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# Shakespeare's verbal and visual relationship : from silent film to Kenneth Branagh

Kelly S. Taylor  
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SHAKESPEARE'S VERBAL AND VISUAL RELATIONSHIP:  
FROM SILENT FILM TO KENNETH BRANAGH

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Theatre Arts  
San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Kelly S. Taylor

May 1999



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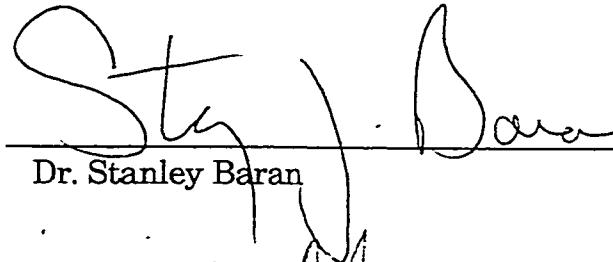
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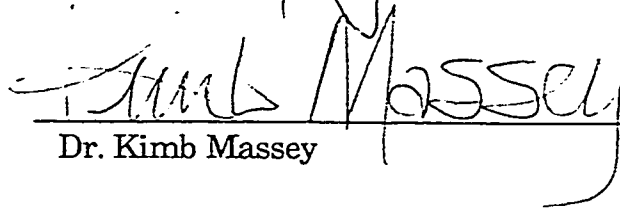
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## ABSTRACT

### SHAKESPEARE'S VERBAL AND VISUAL RELATIONSHIP: FROM SILENT FILM TO KENNETH BRANAGH

by Kelly S. Taylor

This thesis examines the interrelationship between text and image in Shakespeare film through the comparative performance analysis of several Shakespeare films. Theories regarding the relationship between text and image from anthropology, psychology, semiology, iconology, theatre, and film are utilized in studies of English Renaissance theatre, English Victorian theatre, Shakespeare silent film, and modern Shakespeare film to determine how theatrical and/or cinematic devices are used to maintain the relationship between the verbal and visual elements of Shakespeare's text.

Research reveals that the literary textualization of Shakespeare has been used to preserve a social hierarchy which ennobles those who work with text and degrades those who work with images. Shakespeare's language is found to be so highly mutable that it defies definitive definition by scholars who seek to appropriate Shakespeare's genius in attempts to preserve intellectual elitism. Therefore, filmmaking techniques which illustrate Shakespeare's genius as equally textual and visual are deemed controversial.

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## Table of Contents

Chapter 1 -	Introduction of the Problem . . . . .	1
	English Restoration Theatre . . . . .	5
	English Renaissance Theatre . . . . .	13
	Shakespeare on Film . . . . .	16
Chapter 2 -	Text and Image . . . . .	24
	Claude Lévi-Strauss . . . . .	24
	Jacques Derrida . . . . .	26
	Michael Chanan . . . . .	27
	Jacques Lacan . . . . .	28
	Michel Foucault . . . . .	30
	Roman Ingarden . . . . .	31
	Claude Gandelman . . . . .	31
	W. J. Thomas Mitchell . . . . .	33
Chapter 3 -	Shakespeare Silent Film . . . . .	47
Chapter 4 -	Theatrical Centripetality and Cinematic Centrifugality . . . . .	89
	The Theatrical Mode of Burge's and Dexter's <u>Othello</u> . . . . .	90
	The Filmic Mode of Welles' <u>Othello</u> . . . . .	98
	The Realistic Mode of Parker's <u>Othello</u> . . . . .	111
	Theatrical Centripetality in Branagh's Shakespeare Films . . . . .	124
	Cinematic Centrifugality in Branagh's Shakespeare Films . . . . .	133
	Theatrical Centripetality/Cinematic Centrifugality in Branagh's Shakespeare Films . . . . .	140
Chapter 5 -	Voice-over . . . . .	154
	The Cerebral Voice-over . . . . .	156
	The Active Voice-over . . . . .	165
	The Narrative Voice-over . . . . .	171
	The Descriptive Voice-over . . . . .	183
	The Deceptive Voice-over . . . . .	189
	The Spacial Voice-over . . . . .	194
Conclusion	. . . . .	198
References	. . . . .	211

## List of Figures

Figure 1.	René Magritte's <u>Les trahison des images</u> (1929) .....	39
Figure 2.	Mitchell's Categories of Images .....	43
Figure 3.	Thanhouser's <u>King Lear</u> (1916) .....	65
Figure 4.	Cines' <u>Amleto</u> (1910) .....	70
Figure 5.	Cines' <u>Amleto</u> (1910) .....	70
Figure 6.	Vitagraph's <u>Othello</u> (1908) .....	72
Figure 7.	Itala's <u>Giulio Cesare</u> (1909) .....	77
Figure 8.	Lux's <u>Hamlet</u> (1910) .....	78
Figure 9.	Gaumont-Hepworth's <u>Hamlet</u> (1913) .....	82
Figure 10.	Burge's and Dexter's <u>Othello</u> (1965) .....	95
Figure 11.	Burge's and Dexter's <u>Othello</u> (1965) .....	95
Figure 12.	Burge's and Dexter's <u>Othello</u> (1965) .....	95
Figure 13.	Burge's and Dexter's <u>Othello</u> (1965) .....	95
Figure 14.	Welles' <u>Othello</u> (1952) .....	101
Figure 15.	Welles' <u>Othello</u> (1952) .....	101
Figure 16.	Welles' <u>Othello</u> (1952) .....	101
Figure 17.	Welles' <u>Othello</u> (1952) .....	101
Figure 18.	Welles' <u>Othello</u> (1952) .....	104
Figure 19.	Welles' <u>Othello</u> (1952) .....	104
Figure 20.	Welles' <u>Othello</u> (1952) .....	104
Figure 21.	Welles' <u>Othello</u> (1952) .....	104
Figure 22.	Welles' <u>Othello</u> (1952) .....	104
Figure 23.	Welles' <u>Othello</u> (1952) .....	104
Figure 24.	Welles' <u>Othello</u> (1952) .....	106
Figure 25.	Welles' <u>Othello</u> (1952) .....	106
Figure 26.	Welles' <u>Othello</u> (1952) .....	106
Figure 27.	Welles' <u>Othello</u> (1952) .....	106
Figure 28.	Welles' <u>Othello</u> (1952) .....	106
Figure 29.	Welles' <u>Othello</u> (1952) .....	106
Figure 30.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	113
Figure 31.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	113
Figure 32.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	113
Figure 33.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	113
Figure 34.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	113
Figure 35.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	113
Figure 36.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	117
Figure 37.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	117
Figure 38.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	117

List of Figures (continued)

Figure 39.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	117
Figure 40.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	119
Figure 41.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	119
Figure 42.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	119
Figure 43.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	119
Figure 44.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	119
Figure 45.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	119
Figure 46.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) .....	126
Figure 47.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) .....	126
Figure 48.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) .....	126
Figure 49.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) .....	126
Figure 50.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) .....	126
Figure 51.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) .....	126
Figure 52.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) .....	131
Figure 53.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) .....	131
Figure 54.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) .....	131
Figure 55.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) .....	131
Figure 56.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) .....	131
Figure 57.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) .....	131
Figure 58.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) .....	135
Figure 59.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) .....	135
Figure 60.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) .....	135
Figure 61.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) .....	135
Figure 62.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) .....	138
Figure 63.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) .....	138
Figure 64.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) .....	138
Figure 65.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) .....	138
Figure 66.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) .....	138
Figure 67.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) .....	138
Figure 68.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) .....	141
Figure 69.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) .....	141
Figure 70.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) .....	141
Figure 71.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) .....	141
Figure 72.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) .....	141
Figure 73.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) .....	141
Figure 74.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) .....	143
Figure 75.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) .....	143
Figure 76.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) .....	143



List of Figures (continued)

Figure 77.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) . . . . .	143
Figure 78.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) . . . . .	143
Figure 79.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) . . . . .	143
Figure 80.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) . . . . .	145
Figure 81.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) . . . . .	145
Figure 82.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) . . . . .	145
Figure 83.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) . . . . .	145
Figure 84.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) . . . . .	145
Figure 85.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) . . . . .	145
Figure 86.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) . . . . .	148
Figure 87.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) . . . . .	148
Figure 88.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) . . . . .	148
Figure 89.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) . . . . .	148
Figure 90.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) . . . . .	148
Figure 91.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) . . . . .	148
Figure 92.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) . . . . .	151
Figure 93.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) . . . . .	151
Figure 94.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) . . . . .	151
Figure 95.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) . . . . .	151
Figure 96.	Branagh's <u>Hamlet</u> (1996) . . . . .	151
Figure 97.	Olivier's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) . . . . .	158
Figure 98.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) . . . . .	158
Figure 99.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1944) . . . . .	158
Figure 100.	Olivier's <u>Henry V</u> (1944) . . . . .	158
Figure 101.	Olivier's <u>Henry V</u> (1944) . . . . .	158
Figure 102.	Olivier's <u>Hamlet</u> (1948) . . . . .	158
Figure 103.	Polanski's <u>Macbeth</u> (1971) . . . . .	163
Figure 104.	Polanski's <u>Macbeth</u> (1971) . . . . .	163
Figure 105.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) . . . . .	163
Figure 106.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) . . . . .	163
Figure 107.	Olivier's <u>Hamlet</u> (1948) . . . . .	163
Figure 108.	Olivier's <u>Hamlet</u> (1948) . . . . .	163
Figure 109.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) . . . . .	169
Figure 110.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) . . . . .	169
Figure 111.	Olivier's <u>Hamlet</u> (1948) . . . . .	169
Figure 112.	Olivier's <u>Hamlet</u> (1948) . . . . .	169
Figure 113.	Luhrmann's <u>Romeo and Juliet</u> (1996) . . . . .	169
Figure 114.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) . . . . .	169

List of Figures (continued)

Figure 115.	Olivier's <u>Hamlet</u> (1948) .....	175
Figure 116.	Luhrmann's <u>Romeo and Juliet</u> (1996) .....	175
Figure 117.	Luhrmann's <u>Romeo and Juliet</u> (1996) .....	175
Figure 118.	Olivier's <u>Henry V</u> (1944) .....	175
Figure 119.	Zeffirelli's <u>Hamlet</u> (1990) .....	175
Figure 120.	Olivier's <u>Hamlet</u> (1948) .....	175
Figure 121.	Olivier's <u>Hamlet</u> (1948) .....	180
Figure 122.	Zeffirelli's <u>Hamlet</u> (1990) .....	180
Figure 123.	Loncraine's <u>Richard III</u> (1995) .....	180
Figure 124.	Branagh's <u>Much Ado About Nothing</u> (1993) .....	180
Figure 125.	Nunn's <u>Twelfth Night</u> (1996) .....	180
Figure 126.	Nunn's <u>Twelfth Night</u> (1996) .....	180
Figure 127.	Olivier's <u>Hamlet</u> (1948) .....	185
Figure 128.	Olivier's <u>Hamlet</u> (1948) .....	185
Figure 129.	Olivier's <u>Hamlet</u> (1948) .....	185
Figure 130.	Olivier's <u>Hamlet</u> (1948) .....	185
Figure 131.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) .....	185
Figure 132.	Branagh's <u>Henry V</u> (1989) .....	185
Figure 133.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	190
Figure 134.	Nunn's <u>Twelfth Night</u> (1996) .....	190
Figure 135.	Luhrmann's <u>Romeo and Juliet</u> (1996) .....	190
Figure 136.	Luhrmann's <u>Romeo and Juliet</u> (1996) .....	190
Figure 137.	Zeffirelli's <u>Hamlet</u> (1990) .....	190
Figure 138.	Parker's <u>Othello</u> (1995) .....	190

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction of Problem

A bell rings softly several times. People anxiously scatter towards their seats and the chatter within the theater increases in pitch momentarily. "This is the first time I've ever been able to see Hamlet live, on stage." Another member of the audience replies, "I've read the play several times. It'll be interesting to actually see it on the stage." As a few straggling audience members seat themselves, the lights begin to slowly dim, causing a sudden hush of anticipation to fill the auditorium. The silence grows until the outlines of two soldiers gradually come into view and the first lines of the play are spoken.

On the other side of town, another performance is just ending. A mob of people, consisting mainly of fourteen year old girls, comes pouring out of the local cineplex. "Leonardo de Caprio is soooo cute. I think he's the best Romeo ever!" exclaims one teenage girl in a cluster of four. "Yeah, he's gorgeous! And Claire Daines is great!" exclaims the girl beside her. "It's just as sad the second time you see it," sobs another girl slowly following the group. These girls have just seen Baz Luhrmann's film version of William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, and the spell that it has cast will last a lifetime.

Since Shakespeare's plays were first produced on the English stage, the theatre, followed by film and television, has continued to produce these plays.

Although the language is strange to modern audiences, Shakespeare's themes and characters possess a timeless quality that compels an audience to explore the complex, poetic language in order to enjoy the drama found within. In order to facilitate a modern audience's full participation in Shakespeare's drama, Shakespeare directors such as Franco Zeffirelli, Kenneth Branagh, Baz Luhrmann, and Trevor Nunn have utilized various theatrical and/or cinematic techniques in their films to reduce the communication gap and heighten the entertainment value of the production. Through the use of these techniques, these directors have been able to make more modern film audiences realize that the themes and characters to be discovered and explored within many of Shakespeare's plays are just as compelling today as they were when written hundreds of years ago.

Kenneth Branagh is one actor/director who has employed theatrical and cinematic techniques in his performances to draw modern audiences to view his Shakespeare films. Branagh, as Laurence Olivier before him, commenced his acting and directing experience in Shakespeare's stage plays, making the leap to film production only after many years of theatrical experience. The fact that Branagh has an extensive background in theatre contributes to his ability to capture the spirit of Shakespeare's plays on film. Jack J. Jorgens in Shakespeare on Film (1977) stated that:

We are more than due for a fresh look at the problems and the possibilities of realizing good plays on the screen. We need to reexamine the prejudices and preconceptions which have driven critics and theorists of literature, theatre, and film to paint themselves into opposite corners of the same room. And we need sensitive, detailed analysis of individual adaptations which are truly interdisciplinary in their approach. (3)

The analysis of Branagh's Shakespeare film work could answer Jorgens' call for fresh possibilities of realizing good Shakespeare plays on the screen. It is Branagh's interdisciplinary approach to filmmaking, originating from his understanding of the theatrical elements of Shakespeare, combined with a knowledge of the cinematic possibilities of Shakespeare on film, that makes his productions translate well onto the screen.

Branagh's main objective in a film production of one of Shakespeare's plays is to make all aspects of the performance accessible to modern audiences. The primary concern with making Shakespeare accessible to modern audiences is that a sizable audience is afforded the opportunity to view the drama. Understanding that the viewing of live theatre is restricted to only those audiences who are able to travel to the location of the performance, Branagh came to see film as the best vehicle to share his Shakespeare performances with audiences of any location because of its portability. Branagh also sincerely believes that an audience for Shakespeare should be made up of people from all walks of life. Branagh stated that,

"There was an audience for Shakespeare. . . . and not just for people who knew about RSC [Royal Shakespeare Company]" (Branagh, Beginning 170).

Branagh has a clear vision of what he wants an audience to see, hear, think, and feel in his Shakespeare films. It was Branagh's need to share his vision with a larger audience that brought him into film; where, unlike in the theatre, he can completely control the writing of the screenplay, the composition of the visual images, and the shaping of the themes and emotional content of the Shakespeare play. By playing the roles of screenwriter, director, and actor, Branagh has left his own indelible imprint on his Shakespeare films, insuring that his personal vision of Shakespeare's text is transferred onto film.

It is not the purpose of this study to argue that Shakespeare should or should not be translated into the medium of film. The tremendous amount of scholarly writing that already exists on this topic makes further exploration of this question redundant. It is the goal of this study to provide solutions to a problem neglected by many Shakespeare scholars: how does a Shakespeare filmmaker, such as Branagh, utilize theatrical and cinematic filming techniques to maintain the interrelationship between the verbal and visual elements of Shakespeare's play text? This question will be explored through the examination of Branagh's Henry V (1989), Much Ado About Nothing

(1993), Hamlet (1996), as well as scenes from other selected Shakespeare films in order to illustrate the various adaptations that can be made when translating Shakespeare's plays into film. The verbal elements of all Shakespeare film scenes will be examined in terms of the utilization of Shakespeare's narrative text within the screenplay, and the visual elements will be examined in terms of the filmmaker's incorporation of Shakespeare's narrative textual images to create the pictures captured by the camera in a theatrical and/or cinematic space. Although it would be beneficial to study a multitude of scenes from all available Shakespeare films, the scenes from films by directors such as Kenneth Branagh, Stuart Burge, Richard Loncraine, Baz Luhrmann, Laurence Olivier, Trevor Nunn, Oliver Parker, Roman Polanski, Orson Welles, and Franco Zeffirelli have been chosen because of the diverse filming styles of these directors. Before commencing an extensive examination of the specific problems of this study, it is useful to briefly survey the history of Shakespeare theatre and film scholarship.

The eighteenth-century witnessed the birth of genuine Shakespeare theatre scholarship which changed the study of Shakespeare in several ways. In one sense, as observed by Roger Manvell in Shakespeare and the Film (1971), the study of Shakespeare made it possible to preserve his plays without all of the "conscienceless additions, deletions and interpolations

made by the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century theatrical adapters" (1). Although Shakespeare's plays were presented frequently during the late seventeenth-century and the early eighteenth-century, it was common practice to present his plays in rewritten or "improved" form. Stage directors were allowed the freedom to give King Lear a happy ending and cut Hamlet to half its original length. These "improved" performances were received with mixed reviews, the rewriting or cutting of Shakespeare's text disrupting the cohesion of the narrative or dramatic development of certain plays.

The Restoration ban on the spoken word in English drama also resulted in enormous alterations in Shakespeare's text. Major theatre patents which allowed actors to speak on stage were only granted to three theatre houses: Covent Garden, Drury Lane, and, on a restricted performance license, the "Little Theatre in the Haymarket." According to Jane Moody, the number of major theatre patents were restricted in an attempt to preserve the distinction between upper and middle-class drama (61-62). Since only three theatre houses were granted the privilege to allow speech on the stage, all other theatre houses, which the majority of theatre audiences attended, were restricted to performances of pantomime, circus, opera, and singing. The consequences for speaking on an illegitimate stage were increased in 1737 when it became possible for the Lord Chamberlain to censor any politically or



morally unacceptable plays and to impose the Poor laws on any actor who spoke on an illegitimate stage. In order to retain illegitimate theatre licenses and to avoid being tried as a vagabond, theatre managers and actors used highly creative means to communicate with the audience.

One such experiment was the use of linen "scrolls" or banners carried by the actors and bearing any information that could not be made clear through action. The banners often described the emotional texture of a stage event such "as 'Macbeth ordains a solemn Banquet' " or, as a form of subtitle, announced the thoughts or speech of a character such as " 'Destruction to the Tyrant' (Macduff's banner at Birnam Wood)" (Moody 63). These banners were brought on from alternate sides of the stage and presented so that the entire audience could read the messages that narrated or supplemented the action on stage. Music was another technique used to magically translate play text into "musical lyrics" instead of speech. An 1809 performance of Macbeth at the Royal Circus was performed as an opera. However, music was practically non-existent in an 1819 Coburg performance of Richard III and an 1831 Surrey performance of Othello where a pianist softly played a chord every few minutes as accompaniment to the verse being recited by the actors on stage. As the previous examples of "musical" performances make clear, the laws governing the use of speech on the illegitimate stage were often widely

interpreted, making many kinds of speech legal as long as it was deemed politically and morally acceptable and accompanied by music.

This need to use music in performances in order to avoid legal prosecution led to the development of the most popular form of Victorian entertainment in the illegitimate theatre, the burletta. Collick pointed out that the popularity of the burletta, "a general term used to describe any performance in which verse was recited to a musical accompaniment," illustrates that "the spoken word was a minor element in English theatre. . . . [since] the audiences followed and understood most of the performance by watching and interpreting mime, images, and spectacle" (15). This visual code of communication developed not only as a result of the ban on speech on the stage, but also on account of the size of the theatre houses of the period. In these enormous theatre houses, thoughts and emotions were commonly relayed to the audience through the actions of "the standard set of characters" who were "immediately recognisable, not only by their dress but also by the code of stances and gestures they adopted [sic]" (Collick 16). These theatrical stance and gesture codes were later borrowed from the English stage and transferred to English silent film in order to visually communicate a character's thoughts and emotions in a language with which most audiences were already familiar.

The popularity of burletta soon gave way to the demand for melodrama, a more specific form of musical entertainment which drew on stories from literature, folklore, and history for its narrative. The staging of Shakespeare was most often done in the form of the burletta if the Shakespeare play was only a vague inspiration for the performance, or in the form of the melodrama if Shakespeare's narrative text and characters were more or less present in the performance. Adaptations of these kind usually "retained the 'principal incidents' of Shakespeare's play, often adding a few extra characters for a comic subplot" (Moody 62). The most frequently performed Shakespearean melodramas usually catered to the tastes of the audience at a particular theatre. For example, the ghosts, battles, and murders in Macbeth and Hamlet were popular for "the notorious taste of Coburg audiences . . . [who were patrons of] 'blood-tub' drama" (Moody 63). Sometimes alternate versions of Shakespeare's plays would be staged in order to uphold the moral temperament of the period as well as to signal "a theatre's aspirations towards cultural legitimacy" (Moody 66). In Milner's adaptation of Hamlet, all of Shakespeare's realistic conflict and psychological complexity were removed since these abstract concepts could not be communicated well without the use of speech (Moody 64). Therefore, the audience viewed the more simplistic struggle between the evil Gertrude and the good Hamlet who

lives on to be proclaimed King of Denmark at the end of the play. After the 1840's, the melodrama had become so popular that the bourgeois theatre culture adopted this form of performance as its own, attempting to remove it from the working-class theatre culture from which it was born. The rising popularity of the melodrama also led to the repeal of the 1737 licensing act in 1843, when it became possible for all theatres to present Shakespeare's plays in their original form without the need of musical accompaniment.

After 1843, actor-managers such as Henry Irving and Herbert Beerbohm Tree began to adapt Shakespeare's plays in order to glorify the political events of English history. For example, King John's signing of the Magna Charta, an event hardly even mentioned in Shakespeare's play about the king, is made into a highly elaborate and famous tableau vivant scene by Herbert Beerbohm Tree. In a tableau vivant, commonly used in melodrama, "the entire cast would freeze, assuming the stance and composition of a living picture. Occurring at the end of scenes, or the play itself, these tableaux provided the denouement to a crisis or moral episode" (Collick 28). In Shakespeare productions, the goal of the tableau vivant was to achieve a visual spectacle rather elitist in nature in order to insure that "only an educated middle-class audience would be likely to recognise the source of the image [sic]" (Collick 28). Although the use of extravagant visual spectacles

sometimes drew derogatory comments regarding the cost of producing such an effect, the spectacular tableaux used in Shakespeare productions were usually deemed as acceptable because of the highly respectable and educational nature of the plays. Regardless of the manner in which Shakespeare's text and plot were or were not used, his plays were always filtered through and transformed by the theatrical, political, and moral practices of the period in which they were produced. This practice continues to this day, supporting the notion that, to paraphrase Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Shakespeare can be all things to all people while forever remaining himself.

One unfortunate result of Shakespeare scholarship was that the study of Shakespeare also made his plays "the victim of pernicious idolaters, with their pursuits of bogus 'relics' " (Manvell 1). One such Shakespeare "idolater" was Charles Lamb, one of the strongest supporters of the movement "towards isolating Shakespeare's text from the theatre and reading it as verse" since he believed in "the superiority of reading text over watching it being performed" (Collick 22-23). This desire to publish Shakespeare's text for close study is understandable. As a result of the ban on speech on the majority of English stages, it was not possible for the three major theatres to expose the vast English audience to the complexities of Shakespeare's text. For this exposure, the growing numbers of the eighteenth-century literate middle-class public

could only turn to mass-produced printed forms of Shakespeare. With this in mind, Charles and Mary Lamb, a business-minded couple with a love of literature, took advantage of the chance to financially benefit from their publication of Tales from Shakespear (1807), a heavily abridged collection of children's stories based on Shakespeare's plays (Collick 23). These children's stories focused on the emotional states and motivations of the main characters as they progress toward complete development as moral beings. Since Lamb regarded Shakespeare's stories as works of literature, emphasis was given not only to the events that Shakespeare depicts on the stage, but also to the events which are described in Shakespeare's text which actually take place offstage. By publishing this work, the Lambs played a role in the development of the Shakespeare purist philosophy which encourages the perception of Shakespeare's works as pieces of literature which can be best enjoyed in the study rather than the theatre.

Shakespeare purists, usually elite, literary scholars such as Charles Lamb or more recently, Harold Bloom, Professor at Yale University, have used the concept of Shakespeare as "supreme poet" to downplay the dramatic visual elements of Shakespeare's plays. Shakespeare purists tend to uphold the supremacy of Shakespeare's verbal text, overlooking the fact that Shakespeare's textual imagery has inspired visual artists such as Henry

Fuseli, Joseph Wright, John Everett Millais, and Robert Huskisson to create pictorial images of scenes from his plays. Shakespeare purists also ignore the fact that Shakespeare wrote his plays specifically for theatrical performance on a stage that lacked elaborate scenery and flexible sets. On account of this absence of elaborate physical scenery, Shakespeare's plays relied heavily on textual imagery to evoke, within the mind of the audience, the details of the scene. These visual images could only have been created through the use of Shakespeare's textual imagery, presented to visual artists and the Renaissance audience through his play text.

English Renaissance theatre has been conceived of as a verbal medium by many Shakespeare purists since the acting style seemed to be a form of poetic oratory. But Stephen Orgel in The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance (1975) attributed the oratory style of acting to the limits placed on the actor's possibilities for movement due to the space of the Elizabethan thrust stage. Actors moved less to maintain the visual sightlines of the audience, not to enhance any supreme verbal quality that existed in Shakespeare's plays. Of the verbal and visual elements in Renaissance performance, Orgel wrote:

Viewed from a Renaissance standpoint, the antithesis between verbal and visual theatre looks very different. . . . Renaissance critics put it this way: the mode of expression or the means of drama, was spectacle. They included in the term spectacle

everything one saw on the stage, from the mere appearance of the characters to the most elaborate kinds of scenic machinery. For purists this quality of drama was not a point in its favor; it rendered the art a lower kind of poetry than, say, epic. But the fact that spectacle was essential to it did not make drama any the less a form of poetry.

The distinction, then, between "verbal" theaters and "visual" theaters in this period is a false one. Both the Globe and the court theater were spectacular, both were highly rhetorical; the visual and the verbal emphases in no way excluded each other. (18-19)

Orgel continued to explain the relationship between the verbal and visual elements of Renaissance theatre, stating that action unfolded on the Renaissance stage

through dialogue, movement and gesture, pageantry and symbolism. These functioned as a unit; little that was expressed in action did not have its concomitant rhetoric, few symbols went unexplained by language. . . . the verbal was inseparable from the visual. Then as now, a symbol had meaning only after it was explained. Symbols function as summations and confirmations; they tell us only what we already know, and it is a mistake to assume that the Renaissance audience, unlike a modern one, knew without being told. (24)

Orgel's concept of the interrelationship between the verbal and visual elements of the Renaissance play provided several insights into the approach utilized by many theatre/film artists in the translation of Shakespeare's plays into modern theatre and film. Orgel continued to explain that

dialogue is more than explication. One of our chief difficulties in producing Elizabethan plays on modern stages is the ubiquitousness of the dialogue; it does not only explain, it often parallels or duplicates the action. Even in the heat of combat,



Renaissance characters regularly pause to describe in words the actions we see taking place. Modern plays rely far less heavily on dialogue, and a great deal of the dramatist's text -- stage directions, accounts of the settings, and the like -- are realized for an audience not through the actor's language at all, but exclusively through the art of the director and designer. In Elizabethan public theater, however, nothing spoke for itself; every action implied a rhetoric. (26)

The modern stage's use of Shakespeare's text as a blueprint for stage movement and scenic design illustrates once again the existence of visual elements within Shakespeare's text. As Orgel stated, the modern audience is more likely to comprehend a visual action or symbol without the assistance of the explicative dialogue required by the Renaissance audience. Therefore, it follows that sections of Shakespeare's text can be cut and replaced with its visual counterpart without compromising the essence of Shakespeare's "original intent." Shakespeare himself tended to "make free with history, or what purported to be history, if he believed a firmer dramatic line would be the result" (Manvell 11). Following Shakespeare's example, theatre and film directors have transformed the "historical" ubiquitous language of Shakespeare into stage direction for the more visually-oriented modern audience. But Shakespeare purists regarded this practice of cutting Shakespeare's text in favor of exploiting the visual images found within to be insupportable, especially in the film medium. Some of the reluctance toward transferring Shakespeare to film originated in the reactions to the first

attempts to put Shakespeare's plays on screen during the silent film era and will be examined at length in Chapter Three.

Since cinema had existed for several decades before film of any genre was perceived as an art form worthy of scholarly study, it wasn't until the 1930's that scholars began to critically examine the filming of Shakespeare. Allardyce Nicoll's Film and Theatre (1936) drew a parallel between the social and economic forces that governed film production in the 1930's and those that promoted the theatrical fare of the English Renaissance. With the exception of the technological advances made in film since the 1930's, Nicoll illustrated how little modern filmmaking has changed from its humble beginnings. Nicoll pointed out that the Elizabethan theatre manager, much like the modern filmmaker, "exploited freely whatever came uppermost at the moment, heaping ghosts upon the stage while the going of ghosts was good and mad ladies in linen when ghosts began to pall" (15-16). Not only did Elizabethan theatre managers and modern filmmakers resemble each other, but Elizabethan stage actors, much like modern film actors, "ruled the boards and a clownish Kemp or a bombastic Burbage demanded fat parts for the proper portrayal of his personality . . . little was aimed at on the public stage save immediate success" (Nicoll 16). The multitude of commonalities shared between the writing practices of Shakespeare and the modern screenwriter

are striking. The writing practices of both employ the continuous flow of movement from place to place, the tendency to borrow plots from history or other authors, the rearrangement of historical events either to provide contemporary relevance and entertainment or to serve as a vehicle for the expression of their own political beliefs, and the adept writing of character roles appropriate for the acting talent of their respective days. Based on these similarities, it seems obvious that the preferred medium for Shakespeare's plays could be modern film rather than modern theatre.

Another intriguing concept is found in Nicoll's theory that Shakespeare film may provide a solution to the problematic influence of modern society's higher level of literacy upon the modern ear's alertness to the spoken word. In an examination of Max Reinhardt's A Midsummer Night's Dream (1935), Nicoll stated:

The power of the cinema to draw us near to an action or to a speaker served here an important function, and we could at will watch a group of players from afar or approach to overhear the secrets of a soliloquy. The second feature of interest lay in the ease with which the cinema can present visual symbols to accompany language. At first, we might be prepared to condemn the film on this ground, declaring that the imaginative appeal of Shakespeare's language would thereby be lost. Again, however, second thoughts convince us that much is to be said in its defence. . . . Shakespeare's dialogue was written for an audience, not only sympathetic to his particular way of thought and feeling, but gifted with certain faculties which today we have lost. Owing to the universal development of reading, certain faculties possessed by men of earlier ages have vanished from us. In the

sixteenth century, men's minds were more acutely perceptive of values in words heard, partly because their language was a growing thing with constantly occurring new forms and strange applications of familiar words, but largely because they had to maintain a constant alertness to spoken speech. Newspapers did not exist then; all men's knowledge of the larger world beyond their immediate ken had to come from hearing words uttered by their companions. As a result, the significance of words was more keenly appreciated and certainly was more concrete than it is today. When Macbeth, in four lines, likened life to a brief candle, to a walking shadow and to a poor player, one may believe that the ordinary spectator in the Globe theatre saw in his mind's eye these three objects referred to. The candle, the shadow and the player became for him mental realities.

