedy. Generally, as Pendleton comments, in the filming of Shakespeare 'the director […] is more concerned with getting rid of words [than with adding or rearranging them]; most films cut a third or even half of the lines' (1998: 62). Inevitably the question 'when does a Shakespeare text cease to be a Shakespeare text?' arises when, as in this instance, such a substantial part is removed. In *Love's Labour's Lost* the decision to cut the text was intertwined with the director's plan to transform the play into a musical. Branagh comments:

> [a] famous critic once said of it that it was a 'fashionable play 300 years out of fashion' because a lot of its references are very specific to its time. We have cut a lot of that material and replaced it with the songs of wonderful writers like Cole Porter, Irving Berlin or George Gershwin whose lyrics are arguably as witty in their own way as Shakespeare was in his and just as full of conceits and verbal trickery. Shakespeare was trying to convey how silly and wonderful and stupid and agonising it is to be in love and the songs we have chosen convey all the same ideas about the vicissitudes of love.
>
> (Pathé *Love's Labour's Lost* Official Website 2000)

Branagh's allusion here to Granville-Barker's *Preface* to the play may reflect awareness of the critic's openness to 'the question of cutting', although Granville-Barker also notes that 'one cannot thus eviscerate a scene and expect to see no wound' (1948: 40). This severe reduction of *Love's Labour's Lost* might be seen as a reaction against Branagh's own decision to present the 'complete' text of *Hamlet* in his four-hour film in 1996. In the case of *Hamlet* Branagh argued that the historical context adopted, in this instance a nineteenth-century 'Ruritania', needed to be 'resonant' and to allow 'a heightened language to sit comfortably' (Branagh 1996a: xv). With *Love's Labour's Lost* similar claims were made about creating 'something heightened, an

atmosphere that was romanticised, highly glamorous, a safe world. I wanted it to feel like a terrific holiday romance which is interrupted by the real world' (Pathé *Love's Labour's Lost* Official Website 2000). But in this case much of the language of the play was thought to sit uncomfortably with his concept and large parts of the text were sacrificed to the creation of an appropriate atmosphere in which to found an exploration of the 'vicissitudes of love'.

In part Branagh's decision to set the film just before Second World War was influenced by his own knowledge and experience of stage performances of the play:

> [It's a play] that seems to have responded well to a very strong directorial hand, and the landmark productions of this century by Brook and Hall and Michael Langham have been ones that have been very strongly inflected, [with a] very strong sense of place, and my instinct in being in the play in the theatre was that it most certainly needed that – it needed a strong sense of reality, a strong sense of location, a strong sense of a world in which you were happy to accept or understand […] why the King might engage in this three-year plan.
>
> (Branagh in Wray 2000: 174)

While Branagh is not the first to employ such a setting for the play, he goes on to explain why this inter-war period was deemed to be of particular significance to his production:

> I've always been interested in the period between the wars – what it offered up, the sorts of regret and grief and tragic legacy of the First World War, with the political situation as it was the threat of renewed violence, and what that seemed to do to the atmosphere of the time. The sense perhaps one last idyll in the twentieth century before the world really would change forever. That sense of a stolen, magical, idyllic time which nevertheless had a clock ticking […].
>
> (Branagh in Wray 2000: 174)

This creation of an idyllic inter-war holiday world is in keeping with academic readings of the festive world of Shakespearean comedy (Frye 1957; Barber 1959; Laroque 1991). However, the tripartite structure of festive comedy is less manifest in *Love's Labour's Lost* than in some of Shakespeare's romantic comedies and so the 'normal world -green world- normal world' (Frye 1957: 181) structure is fleshed out further in the film. The 'green world' of Navarre is here a stylized Oxbridge setting in vivid Technicolour. A vast circular 'Bodleian' library dominates the buildings of the court and a large grassy area forms part of its grounds. Two large iron gates mark the limits of this court/college and outside is a paved square sloping down to the river. The women arrive by punt against the backdrop of a very artificial full moon with mist drifting across the water. In stark contrast, the outside world is presented through the flickering black and white images of Pathé newsreels. (The references to Pathé are somewhat self-referential, given that the film was produced and distributed by Intermedia films and Pathé Pictures.) Further context is presented at the beginning of the film, as the newsreel shows the four men returning from military manoeuvres in 1939, throwing off their flight jackets and donning academic robes, and at the end of the film a succession of short scenes show the characters involved in events during the Second World War.

By these interpolations Branagh augments the structure of the play to bring it more in line with the structural movement of other Shakespearean comedies, spelling out a before and after, and emphasizing a tripartite structure.

The visual style of the film's inter-war world is largely unrealistic and even theatrical in its artificiality. The *mise-en-scène*, created almost entirely (except for the aeroplane shots in the final sequence), on a sound stage at Shepperton studios is clearly not 'realistic' and employs a vivid Technicolour palette. If we set aside the use of colour, Branagh's film adopts an artificial staged style in keeping with the major interpretative framework of his adaptation: the musical comedy films of the 1930s and the 1940s. This artificiality importantly qualifies Branagh's comment quoted earlier that he wanted 'a strong sense of reality, a strong sense of location'. Here the location is derived from the classic Hollywood musical and is far from a 'realistic' representation of a historical period. Ramona Wray notes that 'in *Love's Labour's Lost*, the 1930s are realized as the musical, an elegant example of what Jameson describes as the "history of aesthetic styles" displacing "real history"' (Wray 2002: 173). Moreover, as Wray notes, the interpolation of the British newsreels with their reports of impending war makes the American musical appear 'symbolically freighted – at best, foolhardy evasion, at worst, political cowardice […] a distractive indulgence' (Wray 2002: 174). This is compounded by the fact that Branagh himself provides the voice-over for the newsreels, so 'the director is identified as controlling agent, the paradoxical effect of which is to ensnare him in unresolved reflections upon censorship and creativity' (Wray 2002: 175). Gay is more positive about the postmodern function of these newsreel interventions, citing Branagh's acknowledgement that they were added later, after previews indicated that the late twentieth-century audiences were uncertain

> about how seriously to take the 1930s 'screwball courtships' […]. Contrast and context are here used cleverly to acknowledge the fin de siecle's belatedness – this film made in 1999 cannot be viewed with the innocent eyes of those audiences who first watched the 1930s screwball comedies.
>
> (Gay 2010: 10)

Branagh's own 'strong directorial hand', as noted above, creates the history of the 1930s with the widespread use of 'classic' songs and musical numbers.[1] The director comments:

> [t]he play responds well to music. There are many references to music and dancing in it and the elegance, style and wit of the play seemed to me to sit well in a context not unlike the fictional world of the Hollywood musicals of the thirties and forties.
>
> (Pathé *Love's Labour's Lost* Official Website 2000)

Branagh's film was certainly not the first adaptation of the play to make use of music. In 1771, as Miriam Gilbert notes, 'David Garrick commissioned a musical version […] but that version was never staged' (Gilbert 1996: 21). Gilbert also gives a fascinating account of a production of *Love's Labour's Lost* at Stratford, Connecticut, in 1968 that modelled the representation of the four men on The Beatles. Woudhuysen records a number of thwarted or successful attempts to adapt the play as opera, including that by W. H. Auden, Chester Kallman and Nicholas Nabokov, which was first performed in 1973

1. The soundtrack included the following: 'I'd Rather Charleston' by George Gershwin, 'I Get a Kick Out of You' by Cole Porter, 'I Won't Dance' by Jerome Kern, 'No Strings (I'm Fancy Free), 'Cheek to Cheek' by Irving Berlin, 'The Way You Look Tonight' by Jerome Kern, 'I've Got a Crush on You' by George & Ira Gershwin, 'Let's Face the Music and Dance' by Irving Berlin, 'There's no Business Like Showbusiness' by Irving Berlin and 'They Can't Take That Away from Me' by George & Ira Gershwin.

(Woudhuysen 1998: 100–03). The RSC's most recent production of the play in 2014 matched the First World War setting with music in the styles of Gilbert and Sullivan and Ivor Novello. Branagh himself made extensive use of musical numbers in his stage productions for the Renaissance Theatre company, including a song and dance number in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1990 (Bevington 1999: 499–502).

In Branagh's film the musical numbers take a number of different forms, with the anamorphic wide-screen format providing the scope and definition to capture the pairs of dancers across the screen. The first dance precedes the sealing of the contract for the academe and is 'I'd Rather Dance the Charleston', initiated by Berowne, but eventually involving all of the men, in an Astaire-style arrangement. This routine, shot mostly from the front with an occasional move in as the dancers retreat to the rear of the library/dance floor, emphasizes the patterns created in the dance and the general companionship of the men. It also reveals a roughness in the execution of the dance with occasional lapses in the synchronicity of movements. The next routine 'I won't dance', following the initial meeting of the men and women, incorporates the camera amongst the dancers in the opening frames as it follows the individual pairs. This serves to reinforce the pairing of the couples for the audience, before the camera again occupies a front of stage shot for the remainder of the number. (Front of stage shots, common in 1930s' film musicals, replicate the point of view of the audience watching earlier stage musicals. Such full-length shots were also utilized in classic Hollywood cinema to enable audiences to see the skill of individual performers. Unfortunately in Branagh's film they emphasize the less than successful execution, rather than effortless skill and grace.) The front of stage shot also enables the audience to see the patterning of the dancers, whose costumes are colour-coded to reaffirm that they are appropriately paired. This motif of visual patterning, borrowed from 1930s' cinema, is taken further in a dance number for the four women to 'No Strings (I'm Fancy Free)'. This begins as a chirpy exercise routine for the women, with their hair in curling ribbons, and wearing frilly pyjamas, but then moves to a swimming pool, where they are joined by a chorus of other women similarly dressed in gold swimming costumes and flowery bathing caps: this part of the sequence is shot from above as the women execute the kaleidoscope dance manoeuvres of Esther Williams. Aided and abetted by body doubles and members of the British Olympic synchronized swimming team, this scene is more convincing and proficiently executed. The routine arguably effects a correspondence between the highly structured and formal language of the play and the precise, almost mechanical, patterns of Busby Berkeley's routines. Phelan, commenting on such original routines in films such as *42nd Street* (Bacon, 1933), notes that Busby Berkeley's female dancers become 'figures of artificial femininity […] as machine women' (Phelan 2000: 161) and the chorus line 'like the assembly line [in that it] dissects, isolates and serializes' (Phelan 2000: 167). As Kracauer observes 'they are no longer individual girls, but indissoluble girl clusters whose movements are demonstrations of mathematics' (Kracauer quoted in Phelan 2000: 167). In this respect the Busby Berkeley routines resemble the courtly love poems sent by the men in the play, in that they reduce the idealized women to a series of contained and conventional images. Yet whereas Shakespeare problematizes the sonneteering conventions, and the sonneteers are made figures of fun because they spectacularly (in both senses) fail to distinguish among the women they idealize, Branagh's Busby Berkeley homage produces a routine that does not invite

such critical engagement. The routine is presented with a certain archness and knowingness, which mimics what Altman calls in relation to 1930s' musicals 'distantiation devices designed to remind and reassure the audience of their sophistication […] [with] jokes, innuendo […] and impish into the camera winks' (1987: 177). It is a 'can you see what we are doing here?' moment.

Other dances include an athletic blues number sung by Dumaine (Adrian Lester) and danced in the style of a Gene Kelly jazz number to 'I've Got a Crush on You' as he acrobatically circles the library tipping chairs in Act Four, Scene Three. The camera point of view is from the edge of the circular room stage, with close-ups interspersed to record the reactions of the other men secretly hidden around the room. This routine specifically replaces Dumaine's sonnet (lines 99–123), although the other love poems from the other participants in this scene were also cut.

In addition to the dances performed by the lovers, the comic characters perform two contrasting song routines in Act One, Scene Two and in Act Four, Scene Two. The first features Armado (Timothy Spall) and Moth (Anthony O'Dowell), who perform a series of vignettes seizing on the phrases in 'I Get a Kick Out of You'. The montage emphasizes the somewhat pathetic and accident-prone nature of Armado, who is seen falling out of a 'plane' and sneezing into his 'cocaine' (a comic borrowing from Woody Allen's *Celebrity* (1998) in which Branagh had starred). The later routine begins with Costard's delivery of Berowne's letter: the opening of Shakespeare's scene is cut along with Holofernes 'epitaph on the deer' and is replaced by a dance initiated by Holofernes, who, in this production, was transformed into a female school mistress, Holofernia, and played by Geraldine McEwan. This is a comic routine to 'The way you look tonight', executed with total seriousness, but highlighting its amateurishness, and featuring Nathaniel (Richard Briers) and Costard and Jacquenetta in a number of exaggerated poses only fleetingly held. Branagh refers to this as a 'comic ballet' (DVD Director's commentary) and it is again shot from a theatrical front of stage point of view. Holofernes/Holofernia's speech about her 'talent' (IV.ii.62) and 'gift' (IV.ii.65ff) in this reinterpretation is seen as assessment of her singing and dancing, rather than her learned linguistic skills! This dance, however, becomes part of the romantic courtship of Holofernia by Nathaniel and 'I beseech your society' (IV.ii.157) is redolent with sexual innuendo. Branagh's decision to adapt *Love's Labour's Lost* into a musical was partially governed, he suggests, by this desire to develop the characterization. He notes:

> [i]t took me a couple of years, once I had had the initial idea, to work out all the songs. I wanted them to be truly organic and not to feel just stuck on top of the play. They had to really say something about how the character were feeling at the time or to advance the plot in some way.
>
> (Pathé *Love's Labour's Lost* Official Website 2000)

In the light of this densely metacinematic discourse, it is striking that the two most obvious metatheatrical episodes in the play were cut by Branagh. The Muscovite Masque of Act Five, Scene Two was filmed, but does not appear in the final version[2] (and was replaced by probably the least successful dance number in the production). The version of 'Let's Face the Music and Dance' presented here is a sensual blues number, more in the style of Bob Fosse than the musicals of the 1930s, which presents the four couples as a

2. There is an interesting intertextual moment in this deleted scene, included in the DVD extras. Rosaline (Natascha McElhone), while in disguise, imitates the voice of the Princess (American actress Alicia Silverstone) but her parody evokes the voice of the ousted silent film star Lina Lamont (Jean Hagan) in *Singin' in the Rain*.

writhing mass of masked dancers. The intention was no doubt to emphasize the sexual undertones of all the courting rituals in the play, but the camera lingers on the artfully posed bodies of the dancers in a rather too knowing and voyeuristic manner. The misty staging and the circling camera seem to suggest that this is a dream: a wide departure from the all too real scene in the play where the men's attempts at courtly chivalric ritual are relentlessly punctured by the ladies' acerbic wit. The implied sexual promiscuity of the dance also seems far removed from the confused courtship rituals of the Muscovite masque and disguising. The Pageant of the Nine Worthies was also cut from the final version, although the scene was filmed and the silent footage is part of the montage in the Pathé newsreel describing the court entertainment. This entertainment, in the spirit of 1930s' musicals, occurs in a created performance space, a night club in the open air, beyond the gates of the academe. Initially the audience of lovers watches a performance of 'There's No Business like Show Business' by Costard (Nathan Lane). This develops into a thundering tap chorus in which all the cast participate. The long rows of this 'London Palladium'-style finale are filmed entirely from the front. While this routine creates a rousing finale that is dramatically interrupted by the entrance of Marcade, the removal of the Nine Worthies undermines the play's thematic enquiry into intellectual aspiration undermined by human limitation, and losing the interplay of the various audiences for the Pageant. Here the demands of the film musical are uppermost, and enforce a conclusion that fits with Altman's observation that 'in the late thirties no self-respecting musical could do without a staged spectacle' (235). In Branagh's final sequence of 'There's no business like show business' all cast members participate and perform directly for the camera. It is a big production number – a theatrical finale for the cinema audience.

The most extravagant dance number in the film, which is reprised behind the credits at the end, is 'Cheek to Cheek' by Irving Berlin. This concludes Act Four, Scene Three, where the cinematic adaptation is marked by a rather facetious comic literal-mindedness. The scene is set in the circular Bodleian-like library, where the initial pledges have been made. Berowne strolls around the upper level and his comments 'By the Lord, this love is as mad as Ajax. It kills sheep, it kills me' (Shakespeare 1998: IV.iii.5–6) are accompanied by his gesturing to a bust of Ajax, and then watching through the window as a number of sheep file past outside, the last of which, obviously unreal, keels over at the words 'kills sheep'. This kind of literal visual joke is continued when the king's 'shrouded in this bush' (IV.iii.134) is represented by the totally inadequate shrouding offered by a small potted plant.[3] The song itself is interlaced into Berowne's speech starting at line 286. 'Have at you then, affection's men at arms' becomes the beginning of a tap routine that emphasizes the line's iambic pentameter. At 'A lover's eyes will gaze an eagle blind' (IV.iii.308) Patrick Doyle's soundtrack with its soaring strings intervenes, colouring the following twelve lines in a romantic gloss. The lines 'And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods/Make heaven drowsy with the heaven' (IV.iii.318–319) are followed by 'Heaven, I'm in heaven', the first words of 'Cheek to Cheek'. The remainder of Berowne's speech is cut. The dance itself is seen as a fantasy projection as the men initially float up to the azure 'heaven' painted on the library's ceiling. This is followed by a kind of Astaire-Rodgers routine in the courtyard, with the women in floaty dresses colour coordinated to the men's ties in order to clearly delineate the couples.

3. This joke has been used in a number of stage productions, including an RSC production at Stratford in 1990 directed by Terry Hands, in which Branagh played the King.

This routine, perhaps more than any other in the film, reveals the limitations of Branagh's decision not to use professional singers and dancers. His rationale was that

> [i] wanted to invest the singing and dancing with the kind of particular understanding of character which an actor can bring. So I was happy to accept – even encourage – a certain rawness in the singing and dancing provided it came from a very clear sense of who the people were.
>
> (Pathé *Love's Labour's Lost* Official Website 2000)

There is indeed a certain rawness in his actors' dancing here, at odds with the professional faultlessness of the 1930s' originals that was a major contribution to the fantasy on which they were based. Woody Allen in *Everyone Says I Love You* (1996) encourages a similar rawness, but this is consistent since his drama is essentially naturalistic, and as Green suggests,

> while Allen is the purveyor of 'deliberate' camp, Branagh offers the 'pure' or 'naive' variety. Allen's film acknowledges its campiness […] Branagh's *falls* into camp, helped along […] by his 'melting pot' approach, to borrow an image from Lehmann (188) to highbrow and lowbrow culture.
>
> (Green 2008: 87, original emphasis)

IV

Branagh's own assessment of his adaptation was that 'It seems to work well and I think that is because the play, which is one of Shakespeare's youngest works, is very exuberant and romantic and uncynical – very like the Hollywood musicals that these songs come from' (2000). His film is, I think, 'uncynical', but most critics responding to its, at times, uncertain mix of playfulness and seriousness, have betrayed their doubts in characterizing the film in terms of parody, pastiche, pasticcio or (as above) camp. Some, such as Gay and Crowl, in asserting the film's postmodern credentials, have affirmed the celebratory energy of the production and its director:

> Branagh is a product of the postmodern moment dominated by a sense of belatedness; a sense that originality is exhausted and that only parody and pastiche and intertextual echo remain. Rather than finding such a condition enervating, Branagh's work seizes on its possibilities […].
>
> (Crowl 2000: 226–27)

It is true that Branagh sometimes exploits the 'exuberant and romantic' devices of the musical effectively. An example is the dream sequence in Act Four, Scene Three. The balletic opening (as the men float around the dome of the library) fits the criteria identified by Jane Feuer, where the 'Dream ballets of MGM musicals emphasise either the wish of the dreamer […] or they represent a tentative working out of the problems of the primary narrative' (1993: 74). The Astaire-Rogers number that follows further empathizes the 'wish of the dreamer' (Feuer 1993: 75). Feuer goes on to note that 'very often the wish ballet will allow the dreamer to road test various possible mates' (Feuer 1993: 2), which may explain the curious dance sequence to 'Let's Face the Music and Dance' described above.

However, Branagh's is a rather nostalgic understanding of the musical comedies of the 1930s and the 1940s. Feuer and Altman's examination of the social and historical context of the musical reveals a film genre whose escapism is in part a response to social and economic deprivation. Feuer stresses that the genre has 'one dominant impulse […] the desire to capture on celluloid the quality of live entertainment' (Feuer 1993: 2). However, she goes on to note that:

> [t]he Hollywood musical as a genre perceives the gap between producer and consumer, the breakdown of community designated by the very distinction between performer and audience, as a form of cinematic original sin. The musicals seek to bridge the gap by putting up 'community' as an ideal concept. In basing its value system on community, the producing and consuming functions severed by the passage of musical entertainment from folk to popular to mass status are rejoined through the genre's rhetoric.
>
> (Feuer 1993: 3)

The implications of this for the musical in general are too wide-ranging to explore here, but it does suggest that the world of the Hollywood musical, perceived as 'uncynical' by Branagh, is also a pragmatic negotiation of aesthetic, cultural and social change, and that confidence about the notion of 'community' in such films is central to the debate. Feuer suggests that the familiar 'let's put the show on here in the barn' motif of many musicals is an attempt to compensate for this perceived lack of community in mass culture, which makes it even more telling that the amateur dramatics of the Pageant of the Nine Worthies were removed in Branagh's production.

Moreover, where Branagh does employ cinematic devices borrowed from the musical, he sometimes underplays their potential to embrace a community. I have commented above on how some of the musical routines were shot from the front. In 1930s' and 1940s' musicals where similar shots were used they often incorporated an onstage audience, either in a theatre, enclosed in a proscenium arch or in a cinema or in a night club,[4] thus encouraging the live cinema audience to see themselves as part of a wider communal experience while at the same time throwing the artificiality of the 'performance' into relief. Without such onstage audience, in such scenes as the 'No Business like Show Business' scene, Branagh's film misses the chance to open up the social issues surrounding the art/reality conflict that is part of both the musical genre and Shakespeare's play.

The conclusion of the play provided Branagh with his most difficult challenge in his attempts to adapt the text to the style of a 1930s' musical. In contrast to most musical comedies, in Shakespeare's play the romantic resolution is deferred beyond the scope of the performance and the text concludes with the potentially melancholic song of Spring and Winter. Branagh found his 'solution' to the inconclusive romantic ending by utilizing further the metacinematic devices of the newsreel, the musical and the war film.

