FRAMING SHAKESPEARE: LIVE THEATRE BROADCAST PARATEXTS AND SHAKESPEAREAN VALUE

by

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Abstract

Since the National Theatre (NT) broadcast *All's Well that Ends Well* (2009) live from the Olivier stage, criticism of Shakespearean performances in the live theatre broadcast medium has been growing. While attention has largely been focused on how the theatrical production is mediated and experienced by cinema audiences, the role of the framing materials that accompany the performance has been greatly overlooked. Over ten years on from NT Live's *All's Well*, the canon of Shakespearean live theatre broadcasts produced by RSC Live and NT Live is populated by a rich and diverse range of broadcast paratexts. These span from advertising slides that preface the live transmission of the broadcast, to pre-recorded short films and even post-performance credits. This thesis examines the role of broadcast paratexts in mediating Shakespearean performances broadcast by these two major theatrical institutions. Drawing from the paratextual function as outlined by structuralist Gérard Genette, this thesis proposes that broadcast paratexts perform significant transactions of meaning in relation to the Shakespearean performance and to broader ideas of Shakespeare's cultural value.

Part I of the thesis consists of three chapters in which broadcast paratexts are explored and explained, convention by convention. Chapter One explores the abundance of pre-performance paratexts, detailing how these materials offer preliminary thresholds of interpretation for cinema audiences. Chapter Two demonstrates the role of interval paratexts in mediating an important juncture of the Shakespearean performance, challenging the assumption that the interval is an interpretively passive space, and Chapter Three rethinks the terminal paratexts of bows and credits. In Part II of the thesis, the functions established in these chapters are explored thematically, in case study chapters that focus on recurring narratives of Shakespearean value in the broadcast paratexts. Chapter Four scrutinises the ways in which the NT and RSC imbue the space and place of performance with Shakespearean meaning. Chapter Five analyses the role of high-profile performers as mediators of the Shakespearean work,

while Chapter Six looks to the fringes of the Shakespeare canon to uncover how the playwright's lesser-performed works are framed for cinema audiences. Chapter Seven examines arguments of Shakespeare's contemporary relevance in broadcast paratexts. Across this study, I argue for the role of these materials in negotiating Shakespearean value as well as mediating the theatrical performance, situating these paratexts as the latest in a long history of attempts to reshape ideas of the playwright through the framing of his works.

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Table of Contents

Introduction – Framing Shakespeare in Live Theatre Broadcast Paratexts 1

Shakespearean Broadcast Criticism 4

Watching (at) the Fringes: Paratexts and Reception 11

Scope and Methodology 17

Research Structure 21

Part I: Conventions and Trends

Convention and Trends: An Overview 28

Chapter One – Before the Beginning

Advertising Slides 33

RSC Live – Opening Montages 39

Presenter Monologues 49

Live Interviews 66

Pre-Show Short Films 80

Chapter Two – The In-Between

Interval Timers 99

Interval Short Films 104

Chapter Three – After the Ending

Bows 119

Credits 124

Conclusion 128

Part II: Case Studies

Chapter Four – Space and Place 133

Richard II and Biographical Place 136

Coriolanus and Diegetic Space and Place 144

2 Henry IV and the Dual Functions of Space and Place 150

Chapter Five – Star Casting 158

Anticipated Audiences 161

Ghosting 164

David Tennant in Richard II (2013) 168

Benedict Cumberbatch in Hamlet (2015) 179

Chapter Six – Canonicity 193

Exposition 199

Composition 207

Attraction 215

Chapter Seven – Relevance 225

Shakespeare in the Year of Shakespeare400 228

Shakespeare in the Year(s) of Brexit 233

Shakespeare in the Year(s) of Donald Trump 244

Conclusion 258

Appendix: Broadcast Productions Consulted 268

Bibliography 272

List of Illustrations

Figure 1	A graph depicting the paratextual makeup of RSC Live's broadcast of *Macbeth* (2018).	30
Figure 2	The paratextual makeup of NT Live's *Coriolanus* (2014).	30
Figure 3	The NT's promotional image for *Timon of Athens* (2012), depicting Simon Russell Beale as Timon dining at a table of celebrity lookalikes.[1]	36
Figure 4	An image of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre (RST) taken from a similar angle to that which is used by the company during the interval timer.[2]	102
Figure 5	Ray Fearon as Othello, captured in an image that was reproduced in black and white and cropped as part of the RSC Live *Othello* (2015) broadcast interval short film.[3]	117
Figure 6	A photograph showing the cast of the Almeida *Richard II* taking a bow during the broadcast's camera rehearsal. The proscenium arch of the stage and box-effect set gave the broadcast a distinctly cinematic style.[4]	120

[1] National Theatre, Timon of Athens Print <https://shop.nationaltheatre.org.uk/products/pod1033237> [accessed 3 May 2018].

[2] David Tett, 'The Royal Shakespeare Theatre', photograph, from Royal Shakespeare Company, n.d. <https://www.rsc.org.uk/your-visit/royal-shakespeare-theatre> [accessed 30 January 2020].

[3] Donald Cooper, 'Othello kills Desdemona', photograph, from Royal Shakespeare Company, 1995 <https://www.rsc.org.uk/shakespeare-learning-zone/othello/story/timeline> [accessed 12 November 2019].

[4] Jenglebook (@CreativeWren), photograph tweeted by National Theatre Live, @NTLive, 'A round of applause for the cast of #RichardII @AlmeidaTheatre ! We hope you enjoyed tonight's broadcast. Photo by @CreativebyWren, taken at our camera rehearsal.', 15 Jan 2019 <https://twitter.com/NTLive/status/1085277939288154114> [accessed 24 Jan 2020].

Figure 7	The promotional image for the RSC's *Richard II*, showing David Tennant seated beneath the 'Westminster Portrait' of Richard II.[5]	168
Figure 8	David Tennant pictured in front of the Frank Benson Memorial Window, in clips that were edited and included within the RSC Live broadcast of *Richard II* (screengrab from YouTube).[6]	173
Figure 9	Helen Castor in front of Westminster Abbey, the setting of her interview clips in the *Richard II* broadcast (screengrab from YouTube).[7]	173
Figure 10	Mark Antony (David Morrissey) addresses a crowd of onlookers at Caesar's funeral, some of whom wear 'Caesar' caps.[8]	248
Figure 11	A selection of the RSC Live broadcasts available via iPlayer as part of the BBC's 'Culture in Quarantine' initiative (screengrab from BBC iPlayer).[9]	263
Figure 12	A slide prefacing the NT At Home stream of *Twelfth Night*, released to YouTube on 23 April 2020 (screengrab from YouTube).[10]	263

[5] 'Richard II Poster Featuring David Tennant', photograph, from Royal Shakespeare Company, n.d. <https://www.rsc.org.uk/richard-ii/past-productions/in-focus-gregory-doran-2013> [accessed 21 August 2020].

[6] Royal Shakespeare Company, *Production Diary 11 | Richard II | Royal Shakespeare Company*, online video recording, YouTube, 8 November 2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxFi0rDcHJI&t=11s> [accessed 27 May 2018].

[7] Royal Shakespeare Company, *Production Diary 3 | Richard II | Royal Shakespeare Company*, online video recording, YouTube, 13 September 2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tCpVlIm8P44> [accessed 27 May 2018].

[8] Manuel Harlan, photograph, David Morrissey as Mark Antony in Nicholas Hytner's production of William Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar' at London's Bridge Theatre, *Spalding Today*, 10 April 2018 <https://www.spaldingtoday.co.uk/whats-on/theatre-review-live-theatre-at-its-thrilling-best-through-wonder-of-technology-1-8452592/> [accessed 7 October 2018].

[9] BBC Four, 'Culture in Quarantine: Shakespeare' <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p089zds8/episodes/guide> [accessed 23 September 2020].

[10] National Theatre, *Official Twelfth Night featuring Tamsin Greig | National Theatre at Home*, online video recording, YouTube, 23 April 2020, URL no longer available, [accessed 23 April 2020].

List of Abbreviations

NT	The Royal National Theatre
NT Live	National Theatre Live
RSC	The Royal Shakespeare Company
RST	Royal Shakespeare Theatre
RSC Live	Royal Shakespeare Company Live from Stratford-upon-Avon
KBTC Live	Kenneth Branagh Theatre Company Live

Introduction

When asked to imagine William Shakespeare, the face that comes to mind is most likely etched in black and white. A broad forehead frames the curved dome of the head, with eyes that hold the viewer's gaze with an inquisitive certainty. Falling beneath a small, pursed mouth are almost imperceptible tufts of facial hair and an ornate collar so rigid it appears to hold the playwright's head at a remove from his intricately decorated doublet. The image of the playwright which holds perhaps the greatest place in the British cultural imagination is that which prefaced his posthumously printed collection of works: Martin Droeshout's engraving, included as a frontispiece in a 1623 volume titled *Mr William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories & Tragedies* (more commonly known as Shakespeare's 'First Folio'). This engraving has since been scrutinised for cryptic clues as to the 'true' author of Shakespeare's works, reproduced endlessly on souvenirs and murals, and reanimated meticulously to form the basis of statues and memorials.[11] This image – the only surviving pictorial likeness of the playwright approved by those who knew him – began its life as a paratext. As a device to frame and commercialise his works, this portrait of Shakespeare is bound inextricably both with the conditions of its original artistic context and with ideas about the playwright that have shifted and evolved over the four centuries since the volume's publication.

If our image of Shakespeare has long been shaped by what was originally a prefacing paratext to a collection of his printed works, it stands to reason that the paratextual framing of the playwright's

[11] In the early twentieth century, William Stone Booth 'decoded' the portrait as a likeness of Francis Bacon rather than William Shakespeare, adding fuel to a debate that sought to use the Droeshout engraving as proof against Shakespearean authorship. In Stone Booth, *The Droeshout Portrait of William Shakespeare, An Experiment in Identification* (Boston: W. A. Butterfield, 1911). Marjorie Garber discusses Booth's contribution in the context of the multiple 'faces' of Shakespeare and how these have been read in relation to desire to find an 'authentic' and 'genuine' image of the playwright, in *Shakespeare Profiled* (Abingdon: Routledge Press, 2008), see pp. 214 – 228. Chris Laoutaris also considers the role of the Droeshout engraving alongside the wider preliminary materials of the First Folio, arguing that 'the prefatorial material [of the Folio] bears a huge burden in constructing the playwright whose works it preserves' (p. 49). Laoutaris also considers the portrait in greater detail through pp. 51 – 53, in Laoutaris, 'The Prefatorial Material, *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's First Folio*, edited by Emma Smith (Cambridge: CUP, 2016), pp. 48 - 67.

works since his lifetime has been responsible for continually shaping our understanding of what 'Shakespeare' means.[12] Since the National Theatre (NT) broadcast their production of *All's Well that Ends Well* into cinemas across the world in 2009, performances of Shakespeare's works have also changed shape, being distributed and framed with growing frequency in a new performance medium: the live theatre broadcast. The NT and the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC, which debuted its first live theatre broadcast in 2013) have emerged as the two central institutions in live broadcasting Shakespearean performances into cinemas, producing between them an average of four Shakespeare broadcasts per year for the past ten years.[13] With some broadcasts drawing in international audiences of

[12] As I consider below, the framing of Shakespeare's works is still a matter of concern for modern editors and critics (see Newman and Massai). Emma Smith summates the importance of the First Folio in no uncertain terms, arguing that 'it has generated endless questions about its author, about the provenance and authority of its texts and about the circumstances of production'. In Smith, 'Preface', *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's First Folio,* edited by Emma Smith (Cambridge: CUP, 2016), pp. xi – xiv, p. xii. Moreover, the work of Lukas Erne helpfully reminds us that paratextual framing of Shakespeare's works in print predated the collation of the First Folio. Erne examines the framing materials used in the commercial lives of Shakespeare's quarto playbooks in *Shakespeare and the Book Trade* (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), see pp. 90 - 129. Margareta de Grazia also examines the importance of the 1623 Folio paratextual apparatus on shaping modern editorial editions in a work which anticipates the later studies of Newman and Massai discussed below, in *Shakespeare Verbatim: The Reproduction of Authenticity and the 1790 Apparatus* (Oxford: OUP, 1991), see pp. 14 - 48. For the framing of Shakespearean performance in the centuries following the playwright's death, Michael Dobson and Emma Depledge's respective studies are invaluable. Focusing her attention on the Exclusion Crisis of the late seventeenth century, Emma Depledge examines how Shakespeare's cultural prominence arose partly as a result of 'theatrical paratexts that praised Shakespeare and promoted his authorial status' (p. 130). In Depledge, *Shakespeare's Rise to Cultural Prominence: Politics, Print and Alteration, 1642 – 1700* (Cambridge: CUP, 2018). Likewise, Dobson focuses on the interpolated prologues common to the eighteenth century in *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation and Authorship, 1660 – 1769* (Oxford: OUP, 1994), arguing that this turn towards freely adapting the playwright's works and framing them was integral to his rise in cultural status.

[13] NT Live have live-transmitted seventeen Shakespeare productions since 2009, excluding the as-live broadcast of The Bridge Theatre's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2019). RSC Live have broadcast productions with a greater frequency, streaming twenty-five productions live to cinemas since 2013. As my research pertains exclusively to broadcasts recorded and transmitted live into cinemas, I have also excluded RSC Live's as-live broadcast of *Timon of Athens* (2019) from this figure. Together, the live broadcast output from both companies since 2009 totals forty-two Shakespearean live theatre broadcasts.

up to 225,000 viewers, Shakespeare's works have come to dominate the UK's event cinema market.[14] Each live broadcast produced by NT Live and RSC Live features at least some of what I term 'broadcast paratexts', which are the live and pre-recorded materials including interviews, short films, advertising slides, and credits that are viewed exclusively by the cinema audiences as part of the broadcast transmission. Many broadcasts feature a complex paratextual structure that mediates the reception of the Shakespearean performance. Despite the proliferation of the playwright's works in this medium and a flourishing of critical enquiry into these mediated performances, as yet no extended critical attention has been dedicated to the role played by broadcast paratexts in framing Shakespearean theatre.

This thesis scrutinises how live theatre broadcast paratexts are used to frame Shakespearean performance for contemporary audiences. In adopting the term 'paratext' to describe prefatory, interval, and terminal elements of a broadcast, this thesis follows in a critical tradition of expanding and appropriating the term as proposed in Gérard Genette's influential structuralist study of the printed novel.[15] Experienced within the singular performance context of the live theatre broadcast, I examine the interpretive thresholds that these ephemeral materials offer to audiences of Shakespeare's work. I establish the paratextual conventions that have dominated Shakespearean live theatre broadcasts in the last decade using a two-part model of investigation, addressing questions of how these paratexts communicate recurring narratives of Shakespearean value. What kind of 'Shakespeare' do broadcast paratexts construct for viewers of a live theatre broadcast? How are these interpretive thresholds into the playwright and his works communicated in a medium that blends filmic, televisual and theatrical

[14] Rebecca Hawkes, 'Live broadcast of Benedict Cumberbatch's Hamlet watched by 225,000 people', *Telegraph*, 21 October 2015 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/benedict-cumberbatch-hamlet-live/#:~:text=Live%20broadcast%20of%20Benedict%20Cumberbatch's%20Hamlet%20watched%20by%20225%2C000%20people> [accessed 4 September 2020]. Daisy Abbott and Claire Read also discuss the audiences for NT Live's *Hamlet* (2015) in 'Paradocumentation and NTLive's "CumberHamlet"', *Documenting Performance: The Context and Processes of Digital Curation and Archiving*, edited by Toni Sant (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), pp. 165 – 188.

[15] Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, translated by Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: CUP, 1997).

conventions? How – like the afterlife of the Droeshout portrait – might these paratexts use ideas about Shakespeare to shape the reception of his works?

Shakespearean Broadcast Criticism

This study expands conversations about the mediating power of the Shakespearean live broadcast to areas on the margins of performance. Issues that have dominated Shakespearean broadcast criticism have thus far been questions of liveness and reception; [16] how these broadcasts operate within a broader history of filmed Shakespeares and the role of broadcasts as archival remediations of performance;[17] and how styles of mediation have emerged across different theatre spaces and companies.[18] In the first book-length study of the live theatre broadcast medium, *Live to Your Local*

[16] A number of studies that encompass issues of liveness and reception are discussed below, however it is worth noting that more recent criticism has turned towards rethinking liveness as a communal (and, notably, digital) construct. Erin Sullivan, for example, has championed the investigation of how broadcast audiences cultivate digital communities that effect a kind of 'aliveness', firstly in 'The Audience is Present: Aliveness, Social Media, and the Theatre Broadcast Experience', *Shakespeare and the 'Live' Theatre Broadcast Experience* edited by Pascale Aebischer, Susanne Greenhalgh and Laurie E. Osborne (London: Arden Bloomsbury, 2018), pp. 59 – 76 and more recently in relation to online streamed Shakespeares in 'Live to Your Living Room: Streamed Theatre, Audience Experience, and the Globe's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*', *Participations*, 17. 1 (2020), pp. 92 – 119. The centrality of liveness to debates of Shakespearean broadcasts is reflected in Laurie E. Osborne's concluding chapter to *Shakespeare and the 'Live'*, 'Revisiting Liveness.' In this chapter, Osborne calls for the need to shift from 'emphasis [on] the liveness inherent in the production to liveness in their reception', pp. 215 – 226, p. 225.

[17] Susan Greenhalgh and John Wyver have led discussions that situate Shakespeare broadcasts among the filmed histories of the RSC in the work of the latter, and in filmed Shakespeares more generally in the former. Greenhalgh examines the origins of contemporary Shakespeare broadcasts through the film histories of the NT, BBC, and RSC in 'The Remains of the Stage: Revivifying Shakespearean Theatre on Screen, 1964-2016', *Shakespeare and the 'Live',* pp. 19 – 41. For a discussion that locates these productions solely in the RSC's screen history and considers their status as records of performance, see Wyver, *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company: A Critical History* (London: Arden Bloomsbury, 2019).

[18] Greenhalgh argued in 2014 that it was NT Live's 'Shakespearean productions that have arguably tested and developed [the company's] digital house style most fully', building on the aesthetic conventions outlined by Barker in *Live To,* in 'Guest Editor's Introduction', *Shakespeare Bulletin* 32. 2 (2014), pp. 255 – 261, p. 256. By comparing a range of Shakespearean broadcasting companies against each other, Sullivan has mounted perhaps the most discursive analysis of different filmic styles in '"The form of things unknown": Shakespeare and the Rise of the Live Broadcast', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 35. 4. (2017), pp. 627 – 662. In a study of Shakespeare broadcasts by NT Live and Shakespeare's Globe, Pascale Aebischer's offers valuable conclusions on the aesthetic

Cinema: The Remarkable Rise of Livecasting (2014), Martin Barker sought to establish the aesthetic features of the medium across the performance genres of theatre, ballet, and opera.[19] Within this broad span of performance media, Barker's study originated a range of critical approaches to the medium that have crucially informed examinations of Shakespearean live theatre broadcasts – not the least of which is an analysis of filmic grammar and audience-research-led theories of engagement.[20] The twin concerns of liveness and 'eventness' recur throughout *Live to*, marking Barker's monograph as indicative of the early critical preoccupation with how filmic mediation impacted on the 'authenticity' of the theatre performance. Accordingly, where paratexts do feature in Barker's work, discussions of their role are couched in the language of liveness and eventness: from viewing broadcast presenters as a way to '*signal* liveness' to proposing that 'interviews, back-stage insights and special extras help audiences who claim no specialist knowledge to see inside [i.e., behind the scenes of the production].'[21] Barker's focus on establishing how this emergent medium was experienced by audiences, therefore, allowed little scope for the consideration of broadcast paratexts as a significant structural element.

differences between these companies' Shakespearean broadcasts as well as tracing the similarities between their presentation of London's South Bank as a cultural centre, in *Shakespeare and the 'Live'*, pp. 113 – 132. Likewise, Peter Kirwan's analysis of Cheek By Jowl's *Measure for Measure* brings his extensive knowledge of the company's theatrical style to compare against the aesthetics of their web-streamed performance, in 'Reframing Complicity in Web-Streams of *Measure for Measure*', *Shakespeare and the 'Live',* pp. 161 – 176. For critical analyses of a range of Shakespeare broadcasts, see also the reviews featured in the *Shakespeare Bulletin* broadcast special issue, edited by Susanne Greenhalgh, 32. 2. (2014) pp. 261 – 328.

[19] Martin Barker, *Live to Your Local Cinema: The Remarkable Rise of Livecasting* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[20] Barker proposes an early aesthetics of livecasting, distinguishing between productions that prioritise a theatrical versus a cinematic mode of viewing and suggesting certain theatrical tropes that typically warrant what he calls 'bravura moments' (pp. 16 – 20). Despite being published relatively early in the emergence of what is now a well-populated event cinema market in the UK, Barker's study is also invaluable for its establishment of a characteristic broadcast 'style' in reference to the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts (p. 21). Barker's attention to audience engagement divides cinema audiences loosely along the lines of 'Immersive' and 'Expert' strategies, commenting that paratextual material was welcomed by those who took an 'Immersive' approach to viewing: ' "Experts" believe strongly in forming their own judgements on the basis of knowledge which they bring to the event. "Immersives" welcome being guided and shown' (p. 66).

[21] Ibid, p. 47; p. 65.

An anxiety felt by early critics of live theatre broadcasts including Barker – that the medium occupied an ontologically slippery ground between a 'live' theatrical experience and a mediated cinematic one – found expression through the debate between Peggy Phelan and Philip Auslander.[22] Phelan's assertion that '[p]erformance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented […] once it does so, it becomes something other than performance' served as a provocative prompt against which critics of the theatre broadcast medium worked through ideas of liveness and digital (re)mediation.[23] Conversely, Auslander's argument that the value of 'liveness' emerged only in response to the increasing mediation of performance offered critics an avenue through which to problematise ideas of 'liveness' altogether.[24] Building upon what he called Phelan and Auslander's 'famous showdown', in *Live to* Barker proposes that the live broadcast medium demands 'a wholly different vision of "liveness" from that which we have met in other fields […] It is in effect the *manufacture of togetherness,* and not limited by physical co-presence.'[25] Arguing that the medium exposes liveness as an ideology rather than a pure and immutable state, Barker's work marshalled this first stage of broadcast criticism towards a marked interest in the medium hybridity of event cinema and how this is understood, experienced, and valued by its audiences.

The concerns proposed in Barker's *Live to* influenced discussions of Shakespearean live broadcasts, sparking debates in a field of criticism that in 2014 was gathering pace. The entrance of the RSC's broadcasting arm, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, in late 2013 represented a point at which Shakespeare live theatre broadcasts began to appear in cinema with increasing regularity. As a result, critics commenting on the concerns of liveness in the medium were now also contending with competing presentations of institutional identity. For example, while the implications of mediated

[22] As well as the examples I discuss above, Stephen Purcell debates the issue of liveness with recourse to Phelan and Auslander in 'The Impact of New Forms of Public Performance', *Shakespeare and the Digital World: Redefining Scholarship and Practice*, edited by Christie Carson and Peter Kirwan, (Cambridge: CUP, 2014), pp. 212 – 225.

[23] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993), p. 146.

[24] Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*, 2nd ed. (Abindgon: Routledge Press, 2008) p. 9.

[25] Barker, p. 52.

performance on audience engagement is the primary focus of Geoffrey Way's article, 'Together, Apart: Liveness, Eventness, and Streaming Shakespearean Performance' (2017), Way observes that it is through live broadcasts that the 'RSC positions itself as a gatekeeper of Shakespeare's cultural value for new generations of potential audiences.'[26] For critics pursuing the role of broadcasting in wider presentations of institutional identity, the work of John Wyver has offered insight both into the production of broadcasts and into how these digital productions operate within the company's brand. Wyver (an academic and practitioner who is also the producer of the RSC Live broadcasts) reflects on the integral role played by these screen productions by adopting the term 'institutional dramaturgy', first proposed by James Steichen to denote 'the techniques by which […] any institution, stages itself for the public.'[27] Reflecting on broadcasts as the latest medium in a history of screen productions by the company, Wyver asserts that live broadcasts have 'become increasingly significant to the RSC's relationships with its audiences.'[28] Studies such as Wyver's, therefore, signalled the start of a shift in attention towards the role of the institution in the Shakespearean live broadcast. Like Wyver, I adopt the term 'institutional dramaturgy' to explore performance of brand identity within NT Live and RSC Live. Questions of how theatre companies use the medium to frame their own characteristic 'Shakespeares' resonate not only throughout my own research but have also proved influential to subsequent critics of Shakespearean live theatre broadcasts.

The importance of these concurrent debates – on the mediated experience of watching Shakespeare in a live broadcast, and Shakespeare's role in relation to broadcasting theatre companies as well as the UK's event cinema market as a whole – characterises the criticism within *Shakespeare*

[26] Geoffrey Way, 'Together, Apart: Liveness, Eventness, and Streaming Shakespearean Performance', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 35. 3 (2017), pp. 389 – 406, p. 398.

[27] James Steichen, 'HD Opera: A Love/Hate Story?', *Opera Quarterly*, 27. 4 (2011), pp. 443 – 459, p. 446.

[28] John Wyver, *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company: A Critical History* (London: Bloomsbury Arden, 2019), p. 183. Wyver also commented on the RSC's approach to its live theatre broadcasts early on in the life of RSC Live, following from the company's debut season of broadcasts in 'Screening the RSC Stage: The 2014 Live from Stratford-upon-Avon Cinema Broadcasts', *Shakespeare*, 11.3 (2015), pp. 286 – 302, p. 290.

and the 'Live' Theatre Broadcast Experience (2018).[29] The first edited collection on Shakespearean broadcasts, this volume is structured to offer a comprehensive and international survey of Shakespearean performance in the medium. As such, it encompasses discussions of the broader concerns in the field, the impact of broadcasting from within the theatre itself, the styles of individual broadcasting companies, and the reception of broadcasts countries outside of the UK. With its titular problematisation of 'live[ness]', this collection proposes a rethinking of previous generalisations of broadcast reception: 'confront[ing] the arguments about the ontology of performance and its dependence on presence and liveness that have dominated the critical discussion of theatre broadcasting to date with viewing practices that unsettle received definitions and require that we rethink essential concepts.'[30]

By focussing solely on broadcasts of Shakespeare's works, the essays within *Shakespeare and the 'Live'* grapple significantly with the questions of institutional identity that had begun to emerge tentatively in prior criticism. Part Three of the volume features four essays devoted to considerations of broadcasts produced by individual theatre companies, supplementing Susanne Greenhalgh's earlier observation that it is through Shakespearean productions that NT Live's 'digital house style' is most visible with an exploration of other theatre companies (including, alongside Shakespeare's Globe in Aebischer's analysis, a revisiting of NT Live).[31] The wider span of broadcast material encompassed by the collection also allows for contributors to reflect on how institutional identity may be read through the conditions of production and reception, a theme which is furthered in this thesis. Peter Kirwan, for example, notes the aptitude of Cheek By Jowl's live web-streams which are made freely available for a limited time, which Kirwan observes is 'a logical model for a company which wishes to broaden and

[29] *Shakespeare and the 'Live' Theatre Broadcast Experience*, edited by Pascale Aebischer, Susanne Greenhalgh and Laurie E. Osborne (London: Bloomsbury, 2018).

[30] Pascale Aebischer and Susanne Greenhalgh, 'Introduction: Shakespeare and the 'Live' Theatre Broadcast Experience', *Shakespeare and the 'Live' Theatre Broadcast Experience*, edited by Pascale Aebischer, Susanne Greenhalgh and Laurie E. Osborne (London: Arden Bloomsbury, 2018), pp. 1 – 18, p. 12.

[31] Greenhalgh, 'Guest Editor's Introduction', p. 256.

diversify its audiences, particularly in younger brackets.'[32] Evident in discussions such as Kirwan's is the impulse to unpick how Shakespeare performs as part of the brand identity of theatre institutions as well as an acknowledgement that to perform the playwright's works in digital media heightens questions of accessibility. With its attention to how Shakespeare's works are presented to new and international audiences in new media, there are pressing concerns underpinning *Shakespeare and the 'Live'* that I return to throughout my discussion of broadcast paratexts: what are the ethical implications of importing a playwright with Shakespeare's 'high' cultural cachet and international status to new audiences? How might the structure of the broadcast and conditions of reception work upon – or work to perpetuate – Shakespeare's already elevated value?

These questions have been addressed in subsequent studies by two contributors (one a contributor and editor) to *Shakespeare and the 'Live'*: Pascale Aebischer in *Shakespeare, Spectatorship and the Technologies of Performance* (2020), and Rachael Nicholas in her doctoral thesis, 'Encountering Shakespeare Elsewhere: Digital Distribution, Audience Reception, and the Changing Value of Shakespeare in Performance' (2019).[33] In the latter, Nicholas considers how the contexts of broadcast reception shape not only the viewing experience, but ideas about Shakespearean value. Exploring how Shakespeare broadcasts are viewed in the cinema, in schools, and via web streams at home, Nicholas's attention to the different contexts of reception 'challenges the prevailing tendency in critical work to speak of the "theatre broadcast experience" either as a singular entity, or as shorthand for cinematic reception.'[34] Nicholas's thesis pays much-needed attention to the diversity of broadcast experiences, building upon the work (including her own chapter) within *Shakespeare and the 'Live'* to place the viewer at the centre of her enquiry. Crucially, Nicholas confronts 'the idea – sometimes

[32] Peter Kirwan, 'Cheek By Jowl: Reframing Complicity', p. 163.

[33] Pascale Aebischer, *Shakespeare, Spectatorship and the Technologies of Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

Rachael Nicholas, 'Encountering Shakespeare Elsewhere: Digital Distribution, Audience Reception, and the Changing Value of Shakespeare in Performance.' (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Roehampton, 2019).

[34] Nicholas, p. 13.

manifested as an anxiety, sometimes as a hope – that watching Shakespeare through media other than live theatre has the power to alter Shakespeare's association with "high" cultural value.'[35] Her study is therefore instrumental in furthering the work on institutional identity seen previously in Shakespearean broadcast criticism – shifting attention from the ways in which the branding of the theatre companies mediates Shakespearean value and onto how audiences perceive value through the context of broadcast reception.

Comparatively, while the conditions of reception feature less, questions of how technological mediation in performance impact the ethico-political role of the spectator are at the heart of Aebischer's *Shakespeare, Spectatorship*. Unpicking assumptions about cinematic and theatrical spectatorship in relation to a range of performance technologies, Aebischer challenges the idea that digital mediation prohibits the viewer from engaging with the ethical dilemmas of the performance. Rather, Aebischer argues, '[d]igital technologies have increasingly worked to intensify, rather than obsolesce, precisely the intense sensation of co-presence that is associated with ethico-political modes of spectatorship.'[36] Within this model of rethinking digitally-mediated spectatorship, *Shakespeare, Spectatorship* also establishes an historical parallel with the forms of engagement inherent to the original performance contexts of early modern dramatic works. Arguing for a relationship that I explore in relation to Shakespearean paratexts, Aebischer suggests that the innovations of digital technologies can often belie their dependence on historical precedents, as her study in part investigates how 'these "new" performance modes are related to and adapt the spatial configurations and modes of spectatorship that govern early modern dramaturgies.'[37] While Aebischer directs the attention in her enquiry to the mediation of the broadcast performance and to wider forms of digitally mediated theatre, *Shakespeare, Spectatorship* argues crucially for the influence of performance technologies on an audience's reading of the Shakespearean performance. As such, her study offers a useful model through which I engage with the interpretive potential of broadcast paratexts.

[35] Nicholas, p. 16.

[36] Aebischer, *Shakespeare, Spectatorship*, p. 10.

[37] Ibid, p. 3.

In this thesis, I build on the existing Shakespearean broadcast criticism by setting many of the central concerns of the field – Shakespearean value, audience theory, institutional identity – in conversation with consistently understudied paratexts. As in Aebischer's *Shakespeare, Spectatorship*, I occasionally draw on the early modern performance tradition to explore the framing function of broadcast paratexts, tracing a similar lineage between Shakespearean performance in new media and the theatrical context within which the playwright and his contemporaries wrote. However, I depart from the debates of liveness that dominated early broadcast criticism, focussing instead on how the structural makeup of a Shakespearean broadcast offers a viewer important interpretive thresholds. I answer studies such as Barker's, which prioritises the impact of paratexts on shaping feelings of liveness and eventness, by arguing that paratexts play a crucial role in framing the meanings of Shakespearean performance and shaping institutional identity. Moreover, the scope of my project allows for a detailed exploration of the ideas of institutional identity introduced in *Shakespeare and the 'Live'*. Rather than proposing a broad survey of Shakespearean broadcasts in different reception contexts, as previous studies have done, my discussion focuses on the work of two companies and just one performance context: the live transmission to cinemas. Before expanding further on the benefits of this scope, it is important to address a second field of critical theory that has influentially shaped my research and, above all, my understanding of the term 'paratext.'

Watching (at) the Fringes: Paratexts and Reception

Underpinning my discussion of broadcast paratexts, their features and their functions is an appropriation of the term coined by French structuralist critic, Gérard Genette. In *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1997), Genette defines paratexts as any 'verbal or other productions' that accompany the publication of a book in print, 'such as the author's name, a title, a preface, illustrations.'[38] Splitting this definition into 'peritexts' and 'epitexts', Genette considers the former as framing elements that are physically bound within the printed book or are inserted within the central 'text' (including 'such elements as the title or preface […] chapter titles or certain notes') and the latter as 'distanced elements

[38] Genette, p. 1.

[…] that, at least originally, are located outside the book' such as media interviews, common knowledge, letters or other publications by the author.[39] Both peritexts and epitexts fall under the functional umbrella defined by Genette as a 'paratext.' These forms of extra-textual material, Genette argues, not only signify the presentation of the text to the public but conduct important transactions of meaning between author (and/or publishing authority) and reader in ways that parallel the relationship of a theatre institution to its audiences. Paratexts, Genette argues, occupy 'a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction*: a privileged place of pragmatics and strategy.'[40] The function of the paratext, therefore, is not simply to negotiate the reader's shift from their present moment into the act of reading and the world of the narrative; rather, paratexts frame central transactions of meaning and value from author to reader.

Genette's division of paratextual elements into peritexts and epitexts demands a greater consideration of how the term 'paratext' operates specifically in relation to the framing of Shakespearean broadcasts. Indeed, in considerations of Shakespearean printed paratexts, Harry Newman, Sonia Massai, and Tiffany Stern have each questioned the limitations of the term. In her conclusion to *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (2009), Stern argues that the application of 'paratext' to the fluid and contingent makeup of a printed playbook conveys a false and anachronistic sense of textual stability.[41] Building upon the metaphor of plays in the period as 'patchworks', Stern asserts:

> It is not so much that performance, and so subsequent printed play, are made of paratexts, for that still implies that one or some documents represent "the text" itself. Rather, a play can be, throughout, a series of patches of definable kinds, each of which might be "liminal" and/or "essential" depending on reader and circumstance.[42]

[39] Genette, p. 5.

[40] Ibid, p. 2, emphasis original.

[41] Tiffany Stern, *Documents of Performance in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009).

[42] Ibid, p. 256.

Massai echoes Stern's destabilisation of para/textual distinctions in her article, 'Shakespeare, Text and Paratext' (2009). Calling for greater critical attention to the way in which Shakespeare's works are framed in print for new readers, Massai argues that '[t]he first step towards achieving a more balanced understanding of the relationship between textual and paratextual features in early modern playbooks is to depart from Genette's definition of paratext as a marginal element of the text and to conceive of it as metatext, or, more simply and more radically, as text.'[43] While Massai settles on the term 'text' itself, her argument still resonates with Stern's: that all elements of the early modern printed playbook be approached with the same attention to contingency and liminality that characterises the Genettian understanding of the paratext. Citing Stern and Massai, Newman's reflection on the paratextual makeup of the *New Oxford Shakespeare* (2016) incorporates a similar questioning of the traditional terms, 'text' and 'paratext.'[44] Newman ultimately departs from Genette altogether and adopts instead a Derridean alternative discussed by Louise Smith and Helen Wilson, suggesting that 'perhaps it is more appropriate to think of paratext – drawing on Jacques Derrida's theoretical work on the *parergon* – as '"a space which both frames and inhabits the text."'[45]

With a number of alternatives posed in studies of printed Shakespearean paratexts – including the option to disregard the term altogether in favour of the more inclusive, 'text' – it behoves this study to clarify how 'paratext' may be applied productively to materials within Shakespearean broadcasts. Primarily, the Genettian understanding of the paratext serves my consideration of their framing function as well as their temporal position within the broadcast. Like the prefacing and terminal materials within printed books, broadcast paratexts are structured around a clearly delineated theatrical performance which serves as a centralising 'text.' While these boundaries may be problematised (I consider the

[43] Sonia Massai, 'Shakespeare, Text and Paratext', *Shakespeare Survey,* 62. 1 (2009), pp. 1 – 11, p. 11.

[44] Harry Newman, 'Paratexts and Canonical Thresholds', *Shakespeare,* 13. 4 (2017), pp. 313 – 317, p. 316.

[45] Ibid, Helen Smith and Louise Wilson qtd. in Newman. In their study – unlike in Newman's – Smith and Wilson draw on Derrida's *parergon* to make a comparative rather than a contrasting statement about paratexts. They write, '[i]n its situation as a space which both frames and inhabits the text, the paratext occupies the position of Derrida's *parergon*.' In Smith and Wilson, 'Introduction', *Renaissance Paratexts,* edited by Helen Smith and Louise Wilson (Cambridge: CUP, 2011), pp. 1 – 14, p. 7.

performativity of certain paratexts in Part I of this thesis), the broadcast's mediation of the theatrical performance enables the culturally understood codes of that performance to seal off elements of the 'text' (in this case, a cast of actors performing a Shakespeare play) from the peripheral materials that are viewed only by cinema spectators (short films, presenter monologues, and interviews, for example, are clearly markers of a mediating authority that exists outside of the world of the theatrical performance as experienced by the in-theatre audience). Moreover, to adopt a term like *parergon* would be to misrepresent the occasional movement of broadcast paratexts outside of the limits of their original performance context. As I explore in Part I, a number of broadcast paratexts in the Shakespearean canon have been distributed elsewhere following the broadcast's transmission into cinemas (and, on a unique occasion, *prior* to this transmission), often on the social media platforms of the theatre companies and as 'extras' on DVD and Blu-ray releases. In this regard, many broadcast paratexts are not tied to inhabiting the central 'text' of the theatrical performance in the way that characterises the Derridean *parergon*. Finally, the term paratext has come (during the period I conducted this research) into common usage in discussions of Shakespearean broadcasts.[46] By adopting the same critical vocabulary, therefore, this thesis builds upon the limited critical attention already paid to paratexts and tests the aptitude of this term under greater scrutiny than it has previously been afforded.

As the studies quoted above suggest, Shakespeare's works in print and performance have offered critics a productive channel through which to explore the mediating role of paratexts. Indeed, the flourishing of print in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has prompted a number of works that engage with the rich paratextual innovation of the period, including Sonia Massai and Thomas Berger's *Paratexts in English Printed Drama to 1642* (2014) and Smith and Wilson's *Renaissance Paratexts* (2011). Beyond print works, a number of critics have explored the framing function of early modern dramatic elements. Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann's analysis in *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre: Performance and Liminality in Early Modern Drama* (2004) evokes the threshold function of

[46] The term paratext is used, for example, throughout *Shakespeare and the 'Live'* in the same context I use it here: to refer to additional live and pre-recorded elements of the Shakespearean broadcast. See particularly Aebischer's discussion pp. 118 – 125 and Nicholas pp. 82 – 84.

the paratext to explore the nuanced liminality of early modern prologues.[47] Though their characterisation of the prologue as a mediating dramatic device recalls Genette's work, Bruster and Weimann reject the image of a singular, authorial originator posed in the structuralist study: '*Paratexts* is too wedded to a novelistic model of literary production to account for the complexities of collaboration involved in the early modern theatre.'[48] Tiffany Stern, building on her earlier consideration in *Documents of Performance*, has likewise questioned the liminal and transitional function of early modern performance elements including the opening trumpet call and closing prayers. In a chapter entitled, 'Before the Beginning, After the End: When Did Plays Start and Stop?' (2015), Stern investigates the fluid performative boundaries of the early modern stage.[49] Without defining these performance traditions as either 'textual' or 'paratextual', Stern nonetheless questions whether their status as part of the early modern theatrical experience might be consolidated in print editions: 'why do editions not draw attention to the rich and complex playhouse procedures that signified the start and end of plays, and that can, like act-breaks, make a claim to be interpretively significant?'[50]

Stern's work, together with Bruster and Weimann's analysis of prologues, touches upon a final critical framework that is central to the understanding of paratexts in this thesis: theatrical reception and audience response. The model of theatrical reception proposed by Susan Bennett invokes a hermeneutic blurring of performance boundaries, approaching theatrical spectatorship as a series of interconnected interpretative engagements. In her influential study, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception* (2006), Bennett argues that 'liminal aspects' of the theatrical experience – including the theatre itself, the attendant social conventions, printed paratextual material, and interactions with the

[47] Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann, *Prologues to Shakespeare's Theatre: Performance and Liminality in Early Modern Drama* (London: Routledge Press, 2004).

[48] Bruster and Weimann find their alternative critical vocabulary in anthropological work on liminal rites of passage, see particularly pp. 32 – 42.

[49] Tiffany Stern, 'Before the beginning; after the end: when did plays start and stop?', *Shakespeare and Textual Studies*, edited by M.J. Kidnie and Sonia Massai (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), pp. 358 – 374.

[50] Ibid, p. 359.

pre-set stage or actors – have a significant bearing on an audience's interpretation of the performance.[51] Adapting a term from literary reception theorist Hans Robert Jauss, Bennett argues that a theatre spectator's 'horizon(s) of expectation' are acted upon and influenced by these framing activities – be they incorporated into the production itself or incidental to it.[52] In Bennett's use, the term applies to the 'scope and means of culturally and aesthetically constituted interpretive processes' brought by audiences to a cultural event.[53] Bennett's work, like that of Stern, Bruster and Weimann, questions the fluidity of the theatrical performance in significant ways. Taking a holistic approach, Bennett reframes the experience of attending a theatrical performance as one in which the audience's interpretive capacities are engaged, as Bennett notes, long before 'the curtain rises.'[54] While this thesis appropriates this purely theatrical model to consider the medium-hybridity of the live broadcast, work such as Bennett's that highlights the multiple layers of engagement built-in to the viewing of a performance is essential to my discussion of the structural role of paratexts.

This thesis, therefore, brings the structuralist literary methods used by Genette to bear on previous studies which have considered live theatre broadcasts for their mediation of the theatrical performance.[55] The vocabulary I adopt from the works of Genette and Bennett in particular offers a productive way to approach the variety of paratextual materials that have emerged within the first ten years of Shakespearean broadcasts. Consequently, in this study positions itself within a tradition of

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[51] Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception,* 2nd ed. (Abingdon: Routledge Press, 2003), p. 32.

[52] Hans Robert Jauss proposed a 'horizon of expectation' as the assumptions and ideas brought by a reader to an encounter with a literary text, in terms which recall Genette's definition of the 'peritext'. In *Towards an Aesthetic of Reception*, translated by Timothy Bahti (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1982), p. 22; Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 166.

[53] Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 156.

[54] Ibid, p. 206.

[55] Attention to the mediating potential of the broadcast cameras is a consistent touchstone for critics of Shakespearean live theatre broadcasts, for extensive descriptions of particular shot choices see Aebsicher, *Shakespeare, Spectatorship* pp. 164 – 179, Sullivan, '"The form of things unknown"' pp. 636 – 662, and Wyver 'Screening the RSC Stage', p. 290. For a broader analysis on mediated theatre, Sarah Bay Cheng's analysis offers thoughtful reflections on how modes of viewing alter through the mediation of live performance, in 'Theatre Squared: Theatre History in the Age of Media', *Theatre Topics*, 17. 1 (2007), pp. 37 – 50.

exploring and extending Genette's definition of the paratext, in turn situating broadcast paratexts in a long history of framing and commercialising Shakespeare's works. Drawing from critical work on Shakespearean paratexts in print and framing elements in the early modern theatre, I explore the narratives of Shakespearean value that accumulate around the fringes of the broadcast performance. This study is the first to pay extended consideration to the structure and formal properties of the Shakespearean broadcast and to its layers of mediation beyond the filming of the performance itself. Within this framework I further explore the role of the broadcasting theatre company as a mediating authority, as well as to comment on how these paratexts interact with culturally contingent ideas about what Shakespeare means for twenty-first century audiences.

Scope and Methodology

Before outlining the methodology and structure of this thesis, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of a project of this size. I consider above how previous critical work has explored Shakespeare broadcasts in a number of production and reception contexts – ranging from live web-streams, to recorded documents of live performance shown in schools or in secondary releases to cinema (often referred to as 'as-live'). I have chosen to focus solely on the broadcasts as they are streamed into cinemas on the event of their original live transmission, as these frequently have the richest and most extensive paratextual framing when compared with as-live or encore performances. Moreover, where encore broadcasts may be framed by retrospective paratexts (clarifying, for example, the date and context of the original performance), it is in their framing of the cinematic broadcast event that institutions often use the value of liveness to communicate other forms of Shakespearean and institutional value. Therefore, the paratexts discussed in this thesis, unless otherwise stated, were featured in theatre productions that were transmitted and mixed live into cinemas, with the theatrical production and live paratexts streaming in real time.[56]

[56] Pascale Aebischer and Susanne Greenhalgh's classification of the different types of Shakespearean broadcast is particularly useful in distinguishing the (often subtle) differences in production and reception. They propose three models: the 'live' theatre broadcast, theatre broadcasts, and recorded theatre. This thesis analyses a subset of what Aebischer and Greenhalgh term the 'live' theatre broadcast which, in their definition, encompasses

The scope of material explored in this chapter also relates to a specific period in the UK's event cinema history: the decade between the end of 2009, when NT Live debuted their first Shakespeare broadcast, to the start of 2020. Producing more Shakespearean broadcasts than any other theatre institutions, the work of NT Live and RSC Live over the last ten years offers two distinctive styles of paratextual framing to examine. While at times I take into account the paratexts included in other broadcasting ventures and in other digitised theatre media, the core of my primary material sets these two major producersin conversation with each other and analyses just over a decade of live theatre broadcast paratexts spanning 2009-2020.

With its focus on the UK's event cinema landscape and more specifically on NT Live and RSC Live Shakespeare broadcasts, this project is limited to Anglophone broadcasts produced by these UK-based theatre companies. Where other studies have examined the production and reception of Shakespeare broadcasts internationally, often their focus on individual broadcasts precludes these shorter works from drawing conclusions about how Shakespeare's works are presented across a number of broadcast or different broadcasting theatre institutions.[57] Moreover, the focus on two broadcasting theatre companies allows me to set these conclusions in conversation with two distinct strands of institutional identity. This thesis thereby develops a line of enquiry outlined by Kate Rumbold, whose work on the digital activities of Shakespeare institutions 'trac[es] not just the meanings but the values

broadcasts that are recorded live but transmitted to cinemas at a later date (including, for example, 'Encore' releases of broadcasts sometimes years from their original live transmission). In 'Introduction: Shakespeare and the 'Live' Theatre Broadcast Experience', *Shakespeare and the 'Live'*, p. 4.

[57] Case studies undertaken by Kitamura Sae, Michael Ingham, Keir Elam, Anna M. Martinez in *Shakespeare and the 'Live'* have considered Shakespeare broadcasts streamed by UK-based institutions to international audiences, exploring the transmission of these productions to audiences in Japan, Hong Kong, Italy, and the US respectively. In the same volume, Aebischer discusses the partnership between The Comédie-Francaise and Pathé Live which saw *Roméo et Juliette* (2016) streamed to Francophone countries across the world. See Kitamura Sae, 'The Curious Incident of Shakespeare Fans in NTLive: Public Screenings and Fan Culture in Japan', pp. 177 – 184; Michael Ingham, 'Shakespeare and the Theatre Broadcast Experience: A View from Hong Kong', pp. 185 – 192; Keir Elam, 'Very Like a Film: *Hamlet* Live in Bologna', pp. 193 – 198; Anna M. Martinez, 'Shakespeare at a Theatre Near You: Student Engagement in Northeast Ohio', pp. 199 – 206; and Pascale Aebischer, 'Shakespeare in the House of Molière: The Comédie-Francaise/Pathé Live *Roméo et Juliette* (2016), pp. 207 – 214.

that attach to "Shakespeare" in any new medium.'[58] The span of material explored in this thesis allows for analysis of historical moments in which Shakespeare's cultural value became a particularly charged topic: including the 2012 Cultural Olympiad,[59] the quatercentenary of Shakespeare's death in 2016,[60] Britain's historic vote to leave the European Union of the same year,[61] and the cessation of live performance in UK theatres prompted by the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020. Chapter Seven, which unpicks the paratextual presentation of Shakespearean 'relevance', reflects on Shakespeare's role in responding to these historical moments in greater detail.

As these examples indicate, the first decade of Shakespearean live theatre broadcasting coincided with events and commemorations in which the role of the NT and the RSC as 'gatekeepers' of Shakespearean cultural value was unusually prominent. By studying the broadcasts produced by these two major Shakespearean institutions, I examine the framing of Shakespeare's works in a context that has historically underrepresented the work of BAME, female and non-cisgender creatives. Moreover, my analysis recognises live theatre broadcasts as a medium that often serves to emphasise systemic inequalities by virtue of technological bias and to propagate them commercially by endangering the survival of smaller touring theatre companies.[62] Rumbold asserts that institutions like

[58] Kate Rumbold, 'From "Access" to "Creativity": Shakespeare Institutions, New Media and the Language of Cultural Value', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 61. 3. (2010), pp. 313 – 336, p. 315.

[59] Edited by Paul Prescott and Erin Sullivan, *Shakespeare on the Global Stage: Performance and Festivity in the Olympic Year* (London: Arden Bloomsbury, 2015) analyses the role played by Shakespeare in the 2012 Cultural Olympiad.

[60] For a discussion of the Shakespeare400 celebrations, see Jennifer Moss Waghorn, 'The Bard is Dead, Love Live the Bard: Celebrations of Shakespeare's "Corpse" and "Corpus" in 2016', *Shakespeare*, 14. 3 (2018), pp. 275 – 290.

[61] In an as-yet unpublished discussion, Peter Kirwan considers how the fractious political climate of the Brexit vote manifested in contemporary productions of the RSC's *Cymbeline*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and NT Live's *Macbeth*. In 'Brexit Shakespeare: Apathy in the UK?' (Unpublished paper delivered for the British Shakespeare Association Conference, 2019).

[62] While I return to these concerns in my conclusion, Pascale Aebischer has detailed the technological biases that impact BAME performers in Shakespearean live theatre broadcasts in *Shakespeare, Spectatorship*, see pp. 180 – 190. In her analysis of the broadcasting work of Talawa Theatre Company and Black Theatre Live, Jami Rogers also considers the impact of live theatre broadcasting from major theatre companies on smaller, touring companies

the RSC 'use new media to perform double maneuvers that efface their traditional role as cultural gatekeepers and reassert their importance as mediators of cultural experience.'[63] With a focus solely on how the RSC and NT frame Shakespearean value, this thesis explores Rumbold's observation and interrogates the role of gatekeeper in a performance context that raises pressing questions of representation and inclusivity.

My methodology in this study draws on close reading to analyse the role of paratexts. Exploring the intersections between paratextual theory, studies of film-making and theatre spectatorship, and Shakespeare studies enables my research to draw conclusions about how Shakespearean performances are framed uniquely in live theatre broadcasts. As Rachael Nicholas observes of broadcast audiences, to study the medium 'necessitates an interdisciplinary approach that takes into account theories of both media and theatre experiences.'[64] This study does not, as others have, seek to question audiences of Shakespearean broadcasts directly. The use of audience surveys has proven a productive method for analysing how the context of reception shapes how a broadcast is read by a cinema viewer in previous studies. While my project is also concerned with reception, the modes of engagement that are so well illustrated through audience surveys in, for example, Martin Barker's and Rachael Nicholas's works are only peripheral to the investigation undertaken here.[65] Rather, the cinema as a site of reception features as a subtext to my discussion of broadcast paratexts. Addressing the ways in which these materials negotiate Shakespearean value and mediate ideas about the play itself, this thesis shifts the dominant focus in Shakespearean broadcast studies away from the discourse of experiential engagement and towards a structural understanding of broadcast paratexts as mediators of Shakespearean meaning.

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in ''Talawa and Black Theatre Live: 'Creating the Ira Alridges That Are Remembered' – Live Theatre Broadcast and the Historical Record', *Shakespeare and the 'Live'*, pp. 147 – 159, see p. 150.

[63] Rumbold, 'From "Access" to "Creativity"', p. 315.

[64] Nicholas, 'Encountering Shakespeare Elsewhere', p. 17.

[65] As I consider above, Barker's use of audience surveys was directed towards establishing how audiences engaged with broadcasts as a cultural 'event.' Comparatively, Nicholas's work used audience responses to explore the ways in which viewers registered the value of the broadcast in line with ideas about Shakespeare's cultural value.

The primary material I use is inevitably ephemeral, owing to the singular performance context of the live theatre broadcast. In his critical history of the RSC's screened works, John Wyver describes his study as, in part, one 'of the contingency, fragility and fragmentary nature of the company's adaptation history.'[66] Wyver's observation that the company's screen ventures have been subject to less archival security than their theatrical ones is echoed in the inconsistency with which the RSC and the NT retain live broadcast paratexts. I expand upon this methodological concern further in my introduction to Part I of the thesis, nonetheless it is important to note here the archival records of Shakespeare broadcasts as they were transmitted live, in full, are often incomplete. Because of these archival gaps, at times I rely on secondary sources including academic and journalistic reviews to reconstruct the paratextual framing of broadcasts that have not been retained in full. The concessions and considerations that are carried by these archival gaps – and the sources I use to fill them – are again the subject of further exploration in the introduction to Part I.

Research Structure

The aims of this project, to propose a taxonomy of Shakespeare broadcast paratexts as well as to explore specific interpretive frames they offer, have led me to structure my analysis around two distinct and complementary halves. In Part I: Conventions and Trends, I trace a decade's worth of evolution and innovation in Shakespearean broadcast paratexts. The introduction to this section explores the methodological challenges of studying these materials, as well as posing general outlines of the paratextual styles of both NT Live and RSC Live. In the subsequent three chapters, I break new ground by offering the first extended study of the materials used by NT Live and RSC Live to frame their Shakespeare broadcast performances.[67] These discussions are structured to examine broadcast

[66] Wyver, *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company*, p.8

[67] Arguably the most sustained discussions of the paratextual conventions of these two companies come in Pascale Aebischer's chapter, 'South Bank Goes Global: Broadcasting from Shakespeare's Globe and the National Theatre' in *Shakespeare and the 'Live'*, pp. 113-132 and in Wyver's study of the RSC's screen history in *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company*, p. 175. Aebischer considers how NT Live's use of paratexts across its Shakespearean broadcasts thus far contribute to a sense of brand identity for the company, particularly rooting her discussion in the importance placed upon the theatre's South Bank location. Wyver has notes the paratextual

paratexts by convention, presenting these in the order that would typically appear within a Shakespearean broadcast.

Chapter One, 'Before the Beginning', is concerned with the plethora of paratextual conventions that typically preface a live broadcast. The pre-show space is frequently the most populated by paratextual material including advertising slides, presenter monologues, short films, and interviews. This chapter therefore engages with the interpretive thresholds offered before the performance begins, questioning how these introductory paratexts are primed to mediate ideas about the Shakespearean performance and the broadcasting institution itself, in Bennett's Genettian term, 'on the threshold of theatre.'[68]

Subsequently, Chapter Two explores the liminal space of the interval and challenges the assumption that these paratexts are simply functional in their bridging of the 'The In-Between.' In this chapter, I consider the potential interpretive frames offered by the ubiquitous interval timer, as well as detailing how interval short films and presenter monologues typically differ from their pre-show counterparts. I argue that these paratexts demonstrate the capacity for the interval paratextual space to interpretively bridge two halves of the theatrical performance, amplifying experiential parallels and interacting with the meanings created by the filmic grammar of the broadcast's first half.

In the final chapter of Part I, 'After the End', I conclude with paratexts that communicate the closing of the theatrical performance and consider the experiential and interpretive ramifications of including bows and credits within the broadcast. I explore the potential for this sealing-off of the performance world to continue to make meaning within it: highlighting central characters and potentially furthering the sense of psychological closeness engendered through the grammar of close-

makeup of RSC Live broadcasts, drawing upon his own experience as the company's Director of Screen Productions and Producer for RSC Live. While these studies each encounter the interpretive and experiential thresholds offered by broadcast paratexts, there has yet to be a discussion which approaches the full range of paratextual elements used by each company comparatively, their interactions within a broadcast, and the potential Shakespearean meanings they engender.

[68] Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 206.

ups (shots that are frequently used to underscore moments of emotional poignancy in the filming of the broadcast performance itself).

Exploring how each paratext functions in relation to the 'text' of the performance, as well as to other framing materials within a broadcast's paratextual makeup, the chapters in this section address the importance of establishing the paratextual 'house style[s]' of these broadcasting institutions.[69] With a structure that replicates the ordering of paratexts as they might be expected to appear within a broadcast, Part I of the thesis serves as a comprehensive and critical introduction to the range of paratextual tropes that have shaped Shakespearean broadcasts by NT Live and RSC Live. The chapters are driven by a comparative methodology that examines the prevalence of certain trends and examples of paratextual originality. These, in turn, reflect on the role played by Shakespeare in the institutional identity of each theatre company. These conclusions are furthered in Part II of the thesis, which features four case-study chapters. These chapters, each of which considers a theme that has dominated the framing of Shakespeare broadcasts across both theatre institutions, delve deeper into the narratives of Shakespearean value that have emerged consistently across the first decade of broadcasts by NT Live and RSC Live.

Chapter Four begins this second half of the thesis by focussing on paratextual presentations of space and place. I consider how London and Stratford-upon-Avon – the respective sites of the NT and the RSC – are imbued with Shakespearean significance in the framing of broadcasts by both companies. Setting these contemporary presentations of place in conversation with the historical contention between the companies to 'claim' Shakespeare, I examine how Shakespearean value is mapped onto these locations through paratexts. Moreover, I suggest that the role of paratexts in establishing theatrical space does not solely serve an experiential purpose. Beyond inviting disparate cinema audiences to feel a sense of 'being there' within the theatre, I argue that paratextual presentations of theatre space are used to offer important narrative thresholds into the world of the play and to mediate institutional identity.

[69] Greenhalgh, 'Guest Editor's Introduction', p. 256.

In Chapter Five, the role of 'star' performers is interrogated as a means of negotiating Shakespearean value. Drawing on Anna Blackwell's work on what constitutes a 'Shakespearean' actor, in this chapter I unpick the role of high-profile actors David Tennant and Benedict Cumberbatch in framing the Shakespearean broadcasts that remediated their respective performances.[70] While Susanne Greenhalgh has previously identified the trope by which the broadcast cameras follow attentively the star actor during the broadcast performance, I instead shift the focus to the margins of the broadcast to examine how these figures play an integral role in shaping ideas of Shakespearean value for new audiences.[71] Indeed, the audience emerges with a renewed significance in this chapter, as I examine how broadcast paratexts respond to the particular demand and atypically young demographic that accumulates around the star actor. With Shakespearean roles often attracting high-profile performers – and the broadcast medium emphasising the demand to see actors in those roles – this chapter addresses important questions about how star actors are utilised as powerful mediators of narratives about the 'Shakespearean.'

Chapter Six tests claims of Shakespearean value by examining how the playwright's least-known and most rarely performed plays are framed. Often maligned in performance and criticism, these works exist on the fringes of ideas about Shakespeare's elevated artistic ability. Examining the way in which these canonically marginal plays are framed for audiences offers new insights into the tensions that arise from broadcasting projects like RSC Live's, which aspires to broadcast all of Shakespeare's First Folio plays plus *Pericles*.[72] I consider how the paratextual framing of these plays consciously marks them out as 'other' to Shakespeare's more famous and revered works. In doing so, I argue, these

[70] Anna Blackwell has published widely on issues of Shakespearean celebrity and the activities of fan communities online, culminating in her monograph, *Shakespearean Celebrity in the Digital Age: Fan Cultures and Remediation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[71] Greenhalgh, in her introduction to a *Shakespeare Bulletin* special edition on broadcasts, argued that 'the audience's assumed focus on the leading actor (often a "star") is gratified by a rhythm of shots and camera movements that capture the key still or mobile moments of a performance' (p. 259 – 260).

[72] John Wyver discusses Gregory Doran's intention to 'mount a single staging, without repeats, of each of the thirty-six First Folio plays plus *Pericles* […] broadcasting and recording each of these productions.' In *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company* (p. 159 – 160).

broadcasts paradoxically affirm ideas of Shakespeare's artistic eminence. Setting these broadcast paratexts in conversation with the play's critical and textual histories, as well as with ideas about the appeal of not-Shakespeare and Jacobean aesthetics, this chapter explores how narratives of Shakespeare's ability are offered at the fringes of the playwright's canon.

In the final chapter, I question how the recurrent theme of Shakespeare's contemporary relevance manifests in broadcast paratexts. Gathering instances in which Shakespeare's works have been made to speak to contemporary events, in Chapter Seven I unpick the rhetoric of (a)liveness that accumulated around Shakespeare in the midst of the four-hundredth anniversary of the playwright's death in 2016. Building upon the metaphor of Shakespeare being 'alive' today through the continued performance of his works, I examine how this rhetoric translated into paratexts that foregrounded the ability of Shakespearean performance to speak directly to two contemporary political events. These paratextual claims of relevance do more than simply perpetuate the value of performing Shakespeare's works four hundred years after his death. Rather, I argue that broadcast paratexts form a significant platform by which Shakespeare's cultural authority is mustered to speak to contentious issues within an increasingly divided political climate. This final chapter illustrates how paratexts respond to contemporary issues, shaping ideas about Shakespeare in urgent and ideologically loaded ways.

In drawing together the analysis of this project, this final chapter underlines the need to provide a vocabulary by which the role of broadcast paratexts can be examined and understood fully. Despite the focus on peripheral material used throughout this thesis, I am not advocating for the critical erasure of the broadcast performance itself nor how its mediation impacts upon its meanings for cinema audiences. Rather, I seek to redress the critical imbalance that has thus far neglected the interpretive role of the paratexts and to foreground their role in relation to the mediated theatrical performance. This study is ultimately concerned with how broadcast paratexts impact upon readings of not only the immediate performance, but broader ideas of Shakespearean value that contribute to the unique cultural status held by the playwright today. What is at stake throughout my study is something comparable to the question Genette poses to his readers: 'how would we read Joyce's *Ulysses* if it were not entitled

Ulysses?'[73] Genette's example points to the danger of critical work that overlooks the interpretive role of broadcast paratexts, whose absence would pose a significant chasm in the live theatre broadcast experience. By focusing on paratexts, the negotiations of Shakespearean meaning that are enacted at the fringes of the live broadcast can be fully understood and appreciated. To erase or overlook their importance, I argue, is to disregard an integral part of the way in which Shakespearean live broadcasts are experienced by their audiences and, by extension, how Shakespeare is presented to and valued by audiences today.

[73] Genette, p. 2.

Part One: Conventions and Trends

Conventions and Trends: An Overview

In a chapter entitled 'On the Threshold of Theatre', Susan Bennett describes the layers of framing involved in attending a theatrical performance as they would be experienced by a spectator.[74] From the location of the theatre to the *mise-en-scène* of a pre-set stage, Bennett's work unravels the forces that work upon an audience's 'horizon(s) of expectation' step by step.[75] Writing about a performance tradition some four hundred years earlier, Tiffany Stern considers the 'rich and complex playhouse procedures that signified the start and end of plays' in the early modern theatre, starting with the opening trumpet and ending with post-show performances and prayers.[76] In seeking to explore how audiences experience(d) theatrical performances, Bennett and Stern looked to the very edges of the performance itself. While these studies remind us that an audience's process of meaning-making often begins well before the play's first lines are spoken, the chronological approach taken by both critics also points towards a key element in the role of framing experiences and performances. These performance paratexts interact not only with the theatrical 'text' that they frame, but with each other in ways which crucially influence an audience's reading of the performance.

The paratextual conventions explored in this section tell a story of two institutional identities, each of which is deeply tied to the canonising projects undertaken by NT Live and RSC Live. While trends in the prevalence of particular paratexts vary across the first decade of Shakespearean broadcasts, the multi-author, multi-theatre span and open-ended nature of NT Live's broadcasting branch results in a first decade characterised by less paratextual consistency than is seen from RSC Live broadcasts. As I propose in this section, the impulse for 'completeness' and the centrality of Shakespeare to the RSC's institutional identity is shown in broadcasts that maintained a relatively fixed paratextual makeup – albeit one that exhibits a handful of unique and original paratextual conventions. The NT Live Shakespearean canon paints a less consistent picture. While NT Live broadcasts featured a number of the same paratexts as RSC Live broadcasts, their canon is characterised by greater variety in the use of

[74] Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*.

[75] Ibid, p. 166.

[76] Stern, 'Before the Beginning; After the End', p. 359.

framing materials and a less fixed approach to the paratextual makeup of each individual broadcast. 'Conventions and Trends' aims to explore this difference and the motivations behind it, ultimately questioning what the framing of Shakespeare's works tells us about the playwright's role in the identities of these two theatre companies.

While this section proposes the importance of understanding the nuanced differences in paratextual style between NT Live and RSC Live, to ignore the consistencies and shared conventions across both companies would misrepresent a medium whose formal features have crystallised significantly in the last ten years. Paratexts that recur across NT Live and RSC Live broadcasts illustrate the roles of these framing materials within an evolving, hybrid medium which – as John Wyver notes – 'combines elements conventionally understood as theatrical (origin, location, the playing) with the cinematic (visual spectacle, camera movement, social space of reception) and with the televisual (live-ness, the grammar of multiple cameras, a host).'[77] This section explores how these paratextual constants have developed their own language and style as a result of the proliferation of Shakespearean broadcasts, as well as how their order and succession typically creates meaning for cinema audiences. Where certain paratextual elements inhabit specific spaces within a broadcast, a number of framing elements can move between the inter-performance spaces of pre-show, interval, and post-show. The diagrams below, for example, illustrate the paratextual makeup of two Shakespeare broadcasts from RSC Live (see Figure 1) and NT Live (Figure 2) and demonstrate the movement of interviews and short films between the pre-show and interval paratextual space.

These diagrams give a preliminary indication of the ordering of broadcast paratexts as well as illustrating the flexibility of these framing materials to be either live or pre-recorded (see, for example, the live interview that prefaces RSC Live's *Macbeth* compared with an 'as-live' interview in the interval of *Coriolanus*). The significance of both temporal positioning (where in the broadcast?) and liveness (live, as-live, or pre-recorded?) is central to my exploration of these paratextual components. Both factors influence the type of audience engagement invited by these paratexts, drawing upon the hybrid

[77] Wyver, 'Screening the RSC', p. 299.

and broad-ranging conventions outlined by Wyver above.[78] Building upon Wyver's categorisations, moreover, I explore how these paratexts not only inherit from the recognisable media of film, theatre, and television, but are themselves a site for innovation. The capacity for these paratexts to blend and transgress the conventions of other media also offers the opportunity to rethink traditional discourses of the role of the spectator. Throughout this first section of the thesis, therefore, I consider questions of how interpretive thresholds are offered in tandem with particular modes of viewing for cinema audiences.

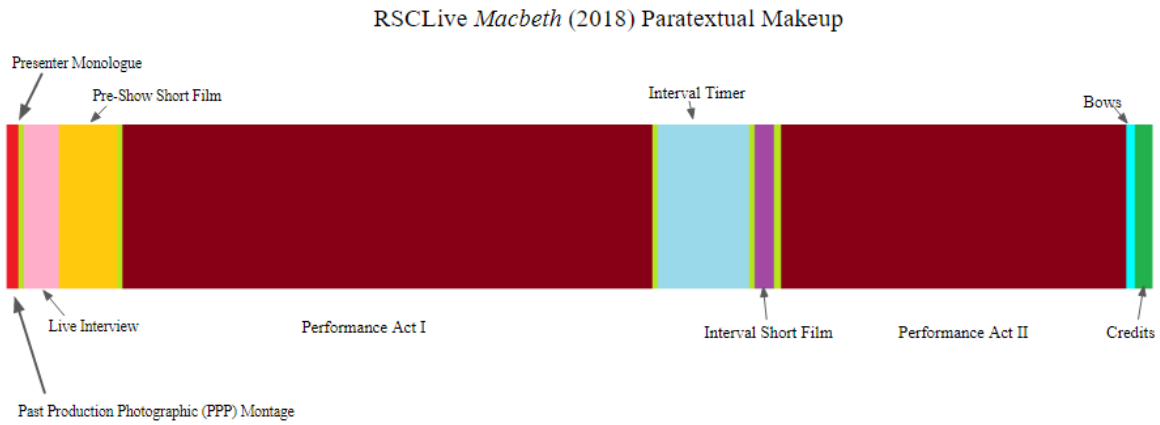

Figure 1: A graph depicting the paratextual makeup of RSC Live's broadcast of *Macbeth* (2018).

