

Chronotopes and Categories of Shakespeare-Inflected Films

Bakhtin, in his long essay, “Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes towards a Historical Poetics,” acknowledges an intellectual debt to Einstein’s theory of relativity and proposes the term, “chronotope,” to describe “the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature” (*Dialogic* [84]). He theorizes the concept of the chronotope in the context of classical models and discerns and explicates their development in the later history of the novel. In order to provide a solid foundation for—and to make visible—my extrapolations to Shakespearean film, there will be at the outset of this chapter fairly extensive quoting of how Bakhtin presents his ideas.

He seeks to demonstrate how “[i]n the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history” (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* [84]). Bakhtin lays out an historical process of development in which the time-space of human experience is more fully represented in the novel. As summarized by Vivian Sobchack, “[c]hronotopes serve as the spatiotemporal currency between two different orders of existence and discourse, between the historicity of the lived world and the literary world (here, the world of cinema)” (150). With respect to Shakespeare-inflected films, the primary question, therefore, may be chronotopic: “from what temporal and spatial point of view does the author look upon the events that he describes?” (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 255).

Bakhtin begins his essay on the chronotope with the remark that “the process of assimilating real historical time and space in literature has a complicated and erratic history,” and he goes on to illustrate this process by using examples from “the various histories of generic heterogeneity in the European novel, beginning with the so-called ‘Greek romance’ and ending with the Rabelaisian novel. The relative typological stability of the novelistic chronotopes that were worked out in these periods permits us to glance ahead as well, at various novel types in succeeding periods” (*Dialogic* [84], 85). Bakhtin identifies three historical chronotopes of continuing significance.

Within the Greek romance of adventure, time is empty and nothing changes: “the world remains as it was, the biographical life of the heroes does not change, their feelings do not change, people do not even age” (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 91). Events, such as “[a]bductions, escape, pursuit, search and captivity,” occur within the adventure-time of Greek romance in “an *abstract* expanse of space”: its represented world is “chronotopic, but the link between space and time has, as it were, not an organic but a purely technical (and mechanical) nature” (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 99). Here, time and space is mere backdrop, without determining significance for the characters.

Bakhtin provisionally calls the second type of ancient novel the adventure novel of everyday life, a new chronotope exemplified by the *Satyricon* of Petronius and *The Golden Ass* of Apuleius. Here, metamorphosis becomes “a mythological sheath for the idea of development—but one that unfolds not so much in a straight line as spasmodically, a line with ‘knots’ in it, one that therefore constitutes a distinctive type of *temporal sequence*” (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 113). In this chronotope, the hero is no longer unchanging: “the novel provides us with two or three different images of the same individual, images that have been disjoined and rejoined through his crisis and rebirths” (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 115). Early Christian crisis hagiographies, Bakhtin notes, share this chronotope. Within the adventure novel of everyday life, “space so saturates this new chronotope that such events as meeting, separation, collision, escape and so forth take on a new and markedly more concrete chronotopic significance” (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 120). In these kinds of narratives, the protagonist is altered at crucial moments, and the significant moments of change are shown in connection to specific elements of the setting.

The third ancient chronotope that Bakhtin discusses concerns life studies: autobiography and biography. In classical Greece, he discerns two different modes: the Platonic, “involving an individual’s

autobiographical self-consciousness,” and the rhetorical, based on “civic funeral and memorial speech” (*Dialogic* 130, 131). The latter presents publicly an external image of an individual, usually in the form of an encomium, while the former conveys an internal, real-life experience of time-space. Bakhtin contends that though antiquity did not produce these types in novel form, long fiction was later “influenced by [these] biographical models” (*Dialogic* 130).