The arrival of Marcade, dressed in black, by river on a punt is greeted by the solemn tolling of a bell. The news of the death of the Princess's father is 'coloured' by Doyle's soaring strings, all creating a darker and more subdued atmosphere. Although supplemented by the somewhat intrusive musical colouring, this scene is one of the most complete sequences of adaptation, with comparatively little cut from the original play text. It is staged as

4. The onstage audience, in a theatre, enclosed in a proscenium arch can be seen in 'Couple of Swells', Judy Garland/Fred Astaire in *Easter Parade* (1948), the cinema in 'Singing in the Rain' (final song), Debbie Reynolds *Singing in the Rain* (1952) and the night club in 'The Continental', Fred Astaire/Ginger Rodgers in *The Gay Divorcee* (1934).

an affectionate parting between the couples, although only Berowne's pledge is sealed with a kiss. A newspaper discarded by Berowne falls into a puddle and as the camera focuses in upon it (in a film cliché borrowed from war movies) the headline 'French King Dead: Will France Fall?' is visible, along with a reference to the invasion of Poland. The song 'They Can't Take That Away' replaces the Song of Spring and Winter (V.ii.861…917). There is no dance routine at this point, only the choreographed interlacing of the couples as they share the lyrics of the song. This may be a version of what Feuer identifies as a song format of the musical, the 'passed-along song' (Feuer 1993: 16), which she notes is usually accompanied by such techniques as 'the passing shot and the montage sequence' (Feuer 1993: 16). In Branagh's film, the song continues and the montage is used to show the departure of the Princess and her friends, who are dressed now in winter furs coordinated with the jackets of the men. There follows an airport departure, an obvious allusion to *Casablanca* (Curtiz, 1942). As the plane takes flight, it writes an 'X' in the sky and then transcribes the final words of the play 'You that way, we this way'. However, the narrative is then continued in a Pathé newsreel montage as the events of the Second World War are sketched in. Berowne is seen under fire in a field hospital, interspersed with images of the Blitz; the fall of France results in the arrest of the Princess; the other men are in action in the trenches; Don Armado is in a concentration camp with Jacquenetta clutching a baby outside the wire fence; Boyet is shot as a member of the French Resistance; and Nathaniel is 'Digging for Victory'. The montage comes to an end with V.E. Day celebrations as the four couples come together across a crowded square. They embrace, as a voice-over reiterates the 'But love, first learned in a lady's eyes' speech from Act Four, Scene Three (lines 301ff). The black and white of the newsreel is transformed into colour as a street party concludes the film, with the entire cast raising their glasses to the camera. This montage is a version of the 'wedding coda', a device often used in musical comedy that 'follows the plot resolution and exists outside the time and space of the film proper, becoming a celebration of the end of the film itself' (Feuer 1993: 82). Here Branagh in using a number of filmic devices has not so much adapted as, in essence, rejected the ending of Shakespeare's play. In this final sequence, the prevailing structure and momentum of the musical comedy have become dominant. There is melancholia and poignancy at the end of the film, but Branagh's audience, unlike Shakespeare's, is not asked to contemplate 'loss' beyond the end of film.

V

The transformation in Branagh's film of the 'academe' of Navarre to the norms of the Hollywood 'Academy' is thus a radical reworking of Shakespeare's text. It clearly shows how, as Boose and Burt comment, Shakespeare adaptations often 'speak within a metacinematic discourse of self-reference in which, through film quotation, they situate themselves in reference as much to other films as to a Shakespeare tradition' (Boose and Burt 1997: 11). In excising so much of the language of the play and replacing it with music and dance Branagh has negotiated a shift in the balance of the play from high to low popular culture. Branagh views this popularization positively, saying:

> obstacles have been removed in our potential enjoyment of the plays. They now seem more audience friendly. Both directors and actors are

> less frightened of them and the audience seem ready to view these films as entertainment and not intelligent tests.
>
> (Pathé *Love's Labour's Lost* Official Website 2000)

Perhaps one might read this as a pushing back against another kind of Academy, typified by the university led mores of the Royal Shakespeare Company and indeed the academic study of Shakespeare itself. Yet one must also question whether the film succeeded as popular entertainment. Its box office returns[5] suggest not, although certainly some audiences responded to it with real pleasure. One showing I saw in 2000, granted in a small art house cinema, was greeted with a round of applause. Such audiences are likely to be different from those of the multiplexes in terms of their class, age and perhaps gender, and the audience responded to what appeared to be a nostalgic remembrance of the original films and the playfulness of their recreation in this film. Yet as critics such as Green, and indeed Branagh himself noted, the musical is 'a genre that hasn't really worked for the last forty years' (Crowl 2003: 45) and it is not a film genre readily accessible to most under 25 year olds. It is also a genre with a complex relationship with its own theatrical roots, and the social and historical context that gave rise to it. Gay applauds Branagh's success in 'capturing the energy of live performance yet framing it as artificial, unrealistic' (Gay 2010: 10). Even though this style was very much in keeping with the original musicals, and a consequence of their technological limitations and their desire to maintain connection with the hierarchical authority of stage performances, it is counter-intuitive from the standpoint of much contemporary cinema. In retrospect Branagh's *Love's Labour's Lost* represented a contemporary re-presentation or re-reading of the 1930s' musicals as much as a re-reading of Shakespeare, and, perhaps paradoxically, it is this talent for reinterpretation of popular culture, with adaptations of the comic book (*Thor* [Branagh, 2011]) and fairy tale (*Cinderella* [Branagh, 2015]), which ultimately has brought him commercial success in movies.

Branagh's *Love's Labour's Lost* and other film adaptations of Shakespeare in the late twentieth century are a rich resource for adaptation studies. Branagh's movie may be a flawed experiment, but in its exploitation of the interaction between the cinematic and theatrical, one might see further evidence of a pattern in recent kinds of adaptation. The use of non-diegetic music in stage performances to underscore key moments, of cinema-style trailers for forthcoming theatre productions and more recently of digital cinematic effects onstage, as in Gregory Doran's production of *The Tempest* at the RSC (2016), all point to the increased cinematization of theatrical performances. Similarly, the increased popularity of the theatre by way of the cinema adaptations of RSC Live, NT Live and, indeed, Branagh Theatre live, focuses fresh attention on the interplay between the two modes in promoting and celebrating the 'liveness' of performance (Wardle 2014). The interpenetration between cinema and theatre remains a matter of continuing enquiry and interest for adaptation studies.

5. Wray notes that the film had cost $8 million, took in less than £350,000 in the United Kingdom and $635,000 in the United States (Dantrey 42) (Wray 2002: 171).

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Time Travel and the Return of the Author: *Shakespeare in Love*, "The Shakespeare Code," and *Bill*

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Abstract

In the latter part of the twentieth century, Roland Barthes's reader-orientated theory, "the death of the author," seemed to signal the end of biographical literary investigation. And yet by the end of the twentieth century, fueled in part by the rising wave of celebrity culture, a new strategy in relation to canonical texts emerged: the resurrection of the author via the biographical film. This paper examines the extent to which "time travel" via contemporary film to the early career of Shakespeare in the 1590s has been driven by a search for images of the playwright relevant to modern audiences, whether that be romantic bard or rock star hero. The texts considered here which explore versions of the author Shakespeare include John Madden's *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), the BBC's *Doctor Who*: "The Shakespeare Code" (2007), and Richard Bracewell's *Bill* (2015). The discussion investigates the significance of these filmic travels through time and place and, by linking them to literary tourism, examines how these ideas are utilized to create personal and national memories. It also shows how these representations of time and place, and the attempt to establish contemporary connections with audiences, engages with central questions in adaptation studies about the authenticity and fidelity of texts and performance.

Introduction

This essay explores three filmic texts, *Shakespeare in Love* (1998), the *Dr Who* episode "The Shakespeare Code" (2007), and *Bill* (2015), which offer their audiences varied representations of the author Shakespeare. Contemporary film and television have had an enduring fascination with the idea of the author, and this has resulted in a "marked surge in the popularity of the literary biopic" (Buchanan 2013, 4). And yet Shakespeare offers particular challenges to those film and television makers, because while comprehensive biographical information is available, "the main deficiency in the available data consists in the fact that [it] is public not private" (Holderness 2011, 2) in the sense that it reveals little about Shakespeare's emotions and feelings. The texts to be discussed here appear undaunted by these challenges, however, and via the technologies of

contemporary film and television offer the opportunity for their audiences, in imagination, to meet the author as they travel back in time to the sixteenth century.

It is that notion of the films as time travel, and the interaction of the past and present, that this essay wishes to explore. In one of the texts discussed here, the *Dr Who* episode "The Shakespeare Code," time-travel is clearly the main narrative thread. In the other texts, there are similar attempts to recreate significant places and times from Shakespeare's life, although in these instances no character is designated as the time-traveller. While, as Brooks Landon notes, "the primary effect of film is always one of time travel or time manipulation" (Landon 1992, 76), this essay will argue that in these particular texts, the intermingling of past and present is more overtly foregrounded, particularly through the use of comedy. Arguably, with all filmic historical recreations of the past there are residual traces of the present, the film's moment of production and consumption, but the texts discussed here make deliberate dramatic capital out of the co-existence of different time periods. These texts explicitly, and conterminously, in their reading of Shakespeare, see the author as someone both "of his time" and also "out of time." Often the presence of this double time enables the films to assert the playwright's genius as an author for all time. The films, moreover, rely upon, and indeed exploit, modern audiences' assumptions about Shakespeare's iconic status. In their depiction of the events of the sixteenth century, "his time," they work to provide "evidence" for, and of, his burgeoning talent. More controversially they also, often playfully, provide largely fictional explanatory "evidence" in Shakespeare's time for some of those gaps and blanks in the author's life identified by contemporary critics. Two of the films discussed here, for example, make merry with Shakespeare's life in 1593, as he emerges from the gap constituted as the "lost years" by academic criticism. Moreover, these comic interpolations, which often highlight moments of frisson between past and present, also make the audiences more aware of their role as observers and travelers to a different place and time.

Contexts

But why should one wish to travel to that place and time in search of the author? Part of the answer may lie in the extent to which such biographical films have in themselves become acts of literary tourism. The history of Shakespearean bardolatry has certainly included the development of literary sites deemed significant to Shakespeare. Harald Hendrix illustrates how place provides an opportunity for acts of memorial and "an intellectual exchange beyond the grave, a 'conversation with the dead'" (Hendrix 2009, 14). In the twenty-first century, travel to Stratford-upon-Avon and visits to the tourist sites such as the Shakespeare Birthplace continue to play an important part in those conversations. The nature of the conversation in 2015 was made clear in a banner across

Henley Street which proclaimed: "'Explore' Shakespeare's Birthplace: uncover the stories behind the world's greatest storyteller." These literary places, including the Birthplace, employ guides in character and staged dramatic scenarios to carry the visitors back in space and time to Shakespeare's world. We may well ask, with Alison Booth, "in what ways does literary tourism serve as time travel?" (Booth 2009, 151). Booth also goes on to argue that "time travel is by no means uni-directorial" (Booth 2009, 151), suggesting, as we shall see in these texts, that the creation of literary space is not simply defined within a specific time, but may occupy a complex mixture of past, present, and future. It is only a short step from these kinds of literary tourism to the film and television texts under discussion here. Although experienced virtually, in film and television, the place and time of the author become the springboard to access the significance of the life. These texts provide the opportunity for a different type of what Douglas Kennedy calls "cultural tourism" or "edutainment" (Kennedy 2008, 175) and as Michael Anderegg asserts, "the cinema cultural tourist travels in time" (Anderegg 2004, 34).

The earliest biographical film concerning Shakespeare is, as Douglas Lanier notes, Georges Méliès' 1907 film *La Mort de Jules César*. In it, Shakespeare, suffering from writer's block, falls asleep. As he does, he dreams of the assassination scene from *Julius Caesar* (Lanier 2007, 61), with the dream being both Gothic premonition and also suggesting that the source of inspiration is Shakespeare's subconscious (and not his research of historical sources). The latest example, at the time of writing, of such a biographical film about Shakespeare is *Bill* (2015), which will be discussed below. What unites these biographical films with literary tourism is the same "desire to find a satisfying synergy between the life and the work" (Buchanan 2013, 15), and in particular a desire to pinpoint the inspiration giving rise to the works. It is clear that such interests fueled earlier films, and this interest has been intensified in more recent films by a contemporary preoccupation with celebrity culture and fame.

In addition to the contexts provided by popular culture, tourism, celebrity culture, and, arguably, science fiction and time travel, the films are obviously positioned, sometimes rather knowingly, amidst the frameworks of academic literary criticism. The opportunity provided to audiences to access the "life of the author" in these texts seems at times a deliberate rebuff to Roland Barthes' mid-twentieth century claims about the "Death of the Author" (1967). As Judith Buchanan notes of Barthes' essay, "No longer was a written text understood as simply a transmission vehicle for a settled and stable meaning determined by an author and awaiting decoding in those terms" (Buchanan 2013, 17). These films, together with a wealth of biographies about Shakespeare,[1] which initially began to appear in a flurry of new millennium reassessment,

seem anxious to reassert the centrality of the life to the works. In these academic biographies, in what seems to be an extension of new historicist methodology, the life becomes a contemporary text to be derived from, and placed alongside, historical sources from the early modern period. The markers of this re-association of the life, works, and historical documentation can be seen in the title of James Shapiro's book — *The Year of Lear: Shakespeare in 1606* (2015). And yet, as Shapiro noted, in a pre-publication article in *The Guardian*:

> Biographers like to attribute the turns in Shakespeare's career to his psychological state. . . . While his personal life must have powerfully informed what he wrote, we have no idea what he was feeling at any point during the quarter-century he was writing. (26th September, 2015)

While Shapiro recognizes that historiographical investigation can reveal significant events in the life of Shakespeare — the return of the plague, the death of Marie Mountjoy, his landlady in Silver Street — and while he posits that these brushes with death are likely to have informed the writing of *King Lear*, he also notes the lack of a personal record, with no first hand evidence of the precise nature of any emotional impact of these events on the author. M. G. Aune, exploring the critical reception of Stephen Greenblatt's biography of Shakespeare, *Will of the World*, suggests that this "biography relies on conventional biographical strategies, most noticeably the use of conjecture and supposition" (Aune 206). It is, as Aune notes, the extent of that conjecture and supposition that was significant to the academic reviewers of Greenblatt's biography, which most also felt (ironically given the nature of Greenblatt's previous academic engagement) went beyond the parameters of new historicism. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, both literary biographies and films continue to employ such apparently imprecise biographical strategies as they attempt to resurrect the idea of the author. Yet arguably film and television versions of the author's life, within their fictional context, have a greater freedom to operate in the gaps and blanks, and to explore the emotional catalysts for the production of the literary works.

Before examining these three films, which all present versions of Shakespeare's life, a brief word about audience. All three films employ humor, and, of course, not all members of the films' audiences will respond in the same way to comedy. More importantly, we should not assume a homogenous audience for these, or indeed any, films. While there is no "text" against which to measure representations of Shakespeare's life, it is certainly the case that audiences for these popular cinematic versions of his life will bring different knowledge sets or baggage on their time travel to the sixteenth century. Some will see them as an opportunity to exercise (and maybe display) their academic abilities; others will treat them as introductions to the milieu and plays;

while others already interested in the drama may be more interested in the speculations about the author's life. They may even simply be interested in a particular genre of film, such as those to be discussed here, romantic comedy or science fiction. The designated rating of the films also has an impact both on the production and consumption of a text. Two of the texts discussed below might be said to be designed for a young, or family audience, while the first, *Shakespeare in Love* with a 15 (or PG-13, in the U.S.) rating, is aimed at young adults and older.

Shakespeare in Love

Shakespeare in Love, released in 1998, presents an imagined context for the writing, rehearsal and performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, which aims to reveal the author's emotional catalyst for the play's production. The film, set in London in 1593, quite clearly seeks to illustrate parallels and analogies between sixteenth-century life and 1990s Britain. The publicists for the film proclaimed that "Refreshingly contemporary, *Shakespeare in Love* is ultimately the tale of a man and woman trying to make love work in the 90s — the 1590s" (quoted in Anderegg, 2003, 61). This notion of the "contemporary" implies that the film will transcend distinctions of time by celebrating universal values. Its aim, as Anderegg notes, is "to bring Shakespeare to us, to collapse past and present, to deny there is such a thing as 'pastness.' 'History,' from this point of view, is always now" (Anderegg 2004, 43).

There are, however, numerous paradoxes in the interpretation of "Shakespeare" offered here. The Will[2] of this film may be like us in his attempts to understand his unfulfilled and complex life in his visit to the astrologer/psychiatrist in the opening scenes, or in his frustrated attempts to make his way in the world, but the film also seeks to affirm the uniqueness of Shakespeare the genius poet. This genius is signalled to those in the audience in the know as they see snatches of language from the Elizabethan street (such as the anti-theatrical cleric proclaiming "And the Rose smells thusly rank by any name! I say a plague on both their houses") registered by Shakespeare and then transformed by the creative powers of the poet into the speeches of Juliet and Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*. There is thus a contradiction wittily played out in Norman and Stoppard's[3] script for this film, as the audience are engaged by Will's similarity to themselves, while he is at the same time marked out as different and separate from them by his transformative genius.[4] It is this focus on the genius literary figure that has been a part of most academic attacks on the film, typified by Richard Burt's comment that the film is a "blunted critique of literary authorship" relying "on outmoded academic scholarship" (Burt 2000, 222).

The paradox of engagement with, and separation from, the representation of Shakespeare is reinforced in terms of the visual and verbal recreation of the world of the film. There is, on the one hand, a meticulous attention to detail in the creation of the costumes and setting of the city of London and its playhouses which draws us via its apparent verisimilitude into the world of the film. In this we see the influence of the heritage film with its use of spectacle and the pictorial creation of an idealized past. Yet this engagement is frequently undercut by anachronistic moments, as when the camera focuses on a mug in Will's lodgings which bears the inscription "A present from Stratford upon Avon." Later we hear the fanciful description of "Today's specials" given by the tavern keeper which in its parody of the 1990s vogue for nouvelle cuisine signals the audience's temporary participation in, but also our separation from, this historical recreation. Elizabeth Klett, noting this contradiction of "anachronism and accuracy," goes on to comment that "it is evident that *Shakespeare in Love* is creating a dialectical relationship between past and present. This dialectic is predicated upon audience awareness of Shakespeare and his works, and upon the dearth of biographical data on Shakespeare's life. The result is a virtual palimpsest of texts and contexts" (Klett 2001, 25-6).

One issue that emerges from this palimpsest is the anachronistic representation of Shakespeare as a Romantic poet, struggling in his garret with the temporary failure of his imagination until it is reignited by his muse in the person of the non-historical figure of Viola de Lesseps. This fictional interpolation is seemingly deemed necessary as what we "know" about Shakespeare's love life is not sufficiently exciting, and would contribute little to the desired romantic arc of the narrative. The film suggests that Shakespeare, through a combination of these intense romantic experiences and inherent genius, is able to express on the stage, in the words of the character Queen Elizabeth, the "very truth and nature of love." Tony Howard notes that the film invites the audience to subscribe "to the myth that Great Art is the direct product of a Great Writer's extraordinary experience" (Howard 2000, 310). Being a "Great Writer," Will is able to use his extraordinary experience with Viola to break out of the romantic comedy straitjacket in which he finds himself in the film. He transforms his play "Romeo and Ethel, the Pirate's Daughter" ("comedy, love and a bit with a dog, that's what they want") into the serious tragedy anticipated by the film's audience — *Romeo and Juliet*.

Thus during the course of the film the "traditional" hierarchies of drama are re-established, with tragedy reasserted as a superior genre to comedy. *Romeo and Juliet* brings Will commercial success and artistic acclaim. Yet it is one of the paradoxes of the film that the genre of tragedy is lauded in a comic film, ironically, with the performance of Will's tragic play providing the carnivalesque moment where a woman becomes a player on the Elizabethan stage. More importantly, the film

suggests that the intensity of Will and Viola's love gives rise to the writing of the tragedy and the charged performance of the play in the film that

> only concerns itself, rather significantly, with scenes that illustrate the social and cultural forces that ensure the lovers' undoing. Norman and Stoppard demonstrate the merging of Romeo and Juliet's fate with that of Will and Viola — indeed the actual coalescence of art and life. (Davis and Womack 2004, 159)

Despite the foregrounding of the tragedy as a product of, and a revealing commentary upon, the final separation of Will and the now-married Viola, the film itself ends with the imagined projection of Viola's future transfigured by Will into another comedy, *Twelfth Night*.

Moreover, this film, and "The Shakespeare Code," as we shall see, asserts the primacy of the theater itself. The camera lovingly lingers over the Rose playhouse at the beginning of the film, tracing a slow path over its wooden structure from sky to stage, in an opening which echoes the beginning of Olivier's *Henry V*, except here the discarded playbill advertises "The Lamentable Tragedy of the Moneylender Reveng'd" and not *Henry V*. As Lisa Hopkins notes, this theatrical "'real presence' [is] in implicit or explicit contrast to the showiness and make-believe of film" (2009, 82). This centrality of specific places to the films underlines how they are kinds of literary tourism using place to initiate "conversation with the dead." In *Shakespeare in Love*, a version of the Rose playhouse was constructed for the film, whereas in the later texts discussed here, an actual theater and literary tourism site, the reconstructed Globe, was utilized. The connections with literary tourism do not end there. Judi Dench apparently bought the filmic reconstruction of the Rose playhouse, with the intention, sadly never realized, of opening it to the public and using it as a theater space. In these texts, however, it is, as Hopkins notes, the filmic frame which gives the theater added significance. In the theater adaptation of the film *Shakespeare in Love* (2014, Noël Coward Theatre London), the absence of that filmic frame meant the scenes in the Rose became metatheatrical and self-conscious, rather than being displayed as a contrastive "real presence" and a significant transformative experience.

The conversation between past and present, somewhat antithetically, also resulted in "Stoppard and Norman rethron[ing] a traditional Shakespeare — unproblematic, heterosexual and apolitical" (Howard 2000, 310). The "heterosexuality" of Madden's Shakespeare is signaled to the audience through the unflinching focus on the romantic Will-Viola courtship. It is also suggested in the film that Sonnet 18, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" is written for Viola. She receives this poem in a letter from Will, which although read while she is dressed as Thomas Kent, contradicts the long-held view that this poem is addressed by Shakespeare to the Young Man of the

Sonnets. This suggests a return in the film to a conservative reading of the playwright's sexuality, and as Sujata Iyengar argues, "both the writer's block and his impotence are cured by Will's love for Viola. Heterosexual intercourse produces children, not biological offspring, but children of the mind, poetic posterity" (Iyengar 2001, 125). The film presents a similarly conservative reading of the historical and political context of the 1590s. Queen Elizabeth is represented as benign *dea ex machina* who ensures "fair play" (here represented as financial reward) by ensuring that Tilney's accusations are not upheld. Yet at the same time, as Burt, commenting on Elizabeth's decision-making within the film, notes, "the theatrical arena . . . has the effect of significantly shrinking what kinds of effect female agency can have" (Burt 2000, 211). In the film all actors, playwrights (Marlowe's death goes unexplored beyond the angst it provides for Will who believes he has caused his murder), and playhouse managers remain unfalteringly loyal to the Queen, largely because of her fondness for theater and not her political acumen. The film audience are also encouraged to remain sympathetic towards the queen because of her complicity in the deception perpetrated during the stage performance of *Romeo and Juliet* which, it is suggested, is born out of personal experience when she remarks that "I know something of a woman in a man's profession — by God I do."

Shakespeare in Love, then, despite containing some intelligent and witty dialogue and visual images, remains an essentially conservative example of time-travel in its representation of the figure of Shakespeare and the world of the 1590s. The intention seems to have been through the popular medium of film to make the high cultural works of Shakespeare more emotionally relevant to a modern audience. In its depiction of the early career of Shakespeare, who at the film's conclusion emerges as a celebrity who has "won" a significant sum of money (which enables him to buy a share in the Lord Chamberlain's Men), there is perhaps more than a hint of the aspirations of a late twentieth-century Elizabethan age, rather than those of the sixteenth century. The film is, of course, designed for multi-national audiences (although particularly British and American ones), and the representation of Shakespeare and the Elizabethan period is intended to pique the interest of those familiar and less familiar with the life and times of the author.