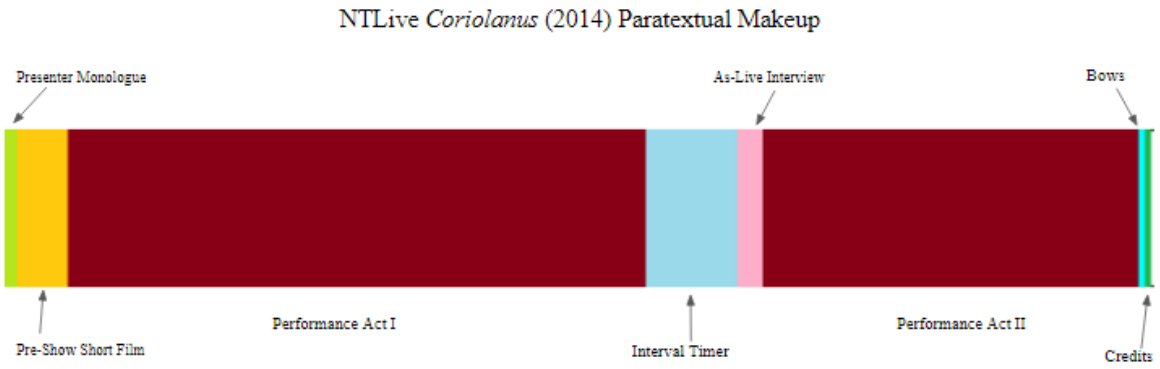

Figure 2: The paratextual makeup of NT Live's *Coriolanus* (2014).

[78] Wyver, 'Screening the RSC', p. 299.

While there are a variety of conclusions to be drawn from the broadcast examples I explore in this section, there is a methodological concession to be made. The first four broadcasts produced by NT Live, and the first broadcast produced by RSC Live, are not retained in full in either of the company's performance archives. Consequently, observations in this section pertaining to the NTLive broadcasts of *All's Well that End's Well* (2009), *Hamlet* (2010), *King Lear* (2011), and *The Comedy of Errors* (2011) are based on what evidence survives of the original transmission of these broadcasts, largely in the form of critical reviews. Reviews that consider the broadcasts of these productions are scant, scanter still are reviews that discuss their paratextual makeup. This archival absence points toward the ephemerality of broadcast paratexts but is also indicative of approaches to the medium and its relationship to theatre within the first years of NT Live's broadcasting. The tendency to expunge paratextual elements from the archived documentation of these broadcasts illustrates the habit (which dominated early discourses of live broadcasts) of viewing these as merely reproductions of the theatrical performance. Likewise, the RSC's private archive retains paratextual material for the great majority of broadcasts – however, a number of recordings have been stripped of seemingly 'functional' paratexts such as opening transmission and interval timers. The RSC's archive does not retain the broadcast of the company's debut *Richard II* (2014) in full, again reflecting early understandings of these broadcasts as a way to 'translate to the screen in a vivid and immediate form the theatrical experience of watching a performance in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre' rather than as creative mediations in their own right.[79] By tentatively reconstructing these archival gaps, I explore the ways in which paratextual conventions and trends may reflect changing attitudes to the role and importance of the broadcast as a record of performance.[80]

A comprehensive study that details the paratextual makeup of every Shakespearean live theatre broadcast within the last ten years is not only beyond the scope of this thesis but, as the archival absences above highlight, is hindered by the loss of a portion of these materials in their original form. However,

[79] Wyver, 'Screening the RSC Stage', p. 290.

[80] Indeed, this shift in attitudes can also be seen in Wyver's writing three years later, in which he laments the sparsity of journalistic reviews of broadcasts as a sign of 'the popular perception that the broadcasts are effectively unmediated transpositions of a theatrical presentation.' In *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company*, p. 175.

the chapters included within Part I propose an extensive and discursive set of paratextual conventions and trends, allowing for concrete conclusions to be drawn about how the framing of Shakespearean performance has evolved and shifted within this period. By approaching these paratexts convention-by-convention, this section follows in the footsteps of Bennett and Stern: detailing for the first time the framing materials that have shaped a profusion of contemporary Shakespearean performances in terms that honour their status as parts of an experiential – and interpretively significant – whole. As I consider in the introduction to this thesis, broadcast paratexts mirror a long history of mediating Shakespeare's cultural value and the value of his works. A better understanding of how these paratexts function in relation to each other, to the Shakespearean performance, and to these major theatre institutions, is vital if we are to appreciate how the playwright's works are presented to – and made meaningful for - contemporary audiences.

Before the Beginning

Advertising Slides

In a semi-darkened cinema auditorium, still images and short trailers alternate at a pedestrian speed. Some show pictures of cast members in rehearsal, the NT bookshop, or Stratford-upon-Avon's Tudor buildings and the benefits of becoming a "friend" of the RSC. These slides play out in an ordered loop, repeating every three or four minutes. The only ruptures in this cycle are occasional shots that allow cinema viewers to peer into the theatre space: where the gaze of the camera documents audience members reading programmes, holding conversations, taking photographs of the pre-set stage. These images may be glimpsed in passing or provide a visual accompaniment to a conversation held between friends or the ritual organisation of bags and coats, of switching your phone onto silent. The cinemagoer may leave the auditorium only to re-enter and be greeted by an image recognised from five minutes ago. Humming below the level of conversation, the soundtrack to this visual montage is not just familiar, it is an uncanny echo. Ambient audience noise of an in-theatre audience provides the aural backdrop which is mirrored – if not totally drowned out – by the low-level rustling and hushed tones of conversation heard in the cinema auditorium.

Everything about the form of advertising slides points to the cinema audience's prerogative to not watch them attentively, from the looping structure to the soundscape of hushed conversation. Nonetheless, these slides are more likely than any other paratext to coincide with the presumed entrance of a cinema viewer and therefore to introduce a broadcast's disparate cinema audiences to the "event" itself.[81] Moreover, despite the lower likelihood that this paratext would enjoy the undivided attention of a captive audience, the content of advertising slides when seen even in passing can enable significant negotiations of meaning between cinema audiences, the broadcasting institution, and the Shakespearean text. As potentially the first paratext encountered by cinema audiences, the content of advertising slides

[81] The running order script to the broadcast of RSC Live's *Richard II* records '15 mins [sic.]' of 'animated cards' between 18.45 and 19.00, the latter being the advertised start time for the play, in John Wyver, 'Richard II: LIVE FROM STRATFORD', drafted 8 November 2013. I'm grateful to John Wyver for sharing this camera script with me.

prompts significant questions concerning how theatres choose to introduce themselves, and the broadcast performance, to cinema audiences.

How, then, do advertising slides function as part of a theatre's institutional dramaturgy? Reflecting on the role of these slides in RSC Live broadcasts, John Wyver argues that they 'contribute importantly to the RSC's shaping of its identity.'[82] Advertising slides certainly offer an opportunity for these institutions to put a spotlight on their engagement and outreach activities. Slides that advertise programmes from the companies' educational departments are commonplace. While these outreach slides generally have little relation to the Shakespearean play being broadcast, they perform negotiations of Shakespearean value by associating the theatre companies with particular audiences and ethical imperatives. In the case of NT Live, for example, slides that show their broadcasts being offered to schools for free advertise the National Theatre as a public-service institution and argue the status of these performances as tools for enrichment and education. Also common to both NT Live and RSC Live's broadcasts are advertising slides that promote the theatres' social media platforms and mailing lists, anticipating that at least a portion of the cinema audience will fit into the young to middle-aged-adult age demographic most likely to use these social networks, or a slightly broader age range of digitally enabled spectators. Rachael Nicholas highlights that quotations from social media feedback are, in turn, often consumed as affirmations of brand identity, noting that 'both NTLive and RSCLive regularly co-opt audience responses on Twitter, collating and retweeting positive comments as part of their publicity campaigns.'[83]

[82] Wyver, *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company*, p. 175.

[83] Rachael Nicholas, 'Understanding 'New' Encounters with Shakespeare: Hybrid Media and Emerging Audience Behaviours', *Shakespeare and the 'Live' Theatre Broadcast Experience,* edited by Pascale Aebischer, Susanne Greenhalgh and Laurie Osbourne, (London: Bloomsbury Arden, 2018), pp. 76 – 92, p.79. Erin Sullivan has also considered social media response as part of audiences' experiences of Shakespearean broadcasts both in the RSC's online performances in 'Shakespeare, Social Media, and the Digital Sphere: *Such Tweet Sorrow* and *A Midsummer Night's Dreaming*', *Shakespeare*, 14. 1 (2018), pp. 64 – 79; and with reference to live theatre broadcasts in 'The Audience is Present'.

While advertising slides may shape brand identity and interact with ideas of Shakespeare's cultural value in this way, they can also offer frames of interpretation for the broadcast performance and may even do so unintentionally. For example, NT Live's *Timon of Athens* (2012) included within its advertising slides a promotional image for the production (see Figure 3: the same image was used as the programme cover) and adverts for the theatre's then-sponsor organisation, Aviva.[84] At the time of the broadcast, Aviva was the UK's second largest insurance provider: a financial giant that sat comfortably alongside the *Timon* promotional image, in which Simon Russell Beale's Timon is seen at the head of an opulent dining table, replete with celebrity lookalikes. The tone of corporate patronage and financial elitism overlaid by the interaction of these two slides would no doubt have struck an ironic chord alongside shots that documented the pre-show *mise-en-scène* of the Olivier stage, which was littered with tents and protest signs in an explicit reference to the contemporary anti-austerity movement, Occupy.[85]

Even cinema audiences unfamiliar with *Timon*'s narrative of financial profligacy may nonetheless have registered the irony of the National's corporate sponsorship and the production's images of economic inequality. In conversation with each other, these slides and the auditorium shots broadcast alongside them paralleled Timon's wealth with contemporary associations of corporate finance – providing a further ironic interaction between the National's sponsorship and the production's own allusions to the Occupy movement. In this instance, the commercial content of the broadcast's advertising slides enacted interpretive shifts for a reading of the Shakespearean performance: situating

[84] Pascale Aebischer has considered how the presentation of Aviva's sponsorship within this broadcast interacted with the production's contemporary London setting and the National Theatre's 'global expansion through broadcasting,' in 'South Bank Goes Global', p. 121.

[85] The Occupy movement began with a gathering of protesters in Zuccotti Park, New York in September 2011, before gaining international attention. Protests in London began in October 2011 and grew into a high-profile occupation of St Paul's Cathedral. Protests were revived October the following year, a month before the broadcast of *Timon of Athens*. See Paul Harris, 'Occupy protesters prepare for day of 'solidarity' across US', *Guardian*, 16 November 2011 <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/nov/16/occupy-protesters-day-of-solidarity> [accessed 19 June 2020], and Press Association, 'Occupy London: timeline of the St. Paul's Cathedral protest camp', 18 Jan 2012 <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2012/jan/18/occupy-london-timeline-protest-camp> [accessed 19 June 2020].

Timon's narrative within debates concerning big-business patronage of the arts and contemporary anti-austerity sentiments.[86] The implicit interactions between NT Live's Aviva slides and the financial context of Shakespeare and Middleton's text demonstrates the difficulty of defining this paratextual element along the lines of purely commercial or purely interpretive functions. Framing the performance of *Timon* implicated this set of advertising slides as both commercially motivated and interpretively loaded.

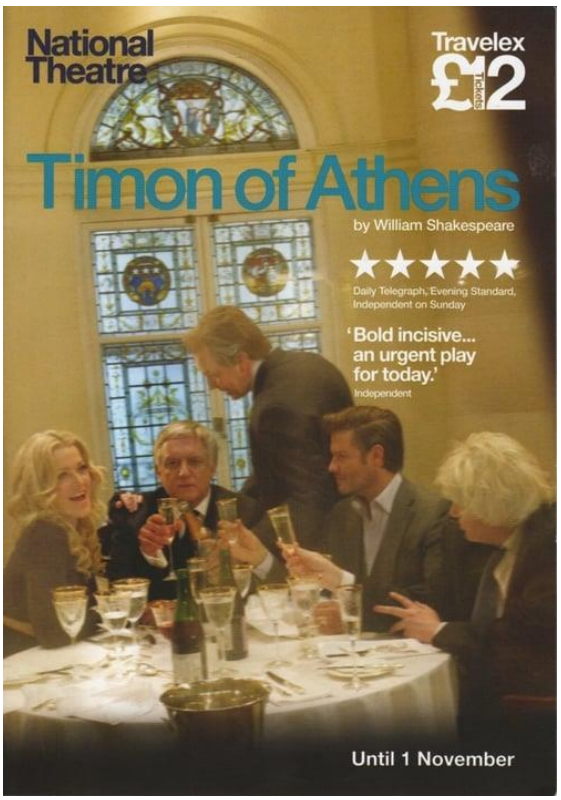

Figure 3: The NT's promotional image for *Timon of Athens* (2012), depicting Simon Russell Beale as Timon dining at a table of celebrity lookalikes.

[86] Susan Bennett has similarly explored responses to BP's sponsorship of various Shakespearean cultural institutions, primarily the 2012 World Shakespeare Festival. In their attempts to co-opt the value of 'Bard Branding', Bennett questions how organisations like BP 'accru[e] from this financial association […] the appearance of commensurability with the cultural institution […] and with the cultural asset (Shakespeare) considered a national and, indeed, global superstar' in 'Sponsoring Shakespeare', *Shakespeare's Cultural Capital: His Economic Impact from the Sixteenth to the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Dominic Shellard and Siobhan Keenan (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 163 – 176, p. 169. Bennett's discussion also includes BP's sponsorship of the RSC's initiative to broaden access to their productions to 16 – 25 year olds, known as RSC Key. The RSC severed their sponsorship ties with BP in late 2019 after public pressure following the resignation of Mark Rylance from the role of Associate Artist and protests by young climate activists.

As well as offering frames of interpretation for the broadcast performance, advertising slides are likely to shape and produce meaning in relation to Shakespearean value more generally. Slides that promote other productions being staged at the RSC or the NT and those that advertise upcoming broadcasts from these companies situate the Shakespearean performance within a performance canon, prompting assumptions of value that act upon the audience's ideas of Shakespeare's cultural capital. For example, advertising slides for NT Live's *Othello* (2013) featured trailers for Encore screenings of *Frankenstein* (2011) and for the upcoming broadcast of *Coriolanus* (2014). Images of the high-profile actors Benedict Cumberbatch (*Frankenstein*) and Tom Hiddleston (*Coriolanus*) in these slides invited cinema audiences to associate the celebrity cachet enjoyed by these actors with the Shakespearean performance. While the value conferred by star performers in the paratextual space is the subject of a larger exploration in Chapter Five, here their inclusion within the advertising slides for *Othello* illustrates the capacity for this paratext to set the broadcast production in conversation with other sources of cultural value. The repertories formed, and the associations drawn, within these slides function in a similar way to the surrounding environs of the theatre and to promotional images often seen in theatre lobbies, heightening what Bennett calls 'the sense of cultural activity.'[87]

An advertising slide conventionally seen within RSC Live broadcast also exemplifies the ability of this paratext to construct types of Shakespearean value through association. Broadcasts produced by the RSC typically feature slides that promote 'Shakespeare's England', the heritage tourism association that covers Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick and Leamington Spa. [88] With images of Shakespeare's Birthplace, Anne Hathaway's Cottage, and Mary Arden's Farm, these slides highlight the role of the Royal Shakespeare Company within the lucrative heritage tourism industry that exists around Shakespeare's hometown. As a form of institutional dramaturgy, the RSC's alignment with Shakespeare's England situates the theatre company as an active part of the same heritage preservation project: implicitly arguing that the continued performance of Shakespeare's works is as crucial to understanding and preserving the playwright's legacy as are the buildings associated with his life. The

[87] Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 207.

[88] 'About Us', *Shakespeare's England* <https://shakespeares-england.co.uk/about/> [accessed 6 November 2019].

company's association with heritage organisations also consolidates their own importance, as Kate Rumbold argues: 'the founding imperatives of [Shakespeare organisations including the RSC] – variously, to preserve, conserve, disseminate, or be a faithful replica – create the impression that their buildings safeguard something of intrinsic importance.'[89] In aligning its theatrical work with the heritage tourism industry, this slide exemplifies just one of the ways in which the RSC's brand identity depends upon the deeply rooted sense of place I explore in more detail in Chapter Four. Moreover, the evocation of the heritage tourism industry aligns this traditionally middle-class leisure pursuit with Shakespearean performance. Historical tourism sites, argues Dennis Kennedy, are 'mediated through intellectual effort and imply that the visitor is obligated [to learn],' particularly compared against modern tourist attractions that 'build in whatever is needed and construct the visitor as already knowing.'[90] The historicity of these sites, therefore, implicates them as sites of intellectual improvement and validation: imbuing the same qualities of 'self-improvement' on the Shakespearean performance which these slides frame. Visiting a historical property preserved by Shakespeare's England and watching a theatre performance in the cinema are, this framing suggests, comparably edifying experiences.

The RSC's association with 'Shakespeare's England' emphasises the ability of advertising slides to set Shakespearean value alongside other types of cultural and intellectual exercises – particularly those that are assumed to be popular with their broadcast audiences. Indeed, the montage structure (which I consider further in the section below) of advertising slides invites a reading of the Shakespearean performance and the theatre's institutional identity within a network of different types of cultural value. While these slides may directly or indirectly influence the reading of the broadcasted performance, it is predominantly through the institutional dramaturgy of the theatre companies themselves that this paratextual convention creates and circulates ideas about the Shakespearean. Enforced by shots that show the age and racial demographic of in-theatre audiences live from the auditorium, the commercial underpinning of these slides prompts interesting questions about the

[89] Rumbold, 'From "Access" to "Creativity"', p. 314.

[90] Dennis Kennedy, 'Shakespeare and Cultural Tourism', *Theatre Journal*, 50.2 (1998), pp 175-188, p. 182.

accessibility of Shakespearean cultural value. The significance of these questions is only heightened when we consider the position of advertising slides within a broadcast's paratextual structure. For a range of first-time broadcast attendees, this paratext may be their first encounter with the Shakespearean institutions that facilitate these performances. In this regard, advertising slides operate at the very threshold of an audience's interaction with the theatre institution. Though ephemeral and allowing a kind of detached engagement from cinema audiences, it is advertising slides that begin the establishment of a relationship that works to shape impressions of Shakespearean value.

RSC Live – Opening Montages

> *Whereas in theatre an effect is achieved primarily through the physiological perception of an actually occurring fact (e.g. a murder), in cinema it is made up of juxtaposition and accumulation […] Let us take that same murder as an example: a throat is gripped, eyes bulge, a knife is brandished, the victim closes his eyes, blood is spattered on a wall […] each fragment is chosen to 'provoke' associations.*[91]

Sergei Eisenstein's description of a murder is evocative. Indeed, it is hard to read without visualising the fragmentary units of action that communicate the scene. The effect is intentional, with Eisenstein using the example to argue for the communicative and affective power of montage in film. Building a network of 'juxtaposition[s]' and 'accumulation[s]', the use of montage in film has captivated and divided film critics.[92] Following from the repeating loop of the advertising slides, audiences attending an RSC Live broadcast were likely to be met by another paratext that depends deeply on the communicative potential of montage. Opening montages coincide with the broadcast's advertised start time and are a recurrent convention that is exclusive to the RSC Live canon, appearing in 68% of the company's live theatre broadcasts between 2013 and 2020. Occupying the significant transitional period between advertising slides and the beginning of the broadcast's live transmission,

[91] Sergei Eisenstein, 'The Montage of Film Attractions', *The Eisenstein Reader*, translated by Richard Taylor and William Powell, edited by Richard Taylor (London: BFI Publishing, 1998), pp. 35 – 52, p. 36.

[92] Ibid. While Eisenstein appears to revel in the provocative power of the montage, André Bazin was clearly uneasy about its rejection of realism, calling montage the 'anticinematic process *par excellence*' in *What is Cinema? Vol. I*, translated by Hugh Gray, edited by Dudley Andrew (Berkley: University of California Press, 2005), p. 45.

this paratextual switch also signals a request for a different type of audience attention. In this section, I examine this unique paratextual element by first outlining the two types of opening montage that commonly feature in RSC Live broadcasts. Attention to opening montages allows for a better understanding of how this paratext is shaped by the institutional identity of the company and the expectations of their anticipated cinema audiences.

While 'opening montage' provides a useful umbrella term for its form and temporal position within a number of RSC Live broadcasts, this convention can be divided into two discrete categories based on the content of the montage: the 'representational montage' and the 'past production photograph (PPP) montage.' The former features stylised, still-life arrangements of props, costumes, scenery or other images relevant to the setting and design of the theatrical production. This style of montage is typically overlaid with music from the production and is characterised by held camera shots, within which there is limited movement created by lighting effects (for example, dappled light moving across an arrangement of props). The PPP montage consists of still photographic records that span the RSC's performance history of Shakespearean (and occasionally non-Shakespearean) works. Usually these records will document past productions of the broadcasted play, with images typically subtitled with information relating to the year of performance, the director, and principal actors. Images are usually played in chronological order, stretching from the RSC's early history and establishing an implicit teleology towards the production being broadcast.

These two modes of opening montage each create their own meanings for cinema audiences and mediate with Shakespearean performance in significant ways. Firstly, I consider how the representational montage performs important interpretive work in relation to the meaning-making strategies of the production itself, before turning to explore the role of the PPP montages as a form of institutional dramaturgy. In the RSC Live canon so far, representational montages appear marginally less frequently than their paratextual counterparts. Of the seventeen RSC Live broadcasts to feature an opening montage, eight (47%) used a representational montage. With the exception that none feature in the RSC's first year of live broadcasting, the use of this paratextual element does not cluster into any particular trend. Rather, representational montages appear in broadcasts that span a number of years

and genres across the canon. This style of montage preceded the live presenter monologue in broadcasts of *Love's Labour's Lost* (2015), *Love's Labour's Won* (or *Much Ado About Nothing*, 2015), *Othello* (2015), *Julius Caesar* (2017), *Titus Andronicus* (2017), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (2018), *The Taming of the Shrew* (2019) and *Measure for Measure* (2019). Even within the sub-category of the representational montage, variation in the content of this paratext highlights only tentative trends. For example, broadcasts of *Othello*, *Julius Caesar*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Merry Wives*, and *Taming* featured representational montages that used elements of the production's design: props in the case of *Caesar* and *Titus*, costume for *Merry Wives* and *Taming*, and set and staging for *Othello*.[93]

The use of design elements in this style of representational montage prompts important questions about its framing function. Taking visual cues from the theatrical production serves firstly as a form of world-building: initiating cinema audiences into what Keir Elam calls the 'complex of messages' through which the production makes meaning.[94] In many cases, the paratextual foregrounding of these semiotic systems works to emphasise a production's governing concept, giving these design elements added significance for cinema audiences. For example, RSC Live's broadcast of *Taming* featured the production's costumes in its representational montage, with close-up shots highlighting the intricate prints and details of the production's 'Jacobethan' design.[95] The emphasis on framing the production through clothing resonated with director Justin Audibert's decision to regender the play: casting male actors Joseph Arkley and James Cooney as the central sisters, Katherine and Bianca, and female actors in the play's traditionally male roles. The radical reversal of the play's traditional casting was intended to reimagine Padua as an early modern matriarchy, in which a female

[93] While this span of broadcasts may seem to suggest a concrete trend for this style of opening montage, these broadcasts were not released consecutively but sometimes with a number of other broadcasts in between. They therefore represent the popularity of using design elements within the representational montage, rather than a period of tangible paratextual consistency through the use of this paratext.

[94] Keir Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, 3rd edn. (London: Routledge Press, 1980), p. 38.

[95] Ella Hawkins usefully adopts 'Jacobethan' to describe styles of theatrical costume which blend fashions from the period of Shakespeare's own lifetime. In 'The Significance of Jacobethanism in Twenty-First Century Costume Design for Shakespeare' (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2020), p. 11.

Petruchia (now mourning her mother, rather than her father) comes to the city in search of a husband. This matriarchal dynamic was established implicitly through the use of costume in the representational montage: with the traditional masculine swords and daggers appearing alongside dresses, corsets, and decorative jewellery. This montage therefore pre-empted the costume's semiotic work within the production itself, inviting cinema audiences to make meaning from this element of design and framing the importance of mixing traditionally masculine and feminine signifiers to the production's matriarchal concept.

The role of representational montages in consolidating the conceptual world of the production is also seen in examples of the paratext that do not use props, costume or set pieces. A handful of RSC Live broadcasts that feature this type of montage used real historical images rather than design elements to frame the 'cultural and historical world' of the production as one that 'makes sense for the audience.'[96] In the consecutive broadcasts of *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Love's Labour's Won* (*Much Ado)*, the decision to pair the settings and cast in these two productions was mirrored in matching representational montages. Christopher Luscombe directed both productions. Undoubtedly with an eye to the contemporary popularity of *Downton Abbey* (2010-15), Luscombe's production of *Labour's Lost* staged the play in the summer of 1914, immediately preceding World War I. *Labour's Won* was set after the end of that same war, with the actors who had previously taken the roles of the King of Navarre (Sam Alexander), Longaville (William Belchambers), Dumaine (Tunji Kasim), and Berowne (Edward Bennett) doubling as the officers in Don Pedro's army.

The representational montages in each broadcast foregrounded these settings through the use of historical photographs: of Edwardian houses and household staff in the case of *Labour's Lost*, and of soldiers and nurses in post-war convalescent hospitals in the broadcast of *Labour's Won*. Cinema audiences attending both broadcasts will have been reminded, through the repeated use of this convention, of the RSC's pairing of these two plays. More importantly, however, the use of historical photographs to frame both productions invited cinema audiences who attended them both to focus on

[96] Bridget Escolme, 'Costume', *Shakespeare and the Making of Theatre*, edited by Stuart Hampton-Reeves and Bridget Escolme (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 128 – 145, p. 130.

the importance of the real historical war as a piece of intervening action between these two Shakespearean performances. The selection of these images not only functioned as a way to consolidate the settings of both productions but also allowed the war to act as an intertext to other directorial choices. Cinema audiences who witnessed scenes of soldiers in convalescent hospitals in the representational montage to *Labour's Won*, for example, would have been more likely to overlay this historical context onto the characterisation of Don John (Sam Alexander), whose malice was linked with potential trauma caused by a visible war wound, and Dogberry (Nick Haverson), whose comic memory loss and malapropisms looked suspiciously like shell-shock.[97]

The framing potential of the representational montage, therefore, is often dependent on isolating and emphasising the communicative tools of the theatrical production itself. As a result, the pearls worn by an actor in *Taming* or the Edwardian set design featured in *Labour's Lost* were further emphasised as mediators of the Shakespearean play. These examples illustrate how this type of opening montage facilitates transactions of meaning between cinema audiences and the broadcast production, and can foreground an existing interpretive framework for the Shakespearean play. The second type of opening montage, the past production photograph (PPP) montage, tends to create meaning which is less centred on the production at hand. Comparatively, PPP montages frame the broadcast performance with attention to the RSC's performance history. This type of opening montage, I contend, offers important insights into the role played by tradition and memory in shaping the RSC's institutional identity.

PPP montages slightly outweigh representational montages, constituting 52% of the broadcasts which feature either type of opening montage. This type of montage was used to frame productions of

[97] Haverson's performance undercut some of the humour at Dogberry's expense by playing the character with a pronounced physical and verbal tremor, as well as the usual overplaying of Doberry's malapropisms. It was left - perhaps deliberately – to audiences to infer whether the source of this tremor was PTSD-related, or on account of a neurodegenerative disease such as Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease. Haverson noted the influence of shell-shock in an interview for the RSC's blog, *Pathways to Shakespeare*, stating that the 'idea of shell-shock was considered' and that Haverson had settled on a backstory in which 'having endured the war, Dogberry returns to find his wife and child have died in the flu epidemic.' Viv Graver, 'Nick Haverson: Pathway #3', *Pathways to Shakespeare*, n.d., <https://www.rsc.org.uk/blogs/pathways-to-shakespeare/nick-haverson> [accessed 3 February 2020].

Henry V (2015), *King Lear* (2016), *The Tempest* (2016), *Antony and Cleopatra* (2017), *Coriolanus* (2017), *Twelfth Night* (2018), *Macbeth* (2018), *Romeo and Juliet* (2018), *Troilus and Cressida* (2018), and the as-live streaming of *Timon of Athens* (2019). The PPP montage appears to have been particularly in vogue in the RSC's sixth broadcast season, spanning four consecutive broadcasts from *Coriolanus* (11 October 2017) to *Romeo and Juliet* (18 July 2018). These two broadcasts in particular offer illustrative examples in which this type of montage was used to affirm a kind of collective memory for the RSC and its audiences. Engaging in a nostalgic exercise centring on past production photographs, this paratext sheds new light on Susan Bennett's assertion that 'Shakespeare […] provides perhaps the very best symptom of a present-day epidemic, the past.'[98]

The PPP montage featured in *Coriolanus* served a particularly timely memorial function, commemorating the work of the RSC's founder and former Artistic Director, Peter Hall. Hall's death preceded the broadcast by a month, prompting a montage that featured photographs of his most celebrated works at the RSC.[99] Images of Hall's work, including a tributary opening slide with an image of Hall himself, noting the years of his birth and death, were underscored by a song taken from a speech in *Coriolanus*, beginning 'I shall be loved when I am lacked.'[100] As the images progressed, the musical accompaniment furthered the tone of mourning and commemoration, including the line in which Coriolanus implores his wife to 'come, leave your tears: a brief farewell.'[101] Adapting the moment of Coriolanus' exile from Rome, the use of this arrangement to accompany this PPP montage drew a parallel between Hall's prestigious theatrical career and Coriolanus's celebrated military successes. For cinema audience members familiar with the play, this analogy gave Hall's death the symbolic function of exile and vice versa: Coriolanus's later self-imposed banishment would have been inextricably tied

[98] Susan Bennett, *Performing Nostalgia: Shifting Shakespeare and the Contemporary Past* (London: Routledge Press, 1996), p. 1.

[99] This use of a PPP montage to commemorate the death of a key figure in the RSC's history was to be repeated a year later in the broadcast of *Troilus and Cressida*, to memorialise the work of the late John Barton and his particular affinity with that play, see *Troilus and Cressida*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 14 November 2018.

[100] William Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, edited by R.B. Parker (Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2008), IV.1.16.

[101] Ibid, IV.3.1.

to this memorialisation of Hall. Aptly, the musical accompaniment to this PPP montage turned the act of commemorating Hall's work with the company into a deeply Shakespearean exercise.

The use of production photos in this broadcast also depended on acts of collective memorialisation which went far beyond honouring Hall's directorial work. All uses of this particular paratext call upon a sense of shared theatrical memory from within the RSC and from its audiences, consolidating the value of nostalgia and the importance of its performance heritage to the company's institutional identity. Michael Dobson has observed the importance of 'individual and collective memory' to the RSC's core audience – in turn, he argues that the company itself 'makes much of its continuity with a supposedly glorious past.'[102] The photographs displayed within PPP montages both depend on an audience's emotional and memorial investment in this idealised past, and work to constitute it retrospectively by further glorifying these images and frequently framing their historical importance (including names of famous actors, directors, the year of performance). *Coriolanus*'s commemorative montage illustrated this investment in reliving the company's history, inviting cinema audiences to reflect on Hall's contribution in winning the RSC public subsidy and staking claims of their importance against the emerging National Theatre – the legacy of which I explore further in Chapter Four.[103]

Memory, in the form facilitated by this paratext, is a collective exercise. The historicity of past production photographs offers a sense of continuity to audience members who have, through following the company's work across perhaps decades, cultivated multiple productions of a given Shakespeare play. Moreover, these images invite cinema audiences to engage their own memories of RSC performances, bringing these to bear against the present performance in a visual manifestation of what Stephen Berkoff calls 'boxing with ghosts.'[104] RSC Live's broadcast of *Romeo and Juliet* (2018) offers

[102] Michael Dobson, 'Watching the Complete Works Festival: The RSC and Its Fans in 2006', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 25. 4 (2007), pp. 23 – 33, p. 31.

[103] Hall's founding of, and impact upon, the Royal Shakespeare Company is well documented in Colin Chambers, *Inside the Royal Shakespeare Company: Creativity and the Institution* (London: Routledge Press, 2004), and also Sally Beauman, *The Royal Shakespeare Company: A History of Ten Decades* (Oxford: OUP, 1982).

[104] Stephen Berkoff qtd. in Judith Buchanan, *Shakespeare on Film* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005), p. 207.

an important example. The PPP montage in this broadcast featured images of actors who had previously taken the roles of the central lovers: spanning in chronological order from a highly romanticised, black and white portrait of Daphne Slater and Laurence Payne in the company's 1947 production, through a euphoric and sexually charged embrace between Ray Fearon and Zoe Waites (1998), to Mariah Gale and Sam Troughton's modern-dress portrayal of the pair in 2010. By condensing the company's performance history of the play in this way, cinema audiences were saturated by theatrical memories. The focus of the PPP montage on the pair of central lovers effectively reduced this play to a vehicle for its past and present actors, consciously evoking and inverting what Marvin Carlson identifies as the 'haunted body' of the actor.[105] Carlson notes that the recognisability of a popular actor means that her body is always haunted by her past roles: 'a phenomenon that often colors and may indeed dominate the reception process.'[106] In this montage, however, it was the roles of Romeo and Juliet that were conspicuously haunted by their past inhabitants. Such a progression through past productions invites cinema viewers to reflect on their own past experiences of watching a play; in this instance, calling upon the cultural ubiquity of *Romeo* whilst also setting the broadcast production within this illustrious history.

Framing a play as canonically central and culturally entrenched as *Romeo and Juliet*, the associations evoked by these images also carried had the power to absorb meanings from beyond the productions shown in the PPP montage. Sally Barnden argues that 'the Shakespeare photograph, with its heightened relationship to iconographies inherited from art history or theatre history, offers a collision between the index of real events and the familiar, cliched, and iconic.'[107] The 'already-seen' quality Barnden identifies in the Shakespeare photograph is characteristic of the way in which this PPP montage prompted cinema audiences to remember also the saturation of images and cultural references to *Romeo and Juliet* that exist in popular culture, encompassing parodies and adaptations and everything in between. The same is true of uses of this paratextual element more broadly. PPP motages within

[105] Marvin Carlson, *The Haunted Stage: Theatre as Memory Machine* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2003), p. 52.

[106] Ibid, p. 8.

[107] Sally Barnden, *Still Shakespeare and the Photography of Performance* (Cambridge: CUP, 2019), p. 7.

broadcasts of *Twelfth Night* (2018), and *Macbeth* (2019), for example, saw photographs included which deliberately reiterated iconic stage images from these plays: Malvolio's yellow stockings and Macbeth's return to his wife with a pair of bloody daggers. The visual performance history charted by these PPP montages inevitably also acts as a confirmation of the special cultural status held by Shakespeare and a number of his works as, in Barnden's terms, 'familiar, cliched, and iconic.'[108]

This meeting of past and present can interact with the Shakespearean performance in significant ways, particularly when the RSC's investment in a nostalgic performance history meets with the company's drive to draw new, younger audiences. Underscoring the performance history traced by *Romeo and Juliet'*s PPP montage was music from the production, which featured bursts of violins against a rhythmic and contemporary synthesiser beat. The juxtaposition of a contemporary musical accompaniment emphasised the archaic and outmoded performance photographs that opened the montage by contrast, implicitly pulling each image of the Shakespearean lovers towards the final image of the young and recognisably modern Gale and Troughton. The production itself, directed by Erica Whyman, was deeply invested in the youth of the play's protagonists, and featured local schoolchildren speaking the prologue to emphasise the themes of inter-generational conflict. Moreover, Whyman reflected in the broadcast's live interview on her desire for the play to be wholly representative of contemporary society. Citing her cross-gender casting of Mercutio and Escalus, and the casting of British Asian actor Bally Gill as Romeo, Whyman stated that 'we wanted all the human beings on stage to be recognisable by our audience.'[109]

Watching this production in the context offered by the live broadcast, cinema audiences may have reflected on the tension of a framing device that so clearly glorified the company's archaic (and overwhelmingly white) performance records.[110] Bennett highlights that this type of nostalgia is

[108] Barnden, p. 7.

[109] *Romeo and Juliet*, directed for the screen by Bridget Caldwell, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 18 July 2018. I return to claims of relevance in this broadcast in Chapter Seven, pp. 238 – 240.

[110] Of the eleven productions featured and twenty-one actors shown within this condensed performance history, Ray Fearon was the only non-white actor. The BBA Shakespeare database documents black and Asian actors,

inherently 'conservative (in at least two senses – its political alignment and its motive to keep things intact and unchanged)', in terms that resonate with the kind of memorial exercise undertaken by PPP montages.[111] Broadcasts such as RSC Live's *Romeo* highlight the tension of appealing to the desires of two disparate audience demographics; with the nostalgia and tradition of the PPP montage appealing to viewers of the same age as the RSC's core audience who might have seen their mid- to late- twentieth century productions, while the contemporary concept and focus on representative casting speaks to a more progressive and likely younger audience. In this instance, the juxtaposition of tradition and innovation raised competing ideas of what the Shakespearean means, and who the performance of his works serves.

RSC Live's use of opening montages to offer interpretive thresholds and to call upon a shared theatrical memory is symptomatic of the company's institutional identity, together with the self-contained nature of their broadcasting project. In service of the latter, the use of this paratext across a majority of RSC Live broadcasts enabled opening montages to function as a marker of consistency: both consolidating the First Folio-centred broadcast project and creating links between Shakespearean texts, as the example of *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Labour's Won* demonstrates. Where the cinematic montage prompted Eisenstein to reflect on the difference between theatrical and cinematic modes of representation in the passage cited above, I contend that the form of the montage nonetheless implicates RSC Live's opening montages in a deeply theatrical mode of interpretation. As Anne Ubersfeld highlights, 'theatrical perception […] is a "*bricolage*" in the technical sense of the word; it is made up

directors, and practitioners of Shakespeare and records a further two productions – not included in the PPP montage – in which either Romeo or Juliet was played by a non-white actor: in a production in 2008, featuring Anneika Rose as Juliet, and one in 1995, featuring Zubin Varla as Romeo.

BBA Shakespeare, 'Romeo and Juliet 2008', *Black, British and Asian Shakespeare Database*, n.d. <https://bbashakespeare.warwick.ac.uk/productions/romeo-and-juliet-2008-royal-shakespeare-company-courtyard-theatre-stratford-upon-avon> [accessed 21 June 2020]

BBA Shakespeare, 'Romeo and Juliet 1995', *Black, British and Asian Shakespeare Database*, n.d. <https://bbashakespeare.warwick.ac.uk/productions/romeo-and-juliet-1995-royal-shakespeare-company-royal-shakespeare-theatre> [accessed 21 June 2020]

[111] Bennett, *Performing Nostalgia*, p. 5.

of bits and pieces.'[112] Mirroring this mode of engagement, cinema audiences are invited to assemble the fragments within an opening montage into a framework of meaning through which to view the broadcast performance – giving heightened attention to the semiotic power of particular design elements, for example, or situating the production within a teleological narrative of Shakespearean performance. The attention to narrative detail created by representational montages and the PPP montage's rehearsal of Shakespearean performance histories gives a window of insight into how the RSC grounds its institutional identity in ideas about the 'Shakespearean.' This convention illustrates much more than RSC Live's desire to carve out paratextual originality and consistency within its broadcasting project, therefore. Rather, opening montages are an essential paratext through which the company constructs Shakespearean value and claims this value as its own.

Presenter Monologues

On the early modern commercial stage, Prologue figures would have been instantly recognisable. From their standardised dress (including a 'black velvet robe', 'bay garland' and items such as a 'book, scroll, papers, or staff'), to a 'traditional pattern of movement and gesture', the Prologue signalled to audiences the entering of a dramatic world.[113] Tasked with describing a television presenter, modern audiences would more than likely list qualities which are, like those of the Prologue, characteristic and instantly recognisable. Armed with a microphone, stylised verbal cadences, and an air of both geniality and authority, Shakespearean live theatre broadcast presenters populate the canon with conventions that are inherited from television. While her presence prompts reflections about the hybridity of the broadcast medium, it is how the broadcast presenter negotiates the transition into the world of the Shakespeare performance that is of interest here.[114] If the role of the early modern Prologue was to 'greet, inform, address, and […] reshape audience's expectations', this section proposes a

[112] Anne Ubersfeld, 'The Pleasure of the Spectator', translated by Pierre Bouillaguet and Charles Jose, *Modern Drama*, 25. 1 (1982), pp. 127 – 139, p. 131, emphasis original.

[113] Bruster and Weimann, p.vii.

[114] As I consider briefly below, the majority of Shakespearean broadcasts are presented by women. See 'Shakespeare's New Marketplace: The Places of Event Cinema', in which Susan Bennett reflects on Shakespeare broadcasts as of 2018 by saying that the presenter is 'almost always a woman', p. 50.

comparable (and comparably liminal) figure in the broadcast presenter – asking how the presenter herself and the paratextual convention of presenter monologues function to mediate the broadcast performance.[115]

More so than any other paratextual element, the broadcast presenter is implicated within the broadcast experience as the 'face' of the theatrical institution whose performance she frames. Douglas Bruster and Robert Weimann's study of the Prologue figure continually reiterates the inherent liminality of the role: both in the paratextual function of a prologue, and in the actor's own 'liminal status in relation to the [playing] company.'[116] Prologues were understood, Bruster and Weimann argue, as 'negotiat[ing] thresholds between and among, variously, playwrights, actors, characters, audience members, playworlds, and the world outside the playhouse.'[117] While the influence of television conventions and the disparity between the media of theatre and live theatre broadcast complicates a direct comparison, Bruster and Weimann's observation that the Prologue operates within a network of audience and institutional relationships is useful in understanding the role of the broadcast presenter. The presenter monologue is not only typically the first paratextual component to feature live transmission, it is also the first to verbally address the watching cinema audience. Positioned thus in close relation to both the theatrical institution and its geographically disparate audiences, the presenter exemplifies the function of broadcast paratexts as a mode of institutional dramaturgy.

As a result, a broadcast presenter is able to shape an audience's expectations of the performance even before she has spoken. Who frames the Shakespearean performance has resounding implications for what Shakespeare means to contemporary audiences, who his works speak to and are 'for.' Shakespeare's cultural cachet and the long-standing association of his works with a white, conservative elite necessarily implicates the broadcast presenter herself within a context of contentious debates surrounding Shakespeare's accessibility and relevance. If institutions such as the RSC and the NT rely upon new digital media to 'efface their traditional role as cultural gatekeepers', we must question how

[115] Bruster and Weimann, p. 25.

[116] Ibid, p. 36.

[117] Ibid, p. 2.

the selection of Shakespearean broadcast presenters might emerge as a necessary personification of this otherwise obscured gatekeeping role.[118] Therefore, while the following discussion progresses towards the content and conventions of the presenter monologue as a paratextual element, it is essential to first address the meanings created by those who have been chosen to frame Shakespearean performances in the broadcast canon so far.

RSC Live's continual employment of the radio and television presenter Suzy Klein has enabled her to become a constant within the company's canon, reiterating and consolidating other elements of paratextual consistency. Klein's role as a mainstay within RSC Live's broadcast canon is all the more pronounced when compared with broadcasts in other live performance media. While Paul Heyer notes that the Met's opera 'telecasts' are each 'relatively self-contained', Klein's appearance in every RSC Live broadcast opens up the possibility for cinema audiences to view each of the works streamed to cinemas as part of a continual series.[119] Moreover, Klein literalised the serialisation of a number of RSC Live broadcasts, drawing connections between productions that told pre-existing serial narratives (the first three broadcasts from the company, for example, documented the fall of Richard II through to the death of Henry IV), and pairing seemingly unconnected plays with narrative, thematic and casting links (as in the consecutive broadcasts of *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Love's Labour's Won* or *Much Ado About Nothing*). Mirrored in her consistency as broadcast presenter, therefore, was the assumption that cinema audiences would attend RSC Live's broadcasts either regularly, or in periods which correspond with a desire to see a particular series of plays.

An experienced broadcaster and cultural commentator, Klein also carries associations that exist independently of her role in RSC Live's canonizing project. Klein's wider presenting roles are notable for their proximity to Shakespeare's 'high' cultural value: including her role as presenter of BBC Radio 3's *Essential Classics* morning show and the BBC's television coverage of the Proms, and co-author of a children's book on contemporary art. Cinema audiences familiar with Klein's work – or even her

[118] Rumbold, 'From "Access" to "Creativity"', p. 315.

[119] Paul Heyer, 'Live from the met: Digital Broadcast Cinema, Medium Theory, and Opera for the Masses', *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 33. 4 (2008), pp. 591 – 604, p. 596.

reputation as a cultural commentator – would likely read her fronting of the RSC Live broadcasts in conversation with the elevated, 'intellectual' connotations of classical music and contemporary art. Klein was chosen 'in part', reflects John Wyver, 'because of her recognized cultural authority as a broadcaster.'[120] Her capacity to negotiate Shakespearean value within RSC Live broadcasts is therefore tied to these exterior associations, which speak to not only a wealth of experience in presenting live performance media but to an affiliation with the traditionally upper- and upper-middle-class leisure pursuits of opera and art. To cinema audiences who recognised Klein from her broader work, in her role as broadcast presenter she had the potential to elevate Shakespeare's already heightened value by association.

While the selection of broadcast presenters for NT Live's Shakespeare broadcasts shares similarities with RSC Live, there is one significant difference to the impression of consistency created by Suzy Klein. NT Live's Shakespearean broadcast canon features a variety of different presenters, with a handful of figures presenting more than one broadcast. Foremost among these is the broadcaster Emma Freud, who presented the largest number of broadcasts in the first decade of NT Live's Shakespearean canon.[121] Klein and Freud share similar career backgrounds which inform their role as broadcast presenters. However, their prominence within the Shakespearean canons of both companies highlights a further feature in the selection of Shakespearean broadcast presenters: the majority of broadcasts (and, indeed, *all* in the case of RSC Live) are presented by women. That the presenter of Shakespeare broadcasts is usually female has interesting consequences for the role as a proxy-gatekeeper, particularly in relation to other authorial figures within the NT and the RSC. Foremost, female presenters like Freud and Klein work to redress an historical and lasting gender imbalance in both companies, neither of which has ever been headed by a female Artistic Director. The same disproportionate privileging of male directors likewise trickles down to productions broadcast by the companies: 24% of NT Live's Shakespeare broadcasts are of productions directed by women, compared

[120] Wyver, *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company*, p. 175.

[121] As I detail below, Freud presented seven Shakespeare broadcasts for NT Live.

with 28% by RSC Live.[122] Though broadcast presenters carry with them a range of meanings and associations, the predominance of female presenters is necessarily shadowed by the gender inequalities of the broader theatre industry and particularly within the canons of RSC Live and NT Live.

Prior to her work with NT Live, Emma Freud worked as a radio broadcaster for BBC Radio 1 and Radio 4, as well as fronting cultural programmes such as *The Media Show* and *The Turner Prize*.[123] Freud presented seven of the company's seventeen Shakespeare broadcasts, spanning four years from *Hamlet* (2010) to *King Lear* (2014).[124] Two presenters recur later within NT Live's Shakespearean canon, both whom share arts and culture credentials with Freud and Klein: Samira Ahmed (*As You Like It* [2016] and *Macbeth* [2018]) and Kirsty Lang (*Twelfth Night* [2017] and *Julius Caesar* [2018]). In the case of this broadcasting company, it is also worth noting that these presenters will have also hosted some of NT Live's non-Shakespearean broadcasts.[125] While the canon later featured figures with a strong background in presenting live events, and particularly arts and culture programming, the selection of actor Alex Jennings to present NT Live's first Shakespeare broadcast demonstrated the company's early imitation of conventions from the commercially tried and tested model of live opera broadcasts.[126] Perhaps prompted by criticism of Jeremy Irons' 'understandably edgy' presentation of

[122] NT Live's first Shakespearean broadcast, *All's Well that Ends Well* (2009), was directed for the stage by Marianne Elliot. Subsequent broadcasts of productions by female directors are *Coriolanus* (2014, Josie Rourke), *Hamlet* (2015, Lyndsey Turner) and *As You Like It* (2016, Polly Findlay). Of their 25 live broadcasts up until September 2020, seven RSC Live broadcasts were of productions directed by women: *The Merchant of Venice* (2015, Polly Findlay), *Cymbeline* (2016, Melly Still), *Titus Andronicus* (2017, Blanche McIntyre), *Macbeth* (2018, Polly Findlay), *Romeo and Juliet* (2018), Erica Whyman), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (2018, Fiona Laird), and *As You Like It* (2019, Kimberly Sykes).

[123] 'Emma Freud', n.d. <http://cobj.co.uk/client/emma-freud> [accessed 22 January 2020].

[124] This figure for NT Live's total Shakespeare broadcasts excludes the Bridge Theatre *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2019), which was streamed as-live. Freud's run as presenter of Shakespeare broadcasts in the period between 2010 and 2014 also excludes Kenneth Branagh's production of *Macbeth* (2013), streamed from the Manchester International Festival.

[125] Unfortunately, due to the prolonged closure of the NT archives as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, I have been unable to confirm the presenters for a number of non-Shakespearean NT Live broadcasts.

[126] Martin Barker considers how the success of the Met's opera broadcasts may have influenced the early emergence of NT Live in *Live to Your Local Cinema*, p. 7.

NT Live's debut *Phèdre* (2009), the emergence of presenters with greater experience in broadcasting signalled a move away from the Met's tradition of using well-known stars of opera to host their broadcasts and towards the conventions which are now well-established in the UK's event cinema market.[127]

With the exception of Freud's tenure, this greater variety of broadcast presenters suggests that Shakespearean broadcasts are treated no differently from the remainder of NT Live's broader canon. Each presenter is chosen for a broadcast without prioritising the same sense of consistency and serialisation shown in the RSC Live canon: rather, the selection of a presenter likely rests on considerations of availability, experience, and suitability to production itself. For example, where Benedict Cumberbatch's role in the NT Live *Hamlet* (2016) was anticipated to draw a younger audience than other Shakespearean broadcasts might have, the company selected a younger and comparatively little-known presenter in the form of artist and writer, Morgan Quaintance.[128] Compared with figures such as Klein and Freud, who each have extensive careers in presenting arts and culture programmes on television and radio, Quaintance offered an opportunity to engage the broadcast's younger audiences and to free the presenter role within this broadcast from the associations of the older, white, middle-class audiences who would typically recognise Freud or Klein. The greater variety of presenters used by NT Live to frame their Shakespearean broadcasts suggests that this paratextual component is used

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[127] Michael Billington, 'National Theatre Live: Phèdre', *Guardian*, 26 June 2009 <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2009/jun/26/national-theatre-live-phedre> [accessed 14 July 2020]. Peter Kirwan, in his review of the broadcast, also noted that Irons was visibly uncomfortable in the role of presenter, in 'Curtain Calls or Credits? Phedre (NT Live) @ Warwick Arts Centre', *The Bardathon*, 25 June 2009 <https://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/bardathon/2009/06/25/curtain-calls-or-credits-phedre-nt-live-warwick-arts-centre/> [accessed 14 July 2020]. Paul Heyer discusses the conventions of using opera performers as hosts in the Met's live broadcasts in 'Live from the Met', while James Steichen offers a more anecdotal account of observing a Met live broadcast in production, in 'HD Opera'. Both accounts, as well as W.B. Anthony Sheppard's Review of the Met's 2003 broadcast season, have been useful points of for observing comparison and continuity.

[128] Daisy Abbot and Claire Read surveyed a number of cinema audiences in attendance at NTLive's *Hamlet* (2015), concluding that the production 'popularized particularly by the lead actor, reache[d] new audiences' in 'Paradocumentation and NTLive's 'CumberHamlet'', p. 167. My discussion of the anticipated demographic for this particular broadcast is developed in Chapter Five, in which I consider how Cumberbatch's role in the broadcast paratext addressed the desires of a younger, social media-engaged audience.

less as a way to reflect a consistent fixed brand identity for the company (a relationship which is further complicated by NT Live's broadcasting from theatres outside of the NT) and more as a means of addressing the anticipated audience for each individual broadcast.

The sequence of broadcasts presented by Freud offers an exception to this malleability, in which cinema audiences who attended a number of broadcasts would have experienced Freud as a figure of consistency. While the reasons for Freud's discontinuing the role of broadcast presenter after 2014 are unclear, the effect of her stint as the 'face' of NT Live's Shakespearean broadcasts merits further consideration as something of an anomaly in the otherwise varied selection of presenters. Like Klein, Freud's extensive career as a presenter of arts programming would have likely acted as an intertext for cinema audiences familiar with her wider work. The meanings created by the recognisability of figures such as Freud and Klein from other programming within the United Kingdom (particularly their work with BBC television and radio stations) is perhaps best understood through a return to Carlson's definition of the 'haunted body.'[129] While I explore the potential for the actor's body to become a productive site of remembering in relation to opening montages above, and in further depth in Chapter Five, here Carlson's theory elucidates the ability of the presenter to frame the present broadcast with the prestige associations of her past presenting roles. For cinema audiences familiar with Klein or Freud's careers in arts and culture programming, with Ahmed or Lang's careers in broadcasting, or with Jennings' previous acting roles, the involvement of these figures as broadcast presenters was inevitably haunted by references to other cultural media.

The recycled body of the broadcast presenter – who is more likely than not to carry associations from other 'high' culture media - has the potential to perpetuate ideas of Shakespeare as inaccessible, elite and, as Douglas Lanier observes, 'addressed to those few willing to devote themselves to laborious study.'[130] This propensity for the broadcast presenter to mediate Shakespearean value by association

[129] Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, p. 52.

[130] Douglas Lanier, *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), p. 3

becomes complicated within a medium which claims to broaden access to the arts.[131] Rachael Nicholas argues that the discourse surrounding the accessibility of broadcasts often manifests as a 'hope […] that watching Shakespeare through media other than live theatre has the power to alter Shakespeare's association with 'high' cultural value.'[132] The predominance of female presenters in a male-led industry, together with NT Live's greater variety of broadcast presenters, certainly offers the opportunity to complicate the impression that this value is monolithic and exclusionary or solely the preserve of a white, male elite. Nonetheless, the trend for framing Shakespeare with figures whose careers are marked by association with performance media that are similarly conceived of as 'high' and particularly 'intellectual' arguably functions to consolidate rather than to actively deconstruct ideas of Shakespeare's elevated cultural value.

Beyond the meanings carried by broadcast presenters themselves, their contribution to the paratextual makeup of the broadcast is dominated by presenter monologues. The function of the monologue within the broadcast recalls one of Genette's central definitions of the paratext, which exists 'in order to *present* [the text], in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to *make present*, to ensure the text's presence in the world.'[133] The presenter monologue – a convention in which the broadcast presenter addresses cinema audiences directly, either for a short or extended period – is typically the first paratext to shift from the pre-prepared materials into live transmission from the theatre auditorium. While advertising slides may feature glimpses of the theatre audience, it is the presenter who consciously involves cinema audiences in the liveness of the event: in Genettian terms, at once

[131] Arts Council England's *Live to Digital* report (2016) noted that one of the greatest benefits of live-to-digital performances is that they 'can be experienced by more audiences, particularly younger and more diverse ones.' Despite this, ACE found that event cinema audiences were more likely to come from higher-income households, to be older and to be less racially diverse than audiences streaming arts programmes at home in Reidy et. al., *Live-to-Digital: Understanding the Impact of Digital Developments in Theatre on Audiences, Production and Distribution* (October 2016), p.11 & p. 12. Moreover, in her consideration of a range of industry reports on live theatre-to-cinema broadcasts, Rachael Nicholas affirms that 'whilst online distribution may have the potential to widen access to theatre, the cinema might not be a particularly effective venue for reaching new or more diverse audiences', in 'Encountering Shakespeare Elsewhere', p. 57.

[132] Nicholas, 'Encountering Shakespeare Elsewhere', p. 16.

[133] Genette, p. 1, emphasis original.

presenting and reminding audiences of the performance's 'presentness.' The act of making the performance present has evident consequences for a cinema viewer's experience of the broadcast. More importantly, however, it is often within the experientially significant space of the monologue that the broadcast presenter facilitates the transition into the world of the Shakespearean performance.

Typically delivered from within the theatre auditorium, presenter monologues constitute the first verbal welcome for cinema audiences. The act of welcoming the broadcast's disparate audiences further highlights the liminality of the broadcast presenter, who at once speaks with the authority of the host theatrical institution whilst usually occupying a position among the stalls or a balcony, areas traditionally within what Marvin Carlson calls the 'support space' exclusively enjoyed by the theatre audience.[134] Where there are exceptions to a broadcast presenter's position within the theatre auditorium, they have interpretive consequences for the production to follow. For example, RSC Live's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (2014) featured Klein delivering her opening presenter monologue from a seat on the stage itself, surrounded by actors milling around in a café setting. Klein's involvement in the pre-set action immediately foregrounded the importance of the production's setting: establishing a metatheatrical blurring of performance and paratext whilst inviting cinema audiences to read location as a point of interpretive access into this rarely performed play. Similarly, NT Live's broadcast of *Julius Caesar* (2018) saw presenter Kirsty Lang deliver her opening monologue from within the Bridge Theatre's pit among standing audience members. Immersed in the crowd in this way, Lang's presenter monologue reiterated the production's promenade setting and focus on the power of the people – an ethos whose paratextual framing I consider further in Chapter Seven. Two years prior, cinema audiences watching NT Live's *Hamlet* would undoubtedly have registered presenter Morgan Quaintance's position within one of the Barbican's cinema auditoriums as affirmation of the production's record-breaking popularity. By situating the presenter monologue among a watching cinema audience, this

[134] Marvin Carlson's semiotic analysis of theatre interior draws on a range of theories and theatrical cultures, however Carlson's most pervasive metaphor for the dialectical 'support spaces' within a theatre is that of a church, which likewise 'involves the meeting of a secular celebrant with the sacred celebrated, but the sacred may be only spiritually or symbolically present, not spatially, as a player must be.' In this definition, support spaces function to manifest spatially the delineated roles of audience and actor. In Carlson, *Places of Performance*, p. 131.

broadcast emphasised the exclusivity of the sold-out production and amplified the sense of the theatre auditorium as a tantalising, off-limits space.

While the location of the presenter may indirectly interact with the narrative or perceived value of the Shakespearean performance, it is not only a welcome to the theatre space which falls within the remit of this paratextual element. The presenter monologue also represents an opportunity to verbally introduce the Shakespeare play to cinema audiences: offering a condensed description of the work which may also incorporate details of performance history or contemporary context. The attention given to narrative detail frequently depends on how far cinema audiences are anticipated to have foreknowledge of the play's plotline. To return to NT Live's *Hamlet* (2015), Quaintance framed that play largely in terms of its esteemed reputation and performance history, rather than establishing any narrative detail: 'First performed in 1601, William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has been thrilling audiences for over four hundred years and it is, in fact, widely thought to be his most performed play.'[135] This introduction anticipated that cinema audiences would likely be familiar with at least the narrative outline of *Hamlet*, a cultural ubiquity underlined by Quaintance's reiteration that the play is Shakespeare's 'most performed.' The assertion of *Hamlet*'s original performance date enabled this introduction to the play to function as what Genette terms a 'factual' paratext. These 'consis[t] not of an explicit message (verbal or other) but of a fact whose existence alone, if known to the public, provides some commentary on the text and influences how the text is received.'[136] In this example, the original performance context given as 'factual' served as an affirmation of the play's aesthetic reputation, supporting Quaintance's later qualitative claim that the play has 'been thrilling audiences for over four hundred years.' Drawing on the production's high-profile casting of Benedict Cumberbatch in the title role, this presenter monologue worked upon the preconceptions likely held by cinema audience members about *Hamlet*'s elevated cultural value, bolstering these using the play's performance tradition.

The factual framing of a performance may also come in the form of an endorsement, as in RSC Live's *Troilus and Cressida* (2018). Klein introduced that performance in a presenter monologue which

[135] *Hamlet*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *NT Live*, Barbican Theatre, London, 15 October 2015.

[136] Genette, p.7.

followed on from an PPP montage paying tribute to the late RSC co-founder, John Barton: 'Welcome to Stratford-upon-Avon and the RSC's brash and beautiful production of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, this tale of Greeks and Trojans that was the favourite play of John Barton: the director, teacher and cornerstone of the RSC who died earlier this year.'[137] Evoking Barton as a figure of institutional Shakespearean authority, this introduction framed both the quality of the RSC's production ('brash and beautiful') and used the director's reputation and career at the RSC to consolidate the value of this lesser-performed play.[138] Barton functioned within this introduction as posthumous patron of the RSC's contemporary work, with his love of *Troilus* lending a kind of commemorative gravitas to the present performance. Cinema audiences – particularly those familiar with Barton's work or with his reputation – were prompted to read the production and the play within the context of its preapproval by the revered Shakespearean, Barton.

In Klein's description of *Troilus* as a 'tale of Greeks and Trojans', there is a further example of the way in which this paratext typically offers a condensed synopsis for the Shakespearean play. The level of detail given in these synopses varies depending on the ubiquity of the Shakespearean narrative, with many plays which feature regularly on secondary school curricula framed with less attention to narrative detail (see, for example, Quaintance's introduction to *Hamlet* above). Nonetheless, an overwhelming majority of presenter monologues in the Shakespeare broadcast canon feature some kind of thematic or narrative threshold into the Shakespearean play. While my discussion in Chapter Six addresses the function of the presenter monologue (among other paratextual components) in establishing narrative details for lesser-performed plays, it is important to reflect here on the ways in which these descriptions offer interpretive frames more generally. Firstly, presenter monologues are significant as they typically frame descriptions of the production and the play in anticipatory terms,

[137] *Troilus and Cressida*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[138] We might also question why paratextual tributes to Barton were not undertaken in any of the four broadcasts of *Twelfth Night, Macbeth, Romeo and Juliet* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* immediately following his death in January 2018. With the exception, perhaps, of *Merry Wives*, this was presumably because none of these canonically central plays required an endorsement of quality from Barton in the way that *Troilus* was deemed to.

weaving together the anticipated experience of the cinema audience with the thematic outline of the play.

For example, synopses such as 'there's villainy, tears and heartache, as well as a lot of laughter', from RSC Live's *Love's Labour's Won* (or *Much Ado*, 2015), and 'tonight we have a contemporary setting of Shakespeare's tale of political intrigue and warfare', from RSC Live's *Coriolanus* (2017), hint at narrative detail in a way which foregrounds their dramatic and affective impact on watching cinema audiences.[139] Explicit spoilers are rarely given for Shakespeare's lesser-known works. Instead, these short descriptions work to locate dramatic value in the broader themes of the Shakespearean work. Tiffany Stern observes that Arguments, short summaries typically printed as paratexts to early modern playtexts, 'give away a story's ending, and so remove dramatic suspense from the reading of a text.'[140] While any direct comparison between the printed text and the broadcast experience has a number of pitfalls, the descriptions offered within a presenter monologue represent a significant reversal of this relationship between narrative spoilers and the thrill of 'dramatic suspense.'[141] While, as Stern notes, the Argument potentially hinders the tension of a reading experience by divulging plot details, the presenter monologue attempts to conjure *more* dramatic suspense by offering a deliberately vague and tantalisingly broad narrative outline. The effect is to enhance the value of performance by anticipation: inviting cinema audiences to reflect on the thrilling experience of themes such as 'villainy […] heartache', 'political intrigue and warfare', and to pre-empt their own affective responses to these themes, ranging from 'tears' to 'laughter.'[142]

The thematic outlines given in presenter monologues also serve as interpretive frames by situating the play within a set of generic associations. Assessments of plays as a 'strange fable' (*Timon*

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[139] *Love's Labour's Won,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 4 March 2015; *Coriolanus*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon,* Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 11 October 2017.

[140] Stern, *Documents of Performance*, p. 63.

[141] Ibid.

[142] *Love's Labour's Won,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough; *Coriolanus*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

of Athens, NT Live, 2012), a 'glorious comedy' (*Twelfth Night,* RSC Live, 2018), a 'drama of kingship, power, and comic excess' (*Henry IV Part I,* RSC Live, 2014) function to either relate these works to, or estrange them from, the categories of comedy, history and tragedy popularly associated with Shakespearean performance. However, as these examples and those cited above illustrate, presenter monologues often complicate the idea that plays adhere to one fixed generic category. Rather, as interpretive thresholds, these descriptions invite cinema audiences to read the play through a range of generic ('fable', 'comedy', 'kingship', 'comic'), qualitative ('strange', 'glorious', 'brash', 'beautiful') affective ('tears', 'laughter', 'comic excess') lenses. The value of Shakespearean performance is located here within a kind of 'something for everyone' marketing model, in which each play is condensed to isolate its most dramatically compelling, and affective, themes and to frame these as 'value-enhancement[s]' for the broadcast performance.[143]

Further to framing the production in descriptive terms, it is often during the presenter monologue in which calls for social media feedback from cinema audiences are made. Prompts for social media engagement draw on the liminality of the presenter monologue, offering an opportunity to invert the relationship in which the presenter – a quasi-representative of the broadcasting institution – addresses the audience by inviting the cinema audience to speak back to the institution. Typically accompanying these calls for feedback on the theatrical institution's social media platforms (and occasionally via email or via a website with a digital feedback form) is a caption advertising a pre-selected Twitter hashtag used by companies to collate responses to the broadcast production. In the Shakespearean canon thus far, these usually have taken the form of a hashtag which begins with the name of the broadcasting company followed by an abbreviation of the name of the play: for example, #RSCTempest or #NTLear. These institutionally sanctioned hashtags and the trope of prompting social media engagement have garnered attention in academic criticism of Shakespearean broadcasts. Erin Sullivan has questioned what appears to be theatrical institutions imposing parameters on audiences' digital engagement through the authorisation of hashtags, suggesting instead that Twitter in particular is a productive space for disparate audiences to form their own communities in responding to, and

[143] Genette, p. 201.

anticipating, Shakespearean broadcasts. Using the Kenneth Branagh Theatre Company Live (KTBC Live) *Romeo and Juliet* (2016) as her example, Sullivan collated a wealth of responses to the broadcast posted to Twitter and argued that 'most tweeters did not use KBTCLive's institutionally branded hashtag, #BranaghTheatreLive, opting instead for the community-generated and Shakespeare-focused #RomeoandJuliet.'[144]

Sullivan's work is helpful here not just for its attention to the ways in which disparate cinema audiences construct their own response communities using digital spaces, but as a reminder of the practical limitations of the broadcast presenter's call for social media feedback. Soliciting responses on social media has become a convention in a range of theatre broadcasts: however, Sullivan's research suggests that such engagements from cinema audience members are often 'intended more for one another than as lip-service to an institution.'[145] In this instance, institutional attempts to regulate the shape and scale of the discussion were overshadowed by the impulse to respond as, and within, a self-fashioned digital community. What does this mean for the ways in which a call for social media engagement may shape Shakespearean meaning for cinema audiences? The claiming of digital spaces for responses that interact with other cinema spectators – despite the attempts of the theatrical institution to shape and direct these responses – supports Rachael Nicholas' argument that 'rather than being passive receivers of Shakespeare's value through performance, audiences are active agents in the creation and circulation of Shakespeare's cultural value.'[146]

Thus far, the presenter monologue has emerged as a convention characterised by its liminality both in terms of bridging the gap between the broadcasting institution and its audiences. There is also a particular instance of this paratext which is typically used to bridge gaps between paratextual elements and the production itself. While my study of paratextual elements thus far has been governed by their chronological position, the continual recurrence of the broadcast presenter poses a methodological problem. An attempt to fully understand the role of the broadcast presenter, and the use of presenter

[144] Sullivan, 'The Audience is Present', p. 66.

[145] Ibid.

[146] Rachael Nicholas 'Encountering Shakespeare Elsewhere', p. 16

monologues, must appreciate that this paratextual element is one which – by virtue of its ability to negotiate transitions between paratexts – is fragmented across the paratextual makeup of the broadcast. RSC Live broadcasts, for example, feature a static shot of the stage with a voiceover from the broadcast presenter immediately before the performance begins, after the start of the interval and before the resumption of the performance's second act. In incorporating a discussion of this type of presenter monologue here, therefore, I leap over a number of intervening paratexts to consider the role of the broadcast presenter in framing these transitional moments which anticipate and reflect upon the action of the performance.

