and choreographs its many scenes of violence in ways that would be familiar to any seasoned viewer of horror and action-adventure films. But it also draws liberally on a vividly colored *mise en scène* of monumental excess and surreal spectacle lifted from Fellini's *Satyricon* (1969) and *Roma* (1972), and Peter Greenaway's *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover* (1989). The film's striking conceptual apparatus is, moreover, closely modeled on Taymor's earlier music theater-pieces and the performance designs of avant-garde theater and dance creators such as Robert Wilson, Martha Clarke, and Pina Bausch. Taymor's indulgence in the lurid, the unlikely, and the absurd may surely tend at times towards schlock (Burr 2002a). Yet the effects aimed at in scenes that include Titus's cooling of his human meat-pies on a window-sill may also tilt towards the campy targets (wherein the domestic coolly conflates with the horrific) that are repeatedly hit by David Lynch in *Blue Velvet* (1986) and *Mulholland Drive* (2001), and by Jim Jarmusch in his brilliantly deadpan *Dead Man* (1995).

Even Baz Luhrmann's aesthetic involves considerably more than an abject catering to his youth audience's need for constant visual and aural stimulation, drawing as it does on influences and inspirations as disparate as the costumes worn in Sydney's annual Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras (Donaldson 2002b: 72–3 *et passim*) and the stylized violence of Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971). The film-noirish mood and atmospheric stylings of Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* hark back not only to popular American films of the 1950s and corporate dramas such as *Wall Street* (1987), but to the brilliantly precise visual and auditory framings of Wim Wenders's *The American Friend* (1977). The immersion of Hamlet himself in the solitary filming, playing, and replaying of video imagery in his effort to solve the mystery of his disjointed family evoke earlier films that range from Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966) and Coppola's *The Conversation* (1974) to Sadie Benning's Pixelvision diaries (see chapter 3). The wider our field of reference, in other words, the more unstable our calculations of any given allusive effect; but with that instability comes an increasing complexity of interpretation.

The films we have singled out for sustained attention not only enter into dialogue with specific Shakespearean playtexts, but into conversation with their own filmic contemporaries and forbears as well as with collateral developments in digital technology, computer graphics, performance art, and popular culture. These intertextual conversations are as varied as the cultural matter they draw on: typically dialogic, disintegrative, collaborative, or parodic in orientation. Yet in all of these modes these films maintain a measured distance from their source-texts – even when they launch most fully into them – that reminds us we are entertaining performances, not revivals, of classic works. In this way, as we discuss in the next chapter, they help expand our understanding of adaptation as a cultural process.

2 Adaptation as a Cultural Process

- conceptual and critical resources
- revival
- recycling

What does it mean to say that film-adaptation is a cultural process and not just a way of translating an artwork from one expressive medium into another? To use two examples from the previous chapter, we need think only of the very different forms of cultural surround that inform and invade Zeffirelli's 1968 film-adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* and Luhrmann's 1996 *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet*. Both films clearly attempt to "keep faith" with Shakespeare's tale of exuberantly youthful "star-crossed lovers" caught up in the throes of "true" love for the first time. But the casting choices, the look of the actors, and their preferred acting styles are as different from each other as Renaissance Verona is from Verona Beach. From Harold Perrineau's transvestite "voguing" as Mercutio to John Leguizamo's demonic turn as Tybalt, we recognize from the start that these films are operating in radically different cinematic terrain. They reflect not only different ideas about Shakespeare's plays and classic works more generally, but a different *cultural imaginary*: that prevailing set of fantasies, values, desires, and assumptions which effectively identifies a specific cultural moment and differentiates it from other cultural moments past or to come. This is not to say that sexual role-playing, drug-taking, and youth-gang violence are more characteristic of our time than of the 1968 of Franco Zeffirelli (or the 1961 of *West Side Story*), though they well may be. It is rather to say that prevailing ideas, fantasies, and assumptions about sex and youth-culture take *this* form as opposed to the form they took when Zeffirelli modeled the innocence, beauty, and passion of his young lovers on the youth culture of the 1960s – or when Arthur Laurents and Stephen Sondheim took their inspiration from street riots involving *chicanos* in Los Angeles, transposing their conception of embattled innocence to the clash of immigrant cultures on New York's West Side.

All adaptations necessarily operate within their specific cultural imaginaries.[1] But some also explicitly reflect on the dynamics of adaptation in this cultural key. Because so many of Shakespeare's plays have the status of classic works – indeed, have come to represent the idea of a "Classic Work" in the Western cultural imaginary – Shakespeare adaptations invite such self-reflexiveness. Of the films we just compared, Luhrmann's is the one that most explicitly takes up this invitation, as its title immediately makes clear by laying claim to and marking its distance from Shakespearean authorship. The pictograph

that links the lovers' names – either a Gothic cross or a +, depending on where the title appears – evokes a host of resonances that belong not to Shakespeare's playtext but to the cultural imaginary that animates this version. The pictograph suggests playground graffiti and adolescent crushes, the transposition of a verbal art into the visual field of cinema, the film's re-appropriation of religious symbols from their kitschy half-life as commodities, and the problematic of faith and infidelity that attaches to many adaptations (Donaldson 2002b). The campy dissonance of Luhrmann's title illuminates the distance between this postmodern "copy" and its "original" while also backhandedly pressing the point that it is only the practice of copying that creates – and confers authority on – an original (Derrida 1981: 206).

In the following pages we focus on adaptation not only as a cultural process but also as a specifically film- and Shakespeare-related phenomenon. Synthesizing ideas from film theory, performance theory, and new media theory, we introduce some basic critical terms applicable to the study of Shakespeare on screen and particularly to the films discussed in this book. As we shall see, the interest these films share in the cultural dynamics of adaptation reflects changing attitudes about classic art, creativity, the relationship between past and present, and the relationship between old and new media.

Fast-forwarding the Bard

A good place to begin is a moment in Almereyda's *Hamlet* when the film rather boldly cites the pre-existence and persistence of a play called *Hamlet* by showing a brief clip on "Hamlet's" monitor. As the camera pans past Ethan Hawke, seated at a digital editing station, it quotes a famous scene (Hamlet addressing the skull of Yorick) and a famous Shakespearean actor (John Gielgud). We can guess that Hamlet must have clipped the scene himself since we often see him working with such found materials. So at this moment we might say that Almereyda is "confessing" the extent to which his film is one in a series of *Hamlets* going back in time. Yet Almereyda's film does not pursue the question of what Shakespeare's *Hamlet means* to his video-collaging main character. We never actually see Hamlet working with the clip the *way we* see him working with Thich Nhat Hanh's Buddhist riff on the "To be" speech that he also plays back on his monitor. Because of this, the film leaves open the question of how we are to understand that gesture backward. Is Almereyda's film a belated *hommage* to or after-image of the original play and later films? Or is it an image of Hamlet "now," understood to replace those earlier versions? Or do all these versions together constitute some larger, composite work that Western culture names *Hamlet?*

We gravitate towards the last notion: that in this brief moment the film presents itself not as a copy of an original but as a reframing of earlier framings, an addition to a larger body of work that by implication
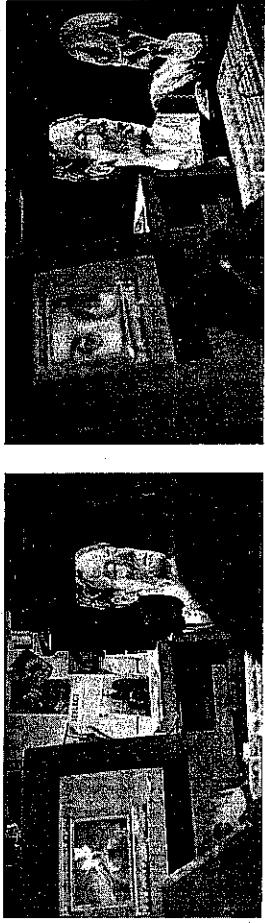
2.1 *Hamlet* as a text series

includes many *Hamlets.* Jerome McGann and Joseph Grigely have described this kind of additive versioning of classic works in terms that underpin much recent scholarship on Shakespeare performances on and off screen, and much of our thinking in this book. A *work* – we will call it "Shakespeare's *Hamlet*" – is properly understood as a *series of texts* (Grigely 1995: 99; McGann 1983: 52). That series may include print editions, textbooks, children's versions, and graphic novels as well as non-print "texts" such as stage performances, opera, ballet, screen versions, multi-media installations, hypertext, and so on. Each of the texts in this series re-presents or re-iterates prior texts in the series, each varying from those that come before and after it (Grigely 1995, 99–100). The series that constitutes a work, in this way, should not be thought of as summable in any simple sense, as if one could add up all the different versions of *Hamlet* to get a sum total of potential variations that would equal "Hamlet" (1995: 99).[2] Nor should we think of the earliest texts in a series as originals. In the case of Shakespeare's works, the earliest playtexts usually exist in multiple versions: early print editions (quartos and the Folio of 1623); lost manuscripts from which the print editions were set; prompter's copies; performances in different venues. Moreover, Shakespeare's plays reiterate even earlier works, making each playtext a "tissue of quotations" from many genres and *intertexts* (Barthes 1977: 146). The tragedy of *Hamlet* belongs to the family of English nationalist dramas that retell Germanic histories and also to the popular genre of revenge plays. So, too, Almereyda's film belongs to the families of Shakespeare adaptation, film noir, and corporate or "Wall Street" drama, and it quotes indie video works along with Gielgud and Luhrmann's film. In this way, Almereyda's *Hamlet* presents itself as one of a series of texts that plays variations on a *work* that is not reducible to a single authorized version.

