Jim Casey, Arcadia University

Ocular Proof: Framing Jealousy and Race in Tim Blake Nelson's *O*

This essay looks at jealousy, surveillance, and race in *O*, Tim Blake Nelson's 2001 adaptation of *Othello*. I am particularly interested in examining how the film reworks the original play's dual preoccupation with jealousy and seeing within the context of a high school shooting. Using a variety of visual and musical framing techniques, Nelson highlights both the see-and-be-seen nature of high school and the physical and metaphorical re-framing of the early modern play. Following Odin James (Mekhi Phifer), the only black student at his upscale prep school, the film dramatizes jealousy as circumscribed by a teenage Foucauldian surveillance society. Characters are continually watching (spying on) one another; the shots are consistently framed to emphasize the audience's voyeuristic viewing experience; and the script's language reiterates the visual nature of jealousy—Hugo (Josh Hartnett) advises Odin to "just watch" for signs of unfaithfulness in his girlfriend Desi (Julia Stiles) and believes that he himself will only be *seen* (by his father and the community) when Odin is dead: "One of these days," he says, "everyone is going to pay attention to me. Because I'm going to fly too."

Laurie E. Osborne, Colby College

Revisiting Liveness: Cinematic Form and Function

Roughly ten years ago, I explored the theatrical television broadcasts unearthed and reproduced by the Broadway Theatre Archive in order to analyze the cinematic tools used to register the liveness of theatre on stage. Arguing that successive filming of stage performances would incorporate more and more emerging cinematic visual and aural coding to imply the live qualities of particular productions, I anticipated that using the capacities of film and televisual reproduction would ultimately both complicate and enable the producers' claims that their audiences were experiencing "live" performance. While the competing claims to liveness in the U.K. theatre companies' broadcasts into movie theatres (and onto computer screens) around the world do resemble BTA production by embracing visual and paratextual codes evoking liveness, current theatrical broadcasts now raise interesting theoretical challenges for the whole idea of liveness. While U.K. audiences can potentially achieve simultaneous, though not co-spatial experiences of actual RSC and NT productions, viewers around the world are decidedly out of synch in their experiences. In both cases, however, multi-camera filming, staging the actors AND their audiences, and co-directing precipitate simultaneous distance-inflected disjunction and strong audience involvement. These effects rely on current film-savvy awareness of visual manipulation and appreciation of the intimacy and suture of the closeup. Taking into consideration two NTLive productions, *Coriolanus* and *Hamlet,* as well as Kenneth Branagh's recent *Romeo and Juliet,* this paper explores the ways that formal cinematic analysis can illuminate how these kinds of films are re-structuring liveness as a spectrum of experiences, particularly relevant in our endlessly recorded world.

Bill Kerwin, University of Missouri

Colliding Forms:
The Shakespearean Long Speech, Grief, and Film Choices

Finding a cinematic form for capturing Shakespeare's poetic language is one of the challenges every adaptation must confront, and perhaps none of the poetic elements of his work offers more challenges and opportunities than the long speech. In this essay, I will consider how different directors have approached the challenge of filming soliloquy, or other long Shakespearean speeches, (and soliloquy is an unstable term here, since directors can and often do turn a play's soliloquy into something else by having another character in the shot). I am interested in social form, film form, and poetic form, and their connections to ideas of different kinds of new formalism, especially the theories of colliding forms articulated by Caroline Levine, and the relationship of film forms and affect as put forward by Eugenie Brinkman. This interest grows out of my work on sixteenth-century complaint poetry, a poetic tradition which, I think, along with other cultural forms such as the sermon, prepared Tudor audiences for dramatic practices such as the soliloquy and the long dramatic speech within dialogue. The complaint poem, packed with both affect and activism, embraces its formal inventiveness—in mid-century complaint, ghosts return from the dead and begin to speak, often in unreliable ways, against the events in their lives and in the forms of social organization around them. A lot of forms collide in a complaint poem, pushing the reader to move forward and backward in time, and deep into the affective experience of being a political subject. As a form that manages both affect and social critique, and that often takes a listener backwards and forwards across times, complaint shares much with the Shakespearean long speech. In this short paper, I will compare the formal choices made by different directors as they present Macbeth's famous fifth-act speech, "She should have died hereafter." My goal is to trace a few examples of how directors deploy the powers of film—especially uses of time, light, rhythm—to give form to affect and take on the flexibility of the long dramatic address.