The role of the broadcast presenter as being heard but not seen is significant for the function of this particular presenter monologue, one which distinctly mirrors Bruster and Weimann's description of the prologue as 'usher[ing] its early modern audience over an imaginary threshold.'[147] By documenting a static shot of the stage, this paratextual element pairs a visual representation of the play's setting with the verbal exposition provided by the presenter. The style of voiceover narrating a pertinent image or images – a trope whose effect I consider further in Chapter Five – inherits from the what Louise Spencer and Vinicius Navarro call the 'truth-telling' authority of documentary filmmaking.[148] Audiences attuned to the conventions of the voiceover in film and television would likely understand this paratext as one which conveys 'major information', often with an important relationship to the image it accompanies.[149] The voiceover therefore serves as a tool of authentication, as well as a confirmation of the speaker's authority over image. In RSC Live broadcasts, this authentication is used to serve as an entrance, or re-entrance, into the Shakespearean narrative. In *Cymbeline* (2016), for example, Klein's voice prefaced an image of the RST stage pre-set with a withering tree stump at its centre: 'sit back, and prepare to enter a world of abducted siblings and forbidden love, disguise and

[147] Bruster and Weimann, p. viii; p. 37.

[148] Louise Spencer and Vinicius Navarro, *Crafting Truth: Documentary Form and Meaning* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2011).

[149] Ibid, p. 18.

deception, in England, Rome, and – in a while – Milford Haven.'[150] This description, as well as establishing key settings in the play, interacted with the *mise-en-scène* to consolidate *Cymbeline*'s fairytale-style themes listed by Klein. As with earlier presenter monologues, this transition into the world of the play was framed in experiential terms for the audience. Prompting viewers to 'sit back', Klein adopted a gently ushering authority that worked to amplify a feeling of luxury within the broadcast experience.

The passivity of Klein's command perhaps also belied an anticipated anxiety on the part of the cinema audience: addressing fears that Shakespeare (and particularly a lesser-known work) demands active and scrutinising attention to be understandable. Klein's presenter monologue instead framed the Shakespearean narrative as an affective and captivating fairy-tale world, one which would lead the cinema viewer by the hand into, and through, *Cymbeline*'s wandering geographic landscape ('England, Rome, and […] Milford Haven). In doing so, this example and the presenter monologue more broadly draws from the affective anticipation of watching audiences. As Peter Holland observes, 'for many of us, that time before the lighting states alter is always thrilling […] It is a pure experience of liminality and transition, of the threshold of the performance being formulated.'[151] While Holland's attention is to Shakespeare's own methods of opening plays, the heightened sense of expectation is built-in to these presenter monologues which are themselves an addition to the 'liminality and transition' typically signalled by the dimming of house lights in a theatre.[152] The same is also true of presenter monologues which bridge either side of the interval, functioning to seal off and then re-establish the narrative world in terms which frame the experience affectively for cinema audiences.

While *Cymbeline* offers a more expository example of this style of presenter monologue, perhaps suggesting that this paratextual convention emerges from the RSC's pledge to broadcast each of Shakespeare's First Folio plays plus *Pericles* and the anxiety of lesser-performed works, it is

[150] *Cymbeline*, directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 28 September 2016.

[151] Peter Holland, 'Openings', *Shakespeare and the Making of Theatre*, edited by Stuart Hampton-Reeves and Bridget Escolme (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 14 – 31, p. 24.

[152] Ibid.

important to note that this style of presenter monologue is also featured in RSC Live's broadcasts of more culturally ubiquitous plays.[153] Moreover, this also includes those which have their own dramatic threshold devices built-in to the play text, as in the examples of the Chorus to *Henry V* (2014) and the prologue to *Romeo and Juliet* (2018). In this latter broadcast, Klein's voiceover introduced the prologue to the play by providing further detail on the familial relationships between characters: 'The Montagues, including Romeo and his cousin Benvolio, loathe the Capulets, the family of Juliet and her cousin, Tybalt.'[154] This example, with its outlining of the play's two households, demonstrates the functional intersections between this type of presenter monologue and the prologue as a Shakespearean performance paratext.[155] Furthermore, the attention to narrative detail perhaps anticipated that this broadcast would draw a number of younger viewers, particularly those studying the play in secondary education. In this educational function, the format of this type of presenter monologue borrowing from the authority of voiceovers becomes doubly significant. Presented as 'major information' about the play, the rehearsal of these narrative details align the broadcast presenter with the educational tone of revision.[156] The result is a paratext that serves the RSC's institutional identity across a range of plays; from offering exposition to frame performances of Shakespeare's lesser known works, to fulfilling their ethos of education through some of the playwright's most familiar ones.

These examples illustrate how institutional identity can be read through every aspect of presenter monologues as well as through the figure of broadcast presenter herself. As the connecting tissue of a broadcast, presenter monologues function to negotiate Shakespearean value throughout a mediated performance. Where the liminality and intermediality of the broadcast presenter has previously seen critical assessments prioritise her experiential function, in this section I have sought examples in which presenter monologues also shape Shakespearean meaning in surprising, subliminal, and significant ways. Framing interpretively loaded moments within the broadcast, the presenter

[153] Wyver, *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company*, p. 159 – 160.

[154] *Romeo and Juliet*, directed for the screen by Bridget Caldwell, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 18 July 2018.

[155] William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, edited by Jill L. Levenson (Oxford: OUP, 2000), *Prologue*, l. 1.

[156] Spencer and Navarro, p. 18.

monologue is as integral to understanding the meanings created by a broadcast performance as are early modern prologues and inductions to their companion playtexts. Moreover, as the 'face' of the theatrical institution – if only, in the case of NT Live, for a handful of broadcasts – the presenter has a resounding impact on shaping an audience's perception of Shakespearean value and its relation to the cultural cachet of the RSC and NT. The liminal role of the broadcast presenter, as well as the interpretive potential of the presenter monologue, makes this paratextual element one whose framing potential we neglect at the cost of understanding how these institutions produce and circulate Shakespearean value in contemporary performance.

Live Interviews

> *The additional elements were intended to offer the cinema-goer privileged access to aspects of the production process and interpretation of the staging that they might otherwise not be able to access.*[157]

Of all broadcast paratexts, the live interview is arguably the most useful in approaching a debate that has emerged with increasing importance over the first decade of Shakespearean live theatre broadcasts. Academics and journalists alike have questioned how the interpretive agency of cinema audience and how modes of viewing are built into the mediation of the theatrical performance. [158] Thus

[157] Wyver, 'Screening the RSC Stage', p. 297.

[158] The phrase 'privileged access' recurs in Martin Barker's discussion of broadcast spectatorship, categorising the two types of audience engagement he identified from his own research as 'Immersive' and 'Expert' positions in *Live to Your Local Cinema,* pp. 65 – 66. Rachael Nicholas responds in her thesis by complicating Barker's dual model. While Nicholas's thesis takes as its central subject the role of the viewer in live broadcasts, she dedicates a section to questions of audience agency in relation to paratexts, in 'Encountering Shakespeare Elsewhere', pp. 71 – 77. Erin Sullivan has posed questions about how/whether a broadcast viewer's experience and interpretive strategies are shaped by the 'liveness' of the event in 'The Audience is Present'. Furthermore, the proliferation of streamed theatre in response to the forced closure of UK theatres during the global Covid-19 pandemic opened up a new strand of public interest in the question of audience agency and broadcast viewing habits: see David Barnett, 'Will coronavirus change the way we consume culture forever?', *Independent*, 28 May 2020 <https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/long-reads/coronavirus-virtual-gallery-museum-stream-theatre-video-games-a9513966.html> [accessed 20 August 2020]. Responding to the closure of theatres, The University of Exeter in collaboration with Creation Theatre headed a research report funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) which sought audience responses to the theatre work streamed online

far, however, studies have largely focussed on the impact of filmic mediation of the productions themselves with little attention to how paratextual material – least of all the live interview, which often offers ready-made frameworks of interpretation from key creative figures such as directors and designers – shapes a viewer's interpretive engagement. In John Wyver's terms, quoted above, all the paratextual elements of an RSC Live broadcast are intended to contribute to increasing the value of the cinema experience by offering 'privileged access.'[159] Interpretive frames offered by the live interview have not, however, been greeted as emboldening or enriching by all critics and consumers of the medium. Indeed, Wyver's justification of paratexts in these terms is used to counter criticisms he received from viewers of RSC Live broadcasts, viewers who Wyver notes 'would prefer the broadcasts to be plain and unaccompanied.'[160] Peter Kirwan has argued that the 'explanatory interviews' included in NT Live's *Coriolanus* (2014) belied an 'attempt to ensure that interpretation is as homogenous as possible.'[161] With critics arguing that this paratextual element operates at both ends of a spectrum of spectator agency, clearly closer attention to the modes of engagement invited by the live interview is essential to elucidate one of the most contentious issues to emerge from the live broadcast medium.

Where they feature within a broadcast, live interviews usually follow immediately from a broadcast's opening presenter monologue, with the presenter engaging in a discussion of the production with one or more of the key creatives. Topics of discussion typically centre on the theatre production, including questions about setting, design, narrative, casting and musical choices. What are the implications of imposing an 'interpretation of the staging' onto cinema audiences in the form of a detailed explanation from the production's director, or another creative? If, as Anne Ubersfeld observes, part of the 'pleasure' of being a spectator is in the 'understanding […] the analysis of signs, [and] the semiotic functioning', does an outlining of the staging from an authorial figure such as the theatre

during the UK's lockdown. In Pascale Aebischer and Rachael Nicholas, *Digital Theatre Transformation: A Case Study and Digital Toolkit,* Initial report published August 2020.

[159] Wyver, 'Screening the RSC Stage', p. 297.

[160] Ibid.

[161] Peter Kirwan, 'Coriolanus Performed by the Donmar Warehouse (Review)', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 32.2 (2014), pp. 275 – 278, p. 276.

director pre-empt and neuter the analytical pleasure of the cinema experience?[162] In this section, I outline trends in the use of this convention before exploring two examples of pre-show live interviews which took different approaches to framing the setting of their respective productions. Drawing from the variety of interpretive frames offered in these examples, I contend that the live interview has a particularly contingent relationship to institutional identity and is not easily defined as facilitating a single type of interpretive engagement. Rather, the live interview raises issues about the role of the cinema audience as consumers *and* producers of Shakespearean meanings and value.

While the examples I discuss are of interviews with the production's director, live interviews occasionally feature other creative figures (often designers or music directors) and do not necessarily centre on the broadcasted performance. A cluster of examples around the Shakespeare400 celebrations of 2016, for example, saw directors and prominent figures within the RSC and NT discuss upcoming events and the activities of the company in anticipation of that centenary year. Despite varying topics of conversation, the liveness of this paratextual element has proved a popular constant in its use by both companies. In a style that evokes the on-the-pitch punditry of live sports coverage, these interviews are predominantly conducted live or with the pretence of liveness (an interview on the stage, for example, dressed to maintain visual continuity with the live material of the broadcast). An exception from NT Live's *Timon of Athens* (2012) proves that liveness is an assumed norm. The interview for *Timon*, which was shown during the interval, saw presenter Emma Freud and Nicholas Hytner introduce their discussion by emphasising a clear temporal rupture in the live broadcast: 'We're [here …] the day before the live broadcast,' Freud announced from the empty Olivier stage, 'so welcome to yesterday.'[163] Despite the fact that the interview was self-consciously pre-recorded, it was characterised by visual continuity with the broadcast (Freud was dressed similarly and still sported a clipboard and microphone)

[162] Ubersfeld, p. 132.

[163] *Timon of Athens*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *NT Live*, Olivier Theatre at the Royal National Theatre, London, 1 November 2012.

and similarly 'live' filmic grammar (minimal shot changes, no attempt to stylise the interaction between the speakers).[164]

The live interview has proved consistently less popular in NT Live broadcasts than in RSC Live. Including the as-live interval interviews for *Timon* and *Coriolanus* (2014), 31% of all NT Live's Shakespearean broadcasts used this paratext compared with 79% of RSC Live broadcasts.[165] Against the relative consistency of RSC Live's use of the live interview, there is a clear trend which emerges over the first decade of the NT Live Shakespearean canon. All instances of live (and as-live) interviews occurred within the first five years of NT Live's Shakespeare broadcasts, spanning from their debut of *All's Well that End's Well* to *Coriolanus* in 2014. After this period, the prevalence of live interviews drops off in favour of pre-recorded short films. As with the company's initial choice of using prominent actors as broadcast presenters, the early flourishing of the live interview may be attributed to a desire to replicate the paratextual styles used within the tried-and-tested Met opera broadcasts. James Steichen lists 'artist interviews' among the '"special features" of the [Met's] broadcasts,' while Paul Heyer notes that 'interviews with the performers and occasionally with the conductor' signal the Met opera broadcast's 'postmodern emphasis on the production process itself.'[166] This shift away from live interviews towards pre-show short films may also be a result of the increasing devaluation of liveness in the medium. Quoting research conducted by Arts Council England, Pascale Aebischer and Susanne Greenhalgh speculate that 'if, in the early broadcasts by Shakespeare's Globe and NT Live, the simultaneity of performance, capture and reception dominated the paratextual framing of broadcasts […], a more recent survey of audiences in England "suggests that in fact 'liveness' does not drive

[164] There are also instances of comparable paratexts in which the director answers questions to-camera in a pre-recorded short film, as in RSC Live's *Cymbeline* (2016) for example. While the content of these short films typically overlaps with live interviews, the pre-recorded quality and exclusion of the broadcast presenter within these videos aligns them more closely with the conventions of the pre-recorded short film.

[165] In addition to *Coriolanus* and *Timon*, NT Live broadcasts of *All's Well that Ends Well* (2009), *King Lear* (2011) and *Othello* (2013) all featured a live interview with the latter three broadcasts placing the interview before the performance.

[166] Steichen, p. 596.

demand for Live-to-Digital, nor does it affect the quality of audience experience.'"[167] The trajectory traced by Aebischer and Greenhalgh and supported by data from ACE's report is tellingly echoed NT Live's move from live to pre-recorded interview content.

Comparatively, the live interview has remained a staple of RSC Live broadcasts since the company's debut in 2013. There is also no comparable trend that shows a decline in the liveness of interviews as in NT Live broadcasts: only five RSC Live broadcasts featured a pre-recorded interview rather than a live one, distributed across five years spanning from 2014 – 2019. The continuing use of live interviews within RSC Live broadcasts functions as a further example through which the company have embedded paratextual consistency into their broadcasting project. There is also a practical consideration to acknowledge when tracing the inclusion of the live interview in a majority of RSC Live broadcasts thus far. While NT Live has broadcast productions from theatres across London, and occasionally from regional and international theatres, RSC Live's documentation of only in-house productions presumably enables more direct access to the creative figures such as directors and designers.[168] The consistency of this paratextual component within the RSC Live canon, therefore, also reflects their contained and comparatively insular broadcast programming.

Although there are differences in how often the two companies use live interviews, the form taken by these interviews sees certain topics recur across both canons. The majority of live interviews open with a question which invites an introduction to the play through either the lens of relevance ('Why did you chose to stage this play now?') or exposition ('Tell me about the play'). Ensuing discussions frequently cover the production's setting, design elements, contemporary relevance, and casting choices; although the latter is usually reserved for productions which feature a recognisable or 'big name' actor. A running order script for RSC Live's debut broadcast of *Richard II* illustrates the typical

[167] Pascale Aebischer and Susanne Greenhalgh, 'Introduction', p. 7. Reidy et al. are quoted in Aebischer and Greenhalgh's introduction, which uses data conclusions drawn from 'Live-to-Digital: Understanding the Impact of Digital Developments in Theatre on Audiences, Production and Distribution', published October 2016.

[168] For example, *The Madness of George III* (2019) was broadcast from the Nottingham Playhouse, while NT Live also broadcast *Of Mice and Men* (2015) from the Longacre Theatre on Broadway.

outline of a live interview. The script retains a draft of the questions asked by presenter Suzy Klein to director Gregory Doran:

> Why did you choose to begin your time as artistic director with *Richard II*? When have you set the production, and why? So is it a play that's safely set in the past? And you're bringing the RSC very much into the 21st century with a cinema broadcast […] So is it a one-off, or are there plans for more? […] Why David Tennant?[169]

While this script gives a bare outline – presumably an autocue or printed script and clipboard from which Klein improvised and expanded her questions – the concerns of establishing the play's relevance, setting, narrative, and appeal (here in the form of Tennant's casting) are clear. Moreover, this live interview marked the company's broadcasting debut with a dual sense of event. Klein highlighted in her questioning that the broadcast is not only the first to stream the RSC's work live to cinemas but also marked the first production directed by Doran in his new role as Artistic Director. This suggests that a further imperative of the live interview is to amplify a feeling of eventness, further suggesting the extent to which this paratextual form inherits from comparable media such as live sports coverage.[170] This function is particularly prominent in the cluster of pre-2016 broadcasts alluded to above, which saw NT Live and RSC Live use live interviews to announce forthcoming events to celebrate the centenary of Shakespeare's death. Geoffrey Way argues that, for many cinema viewers, 'liveness is […] central to […] experiences and perceptions of the performance and its eventness,' in a relationship which emphasises the interdependency of liveness and eventness frequently capitalised upon by the live interview.[171] In these instances, the liveness of the interview and the authoritative figure of an institutional representative (Doran as the RSC's Artistic Director, for example) combine to heighten the sense of anticipation.

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[169] Wyver, 'Richard II: LIVE FROM STRATFORD', n.p.

[170] The role of the broadcast presenter in emphasising and constructing liveness is considered by Barker, who argues that 'presenters often go out of their way to *signal* liveness' in *Live to Your Local Cinema*, p. 47, emphasis original.

[171] Way, p. 395.

Amplifying the eventness of the broadcast has ramifications for the performance's perceived value, echoing the idea of 'privileged access' proposed by Wyver and also Martin Barker.[172] However, as Klein's questions above illustrate, the live interview also depends on the impression of added value created by hearing from an 'authorial' figure such as the director or designer of a production. This paratext capitalises on the idea of a glimpse behind-the-scenes of the production, with directors and designers often explicitly detailing the creative choices and their intended effect. While interviews conducted *literally* behind the scenes were confined largely to early broadcasts from both NT Live (*All's Well* [2009], for example, featured backstage interviews) and RSC Live (*Two Gentlemen* [2014] saw Klein interview Doran outside the theatre auditorium, near the RSC's giftshop), the voyeuristic access promised by this paratext again shares a close relationship with the conventions of the Met Opera broadcasts. Barker emphasises the Met's implicit linking of the live interview with a rare feeling of unlimited access: '[c]inema audiences get taken back-stage, both before (with rather gooey interviews with directors and singers) and between acts.'[173] In these examples, the setting of the live interview emphasised a feeling of 'inside knowledge' already inherent to the 'exclusive' content of the interviews themselves. In this regard, they perhaps come closest to fulfilling a comparison commonly levelled at broadcast paratexts: that these materials replicate the theatrical programme which could not be made widely available to cinema audiences.[174]

[172] Wyver, 'Screening the RSC Stage', p. 297; Barker, p. 65.

[173] Barker, p. 20.

[174] John Wyver makes an explicit comparison between RSC Live's broadcast paratexts and theatrical programmes, recalling his thought process behind the first season of broadcasts, in which: '[s]elling theatre programmes in all of the cinemas for a single night is impractical, and so the paratexts are intended to replicate background elements, such as an interview with the director or a detailed noted about design', in 'Screening the RSC Stage', p. 297. The comparison is also one which recurs in other critical considerations of broadcast paratexts. For example, Laurie E. Osborne comments that digital programmes created by both NT Live and RSC Live are 'new forms of the theatrical programme' and are inherently linked with 'the pre-performance interviews,' in 'Epilogue: Revisiting Liveness', p. 219. It likewise underlines Erin Sullivan's lament that 'this sometimes heavy-handed framing [of broadcast paratexts] is rather like being forced to read the program before the performance begins,' in '"The forms of things unknown"', p. 635.

How far does this comparison with a theatrical programme help to explore the framing function of the live interview? Moreover, what bearing does the relationship between these two types of paratextual material have on the kinds of interpretive engagement invited by cinema audiences? Two examples of live interviews help to address these questions by demonstrating the varying approaches taken by directors when discussing the creative concept behind productions. In the case of NT Live's *Othello* (2013), for example, director Nicholas Hytner gave only glimpsing references to the production's setting and creative choices. Hytner's production used visual references to emphasise the proximity of Cyprus to the Middle East, with Othello's campaign against 'the general enemy, Ottoman,' clearly paralleled with contemporary conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.[175] Othello, Iago, and the Venetian army wore desert camouflage uniforms, and metal portacabins doubled as military offices decked with maps of the Persian Gulf states. Christie Carson reflects on the recognisability of this production's setting, giving a 'clear indication of the hierarchical structure of an army surrounded by the barren and hostile dessert of the land they occupy.'[176] The clarity of the play's contemporary analogy was contrasted by the ambiguous framing of Hytner's live interview. When asked by presenter Emma Freud about the setting for the production, Hytner response was knowingly coy: Venice was now 'London, maybe?' and Cyprus 'a foreign army base.'[177]

Responding to the 'concretely defined stage world' of this *Othello*, Hytner's mediation of his own creative choices acted as a playful interpretive prompt for cinema audiences.[178] It was also a far cry from the detailed notes and pensive exploration that might be expected of a theatre programme. Rather, Hytner's choice to tease at – but not explicitly pinpoint – the production's contemporary analogy invited cinema audiences to determine the 'political and social immediacy' of the production's setting

[175] William Shakespeare, *Othello, The Moore of Venice*, edited by Michael Neill (Oxford: OUP, 2008), I.3.50.

[176] Christie Carson, 'Creating a Critical Model for the Twenty-first Century', *Shakespeare and the Digital World: Redefining Scholarship and Practice*, edited by Christie Carson and Peter Kirwan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 226-37, p. 235.

[177] *Othello*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *NT Live*, Olivier Stage at the National Theatre, London, 26 September 2013.

[178] Abigail Rokison-Woodall, *Shakespeare in the Theatre: Nicholas Hytner* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), p. 3.

for themselves.[179] There was also a notably performative tone to Hytner's ambiguity that is all the more amplified when we consider that the context of his role in the interview is to talk about *his own* creative choices. In turning the question back to Freud in the phrase, 'London, maybe?', Hytner enacted a faux-naivety that positioned Freud herself as a proxy for cinema audiences: shifting the impetus of creative interpretation onto his interlocutor and, by extension, the broadcast's cinema audiences. In addressing this invitation for cinema audiences to infer the production's allegorical locations themselves, Hytner plays upon what Gareth White has termed 'a "horizon of participation."'[180] Proposing the term as a means through which to understand audience participation in live theatre, White's extenuation of the 'horizon(s) of expectation' commonly cited in reception studies is nonetheless useful as a way to approach Hytner's live interview, and this paratext more broadly.[181] Described as the pressure which arises when a 'moment of experience presses upon us to take action,' White's horizon of participation can be applied to the interpretive invitation issued by Hytner as a result of turning the question of the play's setting back to Freud, and of his deliberate opacity concerning the production's relocation of the Turkish wars in Cyrpus to contemporary conflicts in the Middle East.[182] In framing the action of the production in terms which challenge the cinema viewer's interpretive capacity, therefore, Hytner's interview broadened the cinema audiences' horizons of participation by teasing that the production involved some kind of contemporary analogy to Britain's military involvement overseas.

Hytner's vagueness is not characteristic of all live interviews. Typically, across the handful of examples from NT Live and the plethora from RSC Live, directors and creative agents involved in the

[179] Rokison-Woodall, p. 3.

[180] Gareth White, *Audience Participation in Theatre: Aesthetics of the Invitation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 165.

[181] As I consider in the introduction to this thesis, Susan Bennett's work builds on the literary reception theory pioneered by Hans Robert Jauss, who originated the term 'horizon of expectations' as a way of understanding how contemporary assumptions, ideas, and established literary conventions such as genre work to mediate the reading of a text. In *Towards an Aesthetic of Reception*, p. 30. My use of the term here follows Bennett's appropriation of Jauss as a way of understanding how audiences approach a theatrical or broadcast event through layers of mediation. See Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 166.

[182] White, p. 165.

production talk openly about their choices in staging the performance. RSC Live's *Twelfth Night* (2018), for example, featured director Christopher Luscombe discussing the design and concept for that production in a level of detail which entirely contrasts with Hytner's. This may in part derive from the difference in directorial styles between Hytner and Luscombe. As I considered above, Hytner's Shakespearean work at the National (and beyond at the Bridge Theatre) is characterised by contemporary analogy. Indeed, Abigail Rokison-Woodall argues that the 'hallmarks' of Hytner's Shakespeare productions are 'the detailed, socially-realistic *contemporary setting*, freshness of interpretation, reinterpretation of characters and alteration and excision of elements of the text to provide clarity and modernity.'[183] Luscombe's recent work with the RSC – three productions of which have been broadcast by the company – shows a marked contrast in his preference for historicised period settings. I have explored the importance of emphasising historical setting in two of Luscombe's productions, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Love's Labour's Won*, in my discussion of opening montages above. Where these productions had seen the plays staged either side of the First World War, Luscombe's late-Victorian *Twelfth Night* stood as another example of the director's penchant for crafting historically specific stage worlds.

Luscombe's setting proved a defining feature of the production not only in the broadcast's live interview, but also for theatre critics. Michael Billington lamented that the production 'plays too heavily on its Victorian setting,' observing that Luscombe's 'determination to cram in as many Victorian references as possible is […] taken to excess.'[184] Natasha Tripney of *The Stage* noted that the 'visually rich production […] risked looking traditional and maybe even a little tame.'[185] These reviews illustrate how the difference between Hytner and Luscombe's styles can also manifest in two distinct types of

[183] Rokison-Woodall, p. 147, emphasis added.

[184] Michael Billington, 'Twelfth Night Review – Fun and Fury from Ade Edmonson and Kara Tointon at the RSC', *Guardian*, 10 November 2017 <theguardian.com/stage/2017/nov/10/twelfth-night-review-ade-edmondson-kara-tointon-royal-shakespeare-theatre> [accessed 31 July 2020]

[185] Natasha Tripney, 'Twelfth Night – "Lavish and Uplifting"', *Stage*, 10 November 2017 <https://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/twelfth-night-review-at-the-royal-shakespeare-theatre-stratford--lavish-and-uplifting> [accessed 31 July 2020]

Shakespeare created through their productions. Where Hytner's contemporary settings and textual editing works to galvanise the Shakespearean work and to visualise modern political parallels, Luscombe's preference for recognisably historical – and visually lavish – settings often aligns his Shakespeare productions a conservative sense of nostalgia and traditionalism. This difference in artistic style manifested in equally distinct live interviews from both directors. While Hytner's provocative and performatively naïve responses acted as an interpretive prompt to cinema audiences, Luscombe's live interview was characterised by a thorough exploration of the production's settings and the creative choices that underpinned them – prompting questions about what kind of engagement is demanded from cinema audiences.

Suzy Klein's interview with Luscombe opened with a question which encompassed both narrative and setting, with Klein asking the director to 'give us a sense of […] the world of this play.'[186] Luscombe's response – like Hytner's – hinted at turning the question back to Klein: 'It's a play, I suppose, about twins, isn't it?' This example again shows that the live interview is not only a productive space of meaning-making on the part of the creative figure being interviewed: rather, a characteristic feature of this paratext is the ability to position the broadcast presenter as an audience member. Luscombe and Hytner each took the opportunity to address their respective presenters as embodiments of the cinema audience, questioning their interpretive capacity in a way that challenged viewers to ask questions of themselves (*is* Twelfth Night first and foremost 'about twins'? What are the implications of Hytner's setting the Venetian court of *Othello* in London?). However, while Hytner's framing of Venice as 'London, maybe?' set a coy and playful tone towards the play's contemporary relevance, by contrast Luscombe's assertion of 'twins' being the play's central theme was crucially affirmative. The semantic difference between 'maybe?' and 'isn't it?' is important here: where the former acts to question or cast doubt over an assumption, the latter ends a statement by looking for an affirmative response from the interlocutor. In other words, where Hytner's question playfully problematised his own artistic authority over an interpretation of the production, Luscombe's used Klein to consolidate it.

[186] *Twelfth Night*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 14 February 2017.

This sense of Luscombe's creative ownership of the production continued, culminating in his discussion of the late Victorian setting. Citing the tone of the play as 'desperately romantic,' Luscombe stated that his motivation to set the production in the late nineteenth century arose from his impression of the era as 'the most romantic period of all.'[187] He elaborated with references to iconic cultural figures: 'I pictured Olivia as being a sort of reference to Queen Victoria [in mourning]' and 'Oscar Wilde was a great reference really, he's a very useful touchstone.'[188] The establishment of these historical allusions positioned Luscombe as the primary mediator between cinema audiences and the production's own world-building design elements. Moreover, the tethering of these figures to themes from *Twelfth Night* (from Victoria 'wallowing in bereavement' to Wilde's 'difficult love life') meant that Luscombe offered interpretive frames not only for the concept and design of the production, but for the networks of relationship and themes within the play itself.[189] Klein's questioning then prompted Luscombe to further elaborate on the relationships within the play through the lens of the production's historical concept. In response to a question about how the 'empire, hierarchy, that sort of stiff sense of people belonging to the right class' translates within the Shakespearean world of the play, Luscombe focused on Olivia's household.[190] 'I think it's ever so useful with Shakespeare,' Luscombe observed, 'to put him in a period where there is a great sense of hierarchy […] there's a very obvious place for – Malvolio is the butler and he would have been the butler in Shakespeare's day, he's the butler in Victoria's England.'[191]

Separated from its context within the broadcast, the transcript of this exchange between Klein and Luscombe loses some of the original irony with which the broadcast presenter recalled the 'stiff sense of people belonging to the right class' in the Victorian era.[192] Nonetheless, Luscombe's detailed historical allusion and the importance of a rigid class system implicated this production within a problematic brand of nostalgia. In drawing a parallel between the Victorian setting and Shakespeare's

[187] *Twelfth Night*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*.

[188] Ibid.

[189] Ibid.

[190] Ibid.

[191] Ibid.

[192] Ibid.

own time, this live interview framed the production as channelling a double-pronged nostalgic value: both for the 'Merrie England' of the first Elizabethan reign and the romanticised class system of the Victorian period. Beyond its implications for the interpretive autonomy of the cinema viewer, therefore, this particular live interview situated Shakespearean performance within a familiar nationalist narrative. Reflecting the ability of his plays to encompass and refract multiple historical eras, Luscombe's foregrounding of how the first Elizabethan and Victorian periods meet within this *Twelfth Night* worked to confirm ideas of Shakespeare's centrality to British national identity.[193] The nostalgic overtones of this live interview can also be read as capitalising on the popularity of historical design with the RSC's anticipated audiences. Drawing on observations from RSC Front of House staff, Ella Hawkins argues that '[s]ome theatre audience members clearly view a historical setting as being the conventional (or 'proper') approach to realising [Shakespeare's] works in performance.'[194] If, as Hawkins suggests, RSC audiences are more likely to favour non-contemporary settings for productions, Luscombe's live interview catered for this anticipated audience desire by focalising and explicating the production's historical references.

A live interview as extensive and discursive as Klein and Luscombe's raises important questions about the horizon of participation set by the framing of this broadcast. Cinema audiences were prompted to read the rich network of allusions onto, and through, this *Twelfth Night* in a mode which arguably neutered their own interpretive capacities. In particular productions, framing like that offered by Luscombe may also attempt to deflect attention from more problematical creative choices – for example, the director did little to address the context of British imperialism and violence against colonial India inherent to the historical context and setting of this *Twelfth Night*.[195] This detailing of the

[193] The relationship between Shakespeare, his cultural afterlife and the performance of his works, and British national identity is the central concern of Michael Dobson's *The Making of the National Poet*.

[194] Hawkins, 'The Significance of Jacobethanism', p. 86.

[195] While the production was not explicitly set in India, the casting of British-Indian actors in the roles of Viola (Dinita Gohil), Sebastian (Esh Alladi) and Feste (Beruce Khan) together with the production's design and historical allusions set an uncomfortably imperialist tone. Moreover, though it was not addressed by Luscombe in the broadcast's live interview, Feste was characterised as an allusion to Mohammed Abdul Karim, an Indian attendant to Queen Victoria who became known as her 'Munshi'. The production's design also alluded to Orsino

conceptual framework for the production may appear to anticipate cinema viewers who are less informed, or less capable of unpicking a production's visual and aural clues for themselves, than their in-theatre counterparts. However, such blanket statements about the types of engagement invited by this paratextual element do not adequately address the diverse realities of broadcast spectatorship, nor the vast differences in the productions themselves. Where Hytner's contemporary setting would have been immediately recognisable to cinema audiences, fashions from and visual allusions to the late nineteenth century and their meanings are not as accessible one hundred years on. The historical specificity of Luscombe's production was perhaps judged as requiring a more thorough and explanatory framing than was Hytner's contemporary *Othello*. Differences such as these highlights the fact that – despite operating within the discrete institutional identities of the NT and RSC – each example of the live interview within the Shakespearean broadcast canon responds to an individual production. In other words, although Hytner and Luscombe's interviews stand at opposing ends of a spectrum of interpretive engagement, two contrasting uses of the same paratextual element problematise any attempt to state definitively whether the live interview poses a more or less engaged mode of viewing.

In this section, I have demonstrated that the live interview is an especially productive paratextual element through which to explore questions of audience agency. While trends and conventions have emerged across both NT Live and RSC Live's use of the live interview, the contingent factors of the broadcast production and the director (and sometimes creatives) interviewed has shown that this is a framing device that is not easily characterised as universally inviting either a passive or an active mode of viewing for cinema audiences. Indeed, the opposing examples explored in this chapter, and the great variety of live interviews within the Shakespearean broadcast canon, contributes to a strand of critical work that challenges the application of this passive/active engagement binary to digital audiences altogether. Building on Peter Kirwan's argument that the live interview to *Coriolanus* (2014) exposed NT Live's 'anxiety over reception', Rachael Nicholas asserts that even cinema audiences faced with heavy-handed paratextual framing are not necessarily passive receptors of the meanings proposed

(Nicholas Bishop) as a Byronic figure, at one point showing him in a gown which closely resembled the portrait of Lord Byron in traditional Albanian dress.

by broadcasting theatre companies.[196] Rather, as Nicholas observes, if 'modes of participation can alter how audiences value Shakespearean performance, then audiences are also active agents, through their individual engagements and valuations, in the wider circulation of Shakespeare's cultural value.'[197] Approaching cinema audiences as 'active agents' in mediating the meanings of the broadcast experience – with an awareness of the spaces on which these engagements are performed, either digitally on social media or more abstractly in a viewer's reading of the production – frames the live interview and ideas of its 'privileged access' in a new light.[198] The frameworks for interpretation offered to cinema audiences by live interviews are perhaps closer to prompts than to authorial impositions, which may be either applied to their reading of the production or totally challenged by it. The spaces in which cinema viewers engage with and remediate the meanings offered by the live interview necessarily fall outside of the paratextual makeup of the broadcast. As a consequence, while this paratext may sometimes function as an attempt to impose authorial readings onto cinema viewers, the frameworks for interpretation embedded within these interviews are subject to the critique and remediation of broadcast audiences.

Pre-Show Short Films

The NT Live broadcast of *Timon of Athens* (2012) began with a palpable sense of unease. Presenter Emma Freud had introduced the play as a 'strange fable', prefacing the broadcast's pre-show short film with a promise to cinema audiences that it 'explains the background of the play, sets it into context – it really does frame the show brilliantly.'[199] While the framing of *Timon*'s unfamiliarity receives further attention in Chapter Six, it is not the only Shakespeare play to have had an explanatory and exploratory short film precede the performance. In fact, the pre-show short film (hereafter, short film) is one of the most common paratexts within the Shakespearean broadcast canon and is often matched by a similarly pre-recorded feature in the broadcast's interval. Freud's assurance that this

[196] Kirwan, '*Coriolanus*', p. 275.

[197] Nicholas, 'Encountering Shakespeare Elsewhere', p. 34.

[198] Wyver, 'Screening the RSC Stage', p. 297.

[199] *Timon of Athens*, directed for screen by Robin Lough, *NTLive*, Olivier Stage at the National Theatre, London, 1 November 2012.

prefacing paratext gives historical and contemporary context encapsulates one important function of the short film. However, the simplicity of her statement belies what is one of the most complex elements within a broadcast's paratextual makeup. Like documentaries in miniature, short films rely heavily upon filmic conventions to construct an authoritative survey of the play's informing sources, historical contexts, performance history, narrative trajectory, character relationships, and contemporary resonances. Short films contain some of the most significant interpretive frames of all broadcast paratexts for their ability to shape ideas not just about the production, but about Shakespeare more broadly.

My aim in this section is to define the function and outline trends in the use of what is perhaps the most ubiquitous broadcast paratext within the first ten years of Shakespearean broadcasts. In addition to the short film's centrality to Shakespearean broadcasts, it is also typically one of the longest paratexts to call for sustained attention from cinema viewers.[200] Visually rich and pre-prepared, short films are an integral means by which theatre companies negotiate the meanings of the Shakespearean text, and their ownership of it. Therefore, while this discussion outlines a number of important stylistic differences between the convention as used in NT Live and RSC Live broadcasts, a broader scope is needed to first establish the trends and conventions which have come to define the Shakespearean broadcast short film.

Of the thirteen broadcasts whose paratexts are retained in the NT archive, ten feature a pre-show short film. NT Live's first four broadcasts do not have paratextual material retained in the archive – however, other sources confirm that *King Lear* (2011) definitely featured a short film and *All's Well That Ends Well* (2009) probably also featured one.[201] The inclusion of these early broadcasts would

[200] While advertising slides and the interval timer are longer, they are, as I discuss, designed to demand only a casual or partial attention from cinema audiences, see pp. 33 – 39 and pp. 99 – 104.

[201] Martin Barker references a short film, broadcast originally with *King Lear*, which is not retained in the NT archive. In *Live to Your Local Cinema: The Remarkable Rise of Livecasting* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 14. Peter Kirwan notes that *All's Well* was prefaced by '[s]ome archival footage showing the historical connections between Shakespeare and the National': the necessity of these to be pre-recorded suggests that they were included within a short film, in 'All's Well that Ends Well (NT Live) @ Warwick Centre Cinema', *The*

mean that 88% of NT Live's Shakespearean broadcasts have included a pre-show short film. Trends within the RSC Live canon likewise attest to the popularity of this paratext. Of the company's twenty-five Shakespeare broadcasts to date, every broadcast has featured a pre-show short film – as did the as-live broadcast of *Timon of Athens* (2019).[202] Moreover, this paratextual element also appears in smaller Shakespearean broadcasting ventures. For example, Kenneth Branagh's Branagh Theatre Live (KBTC Live) broadcasts of *The Winter's Tale* (2015) and *Romeo and Juliet* (2016) both used pre-show short films. The defining trend of this convention, therefore, is its ubiquity across broadcasting companies and the ten-year span of Shakespearean broadcasts thus far.

Another trend that prompts interesting questions about the function of the short film is the propensity for this paratext to be detached from, or to pre-exist, its role within the broadcast event. Looking over the first decade of Shakespearean broadcasts, examples arise from both NT Live and RSC Live of short films that are variously posted to the theatre company's social media channels (predominantly YouTube and Facebook), or in the case of RSC Live short films, are transferred with the production to a DVD release in the form of special features. In an example that constitutes part of my discussion in Chapter Five, the short film to NT Live's *Hamlet* (2015) predated the broadcast itself and was originally shown as part of an episode of Sky Arts' *The Southbank Show*. Similarly, the RSC Live debut broadcast of *Richard II* (2013) included a short film that was compiled from interview material which had previously been released – in the form of a number of individual videos branded as a 'Production Diary' for the show – to the RSC's official YouTube channel.[203] This broadcast, too, is

Bardathon, 2 October 2009 <https://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/bardathon/2009/10/02/alls-well-that-ends-well-nt-live-warwick-arts-centre-cinema/> [accessed 4 August 2020].

[202] While its release to cinemas was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, RSC Live's as-live *King John* (scheduled for release 23 April 2020) will also feature a pre-show short film. I'm grateful to John Wyver for allowing me to observe the filming of this short film as well as the production of the recording to be broadcast.

[203] Royal Shakespeare Company, *Production Diary 11 | Richard II |Royal Shakespeare Company*, online video recording, Youtube, 8 November 2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxFi0rDcHJI&list=PLSIxo_5qCKQhNtE0_x9ZywMes-qy19cWa&index=11> [accessed 1 November 2019].

Royal Shakespeare Company, *Production Diary 3 | Richard II |Royal Shakespeare Company*, online video recording, Youtube, 13 September

the subject of further analysis in Chapter Five and it is no coincidence that the short films included within these high-profile and much-anticipated broadcasts featured material that had also been made available to the general public. The fact that material that would later feature in the short films for these broadcasts was publicly available prior to the broadcast speaks to the insatiable demand generated by the casting of two eminently popular actors – Cumberbatch as Hamlet and Tennant as Richard – in these productions. More importantly, it also speaks to the unique ability of the short film to be extracted from its original performance context (or, in these cases, to predate it). What, then, gives this paratextual element the ability to stand alone? How does the short film serve the immediate context of the broadcast itself as well as the broader commercial contexts of social media channels and DVD releases?

An answer to these questions can be found by looking back to the paratext that often precedes the short film: live interviews. In the previous section, I explored how the live interview is typically invested in the creative choices and concept that define the production. By comparison, a general rule for short film is that their framing focus is turned more towards the play itself and its contemporary resonances than to staging and creative choices. Rather than offering interpretive frameworks through which to read the production, therefore, the short film typically centres on the play's composition, character relations and cultural afterlife. The result is a framing focus that can have wide-ranging implications for a cinema viewer's ideas of the Shakespearean work and the cultural value of the playwright himself. The role of the theatre company and other voices of authority in mediating these ideas means that the short film, with its minimal reference to the specifics of staging and to the 'event' of the broadcast night, is ideal for lifting out of the context of this performance context. In addition to their often interpretively loaded thresholds into the narrative world of the play, the short film must therefore be counted as one among many 'negotiations of authority and expertise that assign value to

2013,<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tCpVlIm8P44&list=PLSIxo_5qCKQhNtE0_x9ZywMes-qy19cWa&index=3> [accessed 1 November 2019].

Shakespeare' that Kate McLuskie and Kate Rumbold have identified as integral to institutions like the National Theatre and, to a greater extent, the RSC.[204]

Understanding this paratext as a means by which companies negotiate and circulate Shakespearean value prompts us to reflect on how each theatre company positions itself as the mediating authority. As such, the following discussion is structured around the two distinct styles of short film that have emerged during the first decade of Shakespeare broadcasts from NT Live and RSC Live. Bearing in mind the general characteristics of the short film outlined above, my aim is to identify what the variations in style between the two companies can tell us about the use of this paratext as a form of institutional dramaturgy. Moreover, I contend that close readings of these short films yield more than new insights into the institutional identity of these theatres. Embedded within these short films are narratives of Shakespeare's contemporary value, his historical context, and creative practice that shape ideas about the playwright. I begin with the use of this component in NT Live broadcasts, looking outside the Shakespearean canon to reflect on how this particular style of short film has crystallised as one which is characteristic of the broadcasting company. Within a Shakespearean canon that features a number of high-profile actors, I explore how the NT Live short film tends to foreground these performers as mediators of Shakespearean meaning as well as inviting voices of authority from other, thematically dictated areas of expertise. Taking a number of examples, I compare this visually rich and dynamic style against the more contained RSC Live style. The RSC Live short film, as I demonstrate, draws from the company's ethos of ensemble performance, typically giving even weight to a selection of the production's principal actors in the format of 'talking heads.' Analysing the comparative simplicity of filmic grammar within the RSC Live short film, I examine how this model borrows from a different style of documentary filmmaking than its NT Live counterpart and what consequences this has for the company's presentation of its Shakespearean authority. Comparing styles across the two major producing companies in this way invites questions as to how this paratext not only frames the

[204] Kate McLuskie and Kate Rumbold, *Cultural Value in Twenty-First-Century England: The Case of Shakespeare* (Manchester: MUP, 2014), p. 52.

meanings of Shakespearean performance, but how this paratext seeks to incorporate the playwright's contemporary value into the institutional identity of the theatre company.

Unlike their equivalents in the RSC Live canon, NT Live short films have titles. In this context, the title is itself an important paratext to consider when exploring the meanings created by the short film: for example, titles such as 'A Timon for Our Times' (*Timon of Athens*, [2012]) clearly foreground the relevance of that play, where thematic titles like 'A Shipwreck of the Heart' (*Twelfth Night* [2017]) may serve as an introduction to the narrative and central concerns of the play. A number of short films have been titled using quotations from Shakespeare's works. *Coriolanus* (2014), for example, featured a short film named 'The People Must Have Their Voices', while the subsequent broadcast of *King Lear* (2014) was prefaced with a feature titled 'Nothing will come of Nothing.' Using the vocabulary of the plays themselves, these titles affirm the position of the short film as a textually based exploration of Shakespeare's works. Titles are also an effective way to collate the wealth of material typically included within NT Live's short films under one unifying idea. They serve as a jumping-off point for discussion within the short film and a complement to the varied, visually rich collage that is characteristic of the NT Live style.

The patchwork editing of the NT Live short film typically draws on a number of visual sources: interview clips with the cast and creative team, archive footage, production and rehearsal footage, and historical still images. The visual richness and complexity of these features is by no means exclusive to the company's Shakespeare broadcasts. The short film that prefaced NT Live's broadcast of *The Madness of George III* (2018), for example, spliced rehearsal footage, shots of palaces, interview clips (including, in a rare example, clips with the playwright Alan Bennett), images of historical documents and portraits.[205] Running through this network of visual reference points was a sequence in which lead

[205] *The Madness of George III*, directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward, *NT Live*, Nottingham Playhouse, Nottingham, 20 November 2018. The short film included within this broadcast was rereleased on YouTube to accompany the screening of the broadcast as part of the National Theatre's *National Theatre At Home* initiative: National Theatre, *Official Introduction | The Madness of George III – Nottingham Playhouse | National Theatre At Home*, online video recording, YouTube, 4 June 2020 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3l7NFyq_aGo> [accessed 6 August 2020].

actor Mark Gatiss visited the Royal Library at Windsor to view original documents relating to the King's illness. While several voices in the short film considered different themes from the play, its title confirmed that the unifying thread was that of madness and its effect on the course of political history. Appropriating the song apocryphally sung by British Forces after surrendering the Siege of Yorktown in America's War of Independence, the title of 'The World Turned Upside Down' served as a continual reminder of the play's real historical context and the short film's governing theme.[206]

When used to frame Shakespeare's plays, this style of short film can offer significant interpretive thresholds to cinema audiences. A close reading of NT Live's *King Lear* (2014), for example, demonstrates how this paratext shapes the meaning of the play and mediates ideas about Shakespeare.[207] This short film, 'Nothing will come of Nothing', opened with a montage of fragmented, short shots. In order to understand the meanings communicated by this patchwork of clips, I will describe this opening sequence in full (using a forward slash [/] to demarcate a change of shot). Underscored by sinister music, the short film began with:

> Stock footage of a barren woodland / a moving MRI scan of a human head in profile showing the layers of the brain / an owl's head rotating punctuated by a shriek / production footage of Lear (Simon Russell Beale) likewise sharply turning his head / an unforgiving Goneril (Kate Fleetwood) turning her face away / another MRI scan this time moving through a human skull from above / stock footage of a black guard dog barking aggressively / Lear wiping his brow in distress / stock footage of a lightning strike in a stormy sky / a close-up of Cordelia (Olivia Vinall) looking just beyond the camera / a sharp zooming shot of Lear crying out in the midst of the storm / followed by a title card depicting a dark, cloudy sky.[208]

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[206] Perhaps also in the minds of the short film's producers was the fact that this title also formed an allusion to the vastly popular musical *Hamilton*, in which the song depicting Britain's defeat is titled 'Yorktown (The World Turned Upside Down)'.

[207] *King Lear*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *NT Live*, Olivier Stage at the National Theatre, London, 1 April 2014.

[208] Ibid, 'Nothing will come of Nothing' is also currently available to watch, in full, via the National Theatre's YouTube channel. See National Theatre, *King Lear – nothing will come of nothing*, online video recording, YouTube, 30 May 2014 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnYInEJ1-v0> [accessed 7 August 2020].

This quick progression of shot changes is typical of NT Live strategies of montage in short films, generating a rapid change of images that attempted to translate Lear's madness using an erratic filmic grammar. Working in tandem with the rapidly moving MRI footage of a human brain, the pace of this sequence foreshadowed Lear's own broken speech patterns at the height of his madness.

Despite the communicative mode of this sequence being to fragment and refract particular meanings, this energetic sequence nonetheless drew important connections between certain shots.[209] Two examples show how stock footage was used to signify the torments of Lear's madness: the first aligning the sharp, predatory gaze of the owl with an irate Lear and the second showing Lear's distress, seemingly in response to the shot of a hostile guard dog. Once more, these mirroring sequences visualised elements of the play's language, in which characters compare the vicious natural world with the savagery of the trials visited upon Lear. While this opening sequence outlined the dominant theme of the short film (and, by extension, a central narrative point of the play itself) as Lear's madness, it offered cinema audiences interpretive thresholds into the systems of imagery and even into the patterns of language by which the play communicates this theme. This reliance on visual cues to offer thresholds into the world of the play ran through the whole short film, particularly in the framing of interview clips. Footage of an interview with Beale, for example, saw the actor positioned against a backdrop of the brutalist, concrete architecture of the National Theatre complex. The *mise-en-scène* aligned Beale with the production's characterisation of Lear at the opening of the play as a tyrant, with the harsh and impersonal angles of the buildings enforcing a sense of authoritarian rigidity. Moreover, the setting also functioned to counter Beale's own geniality as an interviewee: in one clip, the actor laughed as he noted that director Sam Mendes asked him to shave his head 'because I know I can look a bit like Santa Claus.'[210] Compare this backdrop against the one used for Mendes, who was filmed in what appeared to be his office, with a wall heavily covered in framed images just behind the director. This

[209] The idea of 'discontinuity' as a central communicative mode of montage is described by Robert Stam, who argues that for film theorist Sergei Eisenstein, 'each fragment of film [should be seen] as part of a powerful semantic construction based on principles of juxtaposition and conflict rather than organic seamlessness.' In Stam, *Film Theory: An Introduction* (London: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), p. 43.

[210] *King Lear*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

comparatively intimate setting imagined Mendes in the purely professional role of director, offering a sharp contrast to the blurring of Beale and Lear signified by the actor's interview setting.

These examples illustrate how the visual makeup and editing of the short film were used to offer thresholds into the production and the play itself. They are not, however, exhaustive. Along with a plethora of other meanings created by even this opening sequence that are beyond the scope of this discussion, the short film also proposed ideas about the play through the topics of discussion pursued by the interview clips. One framework for approaching the action of the play and Shakespeare's writing of Lear emerged more clearly than any others. Running through this feature was the use of contemporary medical vocabulary, imagery, and expertise as a means of understanding Lear's madness. Beale first proposed Lear's affliction as a specific form of dementia: 'I thought that [Lear's behaviour] looks suspiciously like the symptoms of dementia.'[211] The short film then featured clips with a consultant geriatrician, Dr Debbie Finch, outlining the characteristics of Lewy body dementia and its physical symptoms. Underscoring physical markers of the disease including 'walking can become shuffling,' and '[loss of] inhibitions […] taking clothes off in an inappropriate place' was production footage of Beale as Lear replicating these actions.[212] The editing of this sequence, in which Finch was made to narrate Beale's performance, not only weighted this reading of the character with the authority of a medical professional but also relied on the implied veracity created by the convention of the voiceover in documentary filmmaking.

The use of commentators external to the production is commonplace in NT Live short films, which frequently use authoritative figures to show the broader resonances of Shakespearean themes and to apply them to contemporary, real-world debates. Other examples include Jack Monroe, the non-binary food writer and activist who was featured in the short film for *Twelfth Night* (2017) that centred on gender; and Paul Mason, then Economics editor of *Newsnight*, who offered insight into the financial

[211] *King Lear*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[212] Ibid.

world of *Timon of Athens* (2012).[213] NT Live's use of 'outside' voices of authority (in this context, a commentator who is not connected creatively with the production) speaks to the established conventions of authenticity in documentary filmmaking. As Louse Spence and Vinicus Navarro argue, '[w]hat assures the viewer that the identity of the person interviewed is authentic is a sort of tacit agreement whereby documentarians are expected to earn the trust of the audience by offering truthful information about their subjects.'[214] Most significant for our purposes is the way in which this contract of fidelity is used to confer authority on the speaker and, by extension, emphasise the value of their contribution in the short film. To return to the example of *Lear* (2014), Finch's role in 'Nothing' was to consolidate a reading in which Lear's madness is understood as a form of Lewy body dementia. Bolstered by the dual authority of Finch and Beale, and with NT Live itself as the mediator, this reading has obvious interpretive consequences which embed the early modern construction of Lear within a thoroughly modern understanding of mental and degenerative illness. Audiences were prompted to sympathise with Lear even before the first lines of the play, reading all the character's subsequent actions as a result of a pre-existing and debilitating condition.

Beyond Beale's characterisation of Lear, however, the framing performed by this short film has important consequences for the perceived value of Shakespeare's work. As he commented on the idea that Lear suffers from dementia, Beale concluded this line of discussion with a reflection on the playwright's writing process. Beale proposed that Shakespeare 'being the observer that he was must have seen somebody – must have known somebody – who suffered from what we would now call dementia.'[215] These kind of provenance narratives – a term I explore further in Chapters Four and Six – are equally commonplace within Shakespeare broadcast short films across both companies, and work to consolidate Shakespeare's cultural value by investing in a narrative of his creative process. In this example, Beale imagined Shakespeare as drawing from his own observation of dementia symptoms, implicitly lending this reading of the character the authoritative weight of the playwright himself. Also

[213] *Twelfth Night*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *NT Live*, Olivier Stage at the National Theatre, London, 6 April 2017; *Timon of Athens*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[214] Spence and Navarro, p. 24.

[215] *King Lear*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

evoked here was Shakespeare's reputation as an exemplary observer of human nature. Despite early modern ideas of insanity being different from our own, this provenance narrative positioned Shakespeare's works as having the ability to speak to transhistorical understandings of mental health. Underpinning arguments for the contemporary resonance of the play, therefore, were familiar ideas about Shakespeare's artistic pre-eminence.

Within this style of short film, NT Live broadcasts are well positioned to offer introductory thresholds to cinema audiences. The visually rich style allows for this paratextual element to establish themes clearly as well as set a tone for the play – one which, as the *Lear* short film illustrates, often visually translates systems of imagery and meaning-making from the Shakespearean text. Embedded within this characteristic model of the short film is the ability to visually and verbally reference contemporary images and concerns. Seen in the use of MRI scans in the *Lear* short film, this paratext has proved a means of drawing contemporary parallels in broadcasts of *Timon of Athens* (2012, which featured real footage from the Occupy protests of 2011-12), *Coriolanus* (2014, from modern parliamentary debates and protests), *Twelfth Night* (2017, images of high-profile gender non-binary public figures including Conchita Wurst) and *Antony and Cleopatra* (2018, visual allusions to Beyoncé's concept album, *Lemonade* [2016]). Across a variety of directors and theatre venues, therefore, NT Live Shakespearean short films are characterised not only by a consistent style but by a desire to foreground a play's contemporary relevance. Paying close attention to the distinctive features of this paratext prompts conclusions about how the short film functions as a mode of institutional dramaturgy. In the use of a filmic style that consistently sets Shakespearean works in contemporary contexts and seeks to understand them through contemporary lenses, NT Live positions itself as a platform that continually revitalises Shakespearean performance. In this respect, despite broadcasting from various out-of-house theatres as well as the NT, the style of short film developed by NT Live has contributed to a brand identity that reflects the choice of content included under the mediating platform itself, rather than adapting to the individual ethos of each theatre.

The RSC Live short film offers a contrast in style to the visually allusive NT Live model. Typically, short films from the company consist of interview clips with a handful of principal cast

members and occasionally the production's director, edited together with some images or clips from performance and rehearsal. Unlike their counterparts in the NT Live canon, RSC Live short films generally do not have titles and – as the convention progressed in the first decade of the canon – have come to be governed more by a set of dominant themes or questions than one particular thematic reading of the play. I return to these concerns in my discussion below: first, however, it is important to note the trends that have defined the persistent use of this paratextual convention by RSC Live. The style of predominantly cast interviews and a comparatively simple visual structure is one that emerged as a constant after more diverse short films within the company's first season of broadcasts, from *Richard II* (2013) to *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (2014). Significantly, after the company's debut broadcast featured a short film structured around a dialogue of interviews between David Tennant and historian Helen Castor, its use in the broadcasts of *Henry IV Part One* and *Henry IV Part Two* was related closely to the NT Live short film. This shift towards a more visually contained and simple structure is important to recognise when exploring the development of the short film within the RSC Live canon. Moreover, it paves the way for my later discussion of the RSC Live interval short film which also typically conforms to the more visually rich structure seen in these early RSC Live examples. Therefore, before considering the meanings created by the style of pre-show short film that would later became conventional to RSC Live, I will first look to an example of the company's earlier model in the broadcast of *Henry IV Part One* (2014, hereafter *1 Henry IV*). The structure of this short film, I suggest, draws as much from the model provided by NT Live broadcasts as it does from a desire to establish properly the historical context of this play and the importance of this context within RSC Live's first three broadcasts, all of which presented a serial narrative from among Shakespeare's histories.

The short film broadcast alongside *1 Henry IV* opened with images of the production and from the earlier production of *Richard II*, accompanied by a voice-over commentary from assistant director Owen Horsley. Horsley's narration bridged the narrative gaps between the two plays and smoothed over discontinuities between the RSC's two productions, which saw a different actors take on roles

shared between the two productions including Bolingbroke/Henry the Fourth.[216] Over footage from the prior production of *Richard II*, Horsley commented that in *1 Henry IV* 'we see King Henry – who was Bolingbroke in *Richard II* – as King […] he's never really come to terms with how he took the throne and how Richard II died.'[217] The impulse to connect the plays within a serial narrative was echoed by contributions from two further commentators, each of whom discussed Shakespeare's broader approach to historiography and historical figures. Academic Emma Smith was interviewed reflecting on Shakespeare's writing of *1 Henry IV* and the contemporary context of his history plays ('He writes his English history plays in the 1590s and that's the last decade of Queen Elizabeth's own long reign […] all the history plays are ways of rehearsing possible scenarios when one King – one monarch – dies or loses power').[218] Smith's insight was supplemented by clips from historian Ian Mortimer, who commented on Shakespeare's unfavourable characterisation of Henry IV: 'there's no real personality, it's almost as if Shakespeare thought, "I'm going to neglect him" […] Shakespeare, if he'd have been fair to Henry IV, would have made him one of the great English heroes.'[219] Supplemented by images of medieval manuscripts and illustrations, these interview clips sought the academic and historical authority wielded by both Smith and Mortimer to establish a foundational understanding of where the play sits in relation to Shakespeare's other works and to his historical sources. This short film – which featured none of the production's principal actors – was deeply invested in setting the play in the context of Shakespeare's wider histories, as well as in the real historical context of its key characters.

The film then focussed in on the role of Falstaff, with Horsley and Smith commenting respectively on the character's dramatic role and his popularity during the period of Shakespeare's lifetime and afterwards. This progression illustrates that while the structure of outside authorities (Smith and Mortimer) and the visually allusive use of manuscript and production images mirrors that used by

[216] The role of Bolingbroke/Henry IV, for example, was taken by Nigel Lindsay in the production of *Richard II* and was continued by Jasper Britton in *Henry IV* Parts *1* and *2.*

[217] *Henry IV Part One*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 14 May 2014.

[218] *Henry IV Part One*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[219] Ibid.

NT Live, the kind of single thematic focus exhibited in short films from that company is not shared by RSC Live. Rather, as this example and the later style of RSC Live short film suggests, the company favours a broader discussion of a play's narrative, historical context, and legacy. Moreover, the detachment of plays from the serial relationships that characterised the framing of RSC Live's first three broadcasts results in short films that offer stand-alone introductions to their respective plays. While the anomalous style of the short films included within the broadcasts of *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV* (the short film to this latter broadcast is a subject of further discussion in Chapter Four) may owe a debt to the visually rich model offered by NT Live, it is important to appreciate how far the paratextual framing of these broadcasts was designed to emphasise their seriality.

As RSC Live's broadcast canon progressed, a model emerged that prioritised interview clips with a handful of principal actors in a 'talking heads' format, supplemented largely by production photographs. This is, as I outlined above, a style that has dominated the majority of the company's broadcasts, spanning from 2015 to the present.[220] While this style of the paratext usually features more than one actor offering reflections on the play and production, the short films included within broadcasts of *Macbeth* (2018), *Timon of Athens* (2019), *Hamlet* and *King Lear* (both 2016) each contained commentary from just one actor. It is no coincidence that these are broadcasts of tragedies, nor that the comic plays within the RSC Live canon are universally populated by short films with multiple actors. Where these features appear in the broadcasts listed above, the voice of a single actor reflects the interiority of these tragic heroes and naturally invites a more focussed discussion of the characters when compared with the more communal focus often seen in comedies. The singular attention afforded to tragic heroes in these short films resonates with Linda Bamber's dichotomy of tragic versus comic structuring in Shakespeare, observing that 'the tragic hero is privileged […] with self-consciousness and the inner life.'[221] These examples demonstrate that the actor portraying the tragic hero is likewise

[220] This assessment includes the as-live broadcast of *Timon of Athens* (2019). RSC Live's delayed broadcast of *King John* (initially scheduled for release in April 2020) was also prepared with a short film which included interviews with the production's cast members.

[221] Linda Bamber, *Comic Women, Tragic Men: A Study of Gender and Genre in Shakespeare* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982), p. 8.

privileged with an exclusive platform by which to engage with cinema audiences through the paratextual space. *Macbeth* presents an interesting example when read in this way, as the short film for that broadcast featured interviews with Niamh Cusack rather than her co-star Christopher Eccleston, playfully challenging where an audience's dramatic interest lies and which Macbeth deserves the play's the titular focus.

Defining paratextual elements according to generic categorisations – particularly among the more slippery plays such as *Richard II*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Measure for Measure* – can be reductive. Nonetheless, the attention to historical context displayed in *1HIV* and the prioritising of a single actor's voice within the examples of tragic plays above suggests that the conventions of the RSC Live short film are indeed fluid and responsive to the dramatic and thematic priorities of the Shakespearean work. Moreover, when compared against the model of NT Live short films (the canon of which contains a variety of genres, although naturally not the same span of Shakespeare's works as RSC Live), the variety employed by RSC Live shows a greater sensitivity to the thematic and generic nuances within the Shakespeare canon. There is, however, one important way in which the structuring of short films around actor interviews also serves as a reflection of the RSC's brand identity. Giving voice to groups of actors within their short films reflects the RSC's reputation as ensemble-led, an ethos that Colin Chambers notes was rooted in Peter Hall's founding of the company.[222] Moreover, the focus on multiple actors is also a consequence of the RSC Live canon being less populated by high-profile performers than is NT Live's Shakespearean canon.[223]

Driven by an ethos that invests in multiple voices from within the production, therefore, RSC Live short films that conform to the more common structure of a handful of actor interviews also conform to a set of consistent discussion topics. The short film that prefaced *Measure for Measure* (2019) illustrates the typical progression of RSC Live short films, which generally move from narrative exposition, through the 'key themes' of the play, towards reflecting on the contemporary resonance of

[222] Colin Chambers argues that it was the 'towering continental ensembles' of the 1960s that served as Hall's inspiration for founding the RSC, in *Inside the Royal Shakespeare Company*, p. 23.

[223] The paratextual role of 'star' actors is a theme I return to in more detail in Chapter Five.

the play including parallels drawn between the period of Shakespeare's lifetime and today. The short film saw actors Lucy Phelps (Isabella), Antony Byrne (Duke Vincentio), and Sandy Grierson (Angelo) reflecting firstly on their individual roles and how their characters sat within the network of relationships within *Measure*. These introductions served to bridge any foundational knowledge gaps on the part of the cinema audience by establishing the principal characters and suggesting the arc of their roles within the play. Phelps, for example, discussed how Isabella is 'about to enter a convent […] however, she is quickly called away to help try and save her brother.'[224] As the actor turned to introduce Claudio, the shot changed from Phelps' interview to a production photograph of James Cooney in the role, wearing handcuffs and a cardboard placard labelling him a 'LECHER.'[225] In this sequence, the photograph – with its visual cues denoting Claudio's imprisonment, as well as the crime of which he is accused – was as important as Phelps' commentary in laying the narrative groundwork for one of the play's central narrative threads. Cinema audiences who were unfamiliar with *Measure* were invited to read these photographs closely and to infer from them thresholds into the world of the play.

Following from the character relationships and more specific references to the action of the play, a clip from Phelps signalled a shift in the discussion towards the 'key themes' of *Measure*.[226] This condensing of the play to a set of central concerns – echoed in the singular focus of NT Live short films – is rooted in a distinctly pedagogical understanding of Shakespeare's works. Identifying a 'theme' within a work forms the basis of exam board Oxford Cambridge and RSA's (OCR) definition of critical reading for Key Stage Four students of Shakespeare, while a number of their recommended resources for the classroom centre on the 'understanding of themes and characters.'[227] In this regard, structuring

[224] *Measure for Measure,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 31 July 2019.

[225] *Measure for Measure,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[226] Ibid.

[227] OCR, *English Literature: KS3 – KS4 Focus Reading Shakespeare* (published online, 2016), p.3; p. 13, <https://beta.ocr.org.uk/Images/170415-ks3-ks4-transition-guide-reading-shakespeare.pdf> [accessed 1 September 2020]. Sarah Olive highlights that this theme-driven pedagogical approach is a result of a critical trend for close-reading of Shakespeare's works championed by I. A. Richards and F. R. Leavis. Olive notes that '[i]nstead of declaiming or acting Shakespeare's texts, students were increasingly required to synthesise from their

the broadcast's short film to cater towards an educational approach to the work reflects not only the RSC's commitment to educational outreach, but also the hope that broadcasts will extend the access of the performance to younger audiences. As in the shots that visualised Lear's madness in the opening sequence of the *Lear* short film, some of the play's central concerns were punctuated by visual references to RSC's production of *Measure*. Notably, Antony Byrne's reflection on the way in which the play questions, 'what is it for two people to be in a room, and who has the power in that room?' was underscored by a production shot of the Duke, disguised as a Friar, giving confession to Claudio.[228] Having already identified Claudio, his crime, and the position of the Duke, this image alluded to perhaps an unexpected moment of questionable power dynamics in the play. Cinema audiences familiar with the 'horrible bargain' at the centre of *Measure,* and particularly given the context of this broadcast coming after the cultural prominence of the #MeToo movement, would perhaps have expected an image of Angelo and Isabella to accompany Byrne's commentary. Instead, the choice of the arguably more niche moment in which the Duke gives a fraudulent confession to the distraught Claudio perhaps anticipated an audience for whom the central narrative drive of the play – Angelo's indecent proposal to Isabella – was already familiar.

These examples illustrate the fine line traced by RSC Live short films, which typically speak to a cinema audience who have a pre-existing investment in Shakespeare's works but also acknowledge viewers for whom the broader reach and lower ticket price of a broadcast has allowed a chance to see a Shakespeare performance for the first time. This tension runs through the verbal and visual exposition of the *Measure* short film, which offered introductory and expositional thresholds into the play whilst also referencing less familiar moments of textual detail. By tailoring their paratextual material to audiences with contrasting levels of Shakespearean knowledge, the RSC brands itself as a company that makes Shakespeare accessible to new audiences whilst also rewarding the investment of their long-standing, core audience. The positioning of brand identity can also be read in what is typically the final

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teachers and play texts […] an understanding of character, theme, plot and the craftsmanship of Shakespearean language', in *Shakespeare Valued: Educational Policy and Pedagogy 1998 - 2009* (Bristol: Intellect Publishing, 2015), p. 20.