The Gielgud citation is a bold gesture because it invites a reaction that updatings are usually supposed to hide. Even if we have never heard the words before, what we are watching is material that may seem rather exhausted because of its very status as classic work. Yet the fact that Hamlet comes to the most familiar material of the play – his "To be" speech – by reusing someone else's (screened) riff on Shakespeare's playtext is precisely the point. The reason that Hawke

sounds so fresh when he delivers those famous lines is that the audience hears them being rehearsed in this layered way – accommodating the fact that we have already heard the speech repeated in whole or fragments many times.[3] In this way, the film allows us to hear the speech as at once entirely scripted *and* performed in the moment, received *and* just now invented. And we may recognize Hamlet as acting by way of repeated citation or "restored behaviors" that are part of a long history of the reuse of Shakespeare plays in Western culture (Schechner 1985: 36–7). Performance scholars think of such actions as "restored" in several senses (Roach 1996: 3). They are played back (and given back) to us; they are represented *as* playable, repeatable givens; they are stored up for future replaying and thus conserved for the culture; they are constituted serially, through repetition and variation.

Extending the idea of a work as a text series, Grigely suggests that every copy, edition, display, publication, exhibit, recording, or performance of an artwork is fundamentally an *adaptation*, in that it reframes prior versions of that work in new environments, periods, and material, and for new purposes. Adaptation in this sense is the very mechanism by which culture transmits its classic works: unmaking and remaking them, renegotiating their meaning in specific reception contexts (Grigely 1995: 32). Even a new print edition of *Hamlet* remakes the play in a way that changes its meaning, in perceptible and imperceptible ways. Each modern edition composes different elements of the three Renaissance playtexts into a new, unified or multi-text version. It adds an apparatus of *paratexts* suited to specific readers: footnotes, introduction, historical materials, and illustrations.[4] It materializes the work (using page-layout, scene breaks, jacket notes, cover illustrations, synopses, etc.) in ways that suit contemporary notions about the shape and readability of a book. And it circulates the work to a specific market of readers: high school, college, theater, Shakespeare buffs, etc. Film-adaptations expand on the verbal and visual media of print to include other perceptual tracks (spoken dialogue as well as written words, music, foley sounds, and moving images), other paratexts, and other production and post-production choices (casting and performance, cinematography, editing, budget and marketing constraints) (Stam 2005a: 17). In such ways, works are "ontologized," Grigely explains, "contextualized semantically" or made meaningful, through a host of local choices shaped "by the temporal history that surrounds their composition" (1995: 103). Thus, a "text" in any medium can be understood as a *performance* of a work, a relatively transient but powerful actualization that gives the work a local habitation and a name. As a series of texts, that work makes certain constellations of meanings and material available to be renegotiated in performance and reception by local users – readers, performers, artists, filmmakers, auditors, teachers, students.

Thinking about Shakespeare adaptations in these terms puts some pressure not just on the question of what a particular work makes available to those adapting it, but of how these resources are negotiated in the light of earlier negotiations. In terms of actual performance by an actor, this requires something that cites his secondariness (such as the Gielgud quotation) and/or something that exceeds a mere playing of the role. Audience familiarity with Shakespearean story and language may be as much an issue in theatrical re-stagings of Shakespeare as it is in screen reproductions. So it is useful to think about the challenges cinematic and theatrical audition share. Consider, for example, how difficult it is for someone conversant with Shakespeare to get caught up in yet another "new" stage-production of *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*. For such a playgoer, there is essentially no *drama* in the offing since she not only knows virtually everything about the play in question and how it will turn out, but also anticipates most of the lines the actors will speak and even how they will probably say them. Beyond the pleasure of hearing beautiful language recited, the only reason for watching may be the hope that someone will say or do something *differently*: will *perform* the roles (that is, call overt attention to their doubleness or belatedness) rather than merely *play* them (that is, fit into them as one fits into a well-worn seat or suit).

It may seem as if only those deeply familiar with the plays could feel the pressure of belatedness, in this way. But that pressure has as much to do with the way the plays circulate throughout the culture and with a given production's attentiveness to the uncanny effects of that circulation. The conditions of mainstream theatrical production often preclude the kind of performativity we have in mind here, as does the residually theatrical conditioning of conventionally realist Shakespeare films (ranging from Branagh's *Much Ado About Nothing* to Michael Radford's *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* (2004)). Even updated stage-productions are regularly performed in an isolated space – a theater – that separates their audiences from immersion in an everydayness that would contextualize the plays far more densely and that reflects their own fragmentary but persistent life in popular culture. But set an actor who calls himself Hamlet in a profoundly multi-mediated and updated cinematic setting – the streets of New York City, a Blockbuster outlet – and a whole world that always already contains and rearticulates Shakespeare appears before our eyes.

Citational Environments

All adaptations make their habitations not only in specific geographic milieux and media but also in *citational environments*: generic and cultural fields that incorporate specific stances towards source materials and rules for handling them. We borrow the phrase from W.B. Worthen, who, in applying Grigely's ideas to Luhrmann's film, observes that the film restitutes Shakespeare's playtext "in a specific citational environment – the verbal, visual, gestural, and behavioral dynamics of youth culture, of MTV" (Worthen 1998: 1104). Thus, for example, we

find the distinctive presentational rules of MTV videos scripting our introduction to Romeo, as he sits alone with his melancholy musings at the ruined theater. Here the audiotracks (Romeo's voice-over, intertwining with a feature-song music track) bridge short, fast visual montages "self-consciously parading" the "perfected techniques of cinematography, *mise en scène*, and editing" (Manovich 2001: 262). These conventions are very different from the citational rules applied in Al Pacino's *Looking for Richard*. That film dips into brief sections of playtext, sampling it in a way that might at first seem more discontinuous. But the narrative structures of theater rehearsal and documentary ensure those fragments will be revisited and repeated – providing a sense of a "whole" experience, if not of the playtext, then of the actor's immersion and engagement with it. At the same time, documentary rules for handling received material call for some degree of irreverence, experimentation, and exposed artifice. These rules reinforce Pacino's self-presentation as someone rescuing Shakespeare – by way of the vernacular idioms of film and the investigative modes of Method acting – from the stiff old pretenses of British theater (see chapter 5).

Several of the films we concentrate on resituate Shakespeare's plays in citational environments in which the history of citation itself – the cultural use of iconic works – is a long-standing concern. We find this reflexiveness at work in Kristian Levring's *The King is Alive*, as a group of castaways struggle "good old Lear" in cinematic frameworks (the survival film, the experimental film) and in locations (the African desert, an abandoned mining settlement) that evoke a vexed history of Anglo-European narratives imposed on colonial cultures. The film tips its hand early on, in an absurdly donnish debate among the castaways about the correct source of a dance track (is it *Saturday Night Fever?*) and the "right" way to dance. The multiple errors and dislocations in this scene raise fundamental questions about what it means to perform received words and gestures (including those of a Shakespeare play) here and now. The film invites us to reflect on the systems of rules that govern such expression and how different heres and nows may change the way we remember and forget received matter (see chapter 7).