In his essay, “The *Bildungsroman* and Its Significance in the History of Realism (Toward a Historical Typology of the Novel),” Bakhtin describes how this early (auto) biographical chronotope leads to the development of the novel genre as exemplified by Goethe, where time and space fuse totally:

Everything—from an abstract idea to a piece of rock on the bank of a stream—bears the stamp of time, is saturated with time, and assumes its form and meaning in time. ... On the other hand, this time, in all its essential aspects, is localized in concrete space, imprinted on it. In Goethe’s world there are no events, plots, or temporal motifs that are not related in an essential way to the particular spatial place of their occurrence, that could occur anywhere or nowhere (“eternal” plots and motifs). Everything in this world is a *time-space*, a true *chronotope*. (*Speech* 42)

In this culminating development of the novel’s use of the chronotope, the artistic representation of the human experience involving the fusion of time with space is more than an intermittent presence for the hero, as is the case with the adventure novel of everyday life. In this biographical mode, a sustained consciousness of time-space shapes the narrative.

Overall, Bakhtin shows how the three ancient chronotopes—adventure romance, adventure of everyday life, and (auto) biographical—“lie at the heart of specific varieties of the novel genre, formed and developed over the course of many centuries” (*Dialogic* 250–251). His chronotopic analysis can also be used to align and calibrate familiar movie genres, such as romance, adventure, fantasy, action, drama, and biopic. Of interest, too, is that Bakhtin’s three major chronotopes have some correlations with the three types of plays enumerated in Shakespeare’s First Folio: comedy, tragedy, and history.

The time-space of the festive comedies (and romances) is less concrete, integrated, and consequential than the chronotopes of the other two genres, and tends toward that of the idyll whose chronotope

Bakhtin describes as a “blurring of all the temporal boundaries made possible by a unity of place ... [contributing] in an essential way to the creation of the cyclic rhythmicalness of time so characteristic of the idyll” (*Dialogic* 225). As with Bakhtin’s romance time-space, the heroes and heroines in plays such as *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and *As You Like It* mostly inhabit the pastoral, a fantasy site.

The chronotope of the tragedies, by contrast, has similarities to Bakhtin’s adventure novel of everyday life: “It depicts only the *exceptional*, utterly unusual moments of a man’s life, moments that are very short compared to the whole length of a human life. But these moments *shape the definitive image of the man, his essence, as well as the nature of his entire subsequent life*” (*Dialogic* 116). With the adventure novel of everyday life, “space is filled with real living meaning, and forms a crucial relationship with the hero and his fate,” yet “time is deprived of its unity and wholeness” (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 120, 128). In *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, and *Othello*, all the title characters undergo crises in which they are abruptly disjoined from a previous self-image. These violent protagonists live in an “everyday maelstrom of personal life” (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 128).

Shakespeare’s history plays fit quite closely with Bakhtin’s third major chronotope for the novel, (auto) biography. Very tightly bound up with dated reigns and geographically locatable battle sites, the time-space of dramatized royal lives such as Henry IV and Richard III fuse Bakhtin’s two ancient types of life writings: an externalized, public biography and an interior autobiography that is voiced through dialogue and soliloquies. Shakespeare’s representation of historical reality in his retelling of the Wars of the Roses means “[b]iographical time is not reversible vis-à-vis the events of life itself, which are inseparable from historical events” (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 141).

In addition to the three major chronotopes that are “most fundamental and wide-ranging” and that endure as generic types, “each such chronotope can include within it an unlimited number of minor chronotopes” (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 252). Of these more finite time-spaces, Bakhtin lists the road, “a particularly good place for random encounters” where time flows; the castle, which is “saturated ... with a time that is historical in the narrow sense of the word”; the space of parlors and salons, “a fundamentally new space” created in the novels of Stendhal and Balzac through which the epoch becomes visible; the provincial town, a locus in *Madame Bovary* with a “viscous and sticky time that drags itself slowly through space”; and the threshold, whose “time is

essentially instantaneous” and connected with “the moment of crisis” (*Dialogic* 243, 245–246, 246–247, 247–278, 248). In Bakhtin’s theorizing, chronotopes “are mutually inclusive, they co-exist, they may be interwoven with, replace or oppose one another, contradict one another or find themselves in ever more complex relationships. ... The general characteristic of these interactions is that they are *dialogical*...” (*Dialogic* 252). The tragedy of *King Lear* illustrates how chronotopic interactions can shape—even constitute—an artistic work.