[228] *Measure for Measure,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

topic explored in RSC Live short films, one that is equally central to its use in NT Live Shakespearean broadcasts. In the final sets of interview clips, Grierson and Phelps were seen reflecting on the relevance of the performance to contemporary society. Responding to what he hopes viewers will take away from the performance, Grierson commented that 'hopefully [… it will prompt people to start] thinking about the behaviour of others, themselves, friends, politicians, Presidents, do you know what I mean?'[229] Becoming increasingly animated in his speech, Grierson's allusion to the contemporary context of calling out high-profile sexual offenders (including allegations against the American President, Donald Trump) positioned this play as speaking directly to modern concerns and even contributing to the conversations prompted by the #MeToo movement.

The potential for paratexts to foreground the topicality of Shakespearean works forms the core of my discussion in Chapter Seven – however, it is worthy of consideration here as a central preoccupation of the short film shared across both companies. Where the impulse to modernise the Shakespearean play and its themes was seen in a number of NT Live short films considered above, in RSC Live short films it is typically these discussions of the play's relevance that are used to conclude this paratext and to transition into the broadcasted performance. While framing that foregrounds the importance of the play to contemporary issues confers a continuing value on performing Shakespeare, this value is doubly important when circulated through the medium of the live theatre broadcast with its aspirations to broaden access to professional Shakespeare performances. As Kate Rumbold argues, '[t]he mandate to provide access confers the *impression* of "intrinsic" value on the objects contained within the institution', in this case, on Shakespearean performance.[230] Central to the function of the short film across both companies, therefore, is establishing the continuing value of Shakespeare's works to contemporary society and – by extension – the continuing work of these institutions.

The concerns of the short film, as the example of relevance shows, allow us to reflect on how the RSC and the NT claim Shakespearean authority and the playwright's cultural value as their own. Furthermore, this section has shown that the unique styles of short film developed by each theatre

[229] *Measure for Measure,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[230] Rumbold, 'From "Access" to "Creativity"', p. 320, emphasis original.

company, as well as the trends in their usage, invite us to draw conclusions about how this paratext is used to reflect institutional identity. In NT Live's consistent use of contemporary visual allusion, for example, we see what Ella Hawkins has observed as the company's 'preference for updating Shakespeare's plays to make them speak as directly and earnestly as possible to its diverse contemporary audiences.'[231] So, too, can the tension between the RSC's long-established audience and the company's desire to make Shakespeare accessible and relevant to new, younger audiences, be read through the form and content of their distinct short film. The role of this paratext as a mode of institutional dramaturgy is only further supported by its circulation outside of the broadcast context. While it forms an integral part of the broadcast experience, therefore, the short film can and does function independently as a mediator of institutional identity, the Shakespearean text, and as a record of the production. A closer attention to the ways in which it performs that work of mediation is essential if we are to understand the context within which contemporary broadcast audiences experience Shakespearean performance and negotiate ideas about the playwright's works.

The end of the short film typically signals the sealing of an interpretively significant space within the live broadcast. The prefatory paratexts have fulfilled their role to set the scene, both experientially and interpretively, for the Shakespearean performance. A cinema viewer's assumptions about Shakespeare, the play and the institution have been worked upon and their horizons of expectation perhaps materially altered. The framing work of the broadcast paratexts, however, is not complete by the time the first line of speech is spoken. Rather, the paratextual interventions of the interval and post-show open up the performance, punctuating this space with thresholds which continue to work upon the meanings created by the first half and then the completed action of the play. These paratextual ruptures have renewed significance for their proximity to the performance, their relation to the narrative as experienced thus far, and as a means of marshalling the theatrical experience through the adaptive medium of the live broadcast. For now, however, the stage is set. The performance begins.

[231] Hawkins, 'The Significance of Jacobethanism', p.149.

The In-Between

Interval Timers

> *This theatre broadcast, like many others, reconstructs the interval as performance and the performance itself within the interval.*[232]

Laurie Osborne's comments on the KBTC Live *Romeo and Juliet* (2016) hit upon an apparent oxymoron within the live theatre broadcast experience: how can the interval constitute an extension of the performance? Surely, by virtue of signalling a cessation of the theatrical performance, the interval must be its antithesis? Osborne's assessment that the *Romeo* interval functioned to 'reconstruc[t]' the main performance responds to a particularly creative paratext that featured in the interval of this broadcast: a quiz in which questions were 'apparently projected on the curtain' of the Garrick stage.[233] These questions centred, as Osborne notes, on 'information about national and historical context of the production design', with cinema and theatre audiences alike pondering the answers to prompts as diverse as the age of consent in Italy to a definition of *spezzatura*.[234] Seizing upon the production's mid-twentieth-century Italian setting and the black and white, Fellini-inspired aesthetic of the broadcast, this broadcast used the interval as a space through which audiences were challenged to reflect upon the diegetic world of the play.

The KBTC Live *Romeo* is an example in which what is typically an interpretively passive space – the theatre broadcast interval timer – became a particularly active paratextual intervention. The overwhelming majority of interval timers take the form of a static shot from inside the theatre auditorium. Overlaid onto this shot is a timer: counting down (usually for a period of between ten to fifteen minutes) to an interval feature or to the resumption of the performance. Bound with the theatrical production, the interval timer is one of the most common paratextual conventions within the Shakespearean broadcast canon. Where it does not appear, it is either because the production does not

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[232] Osborne, p. 224.

[233] Ibid, p. 223; *Romeo and Juliet*, directed for the screen by Benjamin Caron, *Kenneth Branagh Theatre Company Live*, Garrick Theatre, London, 7 July 2016.

[234] Osborne, p. 223.

have an interval (as in *Julius Caesar* [2018]) or often because the interval timer has been removed in archival recordings of a broadcast. As its absence from many archival recordings suggests, the timer would seem to be a purely functional paratext, a requirement that allows for the continuation of shared liveness between cinema and in-theatre audiences. However, Osborne's reading of the *Romeo* interval reminds us that this transitional and seemingly neutral paratext can, indeed, constitute a performance in itself and interact with the meanings created by the theatre production.

So-called 'gaps' in the performance have long been exploited dramatically. Moreover, this practice is one which is firmly rooted in the dramatic tradition of the early modern theatre. Reading into the inter-act stage directions for Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling*, Mark Hutchings notes that 'several instances of dramatic innovation may point us in the direction of how, at least one some occasions, the interval signified – how, in fact, it played an active, contributory role in the narrative and (audience) narration of the play.'[235] Hutchings' focus is on the malevolent presence of De Flores, who is directed at one point to hide a dagger on the stage during an act break. With these glimpses of sinister dramatic action, Hutchings argues, 'a play might "trespass" across the boundary between play and interval, blurring distinctions between the playworld and moments when the play seemingly "hesitates".'[236] The idea of interval action '"trespass[ing]"' into the narrative world of the play is one that is particularly useful for understanding the often incidental meanings created by the interval timer. In what follows, I consider how the filmic grammar and experiential quality of the timer may occasionally interact with the meanings created by the broadcast's mediation of the Shakespearean performance. Drawing from two examples within the RSC Live canon, I propose that paratextual interventions into the space of the interval need not be as pronounced as the *Romeo* quiz to offer interpretive thresholds for cinema audiences and – crucially – to constitute an extenuation of the Shakespearean performance.

[235] Mark Hutchings, 'De Flores Between the Acts', *Studies in Theatre Performance*, 31. 1. (2011), pp. 95 – 111, p. 97.

[236] Ibid, p. 98.

The shot style frequently used for interval timers, combined with the duration for which this shot is held (which would unequivocally be the longest held shot in any given broadcast), can be interpretively loaded when read in conversation with the filmic grammar of the main production. The framing of the shot used for an interval timer varies according to different theatre spaces. The most common convention, however, is a high-angle shot taken from off-centre, typically from one of the broadcast's fixed cameras in the upper circle (a similar view is offered in Figure 4).[237] While the mediation of the performance itself may splice cinematic and televisual shot styles, this framing of the interval timer most strongly evokes the recognisable filmic grammar of closed-circuit television (CCTV).[238] Creating a sense of surveillance, the framing of the interval timer shifts the gaze of the broadcast cameras from the more energetic, expressive mode typically used to capture the performance, to one of pensive voyeurism. Within this style, Hutchings' argument that inter-act narrative signifies a form of '"trespass"' into the world of the play is made more significant by a filmic grammar whose defining characteristic is surveillance.[239] This style of static shot can, as the examples of RSC Live's *Hamlet* (2016) and *Macbeth* (2018) illustrate, have unexpected and impactful resonances with the Shakespearean meanings of the performance.

Pascale Aebischer's analysis of the film aesthetics of *Hamlet* (2016) usefully theorizes the ways in which the mediation of that performance functioned not only to capture interactions between characters, but to participate as an agent within those interactions. Commenting on broadcast director Robin Lough's recurring use of crane camera shots, Aebischer observes how this shot style was 'made into an integral part of the plot by associating it consistently with the point of view of Old Hamlet's ghost.' [240] So consistent was the use of these elevated shots in scenes where the ghost's presence was

[237] Pascale Aebischer features a diagram in her discussion of the RSC Live *Hamlet* (2016) which shows the standard placement of broadcast cameras in the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, in *Shakespeare, Spectatorship*, p. 160.

[238] John Wyver reflects on the cinematic and televisual elements of producing live theatre broadcasts in 'Screening the RSC stage', p. 299.

[239] Hutchings, p. 98.

[240] Aebischer, *Shakespeare, Spectatorship*, p. 167.

Figure 4: An image of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre (RST) taken from a similar angle to that which is used by the company during the interval timer.

felt, Aebischer argues that '[f]or broadcast viewers, camera-4-as-the-ghost remained a character within the play.'[241] The coding of high-angle crane shots as the ghost of Old Hamlet had important consequences for the broadcast's mediation of the interval. Positioned in an elevated frame that offered a supervisory gaze to cinema audiences, the interval timer necessarily interacted with the broadcast's filmic grammar used to characterise the presence of Old Hamlet. In a particularly fitting example, therefore, Old Hamlet was made to performatively haunt the space of the broadcast interval: consolidating Hamlet's pressure to avenge his father while underscoring the ghost's surveillance of Hamlet in other scenes of the play. This latter intervention is especially pronounced when read in conversation with the production's placement of the interval. The interval for this production interrupted the action just as Hamlet questions whether to kill the praying Claudius (the lights fell as Essiedu's Hamlet pointed a gun at his uncle, proclaiming 'now I'll do it'). Following from this moment of suspense, the voyeuristic surveillance of the ghost through the interval timer was all the more significant in for its interruption at a narrative point that teased at Hamlet avenging his father. Like De Flores lurking between the act intervals of *The Changeling*, the potentially malevolent presence of Old Hamlet

[241]Aebischer, *Shakespeare, Spectatorship*, p. 170.

permeated through the use of the elevated shot, a shot that is nonetheless a standard for all RSC Live interval timers. As a result, this broadcast – however incidentally – created a filmic grammar that allowed the play's own themes of haunting and surveillance to underscore what is often an interpretively passive paratextual element, suffusing it with dramatic tension and meaning.

The ability of the interval timer to amplify the tension created by the Shakespearean performance was also seen in the RSC Live broadcast of *Macbeth* (2018). Under the direction of Polly Findlay, this production was characterised by homage to tropes from horror and thriller movies, allowing for a mediation that heightened the allusion to filmic modes of communicating suspense and terror. The most significant example was a digital countdown clock, set high in the upstage wall, that commenced with the murder of Duncan and counted down to zero as Macbeth was killed. This countdown timer was inextricably linked with the Porter in the production, who was constantly onstage and was seen setting his own watch simultaneously with the appearance of the upstage timer. For cinema and theatre audiences, therefore, this timer was imbued from its first appearance with a sense of sinister predestination and tragic inevitability. The production's interval was signalled by the Porter menacingly creeping upstage as Macbeth and Lady Macbeth conversed, with the lights falling as the Porter sharply turned to glare at a weeping Lady Macbeth. Crucially, The Porter's presence as a supernatural arbiter of the tragedy was felt as the onstage timer counted down throughout the interval. In addition to providing a diegetic echo of the paratextual interval timer, the framing of the interval timer to also capture the onstage clock allowed the tone of tragic predestination to permeate throughout the interval. As the onstage clock continued to count down, cinema audiences were prompted to view this paratext as participating in the narrative drive to avenge Duncan's murder. In a similar way to the *Hamlet* broadcast, the association of the onstage timer with the Porter also enabled this character to haunt the interval space. Within the standard viewpoint of the interval timer, therefore, this broadcast implicated the paratext as an extension of the performance, consolidating the sense that time itself is colluding against Macbeth.

It is perhaps no coincidence that these examples both show the interval timer supplementing presentations of the supernatural. Coded as a voyeuristic gaze into the theatre auditorium, the framing

of the interval timer is apt to adopt the sinister or haunting role often that drives the tragic trajectory of plays such as *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. The elevated shots that typically frame this paratext are suited more to the intangible, supernatural forces at work in these plays than to Shakespearean narratives that are driven by machinations and acts of surveillance perpetrated by human antagonists, as in *Othello* and *Cymbeline* for example.[242] The filmic grammar of the interval timer, as well as the dramatic tension that can be emphasised through its long duration, is well suited to draw out otherworldly and fatalistic themes within particular Shakespearean works. Moreover, the stasis and duration of the interval timer can often be a source of meaning in and of itself. As installations such as *Caretaker* at the Royal Court theatre – which offered audiences a digital live stream of an empty stage in the theatre during the UK's lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic – exemplify, the long-held view of an empty stage is itself coded by feelings of absent presence, pause, and reflection.[243] In this way and many others, the interval timer can play an important role in supplementing and even reshaping the meanings of the Shakespearean performance in subtle and implicit ways. These occasional extensions of the performance are no less significant for only appearing rarely within the Shakespearean broadcast canon. Rather, these fleeting examples of performative intervals prompt us to better appreciate even the most seemingly functional of paratexts as potential mediators of Shakespearean meaning.

Interval Short Films

Your patience this allowing,

I turn my glass and give my scene such growing

As you had slept between [244]

[242] Another particularly interesting example of this was in NT Live's broadcast of *Amadeus* (2017), in which an elevated crane shot was coded as God himself in a scene where Amadeus cataclysmically renounces his faith. *Amadeus*, directed for the screen by Tim van Someren, *NT Live*, Olivier Stage at the National Theatre, London, 2 February 2017.

[243] *Caretaker* is a durational installation created by Hester Chillingworth and has been available to view via a livestream YouTube video since 8 May 2020. The Royal Court advertises the installation as held 'for as long as lockdown continues.' See 'Caretaker', *Royal Court Theatre*, n.p. <https://royalcourttheatre.com/caretaker/> [accessed 3 September 2020].

[244] William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, edited by Stephen Orgel (Oxford: OUP, 1996), IV.1, 15 – 17.

When faced with the challenge of adapting an intergenerational narrative, Shakespeare manifested the allegorical figure of Time to intersect the action of *The Winter's Tale*. Time negotiates not only a temporal movement sixteen years into the future but also supplements the play's tonal shift, as Stanton B. Garner Jnr. argues: 'when Time exits from the middle of *The Winter's Tale,* he leaves a dramatic world disrupted by his passage.'[245] While any comparison with the modern theatrical convention of the interval is inherently anachronistic, the intervention of Time within the dramatic structure of this play offers a productive way to think about the role of the interval short film. Just as Time's function in negotiating a narrative transition – 'slid[ing] / O'er sixteen years' – is distinguishable from the expository and establishing work performed by, for example, the prologue to *Romeo and Juliet*, so too is the function of the interval short film different from its pre-show counterpart, despite often sharing stylistic qualities.[246]

The role of Time prompts questions that are integral to an understanding of the interval short film. How are two halves of a performance being bridged? How is this bridging made interpretively significant? And what interactions with the audience are facilitated by returning to the themes and concerns of the work, even within a seeming moment of 'pause' in the action of the play? In what follows, I focus on the intermediate function of the interval short film to address these questions. While exploring the ways in which this paratextual convention may be stylistically comparable to the pre-show short film, I analyse how it nonetheless means differently – and offers distinct interpretive thresholds to cinema audiences – from its position in the interval of the broadcast. Reflecting on its ability to extend and explore the boundaries of the Shakespearean performance, I consider how the interval short film may mirror early modern forms of interim entertainment and, in its creative extensions of the Shakespearean narrative, function to reframe and anticipate the action either side of the broadcast interval.

[245] Stanton B. Garner Jnr., 'Time and Presence in *The Winter's Tale*', *Modern Language Quarterly* 46. 4 (1985), pp. 347 – 67, p. 303.

[246] Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale,* IV.1, 5 – 6.

Less common than its pre-show equivalent, interval short films feature in just two NT Live Shakespeare broadcasts to date: *Othello* (2013) and *As You Like It* (2016). It is important to note that in both of these broadcasts, the place of a pre-show short film centring on the play performed was filled, by a live interview in the case of *Othello* (discussed above), and by a short film dedicated to the history of Shakespeare performances at the NT for *As You*. The company's sparse use of this convention, as well as its appearance in broadcasts that had little space for more prefatory material, indicates that NT Live favours the pre-show space for pre-recorded features rather than the interval. This could be on account of practical considerations. As NT Live also broadcasts from out-of-house theatres, guaranteeing the time and organising the production for an extended interval feature (in addition to a pre-show short film) is undoubtedly complicated when dealing with a separate theatre company. It is also important to consider that these two examples of interval short films were stylistically identical to the broadcasting company's pre-show short films. The consistency between NT Live's interval and pre-show short films, together with the rarity of the former, suggests a strong preference for the use of short films as prefatory rather than intermediary framing paratexts. In the NT Live Shakespearean canon, therefore, 'front matter matters' to a greater extent than interval counterparts.[247]

Nonetheless, *Othello* provides an insightful example of how the company's distinct style of short film operates interpretively when positioned in the broadcast interval. The production was broadcast with an interval short film titled 'Behind the Lines.'[248] The topic of the short film is encapsulated in the wordplay of its title. Seven minutes long, this film offered an extended reading of the play that foregrounded its military context, reading behind the lines to pull this subtext to the foreground, whilst exploring the implications of a career spent *literally* behind the lines of a military encampment. This short film featured interview clips with military advisor to the production, Major-General Jonathan Shaw, spliced with news footage, clips from rehearsals, and footage of director Nicholas Hytner discussing the setting for the production. Adrian Lester (Othello) was the first to be

[247] Newman, p. 314.

[248] *Othello*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *NT Live*, Olivier Stage at the National Theatre, London, 26 September 2013.

heard, reciting an extract from the play over a montage of military helicopters; infantry soldiers manning guns and loading cargo; explosions seen through night-vision aerial cameras; and actors in rehearsal. The lines narrated by Lester were taken from the first act of the play, in which Othello defends his marriage to Desdemona in front of the Venetian court ('Rude am I in my speech […] more than pertains to feats of broil and battle').[249] Underscoring contemporary images and shots of the cast in rehearsal, this section of the play was reframed by the interval short film with a renewed importance for cinema audiences. As well as visually affirming the setting of the production (footage showed a recognisable British military presence in a desert landscape, clearly denoting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan), the temporary restaging of this speech prompted cinema audiences to retrospectively reinterpret this moment of performance seen in the first act. With a clear focus on the production's contemporary military setting, this short film offered a reframing of Othello with his military experience (the topic explored in this speech) and status as his defining trait.

The short film continued with an exploration of how the contemporary meanings of the military can impact upon the action and relationships within the play. Hytner was heard addressing the cast on (what a subtitle informed audiences was) the first day of rehearsal, noting that the central question he wanted to consider through the production was 'what a life spent fighting – what a life spent devoted to violence – has done to the men at the centre of the play and to the women who find themselves caught up in the drama.'[250] Positioned in the middle of the performance rather than at its start, this question from Hytner invited cinema audiences to retrospectively reflect on the first half of the performance with this question absolutely at the forefront of their minds. While the production itself made the play's military context prominently visible using cabin-style staging and recognisable camouflage costumes, the intervention of this short film would likely have prompted cinema audiences to reflect upon the importance of this context to different and diverse areas of the play (including, as Hytner suggested, to the women at the fringes of the hyper-masculine culture of the Venetian army). The involvement of

[249] Shakespeare, *Othello*, I.3.82 – 88.

[250] *Othello,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2013. Note that future short form references to this broadcast will also include the year of transmission: this is because there are both NT Live and RSC Live's *Othello*s were directed by Robin Lough. Future references to each broadcast will therefore also include their year of transmission.

Shaw worked as a way to probe further into the psychological and social nuances of the play's military context. Shaw's introduction to the short film included a brief profile of his career. Hytner was shown first inviting Shaw into rehearsals for the production, announcing to the cast that the advisor 'was, until recently, a pretty high ranking General in the British Army.'[251] Edited to follow on immediately from this clip was an interview with Shaw, in which he explained the breadth of his experience: 'I was thirty-two years in the military, I retired last year. I was a paratrooper, I've been on operations throughout my life: I commanded the effort in Basra in 2007 in Iraq so I come with a lot of experience of doing precisely what Othello is asked to do.'[252] Shaw's interview was accompanied by an image of the former General in a military uniform that resembled those used in the production's design, visually enforcing the parallel Shaw made between himself and Othello.

This relationship, in which Shaw stood as an advisor to the production but also shared crucial military parallels with Othello, framed Shaw as offering distinctly performative psychological insight into the play's main character. For example, when Shaw argued that his experience encompassed 'doing precisely what Othello is asked to do', his discussion of his own military career was offered as a counterpoint to the speech recited by Lester at the opening of the short film. Therefore, despite filling a gap in the narrative signified by the interval, the well-established experience of Shaw and the choice to open this short film with Othello's statement of his own illustrious career allowed Shaw to function as a real-life proxy for the Shakespearean character. Likewise, interview clips that saw Lester discussing his portrayal of Othello similarly invited cinema audiences to interpretively engage with the character even as the interval was ostensibly a pause in the narrative of the play. On his performance of Othello, Lester reflected that the abrupt end to the war in Cyprus just as the Venetian army arrives is an crucial factor to the action of the play: 'anyone who has any military experience at all will know that that's a powder keg waiting to go off.'[253]

[251] *Othello*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2013.

[252] Ibid.

[253] Ibid.

Overlapping with the last few words of Lester's description was footage from a dress rehearsal, showing Iago and the soldiers drinking and shouting raucously. The events alluded to by Lester and shown briefly in the performance clip – Cassio's drunken assault and the increasingly violent action that follows it – were made more significant because of the position of this short film in the production's interval. For viewers familiar with the play, the intermediary role of this paratext gave Lester's reading of the Cyprus encampment as a 'powder keg' an added importance because of its proximity to the sequence of violent acts leading to the play's conclusion.[254] Framed in this way, the military context was granted a particular emphasis in contrast to the other driving narrative forces of *Othello*, not the least of which is Iago's infamously motiveless malignity. A subtle yet important reframing of ideas about the play was offered here. By foregrounding the boredom and repressed aggression of an inactive military camp, this short film implicitly shifted some of the agency for the violence in the play away from the machinations and prejudices of its characters (principally Iago) and towards a sense of chance or perhaps providence (the storm that destroys the Ottoman fleet and consequently ends the war against the Turks).

'Behind the Lines' concluded with an exploration of the relationship between Othello and Iago, culminating when Shaw commented on Rory Kinnear's performance as the latter. Shaw recalled that one element of his role as military advisor was to assure a continuity in the uniforms worn by the characters, giving 'advice on how to dress, how to wear their berets' according to the strict conventions of the modern military.[255] He then isolated Kinnear's Iago as the only character whose costume does not conform to these exacting standards, reflecting that it occurred to him as a conscious choice on Kinnear's part to show that Iago is 'a man who has boozed and smoked and drunk and whored his way through life, and it's all catching up with him.'[256] At this intersection in the performance, this reading of Iago's mental state and the way it manifests in his dress functioned directorially, encouraging cinema viewers to watch for this and other 'clues' in Kinnear's portrayal. Moreover, this sequence allowed

[254] *Othello*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2013.

[255] Ibid.

[256] Ibid. This detail of the short film is also recalled by Deidre Fleming in her review of the broadcast, in '*Othello*', *Shakespeare Bulletin* 32. 2 (2014), pp. 269 – 272, p. 272.

Kinnear's characterisation of Iago to be voiced indirectly by Shaw: informing and potentially impacting on how the character was read in the second half of the performance. A comparison to printed texts of Shakespeare's is useful here. Harry Newman argues that the paratextual apparatus of the *New Oxford Shakespeare*, particularly the recreation of early printed lists of *dramatis personae*, 'urges questions about the role of the paratext in the reader's perceptions of Shakespeare's dramatic characters.'[257] Using the example of the Folio character list for *The Tempest*, in which Caliban is labelled '"*a saluage and deformed slave*"', Newman suggests that replicating this prefacing paratext for modern readers re-contextualises the character in light of 'important postcolonial work on *The Tempest* and Caliban over the last half century.'[258] The re-evaluations prompted by 'Behind the Lines' may not be as loaded as this example; nonetheless, Newman's observation that these paratextual materials have the ability to shape interpretations of Shakespearean characters echoes the intervention of this short film during the broadcast interval. Despite being stylistically identical to its pre-show counterparts, the meanings created and readings proposed by the *Othello* interval short film resonated differently within this juncture of performance.

With its use of Shaw as a proxy for Othello and Adrian Lester's own comments on his performance, 'Behind the Lines' also prompts a re-evaluation of how NT Live's conventional style of short film functions as a kind of performative extension of the Shakespearean performance. Just as Time bridges two narrative halves in *The Winter's Tale*, so too is the interval short film differentiated from pre-show paratexts by a facilitating a *re*-entrance into the world of the performance rather than simply an entrance. A second example, from the RSC Live canon, illustrates how the interval short film can be used to further explore the narrative and psychology of characters established with the first act of the performance. Also from a broadcast of *Othello* (2015), this film featured interviews from a number of actors who had played the titular role – including Adrian Lester commenting on his performance in the NT production I discuss above. While this type of interval short film is unique in the RSC Live canon (interviews with actors are usually the reserve of the pre-show short film, as I consider above), it is not

[257] Newman, p. 315.

[258] Ibid.

the only model within the company's canon. Therefore, before uncovering how the *Othello* interval short film acted to blur the performative boundaries of that broadcast, it is important to address other styles of interval short film commonly used by RSC Live and the meanings created by these.

RSC Live's use of interval short films has been a consistent feature of their broadcast canon, meaning that a variety of examples exist covering a number of different topics. Broadly, however, these can be categorised by three foci: interval short films that focus on an element of the staging or on a creative department within the RSC; those that stage a 'deep-dive' style analysis into the textual, cultural and performance history of the Shakespeare play; and those that invite key figures from the company to discuss their upcoming shows or activities. Divided along these lines, the former style of interval short film featured in 54% of all broadcasts, deep-dive segments a further 29%, and the remaining 17% staged interviews on the company's broader programming (the broadcast of *The Tempest* [2017], for example, saw an interview with Gregory Doran on the RSC's upcoming 'Rome Season').[259] The style in which a creative department of the RSC is profiled – or the production is explored through a single staging element – is the most consistent style of interval short film, therefore. Broadcasts have seen explorations of the company's wig department, prop department, costume department (as part of the RSC's 'Stitch in Time' campaign), as well as short films which feature a single creative from the production discussing their role in detail. RSC Live's broadcast of *Titus Andronicus* (2017), for example, invited stage illusionist Chris Fisher to explore his role in helping to perform some of the play's on-stage violence; while three broadcasts thus far have featured profiles of composers for the production.[260]

This style of interval short film raises interesting questions about the role of this paratext as a means of institutional dramaturgy. Films that profile the activities and introduce staff from the company's creative departments – what James Steichen calls 'engaging in self-documentary' – allow

[259] *The Tempest*, directed for the screen by Dewi Humphreys, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 7 February 2017.

[260] *Titus Andronicus*, directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 9 August 2017.

not only for a personalisation of the RSC as a brand but also for implicit arguments to be made about the quality and professionalism of productions mounted by the company.[261] The company's broadcast of *The Taming of the Shrew* (2019), for example, featured a six-minute film on the company's wig department, titled 'Inside the Wig Room.'[262] The central figure in the film was Sandra Smith, Head of Wigs and Makeup, who narrated footage of actors doing quick changes and having wigs fitted, and demonstrated the process for fitting 'shells' that provide the shape of an individual wig for each actor.[263] Smith was featured alongside her colleagues in the department, one of whom was seen meticulously knotting a wig one hair at a time. As well as offering a 'behind the scenes' look at the production, this short film advertised the artisanal craftsmanship and skill of this department. This intimate and personalised view of the RSC's wig department is typical of the way this model of interval short film works to curate a brand identity of quality and affability for the company. Underscoring shots of the wig team working closely to help dress and change actors was the description of an intimate relationship from Smith: 'when an actor comes into the wig room, they could have had a really bad day […] sometimes an actor will want to come in and rant at you, sometimes they will want to come in and cry with you and you have to be very sensitive so all those things.'[264] Smith's description framed the activities of the department – and, by extension of the RSC – as contributing to the wellbeing of their actors. As well as showcasing the detailed skill behind the production, therefore, this interval short film invited cinema viewers to infer an intimate and supportive culture within the RSC.

In this regard, interval short films that profile creative departments perform more than just an indulgent look behind the scenes of a production as a way of, in Martin Barker's words, 'climbing into an otherwise closed world.'[265] Rather, they constitute a performance of institutional identity that seeks to bolster the cultural capital and assurance of quality denoted by the RSC as a company. As Steichen

[261] Steichen, p. 446.

[262] *The Taming of the Shrew*, directed for the screen by Bridget Caldwell, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 5 June 2019.

[263] Ibid.

[264] Ibid.

[265] Barker, p. 65.

notes of short films included with the Met's opera broadcasts, 'these special features were in service less to the opera than to the Opera.'[266] In the case of institutions that deal in 'high culture' art forms such as opera and Shakespeare, a brand identity that foregrounds a sense of intimacy and personalisation may be a useful way to counter assumptions that their theatrical work is exclusive and inaccessible. The impulse to construct a brand identity that encompasses both personability and quality is, Kate Rumbold argues, inherent to the way in which Shakespearean institutions offer '"unserious" […] access to their organizations' and, 'in a profitably iconoclastic gesture, market a more intimate relationship.'[267] While the kind of personal brand identity cultivated in the *Taming* interval short film does not aspire to the level of iconoclasm highlighted by Rumbold, yet showcasing an intimate look into the company's artistic departments implicates this style of the short film with a particularly 'accessible' mode of institutional dramaturgy for the company. Rather than portraying themselves as the stoical and impersonal gatekeepers of Shakespeare's cultural capital, interval short films such as *Taming*'s function within the wider mandate of the live broadcast medium as an attempt to broaden access to the company's activities and to give the appearance of democratising Shakespearean value.

By comparison, the style of short film encapsulated by the *Othello* broadcast had only a tangential attention to the RSC and its institutional identity. Titled 'Who is Othello?', this interval short film was similar to the RSC's conventional 'deep-dive' style, which typically features academics commenting on a play's composition, textual history and afterlife.[268] Examples of this form of interval film include James Shapiro commenting on *Henry V*, Judith Buchanan and Emma Smith on Lady Macbeth, Emma Whipday on power and sexuality in *Measure for Measure*, Mary Beard on *Julius Caesar*, and Michael Dobson on the shared historical setting of *Cymbeline* and *King Lear*. While I explore how 'Who is Othello?' calls on voices of authority in a manner comparable to these other uses of the convention, this example is exceptional for the way in which it staged a detailed exploration of character within the interval space. The closest comparison to this single-character focus is found in the

[266] Steichen, p. 446.

[267] Rumbold, 'From "Access" to "Creativity"', p. 318.

[268] *Othello*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 25 August 2015.

Macbeth broadcast featuring Buchanan and Smith's 'deep-dive' on Lady Macbeth, although this example did not include actors as the *Othello* short film did. It was in the *Othello* broadcast that the interval short film was used for its rich capacity to extend and explore the narrative world of the Shakespearean performance, raising questions as to how far paratextual interventions may deconstruct and reshape a viewer's reading of the play at this juncture in the performance.

'Who is Othello?' saw three actors who had previously taken the play's central role comment on their performances and perceptions of the character.[269] The choice to populate this short film with actors, rather than academics as in the other examples, had an interesting resonance with the casting choices made in the RSC's production of *Othello*. The lead role was played by Hugh Quarshie alongside another black actor, Lucian Msamati, as Iago. In addition to the publicity garnered by director Iqbal Khan's choice to cast Msamati in the role of Iago, the production saw a resurfacing of comments previously made by Quarshie that 'of all the parts in the canon, perhaps Othello is the one which should most definitely not be played by a black actor.'[270] The discourse in media coverage of the production, which set questions of the importance of race to the play against the casting of Quarshie and Msamati, haunted this choice of interval short film. Alongside Adrian Lester were interview clips with Paterson Joseph (who played Othello at The Royal Exchange Company, 2002) and Ray Fearon (RSC,1999). Quarshie himself had been featured in a pre-show short film for the broadcast, allowing this later paratext to interact indirectly with Quarshie's own comments on his interpretation of the character. More importantly, however, the positioning of this short film in the interval allowed the reflections from Lester, Joseph and Fearon to respond directly to Quarshie's performance in the first half of the production. By evoking previous inhabitants of the role of Othello, this short film literalised the idea of

[269] This interval short film is also a rare example in the canon where a paratext was disrupted by a technical glitch, although this is not the focus of my discussion here.

[270] Hugh Quarshie qtd. in Andrew Dickson, 'Othello: The Role that Entices and Enrages Actors of All Skin Colours', *Guardian*, 10 June 2015 <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/jun/10/othello-actors-rsc-lucian-msamati-hugh-quarshie#:~:text=%E2%80%9COf%20all%20the%20parts,a%20lecture%20published%20in%201998.> [accessed 16 August 2020].

haunting proposed by Marvin Carlson and demonstrated, rather than the 'recycled body' of the actor adopting numerous roles, the capacity for the role of Othello to be inhabited by a number of actors. In doing so, this short film disrupted ideas of a singular and definitive reading of Othello and challenged the authority of Quarshie's portrayal.[271]

This was nowhere more true than when the actors discussed Othello's relationship with Desdemona and the accusations of her infidelity. In a sequence of clips that showed Lester and Joseph, the latter punctuated his exploration of Othello's love for Desdemona with quotations from the play:

> Lester: I think for [Othello to see Desdemona weep in response to the story of his life] it must have broken his heart and opened him up and completely changed his world.
> Joseph: "'Tis strange," he says, "'Tis wond'rous strange, 'twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful"
> Lester: No wonder he's in love with her and no wonder it's the kind of love that reason can't find a place in.[272]

The editing of these clips established a distinctly performative exchange between the two actors, one that had interpretive consequences for a reading of Othello's character. In an implicit dialogue, Lester and Joseph illuminated a shared understanding of the character even whilst visually refracting 'Othello' across a number of different actors (including, although he was not interviewed in the film, Quarshie). Joseph's interview clip, as the above quotation demonstrates, consisted almost entirely of the actor delivering lines spoken by Othello. While this was in service of Joseph's exploration of the character, these lines functioned as a performance of their own: one in which Joseph temporarily inhabited the role of Othello and potentially decentralised Quarshie's performance of the character in the minds of cinema audiences. Joseph's interview clip is illustrative of the broader ability of this short film, and of this paratext more generally, to breach and overwrite moments from the Shakespearean performance.

This act of performative intervention is, of course, doubly significant when performed by actors who have previously played the role of Othello. The use of production photographs to underscore

[271] Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, p. 8.

[272] *Othello*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2015.

observations by Lester, Fearon and Joseph worked to further this sense of a performance erupting into the paratextual spaces of the broadcast. One such example showed an image of Ray Fearon in the role, over which Fearon's voice was heard narrating Iago's line, 'the green-eyed monster / which doth mock the meat it feeds on.'[273] For the duration of the line spoken by the actor, the shot panned downwards to reveal Fearon's Othello at the moment of Desdemona's murder. Staring painfully into the camera, Fearon's Othello was seen straddled on top of Gillian Kearney's Desdemona, with only her arms and hands visible as she clawed desperately at his face (see Figure 5). The use of an affective image such as that of Fearon's Othello strangling a disembodied Desdemona supported the performativity of this short film, prompting emotional and sympathetic responses from cinema viewers. Rather than presenting these photographs in a distinctly historicising mode, as in RSC Live's PPP montages, their appearance in this short film served to decentralise the play's central character and to split 'Othello' across a number of bodies.

If the role of Othello was haunted by these past performers, this paratext framed this haunting as an immediate one with the potential to disrupt and decentre Quarshie's portrayal. Moreover, the image discussed above was particularly coded to intervene performatively within the broadcast production using the filmic grammar of the medium. Staring straight into camera, this production photograph of Fearon captured a tightly framed moment in which the actor engaged the eyes of the cinema audiences in a manner sometimes used to denote audience address (as in, for example, Lucy Phelps' delivery of Rosalind's epilogue in the RSC Live broadcast of *As You Like It* [2019]). Despite the production photograph predating the broadcast by sixteen years, its use within this interval short film interacted with the meaning-making processes of the broadcast itself to situate Fearon's Othello in a position of psychological proximity to cinema viewers. Underscored by an iconic line from the play (albeit not a line of Othello's), this sequence and the wider short film implicated these actors as co-existing Othellos whose interpretive commentary was set directly in conversation with Quarshie's

[273] *Othello*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2015.

performance. In doing so, this interval short film intersected Quarshie's performance by extending the psychology of the character not only across multiple actors, but into the paratextual space of the interval.

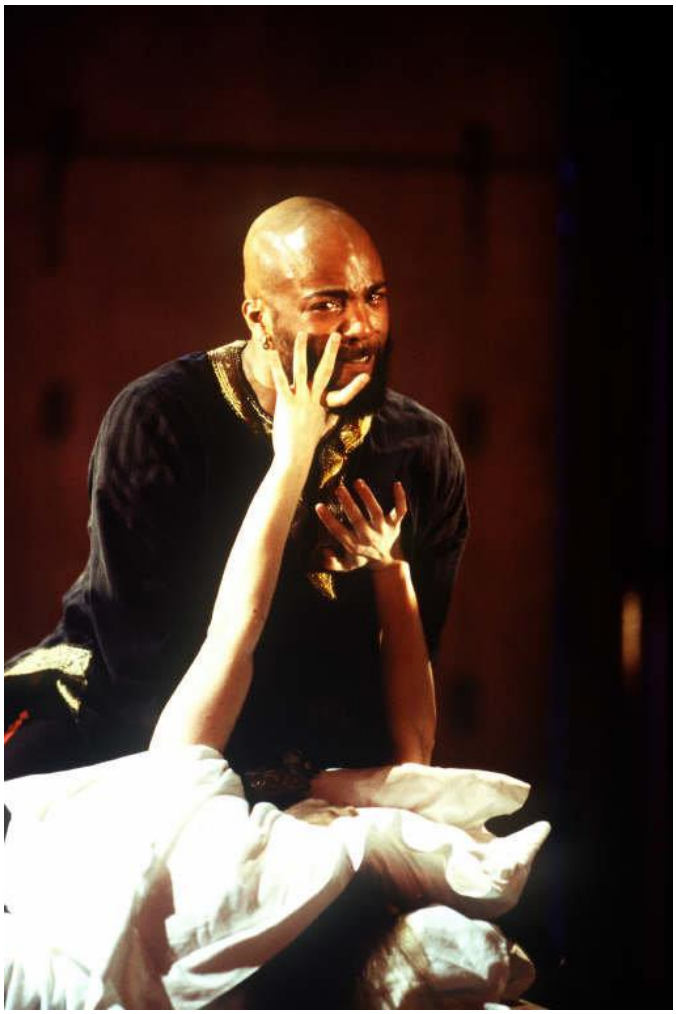

Figure 5: Ray Fearon as Othello, captured in an image that was reproduced in black and white and cropped as part of the RSC Live *Othello* (2015) broadcast interval short film.

Using this broadcast and NT Live's *Othello*, I have demonstrated how the interval short film holds the capacity to be both performatively active and interpretively rich: shaping readings of the Shakespearean work even during what is traditionally seen as a 'gap' in the performance. As with a range of paratextual material, this framing component is also a productive means of shaping institutional identity, particularly in the example of the RSC Live style that profiles creative departments within the company. Beyond these conclusions, what has emerged through my discussion of the interval short film and interval paratexts more generally is how far these paratextual elements may mirror early modern theatrical practices which sought to use act breaks as sites of creative and performative intervention.

Often overlooked, action between the acts of early modern performances crucially shaped how audiences perceived characters – for example, De Flores' premeditated attack on Alonzo – and is integral for understanding George and Nell's 'consistent identification with the class and culture of the public theater' in Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle.*[274] Many examples from the early modern theatre show dramatists writing for the unique performance context of the indoor playhouse (in which the essential trimming of the candles demanded regular act breaks), in an adaptive or creative mode that finds a modern parallel in the transposition of theatrical performances to cinema screens. While the paratextual interventions explored in this section and the preceding one are not 'authorial' in the sense of Shakespearean authorship, nonetheless their function is often distinctly comparable with early-modern interim action wherever interval paratexts effected a performative continuation of the Shakespearean play. As critics continue to explore how these apparent pauses in early modern performance may be more interpretively significant than they seem, in this chapter I have argued that the same attention is integral to understanding Shakespearean performance in the theatre broadcast medium and, by extension, how narratives of Shakespeare's cultural value are formulated and circulated. These studies and the interval paratexts I have outlined here remind us that to look for the full range of meanings created by the action it is essential to look between the acts.

[274] Joshua S. Smith, 'Reading Between the Acts: Satire and the Interludes in "The Knight of the Burning Pestle"', *Studies in Philology*, 109. 4 (2012), pp. 474 – 495, p. 475.

After the Ending: Bows

> *[D]o you clap or not? Biggest question. There's a wall. They feel a bit embarrassed. You feel silly when they're taking bows.*[275]

The mediating work of the live theatre broadcast certainly does not end with the final line of the play. To conclude the performance is the theatrical convention of the bows: the inclusion of which in the live broadcast, as the quotation above suggests, can often perplex cinema viewers. While footage of the theatre audience greeting actors with applause may pose an experiential 'wall' for cinema audiences, bows and credits are often assumed to be likewise void of interpretive possibilities.[276] If the performance has ended clearly with the last line of Shakespearean verse or with the last piece of stage action, surely these terminal paratexts can have no bearing on a cinema viewer's interpretation? In this section, I challenge this assumption by exploring the interpretive thresholds offered at the very end of the live broadcast. By analysing how bows are mediated often using the same filmic grammar that made meaning from the action of the play, and by considering examples in which the credits reiterated character relationships, I demonstrate that the role of these elements within a live theatre broadcast is worthy of the function of a paratext. More than experiential oddities within the broadcast, I contend that bows and credits can retrospectively shape the meanings of the performance in unexpected and nuanced ways.

The framing of bows, like that of the performance itself, is contingent on the shape of the theatre auditorium. Bows captured in Shakespeare's Globe or the RST, for example, will inevitably record the responses of the theatre audience, while stages with less of a thrust into the auditorium may frame bows in a more cinematic style (see, for example, Figure 6 which shows the stage arrangement and framing of bows for NT Live's *The Tragedy of Richard II* [2018]). Close-ups are frequently used, especially to focalise the principal actors in a production. In some cases, the framing of certain actors in close-up can not only highlight their centrality to the production but draw or consolidate relationships between the characters they have just portrayed. In the RSC Live broadcast of *Love's Labour's Won* (or *Much Ado*

[275] Audience member qtd. in Reidy et. al, p. 55.

[276] Ibid.

Figure 6: A photograph showing the cast of the Almeida *Richard II* taking a bow during the broadcast's camera rehearsal. The proscenium arch of the stage and box-effect set gave the broadcast a distinctly cinematic style.

About Nothing, 2015), for example, sequential close-ups focussed cinema viewers' attention to the play's central pairings of Beatrice (Michelle Terry) and Benedick (Edward Bennett), and Hero (Flora Spencer-Longhurst) and Claudio (Tunji Kasim).[277] Even outside of the boundaries of the Shakespearean play, the framing of bows in this broadcast anticipated that cinema audience pleasure would be gleaned from the romantic pairings that conclude the action. Echoes of this are found in Tiffany Stern's work on post-performance dances in the early modern theatre. Stern argues that 'dance sometimes merged the fictional celebration, often of a wedding, with the factual celebration of the end of the event.'[278] While this is already apt for *Much Ado* (the final line of the play sees Benedick command 'Strike up, pipers'), this blurring of fictional and factual celebration was redoubled in the *Labour's Won* broadcast by the mediation of the cameras.[279] Deploying the same filmic grammar to document the dance and bows, the movement of the broadcast cameras set this post-performance action in direct conversation with the action of the play. Moreover, this example also suggests the ability of filmic mediation of the

[277] *Love's Labour's Won*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[278] Stern, 'Before the Beginning, After the End', p. 371.

[279] William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, edited by Sheldon P. Zitner (Oxford: OUP, 1993), V.4.129.

bows to interact with other acts of looking within the Shakespearean narrative itself. The gaze of the camera on the play's central lovers evoked multiple instances of voyeurism in *Much Ado*: from the comic 'gulling' scenes in which Beatrice and Benedick spy on the staged conversations of their friends, to the more sinister case in which Don John's deception of Claudio relies upon a misinterpreted act of voyeurism.[280] Even as actors inhabited the performatively liminal space of the bows, the memory of these moments in the performance of *Love's Labour's Won/Much Ado About Nothing* were summoned by the attentive gaze of the broadcast cameras.

A number of plays within the Shakespearean broadcast canon codify the gaze in ways which may have interpretive consequences for the framing of bows. When combined with elements within the production and often with casting choices, themes of gazing or voyeurism within these works can set the scene for bows that are more interpretively loaded than they would be. NT Live's *Coriolanus* (2014) serves as an illustrative example. The broadcast starred Tom Hiddleston as the eponymous Roman general, in a narrative driven by the popular desire to peer closer (a fact not lost upon presenter Emma Freud and director Josie Rourke during the broadcast's interval interview, in which the subject of Hiddleston's accolade of 'MTV's Sexiest Man Alive' was raised).[281] Peter Kirwan has observed that the filmic aesthetics of that broadcast 'utilized the focusing, fetishizing power of the film camera' as part of an overall 'mediation of Martius's image.'[282] Setting Kirwan's analysis in conversation with the work of Anna Blackwell on Shakespearean celebrity can help to further elucidate the consequences of such a gaze when deployed in the liminal and transition space of the bows. Blackwell notes that '[t]hrough meshing Coriolanus' characterization with our knowledge of Hiddleston's popularity, Rourke encourages a reading of the play as a comment on celebrity culture.'[283] Working with the

[280] While the scene in which Claudio views what he takes to be a secret assignation between Hero and another gentlemen is not staged in the play, surveillance and eavesdropping underpin the comic sequences of *Much Ado*, II.3 and III.1.

[281] *Coriolanus*, directed for the screen by Tim van Someren, *NT Live*, Donmar Warehouse, London, 30 January 2014.

[282] Kirwan, '*Coriolanus* Review', p. 276.

[283] Anna Blackwell, 'Adapting *Coriolanus*: Tom Hiddleston's Body and Action Cinema', *Adaptation*, 3.7. (2014), pp. 344 – 352, p. 349.

narrative desire to look that drives *Coriolanus* was a sustained effort to employ the gaze of the camera as a proxy for that desire, which itself inevitably communicated an impulse to gaze further at Hiddleston as a star actor. Within this network of loaded gazes, therefore, the framing of the bows adopted a renewed interpretive significance through its documentation of the moment in which Coriolanus and Hiddleston became increasingly blurred, still under the watchful surveillance of the broadcast cameras. In this context in which the gaze was codified by the Shakespearean narrative, the production's casting choices and the filmic grammar of the broadcast itself, shots that focd on Hiddleston during the bows inevitably interacted with and extended the 'focusing, fetishizing' tone of the performance.[284]

The example of Hiddleston as Coriolanus also demonstrates that the framing of bows can interact with residual character relationships. Close-ups of actors who had recently played elusive or stand-offish characters may effect a shift in the perception of these roles, inviting cinema audiences to retrospectively imbue their characters with a sense of intimacy and personability. Shots that emphasised the camaraderie between actors at the end of a broadcast of *Timon of Athens* (NT Live 2012, RSC Live 2019), for example, may have struck an ironic chord with the titular character's lonely downfall.[285] For characters who maintained a close relationship with the audience through soliloquys or direct address – typically filmed using close-ups in live broadcasts – this *platea* role can be evoked once again through tightly framed shots during the bows.[286] In these instances, the mediation of the broadcast cameras can heighten and emphasise the liminality of the bows themselves as an extension of *platea* positions within the narrative of the play.

Expanding upon his original work on *locus* and *platea*, Robert Weimann argues that in many cases the '*platea* positioning' is defined by 'a recurring, more immediate overlapping or oscillation of

[284] Kirwan, '*Coriolanus* Review', p. 276.

[285] *Timon of Athens*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *NT Live*, Olivier Stage at the National Theatre, London, 1 November 2012; *Timon of Athens*, directed for the screen by Rhodri Huw, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 15 November 2019, delayed transmission.

[286] Robert Weimann, 'Platea and Locus: Flexible Dramaturgy', *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater: Studies in the Social Dimension of Dramatic Form and Function*, edited and translated by Robert Schwartz (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 73 – 85.

player's role and player's self.'[287] While this liminality of performer/character is arguably inherent to bows anyway, within a live theatre broadcast this is also inevitably coloured by the same filmic grammar that documented the performance of these characters. Pascale Aebischer observes how the language of the broadcast may heighten the liminality of these *platea* moments in performance, allowing them to be 'reconfigured for the broadcast so that moments of direct address are translated into the intimacy afforded by camera work that pulls the viewer into the character's thought process.'[288] If the filmic grammar of the broadcast can effect this kind of *platea* interaction within the Shakespearean performance, are the residual effects of these types of shots not also possible when used to record the bows?

A further example from NT Live's Shakespearean canon highlights the potential for bows and post-performance action to emphasise the blurring between star performer and Shakespearean character. The broadcast of NT Live's *Hamlet* (2015) captured a unique feature of that production's curtain call, in which lead actor Benedict Cumberbatch delivered an appeal for donations to be made to Save The Children in aid of the Syrian refugee crisis. While this was a nightly occurrence in the theatrical performance of *Hamlet*, for the broadcast Cumberbatch acknowledged the unusually large audience reach of his appeal, reflecting that 'what's extraordinary about NT Live is no matter where you're watching, you're all in this theatre with us […] if you feel you would like to donate anything or help to this cause [sic], [it] would be really appreciated.'[289] The unique political and social circumstances of this broadcast – its proximity to the height of the refugee crisis in 2015 – allowed Cumberbatch to effect a particularly heightened transition from character to actor in the paratextual space of the bows. As Anna Blackwell argues, '[b]y bringing his personal politics into the periphery of performance, the ambiguous, transformative site of the curtain call witnessed the shift not from Hamlet to the (expected)

[287] Robert Weimann, 'Space (in)dividable: *Locus* and *Platea* Revisited', *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre*, edited by Helen Higbee and William West (Cambridge: CUP, 200), pp. 180 – 215, p. 193.

[288] Aebischer, *Shakespeare, Spectatorship*, p. 30.

[289] *Hamlet*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2015.

weary yet appreciative Cumberbatch but to the activist.'[290] Blackwell's language choice in terming Cumberbatch an 'activist' itself highlights the ways in which the terminal paratextual space is apt to provide ironic contrasts to elements of the Shakespearean performance: in this instance, Hamlet as the famously *inactive* and procrastinating avenger transitioned, through the paratextual space of the broadcast, to Cumberbatch the political and philanthropic activist.

Mediated as an extension of the performance itself, therefore, the filming of the bows is aptly positioned to heighten the post-performance blurring of actor and character and to expand the meanings of performance through this ambiguity (which is already emphasised, as I consider further in Chapter Five, in the case of celebrity performers such as Hiddleston and Cumberbatch). In instances where a conscious blurring of Shakespearean character and star performer occurs in the post-performance paratexts, these framing materials offer a site of added pleasure for cinema audiences and particularly for fan communities. The majority of bows and curtain calls may not be paratexts which are 'staged' in the manner of other examples explored in this half of the thesis, nor ones as self-consciously mediating as the pre-show short film or the live interview. They arise organically from the theatrical performance; nonetheless, the examples outlined above demonstrate that the inclusion of the bows within the live broadcast, and their mediation by broadcast cameras, can extend the meanings created by the performance for cinema viewers in subtle ways. Like the interval timer, bows are chiefly a functional paratext that but one that is well positioned to create incidental meaning, or to build upon the mediation of the performance to consolidate themes or relationships within the play.

Credits

Broadcast credits can perform a similar framing function. A paratext that is universal across broadcasts by NT Live and RSC Live, credits typically begin to roll just before the house lights within the theatre auditorium are raised, setting this final paratextual intervention in the broadcast against a backdrop of audience members leaving the theatre auditorium. This is also the likeliest point at which cinema audiences might leave, meaning that credits may be viewed only in passing or perhaps not at

[290] Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 115.

all. Detailing the names of the actors as well as the creatives and technical staff involved in staging and broadcasting the performance, the credits are nonetheless significant as the only paratext within the broadcast to acknowledge the frequently invisible work of the broadcast team.[291] Where a broadcast unaccompanied by credits may invest further into what John Wyver calls the 'myth of non-mediation', the credits highlight the breadth of labour that contributes to the production of the broadcast.[292] In this regard, a closer attention to the credits as a framing paratext requires that we question how cinema audiences register and acknowledge the mechanics of the mediation process. This suggests that credits, where seen by cinema viewers, have the potential to invite these audiences to re-evaluate the labour and artistic agency (broadcast directors are typically listed first in the section that includes the broadcast team) and to incorporate more consciously the process of mediation into their reading of the production. A handful of examples from within the canon highlights the ability of credits to also offer interpretive thresholds that reflect backwards into the narrative world of the Shakespearean work. The way in which credits can reframe the networks of relations is comparable to printed *dramatis personae*, albeit offering this threshold of interpretation as a retrospective rather than a pre-emptive one. In this position at the closure of the broadcast experience, credit sequences can sometimes interact with the concluding action of the performance in important ways.

[291] John Wyver recalls how, during the first season of RSC Live broadcasts, 'the assumption was made, although never explicitly discussed, that the cinema audience should see nothing of the mechanics of the broadcast', in 'Screening the RSC Stage;, p. 295. Similarly, Pascale Aebischer analyses the 'self-effacing techniques used by leading broadcast directors, who seek to make the camerawork and thus the fact of remediation as 'invisible' as possible' in *Shakespeare, Spectatorship,* p. 150. Erin Sullivan evokes a comparable language of 'transparency' in her discussion of broadcast aesthetics, in '"The forms of things unknown"', p. 631.

[292] John Wyver, '"All the Trimmings?": The Transfer of Theatre to Television in Adaptations of Shakespeare Stagings', *Adaptation,* 7. 2 (2014), pp. 104 – 120, p. 109. Alison Stone builds upon the 'myth of non-mediation' by exploring further the ways in which the visibility of filmic mediation may be reduced in 'Not Making a Movie: The Livecasting of Shakespeare Stage Productions by the Royal National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company', *Shakespeare Bulletin,* 34. 4. (2016), pp. 627 – 643.

Two such examples are found in the RSC Live broadcasts of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Troilus and Cressida* (both 2018).[293] What unites these two plays thematically – love crossing a social or cultural divide – also manifested in the comparable structures of their credits. Characters in these plays were listed under categories that consolidated their social division: with the cast split into the houses of Capulet, Montague and Escalus in *Romeo,* and into the Greeks and Trojans in *Troilus*. Where this style of credits emphasised the divisions of the continuing war that concludes *Troilus*, it reframed the reconciliatory conclusion of *Romeo and Juliet* by reiterating the factionalism with which the play begins. In doing so, this credits sequence embodied the framing potential of the *dramatis personae* at a particularly juxtaposing narrative moment: consolidating the divisions within the play even immediately after the establishment of a 'gloomy peace' between them.[294] The structuring of the *Romeo* credits in this way may not have effected any radical reworking of the play in the minds of cinema audiences, however it does illuminate ideas about *Romeo and Juliet* in the popular imagination. That the characters exist in the broadcast credits still divided into 'Houses' suggests that narrative interest in the play lies more in conflict than in its reconciliatory conclusion. While these may replicate character lists in other paratextual material designed around the production – programmes, for example – the organisation of credits in this way and their placement at the end of the performance significantly shifts the meanings of the character relationships they evoke. The *Troilus* and *Romeo* credits invite us to reconsider the role of this terminal paratext as a way of complicating or consolidating the narrative conclusion of the Shakespearean performance.

The ability of credits and bows to amplify or undermine the meanings created by the Shakespearean performance challenges the idea that terminal paratexts are not interpretively significant by virtue of their position after the performance. By exploring broadcasts in which these paratextual components have intersected with Shakespearean themes and with the meaning-making structures of the broadcast's filming, I have argued for the ability of bows and credits to be perform paratextually.

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[293] *Romeo and Juliet*, directed for the screen by Bridget Caldwell, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 18 July 2018; *Troilus and Cressida*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 14 October 2018.

[294] William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, edited by Jill L. Levenson (Oxford: OUP, 2000), V.3.216.

Moreover, I have shown that considering bows and credits as framing paratexts in their own right raises questions previously unexplored within the field of Shakespearean live broadcast criticism. Foremost, as the example of *Coriolanus* (2014) highlights, how might the filmic mediation of the bows constitute a conscious extension of the narrative world and relationships within the play? In turn, how does the involvement of high-profile actors across a number of Shakespearean broadcasts – a concern I expand on in Chapter Five – impact upon readings of the plays when the bows present these actors in a liminal space between their Shakespearean role and their celebrity persona? Secondly, the intersections between broadcast credits and *dramatis personae* in both form and function highlights that the hybridity of the Shakespearean live broadcast also owes a debt to the non-digital media of print. How might the credits participate in the paratextually rich history of Shakespeare's printed works? While further attention to bows and credits is needed to answer these questions, in this chapter I have begun to refocus the role of terminal paratexts and to highlight the extent of their interactions with the broadcast performance. What has emerged is that their position at the closure of performance problematises the idea that these paratexts do indeed seal off the narrative world of the Shakespearean play. In many cases, as these examples have shown, bows and credits demonstrate the porous relationship between paratext and the performance as 'text.' Even at the end of the broadcast event, bows and credits have the potential to prompt cinema audiences to reflect upon, affirm, and occasionally even challenge their reading of the Shakespearean performance.

Conclusion

In Part I of this thesis, I have attempted to paint a picture of a decade's worth of evolution, creativity, and experimentation. Underlining this paratext-by-paratext analysis have been two central questions: what can these materials tell us about the role of Shakespeare within the institutions that broadcast his plays? And what do they reveal about the ways in which ideas about Shakespeare are shaped for contemporary audiences? While approaching broadcast paratexts with an understanding of their nuance, their development, and their contingency helps us to begin to answer these concerns, it also highlights the inevitable limitations of attempts at definition and generalisation. Of the forty-one Shakespearean live broadcasts streamed by NT Live and RSC Live since 2009, not one has been completely void of framing paratexts. These framing materials have responded to fractious political moments, to unique circumstances of casting, and to the nascent developments and later flourishing of the live theatre broadcast medium. Broadcast paratexts are as rich with meaning as individual paratextual elements are prone to change and evolution. To attempt to capture *the* definitive paratextual makeup for a Shakespearean live theatre broadcast, and to state unequivocally the meanings it creates, would be to disregard the ultimately protean nature of this medium as well as the changing social and historical context within which it exists.

By detailing the general functions of each paratextual component seen within the first decade of Shakespearean broadcasts, I have rather argued for the ability of these materials to be, using Tiffany Stern's phrase, 'interpretively significant.'[295] Together with an outline of the trends that have dictated the use of these paratexts, I have also argued their role as a means of institutional dramaturgy. Attending to the role that these framing elements play within the medium allows conclusions to be drawn not only on how the formal features of the Shakespearean live broadcast have crystallised and shifted under the direction of these two theatre companies, but also how their identities have been shaped by, and communicated through, the paratextual space of the medium. In 2014, Susanne Greenhalgh highlighted the need to identify 'house style[s]' within critical appraisals of Shakespearean live broadcasts.[296] While

[295] Stern, 'Before the Beginning, After the End', p. 359.

[296] Greenhalgh, 'Guest Editor's Introduction', p. 256.

critical work has thus far directed this attention primarily to the mediation of the performance itself, in this half of the thesis I have proposed some reflections on paratextual house styles. In the differences between paratextual makeups and individual styles of paratextual element we may read creative negotiations of institutional identity. More important than this, however, is what the development and functions of these framing components can reveal about the role played by Shakespeare within this identity.

The development of broadcast paratexts within NT Live's Shakespearean broadcasts always functions within the company's wider broadcasting project. The distinct styles of short film, the variations in broadcast presenter, and the standardised presentation of interval timers, bows, and credits, sets Shakespearean broadcasts within the cultivation of an identity for NT Live that depends upon broadcasting works by multiple authors and from a number of theatres. That the first decade of Shakespearean broadcasts from NT Live has been characterised by a relative lack of fixed paratextual makeup and an adherence to a broader NT Live aesthetic style (see my discussion of pre-show short films, pp. 84 – 90) is illustrative of how Shakespearean performance functions as one part among many within the company's institutional identity. The lack of a fixed 'face' for Shakespearean broadcasts, together with pre-recorded paratexts and live interviews that consistently foreground contemporary readings of the play's relevance, nonetheless suggests that NT Live aims to claim the authority of a Shakespeare who is protean, reactionary, and definitely 'our contemporary.'[297] Pascale Aebischer argues that the paratextual makeup of NT Live broadcasts focuses on their liveness and immediacy: 'invit[ing] cinema viewers into the *here-and-now* of the performance.'[298] In the evolution of their broadcast paratexts away from an early reliance on the model of the Met Opera broadcasts, towards paratexts that foreground a sense of Shakespeare's variety and relevance, I contend that this same immediacy is claimed by the company as a source of Shakespearean value. NT Live's Shakespeare is one whose greatest asset is his ability to speak and be adaptable to the present moment, conferring upon the NT (through its branch, NT Live) the values of a progressive and provocative style of theatre.

[297] Jan Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1974).

[298] Aebischer, 'South Bank Goes Global', p. 123, emphasis original.

RSC Live broadcast paratexts, as I have demonstrated in this first part of the thesis, can be characterised by the dual concerns of originality and consistency. Where the company's paratextual makeup and conventions were well-established after the first season of more experimental broadcasts, the RSC has also proved itself to be more creative in adapting paratextual elements to communicate its institutional identities and values. The obvious concession to this is that the RSC Live thus far operates under a contained and time-limited broadcasting project (to stream all of the Folio plays plus *Pericles*) and from within one theatre company. By comparison, NT Live's reflections of institutional value conferred upon the National Theatre are sometimes refracted via hosting the work of other theatre companies.[299] Their opening montages and the company's distinct style of pre-show short film point towards a desire to differentiate RSC Live's broadcasts – and by extension, the company's institutional identity – from competitors in the event cinema market. Moreover, the heightened consistency and creativity seen in RSC Live broadcast paratexts across the last decade is attributable to the fact that the very core and *raison d'être* of the RSC's brand is Shakespearean performance. Paratexts thus invest a greater value in the company's own performance history and in catering towards audiences whose anticipated knowledge of Shakespeare's works spans from secondary students studying *Romeo and Juliet* for the first time, to what Dobson calls the 'long-suffering amateur chroniclers, the self-appointed Holinsheds of the rear stalls.'[300] In catering to these audiences and validating the sole-author focus of the company, RSC Live's Shakespeare is one whose inherent value is largely presumed. As a consequence, paratexts are less devoted to the establishment of a provocative or contemporary Shakespeare than they are to the celebration of his performance histories, the textual detail and composition of his works (including the reverence to the First Folio that underpins the wider broadcasting project), and to the value of the RSC as his foremost torch-bearer.

[299] The aim for RSC Live to broadcast 'all of the Folio plays plus *Pericles*' is one I return to in various places throughout this thesis. This self-contained broadcasting project was interrupted by the global Covid-19 pandemic, nonetheless, it is anticipated that the company will still complete their goal presumably by a later date. John Wyver discusses the intention to stage and broadcast these works in *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company*, p. 159 – 160.

[300] Dobson, 'Watching the Complete Works Festival', pp. 23 – 33.

The validity of these conclusions will be tested in Part II of this thesis. Across four case study chapters, I set these institutional identities and paratextual histories in conversation with themes that have emerged to define the first decade of Shakespearean live broadcasts. Understanding the functions and the characteristics of each paratextual element not only establishes a groundwork for approaching the Shakespearean meanings I explore in subsequent chapters, but marks these case studies with questions about how these paratexts function in shaping the authority of the institutions performing Shakespeare. As gatekeepers of Shakespeare's cultural value, the paratextual mechanics through which the NT and RSC frame Shakespearean performance for cinema audiences demand close scrutiny. Despite the ever evolving paratexts that characterise this medium, by questioning the trends that have emerged and the ways in which these paratexts offer interpretive thresholds we come closer to understanding who shapes Shakespearean value for contemporary audiences and how. The diversity and development of these paratexts confirm more than the emerging understanding that, as Rachael Nicholas observes, the 'theatre broadcast experience' is neither 'a single entity, [nor] shorthand for cinematic reception.'[301] Rather, approaching each paratextual convention with a nuanced understanding of its functions and role within a broader framing structure lays the foundation to challenge the ideologies and power structures that underpin the narratives of Shakespeare's value in this medium of performance.

[301] Nicholas, 'Encountering Shakespeare Elsewhere', p. 13.

Part II: Case Studies

Space and Place

> *[A]s I entered the hallway to the darkened theater, sound transformed my surroundings and made me feel as though I was entering the opera house […] Hearing the orchestra warming up and the hum of the Met audience, it sounded like "being there," only a good bit louder.*[302]

There is plenty in this passage from W. Antony Sheppard's review of a Metropolitan Opera HD live broadcast which could confuse a reader curious to know where exactly he was. Sheppard notes the aural cues of the broadcast paratexts that immersed him in sensory co-presence, but in the terms of *in situ* presence.[303] The ambiguity with which Sheppard refers to the cinema auditorium – though an ordinary term in his American parlance – as a 'darkened theater' works to throw readers off the scent.[304] This shared vocabulary and the work of ambient audience noise all pointed Sheppard toward a feeling of co-presence with the remote Met audience. However, the example of Sheppard's review hints at a function of broadcast paratexts which goes beyond simply experiential co-presence. The feeling of '"being there"' holds evident value for an audience watching a mediated live event – but how, in Sheppard's case, was the particular 'there' of the Met constructed?

Early criticism of live theatre broadcasts largely attended to the space-constructing strategies inherent to the filming of the theatre production, whereas more recently the work of Rachael Nicholas has turned to explore cinema venues as meaningful sites of reception.[305] Different types of presence

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[302] W. Anthony Sheppard, 'Review of the Metropolitan Opera's New HD Movie Theater Broadcasts', *American Music*, 25.3. (Fall, 2003), pp. 383 – 7, p. 384.

[303] Ibid.

[304] Ibid.

[305] For example, see Sarah Bay-Cheng's discussion of the framing of stage space in 'Theatre Squared', pp. 37-50, p. 44. See also Susanne Greenhalgh and Erin Sullivan consider space-constructing techniques in broadcast filming in Greenhalgh, 'Guest Editor's Introduction', p. 259 and Sullivan, ' "The forms of things unknown": Shakespeare and the Rise of the Live Broadcast', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 35. 4. (2017), pp. 627-662. In 'Screening the RSC Stage', John Wyver details from a production perspective the mounting of RSC Live broadcasts, including decisions as to how to translate the theatre interior faithfully to cinema audiences. More recently, the work of Rachael Nicholas has shifted the focus towards the framing function of a broadcast's reception, its location and the conditions within which the performance is experienced, in 'Encountering Shakespeare Elsewhere.'

have also been explored, most notably the digital co-presence facilitated by the engagement of cinema spectators on social media.[306] The contribution of paratexts to the construction of not only interior theatrical space, but also the geographical location of performance, has been considered by Pascale Aebischer. Aebischer comments of NT Live broadcasts that 'complex paratextual framing […] establishes a strong sense of the theatre's structure, location and history, and the Shakespearean legitimacy that arises from these factors.'[307] Despite her unusual attention to the meanings created by broadcast paratexts, Aebischer's discussion is still couched firmly in the cultural capital of London (particularly the arts hub of South Bank), and comparatively little attention is afforded to the ways in which Shakespeare himself is evoked as important to locations and theatrical spaces in paratexts, or how these are imbued with distinctly Shakespearean meaning. Aebischer's selection of broadcast material exclusively from theatrical institutions based in London means that the interpretive potential of Stratford-upon-Avon, frequently evoked in RSC Live broadcasts, goes unexplored.[308]

In this chapter, I consider how NT Live and RSC Live use paratexts to imbue their spaces and places of performance with distinctly Shakespearean meaning. My analysis will build upon a foundational understanding of the terms 'space' and 'place' as referring to the broadcasting theatre interior and the geographical location of performance respectively. However, in exploring how space and place are overlaid with Shakespearean meaning, I will supplement this more practical understanding of these terms with critical models offered by Marvin Carlson and Michel de Certeau. Approaching the presentation of space and place as a key form of institutional dramaturgy, I propose that the paratextual framing of performance locales is an impactful means by which these theatrical institutions claim Shakespearean authority and construct narratives that imagine the playwright at work. I explore

[306] Sullivan, 'The Audience is Present', pp. 59-75.