The same speech uttered on the stage today can hardly hope for such interpretation. Many in the audience will be lulled mentally insensible to its values by the unaccustomed movement of the lines, and others will grasp its import, not by emotional imaginative understanding, but by a painful, rational process of thought. A modern audience, therefore, listening to earlier verse drama, will normally require a direct stimulus to its visual imagination -- a thing entirely unnecessary in former times. (178-80)

Nicoll also believed that Shakespeare film, unlike modern theatre, has the ability to improve the modern ear's alertness to the spoken word through visual imagery. Nicoll began his examination by exploring the challenges of producing poetic drama for modern audiences:

Herein lies one of the principal difficulties for the modern poetic drama; an audience may still be able to appreciate the rhythmic, the musical, worth of words, but that which, in the truly vital poetic drama, must ever accompany that rhythm, the emotional vigour of the poetic symbols, is largely lost. We moderns are, it seems, much more deeply moved by visual symbols than by words. . . . In the utilisation of such visual imagery, however, the theatre is manifestly restricted [sic]. Symbolic objects may be

presented there, it is true, but usually these must remain fixed; there is little opportunity for the introduction of a regular flow of images calculated to excite and stimulate at once the attention and the understanding of the audience. In the cinematic realm, there is nothing which cannot be accomplished in this kind, and accordingly there is the possibility there of awakening to life and of releasing mental processes which in our modern world are apt to remain dormant when words alone are heard. (109)

In response to complaints that "nothing is left to the imagination" in film, Nicoll tried to remind critics of the unique "strangeness" of Shakespeare's ubiquitous language (180). Nicoll insisted that:

we must remember that in the Shakespearean verse is a quality which, because of changed conditions, we may find difficulty in appreciating. Its strangeness to us demands that an attempt be made to render it more intelligible and directly appealing. Such an attempt, through the means of expression granted to the cinema, may merely be supplying something which will bring us nearer to the conditions of the original spectators for whom Shakespeare wrote. (180-81)

Nicoll also believed that novels and other literary works serve as more suitable subjects for cinematic adaptation than do theatrical plays. Yet, in what may be one of the earliest justifications for Shakespeare on film, Nicoll maintained that Shakespeare's plays are unique exceptions to this general rule because they have been so readily adopted into the literature world by generations of purists.

Olivier's breakthrough film version of Henry V (1944) was the catalyst which sparked the realization that Shakespeare could be done well on film.

In Olivier's autobiography, On Acting, he related what happened after the release of his film adaptation of Henry V, "As far as I was concerned, Henry V might as well have been the first Shakespeare film. . . . Once the public had been wooed and won by Henry V, the critics and the studios came round to the idea that it was possible to put Shakespeare on screen. Henry was a box-office success" (Olivier 267-68). The idea that Olivier's Henry V was the first film to give credence to the idea of filming Shakespeare is well supported by the writings of Manvell, Jorgens, and many others whose writing followed.

Over the past thirty years, the amount of scholarly writing regarding the translation of the Shakespeare play to the screen has increased dramatically. The examination of Shakespeare film had been relatively sparse before 1968 because the filming of Shakespeare was not taken seriously by many Shakespeare scholars. Therefore, the vast majority of criticism regarding Shakespeare film was left to the film critics of the period. Finally, in 1968, Robert Hamilton Ball became the first author to seriously approach the study of Shakespeare silent film in his chronological survey, Shakespeare on Silent Film. Just three years after Ball published his survey, Manvell's Shakespeare and the Film provided background information on twenty-five films made between 1929 and 1970, with the addition of several stills from various films and an interview with Akira Kurosawa, a noted

Japanese filmmaker. In 1977, Jorgens approached the study of Shakespeare on film in a more academic and analytic manner in his Shakespeare on Film, limiting his field to only seventeen Shakespeare films and dealing with each film in more detail than Manvell. Jorgens also advanced the new concept of theatrical, realistic, and filmic modes in the filming of Shakespeare's plays. The concept of theatrical and cinematic film modes was to become a major field of investigation in Shakespeare film scholarship to come and will be examined at length in Chapter Four.

Anthony Davies' Filming Shakespeare's Plays: The Adaptations of Laurence Olivier, Orson Welles, Peter Brook, and Akira Kurosawa made its appearance in 1988 as the first single author volume to attempt to study the aesthetic issues that arise when transferring the drama of the theatre to the drama of the cinema. Several scholars were soon to follow him into the examination of more specific and unique problems in the filming of Shakespeare. Peter Donaldson took a controversial, psycho-analytic approach to his study of Shakespeare film in Shakespearean Film/Shakespearean Directors (1990). One year later, Lorne Buchman's Still In Movement: Shakespeare on Screen examined how the Shakespeare play could be transferred to film through the use of various cinematic techniques unique to Olivier, Welles, Polanski, and Grigori Kozintsev. Like Orgel, Buchman

expressed his belief that a parallel existed between the strength of the dialogue and the moving image in a Shakespeare film:

What one hears and what one sees in films are so integrally linked that it would be absurd . . . to miss, or only to imply, this crucial relationship. That the visuals of the films receive the most attention is a consequence both of the approach that I adopt as well as of the filmmakers' own creative emphasis. (10)

Therefore, it is merely the fact that many filmmakers choose to focus on the visual elements of a film rather than the dialogue that has lead many filmmakers to believe that image is stronger than text in film. As a result of the Shakespeare scholars' and filmmakers' choice to focus on either the verbal elements or visual elements of Shakespeare's play text, there is a lack of scholarly analysis of the necessary interrelationship between the verbal and visual elements of Shakespeare's play text in Shakespeare film.

The remaining study of Shakespeare film will consist of five chapters. The study will begin with an exploration of the theories of Michel Foucault, Jacques Lacan, W. J. T. Mitchell, and others regarding the relationship between text and image. In the third chapter, the verbal and visual elements of Shakespeare's narrative text will be examined further in an exploration of Shakespeare silent film. The fourth chapter will utilize Jorgens' and Davies' theories of theatrical, realistic, and filmic modes in an examination of the use of theatrical centripetality and/or cinematic centrifugality in several scenes



from three adaptations of Shakespeare's Othello. After the examination of these three film versions of Othello, the results will be used to illustrate how Branagh has built upon established theatrical and cinematic techniques to create scenes which maintain the interrelationship between the verbal and visual elements of Shakespeare's play text. In the fifth chapter, Branagh's use of the voice-over will be compared to that of several filmmakers. This comparison will show how Branagh has built upon the voice-over techniques of Shakespeare filmmakers before him to create scenes which maintain the interrelationship between the verbal and visual elements of Shakespeare's play text while, at the same time, inspiring a few contemporary filmmakers to create new Shakespeare voice-over techniques. The last chapter will consist of conclusions that can be made as a result of this study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Text and Image

Scholars from a variety of academic fields have attempted to define the enigmatic relationship between text and image. In his structuralist anthropological study, The Savage Mind (1966), Claude Lévi-Strauss, stated:

there is an intermediary between images and concepts, namely signs. For signs can always be defined in the way introduced by Saussure in the case of the particular category of linguistic signs, that is, as a link between images and concepts. In the union thus brought about, images and concepts play the part of the signifying and signified respectively.

Signs resemble images in being concrete entities but they resemble concepts in their powers of reference. Neither concepts nor signs relate exclusively to themselves; either may be substituted for something else. Concepts, however, have an unlimited capacity in this respect, while signs have not. The example of the 'bricoleur' helps to bring out the differences and the similarities. Consider him at work and excited about his project. His first practical step is retrospective. He has to turn back to an already existent set made up of tools and materials, to consider or reconsider what it contains and, finally and above all, to engage in a sort of dialogue with it and, before choosing between them, to index the possible answers which the whole set can offer to his problem. He interrogates all the heterogeneous objects of which his treasury is composed to discover what each of them could 'signify' and so contribute to the definition of a set which has yet to materialize but which will ultimately differ from the instrumental set only in the internal disposition of the parts. (18)

The above example of the "bricoleur" illustrates Lévi-Strauss' theory of text as an intermediary "dialogue" which serves as a bridge between images, "the tools and materials" of the "bricoleur," and a concept, "a set which has yet to

materialize" (18). Lévi-Strauss' concept of the bricoleur also led to his creation of the term "bricolage," the manufacturing process of the bricoleur.

Lévi-Strauss also used the example of the bricoleur in his examination of a society's artistic process. He stated, "that the artist is both something of a scientist and of a 'bricoleur'. By his craftsmanship he constructs a material object which is also an object of knowledge" (Lévi-Strauss 22). In order to provide a clear definition of the differences between the bricoleur and the scientific engineer, Lévi-Strauss explained that "the 'bricoleur' is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks; but, unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived of and procured for the purpose of the project" (17). This statement gives the impression that the bricoleur is a kind of creative designer whose "universe of instruments is closed and the rules of his game are always to make do with 'whatever is at hand' " in order to manufacture the tools and devices that the engineer will eventually use to create new devices (Lévi-Strauss 17). Lévi-Strauss continued his comparison of the bricoleur and the scientific engineer, stating that, "the engineer is always trying to make his way out of and go beyond the constraints imposed by a particular state of civilization while the 'bricoleur' by inclination or necessity always remains within them" (19). Since the bricoleur cannot or chooses not to move beyond

the constraints of using the elements at hand, "an account of his personality and life [is created] by the choices he makes between the limited possibilities. The 'bricoleur' may not ever complete his purpose but he always puts something of himself into it" (Lévi-Strauss 21). Lévi-Strauss continued to emphasize that regardless of whether the bricoleur can or cannot choose to be limited by his use of found materials, the bricoleur, unlike an engineer, cannot improve or advance his newly created devices since the results he can achieve are always constrained by the original functions of the utilized materials. Therefore, Lévi-Strauss believed that a society needs a bricoleur to create the new tools and devices needed by the engineer, who can then utilize these new tools and devices to advance civilization beyond its current state.

Jacques Derrida, who is considered the father of deconstructionist theory, argued against Lévi-Strauss' concept of bricolage in his book Of Grammatology (1976). Derrida's main objection to bricolage stemmed from Lévi-Strauss' separation of the bricoleur and the engineer. Derrida stated:

the most inventive and systematic engineer[s] are surprised and circumvented by a history, a language, etc., a world . . . from which they must borrow their tools, if only to destroy the former machine. . . . The idea of the engineer breaking with all bricolage is dependent on a creationist theology. Only such a theology can sanction an essential and rigorous difference between the engineer and the bricoleur. But that the engineer should always be a sort of bricoleur should not ruin all criticism of bricolage; quite the contrary. Criticism in what sense? First of all, if the difference between bricoleur and engineer is basically

theological, the very concept of bricolage implies a fall and an accidental finitude. This techno-theological significance must be abandoned in order to think the originary appurtenance of desire to discourse, of discourse to the history of the world, and the already-three[there]-ness of the language in which desire deludes itself [sic]. Then, even supposing that, by bricolage, one conserves the idea of bricolage, one must know that all bricolages are not equally worthwhile. Bricolage criticizes itself. (139)

Although Derrida disagreed with Lévi-Strauss' separation of the bricoleur from the engineer, he did believe that the concept of bricolage could be used by theorists to analyze the merits of a particular method of bricolage.

Michael Chanan, in his book The Dream That Kicks: The Prehistory and Early Years of Cinema in Britain (1980), used Lévi-Strauss' bricolage to compare the bricoleur to the original creators of silent film. Chanan explained the similarities between the process of bricolage, used by the bricoleur, and the process of early industrialization, used by the original creators of silent film:

industrialization was still only beginning, not only was there no established body of knowledge to go by in constructing new machines for new purposes, but there were no established means for producing these machines either. Machines had to be built individually and by hand. In a sense every machine was a prototype and therefore had to be built by means of bricolage. To some extent new machines could be built by bringing together the skills of different traditional crafts; this is a kind of bricolage on the level of the organization of the project . . . . (51)

As Derrida has suggested and as Chanan has shown, Lévi-Strauss' concept of bricolage can be utilized in the analysis of the development of silent film, or

even film in general. Lévi-Strauss' process of bricolage will be examined further in the third chapter in order to explore possible explanations for some of the problems experienced by Shakespeare silent film.

Jacques Lacan also studied the role of language in communication in his book on structuralist psychoanalysis, The Language of the Self: The Function of Language in Psychoanalysis (1968). Lacan believed that, "the function of Language is not to inform but to evoke"; therefore, Lacan considered "Language" to be any form of exchange that can "evoke" a meaning (63). Lacan, in his first chapter, made a distinction between the two language tools used by psychoanalysts: the "empty word," which involves body language or gesture, and the "full word," which involves aural discourse (9). Lacan supported the concept of an interrelationship between body language and aural discourse in his statement that in order to "obtain an avowal of what" the psychoanalyst has intuitively found "the subject is not saying," the psychoanalyst "must nevertheless talk about it" (9). Lacan also cautioned psychoanalysts that, "the analyst cannot without peril track the subject down into the intimacy of his gestures, nor into that of his static state, except by reintegrating them as silent notes into his narcissistic discourse . . . ." (13). Both of Lacan's previous statements support the intensely interrelated nature of body language and aural discourse.

Lacan emphasized that psychoanalysts must listen with a new kind of ear to the language of the body which is communicated through gesture and action. Lacan made an example of a remark of Mallarme in order to illustrate the correct approach to the perception of "Language." Mallarme compared:

the common use of Language to the exchange of a coin whose obverse and reverse no longer bear any but worn effigies, and which people pass from hand to hand 'in silence.' This metaphor is sufficient to remind us that the Word, even when almost completely worn out, retains its value as a tessera [a token of recognition or a password].

. . . the question is to understand which 'part' of this speech carries the significative term, and this is exactly how he proceeds in the ideal case: taking the recital of an everyday event for an apologue addressed to him that hath ears to hear, a long prosopopoeia for a direct interjection, or on the other hand taking a simple lapsus for a highly complex statement, or even the sigh of a momentary silence for the whole lyrical development it makes up for. (Lacan 13)

Lacan's advice to psychoanalysts could also be given to any type of audience since it is clear that one must "listen" to both body language and aural discourse if the true message is to be "heard." In theatre and film, a character's aural discourse is referred to as lines of text, while a character's body language is referred to as one element of subtext. Since a character's lines of text can be compared to aural discourse and a character's subtext can be compared to body language or gesture, Lacan's theory of the interrelated nature of body language and aural discourse could apply, not only to the world of psychoanalysis, but also to the world of theatre and film. The use of this

theory in Shakespeare theatre and film productions would reestablish the necessary interrelationship between the verbal and visual elements of Shakespeare's play text through the simultaneous combination of a character's text and subtext, regardless of whether the text and subtext are in harmony or in conflict with each other. By doing this, the clarity of an actor's performance would improve, thus increasing the modern audience's understanding of the performance.

Michel Foucault, a theorist "loosely and unwillingly associated" with structuralism, believed there exists a distinct separation between text and image in any work of art (Harkness 3). Although espousing certain structuralist ideology, Foucault made certain allowances for the common "vain" tendency to assign proper names to images. This practice "gives us a finger to point with . . . to pass surreptitiously from the space where one speaks to the space where one looks; in other words, to fold one over the other as though they were equivalents" (Foucault, Order 9). Foucault theorized, in his book The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences (1970), that the verbal and visual elements in art will always be distinctly separated from each other, although some degree of commonality is shared. Foucault, like Lévi-Strauss, supported Saussurean linguistics, the concept that "words do not 'refer' to things themselves. Rather they have meaning as points



within the entire system that is a language -- a system, further, conceived as a network of graded differences" (Harkness 5). Foucault stated that:

the relation of language to painting is an infinite relation. It is not that words are imperfect, or that, when confronted by the visible, they prove insuperably inadequate. Neither can be reduced to the other's terms: it is in vain that we say what we see; what we see never resides in what we say. And it is in vain that we attempt to show, by the use of images, metaphors, or similes, what we are saying; the space where they achieve their splendor is not that deployed by our eyes but that defined by the sequential elements of syntax. (Order 9)

Foucault also described the above mentioned rupture between text and image as a "colorless, neutral strip," "an uncertain foggy region," and an "absence of space" (This 28-29). Foucault's description of the "uncertain foggy region" between text and image closely resembles the descriptions of the rupture between text and image used by Roman Ingarden and Claude Gandelman (This 28-29).

Ingarden's concept of "indetermination," described in his phenomenological study The Literary Work of Art (1973), also included references to the presence of many "spots" within a literary text. Gandelman, in his book Reading Pictures, Viewing Texts (1991), referred to a portion of Ingarden's book in his study of text and image in visual art. Gandelman believed that Ingarden's spots of indetermination closely resembled a description of impressionism. Gandelman stated that:

Ingarden explained that when an author replaces the expression 'a man,' for instance in the sentence 'a man appeared on the threshold,' by the phrase 'an experienced old man,' he only does away with a very limited number of indetermination spots; 'there remains an infinity of such spots to be suppressed, each of them necessitating an infinity of determinations.' Thus the literary text is constituted of spots of determination separated from one another by so many gaps, which the reader must fill mentally if he is to make head of tail of the poem or narrative he is reading. (148)

Although Foucault and Ingarden believed the existence of "gaps" or "spots" in literature or art to be problematic, Gandelman stressed that impressionism would cease to exist without the presence of the "gaps" which define this art form. However, the presence of these artistic "gaps" also requires delicacy on the part of the viewer because "seeing the text from too close a distance would bring out the gaps. Conversely, too great a distance would put the text out of focus, so that nothing in it except a global subject and structure would be perceptible" (Gandelman 147). Since theatre and film art also share these impressionistic "gaps," a theatre or film artist must take great care in how a production is presented to an audience. This cautious approach to Shakespeare play and film production may reduce the problematic rupture between text and image that often occurs with the Shakespeare play or film and will be examined in more detail in Chapter Four.

Although many artists and theorists continue to insist on the need to keep text and image entirely separate, art history theorists like Gandelman

continue to draw correlations between text and image. Aware of this continuing tendency, Foucault suggested to art history theorists that, "if one wishes to keep the relation of language to vision open, if one wishes to treat their incompatibility as a starting-point for speech instead of an obstacle to be avoided, so as to stay as close as possible to both, then one must erase those proper names [language and vision] and preserve the infinity of the task" (Foucault, Order 9-10). Foucault's advice to art history theorists can be given some credit for launching W. J. Thomas Mitchell, an iconological theorist, into his studies of text and image, or as he called it in Picture Theory (1994), "imagetext." Mitchell argued that intellectual and academic discourse is shifting from what Richard Rorty called "the linguistic turn" to what Mitchell called "the pictorial turn" (Picture 11). Mitchell found that:

variations on this [pictorial] turn could be traced early on in Charles Pierce's semiotics and later in Nelson Goodman's 'languages of art,' . . . . In Europe one might identify it with phenomenology's inquiry into imagination and visual experience; or with Derrida's 'grammatology,' which de-centers the 'phonocentric' model of language by shifting attention to the visible, material traces of writing; or with the Frankfurt School's investigations of modernity, mass culture, and visual media; or with Michel Foucault's insistence on a history and theory of power/knowledge that exposes the rift between the discursive and the 'visible,' the seeable and the sayable . . . . Above all, I would locate the philosophical enactment of the pictorial turn in the thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein, particularly in the apparent paradox of a philosophical career that began with a 'picture theory' of meaning and ended with the appearance of a kind of iconoclasm, a critique of imagery that led him to renounce his

earlier pictorialism . . . . This anxiety [about visual representation], this need to defend 'our speech' against 'the visual' is, I want to suggest, a sure sign that a pictorial turn is taking place. (Picture 12-13)

In response to this pictorial turn, Mitchell insisted that the study of text and image must be approached differently. Mitchell believed that the wrongly perceived incompatibility of text and image is fostered primarily by "the corporate departmental structure of universities [which] reinforces the sense that verbal and visual media are to be seen as distinct, separate, and parallel spheres that converge only at some higher level of abstraction . . . ." (Picture 85). Some university departments have joined together to utilize comparative studies in an attempt to build bridges over the perceived "space" or "gaps" between text and image that are believed by many to exist. However, Mitchell insisted that comparative study does not answer specific questions involving the relationship between text and image:

rather than comparing this novel or poem with that painting or statue, I find it more helpful to begin with actual conjunctions of words and images in illustrated texts, or mixed media such as film, television, and theatrical performance. With these media, one encounters a concrete set of empirical givens, an image-text structure responsive to prevailing conventions (or resistance to conventions) governing the relation of visual and verbal experience. Some plays (taking their cue from Aristotle) privilege lexis over opsis, speech over scenery, dialogue over visual spectacle. The film medium has passed through a technological revolution involving a shift from a visual to a verbal paradigm in the shift from silent film to the 'talkies,' and film theory invariably confronts some version of the image/text

problem whenever it attempts to specify the nature of 'film language.' The relative positioning of visual and verbal representation (or of sight and sound, space and time) in these mixed media is, moreover, never simply a formal issue or a question to be settled by 'scientific' semiotics. The relative value, location, and the very identity of 'the verbal' and 'the visual' is exactly what is in question. (Picture 90)

Mitchell also suggested that iconology, established by Erwin Panofsky, needs to be rethought in response to the pictorial turn:

the key move in the reconstruction of iconology is to resign the hope for a scientific theory and to stage the encounter between the 'icon' and 'logos' in relation to topics such as the paragone of painting and literature and the Sister Arts tradition. This move, in my view, takes iconology well beyond the comparative study of verbal and visual art and into the basic construction of the human subject as a being constituted by both language and imaging. (Picture 24)

In order to clarify to which specific category of text and image relationship he was referring, Mitchell utilized "the typographic convention of the slash to designate 'image/text' as a problematic gap, cleavage, or rupture in representation. The term 'imagetext' designates composite, synthetic works (or concepts) that combine image and text. 'Image-text,' with a hyphen, designates relations of the visual and verbal" (Picture 89). This study will also adopt these designations in order to maintain clarity. Of the concept of image/text, Mitchell stated:

The concept of the medium (visual or verbal) as a heterogenous field of representational practices, as an 'image/text,' is not recommended here for its novelty, but for its persistence as a

theoretical tradition, its survival as an abiding feature of poetics, rhetoric, aesthetics, and semiotics. . . . It may also seem that, in my zeal to overturn the tedious historicism of the comparative method, I've jettisoned history altogether in favor of a kind of descriptive formalism. This charge is half right. This book is not a history of visual and verbal culture, but a theory. It offers the figure of the image/text as a wedge to pry open the heterogeneity of media and of specific representations. The aim, however, is not to stop with formal description, but to ask what the function of specific forms of heterogeneity might be. Both the formal and functional questions require historical answers: they are not pre-determined by any universal science of signs, and their relation to a historical 'period concept' is an open question. (Picture 100)

One explanation for the insistence on the heterogeneity of text and image comes from the "ancient tradition, of course, which argues that language is the essential human attribute: 'man' is the 'speaking animal.' The image is the medium of the subhuman, the savage, the 'dumb' animal, the child, the woman, the masses" (Picture 24). Mitchell believed that the concept of image/text during the Renaissance was analogous to "a battle or contest, what Leonardo da Vinci called a paragone" (Picture 227). Visual artists would incorporate literary elements into their paintings in almost desperate attempts to attain the respectability of the poets. As Mitchell pointed out, even "Ben Jonson denounced the spectacular set designs of Inigo Jones as degradations of the 'poetic soul' of the masque. Erwin Panofsky thought the coming of sound corrupted the pure visuality of silent movies" (Picture 90-91). Mitchell believed that image/text tension, "rather like Derrida's différance, a

site of dialectical tension, slippage, and transformation," does not have to be trapped forever in a battle for supremacy which puts either element at a disadvantage to the other (Picture 106). In order to prove this theory, Mitchell utilized film analysis to illustrate that "the image/text is not a template to reduce these things to the same form, but a lever to pry them open" (Picture 106).

In a brief examination of the image/text in film, Mitchell suggested that any "disjunction" between text and image which may exist in film requires "the most seamless forms of image/text suturing" (Picture 103). One film technique that Mitchell saw as a suturing device between text and image was the voice-over. Mitchell stated that Billy Wilder's Sunset Boulevard

takes a version of the image/text (the division between speech and visual representation) as its explicit theme, embodied in the relationship of a young male writer (Joe Gillis, played by William Holden) and an aging female screen idol (Norma Desmond, played by Gloria Swanson). The film allegorizes a number of familiar myths of film history and theory: the two central characters represent, respectively, the New Hollywood of 'talking pictures' and the Old Hollywood of silent spectacle; they also incarnate the professional tension between the (invisible) writer and the (visible) star, the split between cinema as a literary and a pictorial institution. (Picture 101)

Mitchell continued his examination of this film, illustrating how the image/text tension which is created by the voice-over can work to combine text and image, thus creating imagetext:

There is a certain straightforward shock effect in framing the entire story in the voice-over narration of the dead Joe Gillis, whose first visible appearance is as an open-eyed corpse seen from below, floating face-down in Norma Desmond's swimming pool. Once the bizarre premise of the dead narrator is accepted, however, the film settles into a straightforward and conventional suturing of voice and image. Joe's voice addresses the audience in the most ordinary of narrative contracts: he is sardonic, knowing, and sociable, counting on an audience that shares his experience and values . . . . The visual narrative seems invariably to illustrate Joe's voice in the most straightforward ways: when he describes something, we see it on the screen; when he narrates an action, it is performed for us; when he recalls a memory or a dream, it is projected in full. The histoire is firmly controlled by the récit, the visible by the sayable.

If the thematic image/text in Sunset Boulevard is the unshakable dominance of the visual over the verbal in the film medium, its formal image/text seems to convey precisely the reverse message: voice seems continually to dominate and control the image. The film's formal perfection is precisely not to 'mirror' or imitate its theme . . . . It is perhaps this perverse form of formal/thematic mirroring that produces the film's overall effect of ideological impasse and paralysis, what one might call the pathological version of the infinite relation between word and image staged by Magritte's pipe [see following examination for this comparison]. (Picture 101-02)

In his examination of Sunset Boulevard, Mitchell noted the ability of the voice-over to control the film image, allowing the text to convey its meaning to the audience with the cooperation of the accompanying images. Mitchell stated that, "In reflecting on its own medium, Sunset Boulevard provides both a description language for and a specific instantiation of the cinematic imagetext. It pictures a theory of film and narrates that theory as an account both of the death of cinema and of cinema as a kind of love affair with death"



(Picture 103-04). Cinematic imagetext also seems to consist of the use of text as inspiration for the director's visual representation. This visual representation, born of and molded by the text, goes on to mold the audience's perception of the film, its characters, and dramatic situation. The ability of film to use the voice-over as an image/text suturing technique makes film an ideal medium for the production of Shakespeare's plays. The voice-over technique can be used to reestablish the necessary interrelationship between the verbal and visual elements of Shakespeare's play text and will be examined further in Chapter Five.

In another examination of the imagetext, Mitchell used René Magritte's Les trahison des images (1929) to illustrate his concept of the imagetext in



*Ceci n'est pas une pipe.*

(Photo from Mitchell, Picture 65)

Figure 1. René Magritte, Les trahison des images (1929).

visual art (see Figure 1) (Picture 65-77). In response to the concept of metalanguage, "a second-order discourse that attempts to reflect on first-order discourses," Mitchell created the concept of the "metapicture" in order to illustrate the impossibility of a strict "metalanguage" (Picture 37). Mitchell referred to Magritte's Les trahison des images as a "talking metapicture, a second-order reflection on the practices of pictorial representation" (Picture 9). This theoretical picture provided "a representation of the relation between discourse [text] and representation [image]" (Mitchell, Picture 65). In his analysis of Magritte's pipe, Mitchell explained that:

The self-reflexivity of this picture depends, in fact, upon its introjection of language inside the frame. The indexical 'this' in 'this is not a pipe' refers, we suppose, to the pictured pipe (though it could also refer to itself, that is, to the string of words, or to the entire ensemble of words and image). . . . Let us think of this as a 'cheating' metapicture, slightly illegitimate, whose real purpose is to reflect, not on pictures, but on the relation of pictures and words, both the way we speak of pictures and the way pictures 'speak' to us.

What image could be simpler, more calculated to let a whole theory of the relation between words and images 'be taken in at a glance and easily held in the mind'? . . . If this is a puzzle, it is one that is decoded so quickly that all the pleasure of decipherment goes up in smoke immediately: of course it is not a pipe; it is only a picture of a pipe. The apparent contradiction dissolves in a moment, erasing even the slim pleasure of a double reading. . . . The statement, 'this is not a pipe,' is just literally true: if there is a contest here between the statement and the image, it is clear that discourse has the final say.

And yet, what discourse is it that can only use language literally? As Foucault notes, there also is 'a convention of language,' the custom we have of talking about the images of

things as if they were the things themselves. This custom makes the legend 'this is not a pipe' literally true, but figuratively false. Moreover, insofar as the verbal figure is customary and conventional, it is no longer a figure at all, but a dead metaphor, like the leg of a table or the arm of a chair. The proposition which seems to deny the authority of the image winds up having its own authority called into question, not only by the picture, but by something internal to the conventions of language. (Picture 65-66)

Mitchell's examination of Magritte's pipe is also a demonstration of Foucault's assertion that "the relation of language to painting is an infinite relation" since the dialogue created by the imagetext tension could go on indefinitely (Order 9). Yet, this statement could also be read to signify that the relation is not indefinite or indeterminate, or even quantitatively large. Perhaps Mitchell's two readings of Magritte's composition are sufficient to explore the infinite relation between text and image. Mitchell stated that:

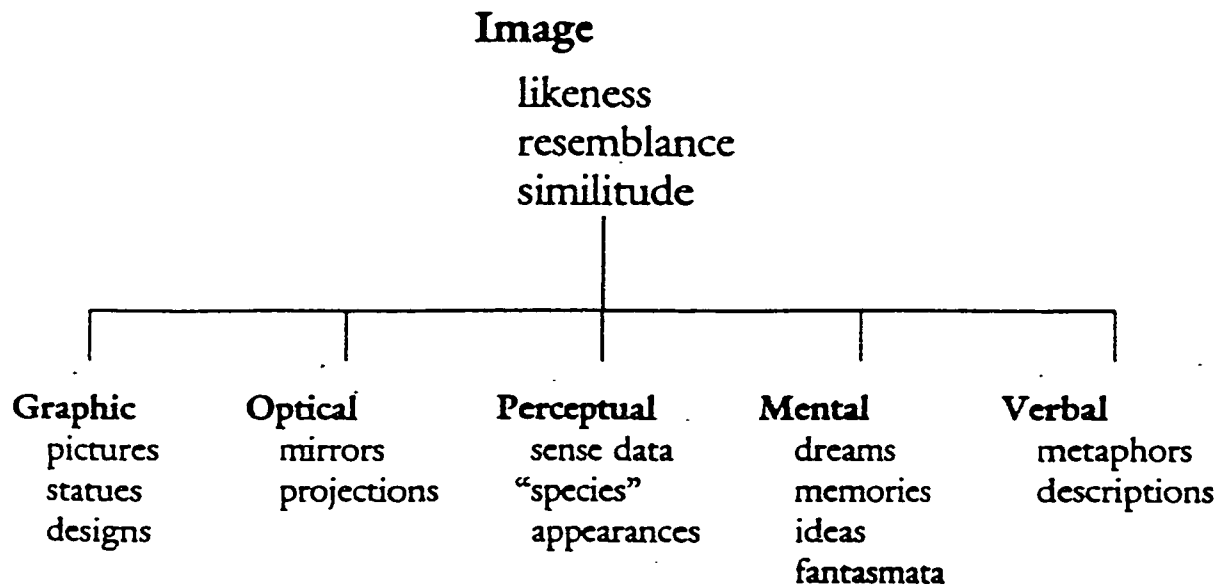
Metapictures elicit, not just a double vision, but a double voice, and a double relation between language and visual experience. If every picture only makes sense inside a discursive frame, an 'outside' of descriptive, interpretive language, metapictures call into question the relation of language to image as an inside-outside structure. They interrogate the authority of the speaking subject over the seen image. Magritte's pipe is a third-order metapicture, depicting and deconstructing the relation between the first-order image and the second-order discourse that is fundamental to the intelligibility of all pictures, and perhaps of all words. It isn't simply that the words contradict the image, and vice versa, but that the very identities of words and images, the sayable and the seeable, begin to shimmer and shift in the composition, as if the image could speak and the words were on display. (Picture 68)

Foucault seemed to support Mitchell's previous theoretical statement in his study of Magritte's pipe in This Is Not a Pipe (1982) when he described text and image as two hunters "pursuing its quarry by two paths . . . By its double function, it guarantees capture as neither discourse alone nor a pure drawing could do" (This 22). Nevertheless, Foucault insisted on maintaining the divided space between the two "hunters," while Mitchell chose to examine the unifying force created when these two "hunters" come together through harmony or tension. The study of theoretical pictures, such as Magritte's pipe, shows that text and image cannot be divided into strict categories of metalanguage or metapicture because of "the inextricable weaving together of representation and discourse, the imbrication of visual and verbal experience" (Mitchell, Picture 83). Mitchell's examination of Magritte's pipe illustrates that image and text (imagetext), much like the body language and aural discourse of Lacan's empty word and full word, must both be perceived if true communication is to occur.