The mix of high culture and popular culture aided this endeavour, and encouraged engagement and assessment of the premise that Shakespeare was like us, which we might say is a rather teleological reduction of the idea that he might be for all time. The time travel in this film and the intermingling of past and present offers the opportunity for its audiences to take stock of their historical and cultural credentials as they neared the end of the century and in this it shares a common interest with other films of the 1990s. Some films of the decade went to considerable pains to recreate historical moments for further examination (*Schindler's List*, 1993; *Titanic*, 1997;

Saving Private Ryan, 1998; *Elizabeth*, 1998), while others assessed the impact on individuals of specific historical periods (*Forrest Gump*, 1994; *The English Patient*, 1996; *Pleasantville*, 1998). *Shakespeare in Love*, like these other box-office successes, utilises CGI (computer generated imaging), which contributes greater verisimilitude to the creation of historical moments and gives further veracity to the time travel offered by film. The final sequence of the film with Viola de Lesseps shipwrecked on some distant shore reinforces the coalescence of past, present, and future. Shakespeare, while mourning the loss of Viola, creates for the audience a fictional future for her beyond the end of the film, which has another effect of also suggesting to its American audience that their own beginnings are linked to the genius of Shakespeare and the Elizabethan period. The Director's commentary on the DVD of *Shakespeare in Love* reveals how in earlier versions of this ending, Viola met two strangers (one of whom appears to be native American) while traversing the expansive sea shore, and in response to "What country friends is this?" was told "This is America." (This deleted scene is also included in the DVD extras.) In the end, an image of the solitariness of Viola was deemed more acceptable than the possible political fallout from such a staging. As John Blakeley comments,

> The encounter on the beach suggests an open and harmonious, multi-racial land of opportunity, and one can well imagine why, given its glib erasure of the complex, often bloody, history of American racial conflict and assimilation, the producers felt uneasy about it. (Blakely 2009, 250)

However, John Madden's commentary also reveals that a further addition was planned but not executed:

> There was always a potentially rather wonderful idea, which we got some way towards exploring — which was an idea of Tom Stoppard's . . . that during the course of this shot, very, very, very, gradually, and imperceptibly, the ghostly outline of modern Manhattan would become visible beyond the tree-line — there for those to see who wanted to see it, and not for those who didn't, but somehow production schedules overtook us, and we never really had the chance to try that out. But the notion that she was walking away into history is still what I hoped the shot would mean and feel. (Transcript in Blakeley 2009, 250)

Here the Shakespeare myth of an iconic genius would have been extended to embrace a myth of the creation of American nationhood. Instead, the solitary wanderings of Viola on the beach echo the opening (well, the second scene) of *Twelfth Night*, a text from the past involving ideas of rebirth from the sea. These ideas are created in the film with underwater scenes that reference both Trevor

Nunn's film version of *Twelfth Night* (1996), and another pre-millenium film, *Titanic* (1997). The contemporaneous juxtaposition of *Titanic* and *Shakespeare in Love* also contrasts the hubris of scientific and engineering advancement with the positive cultural longevity of Shakespeare's plays. Moreover, this alignment of past, present, and future is made possible by the time travel of film, and yet in this instance, time travel has become the means of eliminating questions and fissures from the historical sequence, which in turn contributes to what is a rather conservative reading of Shakespeare as an author for "our" time.

Dr Who — "The Shakespeare Code"

The second text to be explored here is an episode from the long-running UK television series *Dr Who*. The episode, "The Shakespeare Code," was first broadcast on 7 April, 2007. As noted earlier, this is the only text under consideration here where the narrative is concerned specifically with science-fiction time travel. In this episode the time-travelling Doctor and his new companion, Martha Jones, arrive in London in 1599, and meet Shakespeare. Since the revival of the *Dr Who* series, there have been a number of encounters between the Doctor and historical personages, including Queen Victoria, Charles Dickens and Madame de Pompadour, all of whom battle with creatures from other worlds and beyond their time. This representation of historical figures is in itself a departure from the very early *Dr Who* series, where the companions were teachers of science and history who facilitated the series' Reithian aim to ""educate and entertain" and who "would draw lessons from their journeys into the future and the past" (Leach 2014, 184). In these early days, the historical and the science fiction encounters were kept in separate story lines, and the combination of these in the more recent series both marks a significant change to the program's conception of time travel and complicates the historiographical enquiry. In "The Shakespeare Code," Shakespeare, as with the representation of Dickens in Series Two, affirms his "genius" and intellectual powers by his ability to comprehend the complexity of the Doctor's thoughts, and ultimately to assist him in vanquishing his alien opponents.

The adversaries in this episode are "deadly witch-like creatures" who, while resembling the witches from *Macbeth*, are Carrionites, intergalactic travellers intent on bringing about the end of the world. As the plot unfurls it transpires that Shakespeare and the Globe Theatre have inadvertently been the catalysts for the Carrionites' arrival on earth. The focus of the Carrionite power lies, the Doctor tells us, in "words and shapes." The science fiction narrative here utilizes known historical detail. The Carrionites have entered the sixteenth century by utilizing the power of the fourteen-sided Globe, which they have instructed (the historical) Peter Street to construct; they have also been able to harness the power of Shakespeare's grief-ridden words on the death of

his son Hamnet. Having thus gained access to Earth, the Carrionites plan to utilise the power of words embedded in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Won* to open up a portal through which the rest of their race may join them, and colonize the planet and destroy all human life.

The original title for this episode was, in fact, "Love's Labour's Won," a possible lost Shakespearean play, which has exerted an influence over a number of fictional revisitings of Shakespeare's life and work.[5] However, Russell T. Davies, the series producer, reveals on the BBC *Dr Who* website that this original title was rejected because the original it was "too academic," and replaced by "The Shakespeare Code" with an ironic intertextual allusion to Dan Brown's bestselling novel, *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) and film of the same name (2006). This change in title reveals some of the challenges and the potential paradoxes that are implicit in the inclusion of the figure of Shakespeare in a prime-time, popular television series. It is a paradox expressed succinctly in another millennium-inspired television program, *Blackadder: Back and Forth* (1999). Blackadder, now a late-twentieth-century entrepreneur, travels to Elizabethan England in Baldrick's unreliable time-machine, in search of a signed copy of a Shakespearean play, and literally bumps into the author. During their brief conversation, Blackadder persuades Shakespeare to sign the title-page of his new play, *Macbeth*, and then says:

> Blackadder: And just one more thing [punches Shakespeare to the ground]: that is for every school boy and school girl for the next four hundred years. Have you any idea what suffering you're going to cause? Hours spent at school desks trying to find one joke in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Years wearing stupid tights in school plays and saying things like 'what ho my lord!' and 'oh look — here comes Othello talking total crap as usual.' Oh and that [kicking Shakespeare's foot] is for Ken Branagh's endless uncut four hour version of *Hamlet*.
>
> Shakespeare: Who's Ken Branagh?
>
> Blackadder: I'll tell him you said that. And I think he will be very hurt.

The paradox acknowledged here is that Shakespeare, while an unmistakable iconic figure, whose rare signature would certainly be bankable, is at the same time associated, in the minds of many in the *Blackadder* television audience, with a boring educational experience. (Interestingly, this same attitude was noted by Marc Norman in relation to the figure in *Shakespeare in Love*. Norman observes, in the "Cast and Crew Commentary" on the 2004 DVD, that the audience may have "ambivalent feelings about Shakespeare . . . the guy the teacher made them read at school"). The switch of title for the *Dr Who* episode from that of a "lost" play (bad) to one incorporating the name of the author (good) reflects this ambivalent view of Shakespeare and his works in the modern

period. The code in this episode has a genuine narrative function as described above: words are power. Yet the reference to code could also allude to the modern audience's concern that the plays are written in a kind of incomprehensible linguistic code, which has to be cracked. The Doctor's willingness to embrace that "code" and celebrate it in this program, as well as the fact that Shakespeare is on the side of the Doctor as he saves the world, is a positive reinforcement of Shakespeare for the modern audience. It represents an attempt to re-read the signs/codes of the visual and verbal representations of the high-culture icon Shakespeare, and re-sequence these into a different more popular signifier.

As with *Shakespeare in Love*, the historical context of the *Dr Who* episode is established very quickly in its depiction of bustling street scenes. Yet instead of empathizing with Shakespeare's subject position in those streets, as is the case in *Shakespeare in Love*, we hear the Doctor's commentary as we accompany him and Martha on their journey along Bankside. We are televisually stitched into their conversation, as we share her point of view as a novice time traveler. As Andrew Hartley notes, "the tone of the episode owes much to *Shakespeare in Love* and is similarly playful in its teasing out of Shakespearean issues and problems" (Hartley 2009b). The Doctor's guidance to his twenty-first century companion, and the audience, is based on drawing analogies between 1599 and 2007, finding equivalencies between what they see and "recycling," a" water-cooler moment," "global warming," and "entertainment." The Doctor's anticipated pleasure of seeing Shakespeare at the Globe is important, as the authority of his point of view is crucial in this series in shaping the audience's own expectations. He describes Shakespeare as a genius: "Genius. He's a genius, the genius. The most human, human there has ever been. Now we are going to hear him speak. Always he chooses the best words. New, beautiful, brilliant words." This image of the high cultural icon is deflated by Shakespeare's actual first words, "Shut your big fat mouths," which visibly disappoints the Doctor. Martha's comment, "you should never meet your heroes," could have signaled the end of this iconic treatment of Shakespeare. However, the writer Gareth Roberts cleverly repositions his portrayal of Shakespeare as the episode develops. Initially Shakespeare is presented as a loud-mouthed rock star, somewhat weary of his celebrity image — "no autographs, no you can't have yourself sketched with me, please don't ask where I get my ideas from." This conception may owe something to TV biographies of Shakespeare screened in the early years of the twenty-first century. Both *Great Britons* (2002) and *In Search of Shakespeare* (2004) had been at pains to establish Shakespeare as a young celebrity at the heart of a dynamic historical moment. As Michael Wood asserted in the latter series:

> You have to think away that image of Shakespeare, the balding, middle-aged man in a ruff, the gentle bard, the icon of English heritage. This is a young blade in his mid-twenties. This

> is a young man, bold, ambitious in his art. He's funny, streetwise, sexy and by all accounts extremely good company. (Wood 2003)

This is in effect what we get in "The Shakespeare Code" and it is endorsed by Martha's anti-iconic comment that Shakespeare is "a bit different from his portraits!"

Nevertheless the main preoccupation of the episode is "words." Despite his roguish image, Shakespeare is presented as a collector and transformer of words and phrases. He is intrigued by the Doctor's vocabulary which playfully includes many phrases we know to be Shakespeare's. The running joke of the episode is the Doctor indicating whether Shakespeare "can have that" (e.g. "the play's the thing," "all the world's a stage," "Sycorax") or "you can't, it's someone else's" ("Rage, rage against the dying of the light"). Or alternatively we see the Doctor encouraging Shakespeare to capture his own thoughts such as "to be or not to be" - "you should write that down!" Alongside this celebratory affection for words, there is also praise of "theatre's magic" — "oh you [Shakespeare] can make men weep. Or cry with joy. Change them. You can change people's minds just with words in this place." This Shakespeare may initially disappoint and be unlike his portraits but his genius resides in his love of language and theater. He is also marked out as separate from his age in that he is not deceived by the Doctor's "psychic paper"[6]: he deduces that Martha is from the future and the Doctor from another time and place. As Hartley observes of the representation of Shakespeare:

> one gets a sense that his separateness, like the doctor's, comes from knowing and feeling too much, however flippant he seems superficially. Both figures are thus rendered Hamletic according to a specific Romantic model. (Hartley 2009b)

The episode aims to explore the affinity and parallels between the two central characters, built on a sense of loss (the Doctor's loss of Rose, his previous traveling companion, and Shakespeare's of his son). While the play staged in the episode is the supposed lost play *Love's Labour's Won*, Shakespeare is being edged by the Doctor towards writing *Hamlet*. Like *Shakespeare in Love*, comedy is forsaken in favor of tragedy and in the "end roots the episode in Shakespeare's repudiation of the frivolity of comedy for something of more weight" (Hartley 2009b). It also ironically marks the trajectory of Tennant's own migration from the popular culture of Dr Who to his performance of Hamlet for the RSC in 2008 (see Hartley 2009b).

The resolution of the episode depends on Shakespeare's open-minded modernity and his recognition of the power of words. In the final scene the Doctor says:

> Come on Will, history needs you! . . . you're the wordsmith, the one true genius, the only man clever enough to do it . . . you're William Shakespeare . . . Trust yourself. When you're

> locked away in your room, words just come: they are like magic. Words of the right sound, the right shape, the right rhythm — words that last for ever. That's what you do Will, you choose perfect words. Do it Will — improvise!

And once Shakespeare has found the words the aliens are defeated.

We see here a subtle mutation, from the Romantic image of an emotionally inspired poet, as in *Shakespeare in Love*, to the intelligent wordsmith and theater practitioner in *Dr Who*. This may partly reflect Roberts's awareness of his audience, particularly the children and young adults who made up a large percentage of the 6.8 million who first watched the program. A focus on the excitement and power of language chimed well with the aspirations of the UK educational system at that time, which emphasised the significance of "language": from the literacy hour in primary schools, to GCSE English Literature programs which stress the need "to explore how language, structure and forms contribute to the meaning of texts" (Review of Standards in GCSE English Literature in 2000 and 2007). Moreover, the episode made a number of knowing intertextual allusions to J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. As Peter Holland comments, "The modern and the classic prove to harmonize, and the text that represents the contemporary excitement of publication proves to complete, complement, and re-energize the early modern excitement of performance (Holland 2012)." The references to Rowling's wizard engage the young audience, reminding them of the underlying message in her novels that language is powerful. It is Harry Potter's spell, "expelliarmus," which brings past and present words and worlds together in the final expulsion of the Carrionites from the Globe.

Though the initial representation of Shakespeare in Roberts's text is more as rock star than as traditional icon, it does show awareness of some key debates about the biography of the playwright, and also alludes to Shakespeare's iconic representation in the visual arts. For example, it is less conservative in its representation of Shakespeare's sexuality than *Shakespeare in Love*. At one point, the Doctor says, "Come on, we can all have a good flirt later," to which Shakespeare responds, "Is that a promise, Doctor?" The Doctor's subsequent comment — "Oh — fifty-seven academics just punched the air" — momentarily draws attention to the academic debates around Shakespeare's sexuality, and maybe even the responses to the resolute heterosexuality of *Shakespeare in Love*, which some of his time-traveling audience may be aware of. Nevertheless, in the final moments of the episode the iconic image of Shakespeare is re-codified, albeit rather ironically. First Martha tells Shakespeare a joke that he fails to understand, involving Shakespeare being "barred"; then she calls him a "great genius," but refuses to kiss him because his breath smells. Next the Doctor offers him a ruff from the stage properties to wear as a neck brace for

a few days, but adds "you might want to keep it — it suits you." Shakespeare is thus ironically reaffirmed in his traditional pictorial image before reciting his latest sonnet, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" to his twenty-first century "dark lady," causing the Doctor literally to raise an eyebrow. All this detail appears to parody much that appears in *Shakespeare in Love*, including the appearance of Queen Elizabeth I who has heard about the previous night's performance. One senses the writer's tongue is firmly in its cheek at this point. Yet the ending does not subside into an inferior historical pageant: rather it plunges into a Carroll-esque conclusion, as Elizabeth is turned into a Queen of Hearts calling for the head of the "pernicious Doctor." The topsy-turvy world of time-travel is revealed as the Doctor does not know how he has offended the Queen because he has yet to meet her. This mystery plays self-consciously with the time-travel motif and its scrambled sequencing, as we see the consequences of an action that the Doctor has not yet experienced. It creates a loose thread, not explained for another two years of the program, when in the Christmas 2009 special, and Tennant's last appearance as the Doctor, it is revealed, in a complex story about alien duplications of Elizabeth, that he was married to Elizabeth, albeit briefly.

V: *Bill*

The final text to be considered here is the September 18th 2015 BBC Films/BFI production of *Bill*. Mark Kermode writing in *The Observer* commented "the players of TV's terrific *Horrible Histories* romp their way through this entertaining mash-up of *Shakespeare in Love* and *Blackadder II*" (Kermode 2015). Most reviews of the film reference these texts, with some also suggesting influences from "The Shakespeare Code." The *Horrible Histories* franchise, which has connections with this film, is an educational entertainment company which includes numerous books, television programs, stage productions, and assorted merchandise. *Bill* is directed by Richard Bracewell, but written by members of the writing team of the CBBC *Horrible Histories* television program, Laurence Rickard and Ben Willbond, with cast members also from the television team. Stylistically, *Bill* replicates the fondness of the *Horrible Histories* for visual and verbal puns, scatological humour, and musical numbers. This film, like "The Shakespeare Code," is predominantly attempting to appeal to a young, or family audience. In *Bill*, as well as the *Horrible Histories*, the audience travel to the past, but there are constant reminders of the present. While set in the past, the details of that past are presented within a recognizable framework from the present. This technique somewhat paradoxically ensures that the audience take away some knowledge of the historical situation being presented. In the film *Bill*, for example, the audience is presented with a scene representing Shakespeare's first acting job. He is dressed as a tomato, and works alongside Marlowe dressed as a leek, promoting the consumption of vegetables — "Are you

getting your two a week?" In terms of plot it is blatantly fictional, yet it succeeds in suggesting that, because of the closure of the playhouses due to the plague, out of work actors and playwrights had to find alternative employment. The ridiculous and anachronistic promotional work is amusing, but it depicts the playwrights' insecure financial situation and their frustrated ambition. While not founded particularly on historical facts, the film, perhaps more than one might expect, seems in an entertaining way to teach the audience something about the material conditions surrounding playwriting in Renaissance London.

These material conditions include discovering, in general terms, something about the background of social, religious and political intrigue. The film is set in the same year as *Shakespeare in Love*, 1593, at the end of the so-called lost years. The opening credit notes it is a "time of war and plague, but mostly war." One of the main themes of the film, which is comically reprised throughout, is the fear of Catholic plots. It is even proposed that the spymaster Walsingham has been pretending to be dead for three years, but has really been undercover investigating these plots. He has, in one of the running jokes of the film, been "hiding in plain sight," and is seen hidden in a pie, and then later in a cart full of plague victims (allowing the cast, perhaps for the benefit of the adults, to draw on the "bring out your dead" joke from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, 1975). While comically presented, the film uses modern terminology to suggest a correlative between these earlier Catholic plots and contemporary concerns about terrorism. There are security checks around the court, and a security level of "dark woad."

Interestingly, the lessons taught embrace not only historical contexts but also issues around authorship. First, the film suggests that the writing of Renaissance drama was often a collaborative affair. In this it develops the idea of the Doctor helping Shakespeare fine-tune his word choices in "The Shakespeare Code." In *Bill* we see the would-be playwright meeting with Christopher Marlowe in the "Quill and Rapier," and being chastised for including "dance moves." Marlowe later appears as a ghost to help him re-write the play for Elizabeth's political summit. This scene has a number of postmodern borrowings with Bill's address to the ghost, "I charge thee speak," and the appearance of a ghostly quill hanging in the air. There are obvious intertextual references here to Will's discussions with Marlowe about "Romeo and Ethel, the Pirate's daughter" in *Shakespeare in Love*. However, it has closer parallels with the stage version of *Shakespeare in Love* which opened in London in July 2014. This production placed greater emphasis on the collaboration between Marlowe and Shakespeare, framing the play with Marlowe, in the opening scene, assisting with the writing of "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?," and then appearing as a ghost, to comfort the distraught Will, at the end of the play, by helping him begin to write *Twelfth Night*. *Bill* also includes the ghostly figure of Marlowe standing with Elizabeth in the closing scenes.

In both of these versions Marlowe is a shaping influence on the work of Shakespeare, with the possible suggestion that he is "reborn" in Shakespeare. It seems possible that *Bill* and the stage version of *Shakespeare in Love*, are acknowledging the anti-Stratfordian theory that Marlowe did not really die (like Walsingham in this film) but, after staging his death, began to write the plays under Shakespeare's name. Nevertheless, the presence of Marlowe as a ghost seems eventually to debunk the theory, and emphasize his role as mentor.

The film rather knowingly even creates humor around its interpretation of Marlowe's death, when he is stabbed to death in the Bull Tavern. In this interpretation it is Philip II and his accomplices who kill Marlowe, while he is trying to sell Shakespeare's play. The Spanish steal the play and leave Marlowe dying, calling out for "Bill," after which he is presented with the bill for the meal. This word-play entertains its young audience, and yet there are additional levels to the joke to be accessed by members of the audience who are aware that the official Elizabethan report of Marlowe's death alleged he was killed following a disagreement over "the reckoning." The tragedy of Marlowe's death is mitigated with the Pythonesque body collector trying to load him onto to the cart before he is dead. The scene reveals further playfulness around the idea of authorship, when it is later revealed that Marlowe did not give Philip the play, and we see the innkeeper throwing the discarded collaborative "lost" play into the fire.

The film also seems to parody another anti-Stratfordian theory, through its inversion of the plot of *Anonymous* (2011). The suggestion in that film is that the erudite Earl of Oxford writes the plays, and then employs the drunken actor Shakespeare to disguise his involvement. This is comically inverted in *Bill*. In this film the Earl of Croydon, having claimed in a drunken boast to Elizabeth that he has written a play, needs to acquire one quickly. Having failed to write his own, because plays turn out to be not "just talking written down," Bill is cajoled into giving him his play. So in a double comic inversion of the Oxfordian claim, it is the Earl who claims to have written Bill's play, but it is the aristocrat who is also the ignorant buffoon.

But what of the representation of the author Shakespeare in this time-traveling film? In general terms the film follows the same narrative arc of the previous two texts, with the author rising to a challenge and receiving recognition and reward. Perhaps to encourage empathy in the young audience, however, Bill is presented as initially much more immature and less formed as a writer. He is first seen in the film at a desk, quill in hand, in the conventional pose of a writer in biopics, but he is interrupted and the iconic image is broken as he shouts "What?" in response to his wife's call. In the early scenes he seems mostly driven by a desire to be famous. He performs with his lute-playing boy-band, "Mortal Coil," who soon "shuffle off" following a showboating performance from Will. Anne interprets his decision to be a playwright as another example of his

rather dilettante behavior, following as it does his interests in music, acting, and "interpretative dance," and remarks that play writing is not a proper job in Stratford. Before departing for London, he protests with rather knowing irony that "twenty years from now they will remember my name!" Once in London, a Dick Wittington figure, worldly goods in a handkerchief on a stick, and oblivious to the crimes being committed around him, Bill seeks his fortune. Yet throughout the film, the audience see little evidence of his skill as a playwright. He explains to Marlowe that he writes plays where "people get hit with sticks," and the actual examples of his work given show a fertile, but unstructured imagination.