Attention to the rules and practices of different citational environments helps us identify the complex effects of different artistic formats converging and recombining. Taymor's *Titus* makes an especially clear example of such convergence. The film is organized in set pieces that do not precisely correspond to scene divisions in modern editions. Some of these are *interpolations* (new material inserted into the story) in the form of Taymor's "Penny Arcade Nightmares;" some are cinematic reorganizations of dramatic entrances, exits, and arcs of action (see chapter 4). These set pieces disrupt and sometimes arrest the narrative flow of the film, in spatial montages that resemble the moving tableaux of conceptual theater, where Taymor has her artistic roots. This organizing principle becomes more evident in the DVD edition of

the film, where it is reflected in chapter divisions with titles such as "Prosthetic Branches" and "A Visit From Revenge." The citational rules here seem to be drawn both from the theater and from a Shakespeare we read; not as we might read a long prose narrative but in the discontinuous way that we might consult an archive of multimedia images, like a book of Renaissance emblems. Structured around labeled entries or "chapters" and with an indexed commentary, the DVD "textualizes" the film, giving it a longer horizon of reception than the traditionally evanescent moment of its theatrical release (Burt and Boose 2003: 4). *Titus* is engaging in part because of the ways it negotiates these and other citational environments. Through the passage of performance, Grigely argues, a classic work is continually "unmade (as an object) and remade (as a text and as memory)" (1995: 33).

By calling our attention to the way artworks exist in memory – individual memories and cultural memory – Grigely reminds us that they matter because they serve to anchor social networks of meaning. In this way, performance scholars have argued, texts "perform" social functions in the ritual sense of the word. A classroom edition of *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, serves multiple functions of social transmission and access, conferring a certain cultural status and inheritance on those who study it, along with its other possible effects and uses (aesthetic pleasure, boredom, occasions for seduction, etc.). Every new version of a work inherits the ritual functions of its predecessors to maintain specific networks of meaning, a process Joseph Roach calls *surrogation* (1996: 3). Thus, for example, with each production of *Hamlet*, the paternal command to "remember me" that haunts Hamlet anchors a series of changing ideas about the relationships between fathers and sons. As *Hamlet* circulates through the culture, that command acquires new meanings that in turn open up newer representational possibilities and functions for a father/son relationship. Almereyda offers a contemporary filial spin on *Hamlet* by casting and directing Sam Shepard to convey a kind of tough-but-intimate love (grabbing his son's face, embracing him) that is profoundly different from the distant, hierarchical figures of paternity we find in Branagh and Zeffirelli. Moreover, each of these versions of paternity reflects differing ideas about relationships with the dead, about revenge, and about the nature of the afterlife.

Surrogation can work at the level of plot function as well as characterization. Thus, when Jane Howell first made Young Lucius a figure who crossed fictional boundaries between past and present, in her BBC *Titus Andronicus* (1985), she coined a convention that would be picked up by Derek Jarman in *Edward II* (1991) and then fully developed by Taymor. By creating a contemporary space of witnessing, Howell added a new *character function* not just to *Titus Andronicus* but to screen Shakespeare and other adaptations besides.[5] We see this character function informing the moments of filial witnessing in Radford's recent *Merchant of Venice*, for example. The film invites us to share Tubal's horror at Shylock's sadistic obsession with Antonio's flesh, and

positions us, in its final interpolation, alone with an isolated, silent Jessica (another child who has crossed world-defining boundaries) looking out over the water that now separates her from her community of birth. The device may work differently in different films: to generate a feeling of anxious complicity with violence and ethnic prejudice (making us ask what actions we can take now, in the light of our complicity); or to produce the false pathos of distance from violent prejudice (letting us think how sad it is that it once had to be that way). The endings of both Taymor's and Radford's films can be read in both ways.[6]

Similarly, Othello films remind us that when ambition, love, and racism intersect we call the one who takes advantage of this intersection and tells us all about it "Iago." To perform Iago is also to tell us what Iago's work means, now -- and by reprising the role to revise and reinvent it, along with the "invisible network of allegiances, interests, and resistances," attaching to ideas about ambition, love, and race, that animate this character (Roach 1996: 39). Iago serves a particular character function that is part of the constellation of behaviors represented and restored by Othello in Western culture. Thinking about dramatic roles in this way means seeing them as fictional constructs that work in certain scripted ways in relation to each other: as operations, not separable entities.[7]

Where the social functions invested in a work are particularly critical or prominent, the process of surrogation by successive texts may be especially fraught, for while surrogates inevitably fall short of and exceed the memory of their predecessors they never fully escape it (Roach 1996: 3). The "double sense" to which Shakespeare films in the camp mode seem to be alive is thus an uncanny sense of both embodying and displacing their primary intertexts (Sontag [1964] 1999: 57; Roach 1996: 2). Applying Roach's and Grigely's ideas to *Romeo + Juliet*, Worthen suggests that this process of transformation through surrogation is precisely the interest of Luhrmann's film: "Citing the text – the verbal text of a play, the cultural text of Shakespeare – Luhrmann's film undertakes a shrewd reflection of the relation between classic texts and their performances, presenting this version of Shakespeare's work not as a performance of the text and not as a translation of the work but as an iteration of the work, an iteration that necessarily invokes and displaces a textual 'origin'" (Worthen 1998: 1104). In different contexts and for different plays, one or the other imperative (to embody or to displace) may seem more urgent. Indeed, as we explain in chapter 6, the inability to break away from and displace character functions that have played a formative role in modern racial stereotypes often undermines recent performances of *Othello*.

The ambivalent dynamics of surrogation are particularly pressing in Shakespeare films, which inherit anxieties about fidelity, legitimacy, and displaced origins from two gene pools: the Romantic ideal of Shakespearean authorship, on the one hand, and deeply rooted prejudices against film and film-adaptations, on the other. Much has been

written about the Romantic notion of Shakespeare as a singular genius, the secular worship of the Bard, and the passion for authenticity invested in both theater and film performances.[8] In citational environments where these are the dominant values, any performance of a Shakespeare play may be an opportunity for nostalgia for a lost – definitive – original, an attempt to close the distance between that lost original and the present performance. Yet, as Robert Stam has observed, a nostalgia for originals – and the corresponding sense that any "updating" is a falling off – is especially a phenomenon of film-adaptation. Theatrical adaptations regularly re-conceptualize, reinterpret, and innovate; if they fail to do so they may not be seen as successful (2005a: 15). The same tends to be true of literary adaptations of Shakespeare, as attested by Jane Smiley's Pulitzer Prize for *A Thousand Acres* (2001), her free adaptation of *King Lear*. Both theatrical and print adaptations are more often measured on their success or failure in their own right, not – as in the case of film – on the fundamental legitimacy of adaptation as a practice.

Why should this be so? By way of an answer, Stam surveys a number of prejudices traditionally attached to film-adaptation. It is worth taking a moment to review these prejudices not only because screen Shakespeares inherit them, as all screen adaptations do, but also because they relate so closely to long-standing notions about Shakespeare's cultural legacy. Stam explains that the common sense that there are deep oppositions between film and the verbal arts is grounded on several assumptions that are themselves deeply rooted in Western culture. When the aural and verbal aspects of film are ignored, film is easily assimilated into a long Western tradition of suspicion against images, appearances, and the phenomenal world -- an "iconophobia" that goes back to Plato (Stam 2005a: 5). The converse of that suspicion is a cultural "logophilia" that privileges the verbal, valorizing the book and literature in general as the highest art-forms (2005a: 6). These twinned values reinforce the sense that the arts of the word and image are locked in an eternal struggle for dominance in which gains for one mean losses for the other (2005a: 4). Iconophilia and logophilia are also linked to a persistent "anti-corporeality" in discussions of film-adaptation: a distaste for the body and bodily experience that recycles basic principles of Puritan anti-theatricality. Film is often described as appealing primarily to bodily sensations, as emotionally and morally "contagious," and as feeding lower (and lower-class) appetites rather than the higher processes of reason (2005a: 6) – just as the Renaissance public theater was. In such moralizing contexts, to eschew and destroy the seductions of the image is tantamount to affirming one's true faith (2005a: 5). These and other assumptions underpin the notion of film-adaptation as a second-order art that parasitically sucks the life from the text, as it converts it to an "image" (2005a: 3–5).