When approaching the study of image-text in the literary arts, Shakespeare's poetic text is unique since it uses imagery to communicate its meaning to an audience. Mitchell, in his Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology (1986), divided "a type of imagery that is central to the discourse of some intellectual discipline" into five categories (see Figure 2): mental imagery

(psychology and epistemology), optical imagery (physics), graphic imagery (art historians), verbal imagery (literary criticism), and perceptual imagery (physiologists, neurologists, psychologists, art historians, students of optics, philosophers, and literary critics) (10). Under these categories, Shakespeare's plays would be designated as "verbal imagery" since they are both literature and poetry. Of the imagetext in literature or poetry, Mitchell stated:

Figurative labels ('blue' moods and 'warm' colors) apply as firmly and consistently as literal ones and have as much to do with actual experience. That images, pictures, space, and visibility may only be figuratively conjured up in a verbal discourse does not mean that the conjuring fails to occur or that the reader/listener 'sees' nothing. That verbal discourse may only be figuratively or indirectly evoked in a picture does not mean that the evocation is impotent, that the viewer 'hears' or 'reads' nothing in the image. (Picture 95-96)



(Photo from Mitchell, Iconology 10)

Figure 2. Mitchell's Categories of Images.

Mitchell also stressed that *visuality* need not be added to discourse because it is "already immanent in the words, in the fabric of description, narrative 'vision,' represented objects and places, metaphor, formal arrangements and distinctions of textual functions, even in typography, paper, binding, or (in the case of oral performance) in the physical immediacy of voice and the speaker's body" (Picture 99). Yet certain literary and art purists would not accept this argument, insisting that images and texts must remain uncontaminated by the presence of text in visual representation or image within discourse. However, Mitchell questioned whether "pure" text or image could truly be achieved in text or image since

'pure' visual representations routinely incorporate textuality in quite a literal way, insofar as writing and other arbitrary marks enter into the field of visual representation. By the same token, 'pure' texts incorporate *visuality* quite literally the moment they are written or printed in visible form. Viewed from either side, from the standpoint of the visual and verbal, the medium of writing deconstructs the possibility of a pure image or pure text, along with the opposition between the 'literal' (letters) and the 'figurative' (pictures) on which it depends. Writing, in its physical, graphic form, is an inseparable suturing of the visual and the verbal, the 'imagetext' incarnate. (Picture 95)

Mitchell did not deny "the merely figurative status of *visuality* in an oral discourse, or the merely figurative status of textuality in a painting purely composed of shapes and colors, without legible, arbitrary signs," he only disputed "the 'merely' that is appended to it" (Picture 95).

As this chapter on text and image comes to an end, one must wonder about the reasons why so many have demonized the concept of imagetext? While Mitchell believed that general semiotics taught that "there is, semantically speaking . . . no essential difference between texts and images," he also believed that "there are important differences between visual and verbal media at the level of sign-types, forms, materials of representation, and institutional traditions" (Picture 161). Mitchell did not believe that the existence of differences between two media usually constituted a need to consistently divide the media. Therefore, Mitchell was mystified by the tendency of many theorists and artists to "make the obvious, practical differences between these two media into metaphysical oppositions which seem to control our communicative acts, and which then have to be overcome with utopian fantasies like ekphrasis [the verbal representation of visual representation]" (Picture 161). Mitchell came up with two explanations for this tendency: first, from a phenomenological standpoint, Mitchell theorized that the answer would be found in

the basic relationship of the self (as a speaking and seeing subject) and the other (a seen and silent object). It isn't just that the image/text difference 'resembles' the relation of self and other, but that the most basic pictures of epistemological and ethical encounters (knowledge of objects, acknowledgment of subjects) involve optical/discursive figures of knowledge and power that are embedded in essentialized categories like 'the visual' and 'the verbal'. (Picture 161-62)

Second, Mitchell believed that the purists' disavowal of the imagetext theory "turns out to be a moral imperative [carried over from the Renaissance], not an empirical description. It's not that the claim that all media are mixed media is empirically wrong, but that these mixtures are bad for us and must be resisted in the name of higher aesthetic values" (Picture 97). Regardless of the many possible reasons behind the demonization of the imagetext, the art purists' and structuralists' disdain for mixed media will not be adopted since this study is not arguing that Shakespeare should not have been translated into film. Instead, this study will use Mitchell's imagetext theory, as well as the concept of bricolage, to examine how the verbal and visual elements of Shakespeare's play text has been translated into silent and modern film.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Shakespeare Silent Film

Certain scholars believe the filming of Shakespeare's plays should be discouraged in order to preserve the "relic" of Shakespeare's language. Any difference between Shakespeare's script and the Shakespeare screenplay is often seen as a destruction of the master playwright's original intent. Stanley Kauffmann, in reaction to Franco Zeffirelli's The Taming of the Shrew (1966), stated that "the film medium and Shakespeare are born antagonists" ("Romeo" 113). Laurence Kitchin also believed that only the theatrical stage could foster the dramatic possibilities of Shakespeare's plays, stating that they "were written to be used by live actors in the presence of a crowd. It follows that all screen versions of them are subject to the limitations of the screen" (70). Although it is undeniably true that the performance of a stage play is altered once it is translated into film, it does not follow that this alteration is always to the detriment of the Shakespeare play. Fortunately, not all scholars or dramatists have viewed the translation of Shakespeare's plays into film as a limitation.

One of the first proponents of Shakespeare film was one of England's finest Shakespearean stage actors. In 1899, Herbert Beerbohm Tree is credited with creating the first Shakespeare film, based on the stage

production of King John that he was starring in at the time (Ball 22). Ball stated his hypothesis that the film, shot on London's Victoria Embankment, consisted mainly of one scene from the play (21-23). Ball believed that since the Victoria Embankment at that time resembled Runnymede, the main action involved the filming of a static tableau vivant scene "of the granting of the Magna Charta [which] needed no words, only pantomime for its effect," mentioned in the first chapter of this study (23). However, the British Film Institute possesses a brief scene from what they consider to be Tree's King John (1899), which shows King John seated in his throne as he flails his arms, ranting at the people around him before his death at the end of the play.

Although Shakespearean scenes were filmed by directors such as Tree and Georges Méliès before 1908, the period of the stage film in England and the art film in France and Italy increased the production of Shakespeare silent film in these countries. By 1908, American filmmakers were using the respectability enjoyed by literature and theatre to combat the vulgar image of the nickelodeon and to give credence to silent film. Since Shakespeare's plays were seen as classic literature as well as theatre, Shakespeare films drew in the kind of audience which would make film seem more respectable.

Shakespeare's plays were also preferred as film subjects by the uplift movement, whose goal it was to educate and morally improve the masses

through film. The uplift movement appealed to the film companies' desire for more profit, convincing some companies to make educational and uplifting films in order "to broaden the base of the audience, to bring in the middle class" (Bowser 38). It is interesting to note here that twentieth-century American conservatives saw Shakespeare's plays as a means to educate the working middle-class, while the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English conservatives saw Shakespeare's plays as a means to preserve the social distinction between the upper classes and the lower classes. Film companies were so convinced by the uplift movement's argument that they began to use Shakespeare's play titles very freely in, what seems to be, an attempt to either draw in a broader audience or appease the uplift movement by making a film appear to be "respectable and educational." Through an examination of approximately four hundred Shakespeare silent films, Ball discovered that it was common practice for film companies to use Shakespeare's play titles to describe a film that either had nothing to do with Shakespeare or was only vaguely inspired by his plays. Therefore, the uplift movement's pressure on the film industry to produce more educational films can also be given some credit for the sudden increase in the number of Shakespeare silent films.

The film companies' desire to avoid copyright infringement penalties also increased the production of Shakespeare silent film. After 1907, when

the heirs of Lew Wallace sued Kalem for making a film of Ben Hur, film companies especially preferred to film Shakespeare because his plays were in the public domain, already written and ready for legal transfer to the screen. By filming a Shakespeare play, or a story inspired by a Shakespeare play, film companies not only avoided potential lawsuits, but also allowed writers more time to write original screenplays. By mixing literary classics with original screenplays, film companies were able to continue the rapid film production pace required to stay ahead of the high demand for new films. Although Shakespeare's plays were desirable subjects for film companies because they combatted the vulgar image of the nickelodeon, gave credence to silent film, satisfied the uplift movement, and transferred readily and legally to the screen, Shakespeare silent film still required more explication than other film subjects being shown at that time.

Many of the problems experienced by early Shakespeare silent film originated from the belief that, "the best filmed Shakespeare is based on the assumption that the audience knows the play" (Rothwell 215). This assumption was partially correct since the majority of Shakespeare silent film patrons before 1908 consisted of special interest groups who had been introduced to cinema through private screenings of magic lantern shows. Since these groups generally came from the upper classes and had more

education, they were already familiar with many of Shakespeare's plays. Therefore, very few, if any, intertitles were used to explicate the complex narrative plots or subplots of these two to ten minute films. John Russell Taylor also believed that film can only affirm the meaning ascribed to an action through the audience's previous knowledge of the Shakespeare performance, but cannot record the meaning of an action if the audience has no previous knowledge of the Shakespeare performance ("Shakespeare" 113). British Shakespeare silent films, such as Barker's Henry VIII (1911), support Taylor's theory since they were produced to affirm a Shakespeare stage performance for those who were anxious to pay the more economical nickelodeon admission to see famous Shakespearean theatre actors perform on film. In an attempt to make his Henry VIII resemble a theatrical production, Barker went so far as to release the film for a limited time and to burn all but two copies of the film in a public ceremony celebrating the end of the film's run. Early silent films cannot be called upon to refute Taylor's theory since many were unsuccessful in recording Shakespeare's textual drama in a manner that made it possible for all silent Shakespeare audiences to fully understand the film.

By 1908, the working middle-class film audience, which either did not speak English fluently or had very little educational background in classic

literature, had grown in number to equal those of the special interest groups. The working middle-class audience preferred more contemporary fiction and drama because it was easily understood and the actors in these films, most of whom had never acted on the stage, seemed more "realistic" in their performances. As a result of the varying levels of education within the middle-class audience, many filmmakers soon realized that they "could no longer expect the majority of the spectators to recognize the narrative events of a classic tale, a work of literature, a popular play, a familiar myth, unless they were in some way explained" (Bowser 54). This concept seems to echo the Renaissance audience's experience with the Shakespeare play and to foreshadow Orgel's theory of the relationship between the verbal and visual elements of Shakespeare's play text. Therefore, in an attempt to reestablish the connection between the verbal and visual elements of Shakespeare's play text, a Shakespeare lecturer/actor would occasionally be supplied to explicate the play/film to the audience in a limited number of nickelodeons.

A short excerpt of a review of Vitagraph's Julius Caesar (1908) by a film critic of the period, W. Stephen Bush, reveals that lecturers were being utilized in Shakespeare silent film by late 1908. Bush stated that, "none of these [Shakespeare] plays without a lecture are more than a bewildering mass of moving figures to the majority of the patrons of electric theatres"

(qtd. in Ball 50). A popular Shakespeare silent film lecture, such as Sterling's Richard III (1913), was introduced to the audience through an overture, followed by "Introductory Remarks by Mr. Frederick Warde," and "Pictures Introducing Prominent Characters" in which Warde was presented as Richard III (qtd. in Ball 158). After this introduction to the film, "came a 'Descriptive Recital by Mr. Warde', perhaps commenting on the various characters or appropriate lines from the play. After each of the first four reels of the narrative, there was a 'recital by Mr. Warde' " (qtd. in Ball 158-59). A film critic's description of Richard III further illustrates that during the intermissions, "Mr. Warde entertains the audience with a dramatic recital of famous passages in the play, elucidating them at the same time. During the showing of the pictures he explains the situations" (qtd. in Ball 159). In the theatres that could not provide a lecturer, some theatre managers took it upon themselves to tell the story of the play, narrating the film from beside the screen while the audience viewed the film. In spite of these admirable attempts at film narration, the cost involved in paying a lecturer and the vocal strain of live film narration soon ended these practices in many nickelodeons.

In an attempt to make Shakespeare silent film a "self-contained unit" that could be "sent where no lecturer would be provided," the film studios

began to experiment with new approaches to Shakespeare filmmaking (Bowser 140). England's British and Colonial film company produced a short film of the wooing scene from The Taming of the Shrew (1915) which experimented with "sound" (Ball 220). In order to make the picture "speak," British and Colonial employed the film's actors to stand on either side of the screen, unseen by the film audience, while attempting to synchronize their live voices to their own lips moving on the screen (Ball 220-21). This short film is admirable for using Shakespeare's complete text and for its experiment with sound, but this unsuccessful experiment in sound film was attempted only twice thereafter by German filmmakers. Filmmakers also experimented with the use of explanatory dialogue, referred to in this study as an intertitle, to provide the narrative information necessary for the audience to understand the film. The first Shakespeare silent film intertitles seem to have consisted entirely of the modern paraphrasing of Shakespeare's dramatic narrative, the direct quotation of Shakespeare's text, used sparingly in Vitagraph's Richard III (1908) and Julius Caesar (1908), being exceedingly rare (Ball 45-49). While the practice of paraphrasing Shakespeare's dramatic narrative in intertitles continued until the end of the silent film era, it is important to note that the direct quotation of Shakespeare's text was not generally seen in intertitles until around 1911.



Shakespeare silent film intertitles usually stated in textual form exactly what would occur in visual form on the screen. In order to explain the significance of this practice, Eileen Bowser, in The Transformation of Cinema 1907-1915 (1990), stated that Shakespeare silent film images were secondary to the text of the intertitle. She wrote, "all the key events and facts were conveyed by the leader [intertitle], and the image that followed merely illustrated the title" (Bowser 140). Arguing against Bowser's notion of a strong verbal element in Shakespeare film, Davies insisted that the dialogue of any film is secondary to the visual elements of the film. In direct opposition to the Shakespeare purists' belief in Shakespeare's primary verbal power, Davies stated that, "as the years of silent cinema proved . . . the medium of film is not based on spoken language. The modern Shakespearean stage can justly claim the projection of the spoken word to be its essence, but the pith of cinematic expression even in Shakespearean adaptation is the moving image" (Filming 2). Davies' belief that silent cinema "proved" that spoken language is not an integral part of Shakespeare film is not supported by the findings of Bowser and Ball. This study proposes a solution to this argument through the application of the theories of Orgel and Mitchell.

According to this study, the use of the film image to support the text of the intertitle is actually a product of the filmmaker's intuitive attempt to

maintain the interrelationship between the verbal and visual elements of Shakespeare's play text, which will be referred to as Shakespeare's imagetext throughout the rest of this study. This intertitle/film image relationship is very similar to the relationship between the verbal and visual elements of Shakespeare's plays during the Renaissance theatre period, as explained by Orgel. Mitchell would see the film image/intertitle relationship as an example of the harmony or tension of the imagetext which ultimately creates meaning in a work of art. Shakespeare's ubiquitous language gave meaning to Shakespeare's plays during the Renaissance, just as the ubiquitous intertitle attempted to give meaning to the twentieth-century Shakespeare silent film image. Yet many silent filmmakers failed to move beyond the limits of early filmmaking bricolage in order to experiment with new methods of communicating Shakespeare's narrative text. Instead of developing imagetext techniques for the film medium, silent filmmakers relied on already established and proven literary and theatrical narrative devices.

Silent filmmakers' tended to utilize the bricolage of literary and theatrical devices to add respectability to film and lengthy intertitles which usurped the power of the images. An example of this tendency is found in Kenneth Rothwell's description of the opening shot of Edwin Thanhouser's King Lear (1916), reputed as one of the best of the silent films:

The opening shot reveals a man in a smoking jacket who affects a wing collar. Seated bolt upright in a wingback chair, he is reading a book. These codes signal a stereotypical Victorian gentleman -- learned, haughty, and stuffy. The film's anxiety about removing a Shakespearian tragedy from that context into the vulgarity of the Nickelodeon is betrayed by the very next shot, a close-up of the first page of King Lear in what could pass for the Globe edition [sic].

The actor seated in the chair, it so happens, is Frederick Warde, who in his day resembled an American clone to Albert Finney's 'Sir' in Peter Yates's 1983 film version of The Dresser, with Tom Courtenay as Norman, or Fool. . . . In his regal appearance Warde embodied every nineteenth-century Bardolator's ideal of an authentic Shakespearian actor [sic]. And in the next sequence of the film Warde gradually begins to dissolve in front of the audience's eyes and to turn into King Lear. Once transformed into the king, Warde's position in the frame is then usurped by a lengthy explanatory title:

King Lear was written in 1607 during the time when the immortal dramatist was at the height of his creative power. King Lear, a proud old man in his dotage, listened to the flattery of his treacherous daughters, and divided his kingdom between them, while he banished Cordelia, his youngest child, the only one who really loved him. On the day that King Lear assembles his court to tell them of his proposed abdication in favour of his daughters . . . [etc] [sic]'

The film struggles to free itself from the constraints of page and stage. It moves from the opening mise-en-scène with a man reading in a chair (which is spatial), to the close-up of the Lear text (which involves montage), to the Méliès-like stunt of dissolving Warde into Lear, and then to the narrative device of subtitles for telling the plot of the play. The director has privileged the world of the library (the page); used a well-known actor of the time in the title role (the stage); and literally framed his movie (the screen) between the pages of a book. Page, stage, and screen, the triad of Shakespearian incarnations, momentarily interface, though the tension generated among the three inevitably favours disconnection of the filmic from page and stage [sic]. To accomplish that, the book and the reader are

figuratively and literally dissolved to make room for the movie.  
(212-13)

This approach to filming classic literature and theatre remained the most utilized method throughout the remainder of the silent film era. Most Shakespeare silent film intertitles did not progress much beyond the traditional format of white lettering on a black background. In order to add some visual interest to the bland intertitle frame, some backgrounds included the copyright symbol of the film company or decorative frames for the text. Otherwise, the predictable pattern of intertitle followed by the supporting images remained the same. Whether paraphrased or directly quoted from Shakespeare, silent film critics had mixed feelings about the use of intertitles in Shakespeare films. On one hand, film critics knew that Shakespeare's narrative text would not be understood by most audiences if the intertitles were left out. On the other hand, critics bitterly complained that the overabundant use of intertitles often broke up the flow of Shakespeare's poetic images. Further examples of intertitles that silent film critics found objectionable are present in two films produced by Film d'Arte Italiana.

In Re Lear (1910) and Mercante Di Venezia (1911), eleven and six minutes in length respectively, the intertitles (in which the words are written in large, white, capital letters that engulf the entire screen) scream at the audience in a modern language that has no resemblance to Shakespeare's

original text. Although these visually disturbing intertitles are used sparingly, their relationship to the images that follow is often vague. The intertitles and images generally do not work together in a manner that gives the audience any meaningful insight into the action taking place on the screen. A few intertitles are so vague that the audience is left to muddle over the connection between the words they have just read and the action that follows on the screen. Even if the intertitles were eliminated, the story would still be too difficult to follow because the images alone can do little to illustrate the complex narrative of each Shakespeare play. In spite of the poor quality of the majority of the intertitles in these two films, Mercante Di Venezia does have the notable distinction of being one of the earliest Shakespeare films to utilize the art title style in a few of its intertitles.

The only new silent film titling techniques which could partially reestablish Shakespeare's imagetext was the use of the art title and the subtitle. Art titles, the use of live action or still photographs as backgrounds in order to heighten mood or reinforce the verbal description of the intertitle, were used in Gade's Hamlet (1920). This film, which actually has little in common with Shakespeare's play, is replete with art titles used in several different types of intertitles. Art titles are most often utilized in intertitles which explain the narrative action of the upcoming scene. For example,

behind the text which reads: "The queen submits to an evil plan," is shown a picture of a despairing woman in a seated position facing away from the audience (Gade, Ham.). This woman is bent forward on a windowpane weeping bitterly into her forearm. This pictorial background serves as an emphatic visual reinforcement of the intense emotion contained within the text of the intertitle. Another example of an intriguing art title involves Hamlet and a partial quote from Shakespeare's text. Behind the text which reads: "And so he puts an antic disposition on," is shown a picture of frenetically rolling waves closely resembling Van Gogh's painting style, visually reinforcing Hamlet's inner turmoil and madness (Gade, Ham.). A full quote of Shakespeare's descriptive text is used in a final example of an art title designed to advance the narrative action of this film. Behind the text which reads: "And she chanted snatches of old tunes as one incapable of her own distress," is shown a picture of a large, moonlit stream in which a swan is drifting (Gade, Ham.). The large tree with long branches that overhangs the water visually recalls the willow which "grows askant the brook" in which Ophelia will soon drown (Ham. IV.vii.165).

Art titles are also used occasionally in intertitles which illustrate the words an actor is speaking in the scene immediately before or after the intertitle. For example, behind the text in quotations which reads: "A dagger.

O mine prophetic soul! Mine uncle!" is shown a picture of a small dagger in the upper right hand corner of the black background to visually illustrate Hamlet's new murderous thoughts (Gade, Ham.). Another art title technique used in this film involves the use of decorative lettering to visually reinforce the meaning of a character's "spoken" text. For example, in a scene inspired more by Freud than Shakespeare, a doctor examines Hamlet for signs of madness. In the process of this examination, Hamlet is asked to state his reactions to various stimuli introduced by the doctor. After one experiment, Hamlet exclaims his reaction in an intertitle that reads: "It's cold" (Gade, Ham.). Although this intertitle consists of a relatively plain black background, the letters that make up Hamlet's "spoken" text are made to appear as if icicles are hanging from each letter, thus visually reinforcing the meaning of Hamlet's text. After another experiment, Hamlet exclaims his reaction in an intertitle that reads: "It's hot" (Gade, Ham.). This time, the letters visually reinforce the meaning of Hamlet's "spoken" text by making it appear that flames of fire are leaping up from each letter of the text. At the end of the film, "spoken" text is allowed to move in order to create two highly dramatic intertitles. The text in quotations which reads: "the drums, the drums, tis Fortinbras," is shown in the center of the traditional black background, as if the words were a far distance away from the audience (Gade,

Ham.). These words quickly grow in size in a manner that makes them appear to be moving rapidly toward the audience. This technique creates the visual impression of a horrified scream as Hamlet's subjects react to the terrifying events taking place around them. The same technique is used for the same effect in the next intertitle, Horatio's sorrowful cry upon Hamlet's death which reads "Hamlet! Hamlet!" (Gade, Ham.).

Art titles are occasionally used to introduce a character into the film's narrative or to change the location of the film's action. For example, Ophelia's first entrance into the film's narrative is preceded by an intertitle. Behind the text which introduces Ophelia is shown a picture of a rolling field filled with the same lilies that will eventually be strewn on her grave, foreshadowing the death which will soon overtake this fragile character. Another art title is used to quickly change the location of the film's action from Elsinore to Wittenberg. For example, behind the text which effects the transfer of location to Wittenberg is shown a collection of gothic style buildings with an owl sitting in the window of one of the buildings. The presence of this owl provides the visual symbol of wisdom which informs the audience that Wittenberg is a scholastic university. Judging by the numerous examples of Shakespeare art titles previously cited, it is obvious that the art title had the ability to restore a portion of Shakespeare's imagetext to the silent screen. Although the art



title technique was frequently used in non-Shakespearean films, it is perplexing that their appearance in Shakespeare silent film was relatively rare.

Subtitles, titles similar to those used today for foreign films, were used in the 1913 Hamlet starring Forbes-Robertson to introduce the actors at the beginning of the film. In a common Shakespeare silent film practice, the main characters of the play are introduced to the audience before the action of the film actually begins. While the image of the actor playing Hamlet is shown on the screen, the subtitle at the bottom of the screen, which seems to be written on a decorative scroll, tells us that we are looking at Forbes-Robertson who will be playing Hamlet. The same subtitling process is followed when the actors playing the other major characters of the play are introduced to the audience. Although the use of subtitles could have made it possible for silent film to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext, the use of subtitles proved to be very unpopular. Silent film audiences were apparently unwilling to accept the mixture of text and image, even when the images were produced by an "exalted" literary or theatrical text. This distaste for the mixture of text and image during the silent film era reflects the art purists' distaste for mixed media. It was as if the presence of text within the image would either degrade the integrity of Shakespeare's text, and therefore, affirm

the "vulgarity" of the nickelodeon, or degrade the quality of the image by partially covering it with text. On account of the silent film audience's unfavorable response to experiments with subtitles, film studios discontinued the use of this new titling technique in most silent films.

Since Shakespeare silent filmmakers could not effectively utilize sound and attempts to utilize subtitles had been rejected by the silent film audience, directors began to develop the use of, what this study will refer to as, textual visualization. Although the intertitling techniques left much to be desired, Thanhouser's King Lear was able to illustrate that Shakespeare's visual imagery and theatricality need not be sacrificed in order to capture his textual narrative on silent film (Ball 242). The power of Shakespeare's text to inspire a pictorial representation to communicate the dramatic narrative of a scene is illustrated in the "division of the kingdom" scene from Thanhouser's King Lear (see Figure 3):

[This scene] is framed around the admonishing hand of the old king pointing at a Cordelia who shrinks from her father's abuse behind her protector, France. The empty space between father and daughter, contrasted with the clasped hands of Cordelia and France, signifies the shattered bond between father and daughter. In the foreground, conspicuously inconspicuous, as though he did indeed belong inside Lear's head, is the Fool. The frame thus positions the severing of the bond of trust and faith at the centre, where it belongs, but the grids surrounding the centre reflect the 'vectors' of disturbance that fall out and away from the king's rash deed [sic]. A daughter discarded, a future son-in-law alienated, a court thrown into turmoil, an inner doubt

and anxiety in the old king adumbrated by the presence of the Fool, impending collapse and disintegration -- all these complexities are reflected in the spatial relationships of the actors. (Rothwell 215-16)

This use of vivid textual visualizations was somewhat rare in Shakespeare silent film. The tension created by the theatrical space in this film image was able to cinematically communicate the tension of this scene's narrative text to the audience, even if the precise motivation in Shakespeare's text could not be communicated. Even though this film utilized a textual visualization of this scene, the audience still had to rely on Shakespeare's text if the precise



(Photo from Ball Plate 45)

Figure 3. Thanhouser's King Lear (1916). Lear banishes Cordelia.

motivation behind the familial break was to be understood. In a review of the Nordisk Hamlet (1910), a silent film critic revealed his belief that an audience without any previous knowledge of Shakespeare would have difficulty understanding Shakespeare's narrative text on film:

In watching this film, I was anxious to discover how much of Hamlet's character could be revealed apart from the words that bear witness to his thoughts. Of course I was hindered by this that I remembered many of his words, and, so, was likely to see qualities in the picture that otherwise would not have been so plain. As I watched the scenes unrolled, the picture gave me thoughts that did 'often lie too deep for tears.' (qtd. in Ball 111)

Even when silent film audiences familiar with Shakespeare's text were provided with images in which they could "read" Shakespeare's text, Shakespeare silent film was, nevertheless, hindered by the absence of text to accompany and comment on the film image. In a review of Universal's The Merchant of Venice (1914), one silent film critic, Hanford C. Judson, made a statement that supports the need to fully render Shakespeare's imagetext on film. In an analysis of Shylock, Judson stated that:

the Jew is all that could be desired; but the bitterness of the struggle is not there. Even when he sharpens the knife there is no real ferociousness in him. This is not to be wondered at. The poet's lines carry, when spoken, continual suggestions to the heart of the player and to spectator alike. In drawing such a character, the living vibrations between these two must count for much. Here, the whole scheme of the picture makes it hard for the spectator to understand the attitude of Shylock. (qtd. in Ball 208)

In a review of Gaumont's Le Roi Lear au Village (A Village King Lear) (1911), another silent film critic stated his belief that Shakespeare's imagetext must be restored to film through the use of sound:

This is a very intelligently produced picture of a tragic incident. It doesn't seem as effective as it ought to be. It is an extremely difficult situation to picture adequately, for the bitterness in such an old man's heart at being ill-treated by his two daughters, to whom he has given everything he owns, needs words to express it. The village Lear has to sit in judgment on himself and his daughters before he can feel all their sharp-toothed unkindness. These are things that cannot be expressed by gestures alone. The acting is very good, but though the picture is interesting, it doesn't get across powerfully. (qtd. in Ball 132)

Ball also stressed the importance of sound in this particular Shakespeare play, stating that, "Of all the plays King Lear seems least suited to radical condensation without audible language" (52). Likewise, Manvell supported the use of sound, expanding the need for sound to all of Shakespeare's plays, stating that, "only with the coming of sound could justice be done to Shakespeare's plays" (3). Manvell went on to state that:

It is therefore of the greatest importance that the techniques of presentation adopted by new media should not stop short at exploiting the single, most obvious aspect of Shakespeare's adaptability to the screen -- the fluidity and excitement of the action. It is evident that Shakespeare's profoundest values lie in the dialogue, the dramatic poetry and prose with which he clothes and humanizes the action. (13)

Manvell's opening statement leads the reader to suppose that he believed the action of the moving image to be Shakespeare's "profoundest" value (13).

Instead, Manvell went on to state that Shakespeare's dialogue is integral to a film's success. This assertion clearly illustrates the interrelated nature of Shakespeare's text and images. Manvell's concluding statement that Shakespeare's dialogue is "the dramatic poetry and prose with which he clothes and humanizes the action" also illustrates the seemingly unconscious awareness one may have of Shakespeare's imagetext (13).

As if in anticipation of Manvell's advice to new media, many filmmakers have chosen to abridge Shakespeare's more complex narrative text and focus instead on Shakespeare's textual imagery, "telling" Shakespeare's stories through his "pictures." Both Shakespeare silent filmmakers and modern filmmakers have followed the example of Shakespeare book illustrators, choosing to depict scenes described or referred to by the text rather than depicting a character as he/she describes or refers to the scene. August Blom, director of Nordisk's Hamlet (1910), went as far as to use one engraving from John Boydell's collection of illustrations based on Shakespearean scenes as inspiration for the character groupings in a scene depicting Ophelia's madness (Ball 109). Many scholars have noted that Shakespeare's textual imagery has been utilized more often in film because it focuses more on the action of the image than on the psychology of the text. Nevertheless, whether the end products have been visual action or

psychological thought, both were born of Shakespeare's narrative text and very likely would not have existed without it. Examples of silent film scenes that originate from Shakespeare's narrative textual images are found in Cines' Amleto (1910), Nordisk's Hamlet (1910), Gade's Hamlet (1920), Vitagraph's Otheilo (1908), Ambrosio's Otello (1914), and Eclipse's La Mégère Apprivoisée (The Taming of the Shrew) (1911).

In Cines', Nordisk's, and Gade's versions of Hamlet, Gertrude's description of Ophelia's death in Act IV Scene VII is visualized for the audience. In the Cines Amleto, Ophelia is shown wandering toward a stream, distractedly throwing flowers on the ground in a joyful frenzy that illustrates her current madness (see Figure 4). The camera does not remain on her long enough to show her fall into the water. In the Nordisk Hamlet, notable for being filmed at Castle Kronborg (Elsinore) five years before the first staged play was performed there, a scene "depicting the wanderings of Ophelia, especially that in which she falls into the river and meets her death" is also visualized for the audience (Ball 110). Likewise, Gade's Hamlet shows Ophelia wander knee deep into a river as she throws flowers into the air. She extends her hand toward the water, apparently in an attempt to reach something she sees in the river. The camera cuts away to another scene, however, before returning to show a group of laboring men discover Ophelia



(Photo from Kliman 234)

Figure 4. Cines' Amleto (1910). The visualization of Ophelia's death.



(Photo from Kliman 231)

Figure 5. Cines' Amleto (1910). Hamlet's vision of his father's murder.



lying on the bank of the river. After unsuccessfully trying to revive her, the men depart the area, leaving Ophelia on the bank of the river to be discovered by Horatio in a later scene.

The Cines Amleto, in addition to visualizing Gertrude's description of Ophelia's death, also visualizes the Ghost's description of his own murder. Hamlet is shown approaching a stream in order to speak to the transparent ghost who stands on the other side of the stream. The ghost beckons for Hamlet to follow and moves off. An abrupt cut, possibly caused by damaged frames which are missing, leaps to a brief long shot of the orchard scene where Hamlet's father is murdered with the aid of Gertrude. The next shot shows the same scene in a long shot that now includes Hamlet in a rocky setting looking at the projected image of his father's poisoning (see Figure 5).