Ana Laura Magis Weinberg, Independent scholar, Mexico City

Make Shakespeare Great Again!
Transposing the soliloquies effectively: a study of Vishal Bhardwaj's "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow" and "To be or not to be"

Whatever people have to say about Shakespeare's poetic genius, it is undoubtedly best represented in his soliloquies: the main (usually male) actor takes centre-stage, with a headlight shining on him, and he slowly and surely begins to pronounce what are the most famous lines not only of the playwright, but of all theatre. Words, not action, are the protagonists here, and all the poetry of Shakespeare comes through. How then to deal with this monsters and monuments of language on the screen? Bollywood director Vishal Bhardwaj has an almost irreverent approach to Shakespeare, and makes some of the most diverging adaptations currently being produced. I will explore how Bhardwaj takes the famous soliloquies from *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* and breaks

away with the rigidity of the traditional Shakspearean adaptation to deliver purely cinematic (and cinematically effective) discourses.

In the case of *Macbeth*, Bhardwaj transformed the movie into *Maqbool* and turned the power politics-heavy play into a heart-breaking love tragedy. All the protagonist's soliloquies are drastically altered, but the biggest change comes when "tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow" is scrapped for a heart-wrenching reaction to "The queen, my lord, is dead". As for *Hamlet*, Bhardwaj makes *Haider* a completely political movie that centers on the military involvement of the Indian army in Kashmere. Hamlet's soliloquies are delivered in the city square, and "to be or not to be" is manifested in signs held by people protesting their disappeared family members.

I will analyse how Bhardwaj has transposed the soliloquies into effective cinematic language, casting aside the words and their "poetry", and discuss how this makes for very effective and moving scenes, which are worked into reimaginings of Shakespeare that reinstate Shakespeare's dramatic force while making him relevant, fresh and exciting—both in their Indian context and in the film medium.

Jacob Claflin, Idaho State University

"Blood will have blood": Trauma in Justin Kurzel's *Macbeth*

A crucial issue in *Macbeth* is the nature of the witches and their influence over Macbeth's choice to kill Duncan. Are the witches powerful supernatural entities that manipulate the events in the play, or do they simply plant a suggestion that leads Macbeth to regicide? Adaptations of *Macbeth* will sometimes take these ideas to their logical extremes, showing the witches as involved in almost every action Macbeth and his wife take, or creating witches that are simply a figment of Macbeth's mind. Despite film's capability of showing the spectacle of full supernatural witches, Western film adaptations of *Macbeth* [1] seem to favor less potent witches and instead focus on how Macbeth deals with some level of trauma. This paper explores how Justin Kurzel uses the affordances of the modes in film in order to allow his 2015 adaptation of *Macbeth* to be a text that comments on the trauma of combat.

Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr., Penn State University

"Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men": *Fires Were Started* and *Macbeth*

This paper is part of a book project centered on Shakespeare and British World War 2 film. One of the project's objectives is to contest the notion that Shakespeare, as an icon of

---

[1] By Western film adaptation I mean any adaptation originating in an English speaking country (The UK, USA, Australia) that was originally conceived of as a film, not a stage production that was later adapted for film like the 1979 Trevor Nunn production or the 2010 Rupert Goold production, Television production like the 1961 Paul Almond production or the 1983 Jack Gold production, or appropriations that do not use Shakespeare's language like the 1955 Ken Hughes film *Joe Macbeth* or the 2001 Billy Morrissett film *Scotland, PA*.

British (or, more problematically, "English") culture, invariably served or represented "what we are fighting for."