Bill is very much shown to be an apprentice writer. His first play, "A Series of Comic Misunderstandings," is prefaced by a musical song which outlines a plot formed from the half-formed motifs of plays to come — pairs of twins, jilted brides, bodies hidden by monks, star-crossed lovers, bride brought back from the dead with a donkey's head etc. All of which leave the Earl of Croydon, who hopes to pass the play off as his own, insisting "I am dead." Following Marlowe's guidance to "write what you know," the play performed to Elizabeth is a bowdlerized mixture of *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, with a smattering of famous phrases and lines. The Queen's critical response is that there are "many ideas," and that in future these should be introduced "one at a time, as it is a bit dense." Bill's reward for the play, and helping to foil the Spanish plot, is that he gains financial support for his future career when Elizabeth recommends that Southampton become his patron.

In the closing moments of the film, the film audience is reassured that Bill has made it. This scene echoes the end of "The Shakespeare Code." As Bill, behind the scenes at the "Rose theatre," confirms the title of the play as *The Comedy of Errors*, he turns towards the camera, and we see that he has been recrafted as something approaching the iconic Chandos image of Shakespeare — hair tamed, earring inserted. He walks onto the stage as someone intones "world ready for Shakespeare." These conversations in the wings of the playhouse mirror contemporary reality shows and offer the young audience a rather *X-Factor* definition of celebrity fame, which is the product of overcoming adversity. In this film, the texts of the plays are always fragmented, and never experienced on the public stage, and so unlike in the previous texts, there is no celebration of the power of theater itself. The narrative of success has been charted, yet here, there is no celebration of Shakespeare's "words," little sense of his craft as a writer, and so far no-one has been affected by his plays.

The consequence of time travel in this film is thus different. Here we see the postmodern irony that is present in the earlier films and that often signals the overlaying of past and present, moving from the periphery to dominate center stage. Paradoxically, in a film which plays so fast and loose with historical accuracy, *Bill* does quite successfully deal with the underlying social, cultural and political movements of the time. Curiously the absurdity of its reconstruction serves to parody,

and thus make visible, several of the underlying questions that have preoccupied critics. The film's dominant ironic tone means that it avoids the stereotypical image of the Romantic playwright, but the downside, perhaps, is that the audiences (both of the film and on-screen) are left anticipating what is to come. Yet maybe that is the point — the film, like the *Horrible Histories* books and television programs, is intended to stimulate interest and provide, via its "mash up," an entertaining hook that will bring children and young adults enlivened to their further study of history and literature. This film is one of several late-2015 texts anticipating the commemorations in 2016 of the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. In response to this, it proposes ends in the beginnings of the author's life, but perhaps more importantly, it creates a springboard for teachers in 2016 to explore that life, and its ends, in the sense of the plays, in the modern classroom.

VI: Conclusion

To conclude, all of the texts considered in this essay indicate at their ends an uncertainty about what happens next. Two texts, *Bill* and "The Shakespeare Code," pull apart the narrative of Shakespeare's life, only to reconfigure him visually as the conventional figure in a portrait. In all of the texts, as in the ending of the *Dr Who* episode, there are things "to look forward to," which seems an apt metaphor for the representation of the person of Shakespeare in contemporary film. Like the time traveling Doctor, the audience of these films is given an experience which is partial: both in the sense that it is incomplete, and in that it reveals a bias in its characterisations of the author. In the early days of cinema, screenwriters relied on the authority of the book and the "author's voice-over" to give authenticity to their creations. In contemporary cinema there is more confidence in the medium's ability to narrate its own stories. Yet, this discussion has shown that, as David Wittenberg observes, "in time travel fiction, the fundamental historiographical question [is] — how is the past reconstructed by or within the present?" (Wittenberg 2013, 13). These texts are undoubtedly the product of different presents, even within the short span of less than twenty years, and they reflect a range of social, cultural, political, educational and filmic contexts. Yet, there is one context that seems to have influenced them all, and that is the modern preoccupation with fame and celebrity. The structuring narrative of the "life journey" is dominant, and yet inconclusive, perhaps because the very notion of "celebrity" is itself dependent on, and forever flirts with, the idea of knowing and yet not knowing about the object of one's fascination. These biographical representations of the rather elusive figure of Shakespeare feed that craving for speculation and information; they also paradoxically ensure that the questions will continue to be asked and the debate will go on. Meanwhile, we can be grateful for the fact that in a predominantly visual and

public medium, each film has found images and narrative devices which encourage us to rejoice in the private creative act of authorship.

Notes

1. Recent biographical studies of the playwright, many with "celebrity" undertones in their titles, include *The Genius of Shakespeare* (Jonathan Bate, 1997), *Shakespeare: the Invention of the Human* (Harold Bloom, 1999), *Ungentle Shakespeare* (Katherine Duncan-Jones 2001), *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare* (Stephen Greenblatt, 2004), *Secret Shakespeare: Studies in Theatre, Religion and Resistance* (Richard Wilson, 2004), *Shakespeare: The Biography* (Peter Ackroyd, 2005), and *A Year in the Life of William Shakespeare: 1599* (James Shapiro, 2006). Shakespeare was voted "Man of the Millennium" in a Radio 4 "Today" program poll, featured in a BBC1 television series *Great Britons* (2002), and was the subject of Michael Wood's *In Search of Shakespeare* (2003) for BBC2. These last two programs have been discussed by Pearson and Uricchio, who suggest that "both *In Search of Shakespeare* and *Great Britons* . . . sever Shakespeare from heritage and . . . argue for his relevance to the twenty-first century" (2006, 214).
2. I follow the protocol adopted by many commentators on this film here by referring to the character in the film as "Will" and the historical personage as "Shakespeare." When discussing "The Shakespeare Code" I will revert to Shakespeare for both character historical figure, and in Bill, resume referring to the character "Bill" and Shakespeare for the author.
3. Lisa Hopkins notes "there has been a steadfast refusal of the part of those involved in *Shakespeare in Love* to clarify the precise nature of Tom Stoppard's involvement" (83) which heightens the issues around authorship in the film itself.
4. For a different reading of the film as postmodern metanarrative employing multivocality and heteroglossia that "demonstrates the synergistic role of cultural, social and historical conditions in the act of composition" (157) and ultimately limits the role of Shakespeare as unifying genius, see Davis and Womack.
5. A. J. Hartley's *What Time Devours* (2009) is an example.
6. Psychic paper is one of the Doctor's tools — a kind of business card that enables him to gain access to individuals or buildings by persuading the reader that they see the verification they need to see.

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CHAPTER 12

Austenland and Narrative Tensions in Austen's Biopics

Janice Wardle

This chapter explores how the popular film *Austenland* (2013) comically exposes some of the narrative conventions and tensions which are apparent in two earlier Austen biopics: *Becoming Jane* (2007) and *Miss Austen Regrets* (2008). Through an investigation of these texts, it will be seen that the wish to celebrate Austen's historical otherness and difference is often held in an uneasy balance with a desire to investigate the contemporary relevance of her life and work for modern readers. I will suggest that all these texts offer readings of Austen shaped by a modern aspirational narrative of romantic fulfilment. In addition their creation of an idea of 'Englishness' is informed by not only twenty-first-century contexts but also differing national expectations of Austen's world. Moreover, the chapter will explore how these filmic readings are predicated on unreliable reconstructions of Austen's life, sometimes supplemented by details from Austen's novels, as well as playful enactments of historical 'facts' and self-referential quotation of other biopics and classic adaptations. These intertextual references are, as we will see, central also to the narrative of *Austenland*, and this investigation shows how the film ironically critiques

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earlier filmic versions of the life and works of Jane Austen, as it unremittingly draws attention to the artifice of Austenland itself.

Definitions

It seems to be generally agreed that the biopics of canonical literary figures, such as Austen, frequently share many of the characteristics displayed in the classic literary adaptations of their work. In her article '*Becoming Jane* and the Adaptation Genre', Deborah Cartmell helpfully summarises the characteristics of the classic literary adaptation. From Leitch's work she notes that they include 'a period setting, "period" music, an obsession with authors, books and words, and a preponderance of intertitles, all calling attention to the film's adaptation credentials'.[1] To this list, as Cartmell indicates, we might add from Geraghty's work, moments where 'the film's *mise-en-scène* visually recalls other much loved films…these meta-adaptive moments foster nostalgia'.[2] Further features suggested by Cartmell herself include 'an emphasis on the author, the inclusion of art, painting or sculpture within the frame or recreated in the *mise en scène*'[3] as well as

> the appeal to female audiences – a feature of the genre, like historical fiction or 'chick lit', which until recently, may have been partially responsible for its banishment from serious academic critical scrutiny. Adaptation the genre, or the screen makeover of a literary text, self-consciously appeals primarily to women, signalled by female-friendly narrative additions, such as the insertion of a bathing or semi-dressed man, a trip to the shops or an additional episode in which the female upstages the male in a normally male-centred activity. Significantly, almost all of these features can be traced back to *Pride and Prejudice*.[4]

Such features of the classic literary adaptation are thus clearly central to the genre of literary biopics, particularly where the focus is upon a canonical literary figure. As far as biopics are concerned Cheshire notes 'defining a bio-pic is notoriously difficult: unlike most other genres there is no specific set of codes or conventions'.[5] Perhaps in general terms we might note that the subject matter depicts the life of a real person. And yet as Bingham observes, this is rather more complex in practice:

> The biopic is a genuine, dynamic genre and an important one. The biopic narrates, exhibits, and celebrates the life of the subject in order to demonstrate, investigate, or question his or her importance in the world; to illuminate the fine points of personality; and for both artist and spectator to

> discover what it would be like to be this person, or to be a certain type of person, or … to be that person's audience. The appeal of the biopic lies in seeing an actual person who did something interesting in life, known mostly in public, transformed into a character.[6]

The idea of biopics transforming the 'real' person into a character would seem to have greater resonance when we are presented with the biopic of an author, and as noted above the source for that character is often found in the author's own work. Yet there is also an observation here in Bingham's definition that the role of spectator and audience is also key. Higson takes this idea of audience further, exploring

> three separate but closely related markets or audiences for these literary biopics: the 'literary' audience; the audience for middlebrow costume drama; and the female audience for romantic drama. For some of these audiences, it is vital that these are 'quality' films about the lives of writers. For others, the protagonists of these films just happen to be authors: what is the real interest is their romantic lives.[7]

A biopic of an author or writer presents particular challenges with the dominantly visual film medium attempting to represent the essentially private, intellectual and, basically, not very cinematically interesting physical activity of writing. And yet, possibly because this basic task is so uninteresting, certain film conventions have accrued around the process of writing. As Buchanan argues in relation to *Enid* (dir. James Hawes, 2009):

> We recognise the anatomized elements of inspiration (poetic shafts of light, gazing into the middle distance), perspiration (clickety-clackety typewriter keys, busy fingers) and production (the words appearing on the page, the voice reading these) to which we have just been made privy and, drawing upon our foreknowledge both of Enid Blyton's literary output and, significantly, of how such film sequences *work*, we infer what this rich assembly of satisfyingly conventionalized visual elements *should* collectively now generate.[8]

There are thus filmic conventions that have accrued to enable the cinema audience to understand the creative act of writing in literary biopics. Moreover, the narrative arc and structure of such biopics owe much to literary archetypes:

> Biopics of authors are generally structured like a bildungsroman, a portrait of the artist as a young person, concentrating on the events leading up to success and ending with the price that success brings. The emphasis is on the dawning of authorship, the 'becoming' the person we know as the author. The Romantic notion that art is inspired by love is also central to films depicting the life of an author.[9]

Becoming Jane and *Miss Austen Regrets*

The film *Becoming Jane* and the television programme *Miss Austen Regrets* have attracted much academic attention and critical investigation. One important aspect of these investigations has been to show how these biopics have been influenced in tone and presentation by the filmic style and content of classic literary adaptations. Like the filmic adaptations of her novels, these biopics draw upon aspects of a nostalgic Austen myth, as Julian North notes:

> a canonical author whose life and work signify English national heritage and all that implies of the past as an idyll of village life in a pre-industrial society, of traditional class and gender hierarchies, sexual propriety and Christian values.[10]

A major component of this depiction involves a nostalgic longing for the order and beauty of the past. In my discussion of *Austenland* in a moment, we will see the significance of place and setting, but in *Becoming Jane* and *Miss Austen Regrets,* we should note the significant role played by the 'historical veracity and authenticity of location and costume—to the extent that central characters may seem lost in the "background", which assumes a pivotal role in the drama itself.'[11] With these films there is the customary setting in National Trust properties: *Becoming Jane* employed settings in Charleville Forest Castle and Kilruddery House, both in Ireland, and *Miss Austen Regrets* uses locations at the Elizabethan Maze, Chenies Manor House, Buckinghamshire and Syon House, Syon Park, Middlesex. In these two films there are many other features of 'heritage film' or in Alan Parker's coinage 'the "Laura Ashley" school of filmmaking'.[12] In each film we can recognise the characteristics of heritage cinema including the 'showcasing of landscape (often the rural south) and costume props in an occupational vacuum or state of permanent recreation', 'an appeal to relatively mature, feminine, or gay middle-class audiences, drawn to films exuding warmth and emotionality'.[13] Part of this warmth and emotionality is created in

these films, as it is in adaptations of Austen's literary texts, by the use of music and dance. As Sheen notes 'Adaptation from page to screen turns a novel into a soundtrack.'[14] Moreover, in both of these biographical films there appears to be some direct reference or quotation of recent Austen adaptations. For example, in *Becoming* Jane there is a visual similarity between the meeting between Jane and Lady Gresham and Elizabeth Bennet and Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Furthermore, the film implicitly references the famous Darcy wet-shirt moment in the 1995 BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice,* in the scene where Jane enters the grounds of Lady Gresham's house, and also in the swimming scene following the cricket match.

Critical attention to these films has shown how the lesser-known corners of Austen's life are utilised to illuminate her literary works. In a slightly paradoxical two-way process, those same literary works and their romantic narratives, as well as those narratives of filmic romantic comedies, also inform the shape of the telling of Austen's life. *Becoming Jane* proposes that a youthful relationship with Tom Lefroy in 1796 provided Austen with the enriched emotional memory to write *Pride and Prejudice*. *Miss Austen Regrets* on the other hand depicts a period beginning with a nearly forty-year-old Austen advising her young niece Fanny on her marital prospects. This leads to Jane's own mature reappraisal of her own earlier romantic relationships, which, it is implied, inform her writing of *Persuasion*. Although her relationship with Tom Lefroy is mentioned in the television drama, the focus is here on her friendship with a Dr Haden and an older relationship with the Reverend Brook Bridges to whom she was very briefly engaged over ten years earlier. All of these relationships have been documented by earlier literary critics and writers including Austen's biographer Clare Tomalin, Jon Spence and John Halperin.[15] While these critics do not entirely agree with each other on which romantic relationship was potentially the most significant in Austen's life and work, the film and television texts clearly endorse the idea that the author's experience of such intense romantic moments must be the transformative incidents which provide an 'explanation' for Austen's genius. This is somewhat curious and as Hopkins notes 'most dangerous(ly), *Becoming Jane* is irresistibly attracted to romance, in a way Jane Austen herself was not'.[16]

As has been noted by other critics, *Becoming Jane* adopts a strategy which is similar to that in *Shakespeare in Love* in that it takes the literary work as its starting point, and retrospectively offers parallels between *Pride and Prejudice* and the 'real' life of the author: we find the end in Austen's

beginnings. Consequently in *Becoming Jane*, for example, Lady Gresham becomes the model for Lady Catherine de Bourgh, Tom Lefroy's early distain influences her creation of Darcy, Mrs Austen's anxiety that her daughters should marry well becomes the foundation for Mrs Bennet, and Jane's elopement (which did not happen) mirrors Lydia's in *Pride and Prejudice*. As with *Shakespeare in Love*, part of the pleasure that some of the film audience will experience is in recognising the connections between the life and work which the film explores. In this drama Jane decides to elope with Lefroy and she recognises that she may need to give up both her family and her future literary aspirations as a result. She does this knowing the consequences and accepting that the married state may not be compatible with the role of a female author. Nevertheless, she soon recognises that her decision to marry Lefroy would inflict penury upon his family and so ends the relationship and returns home. It is suggested in the film that this thwarted romance influences her novel writing and so in *Pride and Prejudice* she ensures that her heroines make sound financial, as well as romantic, attachments. While she is writing the novel, Jane remarks to Cassandra that the two sisters make 'incandescent marriages to very rich men'. The director, Julian Jarrold, has noted of the depiction of Jane Austen in the film:

> And I think what was surprising and interesting was the way he [writer Kevin Hood] portrayed Jane Austen as a very fresh, feisty, lively, kind of full of energy, young 20 year old. And we are so used to the image of Jane Austen as prim and proper and obsessed with propriety and middle-aged and sat quietly on her sofa in the living room, that it just seemed very fresh and lively and an interesting character who anybody could relate to. And there was something very interesting then about the way of looking at her before she became that iconic image… (DVD Special Feature, 2008)

This demonstrates that the film has an absolute commitment to the idea that a presentation of the author's biography, and an understanding of their perceived 'human' characteristics, provides the source and answers to a writer's future literary work and their iconic 'genius'. It is as if cultural materialism and new historicism had never happened.

While *Becoming Jane* makes some use of Austen's letters to her sister, the narrative in *Miss Austen Regrets* is derived according to its writer, Gwyneth Hughes, largely from the author's correspondence and diaries. There is a similar attempt in this drama to highlight the 'human' aspects of Miss Austen's life. Steven Pile in *The Daily Telegraph* noted:

> At the start of the 21st century we are all madly interested in What Jane Austen Was Really Like, but the reports are confusing. In the cinema *Becoming Jane* showed us an intelligent woman who was nonetheless feminine and romantic, but television is not so easily fooled and has come up with something far more complex. (3 May 2008)

The complexity of the characterisation in *Miss Austen Regrets* is partly a consequence of Jane being more mature. Yet she is also portrayed as a flirt, with an occasional sharp mocking tongue, who is given to enthusiastic dancing and drinking too much wine. Jane's behaviour enchants her new friend and potential romantic attachment, Dr Haden, while her former fiancé, the Reverend Brook Bridges, chastises her. In addition, she is also seen to be constantly beset by financial concerns, partly because the arrangements of her affairs are in the hands of her financially inept brothers. Jane's writing bestows a greater economic security on herself and her immediate family, as well as a degree of fame (she visits the Prince Regent's librarian who negotiates with her for the royal dedication of her next novel). The 'regrets' of the drama's title are somewhat ambiguous and numerous. Jane regrets that she is ill and may not complete her novel. She appears to regret that she did not marry her friend Brook Bridges. The interpretation offered here is that this decision not to marry is partly based on a belief that he was 'not the one', even though later experience teaches her that 'the only way to get a man like Mr Darcy is to make him up'. There is also the rather flippant reason offered that 'The true reason I have never found a husband: I never found one worth giving up flirting for.' Yet the drama also suggests that she has a very real anxiety that she would have not been able to continue to write because of children and family commitments. The drama repeatedly shows that the lot of most women in the early nineteenth century is to become worn out and/or die as a result of having children: her sister-in-law has died leaving her brother with eleven children; her niece is pregnant within a year of her marriage. At the christening of this child, Jane's mother comments publicly on Jane's inability to hold the baby correctly, but one is led to believe that the absence of children in Jane's life is one of her regrets. Another of Jane's regrets is shown to be that her sister Cassandra asked her not to marry as she would be left alone.

The last aspect of these two films which has come under academic scrutiny, and that I wish to highlight here, is the depiction of the actual act of writing. As noted earlier, the challenge is how a biopic might make this

visual and interesting. Cartmell, comparing *Becoming Jane* with *Shakespeare in Love*, highlights how the quill/ink pen has become a filmic, and indeed a universal, iconic symbol of the writer. Moreover, she notes 'The pen is… symbolic of frustrated desire as well as a rival or replacement desire',[17] and later quotes Holderness who says:

> The image dovetails with our romantic idea of the writer, physically engaged in putting words on paper, transferring thoughts and emotions from the mind, via the muscles and nerves of arm and finger, through the writing implement that makes immediate contact with the paper.[18]

This focus on the physical, and indeed pseudo-sexual, act of artistic creation can be seen in the opening scene of *Becoming Jane*. Here we see Jane Austen in the early morning dressed in nightdress and shawl, writing at a small desk in the parlour of a country cottage. The opening shots of the film lovingly linger over a pastoral scene with a small village nestling amongst rolling hills, and cattle and horses grazing in the field. The soundtrack is dominated by rural sounds—bird chirping, horses snorting which is then over taken by the loud ticking of a clock in Jane's room which shows it is 6.15 a.m. An interesting characteristic of this opening scene is fast cutting between long-shots and apparently idiosyncratic close-ups. Before her on the desk is a page, blank but for a few sentences, and she distractedly taps her pen on the desk. After one stalled attempt to write a sentence which is crossed out (and then cut out of the page) she starts lethargically to play a piano. The camera pans outside the house and looks back through the window at a rather melancholic Jane tinkling on the keys of the piano, and then pans up the wall of the house to look in at Jane's sister Cassandra, and her parents sleeping peacefully. The next shot is of a large sow suckling her piglets and the Austen's servant arriving for the beginning of her working day. As the serving girl enters the house, Jane is struck by an idea which she frantically scribbles down, and then under her breath reads aloud the paragraph she has now written. Her exuberance at this success leads her to return to her piano and play a jubilant loud piece which causes the servant to drop a milk jug on the stairs, the piglets to scatter alarmed, two doves to flutter from the dove cote, her sister to rush from her room and meet her future fiancé on the landing before each retreat embarrassed by the lack of propriety, and Mrs Austen to shout 'Jane' just as the film's title appears on screen. Her mother continues 'that girl needs a husband … no-one's good enough … I blame you for that'.

This opening line quite clearly is intended to introduce the beginning of a series of references to marriage in the film that parallel those in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* ('It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife', Chap. 1). In this case it is Jane, the single woman without a fortune, who must be in want of a husband. In Mrs Austen's declaration, we see how Jane's writing implies a singleness separate from the film's opening images of partners and natural procreation which include Cassandra and fiancé, Mr and Mrs Austen (who engage in some early morning amorous activity after her initial comments), and even the two doves frightened from their cote, along with the sow and her many piglets. This is certainly the explicit meaning of the opening of this film. Yet, there is perhaps an implicit suggestion that the act of writing is also a pseudo-sexual act of creation. The succession of close-ups of initially apparently random objects together creates a Freudian narrative of writing as sexual climax. The sequence of shots from a full-frame shot of the bottom of a dripping drain-pipe, the focus on the prow of a boat on the river, following by a close-up of Jane's black pen being tapped repeatedly on the table before being dipped in the ink-well, followed by a shot of a doll sitting in a window seat, and then Jane's ecstatic piano playing leading to the breaking of the waters as the servant's jug is broken on the stairs does I think support such a reading. In a sense this film's response to Gilbert and Gubar's question 'Is the pen a metaphorical penis?' would be a resounding yes.[19] And yet the audience learn as the film progresses that Jane's creation in this scene is an early draft of *First Impressions* which fourteen years later became *Pride and Prejudice*. The film's main project is to show how the events the film depicts are the catalyst for the creation *Pride and Prejudice*. The film proposes that her relationship with Tom Lefroy introduces her to the 'real' world of love and relationships which results in the emergence of Austen as a great writer born out of sacrifice.