In the context of screen Shakespeares, these long-standing prejudices reinforce related ideas about Shakespearean authorship. Indeed,

Shakespeare and Shakespeare's works have come to stand iconically for many of these ideas. Latent anti-theatricality remains strong in the scholarly preference for seeing Shakespeare as a poet, an artist of words rather than of the lesser realm of the stage (supposedly lesser because its arts are commercial, bodily, and transient). Secular worship of the text and book persists in attempts to produce ideal, composite editions of the plays attributed to a single artistic genius – rather than to the many hands (and minds and voices) that contributed to the creation of a play, from stage to printing house. Finally, to read, teach, own, and love Shakespeare's works remains a reliable way for both individuals and institutions to affirm their faith in literature and Western culture more generally. The fact that a single pictographic alteration in the title of Luhrmann's film can simultaneously evoke the possibility of both faith and infidelity suggests how forcefully these dynamics converge on film-adaptations of Shakespeare's plays.

McGann's notion of a work as a text series and Grigely's concept of textual reiteration as a kind of performance build directly on poststruc-turalist theory that challenges these hierarchical assumptions about the relation between different art-forms.[9] Without holding us to unworkable standards of fidelity, both models of textuality help us talk about what changes – what is added and taken away – as technologies and media change, and artworks undergo the continual process of cultural recycling, recast with new settings, props, characters, and themes. These notions of textuality are particularly suited to a group of films that tend to see Shakespeare's plays as robust compendia of traces of the past, available to be recycled according to present needs and desires, rather than as objects of veneration and nostalgia (see chapter 3). Similarly, the idea of surrogation helps us think about the ways in which the social functions of earlier Shakespeare texts – plays and also previous films – are at once fulfilled and altered by these avatars. Thus, as we have seen, a film such as Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* takes on the mantle of Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* becoming *the* bridge between Shakespeare and a new generation, fulfilling a Western cultural imperative that each generation have such a bridge. Yet it also fundamentally shifts our understanding of how such bridges work and what they bridge to. The past Zeffirelli's film conveys seems immediate, knowable, and, crucially, unchanging; indeed, for all its lush immedi-acy, this is still a Verona in doublet and hose. By contrast, Luhrmann's film insists that any "past" we encounter is a feature and function of the present: variously reconstructed, repurposed, or ruined like the blasted Sycamore Grove theater, but never fixed or completed in any real sense.

Revivers and Recyclers

The degree to which a film is invested in the oppositions and hierarchies listed above – text vs image, sensation vs thought, original vs copy, author vs parasite – determines whether its stance towards its source-texts is

one of revival or recycling. Film *revivals* are Shakespeare-centric in a way that reflects the values of unique, original authorship; they set out to convey *Shakespeare's* version of tragic love, national unity, overweening ambition, and so on, and to bring it closer to an audience and moment they define as especially ready or in need of it. The impulse to revive requires finessing or actively hiding the interplay of intertexts – particu-larly the plurality of Renaissance source-texts – in the interest of "myths of legitimacy and origin" invested in qualities the performance estab-lishes as definitively "Shakespearean" (Roach 1996: 3). Richard Loncraine's *Richard III* (1995) opens with fragments of Shakespeare's *Henry VI*, typed on a teletype machine, and later adds a swinging, 1930s-style jazz rendition of Christopher Marlowe's popular Elizabethan poem, "The Passionate Shepherd" ("Come live with me and be my love . . ."). Such *interpolations* are more the rule than the exception; like Renaissance stage performances, most theater performances and most films depend on multiple scripts (Masten 1997). Yet the fact that the Marlowe borrowing supplies lyrics on the music track while the echoes from *Henry VI* appear as print, before the credits, helps maintain dialogic boundaries. Radford's *Merchant of Venice* observes a similar decorum in its dialogue-free opening, a ten-minute trip through Renaissance Venice that segregates its anti-Semitic business in an interpolated preface to the playtext. Although that business is "Schindler-ized" to reverse the flow of prejudice, the attempt to purge the playtext of such complexities cannot stem their old momentum as soon as the film proper (and Shakespearean dialogue) begins.

At their most nostalgic, revivals are invested in purified origins of many types: in restoring some past reality, conveying a "complete" text or agreed-on meaning, using the classic devices of cinematic immer-sion to make the past seem present, the strange familiar. Film revivals tend towards aesthetically comfortable modes of illustration, often rendering the past in well-upholstered costume dramas (Albanese 2001: 213–14). Such upholstering typically reflects the anxiety that by rendering the literary *as* image the film debases it. Thus the lighting, *mise en scène*, and camera angles in Radford's *Merchant of Venice* allude to the characteristic play of light, architecture, and perspectives in Italian humanist painting – enlisting these models not only to establish a (loosely) historical authenticity for the film's "look," but also to borrow their high cultural authority as objects for *looking at*. Revivals often perform what Stam describes as "aesthetic mainstreaming" on their source-texts "in the name of mass-audience legibility," "a kind of purge . . . of moral ambiguity, narrative interruption, and reflexive meditation," that "smooths over sources of potential audience discom-fort" (2005a: 43). The heroine cannot be truly bigoted, her rescuer cannot be genuinely greedy, his best friend cannot be actually queer; any reflexiveness about the Englishness of a play about Venetian moneylending and venture capital disappears into the house-styles of suburban, multiplex storytelling.[10]

The distinction here does not have to do with freshness of interpretation but with an *aesthetic decorum* that conforms to one or more of the hierarchical assumptions about artistic value and narrative coherence described above. Indeed, if we think of "fidelity" in this neutral way, as a principle of decorum, we immediately see how a single film may proceed along different paths at the same time, conforming to some of those hierarchies while departing from others. Thus revivals may reinterpret, find new pay-offs and ascribe new meanings to the works they perform; they may also be motivated by an interest in replaying Shakespeare's plays in new citational environments, taking advantage of new powers of communication and new audiences, as in Olivier's film revivals and the BBC television productions. Such impulses can launch a Shakespeare film on more experimental footing, as we find in Loncraine's *Richard III*, a film based on an earlier stage-production and scripted by its star, Ian McKellen. The resituation of Richard's opening soliloquy as a victory speech, with its cinematic zooms (to Richard's mouth) and cuts, follows even more explicitly cinematic effects in the credit sequence, with its teletype machine, tank, and gunshots. In these scenes, the film conjures a counter-factual version of 1930s England in which an authoritarian right wing, led by Richard of Gloucester and his brothers, has gained control of the government. Thus the film brings the authoritarian impulses of the British upper crust – both in their 1930s and latter-day manifestations – to the surface in a belated effort to attack the conservative revolution launched by Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s and carried on by her successor, John Major. In this respect, the film may well be said to work within the cultural imaginary of the late twentieth-century British left wing, insofar as it "channels" their impression that the present is witnessing a resurgence of an imperfectly suppressed past. On the other hand, the film's status as a form of costume drama and its management of dialogic boundaries reveal equally strong attachments to the decorum of a single author and a comfortably distant past.

With its interest in modern communications and their potential for abuse, Loncraine's *Richard III* finds modern correlatives for Richard of Gloucester's deceptive persuasions on a mass scale. Such cinematic *substitutions* serve as filmic equivalents for properties, behaviors, and actions that are no longer diegetically viable – that is, are no longer consistent with the "world system" of updated film. In a similar way Almereyda's *Hamlet* substitutes Denmark Corporation for the kingdom of Denmark and the Hotel Elsinore for Elsinore Castle, while Taymor's coliseum resembles the surround-space of a video game. Substitutions like these carry considerable potential for altering our understanding of the Renaissance playtext and for requiring us to "read" the film in question on its own terms. The more fully imagined and motivated such substitutions, the less Shakespeare-centric a film tends to be. Thus Donaldson describes Loncraine's film not as a revival but as cinematic reframing of Richard's story, an allegory in its own right of

"the role of cinema and other modern media in the institution and maintenance of death-dealing social regimes" (2002a: 244). While lacking the full sense of doubleness and distance from the playtext that marks the more experimental films we discuss below, Loncraine's film shares with them a willingness to manipulate the playtext and interpolate materials that reflect concerns external to its main intertext.

Filmmakers approaching Shakespearean material in this use-based way may be thought of as *recycling* their playtexts, treating a selected play as one among many intertexts that partly meet their needs – including not only literary intertexts but other films, music, television, and additional visual artifacts and electronic media like architecture and computers. Films interested in recycling Shakespeare for extra-Shakespearean uses may play around with the rise and fall of intertextual awareness, as it changes from moment to moment and from spectator to spectator; these effects are particularly strong in *vernacular* adaptations and in films that embed performances or rehearsals. Several films – Levring's, Taymor's, and Eric Rohmer's 1992 adaptation of *The Winter's Tale* – seem especially interested in the cognitive sense of match and mismatch between a given performance, its context, and the work performed.