[307] Aebischer, 'South Bank Goes Global', p. 118.

[308] Likewise, Martin Barker's study of live theatre broadcasts in *Live to* observes that NT Live's *King Lear* (2011) 'needed the rhetorics of the opening interviews for us to know about the qualities' of the Donmar Warehouse stage from which that production was streamed. However, Barker too undervalues the ways in which theatre space was mediated to reflect specifically Shakespearean meanings, instead focussing on the experiential impact of the interviews in constructing the intimacy of the compact Donmar stage, in Barker, p. 16.

mediations of performance place and space using examples from three broadcasts: RSC Live's *Richard II* (2013) and *Henry IV Part Two* (2014), and NT Live's *Coriolanus* (2014). It is notable that the former two broadcasts are amongst the first in the RSC Live canon and the latter is an out-of-house broadcast from the Donmar Warehouse. In each of these broadcasts, the unique combination of their position within the canon and their discrete conditions of performance (including theatre venue, and thematic and geographic contexts of the play itself) informed the paratextual mediation of space and place. What emerges as a constant across these three examples is the impulse to cultivate and emphasise the Shakespearean resonances of theatre spaces and places.

That the two major producers of Shakespearean live theatre broadcasts emerged from theatres based in locations associated with Shakespeare's life is similarly an informing factor when considering presentations of place for international audiences. If, as Marvin Carlson has argued, 'the physical surroundings of a performance […] are themselves always culturally encoded, and have always […] contributed to the reception of the performance', then Stratford-upon-Avon and London share a common meaning in that both, at various times, were home to England's most revered playwright.[309] Given the little documentary evidence that exists of Shakespeare's life, London and Stratford-upon-Avon represent tangible ties to Shakespeare through which broadcasts often tether biographical meanings. A notable example of this mediation of place comes in RSC Live's debut broadcast of *Richard II* (2013). As I demonstrate, the paratextual strategy for this broadcast constituted a bold statement of self-presentation from the RSC, constructing Stratford-upon-Avon as a Shakespearean epicentre and calling upon the company's history to defy a legacy of anxiety that Stratford is a 'provincial backwater' compared with London.[310] I set the *Richard II* paratexts in conversation with the RSC's precarious financial history, to show how the paratextual call-back to an imperial "golden age" framed Stratford as the birthplace of English cultural dominance.

[309] Carlson, *Places of Performance*, p. 206.

[310] Claire Cochrane, *Twentieth-Century British Theatre: Industry, Art and Empire* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011), p. 165

My second strand of enquiry is dedicated to the use of place and space for narrative and thematic explication. In this section, I explore NT Live's broadcast of *Coriolanus* (2014) as an example in which performance locale and the interior of the Donmar were made to signify narrative elements, relationships and settings within the play. *Coriolanus* offers a rich network of settings – both private and public – that were codified onto the Donmar's interior theatre spaces and location within London's Covent Garden. I explore how the mapping of both space and place also constituted an interpretive mapping of the play, offering narrative thresholds through the mediation of this particular condition of performance. The final example sees a unification of these two meanings imposed upon, and mediated through, performance space and place. RSC Live's broadcast of *Henry IV Part Two* (2014, hereafter *2 Henry IV*) evoked place as both a means of explicating the play's wandering geographic landscape and of imagining Shakespeare's own life in London. Highlighting the proximity of locations associated with Shakespeare's life to the narrative settings of his plays, this broadcast ultimately relied upon place to collapse any artistic distance between Shakespeare and his works. Biographical place became narrative place, in a reciprocal relationship which vividly imagined Shakespeare fictionalising the sights and scenes of his everyday life. As this example and others in the chapter elucidate, paratextual mediations of space and place always look in two directions: shaping and reshaping the meanings of Shakespeare even as the authority of this label is used to create an institutional identity for the broadcasting company.

'All the world comes to Stratford': *Richard II* and Biographical Place

While *Richard II* was the RSC's first live broadcast to cinemas, it was not the RSC's first venture in broadcasting to national and international audiences. John Wyver, in a monograph-length study of the RSC's screen history, includes an appendix with sixty-two examples of the company's productions broadcast into cinemas, to television, and adapted or released as feature films.[311] Even within this sixty-two, Wyver conflates the RSC Live broadcasts under a single heading which, taken

[311] John Wyver, 'Filmography', *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company: A Critical History* (London: Bloomsbury Arden, 2019), pp. 218–231.

individually, would bring the total to eighty-seven and climbing.[312] Each of these RSC Live broadcasts offered an opportunity for the company to position itself both literally in Stratford-upon-Avon, and figuratively as a theatrical institution within wider cultural networks in England. For their debut venture in the medium of live theatre broadcasts, RSC Live reached into this screen history for an example in which place performed the work of institutional dramaturgy, establishing Stratford as a cultural hub with the company – and Shakespeare – at its heart.

Why, beyond the obvious commercial advantages of assuring the standard of their work, would the RSC need to argue for Stratford-upon-Avon as a particular hub of arts and culture? To address this question, it is necessary to follow the lead of the *Richard II* broadcast paratexts and turn to the RSC's long history, and to the history of Stratford-upon-Avon. The emergence of Stratford as a 'place of pilgrimage' for Shakespeare enthusiasts has been widely attributed to Garrick's 1769 Jubilee, so much so that it needs little expansion here.[313] However, the impact of the Jubilee does have an important bearing on the development of the RSC's brand identity some two centuries later. Vanessa Cunningham notes that, in line with nascent bardolatry, the Jubilee set Stratford in opposition to London and prompted a 'contest […] with possession of Shakespeare himself as the ground of battle.'[314] The history of the RSC has always been tied to this debate over who has the authority to memorialise Shakespeare. The company that would later become the RSC had staked their claim from 1874 in their name – the

[312] This figure is correct as of October 2020, including RSC Live's as-live broadcast of *Timon of Athens* (broadcast 20 November 2019).

[313] Vanessa Cunningham, *Shakespeare and Garrick* (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), p. 107. Alongside Cunningham, discussions of the impact of Garrick and the 1769 Jubilee on Shakespeare's cultural prominence are too numerous to list extensively here. However, Michael Dobson's *The Making of the National Poet* offers a comprehensive overview of Garrick's contribution to the emerging cult of Shakespeare during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. In a more focused analysis, Kate Rumbold considers the importance of the Jubilee celebrations in the history of Shakespearean and Stratfordian veneration in 'Shakespeare and the Stratford Jubilee', *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century*, edited by Fiona Ritchie and Peter Sabor, (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), pp. 254 – 276. Peter Holland's 'David Garrick: Saints, Temples, and Jubilees' sets Garrick as the forefather, and the Jubilee as a watershed moment, within a history of Bardolatry, in *Celebrating Shakespeare: Commemoration and Cultural Memory*, edited by Clara Calvo and Coppélia Kahn, (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), pp. 15 – 37.

[314] Cunningham, p. 106.

Shakespeare Memorial Theatre (SMT) – though the battle to solidify Stratford's place in the national landscape of the arts would be a protracted and precarious one.[315] Sally Beauman argues for the 'radical effect' of nineteenth-century attitudes towards so-called 'provinc[ial]' theatre: 'only [in London], it was felt, could adequate performances [particularly of Shakespeare] be given […] The divide between London and the provinces was deep and absolute, and Stratford was on the wrong side of the line.'[316] This divide was little helped by a fire in March 1926 that the razed the SMT to the ground: among donations for its reconstruction were suggestions that the theatre should instead be rebuilt in London.[317]

In the mid-twentieth century, anxiety about Stratford's role in commemorating and performing Shakespeare culminated in contention over the issue of public subsidy.[318] Peter Hall led the charge to position the now-*Royal* Shakespeare Company (a name hard-won by lobbying Buckingham Palace) on a level with what would shortly become the London-based NT, a venture which dogged Hall's tenure as Artistic Director of the company.[319] With famed Shakespearean actor Laurence Olivier heading the campaign for national subsidy of the NT, and with the Treasury pressuring both companies to merge and form a single London-centred institution, the RSC won a pyrrhic victory in 1962.[320] The company was granted public subsidy that amounted to 'nearly three times less' that which the NT was granted: a 'historical imbalance' that, Colin Chambers argues, 'remained a constraint for the rest of the RSC's life.'[321] This history, though necessarily brief, offers a crucial context to the framing of Stratford-upon-Avon in the *Richard II* broadcast. By staking a claim for Shakespeare's birthplace of Stratford as the

[315] Beauman, p. 8.

[316] Ibid, p. 6.

[317] Ibid, p. 95.

[318] See Beauman, pp. 241 – 3. and Chambers, pp. 27 – 30. John Wyver also considers the impact of contention for Arts Council subsidy on the RSC's screen works throughout *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company.*

[319] Chambers, p. 12.

[320] Ibid., p. 28.

[321] Ibid., p. 29.

cultural 'heart' of England, this broadcast shows the legacy of the RSC's attempts to answer Chambers' 'historical imbalance.'[322]

Following from an opening transmission of advertising slides, *Richard II* featured a short film that adapted archival footage from a planned US television broadcast of Peter Hall's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1959). The broadcast itself never came to fruition, meaning this footage had never been shown to audiences in either its intended televisual context, or in any of the RSC's subsequent DVD, online or cinematic releases.[323] While the complete original is available to view at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust archive, *Richard II* featured edited clips that amounted to just over a minute of the broadcast transmission.[324] Despite being edited for the broadcast, the American audience originally intended for this recording looms in the way in which Stratford-upon-Avon is presented through these clips. The paratextual short film opened with the voice of actor Charles Laughton narrating black and white footage of Stratford-upon-Avon shot in 1959 – though neither Laughton's identity nor the exact date was glossed for cinema audiences. His voice was underscored by climatic, trilling violins as Laughton began:

> The country you see through the windshield of your television screen is the heart of England in the county of Warwickshire. And this is the heart of Warwickshire: the town of Stratford-upon-Avon. All the world comes to Stratford.[325]

Punctuating this narration was first footage of a '[t]ravelling shot into Stratford', clearly filmed as if from inside a car moving through what looked to be a neighbouring village.[326] This shot quickly shifted to a static frame, foregrounding the roundabout at the top of Stratford-upon-Avon's Bridge Street with a view looking up towards Henley Street (home to Shakespeare's Birthplace, though the building itself

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[322] Ibid; *Richard II*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 13 November 2013.

[323] Wyver, *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company*, p. 36.

[324] Wyver, 'Running order script for *Richard II*', n.p. For the purposes of the present discussion, all references to the short film will be to the edited version broadcast with *Richard II* rather than the full-length original, unless stated otherwise.

[325] *Richard II*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[326] Ibid.

was not in view). Following this was another static shot, taken from the bottom of Bridge St, again looking up towards the roundabout from the corner of Bancroft Gardens. Each shot clearly denoted historical rather than contemporary footage, in part attested to by the presence of vintage vehicles and the clothing of the many pedestrians seen lining the streets of central Stratford.

This narration and accompanying shot progression established a rich and complex narrative of place. Immediately, the black and white quality of the video; antiquated musical scoring; and Laughton's crisp, newsreel-style elocution situated this footage not only geographically but historically (the video was later glossed by Klein as a 'clip […] taken from […] the first *TV* recording of a Shakespeare play in this theatre').[327] The metaphor of the camera lens as the 'windshield of your television screen' likewise invited cinema audiences to infer that this footage was originally intended for televisual, rather than cinematic, distribution.[328] This figurative language clearly established a further experiential dimension to its new-found context in a live theatre broadcast: effacing individual cinema venues as sites of reception, this paratext instead aimed to make the metaphorical claim of a virtual journey into and around Stratford. This mediation of place not only functioned as an experiential prompt (i.e. a journey to your local cinema also constitutes a virtual journey to Stratford-upon-Avon), but the presentation of a historicised Stratford-upon-Avon was laden with potential interpretive meaning for a cinema audience. The historically inflected footage prompted contemporary cinema audiences to imagine Stratford as a kind of artefact. Delicately preserved (viewers familiar with Stratford's streets would undoubtedly register how little the town centre has changed), this footage constructed Stratford as a window into both the mid-sixteenth and twentieth centuries.

The short film also imbued the place of performance with Shakespearean meaning within the wider geography of England. Described as the 'heart of England [… in] the heart of Warwickshire', cinema audiences were invited to view Shakespeare's hometown and county as integral, sentimental parts of the English landscape.[329] Shakespeare's role in shaping the argued importance of Stratford

[327] Wyver, 'Running order script for *Richard II:* Live from Stratford', emphasis original.

[328] *Richard II*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[329] Ibid.

culminated in the oblique Shakespearean reference, 'all the world comes to Stratford'.[330] Riffing on Jacques' famous meditation known as the 'Seven Ages of Man' speech, the inclusion of this line in the broadcast paratext argued that it is Shakespeare whose achievements and cultural prominence have put Stratford not only on the map but at its very 'heart.'[331] This phrase constitutes an example in which institutional dramaturgy also encompassed a kind of national dramaturgy. The line 'all the world comes to Stratford', reflects not only upon the RSC's position in the English arts industry, but also on England's position internationally as a supposed bastion of high culture. Stratford may have been presented as a site of particular Shakespearean meaning, but Shakespeare also performed within this paratext to 'stage' England, as the implicit supra-place, as a site of globally recognised cultural prestige.[332]

Arguing for England's position in a global cultural landscape draws attention to the narrative of cultural pilgrimage which governed this paratext. From the opening shot which tracked a journey into Stratford, building on the line which argued that 'all the world comes to Stratford', the short film then showed footage of 'a strikingly diverse range of visitors.'[333] These shots, which featured a span of ethnically diverse tourists of equally ranging ages and genders, were stripped of their original narration for the broadcast. Where, in the unedited short film, Laughton's narration had offered a number of international locations from which tourists visited the town, for the *Richard II* broadcast, these images were not glossed.[334] Even without their original narration, however, these shots bolstered the narrative of cultural pilgrimage established by the paratext's opening sequence of a journey into Stratford. Attending to an ethnically diverse span of Stratford's tourists, the broadcast's cinema audiences were invited to imagine Shakespeare's birthplace as an historical site for heritage and cultural tourism.

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[330] Ibid.

[331] William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, 4th edn., edited by Alan Brissenden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), II.7.139-63; *Richard II*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[332] Steichen, p. 446.

[333] Wyver, *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company*, p. 32

[334] The 1959 original was glossed by Laughton's commentary, which speculated about the nationality and status of the visitors, from 'students from Ghana' to 'bachelors from Dublin.'

The importance of Laughton's Shakespearean allusion, and the context of RSC Live's debut broadcast venture, cannot be understated when considering how Shakespearean meanings were imposed onto Stratford as a performance location in this paratext. Visually and aurally legible as historical footage, the evocation of the mid-twentieth century arguably situated Shakespeare's cultural dominance on a par with England's bygone colonial dominance. In its most sinister suggestion, the narrative of cultural pilgrimage established by this paratext implicates RSC Live's first broadcast as a kind of cultural imperialism, in which digital co-presence constitutes a new form of cultural pilgrimage to Shakespeare's birthplace.[335] While the edit for the broadcast diffused and diluted a good deal of the overt cultural imperialism of the 1959 original by omitting Laughton's narration and editing shots of the visitors, the RSC's role as the gatekeepers of Shakespeare's works and the disseminators of his cultural value was clear. The message – literally in black and white – was that Stratford-upon-Avon, the birthplace of England's most famous son, is the 'heart' of England's cultural tourism market and the RSC claims the cultural capital of this Shakespearean heartland as their own.

The *Richard II* short film concluded by bringing this historical and biographical narrative of Stratford into the present day. The final shot edited from the original *Dream* footage was of the then-Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, framed as if looking from Stratford's Clopton Bridge. Laughton's narration of this shot focussed on the role of the RSC in Stratford's status as a hub of English and global high culture, situating the theatre and the company as the biggest draw: 'The principal attraction that draws these people to Stratford-upon-Avon is the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, to which you are all invited this evening.'[336] In a match dissolve shot, the black and white image of the theatre faded into live footage of the RST exterior. Likewise, moving from the clipped and historicised diction of

[335] The popularity and audience reception of Shakespearean broadcasts in countries formerly colonised by Britain is as yet largely unexplored, with the exception of a handful of international audience response studies in *Shakespeare and the 'Live' Theatre Broadcast Experience*. For example, Michael Ingham notes the popularity of Shakespearean live theatre broadcasts in Hong Kong, positing that 'British colonial rule between 1841 and 1997 […] has ensured greater familiarity with his name and work than in most East Asian cities', in 'Shakespeare and the Theatre Broadcast Experience', p. 186.

[336] *Richard II*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

Laughton, it was now Klein whose voice was overlaid, giving cinema audiences a 'welcome to Stratford-upon-Avon *today* – and to what is now the *Royal* Shakespeare Theatre.'[337] Here, the transition from a historically rooted to a visibly contemporary and live Stratford-upon-Avon was tethered to the history of the RSC as a company. Klein's emphasis on 'today' and 'Royal' fulfilled the verbal equivalent of the match dissolve shots: bridging the historical and prestige gap between the 'Shakespeare Memorial Theatre' and the 'Royal Shakespeare Theatre' in a manner characteristic of the paratextual negotiations facilitated by broadcast presenters.[338] Therefore, this shift from archival to live footage also signalled the movement of this paratext from a mediation of place to a mediation of theatrical space.

No longer occupied with establishing the cultural credentials of Stratford-upon-Avon, this later sequence instead sought to imbue the Royal Shakespeare Theatre (and by extension, the RSC) with the authority of Royal patronage. This introduction to the RST interior particularly echoes Michel de Certeau's definition of 'space' as that which is 'in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it.'[339] Distinct from 'place', de Certeau argues, 'space' instead 'occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it […] in short, *space is practiced place*.' Through the use of a historically inflected match-dissolve shot and Laughton and Klein's introductions, which constituted a potted narrative of the RST's history, this sequence constructed the theatre interior as a long-standing, culturally significant and, in de Certeau's terms, '*practiced*' space. Moreover, the framing of Klein's presenter monologue to include audience members visible in the background emphasised the RST as a dynamic, populated performance space; defined with a De Certeau-esque significance by its function as a lived environment. Capitalising on the liveness of the broadcast in this way, the *Richard II* short film deployed two paratextual halves, each using place and then space to traverse the anxiety of the company's hard-fought subsidy battle and to launch the RSC's debut

[337] Wyver, 'Running order', emphasis original.

[338] See my discussion on pp. 56 – 61 and pp. 63 – 66 of this thesis, which considers the role of the broadcast presenter in facilitating paratextual transitions; *Richard II*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[339] Michel de Certeau, *The Practices of Everyday Life, Vol. 1* (London: University of California Press, 1984), p. 117.

broadcasting venture to national and international audiences. From bolstering Stratford as a cultural hub in the pre-subsidy era of 1959, the transition to a markedly *live* and *lived* performance space celebrated the contemporary prestige of the company in 2013.

As a means of staging itself to international audiences, RSC Live's debut broadcast of *Richard II* chose to dress this stage in the trappings of historicised cultural authority. The use of footage previously intended for a broadcast half a century prior highlighted the company's long performance history and enabled this broadcast to present Stratford-upon-Avon as a kind of heritage artefact. Frozen in time, the *Dream* footage implicitly but continually deferred to both the authority of Stratford as Shakespeare's birthplace, and to a lesser extent to the ghostly memory of England's mid-century status as a colonial superpower. Cinema audiences were thereby invited to invest in a narrative of Shakespeare's international cultural eminence across a half century: one which was rooted firmly in his birthplace, his home country and, finally, within the royally-sanctioned performance spaces of the RSC. The audience that this paratext anticipated mirrors Michael Dobson's assessment of the RSC's core audience as 'a very long term one' invested in their 'collective memory' of the company.[340] In this regard, the *Richard II* broadcast looked back in order to look forward, locating its newest venture into a hybrid medium among historical claims of Stratford's cultural authority that stretch at least as far back as Garrick's Jubilee of 1769.

'There is a world elsewhere': *Coriolanus* and Diegetic Space and Place

Coriolanus (2014) was the second Shakespeare production broadcast from Covent Garden's Donmar Warehouse theatre, and one in a string of NT Live Shakespearean and non-Shakespearean performances broadcast from London. NT Live's first broadcast from the theatre, as Martin Barker recorded, had used the paratextual framing of *King Lear* (2011) to emphasise the 'specialness of the space.'[341] Comparatively, the *Coriolanus* broadcast showed less attention to space as a means of

[340] Dobson, 'Watching the Complete Works Festival', p. 31.

[341] Barker, p. 14.

institutional dramaturgy in constructing the 'specialness' of the Donmar.[342] Rather, in this broadcast, the mediation of space and place was used to address narrative and thematic concerns of *Coriolanus*. This mode of framing cannot be divorced from the unique context posed by casting in this production which drew large audiences, including many fans of lead actor Tom Hiddleston's wider work (the particular draw of star performers is the focus of Chapter Five). Anticipating an audience that was likely less familiar with the play, therefore, the presentation of space and place in this broadcast was mapped onto, and through, narrative details from within *Coriolanus*.

Coriolanus was broadcast with a pre-show short film which was prefaced with the title: 'The People Must Have Their Voices' (hereafter, 'The People').[343] 'The People' established the political and social tensions of the play by drawing upon the proximity of the Donmar Warehouse to London's House of Parliament, and the history of the theatre on the site of an ancient market. Director Josie Rourke commented:

> [The Donmar is] a warehouse so it's within what was an ancient market. It's within one of the most ancient parts of London where people congregated every day. We're pretty close to Westminster, to the Houses of Parliament. There's a scene in *Coriolanus* in which there is a sort of fight that erupts within the Senate [344]

To audience members already familiar with the narrative and settings of *Coriolanus*, Rourke's mediation of the performance place would have felt aptly suited to the play's own political and public spaces. Rourke called upon the historicity of the performance place as an 'ancient market', using a historicised appropriation of performance place akin to that evoked in the *Richard II* broadcast. That the Donmar is built on the site of an ancient market in this context constitutes a 'factual' paratext: defined by Genette as 'a fact whose existence alone, if known to the public, provides some commentary

[342] Ibid.

[343] *Coriolanus*, directed for screen by Tim van Someren, *NT Live*, Donmar Warehouse Theatre, London, 30 January 2014.

[344] Ibid.

of the text.'[345] Rourke's reference to an 'ancient market' could have warranted a further discussion on the Roman market-place as one of the play's most important public, congregational spaces.[346] Despite Rourke not pursuing the significance of this historicised mediation of place any further, to cinema audience members familiar with the play this 'fact […] alone' might have influenced a reading of the production's staging of public and congregational spaces.[347] Instead, Rourke sought the much more tangible, recognisable location of Westminster to explicate one of the play's dominant themes: political tension.[348] Rourke noted that the seat of the British parliament is 'pretty close' to the Donmar, giving a selective mediation of performance place that renders these locations in a proximate relationship with each other (a mile might just as easily have been argued as a considerable distance were the play particularly *dis*interested in politics).[349] This mediation of place collapsed – or rather understated – real geographical distance in favour of bringing the political associations of Westminster to bear on the themes of *Coriolanus*.

These associations were then used to frame an introduction of the 'fight that erupts in the Senate.'[350] In this example, a concrete narrative threshold into the play (one that invited thematic readings of political factionalism and conflict) was only able to be introduced in the context of a selective presentation of the Donmar's performance location. Consequently, cinema audiences were offered a reading in which the play's political landscape was tethered to the contemporary associations

[345] Genette, p. 7.

[346] R.B Parker, 'Introduction', *Coriolanus,* edited by R.B. Parker (Oxford: OUP, 1994), pp. 1 – 148, p. 76.

[347] Genette, p. 7.

[348] Voicing a wealth of critical treatments of the play, Patrick Murray notes that the 'interest' of *Coriolanus* 'derives less from its treatment of tragic issues than from its acute analysis of a wide range of political attitudes', in Patrick Murray, 'Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*: A Play for Our Time', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 61. 243 (1972), pp. 253 – 266, p. 253. See also: R. B. Parker, 'Introduction', *The Tragedy of Coriolanus,* edited by R. B. Parker (Oxford: OUP, 1994), pp. 1 – 148, p. 8 – 11. Jan Kott examines the politicising of the Roman populace in '*Coriolanus* or, Shakespearean Contradictions', *Shakespeare Our Contemporary,* pp. 179 – 210. Zvi Jagendorf discusses the persistent metaphors of the Roman body politic in '*Coriolanus*: Body Politic and Private Parts', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 41.4 (1990), pp. 455 – 69).

[349] *Coriolanus,* directed for the screen by Tim van Someren.

[350] Ibid.

of Westminster and, metonymically, the British Parliament. This was further enforced by the visual editing of 'The People' – which spliced real footage from British and international Parliamentary sessions alongside Rourke's interview clips. The cumulative effect of this was to evoke Westminster, mediated here to be a proximate extension of the play's performance location, as a continual intertext to a cinema spectator's viewing of the play and, by extension, as a narrative threshold into the political context of *Coriolanus*.

Mediating performance place in this way, 'The People' drew upon the Donmar's broader setting of London to introduce one of the play's central thematic concerns. This short film's mediation of space, however, effected more implicit and suggestive transactions of meaning by showing particular actors to inhabit different areas inside the Donmar. The presentation of interior theatrical space in the *Coriolanus* broadcast paratexts echoed Marvin Carlson's observation that theatres are built upon a spatial dialectic between 'actors and spectators' and that these zones are '[b]y tradition, […] off-limits to the inhabitants of the other.'[351] Carlson contrasts the publicly accessible zones of a theatre interior (e.g. lobbies, bars, the auditorium) with the deliberately obscure and exclusive zone 'behind the acting area.'[352] This spatial division is characterised by Carlson in terms of religious mysticism, in a parallel which is equally apt for conceptualising the gaze of the broadcast camera. With a seeming intrusion of the theatre spaces, cinema audiences are offered an exclusive view "behind the curtain" in terms which echo the mystery of the church's sacred spaces to which Carlson compares the zone of the performers. Far from representing a democratisation of these privileged 'off-limits' zones, in the *Coriolanus* broadcast, paratextual exploration of the Donmar's exclusive and public spaces only served to reinforce Carlson's separatist 'dialectic' and to map this division onto the social structure of the play itself.[353]

'The People' featured interview clips with not only Rourke but a number of the principal actors in the production. Hiddleston (Coriolanus), Mark Gatiss (Menenius), Deborah Findlay (Volumnia), and Birgitte Hjort Sørensen (Virgilia) were all filmed discussing their roles and considering some of the

[351] Carlson, *Places of Performance*, p. 128.

[352] Ibid, p. 131.

[353] Ibid, p. 128.

play's thematic resonances in contemporary society. While these topics are indicative of the framing function of the pre-show short film, it is rather how these actors themselves were framed in particular settings which offers an insight into the meanings created by theatrical space. The short film first introduced Hiddleston, who was sat in what appeared to be his backstage dressing room. Moreover, the *mise-en-scène* corroborated the feeling both of Hiddleston's possession of the space and that cinema audiences had been granted privileged, voyeuristic access: resting on the dressing table were a number of personal items including a toothbrush, a comb, hair styling products and greetings cards.

Hiddleston's isolation in a personal dressing room would, for cinema audiences familiar with the play, likely have resonated with the status of Coriolanus as a privileged figure in the Roman military, one who equally prizes his privacy away from the 'many-headed multitude.'[354] While this interpretation may seem esoteric, is was further consolidated by the framing of other actors in 'The People'. Clips in which Sørensen and Findlay discussed their roles as Virgilia and Volumnia were set with both in one dressing room. As with clips of Hiddleston, this interior space was littered with personal effects including makeup, hairspray and also greetings cards. With this repeated spatial context, cinema audiences were invited to align Hiddleston's character with Sørensen's and Findlay's – just as all three characters inhabit the same class in the Roman context of the play, the theatre interiors associated them all with the highly private and exclusive space of the dressing room. However, that Sørensen and Findlay were sharing a single dressing room established a precedent for the play's own scenes in which their characters, Volumnia and Virgilia, share a domestic space (I.3), bid a communal farewell (IV.1) and later present a collaborative plea to Coriolanus (IV.3).[355] In this regard, their association with both the private dressing room and with each other offered an implicit interpretive threshold into the role and presentation of their characters in *Coriolanus*. Cinema audiences were invited to imagine Virgilia and Volumnia as characters who possess the status to afford them a privileged space in Roman society (here

[354] William Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Coriolanus*, 4th edn., edited by R.B. Parker (Oxford: OUP, 2008), II.3. 16.

[355] Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Coriolanus*.

signalled by the privacy of the dressing room), but who also function as a shared familial network in comparison to the pointedly isolated Coriolanus.

The coded use of the Donmar's theatre interiors also effected an implicit threshold into the play's notorious divisions between patrician and plebeian classes. Carlson suggests that 'audience spaces have almost always reflected with great accuracy the class preoccupations of their society.'[356] The *Coriolanus* broadcast effected an inversion of this relationship, in which the inherent private and public nature of particular theatre interiors was used to introduce the class preoccupations of the play. This contrast was evident in the setting of interview clips with Mark Gatiss (Menenius). Gatiss was consistently positioned in what was perceptibly the Donmar Warehouse bar: an open space with pillars, noticeboards and ledges for resting drinks. Clearly occupying one of the theatre's public spaces, Gatiss (and by association his character, Menenius) appeared in direct opposition to the privileged, highly personalised setting of the dressing room. In this regard, the highly coded 'dialectic' of theatrical interiors equally mapped out the relationship of the play's principal characters to the public spaces of Rome and the people who inhabit them.[357] In effect, this mediation of space echoed the sentiments of the play's opening scene, in which the privileged and inaccessible Caius Martius (later Coriolanus) is cursed as 'a very dog to the commonality', whereas the 'worthy' Menenius is later greeted as one who 'hath always loved the people.'[358]

In this last example, I have sought to illustrate that cinema viewers with a detailed knowledge of *Coriolanus* could read the play's concerns and relationships onto, and through, the presentation of theatrical space. However, for spectators unfamiliar with the play, this mediation of space may similarly have taken on a new meaning in light of their subsequent viewing of the broadcast, and indeed the relationships between the characters may have been read with the coded dialectic of theatrical space as an intertext. *Coriolanus* (2014) offers an insight into the broad and complex functions of theatrical place and space in offering interpretive thresholds and points of entry into the Shakespearean narrative.

[356] Carlson, *Places of Performance*, p. 135.

[357] Ibid, p. 128.

[358] Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Coriolanus*, I.1.26, 58 – 9.

Calling upon the associations of Westminster and highlighting the coded dialectic of theatrical space, this broadcast exploited the material and geographic reality of the Donmar as a significant explicating tool. In mapping performance place and space, this broadcast used these conditions of performance to draw narrative coordinates and sketch the thematic landscape of *Coriolanus*.[359]

2 Henry IV and Dual Functions of Space and Place

Thus far, I have explored broadcasts of *Richard II* and *Coriolanus* to show the different ways in which biographical and narrative mediations of space and place can construct and explicate Shakespearean meanings. In RSC Live's broadcast of *2 Henry IV* (2014), these two modes of framing were used to imagine Shakespeare's creative process and life in London, and to tie these to the writing of the play. Tracing the movement of geographical settings in *2 Henry IV*, a pre-show short film established a parallel movement of Shakespeare from Stratford-upon-Avon to the capital. While the short film then concluded with a feature which focussed on the Jerusalem Chamber in Westminster Abbey (the room in which Henry IV died), it was the earlier presentation of London as Shakespeare's home which placed the playwright firmly within the settings of his plays. In doing so, this paratext created a narrative about Shakespeare's inspiration which overlooked external factors such as source materials and other dramatists, instead using an historicised presentation of place to construct the playwright as an unusually astute observer of everyday life.

Before examining how the *2 Henry IV* broadcast used place to imagine the relationship between Shakespeare's everyday life and his works, it is worth considering the ideas and value judgements that accumulate around this narrative. Margareta de Grazia notes the propensity for modern editions of Shakespeare's works to construct his creative process as 'certainly influenced by externals […] but integrating them into an independent and essential completeness that is his own and that is reflected in his works.'[360] In these editions, de Grazia argues, the playwright's creative ability is represented not within the 'collective activities' of his theatrical and historical context, but as a self-contained

[359] Shakespeare, *The Tragedy of Coriolanus*, III.3.136.

[360] de Grazia, p. 25.

'cosmos.'[361] The paratextual work of these modern editions joins a long history of rewriting and re-presenting Shakespeare's creative agency, one which Michael Dobson notes was flourishing in the mid-eighteenth century when 'adaptation and appropriation of Shakespeare's plays begins to decline in importance compared to the adaptation and appropriation of Shakespeare himself.'[362] By foregrounding place as a creative influence on Shakespeare's writing (to the pointed exclusion of other factors, not least of which are source material, generic trends and company considerations), this broadcast used an historical presentation of place to effect its own 'adaptation and appropriation of Shakespeare himself.'[363] As I consider, Shakespeare emerges from this adaptive process as an author not entirely romanticised in terms of his 'independent and essential completeness', but certainly drawing on a unique ability to transpose his everyday experiences into his enduring dramatic works. [364]

2 Henry IV echoed RSC Live's debut broadcast of *Richard II* in its effort to frame Stratford-upon-Avon as a meaningful place of performance. The short film began with shots of rolling green hills, wildflowers, and picturesque landscapes, before a road sign reading 'Welcome to Warwickshire' located these bucolic scenes in Shakespeare's home county. In a voiceover, Suzy Klein narrated:

> The panorama of the nation in Henry the Fourth Part Two starts in the north of England, and then travels with Falstaff to the countryside close to Stratford-upon-Avon, where Shakespeare was born. But the drama returns, time and again, to London – to the court and to the haunts of Sir John Falstaff in and around the Boar's Head tavern, in Eastcheap.[365]

The mediation of the 'panoram[ic]' geography in *2 Henry IV* was, in this voiceover and the accompanying shots, definitively tied to Shakespeare's life.[366] Visually, the play's settings 'in the north of England' were substituted for a landscape later glossed (by the road sign, and by Klein's voiceover)

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[361] Ibid.

[362] Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet*, p. 134.

[363] Ibid.

[364] de Grazia, p. 25.

[365] *Henry IV Part Two,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 18 July 2014.

[366] Ibid.

to be 'the countryside close to Stratford-upon-Avon.'[367] In this regard, this paratext operated a selective mediation of narrative place which echoes Rourke's in the *Coriolanus* broadcast, with the play's Gloucestershire locations rendered aptly 'close' to Stratford-upon-Avon, here emphasised as Shakespeare's home town.[368] Linking the play's rural geographies to Shakespeare's birthplace constructed a sense of continuity, of the play being tied to recognisable locations in the playwright's life. Moreover, the use of Stratford-upon-Avon to contextualise the settings of *2 Henry IV* capitalised on an assumption that cinema audiences are likely to be more familiar with Stratford and the heritage industry which accumulates around the Warwickshire town than with the narrative of the play. In using biographical place to introduce and explicate narrative locations, cinema audiences were thereby offered thresholds into the world of *2 Henry IV* which encouraged a reading of fictional and biographical place in conversation with each other.

As this section of Klein's voiceover also demonstrates, this mediation of place not only drew upon the places associated with Shakespeare's life as a point of reference but also wove together Shakespearean biography and the life of his characters. Klein's narration used Falstaff as a moving marker, offering an expository threshold into *2 Henry IV* in the form of a geographical trajectory of the play: one which leaves 'the north' to follow 'Falstaff to the countryside,' then to accompany him again to 'London – to the court […] and around the Boar's Head Tavern.'[369] Noting that the play's locations 'trave[l] with' Falstaff likewise prompted cinema audiences to infer his character as central to the action of the play, while inviting those unfamiliar with *2 Henry IV* to use Falstaff (and, by biographical association with Stratford and London, Shakespeare) as a marker for the play's varying locations. Implicit in this linking of Shakespeare and his characters is a familiar narrative of the playwright's creative process; one in which Shakespeare's life (in this instance, the places and spaces associated with him) can be read as a demonstrable influence on his works.

[367] *Henry IV Part Two,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[368] Ibid.

[369] Ibid.

After using Stratford-upon-Avon as a starting point to map its rural settings, the *2 Henry IV* short film then focussed on London to introduce some of the play's locations within the capital. Here, the broadcast called upon a voice of authority to mediate a historicised presentation of biographical and narrative place, mirroring and adapting the authority sought from the RSC's archival history in the *Richard II* broadcast. Roy Stephenson, glossed in the paratext as a curator at the Museum of London, led a site-specific exploration of London locations which had particular significance to Shakespeare's life and to *2 Henry IV*. However, the disparity between a romanticised imagining of Shakespeare's life in London and the contemporary reality of the locations largely resulted in moments of bathos. For example, Stephenson was shown standing in front of the approximate site of Shakespeare's London lodgings, 'the corner of Silver Street and Monkwell Street', which he noted disparagingly is now an underground car park ramp.[370] Similarly, Stephenson's visit to the site of the real Boar's Head tavern in 'the southside of Eastcheap' led him to a busy traffic junction. Despite their jarring modernity and obscurity (compared with protected heritage sites like Shakespeare's birthplace), the former sites of the Boar's Head tavern and Shakespeare's lodgings each performed interpretive work in relation to *2 Henry IV* and to ideas about the playwright.

Primarily, this sequence introduced one of the play's key London locations and gave this a visual meaning for cinema audiences (albeit an anachronistic, contemporary one). Seeking out the historical sites of the play's locations, this paratext performed expository work by introducing the context and surrounding neighbourhood of Boar's Head tavern. However, this contextualisation of narrative space was also tied to biographical space, in a move that conflated both geographical distance and the historical disparity between Shakespeare's late sixteenth-century life in London and the early fifteenth-century setting of *2 Henry IV*. This conflation was achieved largely through visual editing. The cut between the shots of Stephenson at the site of Shakespeare's lodgings and then of the Boar's Head tavern was immediate, with the paratext also splicing shots denotative of contemporary London (black cabs, street signs) to supplement each location. By omitting Stephenson's travel between the locations with a direct cut, this editing allowed these two locations to stand in metaphorical proximity

[370] *Henry IV Part Two*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

to each other, placing biographical and narrative place side by side. While this worked to clarify that the Boar's Head tavern was a historical as well as a fictional location (as in *2 Henry IV*), the effort to link Shakespeare's lodgings with the tavern also created an interdependency between Shakespeare's life and the content of his plays.

The more this paratext found sites of Shakespearean biographical significance in London to be disappointingly modern, the further it retreated into modes of imagining the early modern London that was home to the playwright. While the short film utilised brief shots of historical maps throughout, it later engaged in a detailed exploration of a sixteenth-century copperplate map held by the Museum of London. Noting the larger-than-life Boar's Head clientele in *2 Henry IV*, Stephenson traced out a route on the map and reflected that the playwright's inspiration must have been drawn from the fact that 'Shakespeare has no alternative [but] to walk past the Boar's Head tavern on his commute to work.'[371] The copperplate map served to emphasise how historical place apparently confirms this narrative of Shakespeare's creative process, as Stephenson then concluded that he 'must have sucked a lot of his inspiration from […] his day-to-day life.'[372] Therefore, Stephenson's mediation of place via the copperplate map drew an explicit link between Shakespeare's surroundings in London and his writing of the play and, indeed, his wider works. The creative narrative was imagined so vividly that it was rendered into the present tense by Stephenson: 'Shakespeare *has* no alternative.' Metaphorically reviving Shakespeare to show his apparent interaction with the narrative settings of his plays, this representation of place also functioned as a small-scale dramatization of Shakespeare's life. In this regard, beyond offering thresholds into the geographic settings of *2 Henry IV*, the meticulous fascination with Shakespeare's 'commute' anticipated an RSC Live audience who are particularly invested in the life and works of the playwright.

Stephenson's persistent use of the present tense ('has', 'is') belied an underlying assumption in this short film.[373] In mediating place to emphasise Shakespearean meanings, the Shakespeare of this

[371] *Henry IV Part Two,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[372] Ibid.

[373] Ibid.

paratext emerged paradoxically as a man both fixed within a historical past very unfamiliar to our own (as attested to by the modernised sites of Shakespearean significance visited by Stephenson), and as an imagined figure who is constantly alive to processes of 'adaptation and appropriation'.[374] The Shakespeare of this broadcast 'is' rather than 'was', in so far as the short film used a biographical and narrative mediation of place to imaginatively evoke the playwright being alive in the moment of constructing the play.[375] In de Grazia's terms, this broadcast presented a Shakespeare who drew solely from London and Stratford-upon-Avon as external influences, enjoying something of the 'independent and essential completeness' that distinguishes him from his contemporaries.[376] By imagining this creative process in one of their first few live theatre broadcast ventures, the RSC also claimed a kind of ownership over Shakespeare's life and the construction of his works. Though Stephenson represents a voice of authority from the Museum of London, the RSC's proxy ownership was evident in its role as the gatekeepers of this narrative and the Shakespearean authority it confers. This broadcast demonstrates that beyond offering interpretive thresholds into the performed play, mediations of space and place can be utilised as a claim of authority both for the institution itself and for Shakespeare. By evoking Shakespeare's life to explore the settings of his plays, the broadcast of *2 Henry IV* used place to speak to narratives of Shakespeare's creative genius and to position the RSC as their gatekeeper.

'It had been so with us, had we been there'[377]

I began this chapter with W. B. Antony Sheppard's disorientated experience of a Met opera broadcast, muddied by the ambiguous language and paratextual strategies that 'transformed [his] surroundings' with a vivid feeling of presence.[378] This chapter has presented examples in which the 'transform[ative]' potential of the paratextual space is not simply experiential, but is also interpretive. The broadcasts considered here have each shown that mediations of space and place are offered to live

[374] Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet,* p. 134.

[375] *Henry IV Part Two,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough. I explore the rhetoric of Shakespeare being alive to the present moment further in Chapter Seven.

[376] de Grazia, p. 25.

[377] William Shakespeare, *Hamlet,* edited by George Hibbard (Oxford: OUP, 1987), IV.1.12.

[378] W. Anthony Sheppard, p. 384.

theatre broadcast audiences as intertexts to their viewing of the play and to their preconceptions about Shakespeare (both the man and his works). This intertextual relationship is perhaps best reflected upon in the critical vocabulary of site-specific performance. Patrice Pavis's definition of the term asserts that '[t]he insertion of a classical or modern text in this "found space" throws new light on it, gives it an unsuspected power, and places the audience at an entirely different relationship to the text.'[379] When considering the mediation of place and space in the Shakespearean live theatre broadcast – as my examples have shown – cinema audiences are prompted to consider their 'relationship[s]' to a number of different spatial, geographic, and ideological 'text[s]'.[380] Beyond their relationship with the cinema as a venue of reception, the broadcasts I have considered in this chapter challenged cinema audiences to (re)assess their relationship to the Shakespearean text being performed, the theatre of performance, the location of that theatre, the place held by Shakespeare in British national culture and – at its most expansive – by Britain on the international stage.

Moreover, the broadcasts I have considered have revealed how the fact of geographically disparate audiences provides a rich interpretive opportunity for broadcasting institutions themselves. Shakespearean mediations of place and space have been shown to be used as a key mode of institutional dramaturgy, of validating so-called 'provincial' performance, offering thresholds and establishing narrative landscapes, asserting biographical readings, and ultimately of perpetuating ideas surrounding Shakespeare's cultural value.[381] If, as Carlson notes of a traditional theatrical spectatorship, the space and place of a performance is 'never […] a totally neutral filter or frame', then broadcast audiences have this framing effect doubled.[382] That is to say, for cinema audiences, the process of negotiating 'an entirely different relationship to the text' is also one of negotiating an entirely mediated presentation of performance place and space offered by the broadcasting institution (on top of the frame offered by the

[379] Patrice Pavis, *Dictionary of Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis*, translated by Christine Shantz (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1998), p. 337.

[380] Pavis, p. 337.

[381] Cochrane, p. 165.

[382] Carlson, *Places of Performance*, p. 206.

cinema as the venue of reception).[383] Far from digesting the Shakespearean meanings imposed through space and place unquestioningly, cinema audiences are at liberty to reflect on how the broadcasting institution presents itself in a new, international medium by claiming these meanings. Ultimately, within this new medium and its attempts to traverse the experiential and geographical gaps that were so slippery to Sheppard, broadcast paratexts emerge as another fruitful battleground upon which the playwright's cultural value and narratives of his life and works are continually claimed and reclaimed. By locating a broadcast within a carefully mediated place and space, Shakespearean live theatre broadcast paratexts help us to survey the landscape of Shakespeare's contemporary value and the role of the theatre institution in shaping it.

[383] Pavis, p. 337.

Star Casting

Dressed in a sharp black suit, Richard Burton clutches a plastic figurine of Hamlet. At Burton's side is a small-scale model of the original Globe theatre, its intricate beams and delicate wooden rails providing an antiquated contrast to the faceless New York skyscrapers seen through the window behind. 'The first Hamlet was Richard Burbage,' Burton remarks as a catalogue of paintings and photographs begins to flood the screen: 'there have been many other Hamlets: David Garrick, Edmund Kean, Edwin Booth, Sir Henry Irving, John Barrymore, Sir John Gielgud.' [384] Now, Burton reflects, it is his turn. The former inhabitants of the role suitably exorcised, Burton declares his 'privilege' in playing the Prince in a theatrical production which marked an 'historic first' in its distribution to another 'one thousand theatres' across the USA.[385] Indeed, the audiences addressed by Burton in this short film were those who would see the production – directed by that final Hamlet, Gielgud – not at New York's Lunt-Fontanne theatre but in cinemas.[386]

[384] RichardBurton01, *Richard Burton Talks Electronovision*, online video recording, YouTube, 7 April 2007 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLQDW4ZqckQ> [accessed 11 March 2020]

[385] Ibid.

[386] While the trailer is readily available today on YouTube, it is unclear exactly where and when it was originally shown – whether in cinemas ahead of other motion picture screenings, or as part of the screening of Burton's *Hamlet* itself. Stuart Ian Burns notes that the trailer 'acts as an introduction to the performance', though it is unconfirmed whether this is used literally (i.e., the trailer and a preceding interview with Burton was transmitted alongside the recorded production) or metaphorically (i.e., it introduces the concept of Electronovision to contemporary viewers). In Burns, '32 Richard Burton', *The Hamlet Weblog*, 18 May 2011 <http://thehamletweblog.blogspot.com/2011/05/32-richard-burton.html> [accessed 31 March 2020]. Likewise, Judith Buchanan states that a 'straight-to-camera piece' with Burton was part of the 'film's trailer', but it is unclear whether this trailer would have preceded the film itself in '"Look here, upon this picture": Theatrofilm, The Wooster Group *Hamlet* and the Film Industry', *Shakespeare in Ten Acts*, edited by Gordan McMullan and Zoe Wilcox (London: British Library Publishing, 2016), pp. 197 – 214. The original film distributed to cinemas exists in a copy held by the BFI but at present, due to travel restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, I am unable to confirm whether or not the trailer formed part of the first screenings of the performance in cinemas across America.

This recording, a trailer for the 1964 'Electronovision' *Hamlet*, tells us much about the early history of Shakespearean live theatre broadcasting.[387] Not the least of these echoes with contemporary Shakespearean broadcasts is Burton's role in selling, framing and popularising the 'miracle' of this new performance medium.[388] With the actor embroiled in a high profile 'scandalous affair' with Elizabeth Taylor, Burton's personal and professional fame was an immediate draw within an otherwise risky commercial venture.[389] Indeed, as Leonard J. Leff highlights, the view taken by Electronovision's head, William Sargent, was that 'Burton's notoriety, not his acting, [that] would sell Electronovision's *Hamlet*.'[390] In this context Burton certainly qualified for the status of a 'star' performer.[391] Burton's profile calls attention to another way in which this trailer is a predecessor of later Shakespearean broadcast paratexts. With its antiquated model of the Globe, plastic Hamlet figurine, and listing of former actors in the role, the trappings and the suits of the Electronovision *Hamlet* trailer also highlight the broadcast's anticipated audience, the meetings of 'high' and popular culture, and the acts of ghosting

[387] Critics have considered the Electronovision *Hamlet* in a variety of contexts which have each informed my understanding here. Judith Buchanan discusses the significance of the film as 'an early anticipation of live-cast cinema' and its appropriation by The Wooster Group in '"Look here, upon this picture"', pp. 197 – 214. Thomas Cartelli discusses its haunting role in performances of the Wooster Group's *Hamlet* in 'Channelling the Ghosts: The Wooster Group's Remediation of the 1964 Electronovision *Hamlet*', *Shakespeare* Survey, 61 (2008), pp.147 – 60. Tracing the short-lived commercial success of Electronovision, Leonard J. Leff encounters the Burton *Hamlet* in the context of the company's ultimate financial demise in 'Instant Movies: The Short Unhappy Life of William Sargent's Electronovision (1964-65)', *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, 9. 1 (1981). pp. 20 – 29. The filmed production is also used as a point of reference to reflect on contemporary Shakespearean broadcasts in Osbourne, 'Epilogue: Revisiting Liveness', pp. 215 – 26 and Sullivan, '"The form of things unknown", p. 629.

[388] RichardBurton01, *Richard Burton Talks Electronovision.*

[389] Cartelli, p. 147.

[390] Leff, p. 22.

[391] Susanne Greenhalgh has discussed the ways in which broadcast's filmic aesthetics tend to facilitate an indulgent view of "star" actors, gratifying 'the audience's assumed focus' on these high profile performers in 'Guest Editor's Introduction', pp. 259-60. My use of the term 'star' develops Greenhalgh's discussion, but also draws on informing studies including Anna Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity in the Digital Age* and James Steichen's attention to '"luxury casting"' in opera live broadcasts, pp. 443-59. My understanding has also been informed by the more generalised studies of celebrity offered by Graeme Turner, *Understanding Celebrity* (London: Sage Publications, 2004), and Chris Rojek, *Celebrity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001).

that still accumulate around the casting of high-profile actors in Shakespearean live theatre broadcasts.[392]

In this chapter I explore the role of the star performer in contemporary examples of these broadcasts. If, as Judith Buchanan suggests, 'in the cinema, yet more so than on stage, we read character through the determining filter […] of the star', this chapter aims to further investigate this claim by exploring the role of star performers in the hybrid medium of live theatre broadcasts, and within the interactive space of the paratext.[393] Drawing on the work of Anna Blackwell, I am interested in how star performers are used as 'a site of adaptive encounter' between Shakespeare's 'high' cultural cachet and the popular culture roles through which the actors I consider here made their names.[394] Moreover, as the Burton example illustrates, the involvement of the star performer also often facilitates a different kind of 'encounter', in that performances of this kind are always haunted by both the actor's own past roles and by previous inhabitants of the Shakespearean role.[395] By attending to the modes of cultural intertextuality and ghosting present in broadcast paratexts, I suggest the importance of these materials to studies of the star performer's role in shaping Shakespeare's contemporary value and meaning for modern audiences.

While a range of Shakespearean broadcasts feature high-profile performers, the intersection between Shakespearean and popular franchise works motivates my selection of two particular

[392] As I explore further, I am using the term 'ghosting' in the context of the term proposed by Marvin Carlson in *The Haunted Stage*.

[393] Judith Buchanan, *Shakespeare on Silent Film: An Excellent Dumb Discourse* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), p. 224.

[394] Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 24.

[395] While the ghosting of an actor's previous roles through her/his present work is considered most extensively by Carlson in 'The Haunted Body', *The Haunted Stage*, pp. 52 – 95, my discussion is also informed by Judith Buchanan's study of the previous roles of stars in early Shakespearean cinema in *Shakespeare on Silent Film*, pp. 223 – 226, and more generally by Jacques Derrida's influential study of hauntology in *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, translated by Peggy Kamuf, 2nd edn. (New York: Routledge Classics, 2006). For other examples in which broadcast paratexts are consciously ghosted by former inhabitants of Shakespearean roles, see my discussion of PPP montages, pp. 43 – 48, and of the RSC Live *Othello* interval film, pp. 113 – 117.

examples, beginning with a return to RSC Live's debut broadcast of *Richard II* (2013).[396] Where my previous chapter explored the broadcast's presentation of space and place as a means of institutional dramaturgy, here I shift the focus to the role of Tennant as star performer, broadening my investigation with a comparative analysis of Benedict Cumberbatch's contribution to the NT Live *Hamlet* (2015), broadcast from the Barbican Theatre.[397] These two broadcasts, as I demonstrate, serve as mirroring examples in which the star actor is positioned in relation to Shakespearean authority (Tennant as a seasoned Shakespearean, Cumberbatch as a relative novice). Both positions allow these high-profile stars to facilitate negotiations about the playwright's cultural value and contemporary relevance. Drawing upon paratextual examples in which the actor takes centre stage, in this chapter I contend that these star performers function within modes of cultural intertextuality and ghosting to mediate Shakespearean performance for new audiences.

Anticipated Audiences

As well as considering the Shakespearean actor as a productive mediator within broadcasts, it is essential to address the unique conditions of reception that occur in the case of high-profile casting. To this end, I first consider questions of fan culture reception, remediation, and how audiences to these broadcasts were particularly primed to read these actors' Shakespearean roles as ghosted by popular culture ones. These broadcasts prompt important reflections – to what extent do paratexts reflect what Blackwell calls an age of 'increasing intersections between Shakespearean celebrity and digital culture'?[398] In turn, how does the involvement of star performers anticipate audiences whose engagement with digital culture continually remakes Shakespearean meanings and value often in conjunction with, rather than against, popular culture?

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[396] *Richard II*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[397] *Hamlet*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *NT Live*, Barbican Theatre, London, 15 October 2015. Note that future short form references to this broadcast will also include the year of transmission: this is because there are multiple *Hamlets* in the Shakespearean broadcast canon directed by Robin Lough, including another broadcast by NT Live in 2010. For clarity, therefore, all future references to NT Live's broadcast of the Barbican *Hamlet* will be referenced in a slightly different format to other short form references used in this thesis.

[398] Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 18.

That both Tennant and Cumberbatch have careers marked by popular franchise work, active digital fan communities, and varying associations with the social and cultural value of the 'Shakespearean' actor is attested to by their inclusion in Blackwell's *Shakespearean Celebrity: Digital Fan Cultures and Remediation* (2019). Blackwell's study, which features discussions of David Tennant, Tom Hiddleston, Benedict Cumberbatch, Kenneth Branagh and others, is a recent example in a field which increasingly recognises the creative work of digital fan communities.[399] In turning her attention to the remediating acts performed by fan cultures in shaping the meanings of "Shakespearean", Blackwell attempts to address the assumption of a 'great divide' between Shakespeare and popular culture by showing that 'contemporary Shakespearean celebrity [is] that which is formed through popular culture rather than in opposition to it.'[400] The audiences discussed by Blackwell are likely those who were drawn to the live broadcasts of *Richard II* and *Hamlet*. This is evidenced partly by their commercial success, with NT Live's *Hamlet* taking a 'remarkable £2.9 million' for its box-office premiere, and *Richard II* appearing in the Event Cinema 'All-Time Top Ten at the UK Box Office' in a list of highest-grossing broadcasts released in 2014.[401] While the box-office revenue of these broadcasts reveals the pulling power of Tennant and Cumberbatch (whose *Hamlet* would now undoubtedly hold the top spot for Shakespeare broadcasts in an updated 'Top Ten' list), it yields little qualitative data concerning their reception by fan audiences.

[399] Other studies of fan cultures which have informed my understanding here are Paul Booth, *Playing Fans: Negotiating Fandom and Media in the Digital Age* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2015); Mark Duffett, *Understanding Fandom: An Introduction to the Study of Media Fan Culture* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York: Routledge Press, 1992) and Roberta Pearson, 'Fandom in the Digital Era', *Popular Communication*, 8. 1 (2010), pp. 84 – 95. Alongside Blackwell's focus on the Shakespearean meanings circulated in digital fan cultures, *The Shakespeare User: Critical and Creative Appropriations in a Networked Culture*, edited by Louise Geddes and Valerie Fazel (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) has likewise proved useful for its attention to the playwright's uses in digital contexts.

[400] Lanier, p. 3; Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 15.

[401] Susan Bennett, 'Shakespeare's New Marketplace: The Places of Event Cinema', *Shakespeare and the 'Live' Theatre Broadcast Experience* (London: Bloomsbury Arden, 2018), pp. 41 – 58, p. 41; Charles Gant, 'The Numbers: Event Cinema', *Sight and Sound*, 24.6 (2014), p. 15.

To understand this anticipated mode of reception further it is worth considering how online creative fan practices may also tend towards high and popular cultural references, and what Marvin Carlson calls the ghosting process of 'performative echoes.'[402] One of the 'largest mobilisations of Shakespeare fan energy online', the weekly Twitter event #ShakespeareSunday hosted by @HollowCrownFans offers an illustrative example in which the star performers I consider here are used as sites of 'adaptive encounter' between their past popular culture roles and myriad Shakespearean roles; often ones they have yet to perform.[403] The weekly hashtag encourages users to post Shakespeare quotations centring on a particular chosen theme, almost all of which are accompanied by an image or a gif. The majority of these visual accompaniments reference a different popular entertainment franchise. This exercise in mining intertextual citations inherently appropriates Shakespeare's works, as Romano Mullin summarizes: '@HollowCrownFans signals its status as a digital community through a participatory culture that prizes direct active intervention with the Shakespearean text.'[404] As well as Cumberbatch's role in the BBC *The Hollow Crown* (2012 – 2016) miniseries from which @HollowCrownFans takes its title, both he and Tennant also inhabit roles within franchises known for their mass fan followings, and which are frequently referenced visually as part of #ShakespeareSunday: Cumberbatch as Arthur Conan Doyle's brilliant detective in BBC's *Sherlock* (2010 – 2017) and Tennant as the tenth incarnation of the Doctor in the long-running sci-fi series, *Doctor Who* (Tennant held the role from 2006 – 2010).

The way in which the activities of digital fan communities like the followers of @HollowCrownFans adapt and remediate the Shakespearean text cannot be understated, nor can the importance of the actor to this effort. As Mullin notes, #ShakespeareSunday tweets often feature 'complex networks of references and allusions' which frequently 'cohere around the body of the

[402] Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, p. 95.

[403] Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 78, p. 24.

[404] Romano Mullin, 'Tweeting Television/Broadcasting the Bard: @HollowCrownFans and Shakespeares', *Broadcast Your Shakespeare: Continuity and Change Across Media*, edited by Stephen O'Neill (London: Bloomsbury Arden, 2018), p. 207-226, p. 208.

actor.'[405] One example serves to illustrate this. In a tweet posted in 2018, @BardOfHeroes used a gif of David Tennant as Marvel's *Jessica Jones* villain, Kilgrave, smiling as Jones seems to strangle him.[406] With an accompanying quotation from *Hamlet*, the full tweet read: '"O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!" – Hamlet #BardWho (10 for the win).'[407] To number the cultural intersections here: the user's Twitter handle and chosen gif reference the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU); the inclusion of Tennant, part of the hashtag, and the shorthand allusion to Tennant's role as the 10th Doctor, '(10 for the win)', reference *Doctor Who*; and the choice of quotation and citational ' – Hamlet' reference Tennant's performance in the role for the RSC in 2008 – all whilst consolidating the tweet's Shakespearean context. Through the intertextuality of this tweet, both Tennant and Shakespeare are 'refracted' and made to speak to a range of cultural allusions and performance contexts.[408]

Ghosting

Tennant's refraction between the roles of Kilgrave, the Doctor, and Hamlet also reveals the importance of ghosting in the reception of the star performer, a context which likewise informs the broadcast paratexts I will consider. In *The Haunted Stage* – a study of theatre's 'inescapable and continuing negotiations with memory' – Marvin Carlson dedicates a chapter to the role of the actor.[409] Audiences, Carlson observes, 'typically see many of the same actors in many productions, and they will inevitably carry some memory of those actors from production to production,' an assertion which is exemplified by the network of references in @BardofHeroes' tweet.[410] It is this transfer of memory through the actor from which Carlson draws the titular description of the actor as a 'haunted body.'[411] Carlson's image of a performer evoking memories from prior roles is increasingly complicated in the

[405] Mullin, p. 217.

[406] The Bard's Avengers (@BardOfHeroes), '"O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!" – Hamlet #BardWho (10 for the win)', Tweet posted 3 October 2018.

[407] The Bard's Avengers (@BardOfHeroes).

[408] Mullin, p. 218.

[409] Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, p. 2.

[410] Ibid, p. 53.

[411] Ibid, p. 52.

age of social media and the modes of digital fan engagement that they enable, including #ShakespeareSunday. In this context, an actor's previous professional roles are also inevitably in conversation with her/his social media presence and – particularly for the active fan audiences – with circulation of images and narratives of her/him proliferated by fan communities online.

For example, Anna Blackwell points to a performance given by Patrick Stewart in the role of Prospero which was particularly ghosted by his portrayal of Captain Jean-Luc Picard in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Blackwell observes that 'for casual viewers and fans alike […] there would inevitably be occasions when echoes of Picard appeared [in Stewart's performance], doubling down and reflecting upon the wealth of Shakespearean reference already in *Star Trek*.'[412] In addition to this, contemporary fans of Stewart may also be prompted to read the star's current work in conversation with his social media presence. At the time of writing, Stewart's Twitter account features a range of tweets from promotional material for his own work (currently the revival of his role as Picard in the CBS mini-series, *Star Trek: Picard*), to daily video recordings of Shakespearean sonnets posted in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, to an image of him and Ian McKellen hugging on the red carpet to which users have responded with gifs and personal anecdotes about their favourite Shakespearean 'bromance.'[413] The proximity of Stewart's professional dramatic work and his friendship with McKellen testifies to how inseparable actors' professional and personal roles have become in the age of social media (though, as William Sargent capitalised upon, Burton's personal 'notoriety' was similarly a selling point in an age pre-social media).[414] Responses from users that consolidate Stewart's Shakespearean associations – undoubtedly bolstered through affiliation with the fellow Shakespearean, McKellen, and Stewart's

[412] Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 22; Douglas Lanier begins *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* with Shakespeare/*Star Trek* anecdote, and the show's many Shakespearean intersections form a point of continuity throughout his study, p. 1 – 2.

[413] Stewart and McKellen's friendship is particularly well-documented and beloved in online fan circles: evidenced *in extremis* by user @Nitro685 who responded to the tweeted photograph by saying 'My son is named Ian Patrick after you two', see Allen Collins (@Nitro685), 'My son is name Ian Patrick after you two.', Tweet posted 15 January 2020.

[414] Leff, p. 22.

#ASonnetADay project – alongside his popular culture roles such as Picard show that the 'echoes' identified by Blackwell and Carlson resonate not only on the stage but also online.[415]

As these examples demonstrate, digital remediations of star performers are apt to conflate any cultural distance between their 'high' Shakespearean roles and their popular franchise ones. Indeed, Blackwell notes of both Stewart and Tennant that 'they move between mainstream culture and British theatre with more ease' and that this 'ability to traverse is a foundational aspect of their appeal for their fan bases.'[416] In the case of live theatre broadcasts, Blackwell's distinctions between 'mainstream culture' and 'British theatre' and the lauded ability of actors to 'traverse' are complicated by virtue of its hybrid medium. As the venue of reception, the cinema is more likely closely aligned with the blockbuster appeal of mainstream films (or, in some cases, with the cult appeal of arthouse films) than with the British theatre, despite the fact that British theatre performances are exactly what these broadcasts bring *into* the cinema. Rather than perpetuating the divide between theatre and mainstream film, and juxtaposing 'high' and 'low' cultural media, the continuity of the actor and the cinema as a site of reception enables live theatre broadcasts of Shakespeare's works to emerge alongside and in conversation with an actor's wider franchise works.[417]

These principles of ghosting and cultural intertextuality are significant informing contexts for the roles of star performers in *Richard II* and *Hamlet*. My first example illustrates the impact of David Tennant's prior roles and popular appeal in mediating Shakespearean historiography in RSC Live's debut broadcast. In paratexts to *Richard II*, Tennant's Shakespearean cachet was brought to bear against the question of an audience's sympathy for Richard and the value of Shakespearean historiography. Set against interview clips with the historian Helen Castor, this broadcast's pre-recorded short film saw Shakespeare's dramatic authority, voiced by Tennant, take precedence over historical sources in a

[415] Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 22; Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, p. 95.

[416] Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 22.

[417] Ibid, p. 22 – 23. Blackwell also discusses an example in which David Tennant's role in *Hamlet* intersected with his role as the Doctor, in which the filmed version of *Hamlet* was broadcast to television in the BBC's 2009 Christmas programming alongside his final season as Doctor Who. Blackwell explores this in more detail in *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 109.

consideration of Richard. Ultimately, Tennant's involvement in the broadcast paratexts facilitated a reading of the play as Richard's tragic downfall and not his deserved usurpation, championing Shakespeare as a writer with particular insight into Richard's psychology and the play as a valuable source for reflecting on the historical king.[418]

Compared with Tennant's construction as an authority on Shakespeare's historiography, I argue that Cumberbatch presents a contrasting figure as a relative Shakespearean naïf in the NT Live broadcast of *Hamlet*. As in the Burton trailer, the pre-show short film to *Hamlet* attempted to situate Cumberbatch in an illustrious canon of actors who had previously taken the role (including Burton himself). Ghosted by the weight of this performance history, Cumberbatch operated within this paratext as a Shakespearean novice, reflecting on a performance in a London secondary school in order to address questions of Shakespeare's contemporary relevance and universality. Despite their varying levels of Shakespearean authority, both Tennant and Cumberbatch demonstrate the potential for the recognisable body of the star performer to become the channel through which Shakespearean meanings and value are shaped for broadcast audiences. Indeed, audiences emerge with a renewed importance in this discussion as I demonstrate how the star performer is apt to utilise the transactional space of the paratext as a new platform for engagement. As Genette notes of printed paratexts, 'many notes are addressed only to *certain* readers', and the same is true of the ways in which the paratextual involvement of star performers is designed to anticipate and interact with their active fan communities.[419] In addressing '*certain*' viewers, these broadcast paratexts repeatedly depend upon the star performer to negotiate Shakespeare's reputation and the contemporary value of performing his works.[420]

[418] In framing the play as Richard's tragedy, this broadcast echoes the play's paratextual framing in its early print history. In six quarto editions (1597, 1598, 1598, 1608, 1608, 1615) of *Richard II* prior to the play's inclusion among Shakespeare's histories in the 1623 Folio, title pages refer to the play as '*The Tragedie of King Richard the second*.' See BL Huth 46; BL C. 34.k.42; Folger STC 22309; BL C.34.k.43; Bodleian Arch.G. d.43; BL C.34.k.44; BL C.34.k.45.

[419] Genette, p. 4, emphasis original.

[420] Ibid.

David Tennant in *Richard II* (2013)

The RSC's production of *Richard II* (directed by Gregory Doran) had been, from early in its marketing and press reception, ghosted by lead actor David Tennant's previous high-profile roles. The production's poster image – which later served as the cover for the theatrical programme and for the broadcast's DVD release – shows Tennant sat beneath the Westminster portrait of Richard II. Contrary to the production's medieval dress and Tennant's long hair for the role, here the actor appears in modern clothing. Tennant's hair is short and fashionably disarrayed, and his open, informal posture contradicts the rigidity and ornament of Richard in the portrait behind (Figure 7). Despite the jarring contrast between the two figures, they are nonetheless linked, with Tennant holding a sceptre that aligns perfectly with the one held by the painted Richard. Tennant appears perched on the threshold between actor and character, as well as between a living, human embodiment of Richard and the comparatively fixed historical figure. Rather than effacing Tennant in favour of his portrayal as Richard, therefore, this image mirrored Burton's *Hamlet* trailer in framing the production as a chance to see the star performer himself first and foremost.