This theme of sacrifice is also a major theme in *Miss Austen Regrets*. Like her character Emma, Jane first tries unsuccessfully to manipulate the love life of her niece Fanny. Yet her significant reflection on Fanny's desire to be in love and to marry and her own regret at not marrying Brook Bridges results in a succession of scenes where she is seen to write passages from *Persuasion*. Having returned from her brother's house in Kent she settles into the cottage in Hampshire where in a voice-over interspersed with domestic images of gutting fish and preparing fowl she says:

> More than seven years were gone since this little recent sorrowful history had reached its close. She hoped to be wise and reasonable in time but alas, alas, she must confess to herself that she was not wise yet. She had used him ill – deserted and disappointed him, and worse she had shown a feebleness of character which his own decided confident temper could not endure. She had given him up to oblige others she had been forced into prudence. She learned romance as she grew older. Natural sequence to an unnatural beginning.

By the end of this passage, Cassandra is wiping her tears away with her apron but Jane notes 'I never weep over anything which might make me some money'.

After the disappointment of losing the attention of Dr Hayes in London, with her sister-in-law's words ringing in her ears 'It is a gift which god has given you. It is enough I think', Jane again returns to Hampshire and there is an extended scene in which another passage from *Persuasion* is 'written'. The passage is again interspersed with scenes of life at the cottage:

> *(Awakes in a start from sleep.)* For a few moments her imagination and her heart were bewitched *(outside in nightgown under a tree)*. She had some feelings which she was ashamed to investigate. They were too much like joy, senseless joy *(close up of pen on paper)*. Anne hoped she had outlived the age of blushing (*medium shot of Jane in parlour*), but the age of emotion she certainly had not. *(Cassandra lets in brother and family through the gate.)* All of the overpowering blinding bewildering effects of strong surprise were over with her. *(Back of head – camera sits just behind shoulder.)* Still however she had enough to feel it was agitation, pain, pleasure *(voice over Fanny and children chasing a chicken in the yard)*, a thing between delight and misery *(chicken cornered, knife sharpened)*. The room seemed full of persons and voices *(plucking chicken)*, a thousand feelings rushed on Anne of which this was the most consoling. *(Door creaks, Cassandra enters with tray, sets table – Jane freezes with pen above paper.)* But it would soon be over *(chicken gets head cut up – Cassandra re-enters, Jane stands up – cries out in pain)*. (1.00.33)

It is interesting that both of these passages are a conglomeration of snippets from different parts of the novel, and an adaptation of Austen's text. Such pastiche we will see is also part of *Austenland*'s approach. The dominate note of both pieces of *Persuasion* we seeing being composed is elegiac—the creative act has been born from difficult personal experience. The ideas arrive unbidden and are wrenched from and into the ordinary

fabric of Jane's life. The silent act of writing is supplemented by voice-over, music and the cornering, killing and preparation of the fowl for the table. As in *Becoming Jane*, the close-up on the pen is again significant. Here it is poised, waiting above the paper for Jane to resume her writing once the room is again her own. Yet whereas the act of writing in *Becoming Jane* was almost an act of procreation, here in *Miss Austen Regrets* it seems an act of purgation and it is seen as an anticipation of her own death. Despite the fact that these passages are not unadulterated Austen, the audience is manoeuvred into a position where they are presented with an image of an author who has confronted her demons and created a great work of literature. Thus as in *Becoming Jane*, the iconic figure of Austen is challenged in *Miss Austen Regrets*, and it is again built on the assumption that as Stephen Pile noted above 'we are all madly interested in What Jane Austen Was Really Like'. Arguably this drama, unlike *Becoming Jane*, came closer to examining some of the social and historical contexts of Austen's life and work. Yet it shares with *Becoming Jane* its strategy of creating an image of Austen which is shaped through a filter of twenty-first-century concerns. And here again there are similarities with the filmic adaptations of Austen's own works. The recreation of Austen herself as a 'feistier' version of one of her own heroines appeals, as Giddings and Selby noted of the Classic Serial on television, to 'socially, sexually, and political enfranchised women' in the contemporary audience.[20] On the one hand the heritage film displays a cultural obsession with the past but paradoxically these productions cater to the audience's perceived need for Austen to 'be like us'—a woman with a career, searching for financial security, a good social life, a significant relationship and children. We want Austen to have anticipated these shared modern preoccupations in her work, but this is only achievable by radically realigning biographical and historical facts.

AUSTENLAND

The film *Austenland*, released in 2013, is based on the first *Austenland* novel by Shannon Hale. In terms of its style and content the film and novel rely on its audience recognising, or at least implicitly understanding, the features of the classic literary adaptation, the biopic, and also the narrative structure of romantic comedy. The title of the film emphasises the significance of place to the concept of the film. Austenland the location in the film has a material particularity, but is founded on a rather more nebulous interpretation of the author's life and works. The term

'Austenland' was used in 2002, by Battaglia and Saglia, as a concept to describe all things Austenian 'a vast, virtual territory in a state of continuous expansion and configuration' created by 'readers and critics in their explorations of Jane Austen and her works'.[21] Yet 'Austenland' also suggests other nomenclature, such as 'Shakespeare's County', or 'Brontë Country', employed by local tourist boards. Nicola Watson describes such literary tourism as 'a fusion of the biographical with the fictional' and notes of the emergence of 'Brontë Country' at the end of the nineteenth century:

> it thus emerges as an amalgam of biographical and ambiguously real and fictive locations. It is populated indiscriminately by the sisters themselves, by their fictional characters, and by houses and places which are at once fictive (since they have usually been transposed and have always been re-named) and yet which are sufficiently real to be documented, mapped, marked and viewed.[22]

In some respects, the two biopics discussed earlier are also acts of literary tourism combining the real and the fictive as well as documenting and mapping people and places to be marked and viewed. In *Austenland* the economic imperative of this literary tourism is also clearly and comically exposed. At the beginning of the film, the proprietor, Mrs Wattlesbrook, in a marketing video for travel agents, describes Austenland 'as the world's only Jane Austen immersive experience', where Austen's name is a synonym for both literary works and author. The 'land' or location for this experience is revealed to be Pembrooke Park, a stately home in the southern counties of England, which the film recreates at the National Trust property, West Wycombe Park. The first shot of the house echoes the framing of such locations in *Becoming Jane* and *Miss Austen Regrets*. Its apparent authenticity is constructed for on-screen customers by its association with these biopic films and other classic literary adaptations. The country house asserts its pastoral credentials in the first long-shot where it is shown perched on a hill, framed by trees, fronted by a lake and bathed in sunshine. In addition, the film audience hear a classical music score inviting further comparisons with previous filmic constructions. The film thus deliberately crafts its location from the tropes of classic literary adaptations and biopics, and yet at the same time these conventions are commandeered to become part of a parody or pastiche of those very films.

The 'immersive experience' promised to Austenland's customers is the promise of romance. In another parallel with the Austen biopics, the 'experience' is loosely based on moments or tropes from the novels, particularly *Pride and Prejudice*. The premise of the film is that the heroine, Jane Hayes, an American, will either find romance at Austenland or be cured of her obsession with Jane Austen's world, and in particular, Darcy and *Pride and Prejudice*. Jane Hayes' long-standing obsessiveness is illustrated through a short series of flashbacks of former romantic encounters blighted by her obsession with Darcy. The interior of her apartment is shown to be cluttered with Austen memorabilia, and is a shrine to a kitsch version of Austen with its collection of teapots, china cups and saucers, doll's houses, dolls in eighteenth-century dress, a full-size cardboard cut-out of Colin Firth as Darcy which dominates her living area, and a bedroom of floral chintz, with 'Darcy was here' written over the bed. With the last of her savings Jane Hayes embarks for Austenland. Following a series of establishing shots of rather clichéd London tourist sites including the House of Parliament, marching guardsman and red telephone boxes, the film shows her arriving at a London airport. In an overhead shot we see her sweeping through the terminal in a long red polyester dress, of a vaguely Regency/Victorian style, a red-hooded cloak, and wearing an ill-fitting flimsy bonnet. At the collection point for Austenland, she meets one of her fellow guests, who while not dressed in period costume, announces herself, reading from notes provided by Austenland, to be Miss Charming. This character played by Jennifer Coolidge becomes Jane's confidante, although it is soon clear that she seeks a different experience from that of Jane at Austenland. They are collected by a chauffeur driving a classic Rolls Royce, which Miss Charming refers to as a 'car from the 1800s' and later asks if this is 'the Chitty Chitty Bang Bang car'? This opening section of the film thus illustrates its American visitors' yearning for historical authenticity in England and at Austenland, while at the same time not being entirely sure what such authenticity would look like. They are seeking the 'LC – life changing experience … get to play the heroine of your very own Austen story' as promised by Jane's travel agent, but their search for transformation is predicated on a misconceived and inaccurate fantasy model of Austen and her works. The trope of an enacted, but dislocated, fantasy is established clearly by Jane's 'Little Red Riding Hood' costume etched against the modernist styling of the airport arrival terminal.

Austenland, the location, oscillates rapidly between the utilisation of genuine historical buildings and grounds, as discussed above, and the obvious inaccuracies of the performance of the 'immersive experience' staged within it. Jane Hayes is given the pseudonym Miss Erstwhile, marking her affinity with a by-gone age. Of the three visitors to Austenland, she is the one most versed in the novels, whereas Miss Amelia Hartwright gushingly enters into the costume drama and Miss Charming fails to register that *Pride and Prejudice* is the title of an Austen novel, and appears more focused on possible romantic liaisons during her vacation. These three women interestingly seem to mirror Higson's 'three separate but closely related markets or audiences for these literary biopics'[23] mentioned above—those seeking the literary, the costume drama and the romantic drama. Ironically, it is Jane, the most informed of the visitors, who, during her welcome meeting at Austenland with the proprietress, is downgraded to the copper package because she has inadvertently paid for a lower level experience. It is clear that there is a modern economic bottom line in this enterprise. It is rather tempting to suggest that this also comically exposes the financial constraints of all modern stagings of Austen. In the film, Jane's copper package means that initially she is denied the 'fine' clothes and accommodation of her two fellow female participants, and is allocated the role of poor relation to the family at the House, and it is from this lowly position that she negotiates the recreated life of an Austen heroine seeking romance.

The 'interactive experience' of Austenland is founded on a performance where everyone, but the paying guests, is a paid actor. The staging of this performance embraces a number of features that would be familiar to its cinema audiences, and to its participants. The interiors of the House are recognisable as those of the Regency houses of classic adaptations, while at the same time they are excessively and parodically filled with *objets d'art* and cluttered with flower displays, paintings and statuettes. The costumes of the women are authentically shaped but they utilise a too modern colour palette and are excessively accessorised. They are the epitome of what Voigts-Virchow called 'costume props in an occupational vacuum or state of permanent recreation'.[24] The male actors are slightly more authentically costumed, and in one of a number of intertextual references in the film, the dark suit worn by Mr Nobley (J. J. Feild), the Darcyesque leading man in the Austenland performance, was worn by Colin Firth as Darcy in the 1995 *Pride and Prejudice*. Similarly Rupert Vansittart, who plays Mr Wattlesbrook in *Austenland*, also played the similar drunken figure of

Mr Hurst in the same television production. One might suggest that these intertextual references, which are likely to go unnoticed by all but the most assiduous of viewers, together with J. J. Feild's previous casting as Henry Tilney in *Northanger Abbey* (2007), are, curiously, an attempt to establish the authentic credentials of the film project itself, even as it parodies the spectacular failure of the Austenland experience.

This Austenland experience focuses on a number of dramatic scenarios, staged by the actors in Austenland, to provide opportunities for the guests to become romantically entangled. Therefore, in activities derived from Austen's novels, biopics and other classic literary adaptations, the actors create scenes involving elaborate dinners and picnics, card games, musical soirées, amateur theatricals and outdoor sporting activities. The latter provides the moment familiar from classic literary adaptations, and seen in the cricket scene in *Becoming Jane,* where the 'female upstages the male in a normally male-centred activity'. In this film Jane Erstwhile is the best shot in the grouse-shooting competition, and this moment is given some cinematic authentification, by employing the biopic convention of the classical musical score, which is here a Mozart Horn Concerto. Nevertheless, at the same time this scene becomes part of a running visual joke in the film around stuffed animals and birds. The grouse Jane 'kills' are already dead, and have been stuffed and then launched into the air for her to shoot. This she does in the style of a rifle-toting American settler. Taxidermy is everywhere in the film from the birds which embellish the women's hair to the peacocks and farm animals dotted around the estate. This motif could I think be a parodic reference to the very real animals which inhabit Longbourne in Joe Wright's 2005 *Pride and Prejudice*. Moreover, this taxidermy is a marker of the artifice which is at the heart of the Austenland experience, and perhaps more significantly becomes a metaphor for the ways biopics seek to objectify and preserve the lives and works of their subjects.

The activities at Austenland, as seen in this grouse-shooting episode, also bring English and American behaviours and interests into stark contrast. This can be seen in the attempts by Miss Charming to imitate Englishness in her speech by mangling vowels and resorting to 'tally ho' and inaccurate 'top of t'morning' utterances before commenting that 'I really enjoy conversating'. Lady Amelia Hartwright is linguistically convincing in the role of an eccentric, comic English aristocratic and yet is revealed at the end to be a bored wealthy American married to an old and ailing husband. Jane Erstwhile, however retains her American accent

throughout, despite the coaching offered by Miss Charming. Given this film is often parodic in its intentions, this discussion around appropriateness of vocabulary and accent could be seen to reference the exploits of other American actresses taking roles in Austen dramas. For example, in the pursuit of 'authenticity', Anne Hathaway, when playing Austen in *Becoming Jane* was willing to immerse herself in 'a village in England for a month', in order to change her accent, which, as Hopkins notes, 'was a clear urge to fidelity'.[25] Yet it also emphasises how in contemporary adaptations of Austen's life and works, the transatlantic perspective on English heritage is a significant shaping factor.

The film therefore gives a number of examples of the difficulty of creating a version of Austen's life and work in the modern world. As well as those mentioned above, the film often uses music to demonstrate the tensions and ambiguities of such an endeavour. Classical music is used to endorse the legitimacy of the film and the constructed Austenland as noted earlier, but contemporary popular music is used to endorse difference and historical distance. All the women when called upon to demonstrate the musical and singing skills of the typical Austen heroine are found sadly wanting. Jane Erstwhile invited to entertain the gathering, provocatively plays a one-fingered piano version of an American hip-hop song by Nelly that begins in her version with 'it is getting so hot in here / I think I will take my clothes off'. Comedy is provided by the contrast with the modern and contemporary, but the song also parodies how desire is often signalled, admittedly more subtly, via such piano performances in biopics and classic literary performances.

But what of the romance in this film? In the biopics of Austen we have seen that, in comparison to her novels, romantic love is not able to be portrayed as happy-ever-after, based on 'the simple fact that all her heroines find their man, but Jane Austen did not'.[26] And yet, as we have seen, despite this, romantic love is positioned as transformative in these biopics. *Austenland* is at heart a romantic comedy (a romcom) and possibly a chick flick, so it comes as no surprise that the idea of romance is again central. Austenland, the place, with its commercial transactions, layers of reality and performance, complicates the recognition of true love, as it does in Austen's novels. Yet this game-playing provides in the film ample opportunities for the customary misunderstandings of romantic comedy to develop. Jane Hayes/Erstwhile clearly understands that Mr Nobley is the Mr Darcy figure in the performance being enacted at the House, but she is initially attracted by someone who seems more 'real', the servant Martin

who seems to critique the Austenesque world. The viewer, however, is soon shown Martin behind the scenes at Austenland, relaxing by a swimming pool discussing Jane, with the other male actors. This scene appears to parody one of the classic novels 'female-friendly narrative additions, such as the insertion of a bathing or semi-dressed man', in a behind-the-scenes moment that shows Captain East in a customary state of undress. Jane, however, fails to recognise that Martin is also giving a performance, albeit one of a disgruntled actor at Austenland, and he is her designated copper package romantic partner. Martin is arguably the Mr Wickham character in the film. Mr Nobley, on the other hand, tries unsuccessfully to reveal his real affections for her under the guise of the theatrical entertainment. There is also some evidence in *Austenland* that, as in the biopics, romantic love can transform one's artistic life. In the novel *Austenland* the character of Jane Hayes is a graphic designer who while staying in England recovers her lost talent for painting. In the film, there is a remnant of this particular transformative power of love, with Jane's continued sketching and Nobley's comments 'you are an artist' [59.09].

However, the film more particularly seems to utilise the archetypal structure of romantic comedy more familiar in Shakespeare's romantic comedies. The film's tripartite structure enables the festive holiday world of Austenland to provide a release from the normal world to facilitate clarification and transformation, as noted by C. L. Barber, 'through release to clarification'.[27] For the heroine of the film this clarification comes in stages. The beginning of this process is signalled by the conventional romantic 'make-over' as she discards the costume of the copper package and takes 'charge of her own story'. Following a musical and dance sequence to Kim Carnes' 1981 version of 'She's got Bette Davis's eyes' (referencing Elizabeth Bennet's eyes and the framing of Kiera Knightley's eyes in 2005 film),[28] Jane asserts, in a near quotation of *Miss Austen Regrets* that she is single because 'good men are fictional'. The final stages of this clarification comes at the obligatory final Ball where she declares she 'wants something real' not what she takes to be the sham proposal of Nobley. This is followed by the fracas at the airport where the two men literally fight for her affection. Then the final stage in the clarification is Nobley's arrival in America at her apartment recently decluttered and cleared of its Austen paraphernalia. Nobley, in this different land, is revealed to be a history Professor and novice actor at Austenland, who nevertheless affirms the benefits of the Austenland experience: 'I used to think my Aunt's profession was somewhat grotesque. But the truth is I enjoyed stepping into

history. The idea of a simpler world where love is straightforward and lasting. I believe we have that in common. And all of this is secondary to the fact that I am completely mad about you' (1.26.13) 'I saw you in the theatrical and you weren't Miss Erstwhile. Neither of us is capable of pretending' (1.27.06). The film has revealed that Austenland, the place, is a poorly constructed artefact, yet paradoxically out of it appears to come transformation, understanding and real love. Austen is vindicated in her relevance to the contemporary world and Jane gets her modern Darcy.

This affirmation is confirmed in the final sequence of the film, where Henry Nobley and Jane Hayes return to the newly refurbished Austenland. They are seen strolling through the grounds where the 'interactive experience' has been turned into an Austen funfair owned now by Miss Charming. Amidst funfair rides, candyfloss, tea drinking and displays from Captain East aimed at the predominately female visitor group, Jane and Nobley pose for a photograph with their faces framed behind a life-size cut-out of Elizabeth and Darcy. Instead of the high 'art' and painting of conventional classic adaptations the audience is left with the image of a funfair holiday snap.

Conclusion

Austenland, the film, is thus I would argue a romantic comedy which utilises and interrogates the conventions of biopics and classic literary adaptations. Its *modus operandi* is parody and through this means reveals the tensions and undercurrents of the conventions employed in the creation of biopics and classic literary adaptations. Macdonald noted in his collection of parodies that 'most parodies are written out of admiration rather than contempt'.[29] Hutcheon noted also

> that the modern use of parody … does not seem to aim at ridicule or destruction. Parody implies a distance between the backgrounded text being parodied and the new work, a distance usually signalled by irony. But the irony is more playful than ridiculing, more critical than destructive.[30]

The film *Austenland* in its parody seems to endorse this view, in that it offers a playful, and kindly, parodic version of biopics and classical literary adaptations, while ultimately affirming the ideas of transformative romantic love which are central to other films telling Austen's story or stories. Further one might argue that Austenland, the location in the

film, stands as an ironic representation of those films, as it offers a performed and constructed version of the life and works of Austen. It explores the attraction of biopics to both the US and UK audiences who seek via this experience the nostalgic reconstruction of the lost social and cultural world of canonical writers. Yet it reveals that such reconstructions are forged from different national and subject positions with different expectations of the finished project. More importantly, this ironic representation reaffirms the significance of place as a site of memorial and remembering. *Austenland* parodically, and Austen biopics more earnestly, brings a romanticised, and somewhat anachronistic, version of the literary writer into the present. From this temporal and spatial foundation, they endeavour to deliver a transformative experience for their audiences. In that sense, perhaps, *Austenland* and Austen biopics are both acts of cultural or literary tourism. They provide opportunities to map and document, but also encourage the contemporary audience to identify and empathise with Austen as they cinematically travel across time and place.

Notes

1. Deborah Cartmell, 'Familiarity versus Contempt: *Becoming Jane* and the Adaptation Genre', in *Adaptation and Cultural Appropriation: Literature, Film and the Arts*, edited by Pascal Niklas and Oliver Lindner (Berlin: DEU, 2012), 25–33, 25–6.
2. Cartmell, 'Familiarity versus Contempt', 26.
3. Cartmell, 'Familiarity versus Contempt', 26.
4. Cartmell, 'Familiarity versus Contempt', 230.
5. Ellen Cheshire, *Bio-Pics: A Life in Pictures* (New York, Chichester, West Sussex: Wallflower Press, 2012), 5.
6. Dennis Bingham, *Whose Lives Are They Anyway?: The Biopic as Contemporary Film Genre* (New Brunswick, NJ, USA: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 10.
7. Andrew Higson, 'Brit-lit biopics', *The Writer on Film: Screening Literary Authorship*, edited by Judith Buchanan (Basingstoke: Palgrave, Macmillan 2013), 106–120, 109.
8. Judith Buchanan, 'Image, story, desire: the writer on film', in *The Writer on Film: Screening Literary Authorship*, edited by Judith Buchanan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 3–34, 10.
9. Deborah Cartmell, 'Pride and Prejudice and the Adaptation genre', *Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance* 3.3 (2010), 227–24, 28.

10. Julian North, 'Conservative Austen, Radical Austen', in *Adaptations: Text to Screen, Screen to Text*, edited by Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan. (London: Routledge 1999), p. 38.
11. Imelda Whelehan, 'Adaptations: The Contemporary dilemmas', in *Adaptations: Text to Screen, Screen to Text*, edited by Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan (London: Routledge, 1999) 3–20, 8.
12. This now proverbial phrase originated as a caption to a cartoon in Alan Parker's *Making Movies* (1998). The comment was directed particularly towards films made by the Merchant-Ivory team, especially *Howard's End* (1992).
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14. Erica Sheen, '"Where the garment gapes": faithfulness and promiscuity in the 1995 BBC *Pride and Prejudice*', in *The Classic Novel: from Page to Screen*, edited by Robert Giddings and Erica Sheen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 23–4.
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Austen Past and Future: Kathleen Flynn's *The Jane Austen Project*

Print

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The Jane Austen Project (2017) is a first novel by the American author Kathleen A. Flynn, in which two time travellers, Rachel Katzman, a doctor, and Liam Finucane, a former actor turned historian, are transported to the year 1815. Their mission is to acquire lost texts authored by Austen and take them to their present, which is the reader's future. As well as securing Austen's personal letters to her sister, Cassandra, and the complete version of her novel *The Watsons*, the time travellers are tasked with diagnosing the ailment that killed Austen in 1817 and providing irrefutable evidence to solve that biographical mystery.