Courting both recognition and misprision in this way, recyclers address their source-texts in a variety of terms: as word- and idea-hoards (an approach Taymor, Pacino, Greenaway, and Almereyda share); as potential survival tools (Levring's interest); as playgrounds (the iconoclastic impulse of Morrissette and Bedford). Or they may frame them as liminal spaces of transformation, taking the film into "screen worlds" marked by Shakespearean language or stage-practice, passages like the "green" worlds of Shakespearean comedy and romance. Rohmer and Van Sant use their Shakespearean passages this way and Taymor's *Titus* turns towards a similar "Shakespearean" function in its final, controversial interpolation, as it imagines a way out of the play's cycles of violence and revenge. As with revival, the impulse to recycle is not exclusive to a particular style or aesthetic (Rohmer, for example, works through a kind of classical realism), though avant-garde and experimental cinema holds more closely to this impulse than to revival.

Differential Constants: Rohmer's *Conte d'hiver*, Greenaway's *Prospero's Books*

When filmmakers adapt Shakespeare in the present day they engage not only all that has been done over time to and with a specific play, but the influence and cultural status of all the plays, as an oeuvre. Shakespeare films surrogate both their specific source-texts and the idea of Shakespeare as a cultural constant. Taymor's ending reminds us that one of the functions of that apparent constant has been to tell us we can imagine a way out of existing structures and frames. Several of

the films we consider construe this *Shakespearean imaginary* as a vehicle of radical transformation, variously mystical (Rohmer, Taymor), carnivalesque (Van Sant), and emotional (Pacino). The social and psychological work of a Shakespearean imaginary is staged especially clearly in Rohmer's *Conte d'hiver / A Tale of Winter* (1992), a film that too rarely appears on the map of the so-called Shakespeare on film genre. Rohmer's film helps explain how an artist such as Taymor may find herself surrogating not just a single play but the convention of the "Shakespearean ending" itself – as it functions in Shakespeare's comedies and romances – to Shakespeare's work as a whole (see Nelson 2001: 230; and chapter 4). It particularly helps explain why Taymor would seem – with her turn towards a restoration premised on impossible, implausible artifice – to be interpolating the ending of *The Winter's Tale* as an exit from *Titus Andronicus*.

Rohmer was one of the pioneers of the French New Wave, and shares with other New Wave directors an attention to the immediacy of everyday events and an eclectic range of interests. (In Rohmer's case, those interests range from adaptations of medieval romance, to realist drama, to documentaries and instructional films.) Yet his closely observed, sensual realism distinguishes his work from more abstract strains of film modernism. In *Conte d'hiver* (the second film in his "Seasons" quartet, 1990–8) Rohmer crafts a very free appropriation of Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*, which displaces concerns about marital fidelity, jealousy, and betrayal into an altogether more modern and female-centered frame of reference. This new frame concerns finding a balance between surrender and autonomy and matching one's erotic needs to a child's need for a stable amorous alchemy between two parents. The mystery of "what women want" gets re-articulated here in terms of a tension between *choosing* a lover and being fated to love. Felicie (Charlotte Véry) begins by believing she needs to choose one of two imperfect (dialectically opposed) lovers, but finds that she has no choice to make, since she is only "herself" when accepting a prior commitment to an ideal but lost lover. The two secondary alternatives, Loïc (Hervé Furic) and Maxence (Michael Voletti), are a mismatched pair: the one intellectual but amorously dull, the other intellectually dull but amorously impulsive. By contrast, Felicie's lost love, Charles (Frédéric van den Driessche), is quick on the uptake and amorously uncomplicatedly demonstrative, even at a chance meeting after a separation of five years.

Although grounded in the mundane details of the workaday life of a single mother and her child, the film works as fully as Shakespeare's play within the Romance framework of accident, error, serendipity, miracle, and the need to awaken one's faith that wrongs will be made right.[11] The gradual clarification of Felicie's commitment to the absent, ideal Charles, and to the impossibility of settling for lesser loves, is catalyzed in the film by the paired power of prayer (in a church) and Shakespeare (in a theater). Several observations may be made about

the way Shakespearean theater works its transformations here, as articulated in Hermione's restoration. First, the Shakespeare that does this work is a French version of "heritage Shakespeare." The fragment of a play-within-the-film we get to see, when Loïc and Felicie go to the theater one night, is a stiffly blocked and declaimed version of the statue scene (*The Winter's Tale* 5.3) portrayed in generic "early Celtic/Roman" dress. Yet for all its layers of mediation and dated style, the *Winter's Tale* scene is marked on screen as powerfully empathetic because theatrically embodied. As in Shakespeare's play, our empathy emerges cinematically through a guided response to another's act of audition – the kind of magic Paulina works on Leontes. Here Felicie's responses to *The Winter's Tale* serve as a gauge of our own engagement and conviction, both with the play-within-the-film and (arguably for the first time in the film) with her. Up to this point the film may have seemed to ally its viewers with Felicie's two imperfect lovers. Like them, we are unable to parse her inner life, with its confusing alterations. And we may find her amorous "games" (whims or caprices) similarly infuriating. In these scenes at the theater, Rohmer gives us our first real access to Felicie's inner life, in an extended sequence of close shots that alternate between Hermione's magical restoration and Felicie's reactions. We watch Felicie weeping at the separate stages of reunion. We see her identifying with Hermione's emergence from stasis, recognizing a figure of her own "coming to self" through an act of faith in a love that may never be re-consummated.

This scene in the theater performs magical restoration at the level of cinematic reception as well as plot, converting what had been the story of an infuriatingly opaque and wandering young woman into a story of true faith rewarded. Rohmer leaves it to Felicie, critiquing the play with Loïc as they drive home, to articulate this shift. Loïc offers a predictable reading of the closing scene: the problem for the audience, he claims, is whether Hermione was alive all along or whether a statue truly came to life. Felicie corrects him, reminding him not to read the drama for "realism" or plausibility but as an allegory of the rewards of genuine faith. Rohmer connects the Shakespearean imaginary *as such* – identification, alignment of self and others triggered by watching Shakespeare – with this radical, mystical transformation. And indeed, for all the dated style of the *Winter's Tale* production, the film's Shakespearean identifications are refreshingly dynamic. What get transacted here are acts of discovery that are both moored to and float free of the dramatic configurations of *The Winter's Tale*.[12] A consummate work of surrogated artistry, *Conte d'hiver* provides a contemporary substitute for Shakespeare's play that need not be recognized as such to perform the kind of cultural work that it does.

Although *Conte d'hiver* refers directly to Shakespeare's play, and may even knowingly allude to the early stirrings of female self-assertion we glimpse in *The Winter's Tale*, Rohmer's film draws just as overtly on the cultural imaginary of late twentieth-century feminism, silently

"quoting" and embodying emergent social changes and aspirations. With a fortuitousness that Rohmer would appreciate, but could not have anticipated, by the time Rohmer was bringing his film to realization. *The Winter's Tale* had become a significant play for Shakespearean feminist scholars, as a work that created a space for female voice, modeling related imperatives that men withhold their patriarchal powers and awake their faith. Yet Rohmer's film goes farther, in its way, towards such feminist transformations: incorporating in Felicie not only Hermione's but also Leontes' subject-positions, rendering all of its epiphanies from a female point of view. It is not just that, at a diegetic level (the fictional world of the film), Hermione's restoration models a way out of Felicie's insoluble romantic dilemma. The "Shakespearean" way out of oppressive social codes. At a meta-dramatic level, Felicie's subsequent reunion with Charles (and his with their daughter) surrogates the reunion of Hermione and Leontes so as to counter dated notions about female satisfaction.

To see Shakespeare adaptations as surrogating their predecessors in this way is to reconceive of classic works not as containers for stable meanings but as mechanisms by which a culture transacts meaning.[13] It is in this transactional sense that we speak of the constants surrogated by Shakespeare performances as "differential." They mark shared patterns and rates of change across different cultural variables, within larger social systems that are themselves continually subject to change. A cultural differential may even transfer energy (as the differential gear in a car does) from one dynamic system to another. Thus, in the late age of print, we see related changes in the notion of textuality taking place across the different fields of postmodern art, text studies, and digital communication. And we may speculate about the differential links between the changing notions of textual decorum among literary scholars (trading a view that values purity, fixity, and single authorship for one that emphasizes hybridity, mutability, and multiple hands) and the "cut and paste" functions of digital interfaces that daily call our attention to the collaborative enterprise of expression.