Much of the plot, characterization, and meaning of Shakespeare’s powerful yet simple play can be made intelligible through a consideration of three of the minor chronotopes that Bakhtin identifies: the castle, the road, and the threshold. *King Lear* opens at court, with its implicit setting of the royal castle that the monarch unwittingly abandons:

The castle is the place where the lords of the feudal era lived ...; the traces of centuries and generations are arranged in it in visible form as various parts of its architecture, in furnishings, weapons, the ancestral portrait gallery, the family archives and in the particular human relationships involving dynastic primacy and the transfer of hereditary rights. (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 246)

A rash transfer of power to his unloving daughters precipitates Lear’s movement from monarch to beggar, setting him on the road that artistically enables Lear’s outward and inward journey.

Often associated with the minor chronotope of the road is that of the encounter, signifying “the collapse of social distances. The chronotope of the road is both a point of new departures and a place for events to find their denouement. Time, as it were, fuses together with space and flows in it...” (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 243–244). In Lear’s encounter with Edgar disguised as a madman, the minor chronotope of the threshold replaces the time-space of the road. Entrance into the sheltering hut in the storm, which ironically substitutes for the former castle, becomes the locus for a “*break in a life*” (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 248). Citing Dostoevsky as an example, Bakhtin sees the threshold and its related time-spaces as the “places where crisis events occur, the falls, the resurrections, renewals, epiphanies, decisions that determine the whole life of a man” (*Dialogic* 248). As the above brief chronotopic explication of *King Lear* illustrates, Bakhtin’s concept of the chronotope allows for a concrete understanding of the significant temporal-spatial design choices that authors make that enable narration and dramatization.

Filmmakers, too, using their own particular era, geography, culture, and subjectivity, give situated meaning through chronotopic choices to their Shakespeare-inflected movies, creating layers of history, determining tone, and expressing (implicitly or explicitly) an ideology. The implications, aesthetic and political, of a particularized time-space that a movie director creates in response to Shakespeare's preexisting lines are many. Bakhtin's observations on quotation provide a way of grasping the dialogic range of contemporary filmmakers in connection to their chronotopic orientations:

Here a whole spectrum of possible relationships toward this [previous] word comes to light, beginning at one pole with the pious and inert quotation that is isolated and set off like an icon, and ending at the other pole with the most ambiguous, disrespectful, parodic-travesty use of quotation. The transitions between various nuances on this spectrum are to such an extent flexible, vacillating and ambiguous that it is often difficult to decide whether we are confronting a reverent use of a sacred word or a more familiar, even parodic playing with it.... (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 69–70)

When “iconic” cinematic quoting of Shakespeare's dramatic discourse occurs, the chronotope may centre on an imagined historical reconstruction of the Elizabethan world, with accompanying costumes, props, music, architecture, and stage traditions associated with Shakespeare's Globe. However, this is far from being the only chronotopic possibility, as several of the movies discussed here will confirm.

With filmic retellings of the plays, imaginative departures from the time-space of Shakespeare's England are the norm and can take several forms. Illustrative of this chronotopic range are Akira Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* (*Hamlet*) whose time-space is post-World War II corporate Japan, Uli Edel's *King of Texas* (*King Lear*), a nineteenth-century cattle ranch, Tom Magill's *Mickey B* (*Macbeth*), a contemporary Northern Ireland prison, Deepa Mehta's *Water* (*Romeo and Juliet*), a widow's ashram in colonial India, and Fred M. Wilcox's *Forbidden Planet* (*The Tempest*), Altair-4, many light years from the planet Earth. Although a few of these movies have parodic moments, most of them despite their selection of an historically “inappropriate” chronotope treat Shakespeare's play-texts seriously, even piously.