The great documentarian Humphrey Jennings invoked Shakespeare repeatedly throughout his career. In this paper, I focus on the final minutes of his masterpiece *Fires Were Started* (1943), which is set in London during the Blitz. The film concludes with a fine example of Jennings's lyrical use of parallel montage: footage of a fireman's funeral is cross-cut with that of a supply ship heading out to sea. The montage clarifies the film's propaganda message that heroic sacrifices like the ones made by the auxiliary firemen are necessary to the war effort. Immediately preceding the montage, however, is a scene in which a weary fireman, in the wake of losing a comrade, reads to his fellow firefighters from Macbeth's sardonic speech to the two murderers he suborns to kill Banquo and Fleance ("Ay, in the catalogue ye go for men"). While this speech has been taken to undermine the film's propaganda message, it is instead expressive of Jennings's awareness of the fragile nature of collective endeavor, and of the temptation to fall into cynicism about the "people's war" narrative that all sacrifice equally for the collective good. Through his use of parallel montage, Jennings offers a rejoinder to the lines from *Macbeth*, seeking to express in formal terms the necessity of overcoming such cynicism. In doing so, Jennings' mobilizes Shakespeare as a marker of internal difference rather than the emblem of a shared national identity.

Melissa Croteau, California Baptist University

Acting the "Tragical-Comical-Historical-Pastoral":
Rasa Theory and Vishal Bhardwaj's *Haider* (2014)

On many levels, *Hamlet* is a play about acting. When considering styles of theatrical performance, our eponymous prince exhorts the players to perform their parts "gently," with "temperance" and "smoothness," "[holding] a mirror up to nature" (3.2). This acting philosophy has been theorized and realized in diverse ways on stage and screen in the Euro-centric West, but it stands in stark contrast to one of the foremost ancient aesthetic theories of India—that of *rasa*, which refers to the emotion an audience member experiences during a performance, be it drama, dance, poetry, or music. Rasa theory posits that all the acting in a performed narrative must focus on eliciting powerful emotion from the audience; thus, "robustious" acting is frequently found on stage and screen in India, as is often noted by critics of Bollywood. Furthermore, rasa theory dictates that every theatrical work should be governed by one primary rasa, out of a group of eight designated emotions, which may appear in the piece but must serve to support the dominant rasa. In 2014, Indian director Vishal Bhardwaj adapted *Hamlet* into the Hindi film *Haider*, transforming the "rotten" state of Denmark into the beleaguered, divided region of Kashmir. Though rasa theory has not been widely used to analyze cinema, scholars have noted that Indian films are most commonly dominated by the rasas of romance (*sringara*) and sorrow (*karuna*). Not surprisingly, *Haider* is governed by *karuna*, the rasa of sorrow, pity, and grief, from start to finish, an emotional landscape that is undergirded by the rasas of disgust, as represented by the extreme, grisly violence in the film, and romance, which, as in the case of Hamlet and Ophelia, increases the pathos of the narrative. In *Haider*, *karuna* is evoked vividly through acting and

other aspects of mise-en-scène, particularly the cold, harsh, awe-inspiring terrain of Kashmir, which typically is used very differently in Hindi cinema, as a magnificent backdrop for romantic passion. It is this, along with other striking juxtapositional strategies, that highlight Bhardwaj's message in *Haider*. Like Akira Kurosawa in his twentieth century Shakespeare adaptations, Bhardwaj makes a brave statement in *Haider* condemning the appalling corruption and gruesome violence perpetrated by official authorities in his own nation as well as militants from within and outside the country. *Haider*, as a great many didactic performative works in India, employs the pathetic rasa to impart its ethical meaning and to stir audiences to think, and perhaps act, differently.