In Ambrosio's Otello, and perhaps Vitagraph's Othello, Othello's description of his courtship of Desdemona in Act I Scene III is visualized for the audience. Although not much is known of Vitagraph's Othello, a still photograph in a magazine article about the film (see Figure 6) may have been a depiction of Shakespeare's narrative textual imagery much like the scene found in a negative print of Ambrosio's Otello. In a gondola,

Othello approaches Brabantio's house to see Desdemona. Her hand is shown at a window, holding a rose. During their private meeting, Othello relates his adventures. She extends her hand to be kissed. Before a door on a canal, Othello takes his leave.

He picks up the rose she has dropped, and steps into a gondola which moves off. Standing in its prow, he looks up to Desdemona at a window, and kisses the rose as she watches his departure. This shot is perhaps followed by a scene in which Desdemona displays emotion before Emilia. With Iago, Cassio, and others present, Othello and Desdemona are married. (Ball 214)

The visualization of a marriage scene is also utilized in Eclipse's The Taming of the Shrew, which includes the scene "at the Church, where the wedding is pictured rather than described" (Ball 130). However, Ambrosio's film is unique since it not only visualizes Shakespeare's narrative textual imagery



(Photo from Ball Plate 8)

Figure 6. Vitagraph's Othello (1908). Desdemona beams at Othello.

which depicts Othello's courtship of Desdemona, but also adds a new scene between Desdemona and Emilia and a marriage scene. The new scene serves as a narrative device to illustrate Desdemona's pleasure in her upcoming marriage to Othello as well as a transitional device to the marriage scene which is only referred to in Shakespeare's narrative text. The depiction of scenes only referred to in Shakespeare's narrative text was quite common in Shakespeare silent film. Further examples of silent film scenes that originate from Shakespeare's narrative textual references are found in Vitagraph's Romeo and Juliet (1908), Gade's Hamlet (1920), Vitagraph's Macbeth (1908), and Triangle-Reliance's Macbeth (1916).

Vitagraph's Romeo and Juliet and Gade's Hamlet both include the visualization of courtship/marriage scenes which are only referred to in Shakespeare's narrative text. Romeo and Juliet begins with a scene where Capulet introduces his daughter, Juliet, to Paris, her future husband," a scene which is referred to by Lady Capulet in Act I Scene III, but actually occurs offstage between Act I Scene III and Act I Scene V (Ball 43). The fourth scene of the film consists of the visualization of "the secret marriage of Romeo and Juliet in Friar Lawrence's cell," which is also referred to in Act II Scene VI, but actually occurs offstage between the end of Act II and the beginning of Act III (Ball 43). In Hamlet, the extravagant marriage of Claudius and Gertrude,

which actually occurs before the play begins and is only referred to by Hamlet in Act I Scene II, is also visualized for the audience in all of its gluttonous glory.

Although Ball credited Vitagraph's Macbeth with the first known visualization of Birnam Wood coming to Dunsinane, the Triangle-Reliance Macbeth, a picture under the supervision of David Wark Griffith, captured even more scenes only referred to or briefly described by Shakespeare's narrative text (41). This film visualizes two Shakespearean references: the first reference comes from a messenger's warning to Macbeth that, "As I did stand my watch upon the hill, / I looked toward Birnam, and anon methought / The wood began to move" (Mac. V.v.33-35). The second comes from Macduff's reference to Macbeth's future coronation which actually takes place offstage between the end of Act II and the beginning of Act III: "He is already named, and gone to Scone / To be invested" (Mac. II.iv.31-32). Not only are these two narrative textual references visualized, but Ross' brief description in Act I Scene II of Macbeth's fight with Cawdor and Duncan's order for Cawdor's subsequent execution are also visualized for the audience. John Emerson, the scenarist and director of Macbeth, makes mention of the filming of the scenes described above, stating in an interview that on film he could

do all the scenes Shakespeare provided for us in practically the same sequence, but . . . [film can] fill in the lapses of time by

adding scenes merely described in the lines of the play. As, for instance, the fight between Macbeth and Cawdor and the execution of the latter.

The coronation of Macbeth, which is completely jumped over in the play, will be one of the biggest scenes in the picture. . . .

And another instance, where I elaborated on a line in the play, is Birnam Wood, which is merely spoken of; we show it moving toward the castle of Macbeth. (qtd. in Ball 230)

So far, only scenes visualized from Shakespeare's narrative textual images or narrative textual references have been thoroughly examined. More attention will now focus on the visualization of scenes which have been added to Shakespeare silent films either through the inspiration of Shakespeare's narrative text or the need to mask alterations made in Shakespeare's narrative text. As previously mentioned, Ambrosio's Othello created a new scene between Desdemona and Emilia to compensate for the passage of time before the marriage while simultaneously advancing the play's narrative. Further examples of silent film scenes newly created through the inspiration of Shakespeare's narrative text are found in Film d'Art's Macbeth (1910), Itala's Giulio Cesare (1909), Lux's Hamlet (1910), Wörner-Film's Othello (1922), Cines' Amleto (1910), and Gaumont-Hepworth's Hamlet (1913).

In Film d'Art's Macbeth, two newly created scenes serve as narrative devices which visualize a character's voiced thoughts, usually presented verbally through a soliloquy or an aside. Macbeth's aside expressing his keen desire to become king is found in these lines:

The Prince of Cumberland! that is a step  
On which I must fall down, or else o'er-leap,  
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires!  
Let not light see my black and deep desires: (Mac. I.iv.48-51)

These four lines are visualized through two scenes where "Macbeth's desire for sovereignty is shown by an episode in which he imagines himself on the throne, and the scene in which he tries on the crown at his own castle . . . ." (Ball 95). This same narrative device is utilized in Itala's Giulio Cesare to create a new scene visualizing Calpurnia's dream of Caesar's murder. This film uses Caesar's description of his wife's symbolic dream merely as inspiration:

She dreamt to-night she saw my statua,  
Which, like a fountain with an hundred spouts,  
Did run pure blood; and many lusty Romans  
Came smiling, and did bathe their hands in it: (JC II.ii.76-79)

Instead of utilizing Caesar's exact description of Calpurnia's highly symbolic dream, the dream is visualized in a more literal manner, almost identical to what actually occurs when Caesar is murdered at the Senate. In Scene VI of the film, Calpurnia is shown already asleep on a bench in a spacious Roman forum. As she continues to sleep, her dream of the murderous senators slashing at Caesar's body is shown in a double exposure on the left side of the screen (see Figure 7). As the figures dissolve into the background, Calpurnia awakes in terror.

Lux's Hamlet also uses a newly created scene as a narrative device which visualizes Shakespeare's narrative text while illustrating the relationship between several characters. This film utilizes a few lines of Ophelia's description of Hamlet's mad exit from her closet as inspiration for the new scene:

And with his head over his shoulder turn'd  
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes,



(Photo from Ball Plate 17)

Figure 7. Itala's Giulio Cesare (1909). Calpurnia dreams of Caesar's murder.

For out o' doors he went without their helps:  
And to the last bended their light on me. (Ham. II.i.97-100)

These four lines are briefly visualized in a new scene depicting Polonius' disapproval of Ophelia's and Hamlet's ardent love for each other:

It opens with Ophelia seated, Hamlet standing next to her holding her hand. Raising her, he kisses her forehead, with two hands on her head, just as her father, unnoticed, comes in, sees them, and looks displeased [see Figure 8]. Hamlet gives her a letter and both of them look at it, but then a movement by Polonius . . . attracts their attention. She hides the letter behind her while Hamlet steps away from her and, with one hand at his chest, bows graciously to Polonius, who returns the bow, with a short forward tilt of the head. Hamlet takes Ophelia's left hand and kisses it fervently. His arm raised in farewell, he walks out keeping his eyes on her . . . . (Kliman 240)



(Photo from Kliman 239)

Figure 8. Lux's Hamlet (1910).  
Hamlet kisses Ophelia as Polonius enters and gives a disapproving look.



Through the visualizations of Macbeth's murderous thoughts, Calpurnia's prophetic dream, and Hamlet's and Ophelia's mutual love, these three Shakespeare silent films are able to advance Shakespeare's narrative text in a manner more conducive to a visual medium that had not yet incorporated sound.

In Wörner-Film's Othello, several new scenes serve as narrative devices which visualize Shakespeare's narrative textual exposition and compensate for the passage of time in a manner that continues to advance the plot. This film begins much earlier in time than in Shakespeare's play in order to visually introduce the characters and their situation to the audience. In a throne room at the palace of the Duke of Venice, Othello is soon to make his victorious arrival. Characters are introduced by intertitles upon their first entrance into the film's action. Iago and Roderigo are shown predicting Othello's impending choice of his new lieutenant. Iago's proud gestures show that he expects the position. The camera cuts to show Desdemona sitting in the hall, surrounded by admirers. Roderigo bows to her, receives a distant nod, and moves toward her. Before Roderigo can speak to Desdemona, Iago approaches her and stands between them to prevent any speech between the two. Desdemona seems grateful for the separation, while Roderigo is clearly irritated. At this point, Othello enters with Cassio, who is characterized in an

intertitle as completely loyal to him. They both approach the Duke, Othello stops and turns to Cassio, puts his hand on his shoulder, and nominates Cassio as his new lieutenant. Iago is shocked and angry about the loss of this position to Cassio. Othello goes to Desdemona, takes both her hands, and greets her warmly. She smiles broadly while Brabantio, watching this exchange from a distance, shows his worry and disapproval. Through this visualization inspired by Shakespeare's narrative textual exposition, the audience is acquainted with the characters and their relationship to each other in much the same manner as in Lux's Hamlet. The audience sees that Othello has recently returned from a victorious war, Iago hates Othello for denying him the lieutenantcy, Roderigo hopelessly loves Desdemona, and Othello and Desdemona share a love which displeases Brabantio.

In another newly created scene from this film, the passage of time and the change of setting are also visualized through two short scenes which continue to advance the plot. The first scene shows Othello and Cassio in the interior of a ship at sea as they travel to Cyprus. The second scene shows Desdemona (with her beloved handkerchief from Othello much in evidence) and Emilia in another ship as they also travel to Cyprus. Since the infamous handkerchief is presented in this new scene, the audience will have a better understanding of its value when Desdemona loses it later in the film. This

visualization technique is very cinematic in nature and can be used to indicate the passage of time or the change in location in a manner that communicates Shakespeare's narrative text to a silent film audience.

The Cines Amleto also creates a new cinematic scene not only to compensate for the passage of time in a manner that continues to advance the plot, but also to make a thematic statement about the play. At the conclusion of Act III Scene IV, Hamlet exits Gertrude's closet with his mother. After the camera pans right to the next room sufficiently to exclude Gertrude's closet, Ophelia enters from an upstage doorway to discover her father's dead body. The beginning of Ophelia's madness is shown through her labored breathing and hysterical arm gestures as she sorrows over the death of her father. The moving camera in this scene also juxtaposes Claudius' manipulations with Ophelia's madness, illustrating the thematic cause and effect relationship between the two scenes. Although this newly created scene may seem very "non-Shakespearean" in nature, it is clear that the scene would not have been created without the inspiration of Shakespeare's narrative text.

The Gaumont-Hepworth Hamlet visualizes Gertrude's description of Ophelia's death and adds a new scene which visualizes Gertrude's reaction to discovering Ophelia in the stream in order to compensate for any passage of time within the play's narrative text. Kliman wrote that:

Once Forbes-Robertson agreed to include the extratextual scene of Ophelia's walking in the woods, the director took the opportunity to insert it as he pleased, using the intercutting for which Griffith was to become famous. The added segments are interlaced with the plotting sequence [of Claudius and Laertes] (4.7), which takes place in the same orchard where Ophelia's textual mad scene was played out. The scene shifts from one to the other six times. The effect, in fact, is of even more shifts because four of the six shots are interrupted by titles. There are, then, ten shots. (259)

After an unseen exit from the mad scene in the orchard with Ophelia, Laertes, and Claudius, the camera shows Gertrude looking at something in the stream (see Figure 9). Immediately after this scene, Gertrude returns to the orchard, runs into Claudius' arms, moves to Laertes to tell him of Ophelia's death,



(Photo from Kliman 262)

Figure 9. Gaumont-Hepworth's Hamlet (1913).  
Gertrude sees Ophelia in the stream.

then returns to the king's arms again. As Claudius attempts to comfort his wife, two bearers bring Ophelia's body into the orchard and the scene ends in a fade on a static tableau, with Laertes kneeling over the body and Claudius observing. Through the visualization of Shakespeare's narrative textual imagery of Ophelia's death and the Shakespeare inspired visualization of Gertrude's discovery of Ophelia in the stream, E. Hay Plumb, the director of this film, was able to compensate for any passage of time within the play's narrative structure. This is only one reason it became common practice to add new scenes to Shakespeare silent films. Another reason for adding new scenes to Shakespeare silent film was to compensate for any kind of alteration made in Shakespeare's narrative text. Further examples of silent film scenes newly created in order to mask alterations made in Shakespeare's narrative text are found in Biograph's The Taming of the Shrew (1908) and Gade's Hamlet (1920).

In Biograph's The Taming of the Shrew, a new scene is created to serve as a narrative device to mask the filmmaker's alterations in Shakespeare's narrative text. Since Petruchio's and Katherine's return to Padua for Bianca's wedding has been cut from this film (most likely to shorten the overall length of the film), a new scene is created to bring closure to the film's narrative. In Scene IX of the film, Ball stated that, "Baptista has come to see his daughter.

She embraces him, but is now tamed and embraces Petruchio too, as Baptista approves and exit [sic]" (65). The final scene of the film, as described by Ball, occurs as follows:

An outdoor scene . . . a garden with shrubbery, flowers, and a stone wall upon which Kate is seated. Petruchio appears from behind her; there is an exchange of flowers, an evident intention to indicate the happiness of the lovers, a wholly new scene, except for the suggestion 'Come on, and kiss me, Kate' at the end of Shakespeare's play. (65)

Ball's description of this scene illustrates that it was possible, through the inspiration of Shakespeare's narrative text, to create a new scene which could mask the cuts that had to be made in this short one reel film while continuing to advance the plot of Shakespeare's play.

In Gade's Hamlet, numerous scenes are created as narrative devices to mask the screenwriter's alterations in and additions to Shakespeare's textual narrative. Being one of Shakespeare's longest plays, Hamlet has been cut and altered for performance even before Milner's version of the play was presented to the nineteenth-century English theatre audience. Much like Milner in his adaptation of Hamlet, the screenwriter, Erwin Gepad, wrote many new scenes for this film, some of which have already been mentioned in the earlier discussion of art titles in this chapter. The scenes showing Queen Gertrude submit to Claudius' "evil" plan to kill her husband, Hamlet, Horatio, Laertes, and young Fortinbras as friends at school in Wittenberg, and Hamlet's

physical examination for signs of madness have all been added to this film's narrative in order to support Edward P. Vining's narrative theories. In the book The Mystery of Hamlet (1881), Vining theorized that Hamlet was a woman forced by her parents to live her life as a man (Ball 272-73). The story behind the theory serves as the film's main subject and is depicted in the first fifteen to twenty minutes of the film. Upon hearing that her husband has been killed in battle, Gertrude decides to take her nurse's advice and pass off her newly born daughter as a boy in order to maintain her control of the crown and provide a male heir. When King Hamlet returns from battle and discovers his wife's deception, he orders that the ruse continue in order to avoid bringing dishonor upon the family. Therefore, Hamlet must hide her femininity throughout the rest of her life. Yet this secret cannot prevent Hamlet from falling in love with Horatio while at school in Wittenberg. Furthermore, since Hamlet is depicted as a woman disguised as a man, Hamlet is shown to become jealous when Horatio begins to fall in love with Ophelia when he comes to Elsinore upon the death of Hamlet's father and the marriage of his mother, Gertrude. Since Horatio does not fall in love with Ophelia in Shakespeare's play, it is clear that this plot line, not to mention the plot of the majority of the film, has been added to further develop and explore Hamlet's deep psychological conflict over her forced sexual charade.

The final moments of this film also have little in common with Shakespeare's narrative text. After Hamlet mistakenly kills Polonius, Claudius sends Hamlet to King Fortinbras of Norway instead of to England. Hamlet still changes Claudius' letter so that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern will be killed, however, after Fortinbras has the two men dragged off to their deaths, Hamlet tells Fortinbras of King Hamlet's murder and Fortinbras decides to help Hamlet regain the throne. Hamlet marches with Fortinbras and his army until they arrive in the environs of Elsinore, at which point, Hamlet proceeds in advance. Upon arrival at Elsinore, Hamlet finds Claudius in a stupor from a drunken orgy and sets fire to the place, killing Claudius in the process. Gertrude vows revenge for Claudius' death and assumes the role that Shakespeare wrote for Claudius. Gertrude and Laertes plot to kill Hamlet in a duel with Laertes' poisoned sword or a poisoned cup of wine if Laertes should fail. During the duel, a servant innocently rearranges the wine cups so that Gertrude mistakenly poisons herself with the cup intended for Hamlet while Laertes pierces Hamlet with his sword. As Hamlet dies, Horatio holds "him" in his arms and laments the death of his friend. It is not until Hamlet has died that Horatio discovers her true identity and weeps anew as he realizes the truth behind his feelings for the dearly departed Hamlet. Fortinbras' speech honoring Hamlet and the



manner in which Hamlet's body is carried to its final resting place all occurs according to Shakespeare's narrative text.

As shown through the study of numerous Shakespeare silent film scenes, the process of creating the necessary combination of literary, theatrical, and cinematic devices to realize Shakespeare's narrative text on silent film took years to develop. At the beginning of the silent film era, the translation of the Shakespeare play into silent film was greatly hindered by the silent filmmakers' tendency to see Shakespeare film only as a profitable means to improve the public's perception of silent film, to educate the working middle-class through the filming of theatrical classics, and to produce legal films quickly. As soon as filmmakers overcame the limits imposed by these various forms of bricolage, the translation of Shakespeare's imagetext into silent film was greatly hindered by the film audience's prejudice against mixed media filming techniques such as subtitling. In an attempt to maintain the public's interest in silent film, filmmakers chose to sacrifice a highly effective method of maintaining Shakespeare's imagetext in silent film. Yet, as silent filmmakers continued to experiment with techniques unique to their own medium, the more likely it was that Shakespeare's imagetext was maintained. In fact, silent film still needed more time to perfect its Shakespeare silent film art, but the arrival of sound made this

pursuit unnecessary. In the next two chapters, this study will continue its examination of Shakespeare's imagetext in modern Shakespeare films.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Theatrical Centripetality and Cinematic Centrifugality

The differentiation between the theatrical and cinematic elements of Shakespeare film has been frequently analyzed and debated throughout the history of Shakespeare film scholarship. This chapter will not continue this dialogue, as little new can be added to the work of scholars such as Jorgens and Davies. Rather, this chapter will use Jorgens' and Davies' theories regarding the "theatrical," "filmic," and "realistic" modes of Shakespeare filmmaking in order to examine how Shakespeare's imagetext is maintained in Stuart Burge's and John Dexter's Othello (1965), Orson Welles' Othello (1952, 1992), Oliver Parker's Othello (1995), as well as Branagh's Henry V, Much Ado About Nothing, and Hamlet. In all film scenes to be examined, the verbal elements will be examined in terms of the utilization of Shakespeare's narrative text within the screenplay, and visual elements will be examined in terms of the filmmaker's incorporation of Shakespeare's narrative textual images to create the pictures captured by the camera in a theatrical and/or cinematic space. Although it would be beneficial to study scenes from all available versions of Othello, the films to be examined have been chosen because of the diverse directorial approaches which had a direct impact on how Shakespeare's imagetext was or was not maintained in these films.

Jorgens and Davies both believed that Burge's and Dexter's Othello falls under the theatrical mode of Shakespeare filmmaking since it

has the look and feel of a performance worked out for a static theatrical space and a live audience. Lengthy takes in medium or long shots stress the durational quality of time, and, the frame acting as a kind of portable proscenium arch, meaning is generated largely through the words and gestures of the actors. Style in this mode derives primarily from the style of the performances, which are usually of a distinctly theatrical cast -- more demonstrative, articulate, and continuous than actors are usually permitted in films. (Jorgens 7-8)

One strength of the theatrical mode is its tendency to retain a sizable portion of the original play text when the stage performance is translated into film. Since the performance is usually intended to be a recorded version of a play which has already been cut for the stage, additional cuts or rearrangements in the script are rarely incorporated in the screenplay. Therefore, Shakespeare's narrative text is often well utilized in the theatrical mode of Shakespeare film performance. Since Dexter's original stage script only cut about six hundred lines from Shakespeare's more than thirty-two hundred, this film's screenplay makes ample use of Shakespeare's narrative text. Another benefit of the theatrical mode is its ability to preserve a record of a stage performance. Davies stated that:

John Dexter's 1964 Old Vic production (which is the substance from which the film selects its images) was to stress the contemporary social relevance of Othello as a black man in an established white society, and to base the precariousness of his

self-image in large measure upon that. An interesting irony arises from this, for while the natural ephemerality of immediate social relevance is ideally suited to theatre, the film has an added value in being both a record of Olivier's unique performance and a historical document revealing an interaction of theatre with society. ("Filming" 196)

It is only through the transfer of this theatrical performance to film that Dexter's directorial interpretation and Olivier's resulting performance can survive for centuries after its original theatrical performance as a theatrical/film history document. It is Dexter's interpretation and Olivier's performance, rather than any unique cinematic device or achievement, that make this film endure today. Where this film fails, however, is in its ability to cinematically realize certain theatrical elements of the Shakespeare play, bringing to light one weakness in this film's use of the theatrical mode.

An undeniable truth that some film productions employing the theatrical mode fail to recognize is that the filming of a weak stage performance invariably creates a weak film performance. Nevertheless, it does not always follow that the filming of a great stage performance necessarily creates a great film performance. The essence of a theatrical performance is, for the most part, lost on film unless a great deal of care has gone into the planning of camera angles and shots to make sure that the performance is seen well by the film audience. Davies agreed with Jorgens in the assessment that Burge and Dexter desired to capture on film, what was in

their minds, the superior stage performance of Olivier's Othello. They both wanted to preserve the theatrical style, using film to

simply [photograph] the staged performance on stage space. Implicit in this strategy is the contention that a play produced on the theatre stage is artistically complete, and that cinema is simply a medium for its transmission and preservation. It implies, too, that the spatial properties of cinema can be disregarded in order to preserve theatrical frontality as well as the actor's centripetality. (Davies, Filming 9)

The obvious problem with this approach is that film is not theatre; for while film can bring images closer to the audience, "the film's independence of audience reaction reduces the involvement of the viewer" (Davies, "Filming" 197). Another difference between theatre and film is the fact that the theatre audience views "the actor on the stage [as] an autonomous manipulator of theatre space," whereas the film audience views the actor as "part of the manipulated space within the frame" (Davies, Filming 10). Another problem can also occur when Shakespeare filmmakers rely too heavily on bricolage:

The tendency to judge Shakespearean film in terms of some sort of theatrical achievement stems partly from that critical tendency to impose old criteria on new artistic fields, partly from the appearance on the screen of established stage actors in Shakespearean roles and partly from a persistent belief -- which intelligent criticism has done little to shift -- that cinema is really 'canned' and transportable theatre. (Davies, Filming 5)

Although there are many specific differences between theatre and cinema, it is not advisable to completely divorce the theatrical elements of the

Shakespeare play from the cinematic elements of cinema. In order to account for these differences, it is only necessary to make some adjustments in the filming of the performance in order to convey Shakespeare's imagetext to the film audience.

When approaching the filming of the Shakespeare play, some of its innate theatrical qualities must be preserved. Yet these theatrical elements must be presented cinematically to insure that Shakespeare's imagetext can be seen and heard on film. Davies stated that one problem of the cinema is

the tendency of the camera to isolate in its frame individual characters, so that at moments when we should be presented with a meta-theatrical situation, the dramatic complexity is diminished with the reciprocity of tension between individual character and an audience within the play being lost. In focusing so insistently upon individual performance, the visual strategy of the film sets up a relationship between specific character and the film viewer [cinematic centrifugality] rather than one between character and a dramatic ambience created on-stage [theatrical centripetality]. ("Filming" 197)

The difficulties created by the use of the camera when translating a play to film is similar to the difficulties experienced by visual art critics when examining impressionistic art. Gandelman emphasized the importance of maintaining a distance that is neither too far nor too close in order to allow the impressionistic gaps, by which the art form is defined, to communicate a clear visual message to the viewer. If the distance between the viewer and the painting is too great or too small, the viewer will not be able to achieve a full

understanding of the message(s) contained within the art work. An example of the break in communication that can occur in film when the camera brings its audience too close to the scene's action at an inappropriate moment is found in Burge's and Dexter's Othello.

The use of cinematic centrifugality in Act I Scene III interferes with the development of Shakespeare's imagetext, which is integral to the illustration of the effect of Othello's tale of his courtship of Desdemona on the Venetian Senate. Although briefly capturing Brabantio, two other senators, and Othello in a medium shot (see Figure 10), the camera soon cuts to a close shot of Othello, focusing only on his head and shoulders as he remains in a stationary position throughout most of the scene (see Figure 11). The film audience is unable to see the reactions of the senators as they listen to Othello's tale of love. If theatrical centripetality had been utilized in the filming of this scene, Othello would have been allowed to move around the stage, pausing at times in front of each grouping of senators so the effect of Othello's story on the senators could be revealed to the camera. This filming approach would have restored Shakespeare's imagetext to this scene by allowing the film audience to see the effect of Othello's narrative text register on all of the senators' faces before the Duke states that his daughter would also have been won by this speech. The use of cinematic centrifugality in this





Figure 10.  
Burge's and Dexter's Othello (1965).  
Medium shot of Othello and senators.



Figure 11.  
Burge's and Dexter's Othello (1965).  
Close shot of Othello.



Figure 12.  
Burge's and Dexter's Othello (1965).  
Iago spies on Cassio and Desdemona.



Figure 13.  
Burge's and Dexter's Othello (1965).  
Othello spies on Cassio and Iago.

scene places inordinate authority on Shakespeare's narrative text and the power of Olivier's stage presence. Although Shakespeare's narrative text is superbly written and Olivier's acting prowess can be captivating, the absence of the senators' visual presence in this meta-theatrical scene denies the film audience access to the clarifying power of Shakespeare's narrative textual images. In spite of the inability to preserve Shakespeare's imagetext in this scene, this film does utilize theatrical centripetality in a few scenes to maintain the imagetext.

This film has a few moments when both theatre and cinema coalesce in a decidedly cinematic use of theatrical centripetality that preserves Shakespeare's imagetext, thereby providing excellent moments of drama. The use of vertical stage space in Act II Scene I illustrates a type of cinematic "aside" similar to the theatrical convention. Iago, in the left foreground of the shot, observes Cassio and Desdemona, in the right background of the shot (see Figure 12). Iago voices his scheming thoughts to the audience, encouraging Cassio and Desdemona to touch each other as they converse in shows of friendly affection that will aid his campaign to pique Othello's jealousy. Likewise in Act IV Scene I, Othello, in the right foreground of the shot, observes as Iago encourages Cassio, in the left background of the shot, to talk of his lover, Bianca, in a way that leads Othello to believe that Desdemona

has been unfaithful (see Figure 13). Othello, captured in profile, shares with the film audience his thoughts and feelings about Iago's and Cassio's conversation which is slightly distorted by the distance that separates him from them. Although these scenes illustrate the potential of theatre and film to work together, it is also true that the marriage of theatre and cinema to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext occurs very infrequently in this film.

Jorgens summed up the accomplishment of this film very well:

Given such performances, Burge could have made a great film. As it is, he only made a good one. Too often the camera is in the wrong place, the editing is thoughtless, the lighting and makeup shoddy. The action is seldom powerfully seen save in some remarkable moments when one gets a glimpse of a film that would have shattered for all time the widely shared assumption that great theatre can never be great film. Shakespeare's language is effective, however, and in a medium hypnotized by its visual possibilities, that is something to be grateful for.  
(206)

The study of Burge's and Dexter's Othello has illustrated three important points. The first is that the screenplays created for films using the theatrical mode of Shakespeare filmmaking generally make ample use of Shakespeare's narrative text. The second point is that filmmakers using the theatrical mode must also carefully consider the use of cinematic camera shots and angles in order to preserve Shakespeare's imagetext through theatrical centripetality. Third, a film using the theatrical mode can create a unique interpretative vision and performance that can carve a niche for itself

within theatre and film history. Therefore, regardless of the flaws which may be apparent in the film, it can endure throughout the centuries as it is studied and compared to other works of its kind.

Davies suggested a second strategy for the adaptation of the Shakespeare play to the screen wherein "the cinema brings its own spatial potential to bear on the material to effect an entire visual transformation by moving the action from the confines of the theatrical enclosure and creating new relationships between actor and the decor, between space and time and between the dramatic presentation and the audience" (Filming 9). This is the basic approach used in the filmic and realistic modes of Shakespeare filmmaking as proposed by Jorgens (7-12). Having just examined the presence of cinematic centrifugality and the relative absence of theatrical centripetality in Burge's and Dexter's Othello, it is useful to examine cinematic centrifugality and theatrical centripetality in Welles' Othello.

The filmic mode, like the theatrical mode, is able to support the poetry of Shakespeare's narrative text while retaining the cinematic techniques involving camera angles and shots. However, unlike the theatrical mode, "there is emphasis on the artifice of film, on the expressive possibilities of distorting the surfaces of reality" in the filmic mode (Jorgens 10). According to Jorgens, the great strength of the filmic mode is that "it acknowledges the

importance of everything that is not literal in Shakespeare's plays by exploring through sounds and images what Stanislavsky called 'subtext' "

(11). One strength of this approach to filming is that Shakespeare's narrative textual images are incorporated in a decidedly cinematic style. Although the filmic mode is not defined by its use of outdoor locations, the cinema's ability to expand the Shakespeare play beyond the realm of the theatre is found in Welles' use of location shots. Unlike Burge and Dexter, Welles did not want to risk giving Othello an air of artificiality through the incorporation of a new interpretation of the play. Instead, Welles chose to heighten the realism of his film through the visual splendor that shooting on location would provide.

A scene from Act III Scene III uses the sounds and images of the battered eighteenth-century seaside Arab citadel at Mogador to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext. This scene begins with a ninety-second long moving camera shot of Othello and Iago walking together (see Figure 14). As they walk, Iago questions Othello, pauses at times in the conversation, refuses to reveal his suspicions about Desdemona and Cassio, then continues to question Othello again. Jorgens stated that:

It is a great shot because of its overlaying of several aural and visual rhythms, each in conflict with the others, which builds a growing sense of unease in the viewer: the regular beat of the boots on the stone and the accompanying movement of their bodies, the rhythm of the waves beating against the shore, the uneven bursts of speech and silence, the irregular appearances of

cannon in the notches in the wall, the regular patches of sunlight thrown on the walkers' feet, and the pattern of the irregularly spaced rocks in the sea beyond the ramparts. (184)

The use of conflicting aural and visual rhythms in this long moving camera shot makes it possible for Welles to use Shakespeare's imagetext to filmicly reveal the subtextual tension present within the narrative text of this scene. Through simultaneously witnessing Othello's aural discourse and visual, subtextual body language, the film audience gets a glimpse of Othello's growing emotional conflict in a manner Lacan believed to be the only route to discovering a person's (or character's) true message.

The sea surrounding the citadel also provides a setting which aurally and visually illustrates the subtextual raging tumult underneath Othello's narrative text as the "green-eyed monster" of jealousy takes hold later in Act III Scene III. Returning to the seaside, Iago approaches Othello from behind as he looks out over the sea. Othello, with a foul grimace, turns to regard Iago as Iago slowly advances towards him. Halted in his approach by Othello's look, Iago is shown in a medium shot with the rolling waves and rocks behind him. Othello slowly approaches Iago, demanding that he prove Desdemona a whore, the sound of the raging waves increasing in volume, echoing the inner torment of Othello's soul. Othello imperiously backs Iago toward the cliff, the camera capturing Iago and the raging sea behind him. The camera reflects

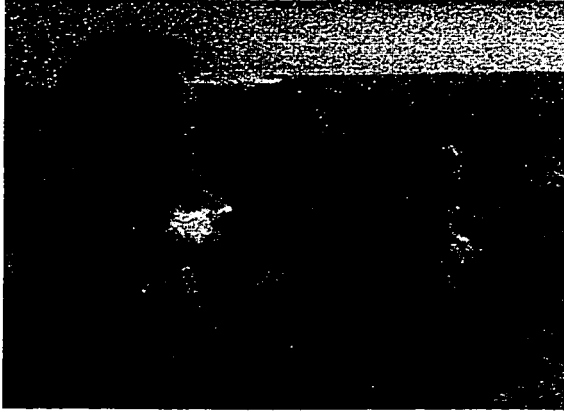


Figure 14. Welles' Othello (1952).  
Othello and Iago walk together.