The novel embraces a number of genres. It is clearly a time travelling/science-fiction text, but it also shares features with the historical novel, the romance, and Austen fanfiction. Its publication in the year of the two-hundredth anniversary of Jane Austen's death, whether by default or design, seems significant. The novel was not only published in a memorial year but is itself concerned with questions of time and the relationship between the past and the future. Such a relationship is created through effective world-building of both the early nineteenth century and the future from which the travellers leave and to which they return at the end. The biographical representation of Austen is foregrounded in the novel, and the purpose of the Project referenced in its title is to enhance Austen's personal and literary "value" for the world from which Rachel and Liam have travelled as well as for subsequent generations.

The time travel instigated in the Project invites the reader to question how Austen's engagement with that future time and readership should be understood.

The present study aims to explore a number of interrelated aspects of this contemporary novel. First, I will ask how and why the novel uses the features of different literary genres, and particularly the time travel novel, to present its version of Austen's life. Then I will consider whether the presumed target readers for this text are, put simply, Austenians (an all-inclusive term, on the model of "Shakespearean") or Janeites (a term that defines these groups in contrast with one another). Finally, I will examine how this narrative about the retrieval of Austen's texts, both literary and biographical, for a future audience encourages reflection about textual ownership and authenticity, authorial legacy and authorial immortality.

The literary landscape of Flynn's novel is drawn from a number of genres, which potentially brings different kinds of readers to the text. As essentially a time travelling/science-fiction text, it contains a number of tropes from this kind of fiction. The actual act of time travel is somewhat obscurely facilitated by a wormhole linked to a portal "precise in time frame and geopositioning" (5) that allows only a twenty-minute "opportunity of return" one year after arrival. This difficulty of returning introduces tension into the narrative, as do other time-travel constraints such as "not interfering" with the time visited and the "grandfather paradox." The narrator, Rachel, notes:

> The chief concern of time travel, aside from the obvious physical risks to travellers themselves, was of somehow changing the past so as to decisively alter the future you had come from, setting in motion some form of the grandfather paradox. Opinion at the institute was divided on whether this was possible; previous missions had created ripples of change, but just nibbles around the edges. . . . Still, the institute could not know everything: what changes might there have been involving not stone or mortar but the quiet facts of people's lives. (39)

These "ripples of change," referred to as disruptions to the "probability field," are versions of the time travel trope of the "butterfly effect," defined by James Gleick as "the slighter flutter [that] might alter the course of great events" (209).

In *The Jane Austen Project* the travellers are continually pondering how they may affect 1815 and in turn their own future, including metafictional concerns that they "might appear as characters in the same letters we had come to steal for scholars of the future" (142). As the novel progresses, events such as Rachel's use of the Heimlich manoeuvre to prevent Austen's niece from choking to death, her secret engagement with Austen's brother Henry, and ultimately her diagnosis of Austen's illness are all at risk of altering the future. In the past world, they do seem to alter "quiet facts of people's lives" and produce small adjustments to events surrounding Austen's circle. While the grandfather paradox for these time travellers does not seem to include the possibility of ceasing to exist in their own time, they recognize that these disruptions in 1815 may be indications that, in respect of the future, "the world as we know it is gone, and we have to be rectified and forget who we are" (171). Their concerns are ultimately realized with the changes to their future outlined at the end of the novel.

In addition to using these tropes of time-travel fiction, Flynn's novel makes extensive use of its world-building to create narrative context and tension, by establishing contrasts between past and future times and places. Early in the novel Rachel comments:

> Wind rattled the leaves, counterpoint to a repetitive squeak that might have been some insect long extinct in my own time. I marvelled at the 1815 air, moist and dense with smells I had no words for, reminded of the glass-domed habitat re-creations at the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens, where we used to go on field trips. *Once, children, the whole world was like this.*

In these accentuated disparities the reader in the twenty-first century simultaneously experiences the world-building of the future and of the contrasted world of the past. It is not until the end of the novel that we receive a more sustained depiction of the future, which, following the "Die-Off," has suffered these

losses from the natural world. In these comparative descriptions the reader is also able to deduce that Rachel's understanding of this world of the past has been shaped by her own training, the so-called "Preparation," which occurred in the future:

> Birch! And another word came to me: *dusk*, something barely noticed in my own time, in a life illuminated by electricity. Natural light; we'd learned the vocabulary of that, along with *waxing*, *waning*, *crescent*, *gibbous*, and the major constellations. I saw again in memory the steel-gray corridors of the Royal Institute for Special Topics in Physics, as the year I'd spent there glided before me like a time-lapse video clip. (2)

Here a remembered future barren urban landscape is compared to the verdant nineteenth-century past she is now inhabiting. By drawing the contemporary reader from the light polluted twenty-first century into the pre-industrial nostalgia of Austen's world, the passage shows a particular strength of time-travel world-building. The narrative technique of describing a new world (here the past) in terms of the way it is the same or differs from the narrator's accustomed world (here the future) is a feature common to both travel and time-travel writing. This simultaneous building of the past and future for the reader, and the weaving together of different times, enables the debate about the significance of Austen's authorial legacy to remain at the forefront of the novel.

It is obviously the presence of a projected future time in the novel that makes it a time-travelling science fiction text. Yet *The Jane Austen Project* also shares similarities with historical novels, particularly in its attention to historical detail. The world-building of Regency England in Flynn's work is quite different in kind from that in Austen's novels. One reviewer notes that "Flynn's novel feels like an Austen novel only in the most superficial ways" (Rev., *Kirkus*<). Arguably it is not the intention of this novel to be "like an Austen novel," but passages such as Rachel's description of a London street scene demonstrate significant stylistic differences between Austen's and Flynn's approaches:

> Thanks to disaster zones and emergency medicine, I know chaos, yet I had never seen anything like this. The intersection of Charing Cross and the Strand was terrifying, and we stood there agape, as I began to understand why people took sedan chairs.
>
> In the raking light of morning, the dust was visible: particles of coal smoke and dried horse manure, shards of brick and iron and paint and porcelain and leather. It softened the shadows of the stony buildings, swirled in the air, and rose from the torrent of passing vehicles: hay cart, mail coach, curricle. Ragged men courted death dodging between them, while hawkers sidled, crying out their wares in a sing-song patter: flowers, beer, snails, milk, sheet music of the latest ballad. (18–19)

Rachel is literally out of place and time, and the comparison here between what she "knows" in the future and what she experiences in 1815 is carefully drawn. Yet the meticulous detail in this street scene is unlike anything that appears in Austen's novels. Part of Rachel's narrative function here is to act as the reader's guide through this representation of England in 1815. As is often noted, Austen's own novels make limited use of descriptions of physical locations. London and other cities appear in Austen's fiction to provide opportunities for social engagements but are not themselves rendered through detailed descriptions of locale.

The extensive descriptions of place and social mores in Flynn's novel show the influence of the historical novel and the romance on her work. *The Jane Austen Project* creates a version of the Regency period that suggests similarities with the Regency novels of Georgette Heyer, both in historical detail and in the exploitation of the romance plot. Heyer, as Diana Wallace notes, "uses the romance plot as Jane Austen did, as a formal structure within which to explore the nature of gender roles and the possibility of an ideal marriage of minds and bodies" (36). Flynn, like Heyer, develops a plot that follows the courtship–misunderstanding–resolution structure of many of Austen's plots, and within this structure romance is used to explore gender roles. Significantly in this filtering of Austen through Heyer, Flynn's focus is not primarily on Jane Austen's personal romantic life (as occurs in many film and television dramas about

Austen) but rather on that of the time travellers themselves. Rachel, a doctor and sexually liberated woman from the future, is constrained by Regency attitudes to women and forced to allow her actor colleague, Liam, to pose as the doctor in the Austen household. Rachel notes that "it was a world run by men, for their convenience and gratification, as I understood better each day I was here" (52) and laments the "waste of human capital that I was now part of" (99). Alongside this "exploration of gender roles" that Wallace identifies in Heyer's work, the context of the Regency period in Flynn's novel provides "the possibility of an ideal marriage of minds and bodies" for the disguised time travellers. In the world of Jane Austen, which becomes their Shakespearean green world, their courtship and romance is transformative and by the end of the novel is described as achieving the "heft of legend" (373) as they resume their lives in the future.

Flynn's novel in its use of the tropes and features of time travel/science fiction novels, as well as historical novels, creates a multi-layered version of Regency England seen through a variety of times and places: past, future, and, of course, the reader's present. The narrator, Rachel, seems throughout the novel to check the Regency world around her against her previous knowledge, acquired through her pre-time travel Preparation and more specifically her reading of Austen's novels. Her direct address to the reader becomes like a travel report offering extended descriptions and information about Austen's life and times. In chapter 3, for example, there is a long description of the preparations being undertaken to welcome Henry Austen to dinner in their newly acquired house: "The breakfast parlor and dining room were both on the ground-level floor of this house, which was a textbook terraced Georgian, three windows wide, four stories high, in addition to a basement level, with the kitchen and other utility spaces" (74). Such detailed descriptions appeal to a wide range of readers. Some may be unfamiliar with the historical period. And some are likely to be familiar with Austen's life and work— "a must read for any Jane Austen fan," Paula Byrne proclaims on the back cover of the paperback edition—but eager to engage imaginatively with and learn more about Austen's material world.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to ascertain exactly who are the primary target readers of this novel. Certainly most of the reviewers focused on the central plot motif of travelling through time to meet Jane Austen: "what lover of literature hasn't dreamed of going back in time to meet Jane Austen?" asks Lauren Belfer, on the opening leaf of the paperback edition. So the next question, given the novel's evident appeal to those who know of Austen, is whether the novel has more to offer to Janeites or to Austenians.

The distinction between Austenians and Janeites has, of course, been widely debated. As Deidre Lynch has commented, "Janeite" is a term that

> Austen's audiences have learned to press into service whenever they need to designate the Other Reader in his or multiple guises, or rather, and more precisely whenever they need to personify and distance themselves from particular ways of reading, ones they might well indulge in themselves. Janeite can conjure up the reader as hobbyist—someone at once overzealous and undersophisticated. (*Janeites* 12)

In an attempt to avoid such constructions of "otherness," critics have more recently explored alternate designations for the "Janeite," such as the "non-academic" or "amateur reader" as used by Juliette Wells in *Everybody's Jane*. Flynn's novel seems to aim at offering a range of experiences for diverse readerships, however they are labelled. The rich period detail, the extensive descriptions of locations, costumes, food, social etiquette, and behaviors look designed to appeal to the amateur reader's or Janeite's desire to embrace and feel part of the material world of Austen. Claudia Johnson notes about Janeites, in a comment inadvertently chiming with Flynn's novel, that

> Janeites themselves are the time travellers taking themselves back into Austen's world by staging Regency costume balls, devising quizzes from minutiae in Austen's novels, . . . discussing how a character from one novel might converse with a character from another, and setting tables according to the protocols of Austen's time, all with the distinctive combination of gaiety, fervor and exactitude. (10–11)

Such time travel re-enactment, Johnson argues, results in "real information and knowledge along with a sort of pleasure that Clara Tuite has brilliantly described as 'period euphoria'" (11). Flynn's "period euphoria" is facilitated by her time travelling Janeite narrator, who tries to be pitch perfect in her narrative re-creation of and participation in Austen's world. It seems likely that the novel is also influenced by, and feeds an interest in, the visual representations of Austen's settings in film and television versions of both the novels and her life, which, from their own perspective of the future, attempt "historical veracity and authenticity of location and costume" (Whelehan 8).

The central question of Flynn's novel—what would it be like to meet Jane Austen?—is posed in a number of contemporary films and novels and in fan fiction, a body of work that is yet another context for this novel. Fan fiction is particularly designed to appeal to a Janeite/amateur audience. Juliette Wells argues that "these invented versions of Austen appeal to—and, in many cases, result from—amateur readers' curiosity about what Austen was 'really' like: how she looked, what she thought, what she experienced as a woman and an author" (142). In her novel, Flynn satisfies her readers' curiosity in the time travellers' initial meeting with Jane, describing her as

> a slender woman, on the tall side, in a lace cap with a few curls spilling out. She had [Henry Austen's] nose, hazel eyes like his, and a quizzical expression that seemed right. . . . Her eyes bright, her gaze direct. I thought of meeting Eva Farmer: I had the same sense of being in the presence of formidable intelligence, of feeling the air around us warped by the force of it. (105–06)

While Jane's physical description does not contradict the limited visual evidence we have for Austen's physical appearance, the significant first impression of the narrator is of Jane's "formidable intelligence" and wit. Flynn supplements the limited details about Austen's life by referencing her novels. For example, when Austen suggests in their first meeting that "you might try Lyme Regis" (108), Rachel ponders if "she had yet written the part in *Persuasion* where her characters go there" (108). Such narratorial references to Austen's texts pepper the novel, with allusions to *Emma* (246), *Sense and Sensibility* (243, 328), *Pride and Prejudice* (157), and *Mansfield Park* (143). In some ways this literal linking of texts and the author's life is awkward and unproveable, and, as Wells notes, can make "Austen seem like an uninspired writer who drew only on her own experience" (142). Given the Preparation undertaken for the Project, however, such comments are at least in keeping with the characterization. One might also argue that they help create a reader community, as happens in fan fiction, where there is a shared pleasure in recognizing the references. This creation of a like-minded community helps strengthen the sense that the narrator and her companion are, in their discussions with Austen, representing the novel's modern readers. In that respect the novel offers a kind of wish fulfilment, as Paul Butler notes: "There are so many excellent reasons to read this book, not least of which is a feeling that you really are meeting Jane Austen in the flesh."

Perhaps a desire to meet "Jane Austen in the flesh" may not be an Austenian reader's main interest in this novel. Where, then, does the main interest lie for Austenians, whom Lynch sees as, typically, "professional scholars/teachers/readers for whom Austen represents career and a connection to the public sphere" (113)? We might say that such academic, analytical readers of Austen's novels are invited to see an affinity between themselves and the time travellers, who are arguably positioned in the novel as fellow Austenians. Rachel and Liam are the leaders of a "scientific" study, and their Preparation is grounded in the reading of Austen's work, while, during the Project, their findings are assessed in terms of the impact on the work of future researchers. The character Eva Farmer, the founder of the Project, is a scholar described as a "true polymath: a physicist whose work had let to the Prometheus Server, a tournament level bridge player, the author of an acclaimed biography of Jane Austen, and another book about daily life in the early nineteenth century" (50). Farmer is, of course, apart from being a "Renaissance woman," the archetypal brilliant but quirky "Professor" of science fiction. One might see in her range of interests an appeal to both the Janeite and the Austenian. Moreover, Farmer's investigation into the context of Austen's life and work and even her aspiration to rediscover lost texts have parallels with the activities of Austenian critics, particularly those who explore the material historicity of Austen's novels and their context.[1] The novel is keen also to position itself as a learned, even high-brow, text. Its prologue cites T. S. Eliot's "Burnt Norton" ("Time past and time future / What might have been and what has been / Point to one end, which is always

present") and, as well as the many literary references to Austen, alludes to the works of Edgar Allan Poe and James Joyce.

Thus, we can posit that the novel makes a generous attempt to draw in different readerships. In this it chimes with recent critical studies such as those by Deidre Lynch, Juliette Wells, and Gillian Dow and Clare Hanson, who propose not a critical opposition of Janeite and Austenian but a mutually beneficial inclusivity of approach. Dow and Hanson note: "in this age of quantifying one's own research in terms of 'impact,' the scholar ignores—or worse mocks—the diverse potential readership for her research at her peril" (14). Flynn may be attempting to capture this "diverse potential readership" in her novel, offering as Wells puts it "an opportunity to come together, amateurs and scholars alike, and share what we love and have learned about this exceptional author" (220). Flynn's own membership in the Jane Austen Society of North America (JASNA) is significant here. Wells notes of the organization: "JASNA's deliberate, even proud, inclusivity is evident in the mission statement as well: 'to foster among the widest number of readers the study, appreciation, and understanding of Jane Austen's works, her life, and her genius'" (218).

Flynn's novel echoes JASNA's mission statement in another way in that it positions Austen as a canonical figure—a "genius" (13), a "wonder" (29), and an "immortal" (312). This final section of this essay will explore how this canonicity is represented in this novel, and feeds into the novel's exploration of authorial legacy and authorial immortality.

From the point of view of the time travellers at the beginning of the novel, Austen has both "renown" and "reputation" as defined and distinguished by H. J. Jackson, using "renown" to refer to present fame and "reputation" for the posthumous kind (2). Austen's renown in her own time is referenced in the novel with her invitation to visit the Prince Regent's library, while the Project, operating from Austen's posthumous future, is seeking both to honor and to enhance her established reputation. As Rachel notes:

> Time travel was secret; if we succeeded in returning with "The Watsons," the institute would concoct a narrative of a scholarly discovery. It would be a big deal, for the Old British revered Jane Austen and considered her short life and small output a tragedy not unlike the destruction of the library at Alexandria. (28)

In terms of the novel's initial construction of authorial immortality, this focus on output is intriguing. The first version of the future—that is, the future that gives rise to the Project that we see unfurl in the novel—places importance on the collection of texts and the commodification of artefacts associated with the author, which they believe will bolster Austen's reputation, currently built on a small number of novels. There is a suggestion here that increasing the number of texts will also enhance the reputation of those who own them—the mysterious Old British who are the dominant class/race following the Die-Off. In this version of the future, the tragedy of Austen's early death will be offset by the recovery of lost texts.

The novel is a little less explicit as to the exact nature of Austen's genius and its specific worth to the future. In their encounters with Austen the time travellers seem, like Virginia Woolf, to find Austen "most difficult to catch in the act of greatness" (qtd. in Johnson 10). It is a paradoxical aspect of the novel, although maybe a true reflection of the difficulties around representing the private act of writing in a work of fiction, that the novel never portrays Austen at work on her novels nor indeed anyone reading her work in her own time. Her reputation as a genius is primarily affirmed by the time travellers. Rachel tells Austen that "[g]enerations to come will mention you in the same breath as Shakespeare," to which Austen replies, "Shakespeare? But what about Maria Edgeworth?" (277). Austen's judgment of her contemporary fellow writer is built on Edgeworth's current renown, showing the reader the vagaries of time-bound literary taste. Austen on the other hand, as asserted in the novel, will become immortal in the future because "she was a genius; burning with the desire to create undying works of art" (113). (Many critics would wish to qualify this description of her intention, including H. J. Jackson, who notes that "Jane Austen did not write for immortality—that is to say there is no record of her declaring that ambition" [96].) Flynn, or at least her narrator, hints that such genius can be used as part of a humanist project that may help in "repairing the world" (50), as Rachel comments in her application to join the Project. *The Jane Austen Project* does not quite work out how this repairing might be achieved and tends to fall back ultimately on

sentiments such as "We are just vessels. The art is eternal" (266). Works of art including written texts seem to be proffered more generally as a means of transcending time or, as in the Book of Common Prayer, another text Rachel quotes, of "redeeming time because the days are evil" (250). Precisely why or in what ways the days in the future are evil is never fully unfolded.

Overall, the novel is surprisingly silent on the political purpose of the Project's acquisitive enterprise, although the author herself has commented that "I'd love to live in a world where literature is so important that a time travel mission to meet Austen would seem like a perfectly reasonable use of resources" (Butler). Literature is certainly represented in the novel as something of significance and worthy of investment, contributing to empires "of the mind, human ingenuity and imagination" (68), and yet *The Jane Austen Project*'s rather underdeveloped references to the "Die Off," an unexplored ecological disaster, and the emergence of a social structure dominated by the Old British, seem to raise questions it never answers about the political imperative for these utopian ideals.

Yet it is not just literary texts that the time travellers are required to bring back to the future: they also need to acquire some of Austen's lost letters to her sister, Cassandra. It is perhaps this feature of the Project that models most closely the defining characteristics of authorial immortality as discussed by Jackson in *Those Who Write for Immortality*. Jackson clearly identifies how the timely production of biographical accounts of the lives of authors can enhance their long-term reputation. The availability of accounts of Austen's life, the "Biographical Notice" published in 1819 by her brother Henry and the *Memoir* of 1870 by James Edward Austen-Leigh, certainly increased the velocity and trajectory of her eventual long-term reputation. In Flynn's novel, the Old British of the future imagine that their search for further biographical data will further impel her reputation into the distant future. The Project, as initially construed, clearly has faith in biography as a means of securing long-term reputation. It even seems that the Project has faith in the nineteenth-century biographies and their initiation of what were to become, for a long period, central tenets in narrations of Austen's life. As Jackson comments: "by conflating Austen with her heroines, they created a rounded portrait of an author who had been imageless before. . . . The *Memoir*'s romanticized descriptions of place gave her locatability and visualizability" (98).

Certainly, as discussed earlier, Flynn's novel draws parallels between Austen's life, family, and social circle and the novels themselves. At several points in the novel, the narrator rather self-consciously assesses biographical theories of Austen's life: for example, "Biographers have puzzled over the relationship of Mrs. Austen and her second daughter; seeing it up close did not make it any less of a riddle. They were never openly hostile, yet they spoke as little as possible" (286). Flynn's novel is at its most forthright, however, when contemplating another area that biographers have extensively "puzzled over"—Austen's own romantic life and its influence, or otherwise, on the novels. In chapter 6, Rachel from her "superior understanding" claims the marriage plot in Austen's novels is "a MacGuffin":

> Many people in my world find it strange, even tragic, that the author of such emotionally satisfying love stories apparently never found love herself, but I don't.
>
> For one thing she was a genius. . . . The marriage plot is interesting mostly for how it illuminates the hearts of her characters, what they learn about themselves on the way to the altar. (113)

The narrator's moral position is at this stage compromised, one might think, by her hope that not being "like everyone else" will give her leverage to acquire *The Watsons*.

Nevertheless, Rachel's beliefs do appear to challenge some of the assumptions of both biographical fan fiction and some actual biographies that seek to link Austen's romantic liaisons with her work.[2] Whereas the film *Becoming Jane*, for example, supposes that Austen's relationship with Thomas Lefroy shaped the writing of *Pride and Prejudice*, in *The Jane Austen Project* a conversation with Austen about Tom Lefroy reveals a different interpretation:

> "But it could not be, and we knew it. That was the entire beauty; that it could not last."

> "So it was almost as if you were imagining yourselves characters in a story."
>
> "Oh! All the time." (292)

It is perhaps a short step from imagining yourself as a character in a story to using that experience in a story, but Flynn's novel avoids making the connection explicit. The novel also avoids voicing any regret surrounding romance, another trope of versions of Austen's life, such as the television drama *Miss Austen Regrets*, which covers a similar period to that of Flynn's work. In that drama Austen's driving force is very much economic: she needs to earn money from her writing. In *The Jane Austen Project*, however, there is no real exploration of Austen's creative process or her reasons for writing, whether romantic or economic: we only ever see a version of Austen from the point of view of the narrator, who is convinced Austen is an immortal genius.[3] One marker of this genius, once the time travellers are revealed, is that Austen, like Shakespeare as represented in the BBC TV *Dr. Who* episode "The Shakespeare Code," very quickly accepts and interrogates the idea of time travel, with Austen even proposing that she could travel to the future to seek a cure for her illness.