Greg Semenza, University of Connecticut

Filming Shakespeare's Wars

Relative to the other arts, cinema has both amazed and troubled us for its ability "to hold . . . the mirror up to nature," or, as Jean Louis Baudry states the matter: "the cinematographic technique is the only one that makes possible a succession of images rapid enough to roughly correspond to our faculty for producing mental images." The Renaissance theater's key anxiety about its own insufficiency to do the same is often most pronounced in relation to the staging of war, its inability to bring forth "famine, sword and fire" on so "unworthy" a "scaffold." Precisely because the depiction of war, and battles more specifically, pose so significant a challenge to the success of a medium dependent on the suspension of disbelief, it also grants a major *opportunity* to cinematic adaptors of Shakespeare. Indeed, the cinema has reveled, since the earliest days of the silent era, in its ability to improve on the theater through on-location shooting (vasty fields and all), the employment of massive sets and casts, and the use of special effects, all in the service of a powerful realism. So how does the illusion of war's actual brutality, chaos, and human costs impact the manner in which we read Shakespeare's wars? How has such realism conditioned our twentieth- and twenty-first-century responses to Shakespeare's war heroes and villains? How has the cinema served to highlight Shakespeare's enduring cultural relevance in the age of the atomic bomb and the threat of imminent annihilation? The longer essay will seek answers to these and other questions by focusing on two inter-related subjects crucial to the larger history of Shakespearean wars on film: first, the changing historical contexts within which Shakespeare's wars have been appropriated and realistically depicted by filmmakers; second, the manner in which these filmmakers have sought to interpret the plays through formal cinematographic and editing choices ranging from creative mise-en-scene to massively innovative montage techniques. For the purposes of this seminar, montage will be my particular focus.

Covered films will include but not be limited to the following: Gade and Schall's *Hamlet* (1920); Olivier's *Henry V* (1944); Welles's *Falstaff* or *Chimes at Midnight* (1965); Kurosawa's *Ran* (1985); Branagh's *Henry V* (1989); Ralph Fiennes's *Coriolanus* (2011); and Bhardwaj's *Haider* (2014).

James J. Marino, Cleveland State University

Shakespeare Unplugged:
Joss Whedon's Alternative Aesthetic

Joss Whedon's 2012 *Much Ado About Nothing* defines itself by opposition to the cinema of big-budget spectacle, most obviously to Kenneth Branagh's star-studded *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993) and Whedon's own 2012 action vehicle *The Avengers* (2012). Filmed in twelve days in Whedon's own home on a reportedly minimal budget and using a cast of modestly known actors, the Whedon *Much Ado About Nothing* presents itself as a deliberate alternative to contemporary Hollywood's industrial blockbuster aesthetic, and early criticism has praised its "amateur" style. But the appearance of amateurism is a carefully crafted illusion.

Whedon's film is a highly professionalized imitation of outsider film-making. It presents an "alternative" cinematic style akin to certain "alternative" music recordings, a commercial appropriation of styles that signify "non-commercial" art. Such "alternative" cultural products are merely consumer alternatives, fully integrated into the marketplace they pretend to be outside. The apparent authenticity and spontaneity of Whedon's *Much Ado About Nothing* is the result of its makers' careful professionalism and technical polish.

Whedon's *Much Ado* strategically mimics less commercial forms of cinema, such as the art movie and the student film. For example, Whedon takes care to include the obligatory mirror shot typical of student thesis films. At a crucial moment, the gulling of Benedick, Whedon's composition even evokes live amateur dramatics in the proscenium format of a typical high school auditorium. But however individual shots may signal uncommercial approaches to film-making, Whedon's editing of those shots and the rhythm of his visual storytelling functions according the standard codes of commercial cinema. *Much Ado* imitates student films in particular frames, but those frames are organized into a fully commercial and professional whole.

Michael D. Friedman, University of Scranton

Justin Kurzel's *Macbeth* and the Language of Cinema

My paper will enter into the debate over the legitimacy of the concept of "fidelity" in the study of Shakespeare on film. If Shakespeare's plays exist for us originally as verbal texts, and film privileges the moving image over text, then is it possible (or desirable) for Shakespeare films to demonstrate fidelity to the plays they adapt? Many scholars would argue that the best Shakespeare films articulate playtexts through the syntax of cinema, primarily employing visual techniques inherent to film form, rather than the vocabulary of verse drama. However, in the popular response to Shakespeare on film, there lingers a general assumption that the poetry of the play carries the essence of the work. Therefore, any Shakespeare film that discounts the verbal text too heavily, no matter how visually arresting it may be, risks the disapproval of its audience. As an example of this phenomenon, I plan to examine one of the most "cinematic" of the recent film versions of Shakespeare: director Justin Kurzel's *Macbeth* (2015). Praised for its stunning and innovative visual impact, the film was concurrently denigrated for its failure to integrate such images effectively with Shakespeare's verse. Kurzel tells the story of Macbeth chiefly

through the language of cinema, and I hope to document the gains and losses that such a strategy entails.