Figure 15. Welles' Othello (1952).  
Othello and Iago in confrontation.



Figure 16. Welles' Othello (1952).  
Othello spying behind the wall.



Figure 17. Welles' Othello (1952).  
Iago's iron cage.

Iago's point of view as he looks down at the rumbling waves below. Othello is shown in dark, backlit silhouette as his menacing figure closes in on Iago. The tempestuous sea continues to serve as a backdrop in a high angle profile shot of both Iago and Othello in confrontation (see Figure 15). This shot is alternated with the quick repetition of several shots that have already been shown, the threatening sea and the rapid editing of dramatic camera shots and angles building suspense for the film audience while mirroring Othello's disturbed emotional state. The fusion of location settings, camera shots and angles, and Shakespeare's narrative text brings about a dramatic cinematic experience which preserves Shakespeare's imagetext in a manner that surpasses the possibilities for dramatic theatrical experience that can be achieved on the stage.

This ancient citadel is used again to provide a setting which aurally and visually illustrates the alienation and imprisonment that invades the jealous Othello as the film continues. The battered stone walls are shown to great advantage in Act IV Scene I when Othello overhears the conversation between Iago, Cassio, and Bianca which convinces him that Desdemona has been unfaithful. The conversation that Othello hears is distorted, much like the conversation overheard by Olivier's Othello, in a manner to create an aural sense of distance and alienation in Othello. As the conversation filters



through the chinks in the stone wall behind which he hides, the film audience sees the suspicious Othello imprisoned within the stone walls of the stairway (see Figure 16). These stone walls serve as a visual symbol, or motif, of Othello's feelings of alienation and imprisonment which are intensified during this scene. Othello's world seems to close in on him as he listens to and observes what he can of the conversation in his trapped position behind the stone wall. Welles builds on this imprisonment motif by visualizing Iago's narrative textual images of the net, the snare, and the web through Iago's iron cage (see Figure 17), floor grates, Desdemona's hair net, ships' rigging (see Figure 18), spear racks (see Figure 19), the windows of the Cyprus fortress (see Figure 20) and the windows of Othello's bedchamber (see Figure 21). This use of the visual motif in cinema is similar to the use of visual motif in theatre. The use of a visual motif in cinema, or theatre, maintains Shakespeare's imagetext through the visualization of Shakespeare's narrative text, from which the narrative textual image of the visual motif emerges.

The use of cinematic techniques to supply the visual counterpart to the rhythm of Shakespeare's narrative text is another strength of the filmic mode employed by Welles. Othello uses a perfected style of speech in the earlier scenes of the play, visually illustrated by the formal, epic manner in which the



Figure 18. Welles' Othello (1952).  
Ships' rigging at Cyprus.

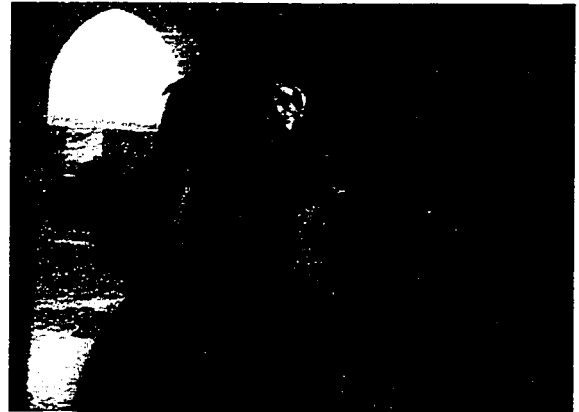


Figure 19. Welles' Othello (1952).  
Spear racks inside the fortress.

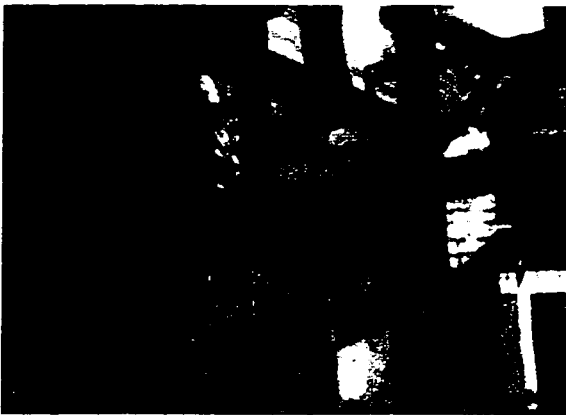


Figure 20. Welles' Othello (1952).  
Cyprus fortress windows.

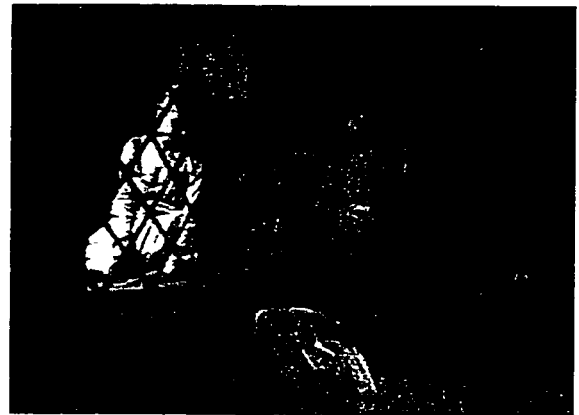


Figure 21. Welles' Othello (1952).  
Windows of Othello's bedchamber.

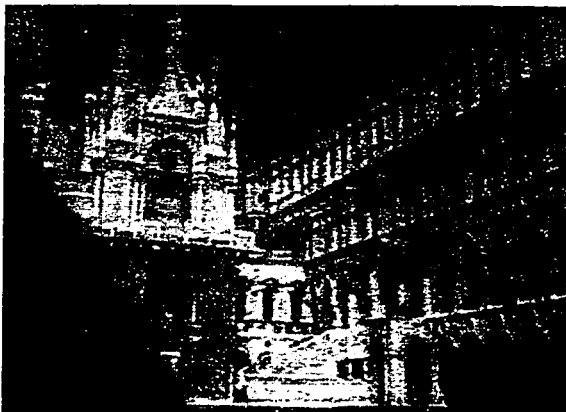


Figure 22. Welles' Othello (1952).  
A vast building of Venice.



Figure 23. Welles' Othello (1952).  
A procession of mourners.

scenes in Venice and the early scenes in Cyprus are shot. The "reduction of Othello's language from poetic grandeur and simplicity to vicious, fragmented, a-rhythmic crudity" wrought by Iago's machinations is visually illustrated through two distinct filming styles (Davies, Filming 106). Jorgens saw these compositional styles as being divided into two specific categories: the "Othello" style of Act I Scene III which uses "low angles, vast spaces, monumental buildings [see Figure 22], crowds of soldiers, and processions of mourners [see Figure 23]" to visually illustrate the "hyperbole and personification" of Othello's dialogue; and the "Iago" style of Act IV Scene I which uses "dizzying perspectives and camera movements, tortured compositions [see Figure 24], grotesque shadows [see Figure 25], and insane distortions [see Figure 26]" to visually illustrate Iago as "the agent of chaos" bringing about the textual decay of Othello's earlier formal speech patterns (176-77).

In addition to the cinematic devices previously examined, Welles also employs theatrical centripetality to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext. In his approach to filming Act I Scene III, Welles captures Othello in a close shot as he addresses the Senate (see Figure 27). This close shot is maintained throughout most of Othello's description of his courtship of Desdemona. Although most of this scene employs cinematic centrifugality, which relies on



Figure 24. Welles' Othello (1952).  
A tortured composition.



Figure 25. Welles' Othello (1952).  
Grotesque shadows.

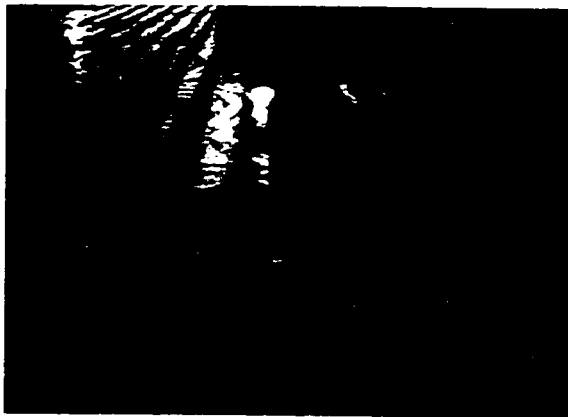


Figure 26. Welles' Othello (1952).  
Insane distortions.

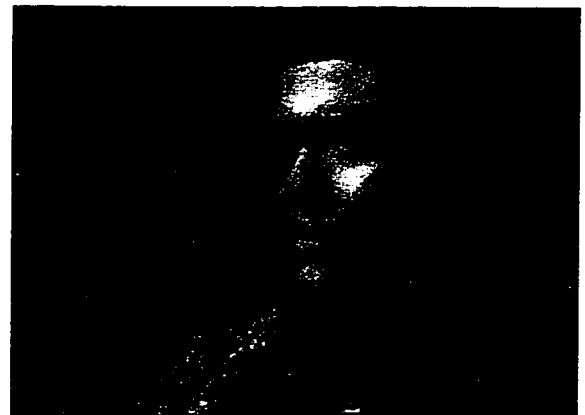


Figure 27. Welles' Othello (1952).  
Close shot of Othello at the Senate.



Figure 28. Welles' Othello (1952).  
Close shot of Desdemona  
at the Senate.



Figure 29. Welles' Othello (1952).  
Several senators watch Desdemona  
approach Othello.

Shakespeare's narrative text and Welles' stage presence to captivate the film audience in the way that Othello is supposed to captivate the senators, Welles does utilize theatrical centripetality to preserve a portion of Shakespeare's imagetext. Welles inserts two close shots of Desdemona as she is captivated once again by Othello's tale of woe (see Figure 28). These close shots visually illustrate to the film audience, as well as to the senators, that Desdemona is indeed in love with Othello. To visually illustrate the effect of Othello's speech on the senators, the film audience is allowed to see the awed reaction of the senators as they stand, watching Desdemona move toward Othello as she is seemingly pulled by a magnetic force to join her husband in the center of the Senate chamber (see Figure 29). These visual illustrations of Desdemona's love for Othello clearly support the Duke's declaration that his daughter would also have been won by this speech. By providing the film audience both the visual authority of the narrative textual images seen on the screen and the verbal authority of the narrative text heard in Othello's speech, Shakespeare's imagetext is preserved in this scene through a combination of theatrical centripetality and cinematic centrifugality.

Although Welles' Othello preserves Shakespeare's imagetext through its use of location shots, visual motifs, and the combination of theatrical

centripetality and cinematic centrifugality, this filmic mode of Shakespeare filmmaking does possess weaknesses. The filmic mode has the tendency to focus more on Shakespeare's narrative textual images than on Shakespeare's narrative text. Manvell pointed out that "some of the later interchanges between Iago and Othello are fragmented into a series of emphatically tilted portraits, which drain the drama from the speech, which is in any case under-emphasized, and so transform the scenes into a photographic exhibition" (63). In order to allow for more time to develop Shakespeare's narrative textual images, Welles not only cut away at least half of the play's text, but he also transposed much of Shakespeare's first act into a non-poetic narrative prologue of the play's action. Welles' prologue was used in voice-over

to establish situation and character relationships in their rudimentary sense, and so to clear the way for a cinematic treatment released from its primary narrative obligation. . . .

Only with the appearance on screen of the film's title does Welles's spoken commentary begin, and the visuals which it accompanies quickly move the narrative situation through Desdemona's escape from her father's house, her marriage, the awakening of Brabantio and the shift of the play's action to the Venetian Senate. (Davies, Filming 103-04)

The use of a literary reference in the title image of Welles' Othello, much like the literary device used in Thanhouser's King Lear during the silent film era, illustrates that as late as 1952 bricolage was still utilized to transfer the respectability of literature to the Shakespeare film.

As proven by his prologue, Welles preferred to use Shakespeare's narrative text to reflect the emotions of the characters in the play rather than to support the narrative action of the film. Although Welles' highly visual, cinematic focus on the character's emotions can be very stirring, it is sometimes at the expense of a clear development of Shakespeare's textual narrative. Davies stated that:

Welles addresses his Othello to an audience whose familiarity with the plot, if not the text of the play, is assumed . . . . the intention is to present visual relationships rather than to visualize narrative connections. A much greater responsibility devolves upon the viewer in forging the links which will make a coherent whole of the highly memorable visual moments in the film. (Filming 102)

Davies also stated that "it is questionable whether, by virtue of the medium, it is possible in a dramatic adaptation to transcend entirely the narrative function of the camera" (Filming 105). This statement is very reminiscent of a similar realization made by the silent filmmakers. Any Shakespeare filmmaker must consider the fact, as true today as it was during the silent film era, that filmmakers cannot "expect the majority of the spectators to recognize the narrative events of a classic tale, a work of literature, a popular play, a familiar myth, unless they [are] in some way explained" (Bowser 54). In an analysis of the weaknesses of the filmic mode, Jorgens concluded that "despite the dangers of dazzling technique for its own sake, wooden

performances, and decimated texts, the filmic mode is truest to the effect of Shakespeare's dramatic verse" (12, emphasis added).

The study of Welles' Othello has illustrated three important points. The first is that the screenplays created for films using the filmic mode of Shakespeare filmmaking tend to cut much of Shakespeare's narrative text in order to highlight the narrative textual images. The second point is that the filmic mode often uses theatrical centripetality, cinematic centrifugality, and other cinematic devices to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext. The third point is that the filmic mode's use of unique, cinematic devices can create a performance that carves a niche for itself within film history. Therefore, regardless of the flaws which may be apparent in the film, it can endure through the centuries as it is studied and compared to other works of its kind.

The realistic mode of Shakespeare filmmaking shares some of the strengths of the filmic mode while attempting to overcome its weaknesses. The realistic mode, like the filmic mode, utilizes theatrical centripetality and cinematic centrifugality to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext and capitalizes on the camera's ability to move the audience quickly from place to place. However, the realistic mode respects the camera's responsibility toward Shakespeare's narrative text. The realistic mode's greatest strength is its use of historical locations and costumes to mirror the poetry of Shakespeare's



narrative text. Jorgens stated that the realistic mode "is the most popular kind of Shakespeare film, not merely because filmmakers are most familiar with it and mass audiences enjoy the spectacle of historical recreations, but because everyone senses that at bottom Shakespeare is a realist" (8).

Examples of the use of location shots to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext in Parker's Othello are found in two scenes. In a brief scene from Act II Scene I, shot in the historic courtyard of castle Bracciano, Parker uses a highly cinematic adaptation of theatrical centripetality to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext. Iago is shown in the left foreground of the shot as he is about to carve an apple with his knife, while Cassio and Desdemona are shown in the right background of the shot, just over Iago's left shoulder. Iago subtly observes Cassio's and Desdemona's conversation in the reflection of his knife blade. The camera cuts to Iago's point of view, the image of Cassio and Desdemona reflected in the knife blade as Iago, in voice-over, encourages them to whisper to each other in open shows of mutual affection (see Figure 30). The camera returns to the original shot of Iago, Cassio, and Desdemona in time for Iago to look directly into the camera, in a more theatrical "aside" than that used by Burge's and Dexter's Iago in the same scene, to briefly share with the film audience his plot to ruin Cassio and Othello (see Figure 31). In another location shot from Act III Scene III, Parker uses the ocean setting to

aurally and visually illustrate the subtextual raging tumult underneath Othello's narrative text in much the same way Welles did in his filming of the same scene. As Othello's jealous rage rises within him, the sounds of the sea around him increase slightly in volume and the waves seem to clash against the sand and rocks with increasing intensity, aurally and visually echoing his inner torment. Parker's approach to the filming of this scene has the added advantage of having actually been shot entirely on the sea shore instead of on the cliffs and rocks surrounding the sea shore. By placing the actors on the sea shore, Parker can use the sea to dramatic advantage as Othello strides toward Iago, threatening brutality if Iago cannot prove his wife a whore. As Othello comes nearer to Iago, he grabs Iago by the shirt and holds him under the waves, almost drowning him in the sea.

A scene from Act IV Scene I which is set in a jail cellar provides an example of the use of the visual motif, the moving camera, and the theatrical "aside" to create cinematic centrifugality in Parker's Othello. Iago instructs Othello to conceal himself while he goads Cassio into relating once again his sexual exploits with "Desdemona" (actually Bianca). Iago closes Othello inside a jail cell (see Figure 32), a visual motif of the trap that Iago is about to set textually for Othello during his conversation with Cassio. The beginning of Iago's conversation with Cassio is filmed in a relatively still



Figure 30. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Iago's point of view of Cassio and  
Desdemona reflected in the knife.



Figure 31. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Iago's aside to the film audience.



Figure 32. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Iago closes Othello in a jail cell.



Figure 33. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Medium shot of Iago and Cassio.



Figure 34. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Othello's point of view shot.



Figure 35. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Close shot of Othello's aside  
to the film audience.

medium shot which captures Iago, Cassio, and Bianca when she enters the scene (see Figure 33). However, upon Othello's first textual reaction to the conversation, the film audience begins to witness parts of the conversation from Othello's point of view from behind the cell bars (see Figure 34). The use of the moving camera is apparent as the cell bars shift, sometimes blocking the view of Cassio or Iago as Othello slinks about to remain undetected by Cassio. The sound of Cassio's and Iago's voices is somewhat distorted in this moving camera shot and possesses an echoing quality that reflects Othello's distance from Iago and Cassio, a sound technique also used by Burge and Welles in the filming of this scene.

Throughout the conversation, the camera alternates between three shots: the medium shot which captures Iago, Cassio, and Bianca (see Figure 33), the moving camera shot of Othello's literally and figuratively obstructed point of view as he watches Iago, Cassio, and Bianca (see Figure 34), and the close shot of Othello speaking directly to the camera in a theatrical "aside" (see Figure 35) similar to those used by Parker's and Burge's Iago throughout each respective film. The medium shot allows the film audience to see and hear the true nature of Iago's conversation with Cassio and Bianca. The moving camera shot allows the film audience to experience Iago's conversation with Cassio and Bianca through Othello's limited point of view while the close

shot allows it to see and hear Othello's reactions to the scene he sees unfolding before him. The moving camera shot and the close shot work in harmony with each other, maintaining Shakespeare's imagetext by revealing Othello's limited visual perception of and furious physical and verbal reactions to the conversation, while the medium shot works in tension with the two harmonious shots of this scene. It is only through the conflict between these shots, created by the imagetext's tension between Othello's and Iago's different points of view, that the film audience is able to understand how completely Othello is being deceived and manipulated by Iago.

An earlier scene from Act IV Scene I uses the cinematic device known as American montage to visually illustrate Othello's jealous thoughts which spring from Iago's claim that Cassio has been sexually involved with Desdemona. As Othello is shown in a medium shot moving slowly toward a bench to sit, intermittent musical notes begin to play faintly underneath Othello's shocked physical and verbal reaction to Iago's claim. As Othello's epileptic seizure begins, the film audience is shown a three second medium shot of Cassio as he enjoys a sexual encounter with Desdemona while the musical notes gradually evolve into soft drum beats (see Figure 36). As the seizure begins to take hold, the audience continues to hear Othello's anguished gasps for air as close shots of Desdemona and Cassio in various

states of sexual intimacy are alternated with close shots of Othello's seizure (see Figure 37) in order to tie these images to Othello's thoughts. As the seizure builds in intensity, the audience sees close shots of legs, arms, and hands entwining and extreme close-up shots of the mouth, eyes, and tongue expressing physical desire (see Figure 38). The presence of these sensual images and the drum beats become more dominant as Othello's seizure reaches a climax. As these sensual images evolve into a climactic accelerated montage, Othello's hand reaches out desperately to cling to a nearby chain while the music comes to a climax in a muted tribal yell. Othello is finally overcome by the image of finding Desdemona "naked with her friend [Cassio] in bed [see Figure 39]," a narrative textual image that has haunted him throughout many of the previous scenes (Oth. IV.i.3). The depiction of a character's thoughts is not new to Shakespeare film since it was used rather frequently in silent film to visualize a character's dream or vision. However, only more recent Shakespeare films have begun to utilize American montage to visually illustrate a character's thoughts in a manner which preserves Shakespeare's imagetext.

An example of another cinematic device, referred to in this study as a flashback sequence, is found in Act I Scene III where Othello addresses the Senate. Other cinematic versions of Othello have filmed this scene in close



Figure 36. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Close shot of Cassio and Desdemona.



Figure 37. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Othello's seizure.



Figure 38. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Cassio and Desdemona kissing.



Figure 39. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Desdemona in bed with Cassio.

shots of Othello, with perhaps two or three reaction shots of Desdemona and/or the senators as they listen to Othello's tale of courtship. Parker films this scene in much the same way, with the abundant use of reaction shots and the flashback sequence being notable exceptions. Othello is first shown in a long shot which captures seven other characters behind him and places Othello theatrically in context within the Senate chamber (see Figure 40). When Othello admits that he has married Desdemona, three reaction shots of several senators and the Duke are shown (see Figures 41-42). The film audience is allowed to see the astonishment register on the senators' faces as they hear Othello's open admission of guilt. Although the camera moves closer to capture Othello in medium and close shots, the camera continues to cut to five additional reaction shots of the senators, creating a cinematic version of theatrical centripetality which utilizes the authority of narrative textual images to show the film audience that Othello's narrative text is indeed persuading the senators. As Othello continues to address the senators, Parker employs a flashback sequence, a visual reenactment of Othello's and Desdemona's courtship while Othello's verbal account of the story is heard in voice-over. The visual reenactment shows the circumstances under which Othello and Desdemona first meet (see Figure 43), reveals the coquettish, stolen glances between the two lovers (see Figure 44), and



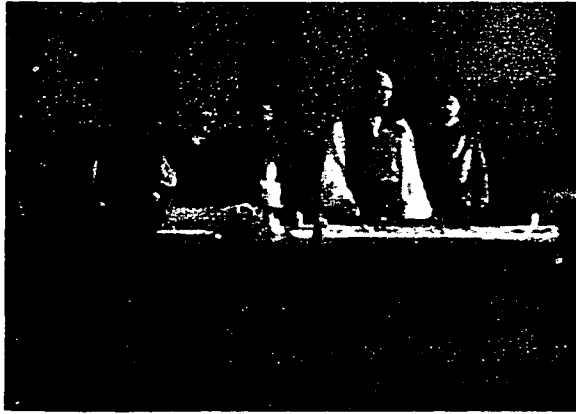


Figure 40. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Othello begins his tale of love  
before the Senate.

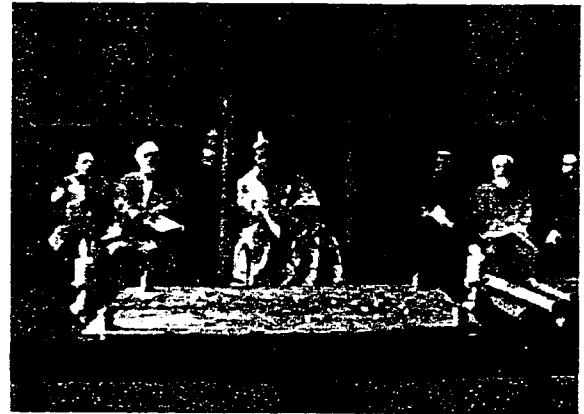


Figure 41. Parker's Othello (1995).  
The Duke and several senators  
listen to Othello's tale of love.



Figure 42. Parker's Othello (1995).  
The Duke and others listen to  
Othello's tale of love.



Figure 43. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Othello visits Brabantio at his house.



Figure 44. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Desdemona steals a glance at Othello.



Figure 45. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Desdemona and Othello kiss.

concludes with the romantic, tearful encounter where they express their love for each other in a kiss (see Figure 45). This flashback sequence maintains Shakespeare's imagetext through the combination of the visualization of Shakespeare's narrative textual images of Othello's courtship as seen on the screen and the verbal account of the courtship in Othello's narrative text as heard in voice-over. The two reaction shots of Brabantio that immediately follow the flashback sequence show the film audience that Othello's narrative text has been so moving as to transform the rage of Desdemona's father into subtle uncertainty.

Although the realistic mode has the strength of its use of historical location shots and the combination of theatrical and cinematic devices to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext, this mode of Shakespeare filmmaking does have several potential weaknesses. The realistic mode, in its attempt to be "realistic," tends to call attention to the poetic nature of Shakespeare's narrative text, making the text spoken by the actors seem out of place if the settings for the film are too modern. A filmmaker must carefully consider the choice of filming locations in order to maintain a level of historical distance acceptable to the modern film audience. Aware of this need to maintain an acceptable and accurate historical distance for the locations and set dressings used in his film, Parker instructed Tim Harvey, the production designer of the

film, to find locations that reflected the architectural style of 1570. To be certain that this time period would be reflected in the locations and set dressings chosen for the film, Harvey utilized contemporary Renaissance art for inspiration as he searched for structures, such as the castle of Bracciano, which served as the military structure of Cyprus. Parker and Harvey also realized "that in shifting the emphasis from the actors to actors-in-a-setting, one risks loss of focus" (Jorgens 10). These men endeavored to strike a delicate balance between the detail in the film's cinematography and the detail in the film's dramatic development in order to avoid obscuring the textual narrative of the play. Harvey stated:

The toughest challenge was to resist making the film into a pageant. I tried to cool the design, to avoid a flashy, eye-catching look that would jar with the intimate and internal nature of the film. Occasionally, the camera opens up to embrace a wider panorama, but we're not making a spectacle of those moments, because the focus is on the emotional developments of the characters. (othello.guide.com)

Another difficulty the realistic mode encounters while attempting to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext is the necessity to disguise or cut Shakespeare's narrative text to create a parallel between what the audience is seeing and what it is hearing. To maintain this parallel, Parker cut certain lines, not immediate to the understanding of the play's narrative, which contained language that sounded especially strange to the modern ear.

Parker worked three years to perfect his Othello screenplay, cutting away approximately eighteen hundred lines. Although Parker did trim away nearly as much text as Welles, he did not attempt to transpose the cut portions of Shakespeare's narrative text into modern text. The main motivation behind Parker's cutting of Shakespeare's narrative text was an attempt to clarify for the modern film audience the narrative force behind the drama of the play. Like Shakespeare silent filmmakers, Parker sacrificed some of the complexity of the play's web of relationships in favor of increasing the clarity of Shakespeare's textual narrative. Through his screenplay, Parker fashioned a film with more cinematic drive, making the action clear and the pace swift. Parker fine tuned the build to the climax of the play by moving some of the more climactic moments of Act III Scene III to Act IV. By doing this, Parker suited the climactic build to the sensibilities of his modern cinematic audience, just as Shakespeare had done in writing plays to suit his Renaissance theatre audience. Through these choices, Parker hoped to make Shakespeare's narrative text a little more accessible to the viewer who may lack previous knowledge of this play or of Shakespeare's language.

The study of Parker's Othello has illustrated three important points. The first is that the screenplays created for films using the realistic mode tend to be more respectful of Shakespeare's narrative text than films using

the filmic mode through careful attention to the cutting of the screenplay. The second point is that the realistic mode of Shakespeare filmmaking, like the filmic mode, uses various theatrical and cinematic devices to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext. Third, the realistic mode makes use of historical location shots and the combination of theatrical and cinematic devices to provide immediate communication with a modern film audience by illustrating Shakespeare's narrative text through his narrative textual images as did Shakespeare silent filmmakers.

The application of Jorgens' and Davies' theatrical, filmic, and realistic modes to the examination of three film versions of Othello reveals that the key to adapting the Shakespeare play to the screen lies in the marriage of theatre and cinema. Therefore, a delicate combination of theatrical devices (theatrical centripetality, visual motif, and the aside) and cinematic devices (cinematic centripetality, montage, flashback, and voice-over) must be achieved in order to convey Shakespeare's imagetext to the film audience. Davies suggested that "film is most successful in those moments when it works in line with the theatrical intention implicit in the original production" (Filming 11). Burge's and Dexter's Othello is a flawed film because some of the theatrical elements have not been captured cinematically, "because the camera focuses too often on only one character at moments when its exclusion

of peripheral response leaves the central action bare" (Davies, Filming 10). In contrast, Branagh's use of theatrical and cinematic devices in his filming of Henry V, Much Ado About Nothing, and Hamlet illustrates how a filmmaker can utilize the theatrical, filmic, and realistic modes of Shakespeare filmmaking to convey Shakespeare's imagetext to the modern film audience.

Branagh has used the theatrical centripetality of the theatrical mode in all of his Shakespeare films to cinematically capture the theatrical elements which must be preserved in certain scenes in order to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext. Examples of this use of theatrical centripetality can be found in three simple moving camera shots from Hamlet and Much Ado About Nothing. In Act III Scene II of Hamlet, the camera travels slowly forward towards Hamlet in a long shot as he gives acting advice to the players before their all important performance in front of his uncle and mother (see Figure 46). The film audience can see all the players within a single frame as they gather on all sides of Hamlet, listening and physically reacting to his final directions. In Act IV Scene V of Hamlet, Branagh uses a medium moving camera shot to show Ophelia from behind on the left side of the frame as she madly enters the State room once again. As she enters, the camera follows her towards Laertes, Claudius, and Gertrude, shown facing the camera on the right side of the frame, in order to allow the film audience to

simultaneously witness their physical and verbal reactions to her mad entrance (see Figure 47). In Act II Scene I of Much Ado About Nothing, Margaret, Leonato, Hero, Ursula, Antonio, and Beatrice are shown in a long shot as they enter the masquerade party. As the camera travels slowly backward, the film audience is able to see all characters' physical reactions and hear their jokes and laughter as Beatrice describes her idea of the perfect man while other party guests dance and frolic in the background and foreground of the shot (see Figure 48). The use of theatrical centripetality in this scene not only allows the film audience to see and hear the physical and verbal reactions of several characters to Beatrice's diatribe on men, but also allows it to get a larger sense of the joyful vibrancy of the numerous guests that surround the characters at the evening revel. Branagh has utilized these simple moving camera shots, along with several more complicated moving camera shots, to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext through cinematic adaptations of theatrical centripetality.

Several examples of Branagh's use of lengthy moving camera shots to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext through theatrical centripetality can be found in Hamlet. In the filming of a segment of Act II Scene II, Branagh uses an approximately two and a half minute moving steadicam shot to show Hamlet welcoming the players to Elsinore. Through the constant movement



Figure 46. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Hamlet gives advice to the players.



Figure 47. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Ophelia madly enters the State room.



Figure 48.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Beatrice describes the perfect man.



Figure 49. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Servants dress and serve Claudius.



Figure 50. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Royal couple march down the hall.

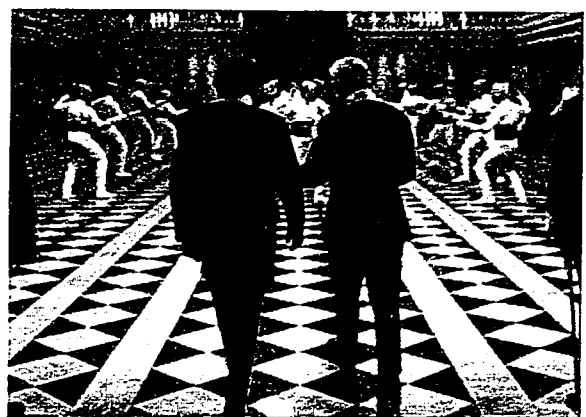


Figure 51. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Claudius enters the State room  
while talking with Polonius.



of the steadicam, the film audience is allowed to see and hear all the players' physical and verbal reactions to Hamlet's warm and energetic welcome as well as his attempt at a dramatic recitation. Another moving steadicam shot, nearly three minutes in length, is used in an earlier segment of the same scene as Claudius and Gertrude welcome Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to Elsinore. The film audience is allowed to see the physical relationship between the royal couple and their servants as they put the bedroom in order and dress the king and queen (see Figure 49). Within the same shot, the film audience is also allowed to see and hear Rosencrantz' and Guildenstern's physical and verbal reactions to the royal couple's request to watch over Hamlet in return for immense favors as they, and a myriad of servants, quit the bedroom and attend the royal couple down the hall towards the State room (see Figure 50). As Claudius and Gertrude briskly lead their entourage down the hall towards the State room, the film audience also gets a sense of the subtextual urgency within the narrative text of this scene. This subtextual development continues as Gertrude thanks Rosencrantz and Guildenstern for their willingness to look after her son and dismisses them with several servants to tend upon Hamlet, as Claudius continues down the hall with Polonius into the State room. Upon arriving in the State room, numerous men dressed in white fencing uniforms come to the conclusion their

practice, quickly dispersing as Claudius enters speaking with Polonius, and then Gertrude, about the troubled state of affairs between Denmark and Norway (see Figure 51). Another approximately two and a half minute circular steadicam shot is used in Act III Scene I to film the conversation between Claudius, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, Gertrude, and Polonius regarding the probable causes of Hamlet's distracted state of mind. Although this moving camera shot draws a distracting amount of attention to itself, it nevertheless uses theatrical centripetality to allow all characters to be seen and heard while the dizzy, circular motion of the camera filmicly reinforces the subtextual scheming and plotting within the narrative text of this scene. In a personal interview, Branagh stated that the three aforementioned scenes were filmed without the interruptions caused by transitions between various camera angles in order to preserve the "continuous flow of action" experienced by a theatre audience.