The final section of the novel suggests, however, that being a genius is not necessarily sufficient to achieving a long-lasting reputation as a great writer. The strategy employed by the Project, to retrieve lost texts and bibliographic information, ultimately proves unsuccessful. H. J. Jackson suggests that there is no guarantee of success in an attempt to plan for authorial immortality:

> It is too late to counsel ambitious writers of the past, and even if we could time travel and talk to them, the advice might not be palatable. There is no such thing as immortal fame in the arts. Put not thy faith in posterity. To authors active around 1810, we would say: If you're talented and you want your works to be read for the next two hundred years . . . , make the novels all of a piece, though not formulaic. Be on good terms with your extended family. . . . Cultivate a personal myth. Choose a pretty place to live (or die). Don't write too much, because your heirs and champions will have to sort through it all; but leave behind, unpublished, something—if only correspondence—that will bring your name freshly to the fore when you are gone. Preserve the decencies for the sake of schoolchildren.
>
> Practical advice such as this would be pointless. (217–18)

As Jackson demonstrates earlier in her study, the real Austen has benefitted in part from a fortunate coming together of the features included in this "practical advice." The fictional Austen in Flynn's novel, however, fails to benefit from the Project's plan to extend her fame by reiterating some of the features that had assisted her to a position of renown. The novel in its first iteration of the Project, then, suggests that manipulation of factors contributing to immortality will not necessarily ensure its continuance, even if renown has already been achieved.

The final twist in the plot of the novel, thanks to the conventions of time travel fiction, does, however, introduce a different version of the future—a future unexpected by the time travellers and that facilitates a further questioning of the ideas of authorial immortality. The Project's attempt to collect lost texts is in the end not significant, as the scanned letters fail to transmit to the future and the finished copy of *The Watsons* bequeathed by Austen remains unread by anyone but the time travellers themselves. What is more important to this second version of the Project is Rachel's diagnosis of Austen's illness as hemochromatosis rather than Addison's disease: treatment of this illness proves so successful that Austen now lives until 1863. Rachel's diagnosis ultimately proves to be the most serious breach in the "probability field," and it is shown to change both the course of Austen's life and the lives of the time travellers.

The last chapter of the novel explores the consequences of these changes in Rachel's and Liam's lives, where an alternate future provides a final hurdle to be overcome before the romantic resolution. The impact on world history of the time travellers' interventions in 1815–1816 is rather briefly sketched. The "Die-Off" had been of less significance, and, with a nod to a favored trope of time travel fiction, "there had

been no Blitz, no Hitler" (366). Yet the changes in Austen's future authorial reputation prove most thought-provoking. In this "alternate history . . . or ucronia, uchronic or allohistory" (Gleick 208), Rachel recounts that Austen's longer life has resulted in revisions to her previously existing novels and the appearance of seventeen new novels, including one in 1819 that appears to be about the time travellers.

Flynn's novel at this stage ponders the significance of these additional novels to Austen's reputation and the literary canon:

> Scholars were busy and happy with all the new Austen novels, but in the popular mind scarcity has value. One effect of this new abundance was to make her a less significant literary figure, in the first rank of the second tier, not unlike Anthony Trollope, who she was often compared to. Our mission, like Austen herself, was respected but not breathlessly esteemed. It was all Brontës here: they were the nineteenth century writers everyone obsessed about. In this placid age, their emotionally overheated quality had an exotic appeal that Jane Austen, restrained, ironic and prolific, did not. (363)

Not only is Austen less revered in this alt-future because more novels are available, but, in "this placid age," the changed historical context has resulted in her work becoming less popular. In the novel's second consideration of Austen's reputation in the future, Flynn again seems to mirror some of the findings in Jackson's argument about authorial immortality. Jackson, having rejected the possibility that an author might deliberately adopt the features that might make him or her immortal, notes that her own imaginary time-travelling critics might offer a different message to authors in the past:

> if the message were instead: Don't worry about whether your works will be read forever or not. Once they are published they are out of your hands. Readers of different constituencies and later will love them or not, in ways that you cannot foresee or control. (218)

Flynn, like Jackson, suggests that an author, despite her best efforts and those of her supporters, cannot anticipate the historical context in which works may be read. Immortality is built on the shifting sands of time, and neither historical context nor the reception of texts can ultimately be "foresee[n] or control[ed]."

In Flynn's *The Jane Austen Project* there is a further detail about this second future that exposes a significant division between "readers of different constituencies": scholars are delighted by the new Austen texts, but popular readers are less enraptured. While this difference in response seems counterintuitive, given the contemporary proliferation of texts about Austen and of those inspired by her novels, it may be an attempt to offer some consolation to Austen fans. In 2017, the year of the novel's publication, while fans were commemorating the anniversary of Austen's death, there was a common refrain that "she was taken from us too soon." Put simply, the novel seems to suggest that readers "be careful what [they] wish for" (Sullivan): more Austen might not have meant better Austen.

The Jane Austen Project uses the chronological complexities of time travel fiction to explore a number of key issues related to Jane Austen and literary studies. Historical re-creation is an essential aspect of the novel, often providing a modern reader with contextual detail that is absent in Austen's own work. The time-travel framework provides Flynn, as Wells notes about other Austen-based novels, an opportunity "to flesh out the historical record about Austen which is notoriously limited" and to "venture deep into fantasy . . . that reflects contemporary taste" (142). While it is difficult to say with absolute certainty whether *The Jane Austen Project* is a novel for Janeites or Austenians, the shifting perspectives in Flynn's text between times and places, past and future, enable different kinds of readers to explore their varied engagement with Austen's texts. Through the narrative of time travel, Flynn experiments with shifting the historical, biographical, and psychological parameters surrounding Austen's work as well as exploring the dynamics of popular and scholarly engagement.

While this study has raised questions about what the construction of genius represents in the novel, one must acknowledge, and praise, the author's attempt to draw together different readerships into an

inclusive narrative. As well as being a historical re-creation, the novel offers recreation, providing occasion for intellectual engagement but also offering readers an opportunity for spending leisure time in the company of an author they admire and with whom they have an emotional connection. Yet, this visit to the re-created past of Austen from an imagined future is not only an act of extraordinary literary tourism, it could also be seen as a metaphor for the act of literary academic criticism itself, in the sense that scholars work from their present, like the time travellers in the novel, and likewise find it subject to change, as they are transported back and forth into the literature of the past. Both critics and time travellers are aware that their own projects may change that past and could reinvent it for their present.

The question of authorial legacy and immortality, as examined in the work of H. J. Jackson, is central to the novel and to the Project(s) contained within it. Like Jackson's, Flynn's message seems to be that immortality may be made somewhat more likely by certain actions taken by authors and their supporters, but that authors' works are subject to the vagaries of future historical, social, and political contexts that they are likely to be unable to predict. Jackson suggests that it "seems likely that Austen will eventually lose her special status, brought down . . . by overexposure and too much respectability, the price of unusually sustained popularity" (205–06). The second future depicted in Flynn's novel, with Austen's slip to the "the first rank of the second tier" (363), postulates a similar fate for the author. Arguably, the novel itself contributes to the tsunami of Austen-related texts that will result in the overexposure feared by Jackson. Yet Flynn offers comfort in the bicentenary year of Austen's death, suggesting that Austen's literary reputation may have been enhanced, not diminished, by her short writing life and the scarcity value of a remarkable literary output.

NOTES

[1]See for example Sue Forgue's "Where's Wickham?"

[2]Novels such as Emma Campbell Webster's *Lost in Austen: Create Your Own Austen Adventure*, Syrie James's *The Missing Manuscript of Jane Austen*, and Jon Spence's *Becoming Jane* all to varying degrees are based on biographical readings of Austen's novels that supposedly reveal evidence of her romantic liaisons.

[3]I have discussed elsewhere how both *Becoming Jane* and *Miss Austen Regrets* use filmic devices to represent different versions of the act of writing ("*Austenland* and Narrative Tensions").

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7

Shakespeare and Blackpool: The RSC's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2016): A Play for the Nation?

Janice Wardle

This chapter explores a production of a Shakespeare play in the North of England, namely *A Midsummer Night's Dream* staged by the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Blackpool Grand Theatre in April 2016. It will investigate how this canonical Shakespearean comedy is shaped by, and interacts with, the North West of England, and the particular northern phenomenon which is Blackpool. This production was part of the RSC tour which, following a two-week residency in both Stratford-upon-Avon and Newcastle, visited another ten venues across the UK, before it returned to Stratford in June 2016 for a month.[1] The significant factor which characterised this production was not necessarily that it toured so many venues, but rather that at each theatre it incorporated a local amateur cast. Across the twelve productions it eventually utilised nineteen professional actors, eighty-four actors from fourteen amateur companies, and 580 child performers drawn from local schools near the theatrical venues. The final performances in Stratford offered the amateur groups an opportunity to reprise their performances at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. The scope and range of the production was challenging and ambitious, with the amateur groups at each theatre performing the three scenes involving the 'rude mechanicals' (3.2.9) and the children expanding Titania's fairy band. This touring production was seen by the RSC as a significant commemorative event in the year of the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death and billed as a 'Play for the Nation', a phrase which was utilised in all promotional material, including video 'trailers', theatre programmes, and on the RSC website.[2] This billing raises an interesting and complex issue about how precisely this idea of 'nation' was to be constructed from a series of 'local' performances. As we will see, the abiding interpretative

structure for the production was provided by the RSC, with interventions from local voices. This in itself is a significant dramatic experiment, and one with which Shakespeare's touring companies may have been familiar. Yet my focus here is on how the production in Blackpool located itself in this specific place, represented and engaged with the North West, and with ideas associated with the North.

Blackpool, Past and Present

First a few words about Blackpool itself, which is a town about which there has been much debate. Described by John Walton as 'still by far the most popular British resort', Blackpool's 'career' attracted 'over three million visitors per annum by the 1890s and over seven million by the 1930s' with recent figures identifying a peak of seventeen million visitors in the 1990s dropping to about ten million per annum since.[3] It was, as Walton notes, the world's first working-class seaside resort. Blackpool owes its conception to Victorian ingenuity (particularly the railway) and social change, which saw the formalisation of industrial workers' holiday patterns. It owes its success to the staggering of these different holidays, in so-called 'wakes weeks', taken in a range of towns across the industrial North West including Preston, Wigan and Burnley. Blackpool provided its visitors with a version of those same Lancashire towns, with accommodation in small hotels in streets not dissimilar to those at 'home'. But, in addition, it offered 'fun', 'medicinal' sea air, and an escape from 'normal' life. In *The Delicious History of the Holiday* Fred Inglis offers an evocative description of the range of entertainments available, and goes on to note '[Blackpool] was not genteel. It was intensely gregarious. Its population came from skilled labour and repeated in its play assorted negations of its work: crowded non-productivity; collective unself-protectiveness; joint indolence; financial carelessness; unrewarded effortlessness.'[4] All this in time, of course, meant Blackpool seemed to offer, according to Walton's reading of Tony Bennett's work, a 'northern counter culture' that is in opposition to the 'dominant southern (and especially metropolitan) ethos, based on aristocracy and high finance, ... pallid and effete'.[5] Moreover, as Featherstone notes, Blackpool 'represented the transformation of the conflicts of northern traditional custom and industrial discipline into a distinctive kind of mass culture', and by the beginning of the twentieth century had 'come to be represented as a place of nostalgia, a representation of an older North'.[6] The elements of that nostalgic representation are still familiar – the Tower, the donkeys on the beach, fish and chips on

the prom, the annual illuminations. All these features have been aided and abetted by what John Urry calls the 'collective tourist gaze', and are further reinforced by representations in the media, and supplied by the industry to fulfil a perceived need.[7] Such activities, deemed 'industrial saturnalia', are part of collective performative rituals, which are often carnivalesque in mood, and sexual in preoccupation, and which may be illustrated by the town's fondness for risqué seaside postcards, phallic-shaped confectionery, or transvestite drag cabaret acts.[8]

Yet there are other sides to Blackpool. It is worth noting that initially it was the playground not of the working people of the North West but of the wealthy middle classes. As the town developed it relied on capital from these same groups as they built their palaces of entertainment. The iconic Tower and its massive entertainment complex featuring a ballroom, a circus and a zoo was built in 1894, the Winter Gardens and Opera House in 1889, and, of course, the Grand Theatre in 1894. Like the three piers that were also constructed, these buildings were both places of entertainment and objects of wonder and spectacle in themselves, with their elaborate gilded stucco designs echoing those of the leading theatre and opera houses in London. Some of these buildings marked the cultural aspirations of the middle classes. The Grand Theatre (where *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was performed in 2016) has an impressive nineteenth-century Thomas Matcham interior. Vanessa Toulmin notes that the original theatre was 'neither designed to be nor programmed as a variety house in its original incarnation', and in fact opened with a production of *Hamlet*.[9] The current programme of The Grand is more diverse, with its interweaving of opera, ballet and theatre with popular music and comedy performances. The RSC's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was book-ended by *Jackie – the Musical*, and *Let it Be*, a concert performance of Beatles' hits. Such mixed programming incorporating high and popular culture is the staple of many contemporary theatres, but it does also reflect something specific about the varied and itinerant nature of audiences in Blackpool.

We need also to note that modern Blackpool has particular social and economic challenges as a result of the decline in visitor numbers in the twentieth and early twenty-first century. Walton notes that 'by the 1991 census it was already occupying high places in league tables of multiple deprivation, especially in the central wards which had been the core of the traditional holiday industry'.[10] In 2013 a report on Blackpool for the Centre for Social Justice was headlined 'the problem-family capital of the North', and continued:

> Blackpool, by far the largest town considered in this report with a population of 142,000, is an example of a community blighted by family breakdown and the wider social problems which can be associated with it. In tandem with the town's economic decline as the tourism industry has receded, families in Blackpool have come to face some of the most pronounced problems in the UK today. The social problems Blackpool faces are not only economic, but also familial, and supporting vulnerable families will be key to tackling Blackpool's difficulties.[11]

The report goes on to propose that unemployment and a transient population has led to one of the least settled school populations in the UK, high levels of domestic abuse, and high levels of alcohol and drug abuse in the town, with the highest alcohol mortality rates for men in the UK. Blackpool therefore represents not only a nostalgic 'representation of an older North', but the very real problems of the contemporary North.[12] A key question is thus: what place does Shakespeare have in this particular complex and ambiguous northern locale?

A Midsummer Night's Dream as a 'Play for the Nation'?

Before analysing the Blackpool RSC production, it is important to unpack some of the ideas around the concept of a 'Play for the Nation', and the choice of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as that play. The idea of a 'Play for the Nation' appears to have had its foundation in the Royal Shakespeare Company's long-term aspiration to stage all of Shakespeare's plays as an act of prolonged national celebration. Gregory Doran, the Royal Shakespeare Company's artistic director, noted as a preface to the 2014 season:

> Under the banner *Shakespeare Nation*, we will lead a truly nationwide celebration of our greatest playwright beginning next summer [2014] and culminating in 2016 [the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death].[13]

Peter J. Smith explores how this focus on nation is a narrowing from the focus on Global Shakespeare of two years earlier during the London Olympics' cultural celebrations.[14] In addition, we should also note that the idea of 'nation' itself is a much-contested term. In literary criticism the debate about the extent of the engagement of Shakespeare's texts with aspects of nationhood remains a key question. Political theorists similarly

continue to explore the development and ideological assumptions of this term. Shiv Visvanathan, summarising some of that debate, comments:

> The history of debates on nationalism and the nation-state described in such classic texts as Gellner and Hobsbawm unravel the ambivalence of the idea of nation and its duck-rabbit status. In its early phases, nationalism was seen as primordial, something objective, a link between community, a culture, and a territorial map. But attempts to establish objective criteria for nation failed. Such a congruency between people, history and territory was easy at the level of definition but problematic at the level of reality.[15]

As Doran's statement quoted earlier seems to suggest, the RSC's understanding of 'nation' is linked to this idea of a shared – or *to be shared* – culture, which in this instance is Shakespeare's plays. While not quite a 'territorial map' in Visvanathan's terms, the UK tour scoped the constituent parts of the nation and at the same time engaged in cultural exchange. The RSC's presentation of the tour in its publicity was also somewhat nostalgic, with a poster design harking back to a more old-fashioned age of cultural engagement, depicting a vintage motor-coach, a kind of charabanc, decorated with festive bunting, trees and a moon on its roof, with a donkey at the wheel. This depiction of the tour as an unthreatening, jolly outing around the UK draws on a nostalgic idea of a 'nation' of shared values and experiences.

If we look to the reason behind the selection of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as the 'Play for the Nation', we will find other clues related to this idea. The director, Erica Whyman, indicates that the choice was partly due to the play's perceived universal relevance and accessibility. She explains:

> [it] is an enchanting play, full of wisdom, mischief and joy, but it is also about community, about people coming together from all walks of life and congregating in the name of peace and stability. It is full of beautiful poetry, almost no difficult language and themes known to every single one of us, such as how to love, how to grow up, and that allowing ourselves to believe in fairies, even just for an evening, is very good for the soul.[16]

This reference to the play's thematic interest in 'community' (albeit in the play one which emerges from discord) is again significant. The idea of 'community, about people coming together from all walks of life'

demonstrates that there are parallels being drawn between the play's content and the theatrical practice of the production, with the mixture of amateur and professional performers. Moreover, the play was selected as it is accessible and projects an idea of nation which is community based and founded in shared life-affirming values. Similar positive explanations for the choice of play were offered by the assistant director, Kimberly Sykes, in a post-performance discussion in Blackpool. Again highlighting nostalgic associations, she commented upon the audience's familiarity with the play from school days, noted that it was a play about identity, and also part of a national memory about Shakespeare.[17] Other reasons were given on the RSC website suggesting that the choice of play was related to the RSC Open Stages project which had for two years given amateur companies across the UK access to RSC rehearsal techniques and support.[18] As the website noted, the production was 'inspired directly by the experience of Open Stages', which meant, in the RSC's words, that 'we are producing a large-scale production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Shakespeare's love letter to amateur theatre'.[19] In addition one might add that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is a play which, possibly because of its familiarity, often invites experimentation – from Peter Brook's 1970 production of the play to the RSC's *Midsummer Night's Dreaming* Project with Google+ in 2013. It also featured prominently in different kinds of celebratory projects for the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death (including CBBC's fifty-minute version for young children filmed at the Everyman Theatre, Liverpool; the Globe's 2016 production; and the BBC TV production directed by Russell T. Davies). Moreover, the extent and range of these different engagements attests to the play's currency across contemporary media and provided another reason why this particular play was chosen as a 'Play for the Nation'.

The Production in Blackpool

The planning of the RSC's 'Play for the Nation' production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* began at least fifteen months before the performance date, when the host theatres were asked to identify amateur groups who would be invited to apply to be involved in the project. There were two stages of auditions culminating in final auditions in Newcastle over two days for the so-called 'Northern section', with amateur groups from Glasgow, Newcastle, Blackpool and Bradford.

The successful group for the Grand Theatre in Blackpool was Poulton Drama, which has been established since the 1940s. In terms of location,

Poulton, and its local theatre at Thornton, is about six miles from Blackpool in a rather middle-class hinterland of Blackpool itself. The school children involved in the production were recruited from nine local schools including schools such as Larkholme School, Fleetwood, in a more socially deprived area of the North West, seven miles north of Blackpool in the Wyre area. This school, like others, had been involved with the RSC for two years as part of the Learning Performance Network through which the RSC was teaching the children both in and out of the classroom to engage with the work of Shakespeare, and thirty children performed during the run in Blackpool. The 'local' amateur element was thus established before the professional actors began their rehearsals, and the amateurs, playing the mechanicals, rehearsed mostly at a distance in their home towns and communicated with the so-called 'mother ship' via a sophisticated Skype link. This also enabled them – technology willing – to see and work with the other companies across the UK. However, Tony Stone, the Poulton amateurs' director, has noted that they were 'virtually self-contained', and they were initially encouraged to develop their own interpretation of the mechanicals scenes, although they had to take account of staging practicalities such as the size of the set.[20]

Nevertheless, it is clear that the overall interpretation of the play and production was established by the RSC. In December 2015, the 1940s period for the production was established, and the design for the set, as a post-war bombed-out theatre, was finalised. The choice of the 1940s was, as Erica Whyman noted, 'to get a sense of place . . . one we could remember – within living memory'.[21] In a programme note she added 'I have set the play in a Britain reminiscent of the 1940s because, like Shakespeare's remembered Athens, it was a place and time of great change'.[22] She goes on to indicate that the time was a moment of hope during a period of austerity, as well as commenting that in this decade the 'founding of the Arts Council in 1949 was visionary but it also marked a fundamental split between the amateur and professional worlds'.[23] The implication was that this production aimed through its practice, temporarily at least, to bring those worlds back together.

The theatre set presented an image of a post-war bombed-out shell of a theatre building, where the interior and floors had been obliterated. In front of this was a dusty grand piano, and an area allocated to the on-stage musicians. Above the stage hung what appeared initially to be large sandbag scenery weights. The performance space also had its surreal aspects, with a large staircase and two door frames at stage level which were moved around during the performance to suggest the magical confusion of the

wood. On a practical level this rudimentary set ensured that the touring production was adaptable to a variety of venues. Yet as Pete Kirwan notes:

> Pleasingly, given the tour's use of the country's network of grand Theatre Royals and the foregrounding of theatre making, the production itself was set in a run-down 1940s theatre. Costume baskets, ladders, tatty red curtains and floorboards demarcated a space of play and celebration of the groups meeting in it.[24]

As identified here, the placing of this 'run-down 1940s theatre' set within the elaborate interiors of some of the country's stately theatrical houses drew attention to the play's, and the production's, fascination with the idea of theatre-making. Paradoxically, perhaps, the representation of a literally deconstructed theatre within Matcham's elaborate interiors at he Grand Theatre seemed to pull together various constituent parts of this 'Play for the Nation'. The juxtaposition of the meta-theatrical set with the grand physicality of the host theatre worked to synthesise and celebrate the theatrical history, architectural spaces, and maybe even geographical places that have contributed to the nation's play-making. It is significant that publicity photographs of the amateur groups involved in the tour were framed against a background of the various beautifully presented theatre auditoriums.[25] The similar framing and lighting of the photographs appears to be an attempt to join the various locales into a united national venture. While signalling the innovative linking of professional and amateur performance in the production, the photographs also serve to acknowledge the rich theatrical heritage of those spaces which the company hoped to incorporate into their forthcoming 'Play for the Nation'.