Mark Thornton Burnett, Queen's University Belfast

Hamlet, Form and Brazilian Cinema

This essay focuses on two Brazilian *Hamlet* adaptations, *A Herança* (dir. Ozualdo Candeias, 1971) and *O Jogo da Vida e da Morte* (dir. Mario Kuperman, 1971), addressing the ways in which the films deploy discrete film forms and peripheral locales (the *favela* or slum and the *sertão* or northeaster rural region) so as to highlight a series of intricate relationships between land, property and poverty. *O Jogo da Vida e da Morte* and *A Herança* are preoccupied with communities that fail or are unable to provide for their own, thereby introducing images of Brazil that run counter to populist conceptions. For example, the black Ophelia figure in *O Jogo da Vida e da Morte* and *A Herança* is utilized as a significant vehicle through which Brazil's troubled racial histories are made visible, while the films' Hamlet figures are arresting for the extent to which they point up differing responses to the straitened conditions of Brazil in the 1970s. Where one film endorses an ideal of socialist utopia, the other underlines a more nihilistic attitude, suggesting how *Hamlet* can be pulled in contrary directions, occupying simultaneously recuperative and defeatist positions.

Form is crucial to both films' undertakings. Within its environs, *O Jogo da Vida e da Morte*, in the spirit of previous shanty town films and with a nod to a documentary tradition centred on the plight of the Brazilian proletariat, identifies João/Hamlet as an archetypal *favelado*. Reduced from a palace to a primitive brick bungalow on a crumbling hillside, Elsinore's stark features are emphasized by *ciné-verité*-style cinematography and the use of deep shadows and high contrasts. Against these distinctive backdrops, *Hamlet* is made to speak to the needs and expectations of a recognizably Brazilian urban milieu. By contrast, *A Herança* might be identified as a Latin American western, as suggested in allusions to Sergio Leone's 'Euro-westerns', a conceptual focus on the lives of *sertanejos* (cowboys), horse-riding sequences and brawls in the dust. The conjunction of Shakespeare and the western is not unprecedented on film, but, in *A Herança*, the formula is lent a local treatment that illuminates a region-specific set of social and economic circumstances. The whole is complemented by the excision of language, and in its place *A Herança* substitutes folk images, compositions and music suggestive of a community's struggles and trials.

Kristina Sutherland, University of Georgia

Sounding 'the very bass string of humility': Hal in *The Hollow Crown*

While Shakespeare's figure of Henry V and the Hal of his youth is the very essence of Renaissance self-fashioning, his use of his Eastcheap activities to hide his true disposition from the nobility lends credence to the accusation he wishes to avoid, that he is "a most princely

hypocrite."[2] While Hal of course is scripting his ascent to the throne as a redemption story, he is doing so at the cost of his lower class friends who he ultimately leaves behind at coronation – and later in *Henry V* – in the fields of France. The calculating and possibly unscrupulous side of Shakespeare's monarch, often somewhat glossed over in high budget screen productions, is not only cut as words are literally taken from his mouth, but also absolved more than ever before in the BBC Two series, *The Hollow Crown*. In Richard Eyre's *Henry IV* episodes, scenes with soliloquies and monologues are employed to create an intelligent, feeling Prince Hal through the use of lighting, music, closeups, voiceover, and camera movement. This essay examines these film techniques and how they fashion a portrayal of Hal as a prince who "sounded the very bass string of humility."[3]

---

[2] William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part Two*, 2.2.51.
[3] William Shakespeare, *Henry IV, Part One*, 2.4.5.