The moving camera is used again to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext through theatrical centripetality in Act I Scene II of Henry V, when the Archbishop of Canterbury tries to explain the Salic law to King Henry and his men. As he begins to relate the history behind the creation of the law, the archbishop steps to the left of the king and turns to address the assembly of men. The camera captures both the archbishop and King Henry in a medium

shot as the archbishop explains the French claim that "no woman can succeed in Salic land" (H5 I.ii.39). As the archbishop continues his discourse on the Salic law, he passes in front of the men sitting in a row of chairs to the king's left, the camera capturing the intent look of the men as each one listens to the speech (see Figure 52). Upon reaching the opposite side of the room, the archbishop announces that the Salic law cannot be applied to France; and therefore, cannot be used to bar Henry from the French throne. Upon making this announcement, the archbishop turns to directly face the king, hitting the documents that he has been reading with the back of his hand, creating a loud whack that causes all men to quickly snap their heads towards him in apprehension. The archbishop continues his forceful and persuasive speech while completing his circular route around the room, now crossing in front of the men sitting to the king's right. As the archbishop continues his speech, he makes eye contact with each man whom the film audience can only see from behind through the openings in the back of the bench. As the archbishop slowly passes by each of these men, the film audience sees an older, white-haired man nod in agreement with the archbishop and lean towards his neighbor on the left to comment on the speech (see Figure 53). As the archbishop continues to address these men, the film audience is allowed once again to see the reactions of the men seated across the room on the king's left

before he comes to the conclusion of his speech. Through the use of theatrical centripetality in this scene, the film audience sees the archbishop's persuasion register on the faces of King Henry's men, leading to a conviction that will later cause many of them to verbally persuade their king to wage war with France.

In the filming of the Saint Crispin's Day monologue from Act IV Scene III of Henry V, Branagh uses theatrical centripetality again to allow the film audience to see the effect of King Henry's speech upon his men. As Westmoreland expresses his wish to Exeter and Bedford "that we now had here / But one ten thousand of those men in England, / That do no work to-day," the camera cuts to a medium shot of King Henry approaching the gathered soldiers (H5 IV.iii.16-18). As the king asks "What's he that wishes so?", the camera cuts to a brief shot showing the reactions of Bedford, Exeter, and Westmoreland to his question (H5 IV.iii.18). As Henry assures Westmoreland and the other men that they should not be wishing anyone else to be there, the camera cuts to a long shot which captures Bedford, Exeter, and Westmoreland in the bottom foreground of the frame and King Henry in the right background of the frame (see Figure 54). The camera begins to move slowly with the men towards King Henry as he begins one of Shakespeare's most stirring speeches. Soon after Bedford, Exeter, and Westmoreland arrive

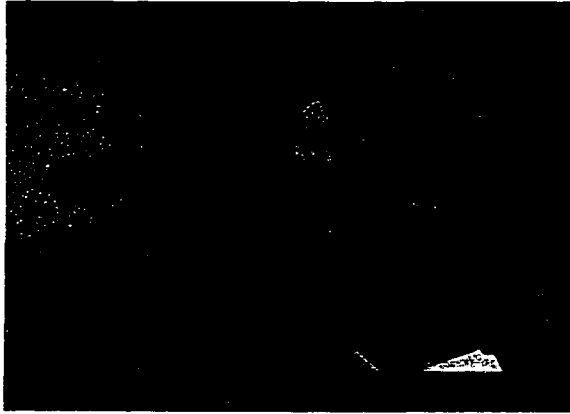


Figure 52.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
Archbishop speaks to the king's men.



Figure 53.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
Archbishop speaks to the king's men.



Figure 54.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
King's men walk toward King Henry.



Figure 55.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
Soldiers gather around their king.



Figure 56.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
Close shot of King Henry.



Figure 57.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
Medium shot of the king's soldiers.

close to the king, King Henry begins a slow progress to the right through his gathered soldiers toward a wagon of weapons, on which he will stand throughout the rest of his speech. As the camera continues to follow the king, the film audience sees the men also continue to follow him, completely drawn in by his persuasive argument and kingly presence (see Figure 55). Through the use of the moving camera, the film audience gradually feels as if it is one of the king's soldiers, following the king and listening to his moving speech. Once King Henry, his men, and the film audience have stopped moving, cinematic centrifugality is used in closer shots of the king and his men in order to bring the film audience into a more intimate contact with the characters and the action of the film (see Figures 56-57). As King Henry's speech nears its climactic conclusion, the dramatic background music becomes louder and more intense, aurally enhancing the subtextual danger and brotherhood within the narrative text of this scene in a very filmic manner. The filmic use of music to reinforce the emotional subtext of a scene is very commonly used in Branagh's Shakespeare films and has become a trademark in all of his films.

Branagh has used the cinematic centrifugality of the filmic mode in all his Shakespeare films to heighten suspense and to bring the film audience into a more intimate relationship with the characters on screen. One example

of Branagh's use of cinematic centrifugality to both heighten suspense and intimacy is found in the conversation between King Henry and Montjoy which takes place at the end of Act I Scene II of Henry V. Since Branagh has already established the setting and the physical relationship of the characters to each other within the setting, as illustrated in the previously examined segment which immediately precedes this scene, Branagh can bring the camera closer to the actors in order to allow the film audience to become more intimately involved in the drama of the scene. Although this scene is filmed mostly in medium shots, the camera cuts to a close-up of Montjoy when he states the dauphin's refusal to grant King Henry any dukedoms that he claims in the name of his ancestors (see Figure 58). The use of a close-up at this moment emphasizes the challenge within Montjoy's face as he speaks for the dauphin, bringing the film audience closer to the emotional confrontation of this scene. In turn, King Henry is also captured in a close-up which shows his controlled rage at the dauphin's message (see Figure 59). After a medium shot of the Duke of Exeter's unveiling of the dauphin's gift to King Henry of the tennis balls, the camera returns to the close-up of a seething king. The camera quickly cuts to medium shots of several of the king's men as they gaze intently at King Henry (see Figure 60), trying to gauge his reaction to the gift designed to indicate their king's youthful inability to rule. The rapid cuts

between reaction shots reveal the pressure placed on King Henry as everyone awaits his response. These rapid cuts also build suspense within the film audience as they wait for the response which will either gain King Henry the full respect and support of his men or make him a complete mockery. The camera returns to the close-up of the king in his seated position on his throne, a seated position which he has not left since he entered the room at the beginning of the scene. King Henry begins his reply to the dauphin in an extremely low tone of voice, showing a great deal of power and restraint in the suppression of his anger toward the dauphin's gift. After a brief close shot of the Duke of Exeter putting a tennis ball back in its box, the camera returns to King Henry in a medium shot as his reply to Montjoy increases in intensity and pace, bringing him out of his throne. As King Henry rises from his throne, his men jump to their feet in unison in a show of respect, strength, and support of their king's words (see Figure 61). King Henry takes several menacing steps toward Montjoy while continuing his threats to the dauphin. As King Henry nears the end of his response to the dauphin's gift, the camera moves in for a close shot of the king as he strides imperiously towards Montjoy. Standing firmly in the herald's face, King Henry commands that Montjoy be conveyed safely back to France with his message to the dauphin of a challenge to war.





Figure 58.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
Close-up of Montjoy.

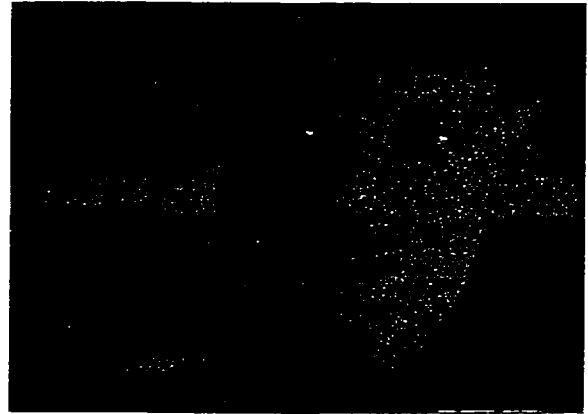


Figure 59.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
Close-up of King Henry.



Figure 60.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
King's men study the king's reaction.



Figure 61.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
King's men jump to their feet.

Another example of Branagh's use of cinematic centrifugality to both heighten suspense and intimacy is found in Act I Scene I of Hamlet when Horatio, Barnardo, and Marcellus encounter King Hamlet's ghost. Branagh uses his seventy millimeter format to great advantage at the beginning of the film to establish the environment of Elsinore through extreme long shots of the grounds surrounding Blenheim Palace, where most of the outdoor location shots were filmed (see Figure 62). After establishing the expansive and rather mysterious and foreboding environment around Elsinore, Branagh once again brings the camera closer to the actors in order to allow the film audience a more intimate relationship with the characters and the drama of this scene. All three men are shown at various angles in medium shots as they sit in a row by the palace gates speaking of previous sightings of the Ghost. Suddenly, the Ghost appears to the men and pursues them through the gates into the palace's inner courtyard. The moving camera is used during this pursuit in two point of view shots which show how the men see the Ghost as he follows them and how the Ghost sees the men as they back away through the palace gates. Several moving and still medium and long shots of the three men running across the inner courtyard are inserted between the point of view shots to remind the film audience of the characters' physical relationship to Elsinore and the Ghost before they reach the relative safety of

a low stone wall. During both of the men's attempts at conversation with the Ghost, the camera cuts rapidly between several still close and medium shots of the three men as they speak to each other and the Ghost (see Figure 63), long moving camera shots of the Ghost's point of view as he hovers above the three men (see Figure 64), and long moving camera shots of the Ghost as he is seen from the men's point of view (see Figure 65). The rapid cuts between these shots, combined with the dramatic background music, filmicly build the suspense that the film audience feels while watching the frightened men desperately plead with the Ghost to state his reason for appearing before them. Although it is clear that close shots using cinematic centrifugality are used most often in the filming of the two scenes just examined, these close shots only begin to dominate the filming of the action after several long shots have been used to establish the setting and the physical relationship of the characters within the setting.

Further examples of Branagh's use of theatrical centripetality at the beginning of scenes to establish the setting and the physical relationship of the characters within the setting can be found in each one of his Shakespeare films. In Act II Scene IV of Henry V, Branagh begins the scene with a close shot of King Charles VI of France handing a letter to a messenger. Gradually, the camera backs away from the king until the film audience begins to see the



Figure 62. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
The grounds of Elsinore at night.



Figure 63. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Medium shot of Horatio and  
Marcellus talking about the Ghost.



Figure 64. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Ghost's point of view shot.



Figure 65. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Men's point of view shot.



Figure 66.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
Charles VI with his men at court.



Figure 67.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Dogberry reviews the guards.

members of the French court within a royal chamber. The camera maintains its focus on the king in a long shot as it moves behind the king's men, seated in a large circle, as Charles consults with them regarding a response to King Henry's challenge to war (see Figure 66). Likewise, in Act III Scene III of Much Ado About Nothing, Branagh begins the scene with a still long shot which shows Dogberry and Verges as they prepare to review the watchmen who will be guarding Leonato's house (see Figure 67). In Act V Scene II of Hamlet, Branagh also begins the dueling segment of the scene with an extreme long shot of the State room which shows all the members of the royal court assembled to watch the fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes. Although Branagh commonly uses theatrical centripetality to establish the physical environment of the characters, he also frequently combines it with cinematic centrifugality in scenes where the physical and verbal reactions of both small and large groups must be captured on the screen.

Further examples of this mixture of cinematic centrifugality and theatrical centripetality are found in Branagh's approach to filming three scenes from Much Ado About Nothing. At the beginning of Act II Scene III, Branagh establishes the scene's setting through two long shots and a nearly one and a half minute circular steadicam shot of a musical interlude contained within Shakespeare's narrative text. As the musicians begin to

sing, the moving camera shows several servants as they carry baskets filled with greenery, fold and deliver the laundry, and tend the garden while their master, Leonato, sits near the courtyard fountain with Don Pedro and Claudio as all listen to the music (see Figures 68-69). As the camera continues to move around the fountain to show the physical reactions of the gentlemen and servants to the lyrical music, the realistic mode is employed to capture in the background of the frame the beauty of the Tuscan hills surrounding Villa Vignamaggio, where the entire film was shot. Therefore, when Benedick moves behind the high shrubbery that surrounds the courtyard after listening to the musicians, the film audience is already aware of his physical proximity to Don Pedro, Leonato, and Claudio as the scene continues. Upon hearing Don Pedro mention that Beatrice is in love with Benedick, Benedick is shown in long, medium, and close shots as he begins to spy on the conversation between the three men (see Figures 70-72). The scene continues to unfold in a series of alternating close or medium shots of Don Pedro, Leonato, and Claudio in the courtyard, conversing loudly of Beatrice's love for Benedick (see Figures 73-74), and the long, medium, and close shots of Benedick behind the shrubbery as he spies on the men from various points surrounding the courtyard. The film audience is drawn into the action not only through close, intimate shots of the characters, but also through the use of two shots which show Benedick's



Figure 68.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Servants work in the courtyard.

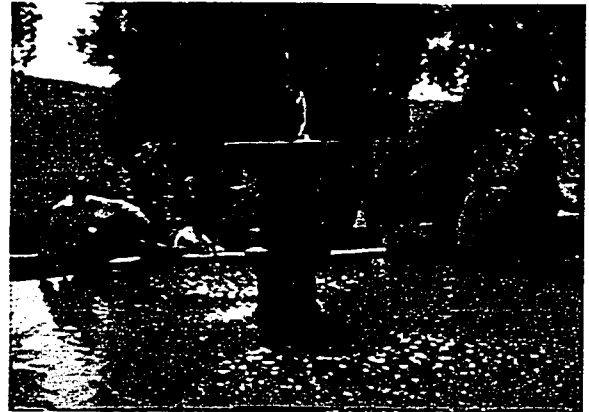


Figure 69.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Men listen to music in the courtyard.



Figure 70.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Long shot of Benedick.



Figure 71.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Medium shot of Benedick.



Figure 72.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Close shot of Benedick.



Figure 73.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Close shot of the three men.

point of view as he spies on the three men (see Figure 75) and Benedick's nonverbal aside to the camera when he hears that Beatrice "will do a desperate outrage to herself" as a result of her unrequited love for Benedick (see Figure 76) (Ado II.iii.134). Although medium and close shots of cinematic centrifugality are used for the majority of this scene, Branagh inserts three shots which use theatrical centripetality to remind the film audience of the characters' physical relationship to each other and to allow the film audience to witness simultaneously the physical and/or verbal reactions of each grouping (see Figure 77).

A similar mixture of cinematic centrifugality and theatrical centripetality is used in the filming of Act III Scene I which is shot in a different part of the same courtyard. Beatrice is shown in the center background of a long shot as she returns from asking Benedick to come in to dinner. Ursula and Hero are shown in the bottom foreground of the same shot as they loudly discuss Benedick's love for Beatrice in a manner that causes Beatrice to double back and follow the two women into a nearby sculptured garden. Upon approaching the women, Beatrice hides behind a decapitated statue in the center background of a long shot in which Ursula and Hero, in the foreground, extol the virtues of Benedick and his abiding love for Beatrice. The remainder of this scene alternates between long shots using theatrical





Figure 74.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Medium shot of the three men.

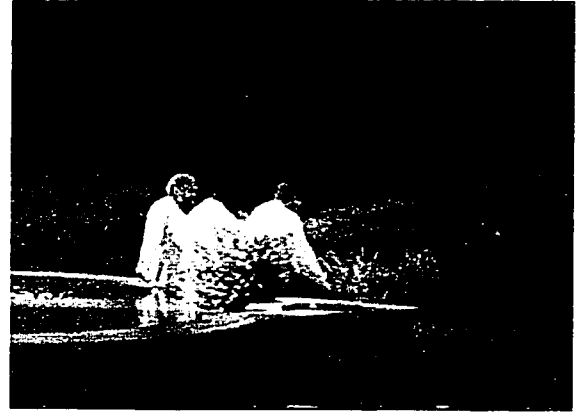


Figure 75.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Benedick's point of view shot.



Figure 76.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Benedick's aside to the film audience.



Figure 77.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Long shot of all four men.



Figure 78.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Long shot of all three women.



Figure 79.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Close shot of Hero and Ursula.

centripetality to show the physical reactions of all three women as Ursula and Hero speak of Benedick (see Figure 78), close shots using cinematic centrifugality to more intimately show either Ursula and Hero speaking to each other (see Figure 79) or Beatrice reacting to their words quietly behind the statue (see Figure 80), and point of view shots which show Beatrice's vantage point as she spies on Ursula and Hero (see Figure 81). A scene from Act IV Scene I also uses a mixture of these filming techniques to show Claudio's refusal to marry Hero just before they are to be wed. Cinematic centrifugality is used most often in shots which involve small groups of characters, such as the moments just before and after Claudio's break with Hero (see Figure 82). Theatrical centripetality is used to establish the setting at the beginning of the scene and to show the physical and verbal reactions of the entire crowd when Claudio breaks his engagement with Hero and accuses her of being a whore (see Figure 83).

In his approach to filming Act I Scene II of Hamlet, Branagh uses another combination of theatrical centripetality and cinematic centrifugality similar to those used in the previously examined scenes from Much Ado About Nothing. In Act I Scene II, Branagh once again uses his seventy millimeter format to establish the indoor court environment of Elsinore through extreme long shots of the State room in which the entire royal court is gathered to



Figure 80.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Beatrice hiding behind the statue.



Figure 81.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Beatrice's point of view shot.



Figure 82.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Cinematic centrifugality shot.



Figure 83.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Theatrical centripetality shot.

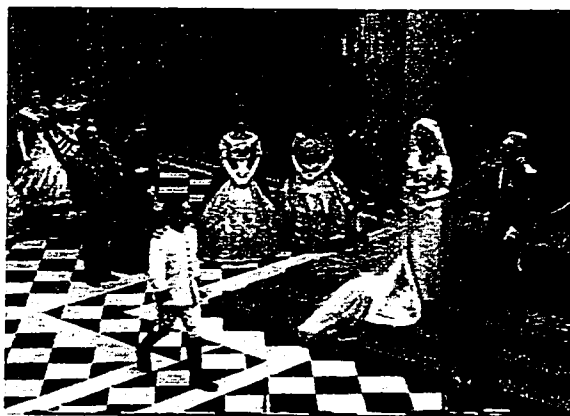


Figure 84. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Long shot of the State room.

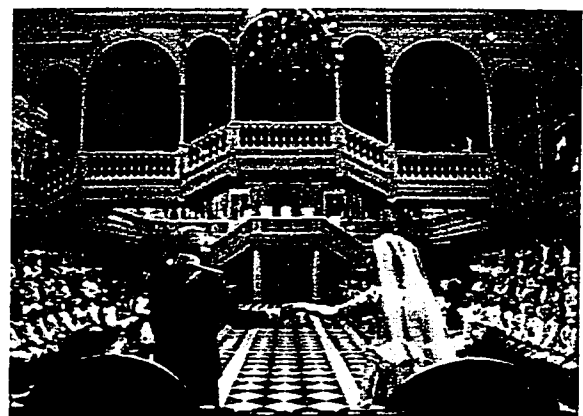


Figure 85. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Extreme long shot of the State room  
from behind Claudius and Gertrude.

celebrate the wedding of Queen Gertrude to Claudius, now the King of Denmark. Although Claudius and Gertrude are usually shown in a close, intimate shot as he addresses his court, the camera occasionally cuts to several longer shots to allow the film audience to see the physical reactions of the assembled crowd as they listen to Claudius. As Claudius speaks, the camera alternates between close shots of Claudius and Gertrude, long shots from the right which include Polonius, Ophelia, Laertes, and various royal attendants (see Figure 84), and extreme long shots which capture the entire State room from directly behind Claudius and Gertrude (see Figure 85). In addition, whenever the court applauds Claudius' speech, the camera cuts to extreme long shots from the right corner of the State room so that the film audience can see and hear the crowd's support of Claudius (see Figure 86). As the scene becomes more personal and intimate in nature, medium shots of Laertes, Polonius, Ophelia, and small groups within the court audience (see Figure 87) are used more frequently in order to show their physical reactions to Claudius' glowing treatment of Laertes as well as Hamlet's open defiance of his mother and uncle.

Two more innovative combinations of cinematic centrifugality and theatrical centripetality can also be found in scenes from Branagh's Henry V and Hamlet. In Act II Scene III of Henry V, Bardolph, Nym, Pistol, Mistress

Quickly, and the young boy are shown in a long shot sitting on a staircase in the Boar's Head Tavern shortly after Falstaff's death (see Figure 88). As Mistress Quickly relates her story of Falstaff's last moments of life to the men gathered around her, the camera begins to move towards Mistress Quickly until only her face can be seen on the screen (see Figure 89). The intimacy created by this gradual shift to close-up allows the film audience to become slowly engrossed in Mistress Quickly's sad tale of Falstaff's death. As Mistress Quickly nears the end of her monologue, she begins to sob and the other men reenter the conversation, relating humorous tales of Falstaff in order to keep themselves from sobbing as well. Mistress Quickly stifles her tears and joins in the banter as the camera moves back to its original long shot so that the film audience can once again see the entire group sitting on the staircase and hear their reminiscences of Falstaff before they must leave for battle. By filming the scene in this way, Branagh recreates on film the experience of a theatre audience through his combination of theatrical centripetality and cinematic centrifugality in this scene. Although a theatre audience would be able to look at the other characters during Mistress Quickly's monologue if desired, it is more likely that, because of the dramatic nature of this monologue, it would be focused entirely on Mistress Quickly. The moving camera in this scene functions as a kind of cinematic "spotlight,"

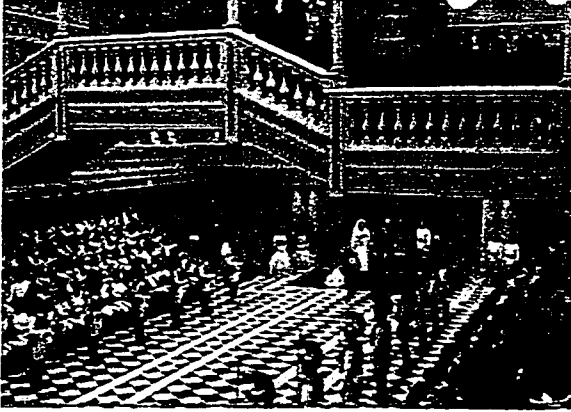


Figure 86. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Extreme long shot of the State room  
from in front of the royal couple.



Figure 87. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Members of the court audience listen  
to Hamlet's public outrage.



Figure 88.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
Peasants at the Boar's Head Tavern.



Figure 89.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
Mistress Quickly tells a sad story.



Figure 90. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Court applauds the royal  
couple's public kiss.



Figure 91. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Royal couple react to Hamlet's  
comments before the play.

similar to the theatrical technique, used to direct the film audience's focus to the appropriate actor(s) at the desired moments.

In his approach to filming Act III Scene III of Hamlet, Branagh uses voice-over in combination with theatrical centripetality and cinematic centrifugality to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext. Branagh establishes the scene's setting through two extreme long shots of the State room, which has been transformed into a staging area for the performance of The Murder of Gonzago. The first long shot captures Claudius and Gertrude in the foreground of the frame as they kiss and the raising of the chandelier in the center background of the frame before the camera tilts downward to capture the stage and the theatre audience as they applaud the royal couple's kiss (see Figure 90). The film audience also gets another long shot of the setting from behind Hamlet as he stands on the stage to welcome the theatre audience to the play. As Hamlet warms up the theatre audience with his manic comic routine with Claudius and Polonius, the reactions of Claudius and Gertrude (see Figure 91), Hamlet and Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Ophelia, and various other theatre audience members are shown in medium and close shots, thus bringing the film audience into a more intimate relationship with the characters and action of the scene. In the moments before the play begins, the camera shots consist almost entirely of

close and medium reaction shots of the previously mentioned characters to Hamlet's ravings about his mother's hasty marriage to his uncle. While Hamlet vocalizes his fury over his mother's unfaithfulness to his dead father, the camera focuses mainly on Hamlet and Ophelia as they are captured in close shots from three different angles (see Figure 92). However, the camera briefly cuts to nine reaction shots involving Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (see Figure 93), Claudius, Gertrude, Polonius, and various theatre audience members as well as one long shot of all of these characters during Hamlet's dialogue with Ophelia. While these reaction shots are shown, Hamlet's narrative text remains present through voice-over, allowing the film audience not only to hear his scathing attack on his mother's actions, but also to see the reactions of many people in the room to his public insults to his mother.

As the play begins, the camera gradually begins to focus as much on the reactions of the surrounding theatre audience to the narrative text of the scene as it does on the character(s) who speak the narrative text. Each time the camera shifts its visual focus from the speaking character(s) to the reactions of the theatre audience to the scene's narrative text, the text nevertheless remains ever present within the scene through the use of the voice-over. It is the use of the voice-over technique in this scene that makes it possible for the film audience to witness the drama of the scene through a





Figure 92. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Close shot of Ophelia and Hamlet  
talking before the plays begins.



Figure 93. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern react  
to Hamlet's open insults of Gertrude.



Figure 94. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Claudius' flashback memory of  
his brother's murder.



Figure 95. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Close-up of Hamlet forcing Claudius  
to face up to his murderous deed.



Figure 96. Branagh's Hamlet (1996).  
Extreme close-up of Claudius'  
fearful reaction to the play.

cinematic adaptation of theatrical centripetality, allowing the film audience to see a character's reaction to Shakespeare's narrative text while simultaneously allowing the film audience to hear the character's verbal subtextual coloring of Shakespeare's narrative text. As Hamlet's tension builds as the poisoning scene approaches, the cutting between shots also becomes more rapid and eventually dramatic music begins to play, assisting in the building of suspense towards the dramatic climax of this scene. As Claudius is forced to confront the memory of the fratricide he committed, several brief flashback shots of the visual reenactment of King Hamlet's death throes in the orchard (see Figure 94) are inserted among the close reaction shots of Hamlet (see Figure 95), Ophelia, Gertrude, Claudius, and Polonius. The rapid cutting between numerous close reaction shots and three flashback shots of King Hamlet's agonizing death continues to build until Claudius' fear is shown in extreme close-up (see Figure 96) just before he stands and calls for more light, thus ending the performance of the play.

As in many of the previously examined scenes, Branagh uses theatrical centripetality in Act III Scene III to establish the setting and the character's relationship to each other within the setting, and cinematic centrifugality to heighten suspense through rapid editing and to bring the film audience into a more intimate relationship with the characters on screen through medium

and close shots. However, the filming of this scene is unique in its use of the voice-over in combination with theatrical centripetality and cinematic centrifugality to preserve Shakespeare's imagetext by allowing the film audience to see the physical reactions of the characters while hearing the character's vocal coloring of the narrative text in voice-over. This voice-over technique has been used quite frequently in Shakespeare film in order to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext for the film audience and will be examined further in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Voice-over

As the examination of Branagh's approach to filming Act III Scene III of Hamlet has shown, modern film may have, however unwittingly, provided one solution to the problem of maintaining Shakespeare's imagetext through its use of the voice-over. Mitchell felt that the voice-over technique in film served as an excellent image/text "suturing" device to create imagetext, as illustrated in his examination of voice-over in Sunset Boulevard. Voice-over can also be used in a Lacanian fashion by simultaneously showing a character's body language and aural discourse in a manner that reveals the character's true message through preserving Shakespeare's imagetext. Through the analysis of voice-over in several Shakespeare films, this chapter will determine how modern film has used the voice-over to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext. In all film scenes to be analyzed, the verbal elements will be examined in terms of the utilization of Shakespeare's narrative text as heard in the voice-over, and the visual elements will be examined in terms of the filmmaker's incorporation of Shakespeare's narrative textual images to create the pictures which accompany the voice-over on the screen. Although numerous voice-over techniques have been used in Shakespeare film, only the six voice-over techniques described below will be

examined in this chapter since they are the only categories in which the voice-over of Shakespeare's narrative text is heard in spoken or musical form.

For the purposes of this study, the voice-over has been divided into six categories: 1) the cerebral voice-over heard as the inner thoughts or memories of the character while his/her reaction to these thoughts or memories are shown on the screen, 2) the active voice-over heard as dialogue while the actions or reactions of one or more characters are shown on the screen, 3) the narrative voice-over heard as narration, dialogue, or musical lyrics while supporting images are shown on the screen, 4) the descriptive voice-over heard as narration or dialogue while supporting images of a character's thoughts or memories are shown on the screen, 5) the deceptive voice-over heard as dialogue while showing an image on the screen which is in direct opposition to the voice-over dialogue, and 6) the spacial voice-over heard as dialogue while a cross-cutting image of a separate location is shown on the screen. It would be beneficial to study these six voice-over techniques in all available Shakespeare films. However, the voice-over techniques of Branagh, Loncraine, Luhrmann, Olivier, Nunn, Parker, Polanski, Welles, and Zeffirelli have been chosen for examination in this chapter because these directors made unique choices which had a direct impact on how the voice-over was used to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext.

Olivier has been given credit for being the first Shakespeare film director to use the voice-over in Shakespeare film productions. Olivier saw the power of the cinema to present a character's thoughts or memories in ways that are not possible on the stage. Therefore, Olivier uses cerebral voice-over in his first Shakespeare film, Henry V (1944), to voice Falstaff's memory of King Henry V's rejection of his further company in a variation of Act V Scene V from Henry IV Part II. This scene, inserted after Henry's triumphant arrival in Southampton, begins with the image of Mistress Quickly comforting and caring for a sick Falstaff who is lying in bed. Shortly after Mistress Quickly withdraws from the bedchamber, Falstaff sits up in bed and speaks aloud to the dream-like memory of his conversation with King Henry soon after his father's death. King Henry's response to Falstaff is soon heard in voice-over as Falstaff sits still and straight, listening in horror to his memory of the king's abrupt and cruel termination of their friendship (see Figure 97). Falstaff's memory of his friend's insulting parting remarks ends as King Henry's voice-over concludes and Falstaff slumps back into his bed, soon to die of sorrow.

Branagh can be given credit for the resurgence of interest in Shakespeare film productions within recent years. Branagh admired the work of great Shakespeare film directors of the past and present and also saw

the power of the cinema to present a character's thoughts or memories in ways that are not possible on the stage. Therefore, Branagh adds a new dimension to the cerebral voice-over, fine tuning this voice-over technique to increase its ability to communicate Shakespeare's narrative text to modern film audiences. In Henry V, Branagh films King Henry's rejection of Falstaff's friendship as a flashback sequence which moves Pistol and the film audience through time from a scene towards the end of Act II Scene I to a memory of the past. Pistol is shown on the screen looking into the distance as he remembers the last time he saw Falstaff healthy and happy. Falstaff is gradually heard laughing and shouting in voice-over as Pistol peers more closely into the distance, beginning to laugh along with his memory of the laughing Falstaff. When the volume of Falstaff's laughter reaches its peak, the film audience is transported with Pistol into the past, a variation of a scene from Act V Scene V of Henry IV Part II (see Figure 98). This scene serves as Pistol's memory of Falstaff's last meeting with King Henry which begins joyfully, but ends on a note of tragic finality as the king leaves his tavern friends behind forever. The termination of King Henry's friendship with Falstaff is represented in the voice-over of the king's last thought, "I know thee not, old man," as he regards Falstaff coldly near the conclusion of this flashback sequence (see Figure 99) (2H4 V.v.47). Although Falstaff



Figure 97.  
Olivier's Henry V (1989).  
Falstaff remembers king's rejection.



Figure 98.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
Flashback of Falstaff at the tavern.



Figure 99.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
King Henry mentally rejects Falstaff.



Figure 100. Olivier's Henry V (1944).  
King Henry gazes about the field.



Figure 101. Olivier's Henry V (1944).  
King Henry gazes at the sunrise.