In its presentation of Tennant, this image juxtaposed the fixity of the historical Richard with a portrayal of Shakespeare's Richard that was characterised by visual citation to the actor's popular culture roles. This promotional image and the later paratexts thereby re-invoked the popular culture links that similarly were drawn similarly five years earlier, as part of Tennant's role in *Hamlet* at the RSC's temporary Courtyard Theatre. Anna Blackwell cites a number of critics who 'have demonstrated [that] the 2008 RSC *Hamlet* and *Doctor Who* existed in dialogue to each other beyond their proximity or even simply Tennant's presence in both.'[421] This ambiguity – in which Tennant's Shakespearean roles are ghosted by, and actively reference, his popular culture ones – may therefore be said to be characteristic of the actor's work with the company and with director Gregory Doran.[422] In the *Richard*

[421] Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 109.

[422] The same can be said of Cumberbatch's involvement in Lyndsey Turner's production of *Hamlet* (2015). While it is not a particular focus of my later discussion of the *Hamlet* broadcast, Scott Jordan Harris has argued convincingly for the ways in which that theatre production drew visual references to Cumberbatch's popularising role as Sherlock, in 'Benedict Cumberbatch's Hamlet Could Usher in an Era of Blockbuster Shakespeare', *Slate*,

II promotional image, it was Tennant's clothing that functioned as an allusion to his prior popular culture role, overlaying the inherently ghosted quality of Tennant's body itself. Wearing a brown blazer and white trainers, the palette of blue and brown is characteristic of his dress as the Doctor, who always wore either a blue or brown suit underneath a long brown overcoat (the trainers in particular were worn by the character at Tennant's own insistence).[423] Therefore, this promotional image, like the later paratextual short film to *Richard II*, capitalised on 'performative echoes' of Tennant's prior roles to invite a reading of Shakespeare's/Tennant's Richard as a distinctly human character particularly in contrast to the fixed, historical record which was here represented by the Westminster portrait.[424]

Tennant's involvement in the broadcast paratexts to *Richard II* came in the form of a pre-recorded short film, which spliced interview clips of the actor with clips of historian Helen Castor. As I explored in Part I of this thesis, RSC Live frequently uses interviews with multiple actors as a form of pre-recorded short film (pp. 90 – 97). This debut presented an exception, however, as Tennant was the only actor in the production to be featured in a pre-show paratext (other cast members instead appeared in an interval short film). This isolation worked to set Tennant and Castor directly in conversation with each other as a preface to the performance. Over the course of this film, Castor and Tennant each came to stand for one of two types of Shakespearean authority previously highlighted by Douglas Lanier: 'the theatre and the academy.'[425] M. G. Aune, who also commented on the presence of these two 'authorized […] groups' in Al Pacino's documentary, *Looking for Richard* (1996), notes that 'access to and understanding of Shakespeare is mediated' by each 'to help deliver Shakespeare to the public.'[426] In

31 August 2015 <https://slate.com/culture/2015/08/benedict-cumberbatchs-hamlet-could-usher-in-an-era-of-blockbuster-shakespeare.html> [accessed 6 July 2019].

[423] Contributors, 'Tenth Doctor', *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, n.d., <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tenth_Doctor#Appearance> [accessed 17 March 2020]; Tennant qtd. in Kirsten Acuna, '"People didn't like that idea": David Tennant fought for his Doctor Who to wear Converse sneakers on the show', *Insider*, 10 October 2018, n.p., <https://www.insider.com/david-tennant-fought-for-doctor-who-to-wear-converse-2018-10> [accessed 17 March 2020].

[424] Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, p. 95

[425] Lanier, p. 45.

[426] M. G. Aune, 'Star Power: Al Pacino, Looking for Richard and the Cultural Capital of Shakespeare on Film', *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, 23:4, pp. 353 – 367, p. 353.

Figure 7: The promotional image for the RSC's *Richard II*, showing David Tennant seated beneath the 'Westminster Portrait' of Richard II.

offering their commentary on the historical Richard versus the Shakespearean character, Castor and Tennant were implicitly aligned with this dichotomy of academic research versus theatrical insight. This contrast, in which Castor's rigidly historical Richard was met with by Tennant's theatrically alive one, was affirmed from their introductions within the short film. Castor began, noting that 'Richard the second was king of England from 1377 to 1399, and he was the successor and grandson of Edward the third.'[427] Comparatively, Tennant's first interview clip offered cinema audiences a more protean, subjective, and personal Richard: 'it's a question of perspective how one sees him.'[428] From the outset, therefore, Castor's factual history was contrasted by Tennant as the voice of theatrical subjectivity.

[427] *Richard II*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[428] Ibid.

Tennant's interview clips consistently emphasised this subjectivity to give a sympathetic reading of the character, frequently in sharp contrast to the unforgiving historical reputation voiced by Castor. For example, Tennant's first interview clip saw him reflect on his own experience of the role: 'as an actor playing him, you of course sympathise with every moment that he lives through.'[429] Tennant continued to qualify his own position as an actor embodying Richard, commenting that 'as somebody seeing him from the outside, I think he's a fascinating character.'[430] This distancing from the character, as well as the vocabulary that roots Tennant's discussion firmly in the theatrical terms of 'actor' and 'character', invited cinema audiences to further read Tennant's portrayal of Richard with the performer himself in the foreground. In this regard, this pre-show short film reinforced the ghosting effect that Carlson identifies as already inherent to theatre, in which 'the recycled body and persona of the actor' bears upon a reading of their latest role.[431] Cinema audiences were therefore prompted to engage with Tennant's own popular appeal and to read this as an intertext to the character of Richard, inviting audiences familiar with Tennant's work to similarly 'sympathise with every moment that he lives through.'[432]

In contrast, Castor's interview clips frequently highlighted that Richard's historical reputation is pointedly unsympathetic. Voicing a body of historical opinion of the medieval monarch, Castor noted that 'one of the reasons he's so fascinating is how disastrous his reign turned out to be.'[433] Castor continued, remarking that Richard's reign had been 'turbulent from the beginning', and that 'Richard's conception of his own kingship […] was at odds really with the way power could and did work in medieval England.'[434] Castor's interview clips were likely not intended to actively vilify Richard in the minds of cinema audiences. However, in relaying the historical details of his reign and judging his kingship by contemporary medieval standards, Castor offered audiences an impression of the character

[429] *Richard II*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[430] Ibid.

[431] Carlson, *The Haunted Stage*, p. 52.

[432] *Richard II*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[433] Ibid.

[434] Ibid.

that sharply contrasted with the personal and sympathetic view voiced by Tennant. Although Tennant admitted, in the clip which immediately followed Castor's discussion of his 'disastrous' reign, that Richard is 'hard to sympathise with […] initially', he ultimately returned to an interpretation in which 'Richard certainly gains some kind of redemption in the eyes of the audience.'[435] That Richard had certainly not gained that same 'redemption' in the eyes of Castor's historical record only further served to highlight the disparity between the historical Richard and Shakespeare's fictional character presented by these two voices.

The implicit dialogue between Castor and Tennant, therefore, was not simply a dialogue between academic and theatrical sources of Shakespearean authority outlined by Aune and Lanier. It was also a dialogue between historical record and Shakespearean historiography, one which inherently challenged ideas about Shakespeare's value as a writer and as a source for, and adapter of, medieval history. Mapped onto Castor and Tennant respectively, this dialogue was occasionally supported by the editing of the short film to give the impression of these two figures responding to each other directly. For example, the issue of Richard's youthful coronation was discussed by both Tennant and Castor in a mode which aptly mirrored the Elizabethan humanist pedagogical practice of *controversiae*: in which each 'pupil took up one side in a debate situation' and would 'try to win his audiences' favour' by means of intellectual merit or soliciting sympathy.[436] Castor attributed Richard's hubris and impulsiveness to the impact of his coronation at the age of ten, noting that 'from a very early stage he seems to have had a sense of his special relationship with God.'[437] Castor couched the coronation in terms of Richard's failure, having 'misunderstood his role of King', to which Tennant appeared to retort in the subsequent clip that 'if you've been God's anointed from the age of ten, that's going to do something to your ego.'[438] Here, Tennant responded as if in defence of Richard, reframing the debate to invite cinema audiences to inhabit Richard's psychology. The historically distanced 'he' of Castor's account was mediated, through the body of Tennant, to appeal to the 'yo[u]' of cinema audiences. In

[435] *Richard II*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[436] Emrys Jones, *The Origins of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 14.

[437] *Richard II*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[438] Ibid.

this way, Tennant's discussion of Richard drew upon his popular appeal and directly addressed anticipated fan audiences, demonstrating the ability to provoke sympathy for Richard through the figure of the star actor.

Tennant's popular appeal and voicing of a sympathetic reading of Shakespeare's Richard were not only enforced verbally in his contributions to the pre-show short film. The settings of both Tennant's and Castor's interview clips similarly communicated their oppositional stances as voices of sympathetic Shakespearean historiography and comparatively unforgiving historical record. Furthermore, it was in the visual makeup of Tennant's interview clips that the ghosting of his popular culture roles, and thereby his ability to 'traverse' between those and Shakespearean theatrical roles, was most prominent.[439] The backdrop of Tennant's interview clips was the RSC's Frank Benson Memorial window, which features stained glass portraits of male Shakespearean characters. While it is important to note that cinema audiences may have been hard pressed to locate Tennant's interview setting precisely – particularly if they had never visited the Royal Shakespeare Theatre building – the framing of the window clearly communicated its Shakespearean heritage. Visible to the left of Tennant were two windows that named their Shakespearean portraits – one of Prospero and one of Iago. Seated at an angle, Tennant was positioned to fill a window whose character was obscured by Tennant himself (illustrated in Figure 8).[440]

Flanked by Shakespearean characters, Tennant was figuratively ghosted and literally surrounded by reminders of prominent male roles in the Shakespearean canon. In this regard, the backdrop of the Benson memorial window served a similar function to Burton's listing of prior Hamlets and to the visual montage that accompanied the Electronovision *Hamlet* trailer. While Tennant's

[439] Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 22.

[440] Castor and Tennant's interviews for the *Richard II* broadcast were also edited together with other behind-the-scenes clips from the production and released on the RSC's YouTube channel. Images featured in this chapter are taken from these videos, with my thanks to John Wyver for confirming Tennant's backdrop as the Benson memorial window: Royal Shakespeare Company, *Production Diary 11 | Richard II | Royal Shakespeare Company*, online video recording, YouTube, 8 November 2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxFi0rDcHJI> [accessed 15 March 2020].

position alongside images of Prospero and Iago may not have immediately evoked for cinema audiences the previous inhabitants of those roles – much less of Richard II – it did serve to place Tennant within a wider history of high-profile performers playing coveted Shakespearean roles. Cinema audiences may have been prompted to read Tennant's proximity to the Prospero and Iago windows as cryptic teasers that hinted at the great Shakespearean characters the actor has yet to explore, indulging in the same networks of Shakespearean reference that underpin #ShakespeareSunday tweets. By inviting audiences to read the interview setting in this light, Tennant's clips were ghosted by Shakespearean tradition whilst also anticipating the continuation of that tradition through Tennant himself.

Moreover, the visual makeup of Tennant's interview clips was characterised by an informality and intimacy that contrasted with Castor's. Castor's interviews were situated, with historical site-specificity, outside Westminster Abbey ('[Richard] was crowned here in Westminster', Castor remarked).[441] The backdrop provided a vast outdoor setting that juxtaposed with the interior, low-lit intimacy of Tennant's clips. Castor's placement outside Westminster Abbey also acted as a visual citation that linked her interview clips with a further source of authority. Along with the door of 10 Downing Street, College Green where Castor was stood is used regularly for news broadcasting stations to hold "down the line" style interviews with political correspondents (Castor is shown *in-situ* in Figure 9).[442] For cinema audiences, Castor's interview setting may well have resonated with the formal authority of political journalism. Consequently, Castor's clips were framed in a particularly authoritative and factual context (supplemented by a caption which introduced her as 'Helen Castor

[441] *Richard II*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[442] Brian Wheeler, 'Why do broadcasters use College Green', *BBC News*, 8 January 2018 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-46795958> [accessed 18 March 2020].

Royal Shakespeare Company, *Production Diary 3 | Richard II | Royal Shakespeare Company*, online video recording, YouTube, 13 September 2013 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tCpVlIm8P44&list=PLSIxo_5qCKQhNtE0_x9ZywMes-qy19cWa&index=3> [accessed 16 March 2020].

[line break] Historian'), offering a stark contrast to the subjective and psychologically investigative angle voiced by Tennant (who in turn was captioned as 'David Tennant [line break] Richard II').[443]

Figure 8: David Tennant pictured in front of the Frank Benson Memorial Window, in clips that were edited and included within the RSC Live broadcast of *Richard II* (screengrab from YouTube).

Figure 9: Helen Castor in front of Westminster Abbey, the setting of her interview clips in the *Richard II* broadcast (screengrab from YouTube).

The interior setting and privacy of Tennant's interview clips (Tennant was shot with softer, artificial light, against a darker backdrop than Castor's) allowed his insights on playing Richard to

[443] *Richard II*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

appear all the more personal as well as tapping into anticipated audience desires to have an intimate, face-to-face interaction with the star. The comparative intimacy of the Tennant clips are perhaps best read in the context of what Blackwell identifies as a fan's 'pleasure [derived] from imagining otherwise competent or traditionally masculine characters in situations that determine their helplessness – whether physically incapacitated […] or emotionally fragile.'[444] Tennant's setting in front of the Benson window did not, in any suggestion, imply that he was 'physically incapacitated', but the interior and low-lit setting combined with Tennant's personal reflections may well have come near to 'emotional fragil[ity]' for some cinema viewers.[445] In this regard, the setting of Tennant's interview clips would likely have appealed to sections of Tennant's fan base who particularly enjoy the actor's performances of emotional vulnerability.[446] Drawing on these, the interview setting used in this broadcast implicitly bolstered the actor's personal reflections on playing Richard, effecting a reading which gave the character a heightened emotional sensitivity.

The final visual citation to Tennant's past roles in the *Richard II* broadcast paratexts was one that returns us to the production's promotional image: his clothing. Tennant appeared in the interview clips wearing a t-shirt, with the slogan 'Super Angels' and a flaming car tyre (shown in Figure 8). This element of Tennant's casual dress went beyond acting as a further contrast to the formality of Castor's blouse and pearl earrings. Rather, Tennant's t-shirt resonated with two of his past high-profile Shakespearean roles in *Hamlet* (2008) and as Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing* (2011).[447] In both productions, Tennant sported casual t-shirts which significantly underpinned particular dramatic

[444] Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 109.

[445] Ibid.

[446] Notable among these is a scene from Tennant's tenure as The Doctor, in which he bids an emotional farewell to his companion, Rose. The scene was voted 'greatest sci-fi scene of all time' in a fan poll, see Susanna Lazarus, 'David Tennant and Billie Piper's Doctor Who goodbye voted greatest sci-fi scene ever', *Radio Times*, 25 June 2014 <https://www.radiotimes.com/news/2014-06-25/david-tennant-and-billie-pipers-doctor-who-goodbye-voted-greatest-sci-fi-scene-ever/> [accessed 18 March 2020].

[447] *Much Ado About Nothing*, directed by Lyndsey Turner, revived Tennant's long-standing professional relationship with Catherine Tate – the pair's casting as sparring lovers Beatrice and Benedick was actively ghosted by their prior roles as the Doctor and another of his companions, Donna.

moments. As Hamlet, Tennant gave his 'To be or not to be' soliloquy in an orange t-shirt with drawn-on abdominal muscles. The muscular t-shirt acted as an ironic commentary on Hamlet's characteristic inaction and famed interiority, which was then mirrored in turn in *Much Ado* when Tennant's Benedick wore a t-shirt with a Superman logo for the character's goading scene.[448] As well as acting as a reference to the masculinity of the characters themselves, these garments also function as a through-line highlighting the roles taken in Tennant's wider career. Rebecca Williams argues that Tennant's 'high cultural links' with the RSC and his characterisation as the Doctor in particular 'feed into his construction as an intelligent, non-traditional figure of masculinity that female fans could identify with.'[449] Each championing a form of masculine ideal, therefore, these t-shirts alluded to the non-conventional masculinity that characterises both roles (Hamlet in his inability to fulfil the role of avenger, Benedick in his initial refusal to comply with the heteronormative desire to marry) and, indeed, that unites Tennant's past popular culture roles.

Though a fleeting form of visual allusion, the penchant for t-shirts which make a knowing commentary on Tennant as a 'non-traditional figure of masculinity' demonstrates an actively ghosted relationship not only between the actor's popular persona and his roles, but also between the Shakespearean roles he inhabits.[450] A visual manifestation of his type-casting, the muscle and Superman t-shirts highlighted Tennant's ability to bring 'an almost boyish vulnerability' to his Shakespearean and popular franchise roles.[451] It is important to note that in the *Richard II* paratextual interview clips, Tennant's t-shirt does not make the same explicit comment on traditional forms of masculinity that his prior costumes as Hamlet and Benedick had. While the flaming tyre invokes associations of racing culture which are tied to traditionally "masculine" pursuits, Tennant's t-shirt in the interview clips

[448] William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*, edited by Sheldon P. Zitner (Oxford: OUP, 2008), II. 3.

[449] Rebecca Williams, 'Desiring the Doctor: Identity, Gender and Genre in Online Fandom', *British Science Fiction Film and Television: Critical Essays'*, edited by Tobias Hochscherf and James Leggott (Jefferson: MacFarland and Company, 2011), pp. 167 – 177, p. 173.

[450] Ibid.

[451] Michael Billington, 'Royal Shakespeare Company Richard II – review', *Guardian*, 17 October 2013 <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2013/oct/17/richard-ii-review-royal-shakespeare-theatre-david-tennant> [accessed 18 March 2020].

operated as a kind of visual allusion to cinema viewers familiar with his prior (and in the case of *Much Ado*, recent) Shakespearean roles. Within this network of sartorial ghosting, Tennant's clothing worked together with the intimate setting of the interview clips to anticipate a similarly vulnerable and 'non-traditional' form of masculinity in his performance of Richard.[452]

Thus far, I have outlined ways in which David Tennant's involvement in the *Richard II* pre-show short film drew upon the actor's popular appeal and prior roles to influence a reading of his portrayal of the eponymous king. I have also considered the ways in which this paratext structured Tennant's interview clips in implicit opposition to Helen Castor's, establishing a dialogue in which the latter championed historical record while Tennant became a voice that argued for Shakespeare's value as a creative and sympathetic adapter of history. As the short film progressed, it was Tennant who offered a relatively clean resolution to this underlying contention:

> It can be hugely informative to find out what actually happened, in this case who Richard the second really was, the actual facts of his life. There comes a point when you have to surrender to the drama. If the historical facts are contradicted by the dramatic facts then ultimately you have to go with what's in the text of the play.[453]

In the context of Tennant's reflections as an actor, his admission that he chose to 'surrender to the drama' rather than to pursue historical records of Richard's reign is unsurprising. However, Tennant's use of the inclusive 'you have to', rather than 'I have to…', implicated the viewing cinema audiences in his championing of Shakespearean historiography.

Moreover, in the subsequent interview clip, the distance between Castor and Tennant's views of Richard was collapsed as Castor also conceded the value of Shakespearean historiography. 'To have a text written with all the understanding of human nature that Shakespeare has,' reflected Castor, 'is a fantastic resource.'[454] While the paratext's construction of a consensus on Shakespeare's value is

[452] Williams, p. 173.

[453] *Richard II*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[454] Ibid.

unsurprising, it is the terms in which Tennant couched Shakespearean historiography which are telling for the mediating role of star performers in Shakespearean live theatre broadcasts. Bolstered by the ghosts of his prior roles and his popular appeal, Tennant's championing of Shakespearean historiography raised the playwright's dramatic works to be on a par with 'historical facts', a view that was then supported by Castor's characterisation of the play as a resource that 'feed[s …] our understanding of history anyway.'[455]

Edited to resolve the apparent conflict between historical fact and Shakespearean historiography, Tennant acted as a continual respondent to Castor. Tennant offered a continually sympathetic reading of Shakespeare's Richard which, in contrast with an unforgiving historical record, allowed the actor to emerge as a theatrical Shakespearean authority, and the playwright as a historiographer with significant psychological insight. This reading was particularly dependant on the actor's prior Shakespeare and popular culture roles. Ghosted by these prior roles, Tennant exemplified the ability of the star performer to 'play [...] in one person many people' and demonstrated the potential for cinema audiences to read this multiplicity as an intertext to his portrayal of Richard.[456] In this regard, the actor fulfilled the role outlined by Blackwell of the Shakespearean celebrity who 'exists alongside and in dialogue with the Shakespearean text but also beyond it, extending its reach.'[457] Cinema audiences were thereby invited to engage with Tennant's performance of Richard not solely through the lens of the actor's prior Shakespearean and popular culture roles, but through one which sought to champion and 'exten[d]' Shakespeare's value as an historiographer.[458]

Benedict Cumberbatch in *Hamlet* (2015)

Two years after David Tennant's performance as Richard II, the ghosts that haunted Benedict Cumberbatch's performance in the NT Live broadcast of *Hamlet* were not – at least not primarily – his

[455] *Richard II*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[456] William Shakespeare, *Richard II*, edited by Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin (Oxford: OUP, 2011), V.5.31.

[457] Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 144.

[458] Ibid.

own. Rather, this broadcast echoed its Electronovision predecessor by placing Cumberbatch's performance under the weight of a history of high-profile actors in the title role. After establishing the gravity of *Hamlet*'s performance history and high cultural associations of the play, Cumberbatch's relative lack of prior Shakespearean roles was then utilised to stage an exploration of the relevance of *Hamlet*, in turn reflecting on Shakespeare's value for contemporary audiences. In what follows, I consider Cumberbatch's role in negotiating this journey from uncertainty to an affirmation of Shakespeare's value. In a mode that drew less upon Cumberbatch's own prior roles than on the ghosted performance history of the play itself, Cumberbatch was constructed as a Shakespearean novice within this short film to paradoxically confirm the high-culture inaccessibility of the play and to champion its contemporary relevance and universality.

In an exceptional example which I discuss in Part I of this thesis (p. 82), *Hamlet*'s pre-show short film was taken from an episode of *The Southbank Show* which had aired on the television channel, Sky Arts, the previous night. The short film began with a sequence that foregrounded the play's iconic status and cultural ubiquity, with production footage showing Cumberbatch delivering Hamlet's most recognisable and oft-quoted lines: 'To be or not to be, that is the question.'[459] The shot then changed to Laurence Olivier's film version of *Hamlet* (1948), the black-and-white footage showing the actor raising the skull of Yorick to meet his face. Following from Olivier was a mirrored match-cut shot of footage showing Derek Jacobi against a stark white studio backdrop, likewise cradling Yorick's skull in his hands. The fourth and final Hamlet was Richard Burton, whose to-camera cry of 'Murder!' was timed to interject at the end of a narrating voiceover from cultural commentatorer, Melvyn Bragg: 'For more than four hundred years, the role of Hamlet has beguiled and obsessed the greatest actors.'[460] In this opening sequence, the short film distinctly echoed Burton's listing of famous actors in the Electronovision trailer. Likewise, the impulse to place the star actor (in this case, Cumberbatch) within a pantheon of Shakespearean performances was similarly evident, with his position at the start of the

[459] *Hamlet*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2015.

[460] Ibid.

play's performance lineage mirroring Burton's.[461] An interesting distinction arises, however, when we consider the medium in which each performance history of *Hamlet* was situated. Burton's roll-call of famed actors stretched back to 'the first Hamlet […] Richard Burbage' and proceeded to list performers who had popularised the role on stage.[462] The pre-show short film to the NT Live *Hamlet*, however, drew performance precedents solely from filmed versions of the play (despite featuring actors who had all also performed the role on the stage).[463] The ghosting of prior performances in this paratext – as the inclusion of Burton's own Electronovision-filmed *Hamlet* highlights – pointedly evoked the spirit of the Dane in digital media.

The performance history established by this short film, therefore, was one that emphasised the mediated and filmic quality of the live theatre broadcast (in this regard it was perhaps also informed by the clip's original context, as part of the televised *Southbank Show*), as well as alluding to Cumberbatch as an actor whose popularising roles have largely been limited to film and television. The proliferation of filmed Hamlets also acted as a validation of the play as especially apt for digitally distributed performance: a bolstering of the role as a star vehicle and safe commercial bet for new media, as it had been for Electronovision half a century prior. Bragg's voiceover made explicit the idea that the play is a litmus test for 'the greatest actors', among whom cinema audiences were invited to measure Cumberbatch's ensuing performance.[464] Anna Blackwell likewise affirms the idea that 'it is Shakespeare – and *Hamlet* in particular – that is viewed as simultaneously both a test of ability *and* a

[461] In her discussion of the *Shakespeare Live!* 'To Be or Not to Be' sketch, Anna Blackwell highlights a similar impulse to populate the RSC stage with actors who, alongside constituting a 'group of performers who can institutionally be characterised as 'Shakespeareans', have played the role of Hamlet in high-profile stagings of the play, in *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 1 – 4.

[462] RichardBurton01, *Richard Burton Talks Electronovision*.

[463] Only the Burton Hamlet provides a concession to the film Hamlets referenced in this short film – as I consider in the opening to this chapter, Burton's performance was filmed in the Lunt Fontaine theatre compared with Olivier and Jacobi's feature film performances.

[464] *Hamlet,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2015.

confirmation of stardom.'[465] In this regard, this short film established the play as a watershed moment in Cumberbatch's career, a tantalising opportunity for the popular actor to cross the high/low cultural threshold and join the ranks of the 'greatest' Shakespeareans.[466] The evocation of a filmic performance history served to emphasise the cultural capital that accompanies (white, male) actors in the role. By showing Olivier, Jacobi and Burton to have been immortalised both figuratively in Shakespearean performance history, and literally in the digital records of their performance, the opening to NT Live's *Hamlet* short film affirmed the importance of the play in shaping their careers around Shakespeare's elevated cultural value.

Despite Cumberbatch's inclusion amongst actors who had seemingly affirmed their 'great[ness]' through the role of Hamlet and in spite of the elite upbringing that aligns him with the cultural prestige of a Shakespearean, the short film also relied on the actor's relative lack of experience in performing Shakespearean roles.[467] Unlike David Tennant, Cumberbatch had few high-profile credentials in Shakespeare plays prior to the broadcast of *Hamlet*, having starred in only two Shakespeare productions at the Regent's Park Open Air Theatre early in his career.[468] The announcement of his casting as Richard III in the second cycle of the BBC series *The Hollow Crown* in late 2014 had shown Cumberbatch to be branching further into Shakespeare's works – however, mass audiences had yet to see him tackle a Shakespearean role by the time he appeared in *Hamlet* the following year.[469] Echoing his role as an unconfirmed Shakespearean, the thrust of Bragg's questioning

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[465] Anna Blackwell, 'Shakespeare Actors, Memes, Social Media and the Circulation of Shakespearean 'Value'', *Shakespeare's Cultural Capital: His Economic Impact from the Sixteenth to the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Dominic Shellard and Siobhan Keenan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 77 – 98, p. 89.

[466] *Hamlet*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2015.

[467] Anna Blackwell considers how the cachet of 'Shakespearean' is often interdependent with other socio-economic forms of privilege in *Shakespearean Celebrity*: '[I]t is only to be expected that Shakespearean actors are assisted by the proximity between social and cultural capital given that the playwright's name exists as a common shorthand for intellectual sophistication and good taste' (p. 5).

[468] Jonathan Croall, *Playing Hamlet: Actors in the Modern Age* (London: Arden Bloomsbury, 2018), p. 121.

[469] Susanna Lazarus, 'First look at Benedict Cumberbatch in The Hollow Crown', *Radio Times*, 23 September 2014 <https://www.radiotimes.com/news/2014-09-23/first-look-at-benedict-cumberbatch-in-the-hollow-crown/> [accessed 23 March 2020].

centred on Cumberbatch being the next actor to take up the role and to do so in the service of what Bragg calls his 'legion of fans across the world.'[470] Cumberbatch was thereby positioned not necessarily as a tried and tested Shakespearean actor, but as a figure whose profile and large fan following had the potential to further elevate the status of Shakespeare's cultural value and contemporary relevance on an international scale.

This status was affirmed by Bragg throughout his interview with Cumberbatch, in which the actor was questioned repeatedly on the prestige of his role as Hamlet with the apparent subtext that to do so would mean 'traver[sing]' a presumed high/low cultural divide.[471] Bragg's first question set the tone by invoking the play's literary critical history as well as its populous performance history: 'Max Beerbohm wrote that "Hamlet is a role" – a hoop – "through which every eminent actor sooner or later has to jump", what made you jump now?'[472] The intellectual trappings of this question – including Bragg's own reputation as a seasoned arts and culture commentator and his quoting of Beerbohm – would likely have prompted cinema audiences to reflect on the play as proof of Shakespeare's elevated cultural value. In the context of the paratext's selective performance history, the upper-middle class and privately-educated Cumberbatch functioned as a reminder that access to 'jump' through the 'hoop' of the role (and therefore, access to Shakespearean cultural cachet) is still restricted and privileged.[473] On Cumberbatch's status as an almost-Shakespearean in spite of his inexperience with Shakespearean roles, Blackwell cites Cumberbatch's status as a white, upper-middle class English actor. As such, she notes that his casting as Hamlet proved that Cumberbatch 'possessed enough qualities which intersect with those associated with Shakespeareanism to obscure the fact that […] he is not historically a Shakespearean.'[474] Alongside Olivier, Jacobi and Burton, Cumberbatch functioned visually to affirm

[470] *Hamlet,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2015.

[471] Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 22.

[472] *Hamlet,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2015.

[473] Ibid.

[474] Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 98.

that the opportunity to prove oneself as an 'eminent' Shakespearean in the role of Hamlet is still largely the preserve of white, male actors.[475]

Cumberbatch's role as an unconfirmed Shakespearean was also distinctly tied, in his interview with Bragg, to the actor's ability to bring new audiences from his pre-existing fan base. As I alluded to above, Bragg introduced Cumberbatch by noting that the actor's portrayal had 'drawn new audiences to the play from his legion of fans across the world.'[476] In response to Bragg's question of why he had chosen to take the role, Cumberbatch listed 'the opportunity to bring a new audience to a four-hundred-year-old piece of brilliance and to try and make Shakespeare as relevant now as he has ever been.'[477] In this response, Cumberbatch framed himself and his participation in the *Hamlet* broadcast as a cultural bridge, a way for audiences of his popular culture works to attain their own Shakespearean cultural cachet. Indeed, the notion that cinema audiences may treat Shakespearean live theatre broadcasts as a mode of self-education is affirmed by audience research conducted by Rachael Nicholas. Drawing from respondents who attended a screening of NT Live's *Macbeth* (2018), Nicholas highlights that at least one respondent was motivated to attend by a sense that the broadcast would constitute 'the accumulation of more Shakespearean cultural capital' and was drawn by the possibility of 'watching for educational self-development.'[478]

While Daisy Abbott and Claire Read's audience research for this particular broadcast found a dominant motivation to be the involvement of Cumberbatch himself (attesting that a number of audience members were likely brought to the screening by their knowledge of Cumberbatch's popular role in *Sherlock*), here the actor seemingly acknowledged this audience and voiced his desire to 'bring' them

[475] This is a particular focus of Blackwell's discussion of the RSC's *Shakespeare Live!* 'To Be or Not to Be' sketch, in which a number of actors including Cumberbatch and Tennant gave performance notes to Paapa Essiedu who was then playing Hamlet at the theatre and was the first black actor to do so in the RSC's history. 'The emphasis placed on Essiedu's race,' Blackwell observes, was 'a demonstration of the implicit whiteness of Shakespearean celebrity', in *Shakespearean Celebrity,* p. 8.

[476] *Hamlet,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2015.

[477] Ibid.

[478] Nicholas, 'Encountering Shakespeare Elsewhere', p. 142.

Shakespeare's most prestigious role through his own performance.[479] This paratext (and indeed Cumberbatch) therefore imagined that fans of the actor's popular culture works were unfamiliar with, or not able to access the cultural cachet of, Shakespeare's works. In this regard, the broadcast paratext perpetuated the narrative that, as Blackwell observes, 'the 'Shakespearean' is something that requires specialist knowledge to unpack.'[480] Despite the literary origins and cerebral intelligence of Cumberbatch's popularising role in *Sherlock*, Shakespeare seemingly held a still higher place and was thereby implicitly inaccessible to fans of this popular, televised work without Cumberbatch's involvement. However, fan practices such as #ShakespeareSunday show that this apparent lack of access is often illusionary. Alongside the Shakespearean origins of @HollowCrownFans, the frequency and fluency with which #ShakespeareSunday tweets reference pop culture media suggests that audiences as well as actors are adept at 'travers[ing]' these cultural registers, appropriating and remediating Shakespearean texts for their own purposes.[481] By emphasising his role in 'bring[ing] a new audience' to Shakespeare's works, Cumberbatch functioned within this paratext to perpetuate the supposed cultural division between his own popular culture works and Shakespeare's, even while claiming that his performance may work to bridge it.[482]

The latter half of the *Hamlet* pre-show short film sought to bridge the second perceived gap acknowledged by Cumberbatch. In his motivation to 'to try and make Shakespeare as relevant now as he has ever been,' the actor alluded to the anxiety that historical distance from Shakespeare's works renders them irrelevant to contemporary society.[483] Moreover, it was not solely historical distance that threatened to render the play irrelevant in the minds of cinema audiences. Underlying the play's extensive performance history and broadcast presenter Morgan Quantaince's observation that the play is 'widely thought to be [Shakespeare's] most performed' was the implication that *Hamlet* is little more

[479] Abbott and Read, 'Paradocumentation and NTLive's "CumberHamlet"', p. 183; *Hamlet,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2015.

[480] Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 70.

[481] Ibid, p. 22.

[482] *Hamlet,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2015.

[483] Ibid, see also my discussion of claims of Shakespearean relevance in Chapter Seven.

than an over-performed star vehicle.[484] The latter half of the paratext addressed these anxieties through Cumberbatch, literalising his desire to make Shakespeare relevant by staging a visit by the actor to watch a short performance at a London secondary school. The segment was linked by a clip from Cumberbatch's interview with Bragg, in which the actor observed that 'there's a universality to the challenge of [playing Hamlet], that means that it's a role that fits any actor.'[485] As if to bolster this claim, the shot then changed to show five pupils performing the line 'To be or not to be' communally. Shots of playing fields and a school hallway established the location as a secondary school and set the precedent for the use of documentary-film-making techniques which underlined this segment's implicit 'story of discovery and understanding.'[486] Cumberbatch adopted the role of 'presenter', narrating footage that showed his introduction to the performing students: 'We're in East Ham, at Langdon Academy, and I'm here to watch some drama students do their interpretation of *Hamlet*. Four hundred years after this extraordinary piece of writing is still being investigated, does it still resonate with kids?'[487] In the context of Cumberbatch's question, it was the Langdon pupils and not Cumberbatch himself who possessed the 'specialist knowledge' to access Shakespeare's meanings and his cultural value.[488] In this regard, the latter half of the paratext worked to undermine the veil of prestige and inaccessibility that had been built around *Hamlet* in the opening segment. Contrary to the play's performance history (which as both Burton and Bragg indirectly highlighted, is overwhelmingly populated by white men) and its apparent alignment with high-cultural prestige, Cumberbatch's visit to the Langdon students worked to argue that *Hamlet's* meanings are accessible and relevant to everyone.

[484] *Hamlet,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2015.

[485] Ibid.

[486] On the recognisability of documentary conventions, Jonathan Bignell asserts that voice-over and the figure of the presenter are key to the 'story-like flow' of documentary filmmaking. His description of the narrative techniques of documentary distinctly mirror the filmic aesthetics of Cumberbatch's visit to Langdon Academy: 'A voice-over commentary can describe, explain or make an argument that has a sequence and a story-like flow. The presenter can seem to find things out, leading the viewer through a story of discovery and understanding', in Johnathan Bignell, *An Introduction to Television Studies*, 3rd edn. (New York: Routledge Press, 2013), p. 222.

[487] Ibid; *Hamlet,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2015.

[488] Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity,* p. 70.

The setting of the Langdon performance was particularly important in affirming this narrative of Shakespeare's relevance and universality, and worked against what many cinema viewers would likely know of Cumberbatch's privileged upbringing and his type-casting as characters from the English gentility.[489] Cumberbatch's received pronunciation and private education at the elite all-boys school, Harrow, was an implicit and contrasting subtext to his visit to the multicultural London state school. As well as being manifested in the figure of Cumberbatch himself, the contrast between the male, racially exclusive impression given of *Hamlet*'s performance history and the Langdon students' performance was further pronounced by the fact that all of the performing Langdon students were from non-white ethnic backgrounds and the group was a mixture of genders. This implicit disparity in background between Cumberbatch and the Langdon students was one which this segment attempted to bridge in order to focalise *Hamlet*'s relevance and, particularly in the case of racial and socio-economic divisions, universality. This bridging was reiterated as, when Cumberbatch entered the school hall, shots were edited to show him immediately greeting the students themselves rather than their adult teachers. Even before their performance, therefore, this section of the short film utilised popular knowledge of Cumberbatch's background to facilitate a reading in which Shakespeare's work traverses boundaries of race, age, and socio-economic background.

In aid of championing Shakespearean universality, the short film further consolidated the idea that the play has resonances with contemporary youth by showing a discussion between Cumberbatch and the students. After the Langdon pupils had performed an interpretive-movement-based, collective rendition of Hamlet's most famous soliloquy, Cumberbatch and the performers discussed the play. Filmed in a handheld style, this round-table discussion was characterised by an over-the-shoulder intimacy. This reflected a very personal discussion in which Cumberbatch fielded emotional responses from the students provoked by their experience of performing the soliloquy. 'I feel sorry for [Hamlet]', one pupil reflected, 'he's lost people, we can relate to that – we've lost people, we know how that

[489] Anna Blackwell discusses this particular brand of typecasting in relation to Cumberbatch's career and his status as a 'Shakespearean' in 'Shakespeare Actors', pp. 88 – 90.

feels.'[490] The inclusion of this response, in which the student identified with Hamlet on the weighty topic of grief, prompted cinema audiences to reflect on the ways in which Shakespeare might provide young people with a particular vocabulary to process their own experiences. Within the use of the collective '*we* can relate to that', the Langdon students were united in their empathy with Shakespeare's Hamlet. The editing of the short film also effected a metaphorical extension of this 'we' to include Cumberbatch himself. As the student concluded ('we know how that feels'), the shot changed from the round-table discussion to show Cumberbatch joining the Langdon pupils for a group photo. Verbally and visually united, this reflection was therefore used to suggest an empathetic bond between the actor and the school pupils, one which was facilitated entirely by *Hamlet*.

As the short film concluded, Cumberbatch's voiceover resumed to reflect that it was *Hamlet's* themes and concerns – that the play indeed was the thing – that had brought him together with the young students. Cumberbatch observed of the performance: 'It was really, really brilliant. It kind of proves a point, to an extent, that this play tackles things that are universal […] and that makes it incredibly accessible.'[491] As Cumberbatch was shown leaving the school in a sequence which mirrored the section's opening shots, the actor's implicit 'story of discovery' was resolved decisively.[492] Through the Langdon pupils and voiced by Cumberbatch, this section of the short film addressed anxieties about Shakespeare's relevance and universality, particularly across implicit cultural and socio-economic gaps. While *Hamlet* was the focus of Cumberbatch's questions of relevance, Shakespeare operated in the subtext of this segment as a playwright whose works give a productive emotional vocabulary to young people even 'four hundred years after' they were written.[493]

Cinema audiences were thereby prompted to engage with a reading of the play as universal and, in Cumberbatch's words, 'accessible' – even in spite of the exclusionary performance history which had been traced in the short film's opening sequence.[494] In this regard, both halves of the short film

[490] *Hamlet,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2015.

[491] Ibid.

[492] Bignell, p. 222.

[493] *Hamlet,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2015.

[494] Ibid.

relied equally upon the construction of Cumberbatch as an actor on the threshold of Shakespearean authority. Where David Tennant's presence in the *Richard II* paratexts was ghosted by prior Shakespearean roles that affirmed him as a voice of authority, this paratext instead used Cumberbatch's relative lack of experience performing Shakespeare to stage an investigative journey into both the prestige of playing Hamlet and the concern of the play's relevance. Drawing on Cumberbatch's liminality between popular television roles and nascent Shakespearean ones (including Hamlet and Richard III), this short film at once effected a reading of *Hamlet* as a high-culture prestige work *and* as an accessible and levelling performance text. Cumberbatch's status on the edge of 'Shakespeareanism' was integral, therefore, to the ways in which this paratext negotiated the boundary between Shakespeare's high cultural cachet and anxieties about his relevance and universality to contemporary audiences.[495]

'Denmark with […] a spin'[496]

Reflecting on Shakespeare's value in contemporary society, Kate McLuskie and Kate Rumbold observe that 'the cultural value of his works increasingly depends upon the added value of performance.'[497] By tracing the role of the star performer in Shakespearean theatre broadcasts, this chapter has sought to focalise their function within one medium of this integral channel by which Shakespeare's cultural value is 'increasingly' measured.[498] Measures have been taken of Shakespeare's reputation as, in the hands of Tennant, an insightful historiographer and, through Cumberbatch, a writer with a unique and enduring relevance. Moreover, from Burton's example in the mid-twentieth century to these actors' involvement in two contemporary broadcasts, this chapter has proven that star performers have long been central not only to the continuation of Shakespeare's cultural cachet, but to

[495] Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 7.

[496] *Hamlet*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 8 June 2016. Note that future short form references to this broadcast will include the year of transmission to differentiate this broadcast from other *Hamlet*s also directed by Robin Lough (see also footnote 394).

[497] McLuskie and Rumbold, *Cultural Value in Twenty-First Century England*, p. 247.

[498] Ibid.

the commercial survival of new performance media. The volume of audiences drawn to the broadcast examples I have considered here suggests the potential for high-profile performers to, in Douglas Lanier's terms, 're-popularize' Shakespeare's works, at least in terms of populous, international audiences.[499] The paratextual space of live theatre broadcasts, these examples have illustrated, is a further platform upon which star performers can engage with their fan communities, exerting their influence to champion the value of new mediums of Shakespearean performance.

However, as both broadcasts I have considered here show, the power of these star performers to re-popularize Shakespeare is frequently at odds with ideas about the playwright's value and cultural status that perpetuate a more exclusionary and inaccessible type of 'high' culture. As far as the involvement of star performers works to bridge the 'great divide' between Shakespeare and popular culture works, broadcasts still capitalise on Shakespeare's elevated cultural cachet as a writer whose works require 'specialist knowledge' to unpack.[500] Interrogating the role of star performers in Shakespearean live theatre broadcast paratexts, therefore, helps inform questions about who Shakespeare is for, and how accessible his works are, in contemporary performance. It is these concerns that prompt the reflection with which I conclude this chapter. These questions of inclusivity and accessibility haunted the RSC Live broadcast of *Hamlet* (2016), which saw lead actor Paapa Essiedu framed as 'a new star' by presenter, Suzy Klein.[501] Klein's pre-show interview with director, Simon Godwin, centred on Essiedu's role in shaping the production's 'West African influence', as well as the hope that the young black actor and majority BAME cast would draw 'a younger, more diverse audience.'[502] This, Godwin reflected, was 'Denmark with a bit of a spin.'[503]

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[499] Douglas Lanier traces the history of 'Unpopularizing Shakespeare' in a chapter of the same title in *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture*, pp. 21-49.

[500] Lanier, p. 18; Blackwell, *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 70.

[501] *Hamlet,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2016.

[502]Ibid; Pascale Aebischer likewise notes that in the broadcast's 'interview with [Simon] Godwin, […] the director spoke at length of his conversations with Paapa Essiedu about his Ghanaian heritage, the general West African influence on the production and the fact that this production was aimed at a young audience', in *Shakespeare, Spectatorship*, p. 158.

[503] *Hamlet,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2016.

The centrality of Essiedu's race and ethnicity to the paratextual framing of the RSC's *Hamlet* provides a stark contrast to the examples I have explored here. Tennant and Cumberbatch's roles in framing their respective broadcasts – and the absence of discourses centring on their race or gender – reflects and reiterates the idea that a racially-exclusive, predominantly male artistic and academic authority serve as the gatekeepers of the playwright's works (adding a racial and gendered dimension to the dichotomy already proposed by M. G. Aune and Douglas Lanier).[504] The Shakespearean theatre broadcast canon is dominated by tragedies – largely on account of NT Live, whose Shakespearean canon is made up of 75% tragedies – meaning that high profile performers who mediate Shakespeare's works in the medium are inhabiting a majority of titular male roles.[505] While there are notable examples within filmed Shakespeares outside of the broadcast medium (and inside from companies such as Black Theatre Live), both NT Live and RSC Live have yet to populate their canons with productions that embrace colour- and gender-blind casting of the playwright's most iconic roles in a way that meets the predominance of white, male actors in these same roles or, as in the case of NT Live, to broadcast more of Shakespeare's traditionally female-dominated comedies.[506] The foregrounding of Essiedu's Ghanaian heritage in the paratextual framing of *Hamlet* reminds us that BAME actors inhabiting

[504] Aune, p. 353; Lanier, p. 45.

[505] For the purposes of this data, I have included *Richard II* as a character-dominated tragic history but have excluded so-called "problem plays". 75% of NT Live's live Shakespeare broadcasts to date have been tragedies, excluding as-live transmissions. While RSC Live's broadcast canon will eventually be representative of all the works featured in Shakespeare's First Folio (plus *Pericles*), thus far 40% of RSC Live's live broadcasts have been tragedies. It might also be noted that the lesser-known tragedy, *Timon of Athens* and the quasi-tragic history *King John*, were broadcast with a delayed transmission and therefore have been excluded from my data. This data is correct as of 30 December 2020.

[506] Jami Rogers addresses the issue of BAME inclusivity in Shakespeare live theatre broadcasts as well as the broadcasting work of Tawala Theatre Company and Black Theatre Live in 'Talawa and Black Theatre Live: 'Creating the Ira Aldridges that Are Remembered' – Live Theatre Broadcast and Historical Record', *Shakespeare and the 'Live'*, pp. 147 – 160. On the lack of female-dominated Shakespearean works in the broadcast canon, this restriction of opportunity for female actors is perhaps attributable to, as Anna Blackwell notes, the tendency for 'female roles to complexity and depth in Shakespeare' not to 'communicate the required skill of the performer to the general public in the same immediate way that major eponymous roles like Lear or Hamlet do', in *Shakespearean Celebrity*, p. 10.

Shakespeare's most iconic roles – particularly in the Shakespearean live theatre broadcast canon – is still an exception, a 'spin' on the presumed norm of Shakespearean performance history.[507]

Like the characterisation of Shakespeare's works as 'high' culture, this racially and gender-exclusionary performance history has the potential to be adapted and reshaped by new performance mediums such as live theatre broadcasts. Douglas Lanier notes that Shakespeare's 'special status in the literary canon', far from being innate, 'springs from a complex history of appropriation and reappropriation.'[508] Drawing on fifty years of high-profile performers, this chapter has highlighted the role contemporary star actors play in broadcast paratexts as part of this 'complex history', and reflected on the role they could come to play in its future.[509] It has also focalised the role of audiences in shaping these processes that redefine Shakespeare's continuing place in contemporary culture. It remains to be seen how Shakespeare's cultural value and elevated status will continue to mutate and shift in the hands of more 'new star[s]' who bring his works to new audiences and, indeed, in the creative work of those audiences themselves.[510]

[507] *Hamlet,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2016.

[508] Lanier, p. 21.

[509] Ibid.

[510] *Hamlet,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough, 2016.

Canonicity

> *Nobody's ever read Timon of Athens. Even Shakespeare didn't read Timon of Athens – and he wrote it.*[511]

So begins a review of the NT's 2012 production of *Timon of Athens*. The Evening Standard's anonymous reviewer names their 'Tragedy lecturer at university' as the source of this 'tongue in cheek' claim.[512] *Timon*'s status as a marginal work in the canon is the butt of this particular joke: however, the idea that not even Shakespeare read a play of his own writing also relies on certain assumptions about the playwright's artistic merit. Though the review progresses with praise for the topicality of the play ('[i]t's as if Shakespeare recently popped into the National for a script meeting'), emphasising the status of *Timon* as a largely under-read work of Shakespeare's infers a value judgement when compared with plays which are frequently performed and approved for secondary school curricula.[513] Shakespeare's estrangement from his lesser known work here reiterates the belief that 'Shakespeare' is his own marker of quality and elevated creative ability. This joke therefore seeks not only to imagine a world in which Shakespeare did not read his 'rarely performed and little loved' work, but also one in which it does not 'belong' to the playwright we know and revere.[514]

This tension between popular ideas held of Shakespeare's value and the challenges to these ideas presented by his marginal works is at the heart of this chapter. As the quotation above suggests, the power of '"Shakespeare" […] to represent a marker of high cultural value' undoubtedly influences the 'horizon(s) of expectation' that cinema audiences bring to live theatre broadcasts.[515] Attending to

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[511] 'Timon of Athens, Olivier Theatre (National) – review', *Evening Standard*, 18 July 2012 <https://www.standard.co.uk/go/london/theatre/timon-of-athens-olivier-theatre-national-review-7956478.html> [accessed 30 March 2020].

[512] Ibid.

[513] Ibid.

[514] Ibid.

[515] McLuskie and Rumbold, *Cultural Value in Twenty-First Century England*, p. 1; Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 166. My understanding of 'Shakespearean' as a marker of elevated quality and prestige is informed by a number of studies on the topic. Useful here are those which approach the idea of Shakespeare's cultural value to contemporary audiences, principally Kate McLuskie and Kate Rumbold, *Cultural Value;* and the collected essays

the ways in which broadcasting theatre companies frame Shakespeare's lesser-performed plays, I explore the use of live theatre broadcast paratexts as a way of regulating narratives about Shakespeare's cultural value in the light of plays that threaten to decentre the playwright. In defining these plays as marginal, I have drawn from the performance histories of the National Theatre and the RSC, from the treatments of these works in literary critical history, and from the programming of the Shakespearean live theatre broadcast canon thus far.[516]

Broadcasts from NT Live and RSC Live offer obvious examples of a disproportion in broadcast programming that suggests which are Shakespeare's most popular and ubiquitous plays. For example, as of 2020 there are five *King Lear*s for every *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and four *Macbeth*s for every *All's Well that Ends Well*. Beyond this statistical division, however, I will also uncover the ways in which broadcast paratexts themselves signal the marginality of the performed play – just as one could not read the *Evening Standard*'s review of *Timon* without registering the play's reputation for obscurity.[517] This chapter therefore addresses crucial questions that emerge from the abundant canon of Shakespearean live theatre broadcasts: how are Shakespeare's lesser-known works mediated for cinema audiences, and what does this mediating effort reveal about the fixity of Shakespeare's contemporary cultural value? Ultimately, what can the framing of these plays on the margins of

in *Shakespeare's Cultural Capital: His Economic Impact from the Sixteenth to the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Dominic Shellard and Siobhan Keenan (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

[516] The data I use to propose 'marginal' plays in this context uses a sample of roughly sixty years in the performance histories of the National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company. I have collated the Shakespeare plays most frequently performed by these institutions, excluding touring productions and revivals. Data for the RSC was collected using Colin Chambers' appendix to *Inside the Royal Shakespeare Company*, pp. 192-231, which documents productions mounted by the company between the years 1960-2003. Data to complete the period up until the end of 2018 was collected by me using the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Archives Online, <http://collections.shakespeare.org.uk/search/rsc-performances> [accessed 3 November 2017]. Data on the National Theatre's performance history was also collected by me using the National Theatre Archive Online, <http://catalogue.nationaltheatre.org.uk/CalmView/How.aspx> [accessed 1 November 2017]. This data set is not exhaustive, nor does it aim to represent anything broader than trends in these two major theatre companies.

[517] 'Timon of Athens, Olivier Theatre (National) – review', *Evening Standard*.

Shakespeare's popular canon tell us about the elevated status and assumptions upon which the centre of the canon rests?

The majority of examples within this chapter are from RSC Live, whose canon reflects Gregory Doran's pledge to 'broadcas[t] and recor[d] each' of 'the thirty-six First Folio plays plus *Pericles*.'[518] While I have considered this project in Part I of this thesis, particularly in relation to RSC Live's paratextual consistency, it is in this chapter that the implications of Doran's project will be felt in the diversity of the company's broadcast works. As of the end of 2020, RSC Live has thus far streamed twenty-seven of a projected thirty-seven plays, a number of which had only previously been staged by the company a handful of times. A consequence of Doran's Folio project and the connected broadcasting plans is that the present broadcast canon, as well as the completed project, is not nor will not be representative of the company's most frequently staged plays. For example, the RSC's performance history features nineteen productions of *Romeo and Juliet*, a play that appears once in their broadcast canon. By comparison, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which was broadcast in 2014, had not been performed on the mainstage RST in forty-five years.[519] Particularly in a comprehensive canonising project such as RSC Live's, the framing of these lesser-performed works is apt to position them, in a way analogous to Peter Kirwan's observation of the plays in the so-called 'Shakespeare Apocrypha', as a 'deeply problematic group […] tying Shakespeare to a range of collaborators, genres, themes and sensibilities that pollute the purity of the approved canon.'[520] Moreover, Kirwan's identification of an 'approved canon' points us towards the role of projects such as Doran's in consolidating this canon, setting limits that seem to arbitrarily dictate *Pericles* as worthy of inclusion despite its absence from the First Folio – but not *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (or indeed, apocryphal works) on the same grounds.[521]

[518] Wyver, *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company*, p. 159 – 60.

[519] As outlined in footnote 513, data on the RSC's performance history was collected using Colin Chamber's appendix to *Inside the Royal Shakespeare Company*, pp. 192-231. Data from 2004 -2018 inclusive was compiled by me, using the RSC's online performance archive held by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

[520] Peter Kirwan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Apocrypha: Negotiating the Boundaries of the Dramatic Canon* (Cambridge: CUP, 2015), p. 5.

[521] Ibid.

If performance repertoires are one way to delineate what these major theatrical institutions set as the limits of Shakespeare's 'approved canon', then the broadcast paratexts produced by them work to both mediate unfamiliarity at the edges of this canon and to bring popular ideas of the playwright's reputation in line with works which – by virtue of their 'disreputable provenance' and/or 'doubtful aesthetic merit' – seem to undermine it.[522] The work of broadcast paratexts in framing these lesser-performed works is perhaps best understood through Genette's model of the printed preface. The preface, Genette argues, 'has as its chief function to *ensure that the text is read properly*.'[523] While the commercial imperative to have a broadcast viewed – and a book read – is somewhat complicated in that both products are already purchased by the time that the preface or a broadcast paratext is encountered, Genette argues that the affirmations of the preface act as 'value enhancement[s].' [524] Genette elaborates, in terms which resonate with the tone of broadcasts I will consider in this chapter: 'here it is no longer precisely a matter of attracting the reader [to buy the book] […] but of hanging onto him [sic] with a typically rhetorical apparatus of persuasion.'[525]

The paratextual prerogative to offer value enhancements and to employ an 'apparatus of persuasion' is important to the broadcasts I consider here, many of which are not bolstered by the cultural cachet of a familiar name or well-populated performance history.[526] In this regard, the role of the broadcast company and the use of these paratexts as part of their institutional dramaturgy is paramount. John Wyver notes that broadcasts have become 'increasingly significant to the RSC's relationship with its audiences' and this is perhaps most true in the case of broadcasts which do not carry the same presumed marker of quality that plays such as *Hamlet* or *Romeo and Juliet* do.[527] The paucity of performances of canonically marginal plays means that these broadcasts are likely to be a cinema viewer's first and perhaps their only encounter with a particular work, giving these productions

[522] Kirwan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Apocrypha*, p. 40; p. 43.

[523] Genette, p.197, emphasis original.

[524] Ibid, p. 201.

[525] Ibid, p. 198

[526] Ibid, p. 201.

[527] Wyver, *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company*, p. 183.

the potential to form definitive experiences for these audiences.[528] In addressing cinema audiences watching a Shakespeare play for the first time – a rare chance to see what Mark Lawson calls a '"new" play' of Shakespeare's – these prefatory thresholds offer broadcasting theatre companies the opportunity to redefine what Shakespeare means in relation not only to his most famous works, but also to his most obscure.[529]

The specific requirements of framing a work that is presumed to be unfamiliar to cinema audiences is a particular focus of my first line of enquiry in this chapter. I begin by considering how the anxiety of unfamiliar narratives is mediated through expository paratexts. Exploring the ways in which Shakespeare's lesser-known plays are explained and their narratives established for cinema audiences, I reflect on how far these broadcasts rely on the assumed cultural ubiquity and famous stage images of Shakespeare's more popular works. As the broadcasts featured here show, visual exposition and utilising the filmic potential of the live theatre broadcast is a valuable means by which the anxiety of unfamiliar narratives is countered for cinema audiences. Building upon Peter Holland's work on Shakespearean opening scenes, I contend that these expository paratexts facilitate and invite a different mode of engagement from cinema audiences than is demanded when viewing one of Shakespeare's most frequently performed and well-known plays.[530] This unique mode of engagement poses an interesting division in the live theatre broadcast canon, which sets the familiarity and ubiquity of a handful of Shakespeare's play on a spectrum of opposition to these lesser-performed works.

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[528] This is further exacerbated by the reach of these broadcasts: with RSC Live and NT Live streaming to regions which may not have a large-scale professional theatre or are unlikely to produce any Shakespeare play which is not commercially tried and tested. Eoin Price's observation on the performances of Shakespeare's contemporaries is equally apt for Shakespeare's own marginal works here: 'Given the relative infrequency with which most not-Shakespeare plays are performed, expectations cultivated for a production of an early modern play and the judgements made about that production can come to define the play for decades', in 'Framing Not-Shakespearean Performance', *The Arden Research Handbook to Shakespeare and Contemporary Performance*, edited by Peter Kirwan and Kathyrn Prince (London: Bloomsbury, forthcoming 2021), p. 153.

[529] Mark Lawson, 'Shakespeare's plays – 35 down, one to go', *Guardian*, 29 August 2014 <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/aug/29/shakespeare-plays-chekov-ibsen-mark-lawson> [accessed 17 November 2017].

[530] Holland, pp. 14 – 31.

Moving from paratexts that establish the narrative of a work, in the following section I focus on paratexts that propose narratives of how these works came into being. As in Chapter Four, in which a reading of locations in *2 Henry IV* was used to imagine Shakespeare's writing of the play, the examples I explore here show how lesser-known plays are framed in the context of extraordinary conditions of composition. I term these stories 'provenance narratives', a phrase that encompasses their imaginative potential while also suggesting the extent to which these images of Shakespeare at work are used to reflect or 'explain' apparent artistic deficiencies through the provenance of these lesser-performed plays. By presenting these marginal works as the result of Shakespeare working under creative 'restrictions', these broadcasts implicitly construct a narrative in which Shakespeare's more canonically central works are tied to traditional ideas of the playwright working alone and free from the creative conditions that were common in the early modern commercial theatre. In these examples, as in many others, a '*proper*' reading of a lesser-performed work is one that seeks to protect and affirm Shakespeare's elevated cultural capital and artistic reputation as an 'all-controlling Author.'[531]

In the final section, I consider examples in which the marginal status of a play is argued to be the its biggest 'value enhancement.'[532] Rather than seeking to assuage the anxiety of marginality, the broadcasts considered in this section framed their lesser-known works as novel opportunities freed from the weight of theatrical precedent that burdens Shakespeare's more popular works. Drawing on and questioning critical ideas of 'not-Shakespeare', I contend that the broadcasts in this section allow for new reflections on how the appeal of Shakespeare's marginal works is framed in relation to those of his contemporaries and to his own broader corpus.[533] These final examples test the extent to which certain

[531] Genette, p. 197, emphasis original; Kirwan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Apocrypha*, p. 7.

[532] Genette, p. 201.

[533] My use of this term is informed by Susan Bennett's study of Jacobean aesthetics in *Performing Nostalgia: Shifting Shakespeare and the Contemporary Past* (London: Routledge Press, 1996), as well Pascale Aebischer and Kathryn Prince's introductory exploration of the performance tradition of works by Shakespeare's contemporaries in Aebischer and Prince, 'Introduction', *Performing Early Modern Drama Today*, edited by Pascale Aebischer and Kathryn Prince (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), pp. 1 – 16. Also influential have been studies which have applied the term 'not-Shakespeare' directly to performances on stage and in film, notably Peter Kirwan, 'Not Shakespeare and the Shakespearean Ghost', *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and*

lesser performed works are adopted as part of Shakespeare's cultural cachet, rather than a challenge to it. Leading from these final examples to consider the role of broadcast paratexts in this chapter as a whole, I highlight the need to extend beyond the critical vocabulary and the conceptual appeal of not-Shakespeare. These broadcasts, I propose, are best understood when considered in terms which appreciate their framing of the plays as inhabiting a uniquely paradoxical position of both canonical and marginal, sanctioned and subversive, Shakespearean and distinctly unShakespearean.

Exposition

In a pre-recorded interview for the RSC Live broadcast of *Cymbeline* (2016), director Melly Still noted the complexity of the play's first scene. Stumbling to express the difficulty of *Cymbeline*'s narrative threads without potentially disheartening cinema viewers, Still settled on: 'It's got the worst twenty – first few minutes of – Shakespeare's really hard anyway.'[534] Still's anxiety, that *Cymbeline*'s unfamiliarity and complex opening scene could render the play's own exposition inaccessible to modern audiences, is shared in varying degrees by a number of other Shakespearean live theatre broadcasts. In what follows, I consider *Cymbeline* and RSC Live's broadcast of *Titus Andronicus* (2017) as productions that were framed with particular attention to narrative exposition. While expository paratexts are frequently found across the Shakespearean live theatre broadcast canon, these two examples show how broadcast paratexts can be used to prompt a different mode of engagement from cinema audiences, one that attempted to mediate the unfamiliarity of these plays.

Still's pre-recorded interview saw her elaborate on the concern that the play's convoluted narrative structure is a barrier for modern audiences: 'You've got all this huge exposition […] and I've tried to make it really, really clear. We've got photographs and diagrams […] to make it as clear as possible.'[535] Here, the paratextual space of the broadcast allowed Still to direct the attention of cinema

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Performance, edited by James C. Bulman (Oxford: OUP, 2017), pp. 87 – 103; Eoin Price, 'Framing Not-Shakespeare'; and Jenny Sager, 'Not Shakespeare: Early Modern Drama and Film', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 32. 1 (Spring 2014), pp. 1 – 10.

[534] *Cymbeline*, directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 28 September 2016.

[535] Ibid.

audiences to specific expository elements of the production. Moreover, the emphasis on her own efforts to make the opening scene 'really, really clear' invited cinema audiences to read this opening scene with a greater interpretive attention than they might have without this paratext. Peter Holland highlights how this shift in the engagement of cinema spectators may already be inherent to the viewing of Shakespeare's lesser-known plays, using an apt example: '[F]amliarity or lack of,' Holland notes, 'can transform the nature of attention, of what is being watched and what is being watched for: seeing *Hamlet* for the 85th time is radically different from seeing, say, *Cymbeline* for the first time.'[536] This 'transform[ed] nature of attention' mirrors that anticipated by Still, whose direction of the cinema audience's focus to the comprehension of specific performance elements ('photographs and diagrams') acted as a kind of verbal manicule.

It is interesting to consider this direction to cinema audiences not in the context of an assumption that their skills of apprehension are lacking when compared to the production's in-theatre audiences, but in the context of an anxiety about the potentially reduced agency of Still as theatre director in a performance mediated by RSC Live's broadcast team. Still's direction of the production would likely have been tailored to focus the in-house audience's attention on the 'photographs and diagrams' that appeared on stage (the elements referenced by Still were projected onto the RST's upstage wall) to clarify the play's plot.[537] However, emphasising these elements to cinema audiences hints at a concern that broadcast cameras may obscure or rush past them – despite the fact that camera cue scripts are typically assembled as a collaborative effort between the theatre and broadcast directors.[538] By drawing attention to the visual performance elements of the opening scene, Still

[536] Holland, p. 24.

[537] *Cymbeline*, directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward.

[538] John Wyver has considered the relative agency of broadcast directors and theatre directors in producing camera scripts from his own position as Producer of *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon,* in '"All the Trimmings?"', pp. 104 – 20; and 'Screening the RSC Stage', pp. 286 – 302. In the latter, Wyver notes that it is standard practice for RSC Live broadcast camera scripts to be created in collaboration with the theatre director, noting that the 'primacy of the stage production was fundamental to every aspect of the 2014 broadcasts', p. 293. Pascale Aebischer also discusses this collaborative process in relation to the RSC Live broadcast of *Hamlet* (2015) in *Shakespeare, Spectatorship,* pp. 149 – 156.

appeared to anticipate that these staging elements might lose their expository power when seen in the background of close-up shots of actors, or perhaps when skimmed over in panning shots of the stage.[539] Still's attempt to direct audience attention to areas of *Cymbeline*'s opening scene that broadcast cameras might gloss over, therefore, illustrates an underlying assumption that the filmic mediation of the staging may inhibit, rather than benefit, the clarity of the stage production.

This broadcast does, however, offer a significant example in which the mediation of the camera benefitted and supplemented the expository work done by the production. Indeed, the *Cymbeline* broadcast presents a rare case in which the paratextual makeup of the broadcast included a digital performance (in this case, a very short pre-show film) which was also part of the main production, troubling the boundaries between the production as 'text', and the broadcast's framing as 'paratext.' It may therefore be useful to think of this particular example, as I consider in the introduction to this thesis, more in terms of a Derridean *parergon* than a paratext, that which 'both frames *and inhabits* the text.'[540] The short film inhabited the stage production insofar as it was projected onto the vast back wall of the RST stage during the pre-set action, playing ahead of the play's opening lines whilst audience members assembled and took their seats. However, it also framed the performance both in this capacity and as a broadcast paratext, as the footage was visible in a number of shots from within the auditorium during the broadcast's opening advertising slides and was then included in full for cinema audiences as a type of pre-show short film.

As the slides drew to a close, this film took centre stage and occupied its own dedicated and interpretively significant space as a paratext for cinema audiences. Overlaid with choral music, the

[539] Bernadette Cochrane and Frances Bonner recall the NT Live broadcast of *Travelling Light*, in which cinema audiences received a particularly mediated view of that production's integrated technological elements ('movies projected onto a wall […] on [a] cyclorama'): 'Adapted for NT Live cinema audiences it showed either Maurice in close-up (no cyclorama), or a full screen, direct feed of the cyclorama image, negating Maurice's presence and rendering him merely a voice-over. The interaction between actor and screen was completely lost.' In 'Screening from the Met, the NT, or the House: What Changes with the Live Relay', *Adaptation,* 7. 2 (2014), pp. 121 – 133, p. 127.

[540] For my own consideration of terms, see pp. 12 – 14. Smith and Wilkinson, *Renaissance Paratexts*, p. 7, emphasis added; Newman, pp. 313 – 317.

grainy-quality footage showed two young children (a boy and a girl) running towards the handheld camera, playing with toy swords and shields, and interacting with a couple whose faces remained obscured from view. Clearly denoting a family, the four figures embraced before the children were given toy crowns. The narrative suggested within this short film worked to supplement the exposition of *Cymbeline*'s opening scene, in which two Gentlemen recall the kidnapping of Cymbeline's heirs 'some twenty years' before the action of the play begins.[541] Particularly when linked with this production's casting of *Cymbeline's* lost princes (who were re-gendered to a prince and a princess, played by James Cooney and Natalie Simpson), this short film worked to establish the early narrative pre-history for the play and to pre-emptively answer the Second Gentleman's question, 'is [Innogen] sole child to th'King?'[542] There were a number of differences between the ways in which this film was experienced by in-theatre audiences and by cinema audiences which relate directly to its role within the broadcast. While theatre audiences were also subject to the film's layers of symbolism (the crowns in particular denoting the status of the royal children), cinema audiences were given a further interpretive frame in the form of the music that accompanied this film in its role as a paratext (and which was absent from the film's use in the theatrical production). This mournful choral song set a tone for the film that was uniquely experienced by cinema viewers, who were prompted to read the footage in a sombre context. In this regard, the expository function of the short film was heightened for cinema audiences who, although largely experiencing the film detached from the wider context and set design of the RST stage, were nonetheless invited to read the family scene as a sad memory.

What is significant for the use of this short film within the broadcast is that its expository storytelling relied heavily on filmic techniques. The footage was characterised as pre-history through its grainy, aged quality (the film was edited with VHS-style tracking lines overlaid, which are the waves of distorted image which travel up the frame on aged video tapes). This emphasis on the action as pre-recorded and thereby historical would have been all the more pronounced in the broadcast, in which transitions between the live and the recorded are often signalled explicitly and hold their own

[541] William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline,* edited by Roger Warren (Oxford: OUP, 1998), I.1.63.