Such speculations return us to the idea of adaptation as a cultural process and specifically to its potential for "changing the entire infrastructure of the art-form" (Grigely 1995: 100). Many scholars have noted the increasing "bookness" of special edition DVDs, such as the recently released version of *My Own Private Idaho* (1991; DVD 2005), which includes a 64-page book broken up into five "acts" instead of chapters. The proliferation of such paratexts has become the norm in DVD editions, so much so that we may begin to see the special edition DVD as a distinct mode of adaptation in its own right, with annotation and discontinuous viewing as its hallmarks.[14] Such special editions make visible the ongoing process of *remediation*, by which emerging media adapt and are structured by the conventions of older media, surrogating the human needs they serve (Bolter and Grusin 2000). The process [...] continuous but not neatly chronological or linear, in

part because the life cycles of so many media are long and overlapping. As an example of this cultural process we might observe that a now familiar memory aid, web-browser "favorites" or "bookmarks," provide a personalized, cognitive-mechanical interface that derives in part from once familiar habits of footnoting in humanist essays. The memorial habits of essay-reading and -writing in turn adapted the earlier practices of Renaissance commonplace books: a form that allowed individuals to gather eclectic information they wanted to remember or regularly consult, such as recipes, important prayers, and favorite poems (Black 2006).

To return to cinematic arts, we should emphasize that film has always borrowed from and been conditioned by other media. For its sound technologies alone, film draws on older performance forms such as stage melodrama and contemporary media such as the telegraph, telephones, radio, and MTV (Altman 1992). Thus, for example, as cinema develops its conventions for voice-over soliloquy, it adapts the rules of stage asides – direct address, single-speaker focalization, and shifted auditory "wall" – to the more focalized technologies of camera and microphone. In aside, the actor speaks directly to the audience, as if she has moved in front of the "fourth wall" of the proscenium stage; isolated in an auditory space temporarily outside of the scene, she serves as her own imaginary auditor for utterances no one else on stage can hear. Cinematic soliloquies accommodate these conventions using a combination of close focus (screening out the rest of the diegetic scene so that the speaker becomes isolated in a now featureless space) and voice-over (making the speaker herself the only on-screen auditor, as she listens to her own thoughts). A number of the films we discuss reflect on this process of remediation more generally, in "media allegories" that surrogate the meta-theatrical aspects of Shakespeare's plays to the rapid transformation of modern expressive media.[15] That interest is reflected in the tradition of *establishing and disestablishing sequences*, devices directors since Olivier have used to hide or foreground the relationships between the different media they draw on. Such opening sequences are frequent in recent Shakespeare films, which seem to need to establish relations between the old and new media they remediate, from stage and book to cinema, video, radio, record player, etc. Some films aim to smooth over or exploit the chasm between archaic and modern forms, as Radford's *Merchant of Venice* does in its opening scene, by immersing us in Renaissance Venice. There a long, dialogue-free establishing sequence piously reminds us that anti-Semitism is an old, bad, idea that led to book burning, whereas modern forms such as film can call our attention to this error and (by extension) preserve rather than destroy culture. Other films seek to destabilize our sense of what is old and new, using disestablishing sequences to call our attention to the costs and benefits of technological change – something we find in Luhrmann, Almereyda, and Morrissette.

The cross-pollinations between different media are ongoing and far from one way. Lev Manovich finds strong connections, for example, between the digital revolution and the aesthetics of avant-garde film:

> Avant-garde aesthetic strategies came to be embedded in the commands and interface metaphors of computer software. In short, the avant-garde became materialized in a computer. Digital cinema technology is a case in point. The avant-garde strategy of collage reemerged as the "cut-and-paste" command, the most basic operation one can perform on digital data. The idea of painting on film became embedded in paint functions of film-editing software. The avant-garde move to combine animation, printed texts, and live-action footage is repeated in the convergence of animation, title generation, paint, compositing, and editing systems into all-in-one packages. (Manovich 2001:306–7)

Films working directly in the avant-garde modes Manovich describes may point to another constant in the Shakespearean imaginary: the notion that Shakespeare's work represents a *way into* new forms, because it provides an archive or experimental space that has a history of reinvention and remediation. Thus in Taymor's set pieces, for example, we find a divided screen structure that suggests the beginnings of an experiment with "broadband" cinema that Manovich calls the future of the avant-garde (2001: 322–6). Taymor's three-part collages echo the split screens of computer "window" interfaces, in a cut-and-paste mode that is allusively thicker than related experiments with "tiled" screens (as we might find in a show such as 24), which simply multiply linear narratives on screen.

Peter Greenaway's work is perhaps the prime cinematic example of an interest in Shakespeare-play-as-archive, as his experiment with what Manovich calls "database" cinema in *Prospero's Books* (1991) attests (2001:237–9). Greenaway completely jettisons the *drama* of *The Tempest* (along with the conventions of linear storytelling) while *performing* a wholesale recitation of the language of the playtext. An actor whose almost century-long career has been identified with Shakespeare (Gielgud), here assumes the role of a character (Prospero) that has long been seen as a surrogate Shakespeare, at once writing and speaking the lines of a play that he conjures into a surplus of visual life around him. *The Tempest* put on display in this way is unlike any version ever realized on stage or screen and it is tied to its moment of production in very specific ways. Using archival and artistic resources newly made available by computer technology, Greenaway orchestrates an archeological recovery that is also a discovery of surprising continuities. He links the visual excess of the present both to the oral richness of a receding past (the theatrical past embodied by Gielgud's voice and persona) and to an earlier moment of cutting-edge archivalism. That was the moment when the then new technology of the printed book was itself used to record and store between its bindings everything new and old under the sun. Nothing is fixed or static in

Greenaway's greenworld/screenworld of expanding storage. While Gielgud inscribes and recites, the film offers a catalogue display of rare books, testing out different methods for ordering, indexing, and retrieving the matter they store and the ways it may be presented. But it also offers a bibliophile's fantasy of books as living, interactive artifacts, whose contents both contain and spill out into the world around them, much in the way our computers serve as responsive links and open channels of communication. The result is a weird hybrid of documentary film, high-end pornography, performance piece, museum display, diorama, and Powerpoint lecture-demonstration.

Greenaway's hybrid mode of presentation foregrounds a pervasive and challenging quality of cinema: its sheer copiousness. It is not always easy to hear everything, just as it is not always easy to see everything in a frame or sequence. Real attention to such abundance requires us to acclimate to changing aural and visual rhythms – in a process not unlike the one we undergo when we acclimate to the unfamiliar rhythms and codes of Shakespearean language – and even to adjust our mode of interaction from linear reception to discontinuous sampling. If we let go of the discomforts of an unsatisfied desire for linear narrative, we may find it easier to adjust to this different kind of decorum: to an art that aims at a comprehensive audio-visual archive of the series of texts that we might call *The Tempest*. And that adjustment opens up intriguing ways to watch and listen. What texts get into Greenaway's catalogue? How are they matched with different modes of representation? What constitutes "bookness" and why does it matter to Greenaway that we learn this through the medium of film (a question Manovich pursues)? We may go even farther afield to wonder about the relationship between this passionate, avant-garde expression of database capacity and the contemporary passion for the archive found in late twentieth century, post-imperial British literature (Keen 2001).

Time and technology cohere in Greenaway's film in a manner that announces not just the brave new world of computer technologies or the triumph of the visual, but, like the Renaissance of the book it celebrates, a moment of reckoning: with cultural memory, with the media that help us remember, with the accretions of the past and what we make of them. Indeed, all the films we discuss function more in the way of archives than as ephemeral "iterations" of the Shakespeare play they revive or recycle. Some are more conscious than others of their doubleness, belatedness, and their status as "copies" or "serial texts." To these we attend most closely in what follows. Yet all recent Shakespeare films – enabled as they are by the encyclopedic impulse at work in the contemporary manufacture of "special edition" DVDs, fan writings, and classroom interactions – have the capacity to become always already archival.