Figure 102. Olivier's Hamlet (1948).  
Hamlet wanders the court chamber  
in solitary thought.



cannot hear Henry's last thought, he can see the rejection on his friend's face which causes him to back away from King Henry and hang his head in sorrow.

Olivier once again uses cerebral voice-over in two scenes from Hamlet (1948) and Henry V. In Act III Scene III of Hamlet, cerebral voice-over is used to voice Hamlet's thoughts when he must remain undetected by Claudius while he is praying for forgiveness for the murder of his brother. Hamlet is shown moving quietly about the chamber as his "silent" debate about whether or not to kill Claudius at that time of religious confession is heard in voice-over. The cerebral voice-over is also used to voice the thoughts of King Henry in his soliloquy from Act IV Scene I of Henry V. The film audience hears King Henry's thoughts about the responsibility of being a king in voice-over while watching him gaze about the field (see Figure 100), on the soldier sleeping next to him, and finally, on the rising sun in the distance (see Figure 101). Although the image of the sunrise is stunning to view, the majority of the visual images in this scene are very static and uninteresting. Olivier purposely chose to utilize these static images in the filming of this scene in order to deemphasize the visual images, forcing the film audience to pay more attention to King Henry's narrative text in the voice-over. This filming approach, like Olivier's approach to filming Act III Scene III of Hamlet, does allow the film audience to hear the emotional texture of King Henry's voice in

voice-over as well as see his facial expressions which spring from his thoughts as heard in voice-over. However, unlike his approach to filming Act III Scene III of Hamlet, Olivier's choice to utilize static images in this scene creates a rift between Shakespeare's narrative text and his narrative textual images. Since Olivier chooses to focus more on the narrative text of Act IV Scene I of Henry V than on the narrative textual images of this scene, he fails to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext. As a result of this failure, an essential element of dramatic development is lost in this otherwise very dramatic and moving scene.

In Hamlet, Olivier further develops the cerebral voice-over in a scene which uses direct speech in combination with voice-over to express a character's thoughts. In the "Oh that this too too solid flesh would melt" soliloquy, the film audience not only hears Hamlet's thoughts about his mother's hasty marriage to his uncle in voice-over, but also hears certain thoughts expressed in direct speech as well (Ham. I.ii.129). Throughout this scene, direct speech is usually employed when Hamlet is overcome by a heightened emotional state, the narrative text of the voice-over suddenly transforming into direct speech in an abrupt manner similar to the experience of many people outside of the film world. Olivier also allows Hamlet to move about the court chamber, his emotions not only resulting in direct speech, but

also carrying him out of his chair and around the chamber (see Figure 102). Likewise, Polanski uses cerebral voice-over to voice Macbeth's secretive, scheming thoughts to reveal his true inner nature to the film audience in Act I Scene III of Macbeth (1971). Macbeth is shown moving about his tent as he reflects on the implications of his recent political advancement. In a mixture of voice-over and direct speech, Macbeth chides himself for lacking the courage to murder the king in order to make the witches' predictions come true (see Figure 103). By adding these moments of direct speech and physical action to the filming of these scenes, Olivier and Polanski are able to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext.

Several other Shakespeare filmmakers have also experimented with unique applications of cerebral voice-over which maintain Shakespeare's imagetext. Zeffirelli uses cerebral voice-over to voice the contents of a letter in Act IV Scene V of Hamlet (1990). Hamlet is shown reading a letter as Claudius speaks several lines from the end of Act IV Scene IV in voice-over. The use of Claudius' voice-over to represent Hamlet's thoughts as he silently reads the letter reveals to the film audience that Claudius wrote this letter which condemns Hamlet to death upon his arrival in England. Loncraine uses cerebral voice-over to reveal the contents of Richard III's dream in Act V Scene III of Richard III (1995). Richard III is shown sleeping restlessly while the

voices of all of the people he has killed are heard tormenting him in voice-over. In Act I Scene V of Macbeth, Polanski uses cerebral voice-over to voice Lady Macbeth's secretive, scheming thoughts to reveal her true inner nature to the film audience. Lady Macbeth is shown standing atop her castle, coolly observing the approach of the king. As the king approaches, her thoughts are heard in voice-over crying out for the assistance of evil spirits to prepare her for the foul deeds she plans to commit (see Figure 104). Later, as Lady Macbeth hurries down the castle stairs to welcome the king to her home, her mental preparation for the heinous crime she will soon commit to place her husband and herself on Scotland's throne is heard in voice-over. By using voice-over to reveal Lady Macbeth's murderous thoughts, the film audience is afforded a feeling of intimacy with Lady Macbeth since the film audience knows more about her than do most of the film characters.

Parker adds a new visual dimension to the cerebral voice-over in his filming of Act III Scene III of Othello. Othello wakes from a dream in which he discovered Cassio and Desdemona making love in his bed. As Othello is shown physically struggling to reassure himself of Desdemona's faithfulness (see Figure 105), his memory of Brabantio's warning from Act I Scene III that Desdemona may fool him, just as she had fooled her father, is heard in voice-over. This cerebral voice-over technique is used as a transition into Othello's



Figure 103.  
Polanski's Macbeth (1971).  
Macbeth chides his own cowardice.



Figure 104.  
Polanski's Macbeth (1971).  
Lady Macbeth plots to kill Duncan.



Figure 105. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Othello fears Desdemona  
has been unfaithful to him.



Figure 106. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Othello recalls Brabantio's warning  
that Desdemona may fool him.



Figure 107. Olivier's Hamlet (1948).  
Marcellus suddenly senses  
the Ghost's presence.



Figure 108. Olivier's Hamlet (1948).  
Hamlet overhears Polonius' advice to  
Claudius and Gertrude.

aural and visual memory of Brabantio as he gave Othello this parting warning in the Senate chamber (see Figure 106). This use of cerebral voice-over in any scene is very Lacanian in nature since it allows the film audience to see the body language of a character on the screen while simultaneously hearing the aural coloring of the narrative discourse in the voice-over.

Branagh also uses this Lacanian technique in all of his Shakespeare films to preserve Shakespeare's imagetext through a combination of Shakespeare's narrative text and physical gesture. In a radio interview, Branagh described how he translates Shakespeare's textual meaning for a modern film audience unfamiliar with Shakespeare's language:

you can be relatively simple in having her [Ophelia] have a prayer book that she's looking at . . . and have Hamlet in the way [he says] "in thy orisons" . . . with some sort of gesture towards it, so that the audience will pick up or intuit, if you like, a great deal of what is going on, even though they may not necessarily get the meaning of every line. . . . there's a line in the full version . . . "for in the fatness of these percy times" . . . in the context of that scene, you just color the line with your own sense of what "in the fatness of these percy times" [means] . . . the audience is going to get some sense that Hamlet's using the word "percy" with some ironic coloring, and in the context of other lines, they will understand. (Branagh, Fresh Air)

Branagh's description clearly illustrates how the use of Lacanian techniques in filmmaking maintains Shakespeare's imagetext, allowing for a more complete dramatic development of any scene which takes full advantage of this technique.

Active voice-over has been discussed in chapter four in an examination of Act I Scene III of Welles' Othello when Othello's description of his courtship of Desdemona reverts to voice-over while physical reaction images of Desdemona and the Venetian senate are shown on the screen (see Figures 27-29). Olivier uses active voice-over for the first time in his second Shakespeare film, Hamlet. In Act I Scene I of Hamlet, Barnardo's dialogue is heard in active voice-over while the camera moves closer to Marcellus in a halting, pulsating movement, capturing on screen his horrified reaction to the presence of King Hamlet's ghost (see Figure 107). By allowing the camera to follow the immediate visual action of interest while retaining the narrative text of the scene in voice-over, a cinematic adaptation of theatrical centripetality is created which allows the film audience to witness two events occurring simultaneously, similar to the experience of a theatre audience. Olivier also uses active voice-over in Act II Scene II where Polonius, Claudius, and Gertrude are shown discussing their decision to plan a meeting between Hamlet and Ophelia in order to determine if his love for her is the cause of his current madness. As this dialogue continues, the camera cuts to a shot which captures Polonius, Claudius, and Gertrude in the right background of the shot, and Hamlet in the left foreground of the shot as he overhears their discussion (see Figure 108). The dialogue between Polonius, Claudius, and Gertrude

gradually reverts into voice-over as the camera follows Hamlet as he slowly retreats from his hidden position behind a pillar. The voice-over continues as Hamlet sneaks quietly toward an entrance into the court chamber, which is a distance from where he originally overheard the discussion, and prepares to enter the chamber as if he has not overheard the conversation. By utilizing active voice-over to create a cinematic adaptation of theatrical centripetality in the filming of these two scenes, Olivier uses Shakespeare's imagetext to bridge a commonly perceived gap between the theatrical experience of a play and the cinematic experience of a film.

Zeffirelli and Branagh also use active voice-over to maintain theatrical centripetality in their filming of Hamlet, Henry V, and Much Ado About Nothing. In Act I Scene III of Hamlet, Hamlet is intermittently shown on a high walkway of the castle as he observes the conversations between Polonius and Laertes, and Polonius and Ophelia which take place on the castle grounds below him. When the camera isn't focusing on Laertes', Ophelia's, and Polonius' physical reactions during their conversations, the camera reveals Hamlet's reactions to Polonius', Laertes', and Ophelia's conversations while their dialogue continues in voice-over. In Act III Scene III of Henry V, Branagh uses active voice-over to reveal the physical reactions of Henry's soldiers and the people of Harfleur to his brutal threats to the Governor of



Harfleur. Henry is shown in high angle extreme long and medium shots as he begins his final demand for Harfleur's surrender. As Henry continues his vicious verbal attack on the governor, his dialogue reverts to voice-over as the camera cuts to numerous reaction shots of Henry's soldiers, the people of Harfleur, and the governor. Several moving and still medium reaction shots of Henry's soldiers are inserted into the visual action as they listen in horrified awe to their king's violent threats (see Figure 109). Another long reaction shot reveals the terrified people of Harfleur as they slowly creep out from behind their city's walls to look at Henry and listen to his frightening speech (see Figure 110). Several low angle reaction shots of the governor are also inserted into the visual action to show his gradual loss of composure as Henry's brutal threats build to a climax. In Act V Scene I of Much Ado About Nothing, Borachio, Conrade, and one of the watchmen are shown in a close shot as Borachio confesses to Leonato the part he played in his plot with Don John and Conrade to make Claudio and Don Pedro believe that Hero was an unchaste woman. As Borachio continues his confession in voice-over, the camera cuts to a close shot of Don Pedro and Claudio, showing both of their stunned physical reactions to this news. As Claudio slowly realizes that this deception has caused him to play a major role in Hero's resulting "death," the camera moves closer to Claudio to capture his tearful sorrow in close up.

Olivier's, Zeffirelli's, and Branagh's approaches to the filming of the five scenes just examined are examples of how active voice-over can be used in combination with theatrical centripetality to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext.

Olivier further develops the active voice-over in two scenes which incorporate a point of view shot, the camera serving as the "eyes" of the character heard in voice-over, while the reactions of others to the character speaking in voice-over are shown on the screen. An example of this active voice-over technique is found in Act III Scene II of Olivier's Hamlet. As the scene opens, Hamlet is heard in voice-over as he directs the players during a rehearsal of The Murder of Gonzago while the actor whom Hamlet is addressing is shown on the screen as he is seen through Hamlet's eyes (see Figure 111). The camera slowly backs away from the actor that Hamlet is directing in voice-over until a cut to a shot from another angle shows Hamlet perched on the edge of a chair as he continues to share his treatise on acting with the entire theatrical troupe. In Act III Scene IV, Hamlet is shown in profile on the floor of his mother's bedchamber, talking to something the film audience cannot see just before the camera cuts to a long frontal shot of Hamlet, the view of Hamlet as seen through the "eyes" of King Hamlet's ghost (see Figure 112). The camera holds this long shot of Hamlet as the Ghost is



Figure 109.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
Medium shot of the king's soldiers.



Figure 110.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
Long shot of citizens of Harfleur.



Figure 111. Olivier's Hamlet (1948).  
Hamlet's point of view shot as he  
gives advice to the actors.



Figure 112. Olivier's Hamlet (1948).  
Ghost's point of view shot as he  
speaks with Hamlet.



Figure 113. Luhrmann's  
Romeo and Juliet (1996).  
Juliet's point of view shot.



Figure 114.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
Benedick's point of view shot.

heard once again in voice-over, urging Hamlet to revenge his wrongful death. The camera shifts to capture Gertrude, seated on her bed, as she gazes at Hamlet in astonishment. The Ghost is heard again in voice-over as he tells Hamlet to inform his mother of his presence in the room. Later, as the Ghost leaves the bedchamber, the camera backs away from Hamlet, exiting behind the portal in the manner that Hamlet describes in his desperate parting shouts to his father's ghost.

This active voice-over technique is also used in scenes from Luhrmann's Romeo and Juliet (1996), and Branagh's Much Ado About Nothing. In Act III Scene II of Luhrmann's Romeo and Juliet, Juliet is briefly captured in the lower left portion of the screen, gazing at the religious figures that cover the walls of her bedroom, as Juliet's sorrowful thoughts about Romeo's murder of Tybalt begin in voice-over. As Juliet's voice-over continues, the camera abruptly cuts to a low angle shot of Juliet's statue of the Virgin Mary, the camera momentarily becoming Juliet's "eyes" as she looks upon this religious symbol for support in her present time of need (see Figure 113). In Act I Scene I of Branagh's Much Ado About Nothing, Benedick and Claudio are shown in a medium shot as they discuss the various merits of Hero and Beatrice. As their comparison of each woman's beauty continues in voice-over, the camera momentarily cuts to a low angle medium shot of Hero and

Beatrice, which shows the men's point of view as the women physically react to the gazing eyes of the men (see Figure 114). Likewise, in Act II Scene III of Branagh's Much Ado About Nothing, Benedick is shown in a close shot as he turns his face towards the direction of some faint laughter in order to determine who is approaching. The camera momentarily cuts to a long shot of Don Pedro and one of Claudio's arms to show Benedick's point of view as he watches Don Pedro smell a rose. The camera returns to the close shot of Benedick as he identifies these men by saying, "Ha, the prince and Monsieur Love!" (Ado II.iii.30-31). The camera once again returns to the long shot from Benedick's point of view, which now shows Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato looking in his direction, as Benedick is heard in voice-over expressing his desire to avoid the company of these men by hiding from them. The use of this active voice-over technique in these scenes not only maintains Shakespeare's imagetext in a very Lacanian fashion, but also involves the film audience in the dramatic action of the scene by showing the scene through the "eyes" of one of the characters.

Narrative voice-over functions well in Shakespeare film as a result of its natural ability to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext. An example of narrative voice-over is found in the narration of the Chorus throughout Olivier's Henry V. Once the presence of the Chorus is introduced and accepted

by the film audience, "the film settles into a straightforward and conventional suturing of voice and image" (Mitchell, Picture 101-02). At the beginning of Act II of Olivier's Henry V, the Chorus is shown on the Renaissance theatre stage in front of a scenic oceanside drop curtain as he verbally begins to shift the action to Southampton and then to France. As he continues his narrative prologue, the Chorus slowly backs away from the camera until he completely disappears from the screen. The Chorus' narrative prologue remains present in voice-over while images supporting it appear on the screen, transporting the film audience from England and the world of theatre to Southampton, then France and the world of film. In this scene, the narrative voice-over maintains Shakespeare's imagetext through the use of Shakespeare's narrative textual images to illustrate the voice-over of Shakespeare's narrative text.

Two more examples of narrative voice-over are found in the narrative prologues of Olivier's Hamlet and Luhrmann's Romeo and Juliet. In Hamlet, Olivier uses a long literary reference in the opening of the film, a device reminiscent of Thanouser's King Lear. The prologue of this film begins with an overhead extreme long shot of Elsinore castle. The image of Elsinore is soon replaced by the image of a piece of literature (not taken from Hamlet) which is read to the film audience by Olivier in voice-over:

So oft it chances in particular men  
That through some vicious mole of nature in them,  
By the o'ergrowth of some complexion  
Oft breaking down the pales and forts of reason,  
Or by some habit grown too much; that these men -  
Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,  
Their virtues else - be they as pure as grace,  
Shall in the general censure take corruption  
From that particular fault. (Olivier, Ham.).

As the voice-over of this literary text reaches a conclusion, the image of the text is crossfaded with the image of the dead Hamlet at the top of Elsinore castle, hoisted to shoulder height by several men who carry the body in state (see Figure 115). During this crossfade from the written textual image to the image of the dead Hamlet, Olivier states in voice-over that, "This is the tragedy of a man who could not make up his mind" (Olivier, Ham.). Once the crossfade of the image and the voice-over is concluded, the camera cuts to another overhead extreme long shot of Elsinore, showing the dead Hamlet carried by several men until this image dissolves and the action of the play begins. This approach to the introduction of a Shakespeare film seems to have inspired Welles' and Nunn's use of original, non-Shakespearean narrative in the opening prologues of their respective films of Othello and Twelfth Night.

In the opening sequence of Luhrmann's Romeo and Juliet, the narrative prologue of the play is heard in voice-over while images supporting the voice-

over are shown on the screen. Excerpts from Shakespeare's narrative prologue to this play are shown on the screen in the form of written text and various newspaper headlines while the corresponding prologue is spoken in voice-over. Magazine covers and articles are shown depicting the images of family members (see Figure 116) and the visual witnesses of these families' violent hatred toward each other. Visual images of the grief-stricken Montague and Capulet parents are intercut with the images of fire, street violence, guns, and police squadrons (see Figure 117). Written text and visual images are carefully placed in sync with the voice-over prologue so that the background of the Shakespeare film can be easily understood. These colorful textual and visual images are also rapidly cut and edited together in order to hold the focus of the young film viewers that this film has targeted as its main audience. The use of narrative voice-over as a narrative transitional device between scenes by characters such as the Chorus in Henry V or as a prologue to briefly introduce or move the film's narrative to its starting point, as in Hamlet and Romeo and Juliet, are only two of the ways this voice-over technique has been used to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext.

Shakespeare filmmakers have also experimented with two different versions of narrative voice-over which maintain Shakespeare's imagetext through its use of narrative dialogue. One such use of narrative voice-over





Figure 115. Olivier's Hamlet (1948).  
Hamlet's body carried in state.



Figure 116. Luhrmann's  
Romeo and Juliet (1996).  
Newspapers tell about the families.



Figure 117. Luhrmann's  
Romeo and Juliet (1996).  
Street violence and police squadrons.



Figure 118. Olivier's Henry V (1944).  
Wild children without education.

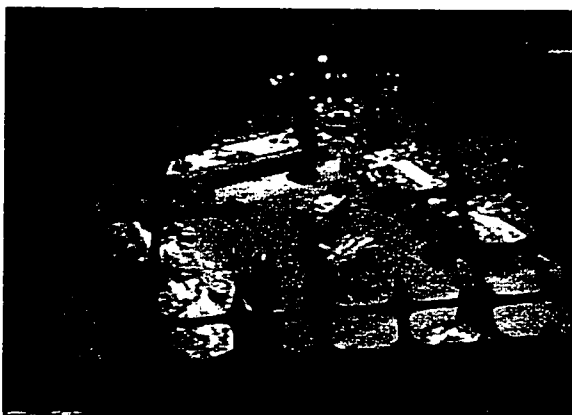


Figure 119.  
Zeffirelli's Hamlet (1990).  
Claudius' drunken feast.



Figure 120. Olivier's Hamlet (1948).  
Hamlet's adventures at sea  
on the way to England.

from Act II Scene I of Parker's Othello was examined in chapter four when Iago commends and encourages Cassio's and Desdemona's flirtatious behavior in voice-over while the image of their animated conversation is shown in the reflection of Iago's knife (see Figure 30). Olivier was the first Shakespeare filmmaker to use this narrative voice-over technique in his filming of Henry V. In Act V Scene II, the Duke of Burgundy moves to a nearby window before commencing his arbitration between the Kings of England and France, referring to the decay that has swept through France as a result of the recent war. As the duke looks out the window, the camera follows his gaze to show the decimated landscape that he continues to describe in voice-over. The overgrown vines and hedges, the untouched weeds which choke out the flowers, and the children growing wild from the lack of education (see Figure 118) are shown on screen as the duke refers to each image in his narrative dialogue as heard in voice-over. This narrative voice-over technique is also used in two scenes from Zeffirelli's Hamlet. In Act I Scene IV, Hamlet, Horatio, Barnardo, and Marcellus are shown on the screen as they momentarily pause in their progress towards the top of Elsinore castle to witness Claudius' nightly drunken feast. As the image of this feast remains on the screen, Hamlet commiserates with his companions in voice-over about how Denmark's tradition for drunken revelry stains the country's

reputation (see Figure 119). Likewise, in Act II Scene II, Claudius, Polonius, and Gertrude are shown in a large court chamber as they discuss Hamlet's madness. Gertrude's response to Claudius and Polonius which refers to Hamlet's daily habit of wandering about the court chamber madly reading a book reverts to voice-over while the supporting image of Hamlet making a great show of madness while reading a book is shown on the screen.

The second version of narrative voice-over is used when the director wishes to transport the film's action into the past and is generally referred to as a flashback sequence. This technique has been discussed in chapter four in an examination of Act I Scene III of Parker's Othello, when Othello relates the story of his courtship of Desdemona in voice-over to the Venetian senate while the flashback images supporting the story are shown on the screen (see Figures 43-45). Another example of this narrative voice-over flashback sequence is found in Act IV Scene VI of Olivier's Hamlet. The flashback sequence begins by showing Horatio inside a hallway of Elsinore castle as he opens a letter and begins to read. As he reads, the film audience begins to hear the voice of Hamlet in voice-over. The use of Hamlet's voice-over reveals that the letter is from Hamlet and relates the contents of the letter while the flashback images supporting Hamlet's story of his adventure at sea are shown on the screen (see Figure 120). Likewise, in Act IV Scene VII of

Olivier's Hamlet, melancholy music plays in the background as Ophelia is shown slowly wandering down an arched hallway until she disappears around a corner. At this point, the camera follows Ophelia's path down this same hallway until it halts in a long shot of the arched doorway through which Ophelia must have exited. This shot of the doorway gradually crossfades to a shot of a river as Gertrude's story of Ophelia's death is heard in voice-over while the flashback images supporting the story continue to be shown on the screen (see Figure 121). Zeffirelli also uses a flashback sequence in his filming of Act IV Scene VII, but Zeffirelli frequently cuts between the flashback images of Ophelia at the river (see Figure 122) and the present images of Gertrude's physical reactions as she tells the story in order to allow the film audience to witness the images of Ophelia at the river as well as Gertrude physically overcome by sadness during her story.

This narrative voice-over flashback sequence is also used in Loncraine's Richard III and Branagh's Hamlet. In Act IV Scene III of Loncraine's Richard III, Tyrrel is shown facing Richard as he listens to the king's inquiry into the current state of the two young princes. Tyrrel's assurance to Richard that he has murdered both princes reverts to voice-over while the flashback image of his suffocation of the young boys with a red silk cloth is briefly shown on the screen (see Figure 123). In Act I Scene V of Branagh's Hamlet, King Hamlet's

ghost is shown in a close shot as he speaks with his son. The Ghost is heard in voice-over as he reveals to Hamlet how Claudius seduced Gertrude and then murdered him to gain his crown while the flashback images supporting the Ghost's narration are shown on the screen. The use of a narrative voice-over flashback sequence in these scenes maintains Shakespeare's imagetext through Shakespeare's narrative textual images, as shown on the screen, and Shakespeare's narrative text, as heard in voice-over.

Branagh and Nunn also utilize one final version of narrative voice-over which maintains Shakespeare's imagetext through its use of musical lyrics. Although the lyrics of the song are not found within Shakespeare's narrative text, Branagh builds on Henry's textual command for the men sing "Non Nobis and Te Deum" in order to give thanks to God for making it possible for England to win the battle while losing so few men (H5 IV.viii.128). In an approximately four minute, extreme long moving camera shot, Henry is shown carrying a dead English boy through the decimated battlefield to a wagon filled with dead soldiers while "Non Nobis" is sung in voice-over. During Henry's slow march to the wagon, the film audience sees glimpses of the living soldiers as they either sit in dazed wonder or assist in clearing the battlefield of the English and French soldiers who have fallen in their valiant battle for their respective kings. Halfway through this extreme long moving camera



Figure 121. Olivier's Hamlet (1948).  
Ophelia's drowning in the brook.



Figure 122.  
Zeffirelli's Hamlet (1990).  
Ophelia stares intently at the brook.

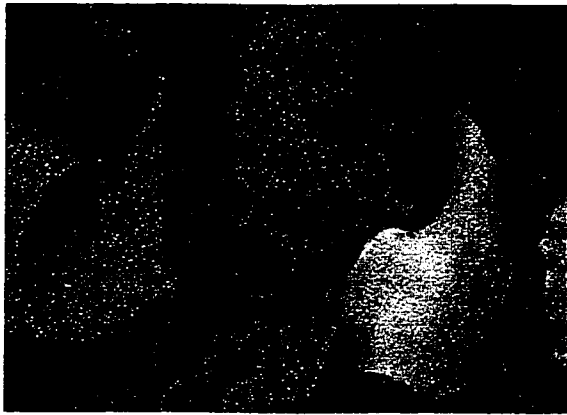


Figure 123.  
Loncraine's Richard III (1995).  
Tyrrel suffocates one young prince.

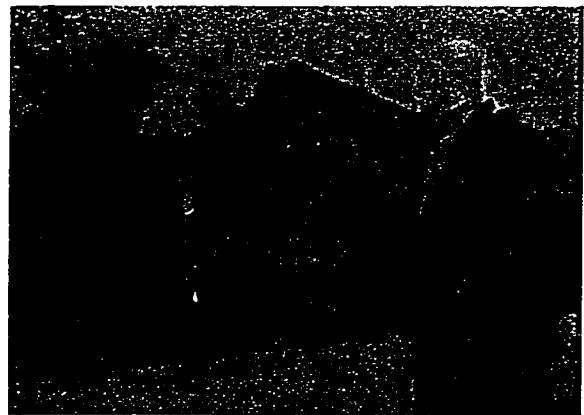


Figure 124.  
Nunn's Twelfth Night (1996).  
Sir Andrew leaves Olivia's house.

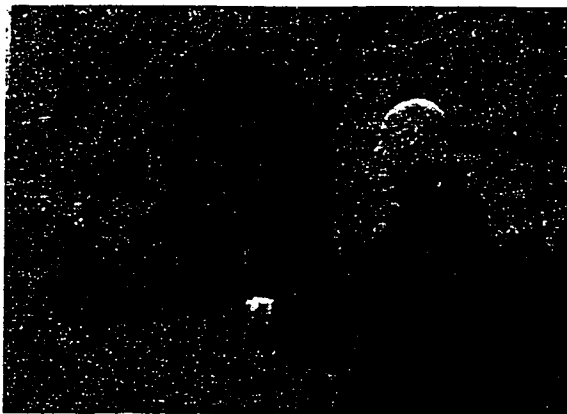


Figure 125.  
Nunn's Twelfth Night (1996).  
Antonio leaves Olivia's house.



Figure 126.  
Branagh's Much Ado (1993).  
People lounge on Leonato's hillside.

shot, Henry is shown briefly next to the dauphin and his men as King Henry concludes the arrangement for his meeting with King Charles which will take place at the French court in Act V Scene II. Through the use of narrative voice-over in this scene, it possible for Branagh to show the bloody consequences of war while creating a narrative bridge between the end of the Battle of Agincourt in Act IV Scene VIII and the scene that will take place at King Charles' palace in Act V Scene II. Nunn uses the musical lyrics found in Act V Scene I of Twelfth Night (1996) to serve as a finale for the film. Each time Feste sings, "For the rain it raineth every day," Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Antonio, Sir Toby Belch and Maria, Malvolio, and Feste are shown as they each leave Olivia's house at the end of the play (TN V.i.379). Theatrical centripetality is used momentarily to show Feste and Andrew Aguecheek (see Figure 124), and Feste and Antonio (see Figure 125) in the same shot before the camera pans to the left to follow the departures of Andrew Aguecheek and Antonio as Feste's singing reverts to voice-over.

Branagh again uses musical lyrics, this time actually found in Act II Scene III of Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing, to serve as two spoken prologues to begin this film and a musical finale to end this film. The film begins with a prologue of multiple, consecutive images of lines from the following lyrical text:

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,  
Men were deceivers ever;  
One foot in sea, and one on shore;  
To one thing constant never:  
Then sigh not so,  
But let them go,  
And be you blithe and bonny;  
Converting all your sounds of woe  
Into Hey nonny, nonny (Ado II.iii.56-64).

As the images of this written lyrical text are shown on the screen, the music (written to accompany these lyrics) is heard in the background as Emma Thompson speaks these lines in voice-over. After this entire lyrical text has been seen on the screen and the music and lyrics heard in voice-over, the film's action is visually transported to the grounds outside Leonato's home in Messina while the music continues to play in the background. A long moving camera shot is used to show Leonato painting a landscape of his home in the distance as well as several groups of people as they lounge and eat on the grassy hillside (see Figure 126). As this long shot continues moving down the hillside, Beatrice is heard in voice-over reciting the lyrical text from the film's prologue while the musical accompaniment continues to play underneath Beatrice's voice-over and the laughter and shouts of the people on the hillside. The finale of this film once again uses the lyrical text and music of its prologue, which begins to play after Benedick speaks the last line of the play, "Strike up, pipers!" (Ado V.iv.122). Upon Benedick's command for the pipers



to play, the music begins and the lyrics gradually revert to voice-over as the actors portraying the characters assembled to dance after the wedding try somewhat unsuccessfully to synchronize their lips to the lyrics as the music begins. The lyrical text, being very light and merry, provides a fitting voice-over accompaniment to the approximately three minute moving steadicam shot which shows numerous characters playing music, frolicking, and dancing to the music which clearly supports the thematic spirit of this comedy.

Olivier uses the descriptive voice-over for the first time in his filming of Hamlet in order to illustrate a character's mental vision for the film audience. In Act I Scene V, the camera captures Hamlet's face in close up as the ghost of King Hamlet begins his story in voice-over. As the story proceeds, Hamlet slowly closes his eyes as the camera cuts to the image of the back of Hamlet's head. As the camera approaches the back of Hamlet's head, the shot crossfades into the image of Hamlet's thoughts which visually illustrates the details of the Ghost's story. The edges of the screen are hazy to remind the film audience that this image originates from Hamlet's mind where it is molded by the Ghost's descriptive voice-over of his own murder (see Figure 127). As the story approaches its conclusion, Hamlet's mental images of his father's murder crossfade with a close shot of Hamlet with his eyes still closed in thought as the voice-over ends.

A unique application of the descriptive voice-over is found in the filming of Act II Scene I of Olivier's Hamlet. Ophelia is shown sewing alone in her "closet." As Ophelia's voice-over narration of Hamlet's entrance into her closet begins, the camera moves into a close up of Ophelia as she looks over her right shoulder slightly. As Hamlet's name is heard in voice-over, the image of Ophelia's memory of Hamlet's entrance into her closet is shown in a hazy oval projected over her right shoulder (see Figure 128). The camera's gradual fade to the medium shot which captures the seated Ophelia in the right foreground of the screen and Hamlet in the left background of the screen as he enters Ophelia's closet, ties this scene to Ophelia's memory of her encounter with Hamlet. Hamlet approaches Ophelia and she stands to greet him. Ophelia's descriptive voice-over continues throughout this scene, her memories shaping and directing the visual action on the screen (see Figure 129). As Hamlet slowly exits the closet, the screen darkens into a small oval around him (see Figure 130). The shot of the retreating Hamlet is gradually crossfaded with the original close shot of Ophelia as the voice-over concludes, thus ending Ophelia's memory of her strange encounter with Hamlet. The use of descriptive voice-over in the filming of these two scenes not only maintains Shakespeare's imagetext, but also involves the film audience in the drama of the scene by allowing them a glimpse into Hamlet's and Ophelia's minds.

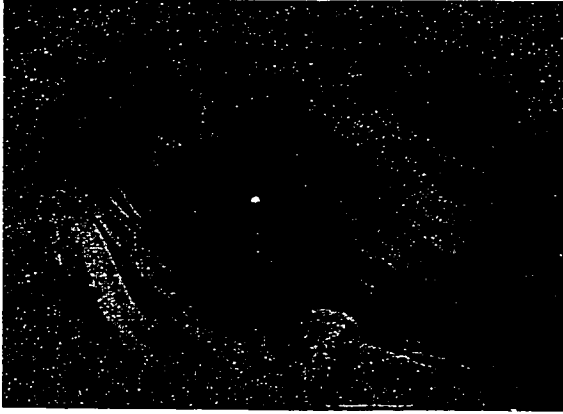


Figure 127. Olivier's Hamlet (1948).  
Hamlet's vision of Claudius' murder of his father.