[542] Ibid, I.1.56.

interpretive weight. Moreover, the content of the footage alluded to home videos through its handheld style and particular attention to the young children playing. Characterised as a home video, this filmic allusion established the familial relationships between the characters, further inviting audiences to construct a narrative pre-history which would later involve the principal figures of the play. Within the broadcast, this film interacted with Still's direction for cinema audiences to watch out for 'photographs and diagrams', incorporating these theatrical texts into the paratextual makeup of the broadcast in a way that significantly altered the manner of engagement demanded from cinema audiences.[543] If, as Peter Holland notes, the opening of Shakespeare's plays 'ha[ve] to lure us into its fictive world, […] enable us to use its framing to approach its events', here the framing offered by *Cymbeline*'s opening scene was itself pre-emptively framed using the paratextual appropriation and adaptation of theatrical elements.[544]

While the effort of exposition in the *Cymbeline* broadcast bubbled openly to the surface in the face of anxieties about the play's narrative complexity, the later broadcast of *Titus Andronicus* offers a contrasting example.[545] Similar methods were used in this broadcast, which likewise foregrounded visual exposition and borrowed from performance elements of the theatrical production as well as filmic conventions in the form of a representational montage.[546] *Titus* presents an interesting example of this common RSC Live convention for the way in which it anticipated a particular level of (un)familiarity with the play from cinema audiences. Rather than explicitly establishing narrative threads as in the *Cymbeline* broadcast, *Titus* was framed to give structure and detail to the play's already infamous acts of violence. In Susan Bennett's terms, this broadcast anticipated cinema audiences for whom the play's bloody acts were already within their 'horizon(s) of expectations.'[547] The function of the broadcast

[543] *Cymbeline,* directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward.

[544] Holland, p. 17.

[545] *Titus Andronicus*, directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 9 August 2017.

[546] For my discussion of RSC Live montages, see Part I of this thesis, pp. 39 – 49.

[547] Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, p. 166.

paratexts was to arrange these into a narrative order and attribute them to different characters and contexts within the play, fleshing out the action of *Titus* around a series of violent spectacles.

This framing of *Titus*'s violence is perhaps best understood in the context of the play's critical and recent performance history. Jonathan Bate notes that critics have historically attempted to 'excise *Titus* from the canon. [Eighteenth-century critics] had to make the excision because they thought it was a bad play […] for 'bad', read principally, though not exclusively, indecorous.'[548] In the over twenty-year gap between Bate's editing of the Arden edition of *Titus* and the publication of his revised edition, however, the play has experienced something of a rehabilitation on the stage and screen.[549] Though *Titus* had enjoyed a number of productions and revivals prior to RSC Live's broadcast in 2017, the broadcast still anticipated that cinema audiences would be more familiar with the play's 'indecorous' violent iconography than with its broader narrative structure.[550] This was a presumption confirmed by director Blanche McIntyre in a pre-show interview to the broadcast, in which she argued that 'because [*Titus*] is so blood-thirsty […this] tends often to be the only thing that people know about the play.'[551]

In this context, the broadcast's representational montage can be seen to give a number of expository frames around which the presumably familiar acts of violence were arranged. The function of this montage, unlike other uses of the trope in the RSC Live canon, seemed explicitly to counter potential misconceptions about the play which would later be identified by MacIntyre. Overlaid with music featured in the production, and filmed under a moving dappled light, this montage used props as

[548] Jonathan Bate, 'Introduction'. *Titus Andronicus*, 3rd edn., (London: Arden Routledge Press, 1995), pp. 1-122, p. 80.

[549] Bate's revised edition of *Titus* features a discussion of Julie Taymor's 1999 film, *Titus*: in, Jonathan Bate, 'Introduction', *Titus Andronicus*, Revised 3rd edn., (London: Arden Bloomsbury, 2018), pp. 157 – 162.

[550] The most recent stage history of the play is dominated by Shakespeare's Globe and the RSC. The former theatre hosted the popular revival of Lucy Bailey's 2006 production, which was staged (and filmed for the Globe Player) in 2014. A year prior, the play was also seen in the RSC's Swan Theatre in a production directed by Michael Fentiman. For a more comprehensive discussion of the play's performances from early staging possibilities to early twenty-first century on stage, see Bate, Revised 3rd edn. (2018), pp. 36 – 68; for Julie Taymor's acclaimed film, pp. 157- 162; and for international stagings, pp. 147 – 157; Bate, 3rd edn (1995), p. 80.

[551] *Titus Andronicus*, directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward.

its foremost visual language. The progression of images was as follows: a military peaked cap with a sword handle visible to the left; a bouquet of red and white roses lying flat with petals scattered around; two blue and yellow striped beach towels with sunglasses; a pair of daggers, one taped with a cloth inscribed with Latin; a belt resting on a pair of metal handcuffs; a large surgical saw resting on gauze, with a kidney bowl and forceps in the background; and finally an oversized pie with a salt grinder and salad bowl in the foreground.[552] The variety in these shots established a number of *Titus*'s themes and contexts, some more directly than others. For example, while the closing pie shot referenced the play's infamous plot conclusion (in which Titus wreaks revenge on Tamora by making her eat the bodies of her two sons whom he has baked into a pie), the beach towels and sunglasses were a veiled reference to the flippant luxuriating of Chiron and Demetrius, who in the production were seen emerging from a "pool" underneath the stage at the start of act four, scene two.

For cinema audiences familiar with *Titus*'s multiple amputations (or indeed those who knew them only by the play's reputation), the choice of props would have no doubt resonated as an ironically manual one – particularly disembodied from the actors whose hands, limbs and bodies are used to animate them. Just as narrative complexity became the defining feature of *Cymbeline*¸ the focus on props in the framing of *Titus* foregrounded violent acts as the play's dominant mode of communication. Despite being rendered inanimate in the still-life style arrangement of the representational montage, these props performed expository work by establishing a narrative of violent acts interacting with each other which mirrored the progression of action in the play. Opening with the military context of Titus' return to Rome (signified by the peaked cap and sword), this montage then implicitly established the acts of sexual violence (the discarded bouquet of roses would later mirror the floral and arboreal language through which Marcus describes Lavinia[553]) that prompt the Andronici's revenge (the Latin-inscribed daggers which would later be delivered by young Lucius) and its eventual culmination (the handcuffs representing the retributive justice delivered upon Aaron, and the pie signalling the play's

[552] *Titus Andronicus*, directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward.

[553] Following Lavinia's rape and mutilation, characters repeatedly describe her body in Ovidian terms that evoke trees, flowers, branches. Marcus's speech in II.4. features perhaps the most concentrated examples (l. 11 – 57). In William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, edited by Eugene M. Waith (Oxford: OUP, 1984).

conclusion). The ordering of the images, therefore, anticipated and to some extent relayed the narrative of the play itself.

This expository sequence, like the short film from *Cymbeline*, relied upon the cinema audiences' familiarity with the filmic conventions of montage. In representing the play's narrative through a sequence of individual images, this montage exemplified the function of the trope in which each 'shot gain[s] meaning […] only relationally, as part of a larger system.'[554] For cinema audiences unfamiliar with the narrative detail of *Titus*, the montage provided an interpretive foundation which would only be activated and meaningful through their viewing of the same props in the ensuing performance. It thereby invited cinema audiences into the mode of viewing identified by Holland, with a heightened awareness of 'what is being watched and what is being watched for.'[555] That is to say, framing the play using these props prompted cinema audiences to anticipate and pay close attention to their individual contexts, giving a pre-emptive narrative basis for *Titus*'s acts of violence.

The expository paratexts in these two broadcasts anticipated varying levels of familiarity with these works. Directing cinema audiences towards narrative moments, props, and future stage images all implicated these plays as requiring what Holland calls a 'transformed nature of attention.'[556] While the paratexts to *Cymbeline* were at pains to supplement the play's own expository scene, in *Titus* the representational montage interacted with preconceived ideas about the play's violent action that were anticipated as being held by cinema audiences. The work of these broadcasts illustrated the extent to which such narrative entry points were deemed necessary for a '*proper*' reading of the play and the production.[557] This offers a stark contrast to some of Shakespeare's most frequently performed plays, whose stage images and the narratives they communicate often circulate widely and continually in the cultural imagination (for example, the sequence discussed in the previous chapter in which the NT Live *Hamlet* [2015] was framed by a succession of famous actors each holding the skull of Yorick and its

[554] Stam, p. 38.

[555] Holland, p. 24.

[556] Ibid.

[557] Genette, p. 197, emphasis original.

ability to instantly evoke the wider narrative of the play). These iconic stage images form what Sally Barnden calls 'the familiar visual clichés of Shakespearean iconography', a phrase that denotes their relation not only to the work from which they are taken but to the cultural cachet of the playwright himself.[558]

By comparison, the unfamiliarity that was anticipated in relation to these plays argues them to be outside of this meaning-making system, with perhaps the pie image in *Titus* presenting a borderline example of an image that is beginning to circulate and create Shakespearean meaning independent of the work. The framing of *Titus* shows these works to be in flux, with the potential for once marginalised and denounced works to ascend on a sliding scale towards the familiarity anticipated of Shakespeare's more canonically central works. Attending to the expository work of these broadcasts, therefore, allows us to better understand which Shakespearean narratives are anticipated to be culturally ubiquitous for RSC Live audiences in particular, and how the value of works outside of this ubiquity is mediated. Contrasting the assumed familiarity of Shakespeare's most frequently performed works, these broadcasts illustrate the negotiations of what 'Shakespearean' narratives mean to cinema audiences along the lines of familiar versus unfamiliar narratives and the modes of viewing that accompany these.

Composition

The role of broadcast paratexts in defining the value of the Shakespearean becomes all the more pronounced when we consider how narratives of the plays' composition are used to frame lesser-performed plays. These provenance narratives typically address anxieties around works which seem to 'fall short of [Shakespeare's] genuine, canonical work' and, in this regard, often echo critical attitudes which have sought to estrange these plays from more aesthetically respected works in Shakespeare's canon.[559] Likewise, the impulse to read the playwright's creative process through the quality of his

[558] Barnden, p. 7.

[559] James Purkis, 'Apocryphal Thinking, or, Deuterocanonical Shakespeare', *Shakespeare*, 13. 4 (2017), pp. 292 – 308, p. 296.

marginal works links to a rich history of attaching Shakespearean biography to Shakespeare bibliography, with 'the assumption that the works can be explained through the life' and vice versa.[560]

The examples I explore each propose a different artistic condition as having negatively influenced Shakespeare's creative process: moving from the legend that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (RSC Live, 2018) was written for royal commission to Shakespeare and Thomas Middleton's collaborative composition of *Timon of Athens* (NT Live, 2012). The preoccupation with the creative origins of these plays rather than solely their historical contexts, one which is often wholly absent from broadcasts of Shakespeare's more popular plays, suggests the latent anxiety that an explanation of their composition is necessary to ensure a '*proper*' reading of these works.[561] Moreover, the provenance narratives offered by these broadcasts not only reflect on the aesthetic reputation of the plays they frame but, as I demonstrate, champion a dangerously simplistic analogy between Shakespeare's more canonically central works and prevalent representations of the playwright as a sole-author genius.[562]

The Merry Wives of Windsor (2018) was broadcast with a live interview between Suzy Klein and the production's director, Fiona Laird. During their exchange, Laird reflected that her governing notion in directing the play had been that *Merry Wives* was written as a commission piece for Elizabeth I 'in about two weeks.'[563] The premise is one that has a grounding in the play's eighteenth-century

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[560] Adam G. Hooks, *Selling Shakespeare: Biography, Bibliography and the Book Trade* (Cambridge, CUP, 2016), p. 3.

[561] Genette, p. 197, emphasis original.

[562] Critics who have considered the construction of Shakespeare as an isolated genius are too many to number in full here. However, a selection of works have influenced my thinking on the topic in the context of this chapter, particularly the textual and historical foci of Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet*; De Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*; Depledge, *Shakespeare's Rise to Cultural Prominence*; and Emma Depledge and Peter Kirwan, eds. *Canonising Shakespeare: Stationers and the Book Trade, 1640 – 1740* (Cambridge: CUP, 2017). Peter Kirwan has also considered the representation of Shakespeare's contemporaries in *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) and *Anonymous* (2011), commenting on how there are both comparatively defined by, and define, these works' representation of Shakespeare in '"You have no voice!": Constructing Reputation through Contemporaries in the Shakespeare Biopic', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 32. 1 (Spring 2014), pp. 11 – 26.

[563] *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, directed for the screen by Dewi Humphreys, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 19 September 2018. The theory that the play was written

performance history.[564] As T. W. Craik records, the idea was first put forward in an adaptation by John Dennis entitled *The Comic Gallant* (1702), in the dedication to which Dennis claims that Elizabeth I '"commanded [*Merry Wives*] to be finished in fourteen days."'[565] While a detailed exploration of the truth of this claim is beyond the interest of this present argument, it is important to note that this provenance narrative has been largely discredited in critical treatments of the play.[566] The disreputable nature of this myth is significant for the way it was discussed by Laird and Klein as a verified context for the play and, more importantly, for the way in which this provenance narrative was evoked in the context of the *Merry Wives* as an apparent artistic failure.

As Laird elaborated on the notion that the play was written to commission, this narrative was continually used to reflect an aesthetic judgement, culminating in her assessment that:

> We can't get Shakespeare on the phone and ask him exactly, but we can piece together – I think it was written to commission. It was obviously written very quickly […] I think he actually did the 1599 equivalent of calling his friend who did the funny French accent and his friend who did the funny Welsh accent and […] put it together as a royal entertainment really quickly.[567]

The link created between the play's reputed conditions of composition and its (apparently lacking) aesthetic merit here is telling. Laird's statement that *Merry Wives* was '*obviously* written very quickly' implies that the play's position below the assumed standard of a Shakespearean work can only be explained by the playwright working under immense time pressure.[568] Cinema audiences were prompted to view the play that they had nonetheless paid to see as, in Klein's later response, 'a very scrappily put together thing.'[569] Both Klein and Laird, therefore, constructed an impression of the play

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to commission for Elizabeth is considered by T.W. Craik in his introduction to the Oxford edition, p. 4-5. T.W. Craik, 'Introduction', *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Oxford: OUP: 1990), pp. 1 – 72.

[564] Ibid.

[565] Dennis, qtd. in T.W. Craik, 'Introduction', p. 4.

[566] Craik notes that 'though we are not compelled to reject the tradition, […] we are by no means compelled to accept it as a true account of the play's origin', in 'Introduction', p. 5.

[567] *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* directed for the screen by Dewi Humphreys.

[568] Ibid, emphasis added.

[569] Ibid.

as hastily written, imposing a negative artistic judgement whilst also rooting the cause of this judgement in conditions apparently beyond Shakespeare's control (and consequently any deficiencies in the production were also rendered beyond the director's control).

Laird's focus on the idea of the play as a 'royal entertainment' commissioned specifically by Elizabeth I (a theory that also manifested in an added induction to the show, which staged Elizabeth's request to Shakespeare) also indulged in a further myth surrounding the playwright.[570] Representations of Shakespeare meeting Elizabeth I are familiar from film and television depictions, including *Shakespeare in Love* (dir. John Madden, 1998) and more recently *Upstart Crow: A Christmas Crow* (dir. Richard Boden, 2017).[571] However, Michael Dobson and Nicola J. Watson highlight that the myth of these two iconic figures meeting has a basis in the age in which John Dennis first published the claim, during the eighteenth century's 'emerging cult of Shakespeare.'[572] As Dobson and Watson assert, 'the notion of Gloriana not just chatting familiarly with a common player but designing his most Merrie England comedy and personally supervising its composition is far too consonant with the needs and desires of eighteenth-century cultural nationalism to be true.'[573]

The cultural context within which the myth of Elizabeth's commission arose, as outlined by Dobson and Watson, prompts questions about how the 'needs and desires' of contemporary cinema audiences are likewise being addressed by the retelling of this same myth in the *Merry Wives* broadcast, some three hundred years after Dennis.[574] The commercial attraction of this composition narrative also traces back to the play's 1602 quarto title page, which named Shakespeare as the author of the work

[570] *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* directed for the screen by Dewi Humphreys.

[571] Tellingly, despite the different approaches of these works in terms of their presentation of the playwright (*Shakespeare in Love* falling on the side of romantic reverence, *Upstart Crow* treading the line between reverence and parody), both *Shakespeare in Love* and *Upstart Crow* depict Elizabeth giving her approval to Shakespeare's works.

[572] Michael Dobson and Nicola J. Watson, *England's Elizabeth: An Afterlife in Fame and Fantasy* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), p. 123.

[573] Ibid, p. 122.

[574] Ibid.

that had '*divers times* [been] *Acted* […] *Both before her Maiestie, and else-where.*'[575] Despite claims that the context of commission rendered the work a 'scrappily put together thing', this broadcast also capitalised on the apocryphal Elizabethan link as a type of 'value enhancement' for this otherwise little-known, and apparently deficient, play.[576] This was further consolidated by Laird, who described the play in language that continually evoked a link with the historical queen: 'the beating heart of this play is Elizabethan – its Elizabethan language, it was written in the Elizabethan era.'[577] In this regard, this provenance narrative worked to sell the play as much as it apologised for its artistic failings. As Helen Hackett notes of John Dennis's original claims, Elizabeth's commission request 'explain[s] the deficiencies' of *Merry Wives* even while 'her interest and patronage guarantee[s] the literary value.'[578]

The reiteration of the myth that *Merry Wives* was a commission piece, therefore, situates this broadcast within a centuries-old tradition of attempts to justify a lack of artistic merit in the play, as well as within a tradition of commercialising the monarch's legendary association which stretches back to its first printed texts. In this instance, a '*proper*' reading of the play was one in which Shakespeare's artistic ability was protected against the potential damage posed by his own work.[579] While there may have been an immediate commercial advantage to selling the production as a piece commissioned (and endorsed?) by Elizabeth I, the invocation of the play as a royal commission also fulfils a more enduring commercial imperative for the RSC that associates Shakespeare – when working free from supposed artistic constraint and imposition – with elevated aesthetic ability. Foregrounding this provenance narrative for *Merry Wives* allowed the broadcast to establish that while the play was certainly *by*

[575] British Library, 'The Merry Wives of Windsor; 1st quarto 1602', *British Library Treasures in Full: Shakespeare in Quarto*, BL Huth 48, sig. A2r <https://www.bl.uk/treasures/SiqDiscovery/ui/record.aspx?Source=text&LHCopy=39&LHPage=-2&RHCopy=39&RHPage=-1> [accessed 16 April 2020].

[576] *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* directed for the screen by Dewi Humphreys; Genette, p. 201.

[577] *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* directed for the screen by Dewi Humphreys.

[578] Helen Hackett, *Shakespeare and Elizabeth: The Meeting of Two Myths* (Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 23.

[579] Genette, p. 197, emphasis original.

Shakespeare, it is not in line with the artistic standard and heightened quality that has historically been termed *Shakespearean*.[580]

Six years earlier, NT Live's broadcast of *Timon of Athens* (2012) had also retold a provenance narrative for that play which seemed to challenge ideas of Shakespeare as 'all-controlling Author.'[581] If 'scrappily put together' was the presiding aesthetic judgement for the *Merry Wives* broadcast, then *Timon* was framed by NT Live as a play defined by the alterity of its genre as well as of its conditions of composition.[582] This broadcast echoed critical treatments of the play which have sought to explain or justify *Timon's* artistic deficiency and generic difference, typically rooting the cause in an explanation of the play's provenance. John Jowett, in his Oxford edition, notes that '[s]ome critics have speculated that Shakespeare abandoned the play before it reached the stage, perhaps in a state of personal or artistic crisis.'[583] The use of provenance narratives to explain the play's singularity within the Shakespeare canon is further identified by Jowett as a defining feature of the *Timon*'s critical history: '*Timon of Athens* was identified in the nineteenth century as a flawed text that needed some form of special explanation.'[584]

This impulse to frame *Timon* with a 'special explanation' – one which is rooted in its composition – was present from the outset of NT Live's broadcast.[585] Presenter Emma Freud noted the play's collaborative composition in the first few lines of her opening monologue in terms that implicitly linked *Timon*'s maligned reputation and alterity with the play's status as a collaboration between

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[580] James Purkis has considered how early editors of Shakespeare's Apocrypha used this distinction – between work by the playwright and work deemed to meet the heightened standard of the 'Shakespearean' – in relation to C. F. Tucker Brooke's *The Shakespeare Apocrypha: Being a Collection of Fourteen Plays* (1908). Purkis observes that for Brooke, 'there is […] a qualitative difference between something that is (or may be) written by Shakespeare and the "'Shakespearian."', in 'Apocryphal Thinking', p. 297.

[581] Kirwan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Apocrypha*, p. 7.

[582] *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, directed for the screen by Dewi Humphreys.

[583] John Jowett, 'Introduction', *The Life of Timon of Athens* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), pp. 1 – 154, p. 1.

[584] Ibid, p. 132. My understanding of the critical treatment of the play, particularly in relation to its collaborative context, has also been informed by Brian Vickers, *Shakespeare, Co-Author: A Historical Study of Five Collaborative Plays* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), pp. 244 – 290.

[585] Jowett, 'Introduction', p. 132.

Shakespeare and Thomas Middleton. Freud described *Timon* as 'one of Shakespeare's least performed [plays]', 'a strange fable' which is 'thought to have been written in collaboration with a younger playwright, Thomas Middleton.'[586] Read in conversation with each other, cinema audiences may well have been prompted to draw a causal link between the play's sparse performance history, its generic alterity ('fable' standing against the more conventional, Folio-inherited categorisations of comedy, history, and tragedy), and its collaborative context.[587] At best, this opening description from Freud situated *Timon*'s maligned performance history and generic alterity alongside its collaborative composition: at worst, it rooted the cause of these apparent deficiencies within it.

While the opening of the broadcast hinted at a link between the play's collaborative provenance and its alterity, paratexts throughout also speculated on the nature of the relationship between Middleton and Shakespeare. Middleton's role as co-author was once more evoked in the play's pre-recorded short film, 'A Timon for Our Times'. As with Freud's introduction, this subsequent discussion of the play's composition was again couched in terms of *Timon*'s apparent deficiency (in this instance, as a play which is dramaturgically lacking). In one interview clip, director Nicholas Hytner discussed the play's collaborative composition, Middleton's role as 'one of the great city satirists', and *Timon*'s dramaturgical difficulty as a play that, Hytner proposed, has too 'many loose ends' to ever have been performed in Shakespeare's lifetime.[588]

For cinema audiences unfamiliar with Thomas Middleton, this broadcast would have represented their first introduction to the playwright. Consequently, the terms in which he was described demand closer inspection – particularly in relation to the abundance of ideas about, and representations of, Shakespeare. Hytner's description of Middleton as a 'great city satirist' is particularly interesting for the way in which it operated in relation to Timon's misanthropy, and for the contrast it offered to the generic categories for which Shakespeare is commonly known.[589] As Gail Kern Paster highlights,

[586] *Timon of Athens,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[587] Ibid.

[588] Ibid.

[589] Ibid.

the sparsity of Shakespeare's works in the genre of city satire and city comedy, and his 'evident disinclination to place comic action in contemporary London se[ts] him apart from other major […] dramatists of him time.'[590] As much as Middleton is known, therefore, as a 'city satirist', Shakespeare is known for not venturing into this generic territory.[591] Against the more established 'Shakespearean' genres of comedy, history and tragedy, the generic alterity of *Timon* was aligned with the provenance of the play as a collaborative work and particularly with the contribution of Middleton.

As with RSC Live's broadcast of *Merry Wives*, *Timon* relied upon a particular mediation of the play's composition to ensure a '*proper*' reading of the production, one in which Shakespeare's reputation for an elevated standard of creative work was protected.[592] These broadcasts presented the processes of commission and collaboration as resulting in works that were distinctly 'othered' from the assumptions of quality that accumulate around Shakespeare's more well-known plays. The result was an implicit narrative in which the popularly held and historically prevalent idea of Shakespeare working in 'romantic isolation' was linked to his writing of artistically elevated works.[593] This impulse to vividly imagine the conditions of Shakespeare's writing has a varied history in print and performance, from the attachment of a biography to Nicholas Rowe's 1709 *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear*, to the tendency for Restoration authors to revive Shakespeare in adapted prologues.[594] Like Rowe's 'Account', which argued that 'the knowledge of an Author may sometimes conduce to the better understanding his Book', these broadcasts displayed a desire to understand and explain the marginal status of these works through the lens of biographically invested provenance narratives.[595] Read among this history, the narratives offered in these broadcasts constitute further examples of the culturally contingent stories that accumulate around Shakespeare's life and works, stories that are continually

[590] Gail Kern Paster, *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), p. 178.

[591] *Timon of Athens,* directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[592] Genette, p. 197, emphasis original.

[593] Kirwan, '"You have no voice!", p. 16.

[594] Hooks, *Selling Shakespeare*, p. 7; Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet*, p. 13 – 4.

[595] Nicholas Rowe, 'Account', *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear. Vol. 1,* edited by Nicholas Rowe (London: Printed for Jacob Tonson, 1709), p. iii.

used to justify a hierarchy of value within his canon as well as to justify the playwright's 'exceptionalism' among his contemporaries.[596]

Attraction

While previous sections have concentrated on the sense of anxiety that arises from the marginal status of lesser-performed works, many broadcast paratexts also revel in the marginality of the plays they present. In these broadcasts, the presumed unfamiliarity of a particular play is framed as its own 'value enhancement': a commercial draw for audiences wanting to expand or complete their own Shakespearean canon, or to see an unseen work of Shakespeare's.[597] The completist project of the RSC Live broadcasts offers a number of examples in which lesser-performed plays are framed as a rare opportunity, locating attraction in various forms. Where *The Two Gentleman of Verona* (2014) stood as a rare chance to see one of Shakespeare's lesser-performed works freed from performance precedents, *Titus Andronicus* (2017) was framed as refreshingly unfamiliar and alien compared with Shakespeare's broader canon. These two examples offer insight into how Shakespeare's works are commercialised even at the fringes of his popular performance canon. In doing so, they prompt reflections that both question the limits of Shakespearean value and shed new light on critical ideas of not-Shakespeare.[598]

The Two Gentlemen of Verona (2014) was the first broadcast by RSC Live of a production directed by Simon Godwin. Godwin would go on to direct two more streamed productions for the company, including the production of *Hamlet* (2016) that was broadcast two years later.[599] The disparity between performance precedents for these two Shakespearean works could hardly be more pronounced. Whereas Klein's interview with Godwin for the broadcast of *Hamlet* included a question on his

[596] Kirwan, '"You have no voice!"', p. 23.

[597] Genette, p. 207.

[598] See footnote 528 for an overview of critics who have discussed and developed ideas of not-Shakespeare, a number of whom recur in the footnotes below.

[599] Godwin also directed *Timon of Athens* in the Swan Theatre, a production which was broadcast with a time-delay on 20 November 2019. For a discussion of the broadcast of Godwin's *Hamlet* (2016) in relation to the implicit whiteness of the 'Shakespearean', see pp. 187 – 190 of this thesis.

approach to this much-performed play ('I want to talk to you about […] the ghosts of productions past […] was it an intimidating prospect to do *Hamlet* for the RSC?'), in a pre-recorded interview for the broadcast of *Two Gentlemen*, Godwin addressed the opposite concern, stating that he was 'delighted that [*Two Gentlemen*] hadn't been done for so long because there isn't that historical baggage that can feel so intimidating.'[600] Godwin continued:

> [There is no sense of] everyone comparing that production to one that they had seen the year before or the actors knowing people that had played their own parts or carrying those kind of cultural memories. There's no baggage with this [play].[601]

The reflection on *Two Gentlemen* as comparatively free from the 'baggage' of other Shakespearean works references the fact that the play had not been performed in full on the RSC's mainstage in over forty years – a detail that was also announced by Klein in her opening monologue to the broadcast.[602] Godwin's characterisation of *Two Gentlemen* demands further attention for the way it anticipates particular types of audience engagement. Of Shakespeare's more frequently performed plays, Godwin notes how audiences 'compar[e]' individual productions, incorporating these into a web of 'cultural memories' for a play in terms which resonate with Michael Dobson's discussion of the RSC's core audience. Dobson argues that the RSC's 'home audience […] specialize in hoarding up enormous stores of memories', consisting of productions mounted by the company and other Shakespearean performances.[603] This store of memories is undoubtedly the same alluded to by Klein in the later broadcast of *Hamlet* as a kind of 'ghost' that haunts the play.[604]

The impression Godwin gives of working on *Two Gentlemen* is refreshingly freed from the mnemonic impulse that haunts repeated performances of a handful of popular plays, appealing rather

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[600] *Hamlet*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough; *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 3 September 2014.

[601] 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona', directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[602] Ibid.

[603] Ibid.; Dobson, 'Watching the Complete Works Festival', p. 31.

[604] *Hamlet*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough. I consider the 'ghosted' nature of high-profile performers, as well as the cultural baggage that accompanies Shakespeare's most popular plays, in Chapter Five.

to cinema audiences' desire to complete their own Shakespearean canon of performances or to see a play of Shakespeare's that is 'new' to them.[605] Through Godwin's mediation, this broadcast inverted the typical assumption that a frequently performed work of Shakespeare's is *more* valuable for its stage history (i.e. is a continual hit with audiences and is tried and tested). Instead this broadcast suggested that the attraction of *Two Gentlemen* is its liberating freedom from these performance precedents. Moreover, the language with which *Two Gentlemen* was considered by Godwin as free from 'baggage', a term he repeated, is worth further exploration.[606] The implication that Shakespeare's more popular works are burdened by their own performance histories resonates with Kirwan's observation that 'the collective memory that renders Shakespeare and pseudo-Shakespeare comfortingly familiar neuters the potential for genuine shock in contemporary performance.'[607] Here, Kirwan alludes to the same 'collective memory' characterised by Godwin as the 'baggage' of Shakespeare's most frequently performed plays. *Two Gents* was therefore positioned in opposition to, as well as proximate with, Shakespeare's popular performance canon. While this play still carries Shakespeare's name – itself a 'trademark for time-tested quality and […] legitimacy' – the broadcast's continual attention to the sparse performance history of *Two Gentlemen* allowed the play to inherit some of the novelty and surprise that is typically lacking from Shakespearean performance.[608]

The broadcast of *Two Gentlemen* thus capitalised on the apparent paradox of an under-performed Shakespeare play, rooting the attraction of the play firmly in its presumed novelty to cinema audiences. While the core 'value enhancement' for *Two Gentlemen* was it refreshing unfamiliarity, the later broadcast of *Titus Andronicus* (2017) argued a different kind of appeal. This broadcast framed *Titus* as the reflection of a darker and more violent side of the playwright that was (by implication) less a defining feature of his more famous and well-known plays. The attraction of *Titus*, this broadcast seemed to suggest, was in the showcasing of a play at the extremities of the Shakespeare's work in the

[605] Lawson, 'Shakespeare's plays', n.p.

[606] *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough.

[607] Kirwan, 'Not-Shakespeare', p. 100.

[608] Lanier, p. 9.

bloody revenge genre, and in an exaggerated mode of violence.[609] As actor David Troughton expressed in a pre-recorded interview with the cast, *Titus* is attractive because it is 'like Shakespeare's on acid.'[610]

While Troughton's assessment of the play forms its own kind of (somewhat outlandish) provenance narrative, it is the attraction and not the artistic consequences of an intoxicated Shakespeare that is of interest here. As this quotation suggests, the broadcast paratexts continually enforced the idea that *Titus* is a work that is little understood (reinforced by Blanche McIntyre in my discussion of exposition above) and stands quite apart from Shakespeare's canonically central works. Presenter Suzy Klein introduced the play in superlative terms: '*Titus Andronicus* is one of Shakespeare's earliest plays, it's also one of his most brutal and tonight's production features bloody acts and not a little gore.'[611] This description, with its pseudo-trigger warning, invited cinema audiences to read *Titus*'s status on the fringes of Shakespeare's popular performance canon alongside its characteristic violent extremity (as well as with the chronological position of the play as an 'early' work).

Moreover, Troughton's later assessment furthered the ways in which this broadcast constructed *Titus* as refreshingly exaggerated in a manner that contrasts popular ideas of Shakespeare's works as 'aesthetically refined.'[612] Commenting on the play's structure in a pre-recorded short film, Troughton opined that *Titus* 'is a play of two halves, really: a really tragic first half and then an extraordinary – it's like Shakespeare's on acid, he goes into the most amazing, imaginative, mad scenes.'[613] Implicit in Troughton's description of the second half of the play as '*extra*ordinary' is the suggestion that *Titus* represents a the playwright's violent imaginative capabilities at a heightened pitch, and that Shakespeare's more frequently performed works adhere to a kind of 'ordinary' standard for the playwright.[614] This description of the play inferred that although traces of bloody and vengeful impulses

[609] Aebischer and Prince, 'Introduction', p. 2; Lanier, p. 3.

[610] *Titus Andronicus*¸ directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward.

[611] Ibid.

[612] Lanier, p. 3.

[613] *Titus Andronicus,* directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward.

[614] Ibid.

may be scattered throughout Shakespeare's wider works, *Titus* is singled out from this broader canon as an exceptional, exaggerated, and altogether '*extra*' work.

While Troughton's image is certainly an offhand and comic description of some of *Titus*' plot turns, the subversive potential of the play has a grounding in critical approaches to the performance of other early modern dramatists and of *Titus Andronicus* itself. Following the definition of Jacobean aesthetics proposed by Susan Bennett, many critics have considered how the works of Shakespeare's contemporaries are frequently commercialised according to a set of counter-cultural, sexually uninhibited, and violent 'Jacobean' aesthetics.[615] In the context of a late twentieth-century trend for productions of plays by Shakespeare's contemporaries, Bennett argues that 'Jacobean' had come to denote an aesthetics of '(moral) decay, excess and violence' which stood in particular opposition to performances of Shakespeare's works.[616] Writing of the repertoire some thirty years later, Pascale Aebischer and Kathyrn Prince observe that the trend has persisted, with 'decadence, violence and sensationalism' defining contemporary theatrical representations of 'the Jacobean.'[617]

The 'radical chic' of this performance aesthetic speaks to the appeal with which *Titus*'s violent themes were framed throughout the RSC Live broadcast, and in the contemporary costuming of the production itself.[618] The particular attraction of *Titus* as conceptualised by Troughton, however, bears a closer relation to the specific appeal of counter-cultural Jacobean performance aesthetics. Kirwan elaborates:

> That *Titus Andronicus*'s subject matter and excesses led to its exclusion from the Shakespeare canon for many decades indicates the potential ramifications of slippage between the Shakespeare and not-Shakespeare aesthetics: and tellingly, productions of *Titus* (most famously Julie Taymor's 1999 film) adopt many of the counterculture elements (body piercings and tattoos for actors, nudity, gore,

[615] Bennett, *Performing Nostalgia*. See footnote 528 for a selection of critics who have subsequently expanded and developed ideas of not-Shakespeare, particularly in relation to Jacobean aesthetics.

[616] Ibid, p. 82.

[617] Aebischer and Prince, p. 4.

[618] Bennett, *Performing Nostalgia*, p. 83.

> additional suggestions of incest, etc.) that define contemporary Jacobean productions.[619]

Here, Kirwan traces a relationship in which the canonical marginality of the play is inherently tied to the not-Shakespearean aesthetics that dominate its performance history. The same relationship was implicit in this broadcast's framing of *Titus* as a subversively extreme work, othered from more conservative ideas of Shakespeare as the 'epitome of virtuous respectability.'[620] Developing this critical and performance tradition outlined by Kirwan, it might be noted that Troughton's tongue-in-cheek narrative of 'Shakespear[e] on acid' would sit comfortably alongside the 'counterculture elements' listed above.[621]

Applying Kirwan's idea of 'slippage' between 'Shakespeare and not Shakespeare aesthetics' helps us to appreciate how *Titus* and *Two Gentlemen* were framed as both a part of Shakespeare's canon and opposed to popular ideas about the playwright and his works, calling into question the limits of the term not-Shakespeare.[622] As these latter examples and others in this chapter have shown, broadcasts of Shakespeare's canonically marginal plays prompt reflections on what happens when the 'obvious hierarchical distinction' seen in mainstream performance repertoires between Shakespeare and his contemporaries is applied to works within the playwright's own canon.[623] Moreover, despite paratextual framing that often accentuates the 'otherness' of these works, the canonising projects within which they appear nonetheless consolidate their status as *within* Shakespeare's canon rather than outside of it. The framing of *Titus* and *Two Gentlemen* positioned these plays on a spectrum within Shakespeare's canon, ranging from works which fit the popular ideas of Shakespeare (elevated artistic ability, iconic stage images, familiar narratives and oft-quoted lines, refined and intellectual thematic concerns) and those which seem to oppose them.

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[619] Kirwan, 'Not-Shakespeare', p. 96.

[620] Sager, 'Not Shakespeare', p. 3.

[621] *Titus Andronicus,* directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward; Kirwan, 'Not-Shakespeare', p. 96.

[622] Ibid.

[623] Ibid, p. 90.

'The centre cannot hold'[624]

The examples I explore in this chapter highlight the need for a term that better appreciates how Shakespeare's lesser-performed plays are framed in the live broadcast medium. I contend that the framing of these marginal works – their appeal, their narrative unfamiliarity, and their conditions of composition – can most productively be understood not in terms of not-Shakespeare or unShakespearean, but by an expansion of this critical idea to emphasise a spectrum that also encompasses the notion of 'alt-Shakespeare'. 'Alt-Shakespeare' suggests the extent to which these plays evidently push back against strongly held notions of what 'Shakespeare' means to contemporary audiences. They are, as Kirwan notes of works by Shakespeare's contemporaries, frequently 'unfamiliar, forgotten and unseen' in comparison to their canonically central counterparts and – as the examples of *Cymbeline* and *Titus Andronicus* illustrate – are likely to be watched and engaged with on entirely different terms.[625] However, their continued inclusion within these theatrically-constituted canons prevents them from being considered unShakespearean, a term that is also positioned too strongly against the marketing of these broadcasts which often depends upon and reiterates the commercial viability of Shakespeare's name.[626]

Therefore, these marginal works are certainly not not-Shakespeare nor are they unShakespearean, rather they operate on a sliding scale in relation to 'alternative' ideas of the playwright's contemporary reputation and that of his works. There is little scope in this thesis to fully conceptualise how more works across Shakespeare's wider canon might be framed in relation to ideas about his artistic ability and the merit of his works. Nonetheless, understanding the way in which these works variously affirm or oppose ideas held about the playwright through a specific and appropriate vocabulary allows us to better identify the meanings Shakespeare holds for contemporary audiences,

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[624] W.B Yeats, 'The Second Coming', *The Collected Poems of W.B. Yeats,* edited by Richard J Finneran (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), l. 3.

[625] Kirwan, 'Not-Shakespeare', p. 95.

[626] Kirwan and Eoin Price respectively discuss how performances of Shakespeare's contemporaries in institutions which rely on the playwright for their brand identity can often play up to the relative marginality of these not-Shakespearean works in 'Not-Shakespeare', p. 90 and 'Canon: Framing Not-Shakespeare'.

and the role of live theatre broadcasts in shaping these meanings. Approaching the framing of marginal plays in this way, I propose, allows for a deeper understanding of the values that reinforce an ideological Shakespearean 'centre.'

I began this chapter by considering how the broadcast programming of NT Live and RSC Live may reflect the popularity of a handful of Shakespeare's plays within the mainstream performance canon and, in the case of NT Live, proportionate to the work of other dramatists. In order to reflect on the way in which Shakespeare's marginal works are framed not just within broadcast paratexts but in a larger organisational structure, it is important to consider these broadcasts within their context as part of the canons produced by these two major theatrical companies. A hierarchy of value within Shakespeare's canon is clear in the broadcasts streamed by NT Live, which also invites other classical works, contemporary drama, and new writing to sit alongside a limited number of frequently performed and canonically central Shakespeare plays. Just as Shakespeare's eminence above other dramatists is evident in NT Live's broader canon, so too the frequency with which a selection of Shakespeare's most popular plays are broadcasted highlights the eminence of these works over their canonically marginal counterparts.[627] In a broadcasting corpus that relies heavily on Shakespeare's most popular tragedies, often performed with high-profile actors in the leading roles, *Timon of Athens* is a notable outlier.

The RSC Live broadcast canon would seem to be a more egalitarian project, albeit one which is exclusive in terms of its single-author focus: even the inclusion of *Pericles* nods towards a breach in the assumed authority of the First Folio, the text which is undoubtedly the *raison d'etre* of Gregory Doran's project.[628] However, in the last few years, compromises to the goal of live broadcasting a mainstage production of these thirty-seven plays have emerged, coalescing around those of Shakespeare's works that are judged to be aesthetically lacking and/or are rarely performed. In his

[627] Shakespeare is the only dramatist to have more than five separate works streamed by the company and his closest contender – Alan Bennett – has the distinct advantage of being alive to produce new work.

[628] John Wyver notes that the plan to stage each of the Folio plays plus *Pericles* was originally intended to culminate in 2023, the 400th anniversary year of the publication of the First Folio in *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company*, p. 1. However, it is likely that the closure of the theatres due to the global coronavirus outbreak has significantly delayed the completion of this project.

optimistic assessment of Doran's original pledge, Peter Kirwan notes that to mount a mainstage production of each First Folio play (plus *Pericles*) would mean 'that even plays such as *King John* will be performed on the main stage, creating an obvious hierarchical distinction in which the Swan [Theatre] hosts Shakespeare's contemporaries and commercial inferiors.'[629] In practice, RSC Live has broadcast time-delayed captures of both *Timon of Athens* (2019) and had planned to release *King John* (initially scheduled for release in 2020) from productions of these plays that were indeed mounted in the Swan Theatre rather than the mainstage RST.[630] As well as signalling the practical consideration that these plays are less commercially viable than their more frequently performed counterparts, this programming has the effect of extending the 'hierarchical distinction' signalled by the smaller theatre space to encompass works whose Shakespearean authorship (in the case of *Timon*, collaborative authorship) and early textual history (both plays appear in the First Folio) is uncontested.[631]

Moreover, the fact that these plays were broadcast with a time-delay reveals a telling consequence of their staging in the smaller space: these plays were denied the eventness of simultaneous transmission. While it remains to be seen how RSC Live will transmit the remaining ten works of their broadcast canon, the result of programming of *Timon* and *King John* with a time delay is the suggestion that the completed RSC Live broadcast canon may be divided along lines that sees the value of liveness in their original transmission attributed according to the perceived value of the Shakespeare work. These judgements are inevitably cyclical: the delayed broadcasting of *King John* and *Timon* represents a lower commercial investment in these plays that likewise responds to the value judgements that are anticipated

[629] Kirwan, 'Not-Shakespeare', p. 90.

[630] *King John* was filmed over two performances in the RSC's Swan Theatre in November 2019, with a release date scheduled to coincide with Shakespeare's birthday celebrations on 23 April 2020. The release has been delayed indefinitely due to restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. I'm particularly grateful to John Wyver for allowing me to observe the process of filming for this broadcast, and to M4C and the NPIF for funding this shadowing work.

[631] In a further concession to Doran's original project, in February 2020 it was announced that the three parts of *Henry VI* would be conflated into a two parts entitled *The Wars of the Roses*, both of which will be performed in the Swan Theatre. 'RSC Announces 2020 Winter Season', *RSC*, 4 February 2020 <https://www.rsc.org.uk/press/releases/rsc-announces-2020-winter-season> [accessed 15 May 2020].

to be held by cinema audiences considering that these broadcasts, unlike the examples I considered in my previous chapter, were unlikely to ever have sold out in cinemas. Small though these distinctions are, they serve as reminders that Shakespeare broadcasts from NT Live and RSC Live operate within a contingent and protean history of canonising the playwright's works, attributing worth, as Kirwan highlights, 'according to an always shifting and redefinable set of cultural values.'[632] Closer attention to the framing of these marginal plays, therefore, invites us to consider the role of live theatre broadcasts in shaping and reshaping new Shakespearean canons, how value is attributed within these, and the ideas which underpin the canon's margins as well as its centre.

[632] Kirwan, *Shakespeare and the Idea of Apocrypha*, p. 205.

Relevance

It has long been a tradition in the performance of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* (1885) to adapt the lyrics of a particular aria, entitled 'As Some Say it May Happen' but more commonly known as 'I've Got a Little List.' The aria is sung by Titipu's Lord High Executioner, Ko-Ko, who lists names of 'society offenders […] who never would be missed' as his future victims.[633] Particularly given the explicitly racist content of Gilbert's original libretto, the opportunity to adapt the lyrics for topical satire is rarely neglected in modern performances. The English National Opera's (ENO) production in 2015, for example, had Ko-Ko listing among his victims 'that Republican contender who behaves just like a chump / Building golf courses and skyscrapers that none can ever [T/t]rump.'[634] (It might also be noted that the ENO's *Mikado* was live broadcast on the 3rd of December 2015 – prompting Ko-Ko to call for the impending execution of 'those who on watching opera in cinemas insist.')[635] As this playful libretto demonstrates, performances of *The Mikado* are continually adapted to respond to the relevant concerns of a contemporary society in spite of the opera's nineteenth-century imperialist origins. In theatre broadcasts of Shakespeare's works, the playwright's relevance is often taken as a given. Largely without *Mikado*-esque rewriting, these plays are framed by broadcast paratexts as reflecting and responding to complex contemporary issues. This chapter investigates the work of these paratexts and addresses the question at the heart of Ko-Ko's ever-changing list – how are texts that were written four hundred years ago made to speak to events and concerns of twenty-first century audiences?

The saturation of Shakespeare's works in the theatre and live theatre broadcast industry alone signifies an underlying assumption that his works have a unique ability to speak to the contemporary moment. Within broadcasts themselves, discussions of the relevance of the play usually centre on interviews with creative figures (most often, the production's director). As I consider in Part I of this

[633] Contributors, 'The Mikado / Act 1 / Part Va', *Wikisource*, n.d. <https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Mikado/Act_I/Part_Va> [accessed 2 July 2019].

[634] English National Opera, *I've Got a Little List (with Lyrics) / The Mikado / Gilbert and Sullivan*, online video recording, YouTube, 22 Jan 2016 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CWo_3CIcTBQ> [accessed 2 July 2019].

[635] Ibid.

thesis, directors and creatives are typically asked why they chose to stage this work 'now.'[636] Responses which affirm the relevance – often figured in terms of 'importance' – of the play to contemporary concerns and contexts are predictably universal.[637] To supplement these, directors will commonly allude to contemporary political or social contexts and explore how they are mirrored by the action of the play. Shakespeare is never staged for the sake of Shakespeare, these interviews would suggest, but for the ability of his plays to speak to a contemporary moment.

This chapter draws on the recurring claims of Shakespeare's relevance made in broadcast paratexts to investigate how the term is used, and the value judgement it confers.[638] Historically, Shakespeare's works have been subject to the kind of textual alteration exhibited by the shifting *Mikado* aria; as Michael Dobson confirms, 'the claiming of Shakespeare as an Enlightenment culture hero both profited from, and occasionally demanded, the substantial rewriting of his plays.'[639] The kind of substantial rewriting undertaken by Restoration adapters of Shakespeare is all but absent in the productions whose paratexts I consider here, but these broadcasts nonetheless argued for Shakespeare's relevance to a particular event. Moreover, in the twenty-first century, issues of relevance and representation hold a central place in the cultural sector. The need for plays and performances to be 'relevant' to their audiences was embedded in the funding criteria announced by Arts Council England (ACE) in early 2019. In a move that saw 'relevance' become the most important requirement for the acquisition of funds, deputy chief executive of ACE, Simon Mellor, added that artists and creators will 'need to be able to demonstrate that you are also facing all of your stakeholders and communities in

[636] I discuss the importance of relevance in live interviews (p. 66 – 79) and in pre-recorded short films (p. 80 – 98) in Part I of this thesis.

[637] These claims for Shakespearean relevance are perhaps more interesting in the context of Gregory Doran's First Folio project, in which staging all of Shakespeare's Folio plays (plus *Pericles*) would seem to threaten the likelihood of these works to speak with precision to changing contemporary contexts.

[638] McLuskie and Rumbold have considered how critical works that argue 'the continuing relationship between Shakespeare's own time and ours' confer the value of relevance on the playwright, focussing their analysis through works by Stephen Greenblatt and Jonathan Bate, in *Cultural Value in the Twenty-first Century*, pp. 54 – 76.

[639] Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet*, p. 5. Emma Depledge also considers the role of adaptations and stagings of Shakespeare's works during the Exclusion Crisis in *Shakespeare's Rise to Cultural Prominence*.

ways that they value.'[640] This announcement came toward the end of the first decade of Shakespearean broadcasts explored in this thesis; nonetheless, it illuminates the artistic context in which these works were produced in the years prior to ACE's change in funding criteria. The prioritisation of 'relevance' in ACE funding grants reflects an increasing ideological shift in the role of the arts to be both representative and responsive, a shift that crucially informs constructions of Shakespearean relevance in theatre broadcasts.

If Shakespeare's works continue to be relevant, what does 'relevance' mean in this context? Taking the legal, linguistic and argumentative definition of relevance as 'connection with the subject or point at issue, relation to the matter at hand', Shakespeare's works would be hard pressed to engage with complex issues like the crisis of Brexit negotiations as directly as contemporary-response works such as David Hare's play, *I'm Not Running,* or James Graham's TV film, *Brexit: The Uncivil War*.[641] Despite this, the claim of Shakespeare's timeless relevance (itself a paradox I will explore further) has a long textual and cultural history. In perhaps the earliest printed claim for Shakespeare's relevance, Ben Jonson's dedicatory praise in the First Folio that Shakespeare was 'not of an age, but for all time' argued for the playwright's ability to speak to the transhistorical truths of the human condition. Marjorie Garber has since shifted the agency of the relevance in Jonson's famous phrase from Shakespeare himself onto his readers and audiences, arguing that Shakespeare's works are continually time*ly*, rather than time*less*. 'Every age', Garber reflects, 'creates its own Shakespeare.'[642] Like the ever-evolving

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[640] Simon Mellor qtd. in Giverny Masso, 'Arts Council: Relevance not excellence will be new litmus test for funding', *Stage,* 8 April 2019 <https://www.thestage.co.uk/news/2019/arts-council-relevance-not-excellence-will-be-new-litmus-test-for-funding/> [accessed 10 April 2019].

[641] 'relevance', *The Oxford English Dictionary* [online] <https://www-oed-com.ezproxyd.bham.ac.uk/view/Entry/161891?redirectedFrom=relevance#eid> [accessed 2 July 2019]; Michael Billington, 'I'm Not Running review – David Hare's Labour play hits political bullseyes', *Guardian,* 10 October 2018 <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/oct/10/im-not-running-review-david-hare-lyttelton-national-theatre> [accessed 2 July 2019]; Lucy Mangan, 'Brexit: The Uncivil War review – superficial, irresponsible TV', *Guardian,* 7 Jan 2019 <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2019/jan/07/brexit-the-uncivil-war-review-superficial-irresponsible-tv-cumberbatch> [accessed 2 July 2019].

[642] Marjorie Garber, *Shakespeare After All* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2005), p. 1.

libretto of 'I've Got a Little List', Garber argues that our ideas of Shakespeare are continually remade in line with contemporary attitudes and concerns.

Jonson's dedicatory epistle reminds us that the history of arguments for Shakespeare's enduring relevance is bound up with rhetorical techniques used in paratextual spaces. This chapter therefore considers how, with the NT and RSC's penchant for textual fidelity meaning that these institutions typically forgo the adaptive measures seen in Restoration era performances, Shakespeare's relevance is figured through work performed not upon the plays themselves, but within the paratextual framing of these broadcast performances. The broadcasts explored here framed Shakespeare as responding to two political shifts that occurred in the year 2016: Britain's vote to leave the European Union (commonly referred to as 'Brexit'), and the election of Donald J. Trump to the US presidency. As I demonstrate, Shakespeare was called upon repeatedly in response to these seismic contemporary events. Despite this, the work of broadcast paratexts in arguing for Shakespeare's relevance to both Brexit and Trump's election has yet to be considered. Attending to these paratexts that set Shakespearean works in conversation with the contemporary moment helps us to address a pressing question: how are Shakespeare's plays frequently exempt from the curse, identified by Stephen Greenblatt, of works that when 'moved from their original setting to a new time or place' are frequently found 'dead on arrival'?[643] Far from being dead on arrival, rhetoric that imagines the playwright and his works as alive in the contemporary moment is particularly important to claims of Shakespearean relevance. Therefore, before turning to consider how broadcasts framed Shakespeare's works as speaking directly to these two paradigmatic political shifts, it is crucial to understand the unique discourses of Shakespeare's relevance that were circulating in 2016. This year saw not only a flourishing of Shakespeare's works in live broadcast performances but a recurring rhetoric that, through celebrations of the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, imagined the playwright as being very much alive.

Dead or (a)Live: Shakespeare in the Year of Shakespeare400

[643] Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 7.

In a book accompanying the Bodleian Library's 2016 exhibition, 'Shakespeare's Dead', Emma Smith and Simon Palfrey made the claim that 'Shakespeare could hardly be more alive.'[644] The exhibition formed part of a year of national and international celebrations in which Shakespeare's mortality, commemorated on the 400th anniversary of his death, became a lens through which to assert his cultural immortality. As Jennifer Moss Waghorn argues, the celebrations were underpinned by a 'deliberately blurred sense of Shakespeare as a body of creative work with continuing cultural resonance, rather than a person whose literal mortality was the key catalyst' for the celebrations.[645] The Royal Shakespeare Company followed suit: playing on this juxtaposition with the title of their celebratory variety evening, live broadcast to BBC2 on Shakespeare's birthday: *Shakespeare Live! From the RSC* (hereafter *Shakespeare Live!*).[646] The exclamation point that follows *Live!* made this title appear like a revelation, teasing the impossibility of Shakespeare having been found miraculously *(A)Live!*, or indeed, that *Shakespeare Live(s)!*[647] As these examples demonstrate, the rhetoric of the Shakespeare400 celebrations was characterised by a pronounced claim for Shakespeare's apparent immortality and the ability of the playwright's works – and seemingly the man himself – to speak with immediacy to a society four hundred years after his death.

The broadcast of *Shakespeare Live!* opened with a performance of 'Tonight' from Bernstein and Sondheim's *West Side Story,* a number that immediately established its dual concerns as the liveness of the event (evoking and re-evoking temporality with each repetition of 'tonight'), and the

[644] Simon Palfrey and Emma Smith, *Shakespeare's Dead* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2016), p. 1.

[645] Jennifer Moss Waghorn, 'The Bard is Dead, Long Live the Bard: Celebrations of Shakespeare's "Corpse" and "Corpus" in 2016', *Shakespeare,* 14. 3 (2018), pp. 275 – 290, p. 280.

[646] The title of this one-off performance is mirrored by the full name of the RSC's broadcasting branch, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, suggests the importance of place to the company's national and international broadcasts – a theme I explore in depth in Chapter Four. In both instances, broadcasts are focalised as '*from*' a place or institution with Shakespearean significance.

[647] 'Shakespeare Lives' was also the name of an international online festival run hosted and distributed by the BBC in collaboration with the British Council as well as partner organisations including Shakespeare's Globe and the Royal Shakespeare Company. 'About Shakespeare Lives' <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1N0y70KJVt5f2ccfvSqZF2c/about-shakespeare-lives> [accessed 26 May 2020].

contemporary legacy of Shakespeare's works.[648] Indeed, opening with a mid-twentieth century musical adaptation of a Shakespeare play showcased from the outset what McLuskie and Rumbold identify as the 'dynamic potential [of Shakespeare's works] for continual negotiation and adjustment to different historic circumstances.'[649] By pairing Shakespeare's works with later appropriations and remediations, *Shakespeare Live!* encouraged its audiences to understand the importance of these later works through Shakespeare's creative influence. What might otherwise be termed 'adaptability' was nonetheless packaged as Shakespearean relevance through the consistent effort to emphasise the playwright's agency in, and implicit ownership of, these later responses to his work. These works were therefore framed as examples of Shakespeare speaking *through* the contemporary moment or the new medium, rather than the contemporary moment speaking back to Shakespeare. This attitude ran through the evening's paratextual structure in the form of scripted segues from the performance's hosts: co-stars David Tennant and Catherine Tate. Following from the opening performance of 'Tonight', Tennant introduced the variety show by observing that 'Shakespeare tells us about ourselves. He sees us from every angle.'[650] Tennant's rhetorical revivification of the playwright emphasised the governing idea that not only are Shakespeare's own works relevant to contemporary audiences but that his is the dominant voice in later adaptations and appropriations. While this statement suggested a collapsing of the artistic agency of later adapters into Shakespeare's own genius, it also contributed to the culture observed by Waghorn of conflating Shakespeare the man with his works. 'So long as men can breathe or eyes can see', this broadcast seemed to suggest, the continuation of Shakespearean performance enables the playwright to live in (and by extension, respond to) the contemporary moment.[651]

This metaphor also dominated the paratextual pre-show short film to NT Live's *As You Like It* (2016). This film celebrated the National Theatre's history of performing Shakespeare and consisted of a number of interview clips with actors, directors, and commentators edited alongside archive and NT

[648] 'Shakespeare Live! From the RSC', BBC2, 23 April 2016.

[649] McLuskie and Rumbold, *Cultural Value*, p. 34

[650] 'Shakespeare Live! From the RSC', BBC2.

[651] William Shakespeare, *The Complete Sonnets and Poems*, edited by Colin Burrow (Oxford: OUP, 2002), 18.l.13.

Live footage from past productions.[652] Drawing on the example of Nicholas Hytner's production of *Henry V* (2003), Abigail Rokison-Woodall commented on the ability of the NT to showcase the contemporary relevance of Shakespeare's works:

> I think what's been particularly exciting about Shakespeare at the National – sometimes it's just been the timing of the programme, they have seemed to have been planned with such brilliant precision. When *Henry V* opened not long after the invasion of Iraq, coming and sitting in this auditorium, Shakespeare seemed absolutely to be talking to us now.[653]

Here, Rokison-Woodall's comments framed the topicality of Hytner's *Henry V* as Shakespeare himself communicating with audiences in the political moment of Britain in 2003. Shakespeare's relevance was imagined as working in collaboration with – if not overshadowing the work of – Hytner's directorial vision and the production's contemporary design to result in a production that had immediate and obvious resonances with the contemporary moment. Moreover, Shakespeare was again brought to life in Rokison-Woodall's use of the present tense ('talking to us now').[654] Considering that this short film was broadcasted thirteen years after Hytner's *Henry V*, the image of Shakespeare communicating with audiences '*now*' rather than 'then' expanded the topicality of one production into an argument for Shakespeare's enduring relevance.[655]

This comment also represented a significant shift in the agency of relevance from the production and the play to Shakespeare himself. As in *Shakespeare Live!*, the rhetorical elision of the playwright and his works effected an argument in which contemporary performance enables the playwright to be alive in the moment of reception. Furthermore, as the examples of *Shakespeare Live!* and *Henry V* illustrate, these claims of Shakespeare's relevance are apt to efface the labour of contemporary adapters and theatre-makers. With the agency of relevance continually placed on the

[652] *As You Like It*, directed for the screen by Tim van Someren, *NT Live*¸ Olivier Stage at the National Theatre, London, 25 Feburary 2016.

[653] Ibid.

[654] Ibid.

[655] Ibid, emphasis added.

playwright himself – rather than the artists who adapt and stage his works – these claims distinctly mirror the 'hidden' mediating process of live theatre broadcasts themselves.[656] The assimilation of the broadcast as live and Shakespeare as (a)live, and the agency of relevance falling upon Shakespeare rather than those involved in staging his works, underlines claims of Shakespeare's relevance and are important contexts for broadcasts that set the playwright in conversation with Brexit and Trump's election. In these broadcast paratexts the playwright was just as alive to the seismic political disruptions of 2016 as he was to the commemorations of the 400th anniversary of his death.

In what follows, I first explore how a number of broadcasts produced by RSC Live framed Shakespeare's works as responding to the Brexit vote of June 2016. In a cluster that followed the vote, these broadcasts set Shakespearean narratives and the playwright himself in conversation with the controversial and divisive political context post-referendum. In a historical moment when Britain's relationship to other nations hung in a contentious balance, Shakespeare's relevance was continually argued as a means of thinking through the political turbulence and protracted aftermath of the Brexit vote. I contend that these broadcast paratexts illustrate a potential danger of attempts to make the national poet speak to, and for, a divided nation. Narrowing my focus to two broadcasts of the same Shakespeare play, I then consider paratexts responded to the election of Donald Trump to the US presidency in November 2016. Drawing on the RSC Live (2017) and NT Live (2018) broadcasts of *Julius Caesar*, I explore how this play became the centre of claims for Shakespeare's relevance to this controversial election result. By overlaying contemporary politics onto the political context of *Caesar*, I contend that these broadcasts contributed to a tendency to oversimplify both Shakespeare's works and the political contexts they are made to speak to. Isolating these two political events and engaging with the way in which broadcast paratexts responded to them allows for a greater understanding of Shakespeare's role in thinking through these paradigm-shifting historical moments. Moreover, these paratexts point toward how popular ideas about the playwright are continually shaped against changing political and social landscapes. These evocations of Shakespearean relevance therefore allow us to

[656] For critics who have considered the invisibility of broadcast production labour, see footnote 289.

address the question of how, in Garber's terms, broadcast paratexts contribute to the creation of our 'own Shakespeare.'[657]

Shakespeare in the Year(s) of Brexit

Described contemporaneously as 't[aking] a plunge into the political unknown', the Brexit referendum was held on 23 June 2016 and saw a marginal majority of 52% voting to leave the European Union.[658] The result itself as well as the preceding campaign had a profoundly divisive impact on the nation – the effects of which continue to resonate and will undoubtedly decide Britain's future outside of the EU. Just as the vote dominated political discourse at the time, Brexit recurred as a point of reference in a number of broadcasts from RSC Live released contemporaneously and in the following years. These broadcasts saw Shakespeare and his works become a touchstone for the concerns that accumulated around Brexit. Two broadcasts immediately following the vote, *Cymbeline* and *King Lear*, deployed Shakespeare's works as well as the playwright's own historical context as a means of vocalising the concerns of the divisive debate and a sense of significant upheaval following the vote itself. Two years later, paratexts to the broadcasts of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Romeo and Juliet* explored what Peter Kirwan calls the 'increasingly unfocused' political discourse in the years following the referendum vote.[659] In both of these later broadcasts, paratextual discussion of the Shakespearean work also incorporated a consideration of the social groups who variously benefitted from, or were disempowered by, the vote. Attending to the paratextual makeup of these broadcasts, and the contemporary moments they reflect, prompts questions about Shakespeare's role in addressing the concerns of the Brexit vote, as well as the ability of his works to speak to this complex social and political issue.

[657] Garber, *Shakespeare After All*, p. 1.

[658] Anushka Asthana, Ben Quinn and Rowena Mason, 'UK votes to leave EU after dramatic night divides nation', *Guardian*, 24 June 2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/24/britain-votes-for-brexit-eu-referendum-david-cameron> [accessed 22 May 2020].

[659] Kirwan, 'Brexit Shakespeare', n.p.

While the run of the RSC's *Cymbeline* straddled either side of the Brexit vote itself, the production was broadcast in September 2016, three months after the referendum result. Part of a programme of Shakespeare's 'Ancient Britain' plays, the play was explicitly paired with a production of *King Lear*. Their pairing was also emphasised by both the timing and the paratextual makeup of their broadcasts, with *Lear* broadcast a month after *Cymbeline*, and with the latter featuring an interval short film in which Michael Dobson discussed the links between setting and tone in the two works. An acute awareness of the political turbulence that followed the referendum result dominated these broadcasts, evidenced by their proximity to David Cameron's immediate resignation as Prime Minister (24 June) and preliminary talks between Theresa May and European Council president, Donald Tusk (September).[660] This context led Carole Sauvegot to comment, in a theatrical review preceding the referendum, that 'a potential Brexit was on everyone's mind as [*Cymbeline*] unfolded.'[661] In RSC Live's broadcast of the play, the pre-show short film featured director Melly Still discussing *Cymbeline*'s relevance to contemporary debates:

> It is a play about Britain, and Britain's relationship to Europe, and Shakespeare was arguing about the same things as we're arguing about today – or questioning the same things that we question – similar, anyway. What national identity is; and what is our relationship given that we are surrounded by sea? Does that make us different? Should we be part of Europe? Should we be completely independent?[662]

Brexit formed a significant, albeit not an explicitly named, context to this mediation of the play. Posing questions that dominated both sides of the debate, Still's discussion of the play foregrounded the Britain/Rome plot line for its pertinence to the contemporary moment of the broadcast. As well as framing the play as an important text by which to consider the concerns of the Brexit vote, Still's description of Shakespeare 'arguing about the same things as we're arguing about today' aligned the

[660] Heather Stewart, 'Tusk presses May to trigger article 50 as soon as possible', *Guardian*, 8 Sep 2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/sep/08/donald-tusk-theresa-may-article-50-brexit-negotiations-eu> [accessed 3 July 2019].

[661] Carole Sauvageot, '*Cymbeline*', *Cahiers Élisabéthains* 91 (2016), pp. 125 – 128, p. 125.

[662] *Cymbeline*, directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward.

playwright's historical context with that of cinema audiences in their moment of reception.[663] The phrase, 'similar, anyway', was the only concession that distanced Shakespeare's own concerns in the writing of *Cymbeline* from the Brexit debates. Nonetheless, Still continued to consider the play in the context of questions that applied directly to Britain's vote. The effect of this was to largely collapse the historical distance between the contemporary moment and Shakespeare's own lifetime, enabling the questions voiced by Still to be ghosted by Shakespeare himself. In this imagined version of the playwright, it was Shakespeare himself debating the topical issue of 'what national identity is […] should we be part of Europe?'[664]

Using *Cymbeline* as a way of understanding the Brexit debate also allowed for the reverse: using the Brexit debate as a means of understanding this rarely performed play. Here, the relevance of the play to the political climate in 2016 met with the concerns of unfamiliarity I considered in the previous chapter. The complex plot and historical setting of the play would likely have been unfamiliar to modern audiences – in this context of reception, a direct comparison with the tensions of a post-Brexit Britain enabled Still to equate the relationship between Ancient Britain and Ancient Rome in the play with the highly topical relationship between Britain and the European Union. This analogy was also adopted in the form of quotation by figures from both sides of the Brexit debate, highlighting – as Anna Blackwell, Peter Kirwan and Emma Smith have done – the potential danger of Shakespearean works being used to encompass and stand for a multiplicity of potentially contradictory political views.[665] Observing the use of quotations from *Cymbeline* to justify both Remain and Leave positions,

[663] *Cymbeline*, directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward.

[664] Ibid.

[665] Blackwell, Kirwan and Smith have all discussed the role of Shakespeare and Shakespearean quotation in relation to Brexit. Blackwell uses this discussion to conclude her study on the influence of Shakespearean Celebrity in *Shakespearean Celebrity in the Digital Age*. Kirwan considers the role of performing Shakespeare in reflecting concerns and galvanising political discourse in the years following the vote in 'Brexit Shakespeare', while Smith offers a survey of appropriation and quotation of the playwright's work to serve both sides of the debate in 'May as Polonius, Gove as Cassius: is Brexit a Shakespearean tragedy?' *Guardian*, 12 April 2019 <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/apr/12/brexit-tragedy-worthy-of-shakespeare-emma-smith> [accessed 20 May 2020]

Smith warned against the potential for the 'relevance' of Shakespeare's works to 'function as a kind of confirmation bias, where we find exactly what we are looking for. […] In this reckoning, Shakespeare is, irreducibly, both for and against Brexit.'[666] Compared with the appropriations of *Cymbeline* to voice opposing sides of the Brexit debate, Still's evocation of the issue as an informing context for the play was not particularly partisan. Rather than explicitly aligning the play or playwright with a political position (which the play itself arguably rejects – Cymbeline initially fights the Roman demand for taxes before agreeing to pay them in 'friendly' co-operation), this mediation imagined Shakespeare as an inquisitive but ultimately undecided observer. [667] While many reviewers commented on the pro-Remain sentiments of the production itself, the paratextual discussion of the play denied the opportunity to claim Shakespeare for either side of the Brexit debate.[668]

In the subsequent broadcast of *King Lear*, Shakespeare was again imagined as engaging with the questions and concerns that underlined the Brexit referendum. Like *Cymbeline, Lear* was framed as speaking to both sides of this divisive issue, as director Gregory Doran highlighted in a live interview before the performance:

> We started rehearsals for *King Lear* in the week of the Brexit vote, you know – quite apart from various comments about, "Here's a play about the catastrophic effects of breaking up a union," you had a sense that there was a sense, globally, now, of a sense of disempowerment, of disenfranchisement perhaps and that a reaction of that

[666] Smith, 'May as Polonius', n.p.