We suggested earlier how a long-established iconophobia, focused on new regimes of the visual, has served to restrain the academic Shakespeare industry from fully embracing the expressly

filmic dimensions of some of the more daring examples of cinematic Shakespeare. Such restraint will be harder to countenance and sustain as the repackaging of Shakespeare films into DVD archives moves forward, making them available for replaying, quoting, and other kinds of handling that have been second nature to us with print texts. Because it is on screens (like the one on which we are writing) that much "Shakespearizing" already takes place, we suspect that it is on the level of the screen and its multi-mediated interactions that most future Shakespearizing will occur. The screens that once represented the tyranny of the visual are increasingly understood to remediate the powers of print; if they become ubiquitous it will be because they satisfy our hunger for images and our logophilia alike. Indeed, it is in the screen world of our computers that much that constitutes the archive of both print and performance is now made recoverable and manifest: the delivery and downloading of primary and secondary sources alike; the assembly and "posting" of bibliographies, the contents of scholarly journals, countless depositories of images and illustrations; the playing of DVDs, capturing of stills, recording of film-clips, and so on. In the first sentence of his introduction to Julie Taymor's Titus: The Illustrated Screenplay, the scholar Jonathan Bate echoes Olivier's conviction that "If William Shakespeare were alive today, he would be writing and directing movies" (Taymor 2000: 8). We think Bate is half right and that if Shakespeare were alive today, he would likely be experimenting with filmmakers such as Taymor and Greenaway, collaboratively crafting the kind of audio-visual art that is awake to the fullest range of mediated experiences – aural, visual, verbal, synesthetic – that the culture and technology make possible.

3 Hamlet Rewound

- anachronism
- tradition and "modernity"
- remediation and memory
- new media
- underground cinema

Called many things in its 400-year career as Shakespeare's signature play, Hamlet has consistently served as the quintessential "text of modern life" (Emerson 1968: 211). It was transparently "modern," possibly even cutting-edge, at its moment of production in early modern England. Though hardly up to date, Hamlet remained "modern" when Emerson made his all-embracing generalization about Shakespeare writing "the text of modern life" in that it continued to speak (knowingly, presciently) to nineteenth-century actors, audiences, and readers. Hamlet became "modernist" when Freud and his disciple Ernest Jones appended it to the myth of Oedipus in the early twentieth century, and remained so when Laurence Olivier followed their psychoanalytic lead in crafting his dizzyingly Oedipal film in 1948. The play became conspicuously "postmodern" when Heiner Müller disintegrated and reincarnated it as Hamletmachine (1977), and it will no doubt receive additional attributions of (post)modernity as we move deeper into our own century – unless, of course, we or our descendants forget how to remember it, or forget why it has always seemed so memorable in the first place.

In his four-hour-long 1996 film-version of the play, Kenneth Branagh chose to forget nothing. Indeed, he had his actors recite more text from variant editions of the play than had probably ever been recited before on stage or film. Yet by channeling this presumptively faithful reading of Hamlet through an uneasy mix of blockbuster conventions and costume drama, Branagh could also be said to have forgotten other aspects of the play: first and foremost, its capacity to speak past its ordinary conditions of production and to whatever changes "modern life" assembles around it. But what does this privileged word "modern" mean in the first place? How can a print text or play seem so insistently "modern" – speaking to the way things are now – when it is the product of a past that seems positively ancient by current reckonings? The rapid proliferation of new media technologies makes it hard even to appreciate the novelty of a cellphone or laptop PC, much less a ghost that speaks acres of blank verse during a flying visit from purgatory. Humanists will tell us that if literature is the news that stays news, then works of Hamlet's genius and universality will always seem more modern than dated. Yet if "modernity" is (as these examples suggest) a shifting target, then it is a quality that may belong less to the text itself than to its uses.

Boose (2003), and Holland (2004). In this spirit, Robert Shaughnessy (2002) offers a cultural history of twentieth-century Shakespearean theater.

2 We can extend Grigely's metaphor to describe them as constantly expanding, infinite, and even divergent – but that may be to stretch the limits of the mathematical analogy too far. In applying McGann's ideas to Shakespeare adaptations we follow the lead of W. B. Worthen (1998), who follows the lead of Joseph Grigely (1995).

3 Thanks to Mark Burnett for this observation, offered at the Shakespeare Association of America seminar "Shakespearean Film Theory," Bermuda, 2005.

4 "Paratext" is Gérard Genette's term for "all the accessory messages and commentaries [that] at times become virtually indistinguishable from" the text they surround (Stam 2005a: 28; Genette 1982).

5 The convention was picked up by Adrian Noble as well, in his stage and film productions of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1996), and recycled back to the stage again with Mamillius, in Edward Hall's 2004 stage production of *The Winter's Tale*.

6 Of Radford, for example, we might conclude that his deep focus thematics – making everything and everyone seem equally significant in every scene – betray false pathos, the desire to please everyone and blame none. Certainly it has a peculiar discontinuity effect of changing our characterological readings from scene to scene: in making his pitch to Antonio and in the later banquet scene, Bassanio is a sleazeball; when he arrives in Belmont and makes his casket choice, he's wise and noble; a few moments later he's half undressed and sleazy again, etc. But one could also argue that Radford has here found a point-of-view equivalent for – and is calling attention to – the compelling but troubling dynamics of Shakespearean humanism: the play's characters have an equal ethical pull on us and generate equal repugnance (e.g. "hath not a Jew eyes" / "my ducats, my daughter").

7 Cf. Kenneth Burke's suggestive framing of dramatic character: "The essayist's terms serve to organize a set of interrelated emphases, quite as Othello, Iago, and Desdemona are interrelated emphases. There are 'hero' and 'villain' terms, with subsidiary terms distributed about these two poles like iron filings in a magnetic field, and tracing somewhat of a 'graded series' between them. Emphases cannot 'contradict' one another so far as the 'total plot' is concerned, any more than Iago's function in the play can be said to contradict Othello's" ([1937] 1984: 312).

8 See Lehmann (2002a) on the author function in film; see Worthen (1997) on the Shakespearean "authority of performance" in theater; see Lanier (2002b) on Shakespearean "purity" from things commercial; see Holderness (1988) on Bardolatry.

9 For accounts of these poststructuralist groundings see Grigely (1995) and Stam (2005a).

10 Stam elaborates: "aesthetic mainstreaming" involves an aversion to "all forms of experimentation and modernism," an adherence to the "dominant model of storytelling (whether in its classical Hollywood or its Sundance Hollywood-lite version)," and a "suburbanized Aristotelianism", calling for "three-act structures, principal conflicts, coherent (and often sympathetic) characters, an inexorable narrative 'arc' and final catharsis or happy end. . . . Aesthetic mainstreaming dovetails with economic censorship, since the changes demanded in an adaptation are made in the name of monies spent and box-office profits required" (2005a: 43).

11 Stanley Cavell (2004) traces the film's "witnessing" of "intellectual origins" including Shakespeare's play (p. 427) as a movement between skepticism and "something that resembles faith but that is also to be distinguished from what we may expect of faith" (p. 426).

12 For Cavell, these transformations raise "the issue of the competition of film with theater" (2004: 436) as well as their interdependency.

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as constituting "natural" acting has changed, although claims to transformative "naturalness" are recycled through theater generations (Roach 1993). Different genres and representational modes make different claims to realism. The vernacularity of documentary, for example, makes one kind of claim to be "true to life." Godard's close observance of the everyday – of narrative emerging out of the arbitrary, contradictory turns of unfolding life – makes another. The affective immediacy of action films make a third. We might well describe the roller-coaster camera rides in *Spider-Man* (2002, dir. Sam Raimi) as excitingly verisimilar (this is what it would feel like to dive off a building), while also recognizing them as completely implausible. In this longer view, as Christopher Williams explains, artistic realism is not a univocal style, but a historically conditioned "network of differing conventions" that make claims to reference – to "knowledge of how things really are," in "relation to different aspects of film and television works, and of emotional, cultural, and social life" (2000: 210–11).

8 For informed commentary on the BBC Shakespeare project, see Susan Willis's book-length study (1991), the essays and reviews assembled by Michele Willems and Neil Taylor in Anthony Davies and Stanley Wells (1994: 69–85, 86–98).

9 See Bruster (2000) on Mazursky; Holderness (1993) on Jarman; and Hapgood (1994) on Kurosawa.

10 Almereyda has contributed a brief essay on Kurosawa's deployment of *Hamlet* in *The Bad Sleep Well* (in which he also acknowledges his debt to Kaurismäki) in the booklet enclosed in the Criterion Collection's recent edition of the film.

11 With respect to Branagh's mining of "heritage film" conventions, Albanese notes that "Branagh's *Hamlet* approximates the period and style of Masterpiece Theater and Merchant-Ivory productions, aligns itself with them in interpelleting a US audience interested in, and comfortable with, British-inflected representations of texts from the distant – but not too distant – past. Given the attention to luxurious settings and interiors that characterizes these films, this time before might be called the upholstered past, made for ease and relaxation, a past that is domesticated, effortlessly knowable" (2001: 213–14).