Figure 128. Olivier's Hamlet (1948).  
Ophelia's memory of Hamlet's entrance into her closet.



Figure 129. Olivier's Hamlet (1948).  
Ophelia's encounter with Hamlet.



Figure 130. Olivier's Hamlet (1948).  
Hamlet exits Ophelia's closet.



Figure 131.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
King Charles' mental image of war.



Figure 132.  
Branagh's Henry V (1989).  
King Henry's memory of the war.

Branagh, Parker, and Nunn also use descriptive voice-over to reveal the thoughts or memories of a character in Henry V, Othello, and Twelfth Night. In Act V Scene II of Henry V, the Duke of Burgundy is shown on the screen as he describes the decay that has swept through France as a result of the recent war. As the Duke continues to speak of the devastating effects of war upon the land and people of France, his voice reverts into voice-over as the camera cuts to a close shot of King Charles of France. As his eyes wander in thought, the camera crossfades into his mental image as he imagines his Constable's dead body on the muddy, bloody battlefield (see Figure 131). This mental image is slowly usurped by a close shot of King Henry, which is, in turn, crossfaded into Henry's mental images as he ponders the tragic results of the recent war. The images of the dead Duke of York being carried from the battlefield (see Figure 132), the young boy, Mistress Quickly, Nym, Bardolph, Lord Scroop, and Falstaff, all cross through Henry's mind as he realizes the large number of people who have died as a result of the bloodshed or the disease caused by his war to gain France. Henry's mental images gradually fade as his own image returns to the screen, showing a king deeply moved by the deadly results of his recent actions. The camera then cuts to the image of the Duke of Burgundy, who soon concludes the speech that has continued throughout this scene in voice-over. Likewise, in Act III Scene III of Parker's

Othello, Iago is shown approaching Othello in order to whisper into his ear possible reasons for Desdemona's infidelity. Iago's deceptive dialogue is heard in voice-over while Othello's mental image of Cassio and Desdemona dancing at the recent celebration feast is shown on the screen (see Figure 133). In Act II Scene II of Nunn's Twelfth Night, Viola expresses aloud her bafflement over Olivia's gift of the ring recently brought to her by Malvolio. As Viola comes to the conclusion that Olivia must have fallen in love with her masculine disguise, images of Viola's memory of her conversation with Olivia are shown on the screen as Viola's voiced thoughts continue in voice-over (see Figure 134).

Olivier also uses descriptive voice-over, combined with cerebral voice-over, to take the film audience into Hamlet's mind as he contemplates suicide just before beginning the "To be or not to be" soliloquy (Ham. III.i.56). The camera slowly approaches the back of Hamlet's head as he looks down on the rumbling waves of the sea from atop Elsinore castle. The camera cuts to a wavering, blurred view of the sea as seen through Hamlet's eyes. Hamlet's distorted view of the sea is blended with the image of a brain, shown to represent Hamlet's thoughts. Hamlet's soliloquy begins in voice-over as the camera cuts to a close up of Hamlet's face with the image of the sea waves imposed on his forehead, representing again the image that Hamlet sees in

his mind's eye. The camera returns once again to Hamlet's distorted view of the sea, his vision clearing and focusing on the sea waves below by the time "that is the question" has been heard in Hamlet's voice-over (Ham. III.i.56). The remainder of the soliloquy utilizes cerebral voice-over, alternating between voice-over and direct speech to express Hamlet's thoughts, with direct speech being the most frequently used form of expression for Hamlet's thoughts in this scene.

Branagh and Luhrmann also use a combination of the cerebral voice-over and the descriptive voice-over in their filming of Hamlet and Romeo and Juliet. In Act I Scene V of Hamlet, Hamlet is shown on the screen as he searches for his father's ghost in the eerie woods while his thoughts are heard in loud cerebral voice-over as he ponders the possible reasons behind the return of his father's ghost. As Hamlet's frenzied thoughts revert to descriptive voice-over, the screen is suddenly filled with multiple, rapidly edited images. The film audience sees images of King Hamlet laying in his tomb, the shaking and splitting ground, the wisps of fog, and the twisted branches of the trees that hinder Hamlet's progress through the woods as each image is mentioned in Hamlet's descriptive voice-over. Likewise, in Act II Scene III of Luhrmann's Romeo and Juliet, Friar Laurence is shown on the screen as he prepares to refuse Romeo's request to marry him to Juliet while

the singing of the church choir is heard in the background. However, as soon as the lyrics "when doves cry" are sung by the church choir, the friar momentarily pauses in his reply. The friar's normally voiced dialogue is heard instead in cerebral voice-over during this brief vision brought on by the words of the choir's song. In this vision, Friar Laurence's mental images of burning buildings and newspaper headlines depicting the hatred between the Montague and Capulet families (see Figure 135), gradually give way to the images of Romeo and Juliet kissing and the flight of a dove (see Figure 136), symbolizing the peace that their love could bring to both families. The combination of the cerebral voice-over and the descriptive voice-over in the filming of these scenes not only maintains Shakespeare's imagetext, but also utilizes the rapid editing of a variety of camera shots and angles to add to the dramatic development of the plot and the excitement of the film images.

Mitchell's concept of imagetext tension, somewhat similar to sarcasm, is reflected in the manner in which the deceptive voice-over communicates an idea to the film audience. The deceptive voice-over communicates its true message through the imagetext tension that alerts the film audience to the fact that it is necessary to be very critical of what is being seen and heard on the screen. Although the deceptive voice-over communicates its true message through imagetext tension instead of imagetext harmony, it nevertheless



Figure 133. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Othello's memory of the recent feast.



Figure 134.  
Nunn's Twelfth Night (1996).  
Viola's memory of Olivia's farewell.



Figure 135. Luhrmann's  
Romeo and Juliet (1996).  
Burning buildings and headlines.



Figure 136. Luhrmann's  
Romeo and Juliet (1996).  
Romeo and Juliet kiss as a dove flies.



Figure 137.  
Zeffirelli's Hamlet (1990).  
Claudius and Gertrude kiss openly.



Figure 138. Parker's Othello (1995).  
Othello stands by the sea shore,  
preparing the kill Desdemona.



utilizes the same techniques as other voice-over categories and has been used in several Shakespeare films since the early nineties. An early example of this voice-over technique is found in the beginning of Act II of Branagh's Henry V. In this scene, the Chorus' narrative prologue of England's preparations for war with France is heard in voice-over while an image of Bardolph and several unwashed old men shuffling about the Boar's Head tavern is shown. Since the lackluster movement of the old men about the room as they rub the sleep out of their eyes and Bardolph's brash search for an impromptu breakfast do not reflect the Chorus' voice-over description of England's excitement to go to war, tension is created between the voice-over and the screen image. It is this imagetext tension that communicates to the film audience a clear sense that these men are not truly patriotically charged and eager for battle.

Zeffirelli also uses deceptive voice-over in his filming of Act I Scene II of Hamlet. Hamlet is shown in a low angle close shot as he stands by a window and looks down onto the castle courtyard below. While looking out of the window, Hamlet uses direct speech to describe the way his mother faithfully loved and worshipped his father while he was still living. The camera cuts to a high angle shot of Gertrude and Claudius in the courtyard below from Hamlet's point of view as he sees them from his lofty vantage point at the window. Gertrude and Claudius are seen kissing as they cheerfully embark

on their horse riding outing (see Figure 137) while Hamlet's direct speech about his mother reverts into voice-over. It is the imagetext tension between Hamlet's voice-over and the screen image that communicates to the film audience a clear sense of Gertrude's changeable nature, making Hamlet's parting line, "Frailty, thy name is woman," very convincing (Ham. I.ii.146).

Deceptive voice-over is also used in the filming of Act II Scene I of Parker's Othello and Act I Scene III of Branagh's Hamlet. Othello is shown welcoming his friends to his fortress while Iago watches this scene with a smile of welcome. As Iago watches Othello's joyful reunion with his friends, Iago's thoughts are heard in cerebral voice-over as he plots to bring about Othello's destruction. When Iago's smiling face is contrasted with his vengeful cerebral voice-over, the film audience gets a clear sense of Iago's dualistic nature. In Act I Scene III of Branagh's Hamlet, Polonius commands Ophelia to tell him what has passed between Hamlet and herself. As Ophelia is shown assuring her father that Hamlet's love has been entirely honorable, images of Hamlet and Ophelia making love are briefly shown on the screen while the dialogue between Polonius and Ophelia continues in voice-over. When the images of Hamlet and Ophelia in intimate embrace are contrasted with Polonius' and Ophelia's dialogue in voice-over, the film audience gets a clear sense that Ophelia is lying to her father in an attempt to hide her love

affair with Hamlet. This use of imagetext tension can be used not only to increase the critical mind of the film audience, but also to reveal the secrets or inner nature of a character, thus involving the audience more intimately with the experiences and feelings of the characters.

Parker's approach to the filming of Act II Scene I of Othello serves as an example of the combination of the deceptive voice-over and the spacial voice-over to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext. In the courtyard of Othello's Cyprus fortress, Iago is shown telling Roderigo that Desdemona no longer loves Othello and has shifted all of her affection towards Cassio. As Iago continues to convince Roderigo of the truth in his claim, Iago's dialogue with Roderigo reverts into voice-over as the images of Desdemona dancing with Othello and Cassio inside the fortress are shown on the screen. As Iago's voice-over continues, the image of Desdemona dancing with Othello clearly shows that she is still deeply in love with him and the image of Desdemona dancing with Cassio shows that her regard for Cassio merely consists of respectful friendship and admiration. When the images of Desdemona dancing with Othello and Cassio are contrasted with Iago's dialogue in voice-over, the film audience gets a clear sense that Iago is lying to Roderigo in order to swindle more money from him. The frequent cutting between the images of Desdemona's dancing with Othello and Cassio inside the fortress

and the image of Iago's dialogue with Roderigo outside the fortress also serves as a cross-cutting device, giving the film audience a sense of these related events which are shown to be occurring at relatively the same time in two separate locations.

Spacial voice-over has been used in several Shakespeare films since the early nineties to allow the film audience to experience two related events which are shown to be occurring at relatively the same time in two separate locations. Zeffirelli uses spacial voice-over as a transitional device in the beginning of Act I Scene II of Hamlet. Claudius' dialogue from inside the castle court chamber is heard in voice-over while an extreme long shot of several soldiers guarding Elsinore is shown on the screen, creating a brief imagetextual cross-cutting of two separate locations. By using spacial voice-over in this shot, Zeffirelli allows the film audience to simultaneously sense the events taking place in two separate locations, thereby creating the theatrical centripetality which maintains Shakespeare's imagetext. In Act V Scene II of Branagh's Hamlet, Hamlet is shown in the court chamber, apologizing to Laertes for the accidental murder of his father, Polonius, before beginning the fencing competition. Hamlet's apology reverts into voice-over as images of Fortinbras' army are shown outside of Hamlet's palace as they begin to take possession of Hamlet's land and invade the outer corridors of

the palace. The camera returns to the image of Hamlet and Laertes as Laertes grudgingly accepts Hamlet's apology, shakes Hamlet's hand, and prepares for the fencing competition. The use of spacial voice-over in this scene illustrates the common link between the actions taking place in these separate locations, leading the film audience to realize that this moment in time is not only the beginning of the end of Hamlet's life, but also the beginning of the end of his family's reign over Denmark.

Spacial voice-over is also used in the filming of Act IV Scene III of Parker's Othello. Desdemona is shown in her bedchamber singing a song as Emilia helps her undress for bed. Desdemona's singing reverts into voice-over as the image of Othello bidding farewell to his guests and walking alone about the outer corridors of the fortress is shown on the screen. The camera returns to Desdemona and her explanation of the significance of the song she has been singing while Emilia helps her bathe. Desdemona's singing reverts again into voice-over as Othello's profile in silhouette is shown on the screen as he stands in the moonlight by the sea shore, preparing himself to murder his wife (see Figure 138) before the camera returns to Desdemona, already retired to bed for the last time. The use of spacial voice-over heightens the emotional immediacy of this scene since the film audience is allowed to see not only Desdemona's actions inside her bedchamber, as is usually the case, but also

Othello's actions around the fortress corridors and by the seaside as he prepares himself for a murder which a part of himself dreads to commit.

After the study of this chapter's six categories of Shakespeare film voice-over, it is clear that modern Shakespeare filmmakers' experiments with the use of voice-over have increased the involvement of the modern film audience in Shakespeare film through maintaining Shakespeare's imagetext. This use of voice-over to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext brings the modern film audience closer to the conditions of the Renaissance theatre audience. As the citations from Orgel in the first chapter explained, the modern film audience has a better understanding of visual action and symbols, while the Renaissance theatre audience had a better understanding of descriptive language. Therefore, the use of narrative textual screen images to illustrate Shakespeare's narrative text as heard in the voice-over can make it possible for the modern film audience to understand Shakespeare's plays in much the same manner as the Renaissance theatre audience. To this end, narrative and descriptive voice-overs have been used to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext in a manner that makes Shakespeare's narrative text easily comprehensible to the modern film audience lacking previous knowledge of Shakespeare and his plays. Likewise, cerebral, active, and spacial voice-overs have used theatrical centripetality to bridge the perceived gap between

theatre and cinema, maintaining Shakespeare's imagetext in a manner that also makes Shakespeare's narrative text easily comprehensible to the modern film audience. In addition, cerebral, active, descriptive, deceptive, and spacial voice-overs have used Shakespeare's imagetext to increase the film audience's intimacy with and understanding of the character(s) on the screen, thus increasing the involvement of the film audience in the Shakespeare film. Through the continued efforts of modern Shakespeare filmmakers to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext through theatrical centripetality, visual motif, the aside, cinematic centripetality, montage, flashback, and voice-over, modern film audiences will continue to become more involved with Shakespeare film as a result of their increased understanding of the narrative text and heightened intimacy with the characters.

## Conclusion

Through the examination of Shakespeare performance on stage and screen, this study has illustrated the enigmatic relationship between text and image that has existed for centuries. Moody attributed the creation of the laws banning speech on the majority of English stages to an upper-class attempt at preserving the distinction between upper and middle-class drama (61-62). In response to these laws, the middle-class theatres began to develop techniques such as the use of linen scrolls, banners, and the musical accompaniment of spoken words to overcome these restrictions. The popularity of these techniques in performance lead to the creation of the burletta and then the melodrama, two performances that revealed their message to the theatre audience as much through mime, images, and spectacle as through printed words or musical lyrics. The popular melodrama soon became so highly regarded by the upper-class theatre audience that they attempted to remove it from its lowly middle-class origins by adopting the performance as their own.

During the Victorian era, Shakespeare's plays were often staged in an attempt to improve a theatre's cultural legitimacy, since it was believed that only an educated theatre audience would recognize the verbal and visual references to Shakespeare's plays. Regardless of the relative popularity of



Shakespeare stage performance, Shakespeare's full text was not being used on any Victorian stage. Therefore, the publishing of Shakespeare's plays as literature was popularized by people such as Charles and Mary Lamb, early Shakespeare literary purists endeavoring to uphold the supremacy of Shakespeare's narrative text over his narrative textual images. Orgel opposed this purist belief in his examination of English Renaissance theatre, a period in theatrical history when "the verbal was inseparable from the visual" elements of performance (24). Nicoll went on to draw a parallel between the social and economic forces that governed early modern film production and those that promoted the theatrical fare of the English Renaissance. Since modern film practice so closely resembled Renaissance theatre practice, Nicoll believed that the modern filming of Shakespeare's plays "may merely be supplying something which will bring us nearer to the conditions of the original spectators for whom Shakespeare wrote" (181).

The theories of scholars from fields of anthropology, psychology, semiology, and iconology have also shed some light on the historical relationship between text and image. It seems that textual forms of communication have always been perceived as the products of a more evolved and highly cultured mind while visual forms of communication have always been perceived as the products of a less evolved and highly primitive mind.

This concept is reflected in the tendency of Renaissance visual artists and Shakespeare silent filmmakers to incorporate literary elements into their paintings and films in attempts to attain the respectability of poetry, classic literature, and theatre. Therefore, scholars such as Foucault and Ingarden tend to associate themselves with either a textual or visual field of study since these modes of communication are generally seen as two distinct entities. Only a few scholars such as Lacan and Mitchell have recognized the importance of the relationship between text and image in understanding the true message that is being communicated. Mitchell's imagetext theory reinforces the necessity of utilizing both text and image if an audience is to fully understand any visual or performing art.

Shakespeare silent films have provided the needed evidence to support Mitchell's imagetext theory. Tree's filming of Shakespeare's King John and the use of Shakespeare's text as inspiration for new comedic and dramatic silent films illustrate the existence of images within Shakespeare's narrative text which have compelled several artists to conceive of and produce many Shakespeare silent films. While Shakespeare silent film was considered an artistic pursuit throughout Europe, Shakespeare film was used by American filmmakers to make silent films respectable, placate the uplift movement, and supply stories ready for legal transfer to the screen. Although the uplift

movement encouraged the production of Shakespeare silent film, the translation of the Shakespeare play into silent film was only seen as a profitable means to improve the public's perception of silent film, to educate the general public, and to produce legal films quickly. In order to improve the public's perception of silent film, films such as Thanhouser's King Lear utilized bricolage which exploited page and stage to enhance the acceptability and respectability of Shakespeare on film, as well as film in general. It wasn't until filmmakers overcame the limits imposed by their indiscriminate use of bricolage that Shakespeare silent film began to benefit from the Shakespeare purist tendency to view Shakespeare's plays as literary text. By choosing to "tell" Shakespeare's narrative text through his narrative textual images, the presence of purely literary and theatrical elements was dissolved in favor of the literary and/or theatrical elements which could be captured cinematically. The use of cinematic devices in films such as Cines' Hamlet and Gaumont-Hepworth's Hamlet reunited Shakespeare's narrative textual images with his narrative text in a manner beyond the capabilities of the page or the stage, while retaining the inherent theatricality of Shakespeare's plays. The more often Shakespeare silent film utilized this unique combination of literary, theatrical, and cinematic devices, the more likely it was that Shakespeare's imagetext was maintained, making it possible for the

narrative text to be readily communicated to silent film audiences, regardless of their knowledge of Shakespeare. However, the silent film audience's reluctance to accept the mixture of text and image in new subtitling techniques forced the silent filmmakers to sacrifice one highly effective method of maintaining Shakespeare's imagetext on silent film in order to retain the public's interest in silent film.

Through the examination of scenes from a multitude of modern Shakespeare films, evidence of the same problems that Shakespeare silent film experienced when translating Shakespeare's plays into film can still be found. In order to enhance the acceptability and respectability of his film adaptation of Othello, Welles used a literary title in the opening sequence of the film. As late as 1965, Burge and Dexter's Othello was also greatly hindered by its bricolage of literary and/or theatrical devices which could not be captured cinematically. When bricolage is used simply to add respectability to the film or to indiscriminately preserve the theatricality of the play, the end product does not usually result in a film which maintains Shakespeare's imagetext. Modern Shakespeare film is still in the process of realizing that, in order for Shakespeare film to succeed on its own merits, the presence of purely literary and/or theatrical elements must be dissolved in favor of the literary and/or theatrical elements which can be captured

cinematically on film. As modern Shakespeare film techniques continue to develop through the experimental trial and error of artists with both theatrical and cinematic knowledge, Shakespeare films have begun to retain only those necessary literary and/or theatrical elements of the Shakespeare play which can be captured cinematically. Through the continued efforts of modern filmmakers such as Branagh to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext through the combination of theatrical and cinematic devices such as theatrical centripetality, visual motif, the aside, cinematic centripetality, montage, the flashback sequence, and voice-over, modern film audiences will continue to become more involved with Shakespeare film as a result of their increased understanding of the narrative text and heightened intimacy with the characters.

In spite of this preponderance of evidence to the contrary, Shakespeare literary purists continue to uphold the centuries old tradition of debate against the mixture of text and image. Although none would deny the existence of mixed media, Shakespeare literary purists have endeavored to convince many audiences, such as the silent film audience, that mixed media is somehow bad for them and should be avoided. This encouragement to resist the concept of imagetext in the name of "higher aesthetic values" is simply another attempt by certain elite scholars to preserve a social hierarchy

which ennobles those who work with text and degrades those who work with image (Mitchell, Picture 97). Therefore, Shakespeare filmmakers, already disdained for their work with images, are discouraged from experimenting with new approaches to maintaining Shakespeare's imagetext for fear of being considered even more primitive or unsophisticated in their thinking. For example, the use of a cinematic device such as the narrative voice-over is discouraged because purists fear that it proves Shakespeare's narrative text alone cannot communicate an idea to a film audience. Shakespeare literary purists, fearing Mitchell's theory of a pictorial turn, believe that the use of narrative voice-over places the film image in a primary position over Shakespeare's text, thus degrading Shakespeare's elite text with a primitive screen image. However, as Renaissance and silent film audiences have shown, Shakespeare's play text is neither primarily verbal nor visual. Shakespeare's plays consist of imagetext which can only communicate a dramatic concept to an audience through the harmony or tension provided by the simultaneous presence of text and image.

Since the career of any filmmaker relies so heavily upon the success provided by favorable critical reviews of their work, many have opted to follow a more traditional Shakespeare filmmaking approach. A filmmaker's fear of appearing unsophisticated could explain some of the reluctance towards more

experimentation with the voice-over to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext on film. Ever since Olivier boldly used voice-over for the first time in a Shakespeare film, filmmakers have continued his tradition by utilizing a low volume and a reflective nature in Shakespeare voice-over. It seems that most filmmakers have chosen to adhere to Olivier's Shakespeare voice-over tradition because they do not possess an extensive familiarity with Shakespeare and do not wish to expose themselves to the ridicule of critics by engaging in any potentially unsuccessful experiments. This may be one explanation for Polanski's choice to reveal the intense and murderous thoughts of Macbeth and his wife through cerebral voice-overs in which the text is not spoken much above the volume of a whisper. On the other hand, Branagh broke away from the use of a quiet, meditative voice-over for the first time in his filming of Hamlet. With two Shakespeare films under his belt, not to mention his extensive repertoire of Shakespeare theatrical knowledge and experience, Branagh finally had the confidence to utilize a loud descriptive voice-over in Act I Scene V to reflect the mad frenzy of Hamlet's textual thoughts while the visual mental images which accompany his thoughts are shown on the screen. Although Branagh is often criticized for the overly "theatrical" loudness of his voice in certain scenes, he has built enough confidence in his directorial intuition to allow the criticism of his work prevent

his continued experimentation with new techniques to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext.

Very few modern filmmakers have been bold enough to experiment with the use of background music in Shakespeare film. Olivier has established the use of background music during action sequences such as Henry's battle at Agincourt or Ophelia's last, silent wanderings through the arched hallways of Elsinore just before her death. However, few modern filmmakers have come close to Branagh's almost continuous incorporation of music to mirror the emotional subtext of Shakespeare's narrative text, while reinforcing the poetic music which occurs when an actor speaks Shakespeare's poetic verse aloud. In a radio interview, he stated that Shakespeare's narrative text "literally gives poetry. It gives music. It gives sounds -- the sound of the word sometimes having an impact on the ear and on the senses generally -- that wins an audience over and that is a sort of treat in itself, 'cause some of the sounds are very odd and very delicious" (Branagh, Fresh Air). Although Branagh is often criticized for the overt "distraction" created by his Lacanian musical reinforcement of Shakespeare's subtextual and poetic narrative, he has built enough confidence in his directorial intuition to allow the criticism of his work prevent his continued use of music to support Shakespeare's imagetext in his films. It is the confidence that Olivier and Branagh have



gained through their vast theatrical and film experience that has provided them with the courage required to experiment with techniques that preserve Shakespeare's imagetext.

Branagh's approach to filmmaking has also brought about an amazing revival of interest in Shakespeare film since 1989. Film companies that once blanched at the prospect of producing a Shakespeare film now eagerly embrace the opportunity. Branagh's unique approach to Shakespeare filmmaking has taken the film world by storm, inspiring filmmakers such as Luhrmann to create a modern, highly controversial interpretation of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. The sheer number of Shakespeare films that have been made in the past decade can be given credit for inspiring Marc Norman and Tom Stoppard to write an award winning screenplay consisting of a fictional account of Shakespeare's romance with the daughter of a wealthy family as he is in the process of writing and staging his newest play, Romeo and Juliet. Modern film's appropriation of Shakespeare resembles the Victorian upper-class' appropriation of the melodrama once the middle-class theatres had popularized it. However, the upper-class' appropriation of melodrama was perceived as a movement up the social ladder, whereas modern film's appropriation of Shakespeare is generally perceived as a movement down the social ladder. Shakespeare literary purists still take a

dim view of attempts at filming Shakespeare in a manner that makes it readily accessible to teenagers or any other group unfamiliar with his language. Even though this concept does not reflect the audience for which Shakespeare wrote his plays, the idea that Shakespeare should only be presented to or enjoyed by the intellectual elite continues to persist.

The controversy concerning the use of Shakespeare's narrative text and narrative textual images seems to stem from the attempts of many scholars throughout the centuries to identify the source of this playwright's genius. The Shakespeare literary purists have always attributed Shakespeare's genius to the supremacy of his literary text, insisting that only through the literary study of Shakespeare's text can one truly understand his work. Theatrical artists have argued against the Shakespeare literary purists' claim, insisting instead that Shakespeare's plays, originally written to be seen on the English Renaissance stage, can only be fully understood if they are visualized for an audience within the environment of the theatrical stage. Film scholars have argued that film is the most appropriate medium for Shakespeare performance since modern film conventions resemble Renaissance theatre conventions more closely than modern theatre conventions. However, Branagh gave an alternative explanation for Shakespeare's brilliance which could resolve this image/text controversy:

And even though we may not literally understand it [Shakespeare's narrative text], I think that's fair enough. There's a great deal in the play [Hamlet] that, I think, because it's a classic and has withstood 400 years of people throwing themselves at it, that resists definitiveness. There is mystery in there . . . . No one will pluck out the heart of Hamlet, the play's mystery. But on the way, you can -- you can, if you serve, as we do in this one, the whole text up, I think that intuitively, the audience responds to it in a very mysterious way. And I think that that's a magical, magical thing which we underestimate because we so want to nail everything. What kind of Hamlet is it? What's his motivation? What does it mean? Can I have it in three sentences please. It's not possible, and that's very exciting. (Branagh, Fresh Air)

Branagh very eloquently identified why so many scholars continue without much resolution the debate to define Shakespeare's genius: the imagetextual mutability of Shakespeare's language defies definitive definition. Shakespeare's language is not something that can be studied and then categorized since it is too eclectic to be defined through either text, image, or any other singular mode of expression. Since it is the goal of many literary, theatrical, and film scholars to definitively define Shakespeare's genius, they react negatively to techniques used for the intention of preserving Shakespeare's imagetext because imagetext works to continue the debate between text and image rather than solve it. However, it is this endless debate that is responsible for the continuation of the study and performance of Shakespeare's plays throughout the centuries. Shakespeare's genius is a mystery that will not be completely solved and any attempt to define

Shakespeare only results in newer versions of the same debate that has existed for centuries.

It appears that the study of the imagetext in Shakespeare's plays can be used to provide additional solutions to the image/text problem in other media and should be examined further. It would also be useful to examine the effect that retaining Shakespeare's full text in theatrical or cinematic performance has on the ability to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext. Likewise, Shakespeare theatrical performance must be studied further in order to examine how Shakespeare's imagetext can be maintained on the modern stage. Although theatrical performance can preserve Shakespeare's imagetext, one cannot ignore modern film's ability to maintain Shakespeare's imagetext through cinematic devices that surpass the theatrical devices used on the modern stage. The only way to examine the fullest extent to which Shakespeare's imagetext can be maintained in performance is through the comparative study of films created by filmmakers with both theatrical and cinematic knowledge and experience. Branagh's Shakespeare films are especially unique since they have been made by a man who does not attempt to define Shakespeare, but simply and enthusiastically explores his meanings and rejoices in sharing with the film audience the results that are found along the way.

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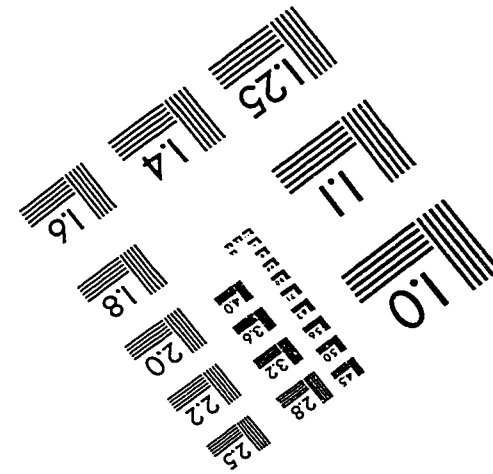
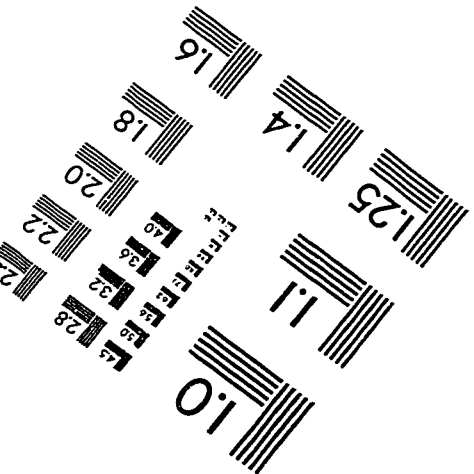
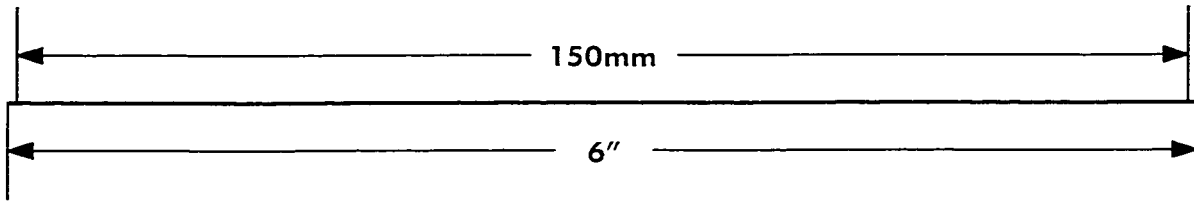
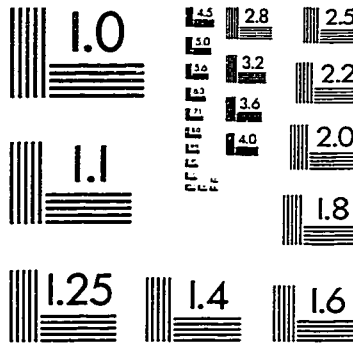
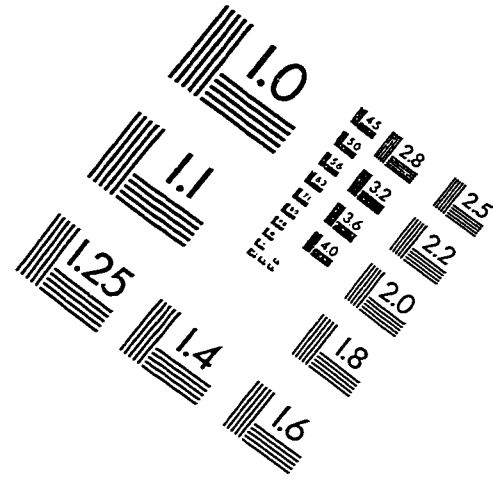
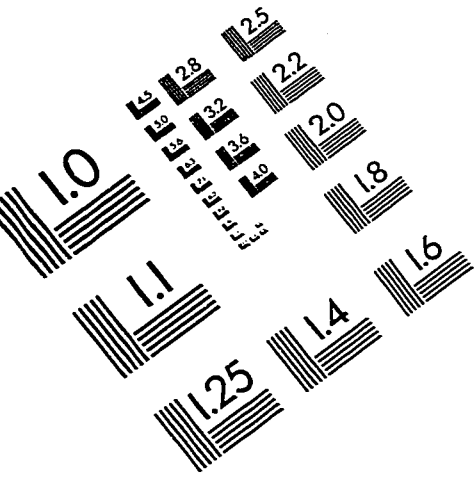
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