The set, along with costume, was also utilised to make distinctions between the mortal and fairy worlds. After an opening establishing scene where Puck seeks applause after a bathetic performance of 'chopsticks' on the grand piano, two red carpets are rolled out and Theseus and Hippolyta enter ceremoniously. The 1940s costumes were used to mark out social distinctions with Egeus' RAF officer's uniform showing him to be part of an old world order, contrasted with the fashionable 1940s clothing of the leisured aristocratic couple, Theseus and Hippolyta, and the lovers in period dresses and casual suits. The mechanicals' initial scene took place in the same setting, with them in work clothes of the period – overalls, aprons, and for the female 'Peter Quince' a turban. As the mechanicals exited, the supposed scenery weights dropped and revealed long red pillars of material. These, together with the moveable stairs

and doors, were utilised to create a surreal 'wood outside Athens' which confused the mortal visitors with false entrances and exits and created visual humour in the scenes with the lovers. Titania (Ayesha Dharker) was linked to the red of the wood with her full-length red dress, decorated in gold and with a sari-like train. Her senior fairies wore a punkish mix of tight jackets and full skirts. The children who made up the rest of the group wore 1940s dresses, shorts and school blazers 'like returning second world war evacuees'.[26] All of the fairies (except Oberon) were splattered with brightly coloured paint which Gardner identified as 'the vivid colours of the Hindu festival Holi'.[27] This Hindu festival, during which bright coloured powder paints and water are thrown, represents a moment of creation and renewal, the beginning of spring, and the triumph of good over evil, as well as achieving a temporary suspension of power relationships within caste and gender.[28] Arguably all these have a resonance with the themes and festive structure of Shakespeare's play. The performative quality of Holi also chimes with the activities in the comedy's festive 'green world' as well as, one may argue, with the festive activities outside the Blackpool theatre, which share this temporary suspension of the 'normal' world. The incorporation of this particular festival appears to be an attempt to create a diverse and inclusive 'Play for the Nation'. However, given that this aspect was only mentioned in a few of the reviews, it seems likely that references to this Hindu festival were not recognised by all audience members. Nevertheless, the production certainly tried to make the contrast between the 'dust left by bombs' and the physical transformation within the wood brought about by the Holi colours.[29] In some ways, the inclusion of these particular festive qualities alongside the multi-ethnic casting challenged the potential Anglocentric nostalgia of the 1940s' post-war setting. Whyman commented in the theatre programme that the 'late 40s also heralded a long but revolutionary struggle for new equalities'.[30] Whyman's remarks focus more on gender politics, but arguably the 1940s setting, the casting, and the festivity of Holi identify the post-war period also as a time of increasing immigration and multiculturalism. This Shakespearean 'Play for the Nation' argues for an inclusive multi-cultural sense of national identity and a celebration of the diverse community of that 'nation'.

Yet the Hindu festival is also supposed to be high-energy and fun, and overall this seemed lacking in the fairy world of this production. It was almost as if the festival was over, and had taken place off-stage, so the audience instead saw the rather melancholic aftermath of a festival. Perhaps the idea was that the disagreement with Oberon had curtailed the festivities

signalled by the way in which his pristine white suit remained unsullied by Holi colours, whereas Titania's red dress with traces of Holi paint indicated her participation and aligned her with ideas of love and fertility. This rather melancholic Oberon was served only by Puck, an impish androgynous figure played by Lucy Ellinson in a black suit and top hat. She was variously described by critics as 'Vesta Tilly', 'Liza Minelli in *Cabaret*', and 'part crossing-dressing music-hall male impersonator'.[31] Ellinson engaged the audience in the manner of a self-conscious mime artist – using her hat to strike rakish poses, encouraging applause at the beginning and end of the play, as well as ushering in the performers for the next scene. As Kirwan notes:

> The action was orchestrated by Lucy Ellison's Puck, a variation on *Cabaret*'s Emcee . . . her energetic performance established a presentational, pageant-like quality to the play – characters are brought on and displayed or introduced . . . the adventures of the forest . . . a series of pageants, orchestrated by Puck for the pleasure of Oberon.[32]

Puck was thus central to the production's idea of playing and also playfulness. This last trait was very much part of her relationship with the audience. At one point she made an exaggerated slow process of clambering over the audience in the stalls, 'stealing' sweets along the way. This comic stylised performance served to endear her to the audience, and with her energy and empathy helped to draw the various groups in the production and play together. Nevertheless, despite the fact that her clothes gradually showed signs of her engagement with the festivity of Titania's fairy band, with Holi colours dusted on the shoulder of her jacket, her melancholy was on occasions also made apparent to the audience. At the end of 2.2., during the scene featuring 'I know a bank where the wild thyme blows' (248), she sat on the staircase with Oberon who gradually leaned back against her. As, unseen by Oberon, she moved to stroke his head, he moved away, leaving her looking rather mournful, before she quickly slipped back into her clownish childlike mode by placing the flower in her mouth, which distracted her from Oberon's instructions about the Athenian youth, and prompted his comment 'effect it with some care' (2.1.265).

It is tempting perhaps to ascribe the performance of this vaudeville Puck to some northern archetype of comedy, engaging with a local audience, in a style such as that espoused by Ken Dodd, who appeared many times at the Grand Theatre. However, the interpretation of Puck

was grounded in a much broader cabaret tradition, and, more importantly the interpretation, was offered at all venues across the UK, not just in Blackpool. The same applies to the physical comedy of the lovers' scenes, complete with the conventional visual gag of Hermia held back by a hand on her head, as she tries to hit Demetrius. These recognisable comic turns may be part of a shared national understanding of different types of comedy, but they are not distinctively northern.

Yet a concern to root the production in its northern setting did feature in the design. Erica Whyman, in an interview following the final audition stage, commented on the Poulton group that they had really caught her eye and she 'really found them very entertaining as you'd expect from that bit of the world. Very strong sense of humour and they properly made us laugh'.[33] The 'as you'd expect from that bit of world' is intriguing and does seem to place humour as a defining feature of Blackpool and the North. Dave Russell in his work *Looking North* certainly includes 'humour' in his list of attributes of the North although he notes how northerners see themselves as 'humorous/witty' whereas from an external viewpoint this might be viewed as 'humorous if crude'.[34]

Consequently, given Whyman's comments, one might have expected to find evidence of 'northern' humour in the mechanicals' scenes. Paul Morley, describing Lancashire humour, notes:

> [A. J. P.] Taylor concluded that there was 'something in the air'. You could actually connect Lancashire's defiant sense of humour with the wind coming in from the south-east, from beyond British shores, bringing traces of distant difference, encouraging a certain edgy whimsy, jittery dreams of otherness, a glorious blend of silliness and wisdom, and a general belief that one way of beating the odds, outwitting fate and rising above social inequity was with a gag. Lancashire was where the world's antic mental energy eventually drifted to, and was absorbed and dispersed with a ruthless sense of timing rooted in fierce centuries of hard labour, defiant love and constant loss.[35]

And yet in this production, perhaps somewhat disappointingly given Whyman's remarks, this exuberant comic energy was deliberately discounted. Tony Stone, the director of the Poulton amateurs, reported that the group were given some initial freedom to devise their own style for the scenes. They decided not to go for 'slapstick' as, according to Stone, it easily 'moves from quality humour to pantomime dame', and because the mechanicals 'are funny not because of contrived jokes, but because

they were inept'.[36] Moreover, it seems likely that despite the celebration of localness, these rude mechanicals scenes had to fit a basic template. For example, the group received broad parameters for the Pyramus and Thisbe scene – the chink (following Jonathan Bate's reading in the text used by the RSC) drew out the sexual references and became the gap between the legs of 'Wall'. In the Poulton version, Snout, as Wall, seemed initially rather over-confident in his role, only becoming slightly more perturbed as the lovers move to kiss through the chink. There were variations to this in other productions' reading of the scene – some Walls were portrayed as being more anxious and uncomfortable with the sexual innuendo of their required performance, anxiously looking over their shoulders as the lovers approached. Others played it very straight (no pun intended). The death of Pyramus and Thisbe also revealed variations in interpretation. The Poulton group gave both characters extravagant and prolonged deaths – both 'dying' to both sides of the stage before eventually collapsing. They included some business with the already 'dead' Pyramus passing a small wooden sword to Thisbe in response to 'come, trusty sword' (5.1.337). The Poulton Thisbe (Gary Houghton) gave a sensitive nuanced performance, which drew out the emotional aspects of the tragedy (as in Michael Hoffman's film version) and almost seemed to be defying the audience to laugh (which, perhaps unfortunately, they did).[37] She/he was also portrayed as rather fastidious, and upon seeing that she would have to lie across Pyramus's lower regions, she moved carefully so that she was just touching his chest. Other versions of this scene drew out the slapstick humour and made more of the positioning of Thisbe's head across the lower body of Pyramus.

Compared to other productions of the play, such as Peter Brook's or the concurrent Globe production, the Kottian sexual interpretation of Bottom's transformation into an ass, where the ass overtly represents sexual potency and desire, a reading which might have chimed well with the sexual frisson of Blackpool popular culture, was not pursued.[38] Perhaps this is understandable given that in other locations on this tour Bottom was played by women (Nottingham and Canterbury). Also, while the Blackpool Bottom was an amateur actor, he was also a professional primary school teacher, and so further moral constraints in his interpretation may have been appropriate. Quince, on the other hand, was here played by a female actor. This gender switching seems to have been encouraged across all the amateur groups, with female actors taking the parts of the various mechanicals in different permutations across the groups. Here the female Quince worked well as a post-war new woman

within the 1940s setting, and, as a female director of the on-stage acting troupe, mimicked the RSC's own all-female directorial team. Whyman commented that the Blackpool mechanicals were 'a hard working group with an endearing humility, they are perfect casting . . . people for whom theatre is evidently a life-affirming joy'.[39] There might, however, have been more opportunity to introduce some regional variations into these scenes, given that the Bottom at Glasgow's Citizens Theatre appeared in the 'Pyramus and Thisbe' play wearing a kilt and carrying a large wooden claymore. Nevertheless, the Blackpool scene was very funny, without resorting to clichés of northernness, and perhaps, more so than some other venue's versions, their interpretation chimed well with the melancholic thread which ran through the production.

However, the key contribution of a local voice in all of the productions was quite literally in the local accents of the actors. Erica Whyman, commenting on the amateur casting in the production, indicated:

> In every single region the cast we have chosen has a distinctive voice and a strong sense of connection to the place where they will perform. I think it will be a real treat for audiences everywhere to see Shakespeare's most magical play with a proper local flavour.[40]

While the Poulton group had a connection to the Grand Theatre itself, having performed at the theatre in amateur productions, the 'proper local flavour' was for the most part conjured up by the actors' accents. All the actors in the Poulton group (apart from a Welsh Huw Rose playing Moonshine) have accents from the North West although not all are Blackpool accents. For local audiences this serves to create a sense of affinity with the speakers, to hear their own voices 'speaking words and experiencing words'.[41] Arguably, the audience in Blackpool, and other local audiences with their own groups, championed and supported their local amateur group because of the familiarity of accent and the implied connection to the shared sense of place. Certainly Katherine Brockaw in her review of the Poulton group's later performance at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre thought the amateurs not as good as the professionals, and commented on the audience's 'awkward chuckles', which suggests that the empathetic, and possibly compensatory, sense of a shared locale had been disrupted in the transfer to Stratford.[42] Somewhat ironically perhaps, this dislocation of the local, and the apparent consequent removal of some empathy, parallels the courtiers' response to the 'Pyramus and Thisbe'

interlude in the play. Nevertheless, Brockaw goes on to praise 'the use of amateur performance [which] made one aware of an actorly humanity and theatrical love (going to the etymological roots of "amateur") that one doesn't always feel at the glossy RSC'.[43]

Arguably when creating a 'Play for the Nation' the utilisation of local accents is potentially significant. David Russell, discussing the work of the Northern Broadsides Company, who predominately cast actors with northern voices, emphasises how this 'plac[es] its accents and intonation at the absolute heart of the national culture'.[44] Perhaps in productions such as this *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, where local northern accents are only used by amateurs for the humorous, but somewhat foolish, lower-class mechanicals, there is a danger of simply reinforcing certain regional clichés and stereotypes. Yet in this production, this did not appear to happen – at least not in the performances in Blackpool, probably due in part to the multi-racial casting of Ayesha Dharker (Titania), Chu Omambala (Oberon) and Mercy Ojelade (Hermia). This deliberately and significantly brought other linguistic patterns and nuances to the production, and the northern voice became part of that national fabric.

Identity and Community

This fabric of voices and identities is perhaps what ultimately substantiates the production's claim to be a 'Play for the Nation'. Whyman, returning to the idea of community in a programme note, says '*A Midsummer Night's Dream* is an enchanting play . . . but is also about community, about overcoming prejudice, looking to new horizons'.[45] The production, as discussed here, utilised professional and amateur actors, local children, an actor of restricted height (who attacked Demetrius for calling Hermia a 'dwarf') and multi-ethnic casting – all representing a conscious and laudable attempt to create an inclusive sense of a diverse community. Interestingly, though, in the nine BBC TV documentaries *Best Bottoms in the Land*, broadcast on different local television channels corresponding to the location of the amateur groups, the narratives constructed were very different and much more about a rather distorted sense of 'localness'. In the BBC Northwest programme which featured the Blackpool cast, the footage of the amateur group showed them walking down the promenade, rehearsing in a social club while downstairs the clientele played Bingo, and improvising a dance routine wearing 'kiss me quick' cowboy hats.[46] Anthony Henry (Bottom) was interviewed on the beach learning more

about the donkeys (this storyline was also used in other episodes with Norwich and Black Country companies visiting a donkey sanctuary). As they neared the opening night, the Blackpool group were seen enjoying a rather staged moment of relaxation at the Pleasure Beach on the 'Alice in Wonderland' ride. This was followed by the actor playing Bottom utilising one of the traditional funfair face-in-the-hole photograph boards, and, in an interesting reversal, sticking his head through a cardboard cut-out of a donkey. No cliché was left unturned! This television programme, presumably, was designed to be a celebratory account of the interaction of the local with the national, and to create a record of the input of the various regions in the production. Nevertheless, its portrayal of northernness was crafted to reinforce a series of high/low culture oppositions, which the theatre production largely avoided. It also reveals some of the possible complexities and pitfalls involved in the interaction of local identities with the construction of a 'Play for the Nation'.

In attempting to create a 'Play for the Nation', the production, as well as navigating the various identities of places, as discussed here, was also negotiating various aspects of its historical context. Primarily, as we have seen, the tour was designed to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death. However, this tour should also perhaps be seen within the context of the Coalition government's austerity programme, which had led the RSC to cut back on its annual sojourn in Newcastle. Whyman herself noted of the RSC's former Newcastle season that '[t]he relationship is unlikely to return to its "golden age"'.[47] The 2016 'Play for the Nation' tour could thus be seen as an attempt to fulfil the RSC's flagging (and/or refocused) touring policy. Noting, in 2016, the still extant 'special relationship' with Newcastle, Whyman added 'We are in a constant state of evolution and a lot has changed since 1977. We just have to make sure that the kind of relationship we have is one that is fit for the 21st century environment'.[48] The 'Play for the Nation' tour provided the RSC with an opportunity to revisit destinations with which it had a prior association, such as Newcastle and Blackpool, perhaps to refresh and extend the interests and loyalties that had previously existed.

Nevertheless, during the course of the tour, different political debates came to the fore when questions about the UK's future as part of the European Union became a significant historical moment in terms of issues around 'the nation'. Arguably, given the long preparation time for the production there was no intention to overtly address this issue. The referendum was not announced until 20 February 2016, and the decision

to leave the EU was not declared until 23 June 2016. Nevertheless, one might argue that presenting a version of the nation as one centred on the cultural richness of one of its canonical writers, while embracing a diverse assembly of audiences and theatrical performers, may have implicitly raised questions in the minds of its viewers about the coherence and integrity of those ideas of nation, and perhaps that nation's future. In April 2016 in Blackpool, the nostalgic 1940s setting helped suggest a positive reference point in the interpretation of the play, to illustrate how ideas of community could be influential in resolving social discord. Later, in June 2016 in Stratford, after the referendum result, a reviewer saw the production very differently:

> [I]ts simultaneous nostalgia for the more unified Britain of wartime yore belied the notion that the RSC was truly producing a 'play for the [current] nation'. Watching the professional actors of Britain's best bank-rolled company play Athenians who mock provincial actors (played by provincial actors) because they don't toil enough in their heads was, in the immediate aftermath of Brexit, an unintentionally disquieting reminder that there is much that separates Britons.[49]

This is a crucial observation, which usefully alerts us to the variables of time (as well as of place) in any performance. In late June 2016 in Stratford, the production was in a different place, where its northernness was estranged, and also a different time, where ideas of nationhood had taken a different turn.

To conclude, I would propose that the value of this interaction between the local and national, between Shakespeare and the North, ultimately lies beyond this specific Brexit moment. The Grand Theatre reported that audience numbers exceeded expectations, and that they had drawn in people, partly those supporting family members and communities, from a wider-than-usual catchment area. The production, together with its accompanying educational projects, appears to have made a significant intervention in the lives and aspirations of a community challenged by a range of social issues. Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* suggests that transformation is possible in the Athenian and forest communities it depicts. It seems that Blackpool, long associated with carnivalesque festivity and sites of spectacle and wonder, found that the topsy-turvy holiday world of the Shakespearean comedy provided an occasion to stimulate the revival and reinvigoration of its own communities.

Notes

1. The RSC tour included performances at the following in 2016: Northern Stage, Newcastle upon Tyne (16–26 March), Citizen's Theatre, Glasgow (29 March–2 April), Grand Theatre, Blackpool (5–9 April), Alhambra Theatre, Bradford (12–16 April), Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury (19–23 April), Theatre Royal, Norwich (26–30 April), Theatre Royal, Nottingham (3–7 May), Hall for Cornwall, Truro (10–14 May), Barbican Theatre, London (17–21 May), New Theatre, Cardiff (24–28 May), Grand Opera House, Belfast (31 May–4 June), Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon (15 June–16 July).
2. Royal Shakespeare Company, 'Erica Whyman 2016 production'. Available at: <www.rsc.org.uk/a-midsummer-nights-dream/past-productions/erica-whyman-2016-production> (last accessed 27 June 2018).
3. John K. Walton and Jason Wood, 'Reputation and regeneration: history and the heritage of the recent past in the re-making of Blackpool', in Lisanne Gibson and John Pendlebury (eds), *Valuing Historic Environments* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), 115–38, 126. See also Jill Fernie-Clark, 'Contemporary carnival: Blackpool and the symbolic suspension of real life', in Roger Spalding and Alyson Brown (eds), *Entertainment, Leisure and Identities* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 36–49.
4. Fred Inglis, *The Delicious History of the Holiday* (London: Routledge, 2000), 52.
5. John K. Walton, *Blackpool* (Lancaster: Carnegie Pub Ltd, 1998), 173.
6. Simon Featherstone, *Englishness: Twentieth-Century Popular Culture and the Forming of English Identity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 97–8.
7. John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage, 2002), 94.
8. Gary S. Cross, 'Crowds and leisure: thinking comparatively across the 20th century', *Journal of Social History*, 39: 3 (Spring 2006), 631–50, 632.
9. Vanessa Toulmin, '"Bid me discourse, I will enchant thine ear": Frank Matcham in Blackpool (1889–1920)', *Early Popular Visual Culture*, 12: 1 (2014), 37–56, 42.
10. Walton and Wood, 'Reputation and regeneration', 122.
11. *Turning the Tide: Social Justice in Five Seaside Towns*, The Centre for Social Justice, August 2013. Available at: <www.poverty.ac.uk/editorial/deprivation-seaside-towns> (last accessed 29 May 2016), 25.
12. Featherstone, *Englishness*, 97.
13. Royal Shakespeare Company brochure, *Summer 14 March – October 2014 Stratford upon Avon* (2014), 2.
14. Peter J. Smith, 'Inaugurating the complete works (again): Shakespeare Nation, Doranism and literalism in the Royal Shakespeare Company's 2014 summer season', *Cahiers Elisabéthains: A Journal of English Renaissance Studies*, 89: 1 (2016), 58–73, 59.
15. Shiv Visvanathan, 'Nation', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 23 (2006), 533–49, 533.

16. Erica Whyman, 'A Play for the Nation', *Arts Professional* (14 January 2016) www.artsprofessional.co.uk/magazine/article/play-nation> (last accessed November 2017).
17. Kimberley Sykes, Post-performance audience and cast discussion. The Grand Theatre, Blackpool (6 April 2016).
18. Royal Shakespeare Company, '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*: A Play for a Nation' <http://www.dream2016.org.uk> (last accessed 17 February 2016).
19. Ibid.
20. Tony Stone, interview with author (May 2016).
21. *Best Bottoms in the Land*, television programme, produced by Sally Williams. UK: BBC Northwest (20 May 2016).
22. Whyman, 'A national passion', *A Midsummer Night's Dream – Play for the Nation*, the Grand Theatre Blackpool, Programme (April 2016).
23. Ibid.
24. Peter Kirwan, '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*: A Play for the Nation (RSC/ Lovelace Theatre) @Theatre Royal, Nottingham'. Available at: <blogs. nottingham.ac.uk/bardathon/2016/05/07/a-midsummer-nights-dream-a-play-for-the-nation-rsclovelace-theatre-theatre-royal-nottingham> (last accessed 30 May 2016).
25. Royal Shakespeare Company, 'Erica Whyman 2016 production'.
26. Lyn Gardner, '*A Midsummer Night's Dream* review – RSC's delightful "play for the nation"', *The Guardian* (24 February 2016). Available at: <www. theguardian.com/stage/2016/feb/24/midsummer-nights-dream-review-royal-shakespeare-theatre-stratford-upon-avon-rsc-ayesha-dharker-chu-omambala> (last accessed 20 May 2016).
27. Ibid.
28. Society for the Confluence of Festivals in India, 'Holi – let the colour shower joy' <www.holifestival.org> (last accessed 27 June 2018).
29. Gardner, '*A Midsummer Night's Dream* review'.
30. Whyman, 'A national passion'.
31. William Stafford, 'A way with the fairies' (June 2016). Available at: <bumona-seat.wordpress.com/2016/06/16/a-way-with-the-fairies> (last accessed 27 June 2018); Kirk McElhearn, '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*' (25 February 2016). Available at: <www.mcelhearn.com/theater-review-a-midsummer-nights-dream-by-the-royal-shakespeare-company> (last accessed 27 June 2018); Gardner, '*A Midsummer Night's Dream* review'.
32. Kirwan, '*A Midsummer Night's Dream*'.
33. *Best Bottoms in the Land*, BBC TV Northwest.
34. Dave Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004), 27.
35. Paul Morley, *The North (and almost everything in it)* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 293.
36. Stone, interview with the author.

37. Michael Hoffman (dir.), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (USA: Fox Searchlight Pictures, 1999).
38. See Jan Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (New York: Norton, 1974), 183.
39. Whyman, 'Amateur actors from Poulton cast in the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*: A Play for the Nation'. Available at: <https://www.visitblackpool.com/latest-news/amateur-actors-from-poulton-cast-in-the-royal-shak> (last accessed 27 June 2018).
40. Whyman, 'RSC Dream Team 2016' (1 October 2015). Available at: <www.blackpoolgrand.co.uk/rsc-dream-team-2016> (last accessed November 2017).
41. Sykes, 'Post performance discussion'.
42. Kathryn Steele Brockaw, '*A Midsummer Night's Dream* by The Royal Shakespeare Company with Poulton Drama at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Shakespeare's Globe at Shakespeare's Globe, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Pendley Shakespeare Festival at Pendley Manor (review)', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 35: 1 (Spring 2017), 148–56, 153.
43. Ibid. 153.
44. Russell, *Looking North*, 173.
45. Whyman, 'A national passion'.
46. *Best Bottoms in the Land*, BBC TV Northwest.
47. BBC, *Shakespeare 2016 on Tour*, 'Newcastle's special relationship with Shakespeare'. Available at: <www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/49CPwpV9TktfzyHFD6qMlWs/newcastle-s-special-relationship-with-shakespeare> (last accessed 27 June 2018).
48. Ibid.
49. Brokaw, 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', 156.