12 On cinematic realism more generally, see note 7, above. At the start of his article Loehlin refers both to "the new wave [of Shakespeare movies] that followed Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V*" and to Jack Jorgens's typologies which we discuss above, making the same kinds of exceptional cases for Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* and Loncraine's *Richard III* that we make (Loehlin [1997] 2003: 173). For Loehlin, "new wave" is less a term for formal and stylistic preoccupations than a chronological grouping.

13 Loehlin notes that "[Oliver] Parker's *Othello* was marketed in Columbia Pictures print ads as an 'erotic thriller that was 'as accessible as *Fatal Attraction*'" (2003: 174), while Albanese contends that "Branagh's at times gratuitous casting reveals his investment in the nexus of value that is the Hollywood star system: witness the number of big-name American actors in minor parts, who are as likely there to secure funding as to represent the universality of the Shakespearean dispensation" (2001: 212).

14 Albanese asks if it is "enough that mall movie and art cinema have the apparition of Shakespeare in common for us to forget all the differences in direction, style, language, and cast – not to mention budget, production, and distribution – that would mark them as imperfectly distinct" (2001: 208). Like Albanese, we think it is not.

15 See Mallin (1999); Burt (1998); Deitchman (2002); Hodgdon 2003b.

Chapter 2   Adaptation as a Cultural Process

1 For accounts of this phenomenon see the essays collected in Cartmell and Whelehan (1999), Desmet and Sawyer (1999), Davies and Wells (1994), Burt and

13 On Shakespeare as a field of transaction between the "high" and the "popular", see Lanier (2002b).

14 See Burt (2003) and Osborne (2002) for discussions of DVD mediations of Shakespeare film. Acland (2003) offers the most extensive account of the changing paratextual landscape in the global film industry.

15 Peter Donaldson develops the phrase "media allegory" over a number of essays (1990–2005) and uses it to describe Shakespeare films that use shifts of cinematic style to reflect on transitions between different media and the history of technological change. See also Douglas Bruster on these effects in Mazursky's *Tempest* (2000).

Chapter 3   *Hamlet Rewound*

1 The association between film and modernity in critical theory takes different forms and has passed through a number of phases, from early Russian and French film theory to the philosophies of a Cavell or a Deleuze.

2 See, for example, Marcel Gromaire's totalizing "A Painter's Ideas about the Cinema" ([1919] 1988) or André Bazin's exceptionalist "The Myth of Total Cinema" ([1946] 1967).

3 Robert Stam (2005b, chapter 6) discusses Godard's adaptations (including his *King Lear* (1987)) in the context of the larger "querelle de l'adaptation" that helped define the French New Wave as a cinematic movement.

4 For discussions of the classroom scene topos in American films since the 1990s see Semenza (2005), Deitchman (2002), and Burt (2002c).

5 "Presentism" is the tendency to interpret earlier works and events according to our own cultural standards, as if early modern culture were, in Margreta de Grazia's words, the "early now." In Shakespeare studies, de Grazia (1995a, 1995b, 1996) and Terence Hawkes (2002) have offered the most sustained analysis of this approach.

6 For Walter Benjamin, the newspaper and novel destroy the "chasteness" and embedded life of storytelling for Fredric Jameson, photography challenges the fullness of novelistic representation (Frow 1997: 224). More recently television has played the role of the impoverished newcomer.

7 Unless otherwise indicated, all citations to Shakespeare's work reference *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

8 See Yates (1966), Carruthers (1990), Maguire (1996), Tribble (2005), and Sullivan (1999).

9 The still fresh insight that all new technologies lag behind our needs of them is Richard Lanham's (1993).

10 For a discussion of the history, art, and science of Pixelvision, see http://www.michaeloreilly.com/pixelpage.html. For a selection of Benning's work, see http://www.vdb.org/smackn.acgi$pkgdetail?SADIEBENNI. Almereyda has also experimented with this medium in earlier shorts and other films.

11 But see Hodgdon for an opposing view evocative of Nora's position: "overall the film marks not just the waning of affect but of rich verbal communication in present-day culture, substituting for the memory of that heritage the ephemera of media culture" (2003b: 202).

12 Hodgdon observes that the ghost's sudden physical presence is "made all the more startling because Hamlet and the spectator see the ghost simultaneously, one of the few times the film invites such specular identification" (2003b: 201).

13 Lanier explains: "Many of Hamlet's filmmaking efforts are directed toward using film to create a counter discourse, in effect turning the technological apparatus of media culture back on itself in an effort to expose its complicity with corporate corruption. This is, for example, how Hamlet confronts Claudius's opening news conference, training his independent lens on the 'official' media and creating his own unfiltered record of the event" (2002b: 174).

14 Lanier contends that this scene offers no "space of resistance" (2002b: 176).

15 On film pornography and fictions of presence, see Williams (1989).

16 The "snow" screens in Hamlet's videos recall the strips of blank film that punctuate Connor's shorts. Video "snow" is the textual record of a recorder turned off, reminding us (Connor's signature gesture) that what we are looking at is a material and mechanical record. Moreover, Hamlet's credit line, "This is a film by HAMLET," echoes a similar gesture in Conner's short, "A Movie," which prominently displays the tag "BY BRUCE CONNER" throughout. (Thanks to one of our students, Andrew Hall, for noting the allusive play on authorship; 2006). The credit line, an intertextual signature, is thus both an allusion and a pun. It simultaneously asserts the claim and the limits of authorship.

17 Although it helps: See Cynthia Fuchs, "Interview with Michael Almereyda," http://www.popmatters.com/film/interviews/almereyda-michael.html.

Chapter 4   Colliding Time and Space in Taymor's *Titus*

1 Taymor notes that her production designer, Dante Ferretti introduced her "to E.U.R, Mussolini's government centre, whose principal building is referred to as the 'square coliseum' because of its myriad arches. Built by Mussolini to re-create the glory of the ancient Roman Empire, this surreal – almost futuristic – architecture was a setting that perfectly embodied the concept for the film" (2000: 178).

2 The first image to the left in figure 4.1 is drawn from *Titus*. The taller image on the right is a photograph made by Philip Greenspun to illustrate a webpage devoted to EUR that is viewable at http://www.photo.net/italy/rom-eur.

3 Taymor may be mining a late twentieth-century genre, post-apocalyptic film, exemplified by the *Mad Max* films (1979, 1981, 1985). Her adaptation evokes a host of contemporary concerns, ranging from the recent ethnic cleansings in the Balkans to the long-established threat of nuclear annihilation. As the first sentence in Taymor's *Illustrated Screenplay* claims, "We could be in Brooklyn or Sarajevo" (2000: 19).

4 In an interview that took place on February 25, 2000 at Columbia University (*Titus* DVD 2), Taymor embraces her reputation as an accomplished stylist of violence. Yet she also describes redesigning the role of young Lucius as a "counterpoint" to the unrelieved violence that makes Aaron and Titus "mirror images of each other" in both play and film.

5 Richard Burt, for example, argues that Shakespeare's own cultivation of "aesthetic excess" through "the media of theater and print narrative" effectively "destabilizes precisely the kinds of oppositions Taymor wants to affirm and correlate: between high art (film) and trash (blockbuster); Shakespeare and Shakesploitation; a critique of violence and an embrace of violence; modesty versus sexual perversion; and sacred and profane" (2002a: 312–13).

6 Many reviews noted Taymor's debt to Fellini – which, it should be added, is as much structural as conceptual. In addition to employing Cinécittà craftsmen, Taymor enlisted a production designer, Ferretti, whose résumé includes five Fellini films between 1980 and 1990. For extended discussions of the Fellini connection see Stone (2000), Burt (2002a) and Donaldson (2006).

7 On Cumming's *Cabaret* haircut, linking homosexuality to perversion to Fascism, see Burt (2002a: 315–16) and Anderegg (2004: 186). Anderegg observes, "the danger of the kind of postmodern allusiveness Taymor practices is that the associations evoked will not be those the artist intends. Too many allusions to a diverse mix of external signs can result in a work that has no ultimate center, no 'base' from which the allusions can be launched and controlled" (2004: 186). We share some of Anderegg's reservations about Taymor's free-floating postmodernity. Yet if postmodernism is about anything, it involves the promiscuous relation of signifier to signified. Searching for an example of Taymor's "fidelity" to anything except the Shakespearean playtext (which Anderegg accounts "a virtue"), much