[667] William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline,* edited by Roger Warren (Oxford: OUP, 1998), V.4.482. Chris Bryant's piece which claimed Shakespeare as a Europhile is reflective of a culture which, in the lead up to and wake of the Brexit vote, speculated on what side the playwright would have taken on the issue of Britain's place in the EU. In 'This septic isle would most displease pro-Europe Shakespeare', *Guardian*, 21 April 2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/apr/21/how-love-eu-count-william-shakespeare-remain-brexit> [accessed 12 May 2018].

[668] Michael Billington identified the play's design as alluding to a 'dystopian near-future where Britain, truculently defying Roman demands for tribute, seems to be in a state of post-Brexit disintegration' in 'Cymbeline review – the RSC's bizarre romance comes straight from the heart', *Guardian,* 11 May 2012 <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/may/11/cymbeline-review-rsc-royal-shakespeare-theatre> [accessed 15 May 2020]. Peter Kirwan also discusses this production in the context of dystopian stagings of Shakespeare following the referendum in 'Brexit Shakespeare', n.p.

> is needed [sic.] and it feels like in *King Lear*, that is what Shakespeare is addressing. He even has the King discussing, in a moment of epiphany about social injustice, how he has not managed to recognise the poor in his country and the struggles that they are going through so it's an astonishing play, and one that I think has extraordinary resonance for today.[669]

Doran's mediation of *Lear* (including his process in rehearsal) uses the play to explore a variety of positions in relation to Brexit. Against the 'catastrophic effects of breaking up a union,' Doran matched the 'disempowerment, disenfranchisement' and a feeling of 'social injustice' synonymous with the discourse of many by working-class Leave voters.[670] As in *Cymbeline*, Shakespeare is imagined as engaging with issues that have 'extraordinary resonance' for the contemporary moment.

While this argument for *Lear*'s relevance utilised narrative moments from the play (Lear's division of his kingdom and later 'poor naked wretches' speech), the relevance Doran located within the play was also crucially dependent on his use of a selective vocabulary. Doran's description of the play as 'about the catastrophic effects of breaking up a *union*' called upon the language of contemporary political discourse, rather than the language of the play itself: 'union' doesn't appear in *Lear* at all, let alone in the opening scene depicting Lear's division of the kingdom.[671] Instead, Doran's use of the term reframed this narrative action in the potentially misleading vocabulary of Britain's exit from the EU. Moreover, just as Still condensed *Cymbeline*'s many narrative threads down to the one in which the Roman duties are contested, Doran's comment that the play is concerned with themes of 'social injustice' effected an act of interpretive cherry-picking. The speech referenced by Doran (11.25-33)

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[669] *King Lear*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 12 October 2016.

[670] For example, in an article that gathered reactions to the Brexit vote, one respondent living in Sunderland reflected: 'Things can't get much worse up here. We need something to change, there's no jobs and no one listens to us.'In Caroline Davies and agency, 'Tears and cheers: Brexit reactions around the UK', *Guardian*, 24 June 2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/jun/24/brexit-reactions-tears-cheers-eu-referendum-uk> [accessed 28 July 2019]

[671] *King Lear*, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, emphasis added; OpenSourceShakespeare, search for 'union' within *King Lear* <https://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/search/search-results.php> [accessed 18 April 2019].

constitutes eight lines of a colossal play, in which Lear's personal suffering vastly outweighs his mediations on the poverty of his subjects.[672]

The selective mediation of *Lear* here created an impression of the playwright as sympathetic to both sides of Brexit debate. Cinema audiences were invited to view Shakespeare as a 'man of the people', concerned both with the issues of social injustice and disaffection that underlined many pro-Leave sentiments as well as with the emotionally invested language of 'breaking up a union' that recurred in pro-Remain rhetoric. Compared with the Shakespeare of the earlier *Cymbeline* broadcast, here the playwright was imagined as more engaged with the personal issues and concerns voiced on both sides of the Brexit debate. In these examples, the framing of Shakespeare's contribution to the Brexit debate worked to, in McLuskie and Rumbold's terms, 'sustain the value of Shakespeare [by making] a case for the continuing relationship between Shakespeare's own time and ours.'[673] Two years later, the RSC Live broadcast of *Romeo and Juliet* (2018) saw the value of Shakespearean relevance located in the playwright's ability to voice the disaffection that followed in the years after the vote. Emphasising the youth of the play's young protagonists, director Erica Whyman reflected on what had emerged in the aftermath of the referendum as a staunchly pro-Remain faction among under-25s, as well as a number of young people who felt strongly about staying within the EU but had been too young to legally vote. With this broadcast, and the subsequent broadcast of *Merry Wives* (2018), Shakespeare's works were framed as a way to explore the social divisions that were revealed after the dust of the controversial vote had settled. References to the political climate in the productions themselves were centralised and reframed, using the broadcast paratexts to bolster topical elements of the performance for cinema audiences. By shifting the cinema audiences' attention in this way, both broadcasts framed Shakespeare's relevance as a valuable source of political expression for social groups who were growing deeply frustrated by the Brexit vote.

In a live interview with Suzy Klein included in the *Romeo* broadcast, Whyman compared the inter-generational tension of the play with the demographic divisions emerging from the results of the

[672] William Shakespeare, *The History of King Lear*, edited by Stanley Wells (Oxford: OUP, 2000).

[673] McLuskie and Rumbold, *Cultural Value*, p. 56.

Brexit referendum. Alongside voting patterns that correlated with educational attainment and location within the UK, one of the most significant revelations of data collected by YouGov was that under-25s were 'more than twice as likely to vote Remain […] than Leave.'[674] This socio-political climate became a crucial subtext to Whyman's discussion of the play, which – under her direction – featured local schoolchildren speaking the lines of the Prologue. Addressing the involvement of young people on stage, Whyman noted that she 'wanted to draw attention, I suppose, to some of the things that do feel contemporary […] the play is about young people […] and right now, I suppose since the referendum, since various elections around the world, we know that some of our young people don't feel heard.'[675]

While Shakespeare was not conjured as an active agent in this description as he was in the broadcasts of *Cymbeline* and *Lear,* Whyman's assessment of the play as 'about young people' aligns the playwright with the voices and concerns of this marginalised group. *Romeo and Juliet*¸ Whyman suggested, presents an opportunity for disaffected young people to 'feel heard' in a political climate that had recently failed them. Whyman's direct reference to the vote (and oblique reference to Trump's election) consolidated this contemporary link: drawing the context of factional conflict in *Romeo* in line with the frustration felt by a portion of Britain's young voters. Shakespeare's role within this relationship was – not unlike the confessional tone of Cumberbatch's conversation with the Langdon students in the NT Live *Hamlet* (2015) – as a writer whose works offer an emotional and political vocabulary to this otherwise disempowered social group. The claims for relevance argued in this broadcast offer an interesting contrast to those made in the *Cymbeline* broadcast. Where Still's use of the contemporary Brexit debate to explore the themes of *Cymbeline* offered an accessible and pertinent narrative threshold into that lesser-performed play, here Whyman's link with the political climate contemporary to this later broadcast offered an opportunity to refresh the familiar plot to Shakespeare's tragedy of young love. By proposing the play's relevance to the aftermath of the Brexit vote, this

[674] Peter Moore, 'How Britain Voted at the EU Referendum', *YouGov,* 27 June 2016 <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2016/06/27/how-britain-voted> [accessed 20 May 2019].

[675] *Romeo and Juliet,* directed for the screen by Bridget Caldwell.

paratext not only framed *Romeo and Juliet* as a productive means of empowering politically disenfranchised youth but also set this well-worn narrative into a new and current context.

Thus far, the voices that staked claims for Shakespeare's relevance to the ongoing Brexit fallout have all been directorial. Following from the broadcast of *Romeo and Juliet*, in *Merry Wives* it was actor David Troughton who argued for the play's value as a contemporary allegory, centring on his portrayal of Falstaff. In a pre-recorded short film that featured to-camera interviews with the production's cast and creatives, Troughton introduced Falstaff in these unambiguous terms: 'he's an old-fashioned, right-wing, old Tory basically, who would vote for Brexit.'[676] The framing of Falstaff as a Leave voter, as well as Troughton's vivid description, set the play in conversation with strong contemporary stereotypes inherited from the key politicians who headed the Leave campaign. Particularly in the context of his subsequent comic blunders and physical humour, Troughton's characterisation of Falstaff could not escape the contemporary connotative association with the notorious gaffs made by another figure who fits his description perfectly: Boris Johnson.[677] Associations that cinema audience members would have drawn with Boris Johnson based on Troughton's grouping of characteristics – 'old-fashioned, right-wing, old Tory' – would have been heightened by the fact that, at the time of the broadcast, Johnson was under fire from people accusing him of 'corrupt and illegal practices' relating to his involvement in the Leave campaign, including overspending, collusion and misleading voters.[678]

Troughton's description of Falstaff as 'an old-fashioned, right-wing, old Tory' drew upon the production's eclectic design, which had been focalised in the broadcast by a representational montage

[676] *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, directed for the screen by Dewi Humphreys.

[677] Whilst Mayor of London, Johnson famously became stuck mid-descent on a zip wire at an event promoting the London 2012 Olympics. The image was widely circulated and ridiculed and exemplifies Johnson's blundering political persona. See BBC News, 'Boris Johnson left hanging on zip wire during Olympic event', 1 August 2012, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-19079733> [accessed 30 July 2019].

[678] Jessica Simor qtd. In Owen Bowcott, ''Corrupt' Vote Leave campaign undermines Brexit vote, court told', *Guardian*, 7 December 2018 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/dec/07/corrupt-vote-leave-campaign-undermines-brexit-vote-court-told> [accessed 29 July 2019].

which featured shots of each character's costumes. Designer Lez Brotherson combined 'Jacobethan' clothing with contemporary cuts and prints, resulting in a vision of early modern Windsor meets *The Only Way is Essex*.[679] Troughton's Falstaff sported a Union Jack waistcoat, an undone bow-tie and loosely hanging handkerchief, with a Regency-style tailcoat, dark breeches and a prominent black cod-piece. In the context of his characterisation as an 'old Tory', Falstaff's clothing would have seemed all the more evocative of a Bullingdon Club parody for cinema audiences. Furthermore, the historically eclectic elements of Falstaff's costume literalised Troughton's description of the character as 'old-fashioned', primarily through his sporting of a cod-piece. Compared with the multiple ruffs and rebato collars worn by other cast members (all fashions of the later Elizabethan and Jacobean ages), Falstaff's distinctly Tudor cod-piece aligned his character with a particularly out-dated construction of masculinity and sexual aggression – associations which were also made meaningful through Falstaff's rampant courting of Mistresses Ford and Page.[680] In Troughton's allegory of Falstaff as a Leave voter, individual garments took on new meaning as amplified references to some of the most abhorrent rhetorical tropes of the Leave campaign: nationalist, colonialist and anti-immigrant sentiment (Falstaff's Union Jack waistcoat), hyper-masculine rhetoric of 'taking back control' (his cod-piece), and nostalgia for Britain's 'golden ages' of political independence (symbolised by the general mix of period dress).[681]

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[679] Ella Hawkins' work usefully decodes the Elizabethan and Jacobean costume elements within this production, setting them in context with Lez Brotherson's interreferential and eclectic design in 'The Significance of Jacobethanism', pp. 266 – 284.

[680] Troughton's Falstaff was the only character to have a cod-piece incorporated as an historical garment. I am grateful to Ella Hawkins for highlighting that Falstaff's cod-piece is outdated compared with the historical dress worn by other characters and for sharing her insight into the period signifiers employed as part of Falstaff's costume for this production.

[681] The hyper-masculine rhetoric of 'taking back control' was prevalent in the Vote Leave campaign and formed part of the URL for the campaign's official website: voteleavetakecontrol.org. The encroachment of these discourses into the arena of toxic masculinity has been noted in both journalistic and critical commentary, including Catherine Bennett, 'Brexit is lost in toxic masculinity. No wonder women are turning against it.', *Guardian,* 9 September 2018 < https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/sep/09/bosis-johnson-brexit-toxic-masculinity> [accessed 18 June 2020] and Columba Achilleos-Sarll et. al. 'Toxic Masculinity: Militarism, Deal-Making and the Performance of Brexit', *Gender and Queer Perspectives on Brexit*, edited by Moira Dustin et. al. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp. 15 – 44.

Therefore, the construction of Falstaff as an allegorical Johnson (and more generally as a stereotypical Leave voter) framed all these performance elements and invited cinema audiences to read *Merry Wives* as a kind of contemporary political satire.[682] Compared with the tempered questioning and even-handedness of *Cymbeline* and *Lear*, the paratextual suggestion that Falstaff 'would vote for Brexit' reflects embittered stereotypes which accumulated around the confusion and upheaval in the years following the vote. In this climate, Shakespeare's comedy was presented as offering an opportunity for pointed satire and as a means to voice disapproval of (and, indeed, to laugh at) the public figures who orchestrated the Leave campaign. While the production's design contributed to the construction of Falstaff as a stereotypical 'Brexiteer', it was Troughton's mediation in the broadcast paratexts that set this Shakespearean character directly in conversation with pro-Leave sentiments. Rather than framing the play as an explicit critic of the pro-Leave elite, Troughton's description of Falstaff as a Leave voter operated within a play and a production that utilised a variety of problematic stereotypes. The production was variously labelled as 'aimed at the lowest common denominator' and 'panto Shakespeare', attracting derision for its heavy-handed application of national stereotypes in the Shakespearean text.[683] The result, Peter Kirwan argued, was 'an ugly political undercurrent' in which jibes at a Brexit-voting Falstaff were just one among many in the production's blanket deployment of two-dimensional characters.[684] Therefore, while Troughton's attempt to situate Falstaff firmly on one side of the Brexit debate would likely have influenced cinema audiences' interpretations, the

[682] The regency-style coat and tails as well combined with the traditionally bloated abdominal padding worn by Troughton in the role situated this politically-charged Falstaff in a tradition drawing from depictions of the gluttonous elite, particularly calling to mind James Gillray's *A Voluptuary under the Horrors of Digestion* (1792), which depicted George IV as the 'Prince of Whales'.

[683] Michael Davies, 'Review: *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (Royal Shakespeare Theatre)', *WhatsOnStage*, 15 August 2018 <https://www.whatsonstage.com/stratford-upon-avon-theatre/reviews/merry-wives-windsor-rsc-david-troughton_47390.html> [accessed 16 May 2020]; Tom Birchenough, 'The Merry Wives of Windsor, RSC, Barbican review – panto Shakespeare', *Arts Desk*, 13 December 2018 <https://theartsdesk.com/theatre/merry-wives-windsor-rsc-barbican-review-panto-shakespeare> [accessed 16 May 2020].

[684] Peter Kirwan, 'The Merry Wives of Windsor (RSC/Live from Stratford-upon-Avon) @ Broadway, Nottingham', *The Bardathon*, 14 September 2018 <https://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/bardathon/2018/09/13/the-merry-wives-of-windsor-rsc-live-from-stratford-upon-avon-broadway-nottingham/> [accessed 15 May 2020].

implications of this relevance were liable to become confused in a production that subjected all of its characters to a comparable level of stereotyping.

These broadcasts trace interesting developments in the political climate following the Brexit vote of June 2016, in a mode that continually returned to Shakespeare as a conduit through which to explore the contemporary moments documented by these broadcasts. It is perhaps telling that, compared with the satirical disdain for Leave voters voiced by Troughton, figures more closely affiliated with the RSC as an institution (none more so than the Artistic Director, Doran), adopted a more ambiguous mediation of Shakespeare's relevance. At the risk of alienating a significant portion of their audiences, these RSC directors largely rejected the opportunity to 'claim the Bard for Brexit.'[685] Instead, claims for Shakespeare's relevance drew upon selective readings of the plays to expose the multivalent nature of his works. Emma Smith argues that a potential danger inherent to claims of Shakespeare's relevance to the Brexit debates lies in his capacity to be imagined as 'both nativist and international, chauvinistic and large-minded, malleable to incompatible causes and ideologies.'[686] However, by not explicitly claiming Shakespeare for any particular side of the contentious debate, these paratexts highlight an altogether different concern. These broadcasts demonstrated the ability of the contemporary moment itself to be 'malleable', to be shaped and remediated to fit particular elements of Shakespeare's works.[687] The tendency to cherry-pick relevant concerns from Shakespeare's multivocal texts and from complex political issues resulted in paratexts which imagined Shakespeare variously questioning Britain's contemporary relationship to Europe, speaking as a voice of the politically disaffected, and parodying the political heavyweights who dominated the Brexit campaign. Rather than claiming the playwright in favour of a single opinion, these paratexts drew upon this plurality to continually reiterate the value of the national poet in speaking to this decidedly (inter)national issue.

[685] Bryant, 'This sceptic isle', n.p.

[686] Smith, 'May as Polonius', n.p.

[687] Ibid.

Shakespeare in the Year(s) of Donald Trump

The broadcasts that considered the aftermath of the Brexit vote did so with Britain's own political context in mind. However, it was not solely domestic politics that dominated claims of Shakespeare's contemporary relevance in 2016. While the implications of the Brexit vote were beginning to be felt in the UK, a troubling political shift was also brewing in America. Described as a 'global political earthquake', the election of Donald Trump to the American presidency in November 2016 came after an election night in which the result seemed uncertain.[688] Throughout a notoriously bitter campaign, Trump had come to stand for a global movement towards more radicalised right-wing politics, garnering considerable popularity despite publicly endorsing racist, misogynist, ableist, and climate-change denying discourses. In the wake of his election to the presidency, Shakespearean responses clustered largely around one play and one character: *Julius Caesar* and its eponymous tyrant.[689] The broadcasts considered in this section drew on *Julius Caesar* as a means through which to understand the political context that led to Trump's election, as well as to hypothesize over what this historic result might mean for America's future.

Attention to the play and to Trump as a Caesar-like dictator reached an apex in the controversy over the Public Theater's production in New York in June 2017, which featured Caesar as an explicit Trump caricature complete with 'big hand gestures' and 'a svelte wife with a Slovenian accent.'[690] The production made international headlines after a number of high-profile protests led to two of the Public

[688] [No authors] 'The Guardian view on President-elect Donald Trump: a dark day for the world', *Guardian*, 9 Nov 2016 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/nov/09/the-guardian-view-on-president-elect-donald-trump-a-dark-day-for-the-world> [accessed 5 July 2019].

[689] Stephen Greenblatt's *Tyrant: Shakespeare on Power* is an example of a later response which paired the obvious political context of Trump's election with Shakespeare's works. While Trump is never named in the work, reviews have highlighted his presence as a crucial subtext, and allusions to the President are rife with Greenblatt questioning 'why [anyone would] be drawn to a leader manifestly unsuited to govern, someone dangerously impulsive or viciously conniving or indifferent to the truth?', in *Tyrant* (London: Bodley Head, 2018), p. 1.

[690] Lois Beckett, 'Trump as Julius Caesar: anger over play misses Shakespeare's point, says scholar'', *Guardian*, 12 June 2017 <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2017/jun/12/donald-trump-shakespeare-play-julius-caesar-new-york> [accessed 5 July 2019].

Theater's largest donors, Delta Airlines and Bank of America, withdrawing their funding on the grounds that the production's political allusion – particularly Caesar's assassination – was too incendiary.[691] The immediate relevance of Shakespeare's works and the function of Caesar as an allegorical Trump was at the heart of the contention between the Public Theater and its commercial sponsors. The controversy sparked by this production is perhaps the most prominent example of a post-election moment in which *Julius Caesar* was used as a recurrent point of reference for exploring the ramifications of Trump's election.

A comparison between Trump and Caesar was similarly integral to the paratextual framing of the RSC's *Julius Caesar,* streamed to cinemas on 26 April 2017.[692] The broadcast featured a live interview between director Angus Jackson and Suzy Klein, in which Jackson noted that *Caesar* is 'the play of the year.'[693] Whilst alluding to a wealth of productions which had emerged in the wake of Trump's election, Jackson's assessment of the play framed Shakespeare's work as speaking directly to the contemporary moment. Responding to a question from Klein as to whether now felt like a 'particular and kind of interesting moment to be staging the play', Jackson sought his answer within the character of Caesar: 'the central character is a very powerful leader, a very charismatic leader, he's a very uncompromising leader, he's very pleased with himself.'[694] The shot choices documenting this description made it clear that Trump himself was a subtext. As Jackson commented that Caesar is 'very pleased with himself,' a change of shot showed Klein giving a wry laugh in response.[695] This sequence prompted cinema audiences to read a particular allusion into Jackson's description – one which, given the high-profile examples of comparison between Trump and Shakespeare's Roman dictator, would likely have been obvious. Moreover, cinema audiences were listening with Trump's recent inauguration

[691] Liam Stack, 'Et Tu, Delta? Shakespeare in the Park Sponsors Withdraw from Trump-Like 'Julius Caesar'', *New York* Times, 11 June 2017 < https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/11/arts/delta-airline-trump-public-theater-julius-caesar.html> [accessed 26 May 2020].

[692] *Julius Caesar,* directed for the screen by Dewi Humphreys, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon,* Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 26 April 2017.

[693] Ibid.

[694] Ibid.

[695] Ibid.

in mind (20 January 2017), inviting this characterisation of Shakespeare's Roman leader to stand as an allegory of the new American president. Jackson's choice of 'leader', as in the example of Doran describing Ancient Britain as a 'union', likewise worked to emphasise the implicit parallel drawn by his description.[696] While the word 'leader' does not appear in *Caesar*, Jackson's use of this term allowed him to encompass and allude easily to both Caesar's role in the play and Trump's contemporary role in American democracy.[697]

The shared joke between Klein, Jackson and the cinema audiences functioned as a tacit denunciation of any political authority Trump might claim, anticipating that the broadcast's viewers would also regard the president as a figure of ridicule rather than one worthy of respect. Despite not naming Trump, therefore, Jackson's description of Caesar was clearly overwritten by ideas popularly held about the unsuitability of the president. The concealed nature of this reference not only worked to confirm the allusion to Trump as a kind of 'inside joke', it also served to position Shakespeare in a paradoxical position of both relevance and timelessness. Trump's presence as a subtext allowed *Caesar* to retain an impression of timeless ambiguity which enables the characters and setting to be read in relation to any number of historical dictators. This timelessness was likewise matched by the production's design, which blended Roman costumes with references to Nazi-style fascist architecture. As Jackson noted, the set design was 'more in the manner of Albert Speer's […] designs in the nineteen-thirties' than ancient Rome.[698] The paratextual subtext of allusion to Trump combined with the production's cross-period design elements enabled this broadcast argue for the play as depicting a transhistorical and yet immediately resonant story of political struggle.

While Jackson's allusion to Trump in the live interview argued for Shakespeare's work as a productive form of veiled satire, a later pre-recorded short film saw *Caesar*'s relevance to the

[696] *Cymbeline,* directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward.

[697] OpenSourceShakespeare, search for 'leader' within *Julius Caesar*; *Julius Caesar,* directed for the screen by Dewi Humphreys.

[698] *Julius Caesar,* directed for the screen by Dewi Humphreys.

controversial election explored in greater depth. Speaking in an interview clip, actor Alex Waldmann (Brutus) framed the play as speaking directly to concerns about the future of Trump's presidency:

> *Julius Caesar* feels very relevant […] would people – if before Trump was made president, if a few people got together and said, 'Shall we take out Trump?' would that have been justified based on what might – the potential disaster that might happen over the next few years?[699]

Waldmann's interview clip extended the play's relevance far beyond the comparison drawn by Jackson between Trump and Caesar. Rather, in this sequence, Waldmann's application of the Trump/Caesar allegory invited a reading in which the action of the whole play speaks to concerns about the future of Trump's presidency. This mediation of the play's relevance demonstrates its capacity to hold multiple and conflicting interpretations – the actor tellingly did not frame the play as offering an answer, but rather as a source of further questions about the ethical dilemma of politically-motivated assassination. Beyond the obvious 'value-enhancement' that comes with appealing to the concerns and interests of a contemporary audience, the value of Shakespeare's relevance was framed by Jackson and Waldmann as a means to question and challenge Trump's political authority.[700] In this way, the broadcast also facilitated an exploration of the entire play through Shakespeare's contemporary relevance. As the Brexit debate helped to contextualise *Cymbeline* and to refresh *Romeo*, Waldmann's suggestion that the play functions as a Trump allegory located the importance of this allegory in the struggle his own character, Brutus, faces. *Caesar* was therefore approached as a productive channel through which to exercise satirical disapproval of Trump and to reflect upon concerns about the rise of alt-right populism: situating the newly inaugurated American president as a productive figure through whom to interpret the action and moral dilemmas of the play.

Broadcast the following year, the paratextual framing of NT Live's *Julius Caesar* (2018) from the Bridge Theatre emphasised that production's use of strong visual analogy between Caesar and Trump (most notably red caps that imitated Trump's infamous 'Make America Great Again' [MAGA]

[699] *Julius Caesar*, directed for the screen by Dewi Humphreys.

[700] Genette, p.201.

campaign merchandise). In an example of a particularly unconventional live broadcast, *Caesar*'s paratextual framing was characterised by an implicit exploration of the role of the public in facilitating the rise of fascist leaders. It is important to note that this broadcast arrived in the middle of the period between the commission (May 2017) and publication (April 2019) of the 'Mueller Report': an investigation into allegations of illicit interference by the Russian government into Trump's presidential campaign.[701] These allegations prompted reflection on Trump's recent campaign, the role of foreign interference, and questions of the will of the people that had also continued to reverberate since the Brexit referendum. Alongside references to Trump in the broadcast paratexts was a mingling of this American political context with the contemporary popularity of a more liberal figure in British politics, Jeremy Corbyn. Without naming either politician, this broadcast implicated the in-theatre audience to introduce Shakespeare's work with allusions to the rise of populism on both sides of the Atlantic.

As the first production mounted by former Artistic Director of the NT, Nicholas Hytner, in the newly built Bridge Theatre, this *Caesar* combined Hytner's penchant for contemporary settings with a protean and immersive staging.[702] The broadcast featured only one conventional paratext in the usual style of NT Live: a presenter monologue delivered by Kirsty Lang. Instead of the typical pre-show paratextual content, the broadcast opened with a transmission of the theatre space filling with standing audience members, while a small band played a music set. While this action would have also been experienced by in-theatre audiences and was consequently not exclusive to the broadcast of the production, its mediation for cinema audiences was significant. Filmed with stylistic allusions to other media, this pre-set action variously took on a voyeuristic tone and made meaningful political allusions for cinema audiences. As I argue, the unconventional structure of this opening paratext allowed the Bridge Theatre's audience to emerge as the primary means of communicating relevance to cinema audiences – more so than in any other Shakespearean live theatre broadcast. Mediated to foreground

[701] Robert S. Mueller III, 'Report on the Investigation into Russian Interference in the 2016 Presidential Election', vol.I, (Washington D.C.: US Department of Justice, 2019) <https://www.justice.gov/storage/report.pdf> [accessed 5 June 2020].

[702] Rokison-Woodall, p. 3.

the in-theatre audience's complicity and interaction with the production's own political allusions, this broadcast was inescapably overlaid with questions of the role of the voting public in Trump's election.

The transmission opened on a view of the Bridge Theatre auditorium, which encompassed a large, central pit for standing audience members. Among the spectators who slowly filled the pit was a handful of theatre stewards manning merchandise stands which sold imitation-MAGA caps, emblazoned with 'Caesar.' The evocative power of these caps cannot be understated, particularly considering the fact that the president himself and his supporters were frequently seen wearing identical caps at events and rallies where Trump had used his campaign speeches to voice some of his most controversial opinions and introduce some of his most divisive policies. This opening transmission documented members of the Bridge audience purchasing these caps (seen in Figure 10), demonstrating what Stephen Purcell has called the 'strategy of coercing their audiences into questionable moments of crowd behaviour' that characterises productions that challenge the norm of a passive spectator.[703]

The behaviours facilitated by Hytner and Bunny Christie's immersive staging, particularly those witnessed by cinema audiences in the broadcast, were not solely political by virtue of their allusions to Trump. As Adam Alston has considered, immersive theatre is apt to 'assign to audiences a scheme of production that is neoliberal in character […] that thrives on the exhilarating perception of risk, or that invites entrepreneurial participation.'[704] Paratextual material that emphasised the Bridge

[703] Stephen Purcell, *Shakespeare and Audience in Practice* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 51

[704] Adam Alston, *Beyond Immersive Theatre: Aesthetics, Politics and Productive Participation* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 21.

Figure 8: Mark Antony (David Morrissey) addresses a crowd of onlookers at Caesar's funeral, some of whom wear 'Caesar' caps.

audience's consumption of a mock-Trump agenda was, in this way, also bound with the already politicised conditions of *Caesar*'s immersive staging. Whether or not the views represented by the imitation caps were espoused by members of the theatre audience who purchased them (a number of spectators were seen later in the broadcast wearing the caps reversed as in the image above, perhaps in a playful retaliation against the political agenda they represented), the transmission that showed members of the Bridge audience buying into a connotative symbol of the alt-right would have resonated as a type of voyeurism into the contemporary political climate of right-wing nationalism in the US. This paratext foregrounded a sinister consequence of the production's deeply allusive choices: that the predominantly young, majority Metropolitan Bridge theatre audience were encouraged to 'play' at being consumers of a Trump-like, alt-right politics – a reading that was later consolidated when theatre stewards in the production's assassination scene ordered the standing audience to crouch to the ground

as if there was a real active shooter in the theatre space.[705] By emphasising the complicity of the production's crowd, this opening paratext implicated the in-theatre audience in a system of political allusion which questioned the role of the consumer and the spectator in Trump's rise to power, and the violent conflicts that have emerged over the course of his presidency.

The threat of audience complicity with the production's Trump-like Caesar was also enforced in Lang's presenter monologue, which she delivered among the assembling crowd in the pit. Her position emphasised the paratextual importance of the crowd, as Lang became part of the audience who would later be used as the Roman people. Lang concluded her monologue with a cry of 'Hail, Caesar!', effecting a kind of paratextual complicity with the agenda of the production's Trump/Caesar figure. This particularly performative moment invited cinema audiences to infer a positive endorsement of the populism represented by Caesar, one that distinctly contrasts the impression of Trump as a threat to democracy created within the RSC Live *Caesar*. In this regard, the broadcast used both Lang and the Bridge Theatre audience to argue for the fickle loyalties of the population (after all, the audience who were seemingly so complicit in Caesar's power would later watch his assassination without intervening themselves), arguing for the relevance of the play to concerns about a contemporary voting populace.

While the production's visual allusions to Trump and their mediation within the broadcast served as an exploration of the play's relevance to contemporary American politics, the NT Live *Caesar* also set this international concern in conversation with British politics. The broadcast made an implicit allusion to the popularity of then-Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn. The summer prior to the *Caesar* broadcast saw Jeremy Corbyn take to the Pyramid Stage at the Glastonbury Festival, delivering an address which denounced Trump's plans to build a wall along the border between the United States and

[705] Andy Kesson and Peter Kirwan have each considered the troubling ethics of the production's immersive staging, particularly in relation to the contemporary threat of gun violence in America and to the ethics of weaponizing a standing audience. In Andy Kesson, ''I do fear the people': theatre and the problem with audiences', *Before Shakespeare*, 16 February 2018 <https://beforeshakespeare.com/2018/02/16/julius-caesar-and-the-politics-of-having-an-audience/> [accessed 18 June 2020] and Peter Kirwan, 'Julius Caesar @ Bridge Theatre', *The Bardathon*, 4 March 2018 <https://blogs.nottingham.ac.uk/bardathon/2018/03/04/julius-caesar-bridge-theatre/> [accessed 18 June 2020].

Mexico.[706] This allusion was communicated through the shot choices which framed the band performing within the pit of the Bridge auditorium. Wide panning shots documented the band's set, mixing these with closer shots of the Bridge audience dancing, drinking, and milling around the space. This filmic style would have immediately resonated with those cinema audiences familiar with the BBC's coverage of Glastonbury, which regularly uses the same visual language to communicate the scale and atmosphere of the festival's crowds. While an aesthetic allusion to the Glastonbury festival may not seem to be politically charged, there would have been a range of meanings accessible to the broadcast's cinema audiences in the moment of its original transmission. The festival, and Corbyn's address, was marked by a repeated refrain of the chant, 'Oh Jeremy Corbyn', sung to the tune of 'Seven Nation Army'. As the broadcast's opening transmission featured the band performing 'Seven Nation Army', these references coalesced into a deeply connotative allusion to Corbyn and his speech condemning Trump at Glastonbury.

This stylised filmic aesthetic and the performance of 'Seven Nation Army' within the broadcast's opening transmission overlaid what was already an implicit allusion to theatre audiences with additional meaning for cinema audiences. Read in conversation with the broadcast's exploration of the power of the people in facilitating the rise of a Trump-like dictator, the filmic allusion to Corbyn's speech at Glastonbury emerged as exploring a contrasting kind of liberal populism. This pre-set action, with its oblique references and attempts to show the Bridge crowd harbouring different political allegiances, embodied what Andrew James Hartley calls the 'the inherent ambiguities of the Shakespearean text, its refusal to take absolute and unequivocal positions.'[707] NT Live's *Caesar* therefore drew on the production's own allusive strategies, mediating and adapting these to invite juxtaposing political allusions to frame the Shakespearean performance. By centralising the role of the

[706] Nadia Khomami and Hannah Ellis-Peterson, 'Jeremy Corbyn calls for unity in Glastonbury speech', *Guardian,* 24 June 2017 <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2017/jun/24/jeremy-corbyn-calls-for-unity-in-glastonbury-speech> [accessed 5 July 2019].

[707] Andrew James Hartley, *Shakespeare and Political Theatre in Practice* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 101.

crowd and emphasising the production's two strands of political reference, this broadcast highlighted the capacity for Shakespeare's works to encompass and speak to oppositional ideologies.

The dependence of both of these broadcasts on a Trump/Caesar allusion (and, in the case of the NT Live *Caesar*, even a Corbyn/Caesar allusion) allowed for arguments of Shakespeare's relevance that were clear and easily attachable to the play's central figure. However, in participating in the culture of a post-election Caesar/Trump allegory, these broadcasts threatened to enact what Emma Smith notes is the 'radical oversimplification of Shakespeare's works' when trying to fit them exactly against a particular political context.[708] When compared with the broadcasts I consider in the previous section, which spanned a range of the issues and social concerns both before and following the Brexit vote, the capitalisation of both broadcasts on the elision of Trump and Caesar appears dangerously reductive. Moreover, the paratextual framing of these broadcasts seldom went beyond establishing a contemporary allegorical context for the play – with the exception of Waldmann, who highlighted the value of the play in exploring some of the more nuanced moral questions that arose from Trump's election. Whilst paratexts to these broadcasts each offered the play as a productive means by which to approach Trump's election as president, parallels drawn between Trump and Caesar ultimately fall short of any desired liberal or conservative reading of the play because *Caesar*, as Smith notes, 'doesn't ultimately endorse one side over the other […] Shakespeare is neither firmly for or against Caesar.'[709] The RSC Live broadcast of *Caesar* may have sought to frame the play as a satirical denouncement of Trump and the 'potential disaster' of his presidency, and the NTLive *Caesar* to present the danger of commercial endorsement in an age of increasing right-wing populism, but the employment of direct allegory between the figures of Trump and Caesar only highlights the irreconcilable ambiguities of a play that, as Smith observes, is 'about politics, rather than being partisan.'[710]

[708] Smith, 'May as Polonius', n.p.

[709] Ibid.

[710] *Julius Caesar*, directed for the screen by Dewi Humphreys; Smith, 'May as Polonius', n.p.

‘Brave New World’[711]

Shakespeare never used a hashtag. His works were never backed up on the Cloud (though many scholars wish they had been), nor were his audiences able to book their afternoon theatre tickets instantaneously through an app. Long dead before even the first electric light bulb (let alone the birth of the internet), the world which we continue to explore and explain through Shakespeare’s works would be frighteningly alien to the author himself. Why, then, do we continually seek in his plays the ability to respond to a range of complex, contemporary issues? What is the value of a Shakespeare who, as in the 2016 celebrations, is able to speak to us from beyond the grave? This chapter has explored examples of broadcast paratexts in which Shakespeare’s works have been made to speak to seismic political shifts. These events were embedded in, and arose from, the unique concerns and cultures of their moment – nonetheless, the paratexts explored in this chapter sustained (however implicitly) the argument that Shakespeare’s works are a productive means through which to understand them.

Shakespeare’s unique role in addressing contemporary events – the answer to the questions posed above – is less apparent from broadcast paratexts than it is from a detailed exploration of ‘the historical processes that have made possible the transmission of “Shakespeare” to the present day.’ [712] While a full exploration of these processes is beyond the scope of this chapter, I began with the recent contribution of two broadcasts that centred on the Shakespeare400 celebrations as a part of ongoing arguments for Shakespeare’s relevance to contemporary events. Moreover, while they cannot comprehensively answer questions of ‘Why Shakespeare?’, this chapter has shown the ability of broadcast paratexts to capitalise upon the ‘inherent ambiguities’ within Shakespeare’s works that allow for applications to issues as diverse and complex as the emergence of the #MeToo movement or the migrant crisis.[713] As Hartley highlights, the resonances of Shakespeare’s works are liable to operate

[711] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (Oxford: OUP, 1987), V.1. 88.

[712] McLuskie and Rumbold, p. 76.

[713] Hartley, p. 101.

even independently of the creative agents who stage them, with the potential for artistic decisions to be 'overwritten by what the audience [brings] with them into the auditorium.'[714]

While theatre broadcast paratexts may constitute only part of the history and cultural processes that address the question of why it is Shakespeare around whom claims of relevance continue to accumulate, they are nonetheless invaluable as a means by which to understand *how* these claims are made and, in turn, shape Shakespearean value. Programming evidently plays an important role. The broadcasts of *Cymbeline* and *King Lear* I discuss above were scheduled to set Shakespeare's presentations of Ancient Britain in conversation with a contemporary moment in which Britain was (at risk of) entering a new and unprecedented phase of being. Likewise, NT Live's *Julius Caesar* was staged at a distance of two years from Trump's election to the US presidency, when the images and allusions drawn upon in that broadcast's paratextual content had crystallised with new and deeply concerning meanings. Theatre broadcast paratexts, this chapter highlights, are by their nature ephemeral and apt to capitalise on a single performance context. Understanding the importance of these framing devices in their moment of reception is key to appreciating how Shakespeare's relevance (and, by extension, his value) is continually affirmed in this fleeting performance medium.

Moreover, this chapter has demonstrated the importance of what McLuskie and Rumbold call the 'particular discursive techniques that turn the play's narratives into allegories of the present as well as paradigms of a recognisable past.'[715] In focusing on the work of broadcast paratexts, I have addressed the ways in which rhetoric surrounding Shakespeare's works imbues these works with the paradoxical privilege of both relevance and timelessness, and the playwright himself with the superhuman ability to be dead and very much (a)*Live!* The paratexts explored here illustrate one means by which Shakespeare's works are 'discursive[ly]' brought to speak to contemporary events and for/against contemporary figures – nowhere more pointedly than in the examples that supplant Shakespearean vocabulary for a deeply connotative contemporary one (as in 'union' and 'leader').[716] These examples

[714] Hartley, p. 3.

[715] McLuskie and Rumbold, p. 55.

[716] Ibid.

of linguistic substitution point towards an interesting manifestation of the adaptive tendency I considered at the beginning of this chapter. Rather than bending the Shakespearean text to fit the contemporary moment, it is the work of these broadcast paratexts to (re)frame the concerns of Shakespeare's plays at the fringes of performances and in a recognisably contemporary vocabulary. These claims for relevance therefore enact almost imperceptible adaptations of the Shakespearean text: overwriting the works with terms and figures of speech that immediately connote the contemporary context and validate arguments of the play's relevance.

While these claims for relevance draw on the multivalence and 'refusal to take absolute and unequivocal political positions' inherent to the Shakespearean text, claims that the playwright's works can illuminate contemporary issues may pose a distinctly contemporary problem.[717] The examples of the Brexit referendum and the election of Donald Trump to the US presidency have demonstrated the capacity for Shakespeare's works to be made to speak in the service of oppositional – and, in some cases, deeply divisive – ideologies. The mediation of contemporary events explored in these broadcast paratexts suggests that it is not only Shakespeare's works that are subject to a 'radical oversimplification' in claims for the playwright's relevance.[718] Rather, in continually attributing to Shakespeare the ability to speak to increasingly complex social and political concerns, these paratexts run the risk of oversimplifying the events that they remediate. While Shakespeare is by no means presented as the ultimate source of information on these issues, and while his works can offer productive loci of exploration, appropriation and even protest, the condensed and often selective way in which contemporary events are set into conversation with his works situates these paratexts as a potential source of misinformation. In a post-truth age, the framing of Shakespeare's works plays a crucial role in arguing for their relevance to contemporary issues that, as McLuskie and Rumbold highlight, 'neither Shakespeare nor his characters could possibly have envisaged or imagined.'[719] Attending to the ways in which these paratexts situate Shakespeare's works as relevant – and the playwright himself in relation

[717] Hartley, p. 101.

[718] Smith, 'May as Polonius', n.p.

[719] McLuskie and Rumbold, p. 54.

to contemporary views and ideologies – allows for a greater understanding not only of how Shakespearean value is circulated, but of how the playwright's works operate within the increasingly divisive political cultures of the twenty-first century.

Conclusion

I began this thesis with a single image of Shakespeare, a likeness captured in Martin Droeshout's engraving. Throughout my discussion, many more images of the playwright have emerged in framing materials whose form and function are not far removed from the commercial and commemorative impulses that drove the publication of the First Folio. In addressing the role that live theatre broadcast paratexts play in framing Shakespeare's works, it was my intention to uncover the narratives and assumptions that continue to shape new likenesses of the playwright for contemporary audiences and to interrogate the role of the theatrical institution in performing this framing work. I have outlined and explored in depth the importance of broadcast paratexts as a form of institutional dramaturgy. Far from simply accommodating the theatrical performance and negotiating its mediation to cinema audiences, broadcast paratexts are an integral form of self-presentation for Shakespearean institutions and establish important associations for their audiences.

Detailing the functions and the thematic consistencies of Shakespearean broadcast paratexts has likewise revealed the extent to which these framing materials contribute to continually evolving ideas about the playwright. The examples I have considered in this study have worked upon narratives of Shakespearean biography, the playwright's relevance to contemporary and complex political events, in negotiations of value within his dramatic canon, and the position of his works as traversing high and popular culture. As such, my discussion of broadcast paratexts argues for the need to reconsider some of the debates that are central to Shakespearean broadcast criticism. By unpicking the complexity of paratexts across the first decade of Shakespearean broadcasts, I have demonstrated the diversity in styles not just across these major producing theatres, but within their own Shakespearean broadcast canons. As a result, my discussion of the conventions and trends of broadcast paratexts contributes much-needed work to understandings of institutional identity already emerging in Shakespearean broadcast criticism. Moreover, by analysing paratexts for their individual functions and their role within the wider framing structure of a broadcast, I have also highlighted the need to move away from the generalisations previously made in broadcast criticism about the function of paratexts as a whole. In Chapters Two and Three, I sought to reframe the interval and post-performance space as interpretively significant,

demonstrating that these spaces offer framing narratives which are distinct from those offered by prefatory paratexts. Ultimately, I have shown that generalised functions offered previously by critics ('part informational […] part promotional'[720], '[intended to replicate] theatre programmes'[721], 'like being forced to read the program before the performance begins'[722]) are problematic oversimplifications. These materials in fact negotiate complex meanings between the viewer and the production, and the viewer and the broadcasting theatre company. By situating paratextual conventions within the context of individual broadcasts and of the wider broadcasting canons of NT Live and RSC Live, my analysis offers the opportunity to rethink the varied and contingent functions of paratexts in this medium. What has emerged is that the role of broadcast paratexts in shaping ideas about the playwright for contemporary audiences is far more significant than previous critics of Shakespearean broadcasts have allowed.

My research has also illustrated that broadcast paratexts are not just a productive way of looking at Shakespearean performance and the playwright's value in the present moment. Throughout my discussion, I have shown how broadcast paratexts re-evoke historical debates ranging from the contention between the RSC and the NT for public funding in Chapter Four, the traditional role of high-profile performers in shaping Shakespeare's elevated cultural capital in Chapter Five, and the contested status of Shakespeare's canonically marginal works in Chapter Six, as well as highlighting similarities with early modern performance elements throughout the chapters included in Part I: Conventions and Trends. As contemporary framing materials, paratexts often summon the ghosts of historical ideas and assumptions about Shakespeare, recontextualising these in new media and new contexts. Furthermore, my research has demonstrated that the relationship between broadcast paratexts and the plays they frame makes these materials deeply indicative of attitudes towards a Shakespearean work – re-performing historical value judgements (affirming, for example, the status of *Hamlet* in Chapter Five while largely disparaging the works in Chapter Six), and offering broader conclusions about understandings of genre.

[720] Barker, p. 13.

[721] Wyver, 'Screening the RSC Stage', p. 297.

[722] Sullivan, '"The form of things unknown"', p. 635.

The methodology I employ in the case study chapters of Part II, grouping broadcasts based on themes, would prove productive for critics interested in how framing narratives accumulate around plays of a particular genre or chronological position within Shakespeare's canon. Paratexts, as my research has shown, are an invaluable resource not only for approaching the legacy of historical concerns within Shakespeare studies, but for exploring how these concerns are remediated for and understood by contemporary audiences.

Attention to the ways in which broadcast paratexts negotiate Shakespearean value has also led to important reflections on what – and *who* – this value serves. Pascale Aebischer argues that '[t]echnologies of performance […] continue to encode and reinforce rigid technologies of gender in mainstream performances of early modern drama', as well as highlighting that HD cameras used in live broadcasts have an 'inherent bias in favour of light skin tones' to the disadvantage of BAME actors.[723] My discussion of broadcast presenters in Chapter One touched upon the disproportionate ratio of male directors to female directors in the Shakespearean broadcast canon (a reflection of the imbalance of the UK's arts industry at large), and close attention to the negotiations of power and cultural value undertaken by broadcast paratexts has also shed light on other areas of systemic inequality. The conclusion to Chapter Five drew on Anna Blackwell's work on the prestige of the 'Shakespearean' to argue that the role of star performers in broadcast paratexts risks perpetuating the association of Shakespearean cultural value and a hermeneutic authority over his works with other forms of racial and social privilege. Jami Rogers, in her discussion of Talawa and Black Theatre Live's broadcasting ventures, alludes to the concern that larger broadcasting institutions such as NT Live and RSC Live pose a risk to the commercial survival of companies who engage in regional touring – particularly, in her examples, to companies whose work is founded on 'integrating ethnic minority work in classical

[723] Aebischer, *Shakespeare, Spectatorship*, p. 209; p. 182. Aebischer concludes her discussion within *Shakespeare, Spectatorship* with examples of 'Technophelias', reflecting that the gender bias made more pronounced by digital performance technologies is echoed in the history of artistic and romanticised portrayals of the death of Ophelia (pp. 209 – 218). In her chapter on the RSC Live *Hamlet*, Aebischer incisively deconstructs the way in which broadcast cameras captured the performance of BAME actors in that production (pp. 182 – 186).

theatre's historical narrative.'[724] By exploring how broadcast paratexts – an integral form of brand identity for both companies – present Shakespearean value, I have begun to unpick some of the structural inequalities that are represented by the dominance of companies like the RSC and NT in the Shakespeare live theatre broadcasting landscape. Redressing these inequalities calls for further studies to examine how the framing of Shakespearean performance in new media might participate in the continuing association of the playwright and his works with forms of social, economic, and racial privilege.

While my thesis has considered the development of paratextual conventions across the first ten years of Shakespearean live theatre broadcasts, this end of this decade was marked by a significant disruption for both NT Live and RSC Live. The seismic upheaval occasioned by the global Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 signalled a threat to the future of the UK's theatre industry and raised questions of the role played by digital mediation in a socially-distanced future. In my final examples, I propose that the broadcast outputs of the NT and RSC in response to the UK's enforced period of lockdown offer useful reflections on the functions of, and characteristic narratives offered by, broadcast paratexts. These examples not only consolidate ideas of institutional identity and Shakespearean value which have recurred throughout my analysis, rather they also offer important reflections on the role of paratexts within the shifting live broadcast medium.

With theatres and cinemas closed to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus, the NT and RSC (as well as a variety of other theatres and theatre companies) released select broadcasts to online viewing platforms.[725] NT Live launched 'NT At Home', an initiative that streamed productions from

[724] Rogers, p. 150.

[725] Pascale Aebischer and Rachael Nicholas headed a University of Exeter study that analysed a case study digital performance by Creation Theatre in response to the UK's lockdown and offered practical guidance for theatre companies transitioning from physical to digital performances, in Pascale Aebischer and Rachael Nicholas, *Digital Theatre Transformation: A Case Study and Digital Tool Kit* (Exeter: University of Exeter, 2020). Gemma Allred and Ben Broadribb have also offered some preliminary classifications of the types of digital Shakespearean performance emerging in response to the pandemic in 'Lockdown Shakespeare: the State of (the) Play', *'Action is Eloquence': Rethinking Shakespeare*, 18 May 2020,

the company's broadcast canon for free on YouTube, releasing one production per week from 2nd April to 16th July.[726] Of the sixteen productions streamed in total, four Shakespeare productions featured. The distribution of NT broadcasts aimed to preserve the sense of 'event' felt in the original contexts of these broadcasts with the option to watch 'live' as the productions were streamed weekly onto YouTube. By comparison, the RSC joined Shakespeare's Globe in releasing a selection of broadcasts which all were distributed simultaneously via BBC's digital viewing platform, iPlayer, and available for a longer period of time as part of the BBC's 'Culture in Quarantine' initiative. Coinciding with Shakespeare's birthday, the RSC shared six of their broadcast productions via the iPlayer, where they were included alongside recorded opera and ballet performances and two broadcasts from Shakespeare's Globe (see Figure 11).[727] In both instances, the broadcasts released by the NT and RSC consisted of performances that had been previously offered within the commercial context of the cinema and were now available to watch for a limited period, at home and for free.

<https://medium.com/action-is-eloquence-re-thinking-shakespeare/lockdown-shakespeare-the-state-of-the-play-88742a95d4ea> [accessed 20 May 2020].

[726] The National Theatre streamed productions of *Twelfth Night* (originally screen in 2017), *Antony and Cleopatra* (2018), *Coriolanus* (2014), and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2019). In addition to these, NT hosted a number of theatre themed quizzes which were freely available on YouTube for limited periods of time. I have considered the re-release of *Twelfth Night*, which was streamed on the 23rd of April to coincide with Shakespeare's birthday, in '*Twelfth Night* Review', *Shakespeare Bulletin* (forthcoming 2021). It was also announced, in December 2020, that the NT would launch a digital theatre streaming service based on a Netflix-style subscription model.

[727] The RSC released the following broadcasts to the BBC iPlayer: *Macbeth* (2018), *Hamlet* (2016), *Romeo and Juliet* (2018), *Much Ado About Nothing* (2014), *Othello* (2015) and *The Merchant of Venice* (2015). As well as productions which were already released to the paid subscription service, Marquee TV, the RSC also released a wider range of their broadcast performances to BritBox which similarly charges a monthly fee. See 'Watch RSC Shows From Home' <https://www.rsc.org.uk/news/watch-rsc-shows-from-home>[accessed 24 September 2020]. Shakespeare's Globe also released broadcasts in a distribution model similar to that of NT At Home, streaming six productions via YouTube with one available to watch every two weeks. These were available to watch for free, signalling a shift from the company's usual practice in which digital productions are typically confined to the Globe's pay-per-view service, Globe Player. See Shakespeare's Globe, 'How to watch our free Globe Player films', 3 April 2020 <https://www.shakespearesglobe.com/discover/blogs-and-features/2020/04/03/how-to-watch-our-free-globe-player-films/> [accessed 13 October 2020].

Beyond the BBC's framing of these Shakespearean performances under the validating (and morally bolstering) title of 'Culture in Quarantine', the RSC's iPlayer broadcasts did not retain the paratextual framing that had accompanied their original transmission to cinemas. Firstly, this suggests the role of broadcast paratexts in justifying the elevated cost of a cinema ticket. Paratexts, within the varying commercial models adopted by RSC Live and NT Live, may be uniquely expendable and adaptable – but the omission of the original paratexts in both NT At Home broadcasts and RSC Live's iPlayer releases suggests that they are also deeply rooted in the performance of the Shakespeare production as a live event. Moreover, in the case of RSC Live, the absence of the original paratexts further consolidates the links between the company's broadcast-canonising project and their characteristic paratextual consistency. As I argued in the conclusion to Part I of this thesis, RSC Live's 'First Folio (plus *Pericles*)' project is in part manifested through the paratextual consistency of their live broadcasts.[728] Outside of the context of cinematic reception, therefore, these performances were divorced from the broader RSC Live canon and therefore required less paratextual labour to create and enforce the company's 'signature' broadcast experience. The ability to watch the RSC's productions repeatedly and asynchronously on the iPlayer suggests that without the liveness of the broadcast event, these paratexts are at best anachronistic or, at worst, appear like a jarring caricature of 'eventness.'

By comparison, the weekly streams of NT At Home broadcasts retained a different sense of event. Together with a renewed commercial context – in which the NT used these broadcasts to solicit donations for their theatre – this call upon communal 'aliveness' led NT At Home's broadcast performances to be reframed within the specific context of the impact of the pandemic on the UK's theatre industry.[729] Each broadcast was framed by a set of simple black and white text slides (see Figure

[728] The aim for RSC Live to broadcast 'all of the Folio plays plus Pericles' is one I return to in various places throughout this thesis – see particularly my discussion of institutionally shaped paratexts in the conclusion to Part I: Conventions and Trends (pp. 128 – 131). John Wyver discusses the intention to stage and broadcast these works in Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company, p. 159 – 160.

[729] In addition to promoting feedback and live tweeting along with the broadcasts on NT Live's Twitter account, the first nine NT At Home broadcasts coincided with the national campaign known as 'Clap For Our Carers'. The campaign invited the British public to applaud key workers every Thursday evening at 20:00 between 26 March and 28 May 2020, meaning that the clap usually interrupted NT At Home streams which began at 19:00. Erin

12), prefacing the performance and filling a brief interval break, which called for donations to subsidise the future work of the NT and to protect from the financial loss of a prolonged period of closure:

> Theatres around the world are closed and facing a devastating impact from Coronavirus. / Theatre and the arts are a positive force for our community in turbulent times. / As you enjoy this recorded performance, please consider a donation to support this great industry.[730]

While these slides also accompanied other NT At Home broadcasts, spanning a range of playwrights and productions from a number of theatres, the argument of the value of the arts industry implicit in this framing is doubly significant in relation to Shakespeare's works. In the broadcasts of Shakespearean performances, the playwright's cultural value was brought to supplement an argument of the value of British theatre in general. As such, these slides constituted an urgent reinforcement of NT Live's brand ethos as argued by Susan Bennett: '[i]n the second season, NT Live's strapline became "Best of British Theatre" […] And what could more easily and effectively connote "Best of British Theatre" than Shakespeare?'[731] Moreover, these slides implicated Shakespearean performance within a broader narrative of the restorative and community-building force of live theatre. Responding to the 'turbulent times' and 'devastating impact' of Covid-19, NT At Home framed Shakespearean performance among the work of other playwrights as a way of boosting morale and consolidating a sense of 'community' in a newly isolated world. When used in the context of Shakespearean performance, therefore, these slides necessarily capitalised upon the playwright's elevated cultural value to allow this value to

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Sullivan's definition of 'aliveness' as 'a collective audience practice rooted in the appreciation, celebration and discussion of an artistic event' alludes to the sense of communality and particularly appreciation that was only emphasised by the shared timing of the streams and the weekly Clap For Our Carers. In Erin Sullivan, 'The Audience is Present: Aliveness, Social Media, and the Theatre Broadcast Experience', *Shakespeare and the 'Live' Theatre Broadcast Experience*, edited by Pascale Aebischer, Susanne Greenhalgh and Laurie E. Osbourne (London: Arden Bloomsbury, 2018), pp.59-75, p. 60. I also consider the dual sense of 'event' inherent to NT At Home's broadcast of *Twelfth Night* which, in addition to coinciding with the weekly Clap For Our Carers, was released on (what is assumed to have been) Shakespeare's birthday, in Sharrock, '*Twelfth Night* Review', n.p.

[730] National Theatre, *Official Twelfth Night Featuring Tamsin Greig | Free National Theatre Live Full Performance*, online video recording, YouTube, 23 April 2020, URL no longer available, [accessed 23 April 2020].

[731] Bennett, 'Shakespeare's New Marketplace', p. 46.

perform emblematically not only for the value of the NT, but as a call to preserve the very mode of live theatrical performance that these broadcasts mediated.

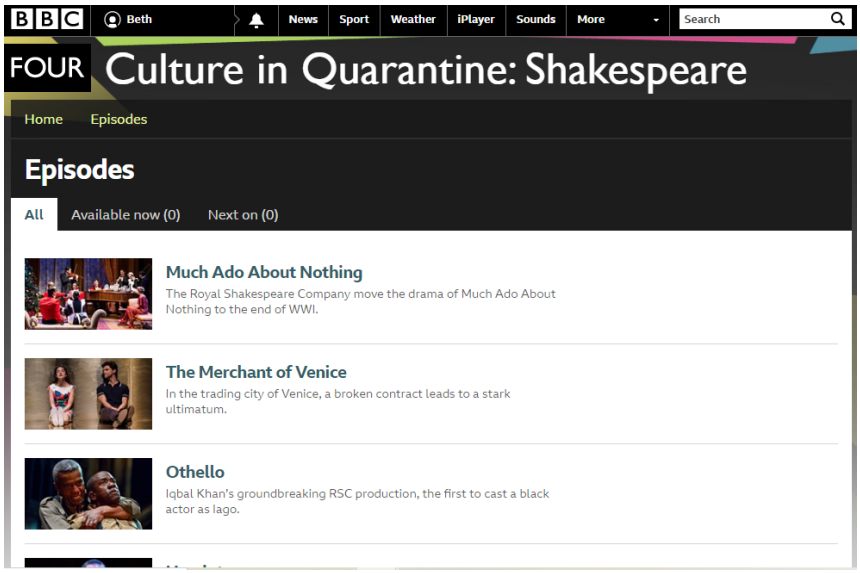

Figure 11: A selection of the RSC Live broadcasts available via iPlayer as part of the BBC's 'Culture in Quarantine' initiative.

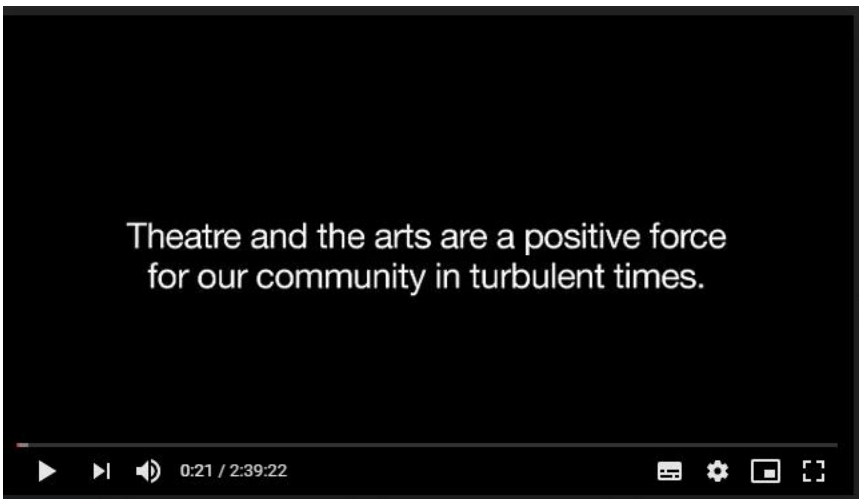

Figure 12: A slide prefacing the NT At Home stream of *Twelfth Night*, released to YouTube on 23 April 2020.

The framing that implicated Shakespeare's works as responsive to, and restorative within, the Covid-19 pandemic would seem to affirm unequivocally Anna Blackwell's observation that 'Shakespeare overwrites all cultural texts and underwrites all history.'[732] Throughout this thesis I have demonstrated that, by exploring the interpretive work undertaken by broadcast paratexts and the theatre

[732] Blackwell, *Shakespearean*, p. 178.

companies that produce them, we can appreciate how far the cultural and historical eminence of the playwright is dependent upon the framing and continual remediation of his works. The full impact that Covid-19 will have on shaping Shakespearean performance in new digital media remains to be seen. Nonetheless, the ability of broadcast paratexts to shape institutional identity and reinforce existing ideas of the playwright's value draws much needed attention to the power structures that underlie the creation of Shakespearean canons in new performance media. This thesis has uncovered the ways in which broadcast paratexts bolster assumptions about Shakespearean value which are markedly traditional: including the playwright's association with high forms of culture as well as with a white, middle-class elite and ideas of nationalist nostalgia; his uniquely elevated artistic ability; and arguments that his works speak to complex political and social issues even four hundred years after his death.

In the introduction to this thesis, I considered the argument re-evoked in Pascale Aebischer's *Shakespeare, Spectatorship* that 'new' performance technologies are 'frequently harnessed strategically to reactivate older forms of spectatorial engagement.'[733] Even within seemingly innovative performance technologies, Aebischer's work reminds us, are the echoes of familiar and historically grounded modes of viewing. My own work has elucidated a comparable relationship within the narratives of Shakespearean value proposed by live theatre broadcast paratexts. Despite drawing from the forms and conventions of markedly contemporary technologies, the framing of Shakespeare's work in live broadcasts rehearses age-old narratives of the playwright's value, artistic ability, and his centrality to ideas of national and cultural identity. For example, in the rhetorical framing that seeks persistently to revivify Shakespeare himself through broadcast paratexts discussed in Chapter Seven, there are echoes reaching back to Philip Frowde's embodiment of Shakespeare's 'Shade' to approve the nationalist sentiments voiced in the prologue to *Double Falsehood,*[734] and to the paratextual apparatus of the First

[733] Aebischer, *Shakespeare, Spectatorship*, p. 10.

[734] Frowde's prologue to Lewis Theobald's *Double Falsehood, or, The distressed lovers* (1728, claimed to be based on three manuscript copies Fletcher and Shakespeare's lost play of 1613, *Cardenio*) highlights the links between Shakespeare's ability and British pride: 'Such Shakespeare's Genius was: - Let Britons boast / The glorious Birth, and, eager, strive who most / Shall celebrate his Verse; for while we raise / Trophies of Fame to

Folio which metaphorically reanimates Shakespeare the man through his works.[735] By recognising broadcast paratexts within this lineage, we are able to unpick the agendas for which Shakespeare is made to speak. It is only by paying closer attention to the work of Shakespearean broadcast paratexts, therefore, that we can understand fully how institutions like the NT and RSC perpetuate Shakespeare's contemporary cultural value and, in turn, participate in the creation of new Shakespeares for contemporary audiences. We need only look to the fringes of performance to see these likenesses shifting and reforming in real time.

him, ourselves we praise.' In William Shakespeare, *Double Falsehood, or the Distressed Lovers,* edited by Brean Hammond (London: Arden Bloomsbury, 2010), Prologue, l. 8 – 10.

[735] The commercial benefit of the fact that the First Folio was published posthumously has been considered by a number of critics. Margareta de Grazia highlights that the Folio preliminaries played on the doubleness of the volume as a posthumous memorial to Shakespeare, and a birth of the playwright's previously obscured works. de Grazia observes that '[t]he dynastic language of buried fathers succeeded and perpetuated by surviving offspring runs through the prose and verse [of the First Folio Preliminaries]' (p. 41). In a more explicit image of Shakespearean revivification, Chris Laoutaris analyses Jonson's prefatorial dedication (which begins with the line, 'My Shakespeare, rise') as one in which Shakespeare 'undergoes a resurrection of almost biblical proportions' (p. 55). Encapsulating this tension between memorial and life-returning text, Adam G. Hooks argues that '[i]f the memorial volume embodies Shakespeare, then the survival of the book is necessary for the preservation (and even resurrection) of Shakespeare himself', in 'Afterword: the Folio as Fetish', *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's First Folio,* edited by Emma Smith (Cambridge: CUP, 2016), pp. 185 – 196, p. 187.

Appendix: Broadcast Productions Consulted

This appendix lists the live theatre broadcast productions referenced in this thesis. Due to the ephemeral nature of broadcast paratexts, all broadcasts used in my discussion have also been consulted in their archival forms where available. Productions consulted in the NT archive are marked by a single asterisk (*). RSC Live productions were kindly made available through correspondence with RSC Live Producer John Wyver, where they are stored in a private digital archive. RSC Live productions accessed in this way are marked by a cross (†). Productions also seen live at the event of their original transmission to cinemas are specified as such, with reference to the location of reception as either the Picturehouse Cinema, Stratford-upon-Avon, the Red Carpet Cinema, Barton-under-Needwood, or the City Screen Picturehouse, York.

Amadeus *, directed for the screen by Tim van Someren, *NT Live*, Olivier Stage at the National Theatre, London, 2 February 2017 [Seen live at Picturehouse, SUA]

As You Like It *, directed for the screen by Tim van Someren, *NT Live*¸ Olivier Stage at the National Theatre, London, 25 Feburary 2016 [Seen live at City Screen Picturehouse, York]

Coriolanus †, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 11 October 2017 [Seen live at Picturehouse, SUA]

Coriolanus *, directed for the screen by Tim van Someren, *NT Live*, The Donmar Warehouse, London, 30 January 2014 [Seen live at City Screen Picturehouse, York]

Cymbeline †, directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 28 September 2016 [Seen live at Picturehouse, SUA]

Hamlet *, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *NT Live*, Barbican Theatre, London, 15 October 2015 [Seen live at City Screen Picturehouse, York]

Henry IV Part 1 †, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 14 May 2014

Henry IV Part 2 †, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 18 July 2014

Julius Caesar †, directed for the screen by Dewi Humphreys, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 26 April 2017 [Seen live at Picturehouse, SUA]

King Lear *, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *NT Live*, Olivier Stage at the National Theatre, London, 1 April 2014

King Lear †, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 12 October 2016

King Lear, directed for the screen by Ross McGibbon, *NT Live*, Duke of York Theatre, London, 27 September 2018 [Seen live at Picturehouse, SUA]

Love's Labour's Lost †, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 11 February 2015 [Seen live at City Screen Picturehouse, York]

Love's Labour's Won †, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 4 March 2015 [Seen live at City Screen Picturehouse, York]

Measure for Measure †, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 31 July 2019 [Seen live Seen live at Picturehouse, SUA]

Othello *, directed for screen by Robin Lough, *NT Live*, Olivier Stage at the National Theatre, London, 26 September 2013

Richard II †, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 13 November 2013

Romeo and Juliet, directed for the screen by Benjamin Caron, *Kenneth Branagh Theatre Company Live*, Garrick Theatre, London, 7 July 2016 [Seen live at the Red Carpet Cinema, BUN]

Romeo and Juliet †, directed for the screen by Bridget Caldwell, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 18 July 2018 [Seen live Seen live at Picturehouse, SUA]

Shakespeare Live! From the RSC, BBC2, 23 April 2016 [Seen live on television]

The Madness of George III, directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward, *NT Live*, Nottingham Playhouse, Nottingham, 20 November 2018 [Seen live at the Red Carpet Cinema, BUN]

The Merry Wives of Windsor †, directed for the screen by Dewi Humphreys, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 12 September 2018 [Seen live at Picturehouse, SUA]

The Taming of the Shrew †, directed for the screen by Bridget Caldwell, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 5 June 2019 [Seen live at Picturehouse, SUA]

The Tempest †, directed for the screen by Dewi Humphreys, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 7 February 2017 [Seen live at Picturehouse, SUA]

The Two Gentlemen of Verona †, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 3 September 2014 [Seen live at City Screen Picturehouse, York]

Timon of Athens †, directed for the screen by Rhodri Huw, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 15 November 2019 [Seen live at Picturehouse, SUA]

Timon of Athens *, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *NT Live*, Olivier Theatre at the Royal National Theatre, 1 November 2012

Titus Andronicus †, directed for the screen by Matthew Woodward, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 9 August 2017

Troilus and Cressida †, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 14 November 2018 [Seen live at Picturehouse, SUA]

Twelfth Night *, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *NT Live*, Olivier Stage at the National Theatre, London, 6 April 2017 [Seen live at Picturehouse, SUA]

Twelfth Night †, directed for the screen by Robin Lough, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon*, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, 14 February 2017 [Seen live at Picturehouse, SUA]

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