A good starting point for a more intensive discussion of the significance of chronotopic choices is Laurence Olivier's *Henry V*

(1944)—“the first Shakespeare sound feature to achieve ... critical *and* commercial success” (Rosenthal 60). Its director and lead actor is central to twentieth-century Shakespearean performance, and his enduring movie achieves much of its artistic power through proximity to the chronotope of the theatre:

Can this cock-pit hold
The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt? (“Prologue,” *Henry V* 11–14)

Olivier’s film, at both the beginning and the end, makes specific use of a theatrical time-space in its near-Platonic form: Shakespeare’s Globe. Just before a swooping, high-level camera shot establishes the historical London location of the “wooden O,” Olivier’s title has announced to the movie audience that it will be watching a stage production “played by The Lord Chamberlain’s Men at the Globe playhouse this day the first of May 1600,” and that “Will Shakespeare”—whose shortened, casually familiar name has not yet achieved iconic authority—is the writer. As the metadramatic “Prologue” indicates, the theatre is an unusual chronotope in that it is easily self-referential. Here, it can let us know how it will tell its story and solicit our imaginative participation. Olivier, the actor, “begins as Burbage the Globe actor, clearing his throat and setting a smile before making a grand entrance to win over the audience with thundering words and big gestures” (Jorgens 128), and in the process becomes Henry V.

But in Olivier’s film, two other story-telling media involving words and images are present: the illustrated book and the cinema. Together with the theatre, these three media—keyed to different eras with their distinct forms of chronotopic representations—embody and relate an overall narrative. They are dialogic to each other and, together, dialogic to Shakespeare’s play-text. The first time-space, chronologically, is a refined, medieval world represented by “depictions of French court and castles, built at Denham Studios and inspired by *Les très riches heures du Jean, duc de Berri*, a fourteenth-century illustrated calendar” (Rosenthal 62). The second historical time-space (which Olivier as director opens with) is the highly visual and verbal world of the Elizabethan theatre,

beginning back-stage with a boy player dressing up as Princess Katharine. It is essentially carnivalesque. The Globe's audience "is quick to mock the blunders of the actors, to cheer Falstaff's name and chief comedian, Pistol, to guffaw at bawdy jokes ..." (Jorgens 123). The third era that Olivier's *Henry V* evokes derives from our initial aerial point of view, which combines the technology of the airplane and the movie camera. The twentieth-century world of the cinema completes this assemblage of time-spaces revealed through historical modes of communication, whose materiality of expression ranges from ink and paint on paper to the human body itself to light exposed on celluloid. Through a narrative involving discontinuous chronotopes, Olivier achieves emotional and dramatic continuity.

In his complex dialogism with Shakespeare's *Henry V*, Olivier has a relatively clear purpose: to propagandize. "In 1943, the government believed a film of this most patriotic play would boost morale as British troops fought Hitler" (Rosenthal 60). Olivier included a dedication, which is subtly reinforced by the opening and closing bird's eye view: "To the commando and airborne troops of Great Britain, the spirit of whose ancestors it has been humbly attempted to recapture in some ensuing scenes, this film is dedicated." Henry V's triumph over the French at the Battle of Agincourt on St. Crispin's Day in 1415 was echoed in the famous defeat of another continental force, the Spanish Armada in 1588, in the age of Elizabethan and Shakespeare: both align with Britain's recent successful invasion of Normandy and presage victory on the continent against the German forces. Related to the propagandistic aim underlying this filmic re-utterance of Shakespeare's play, the variegated time-spaces signified by the three communication technologies set up a pattern of triumphant recurrence—one that supersedes the linearity, transformations, or unpredictability of history.

Olivier's hero, Henry V, like Shakespeare's, does not grow, change, or even deepen in consciousness. He is an uncomplicated protagonist who achieves improbable deeds against fierce odds through skill and courage. In serving the nation's aim of morale-boosting, Olivier and Alan Dent "reduced the play from 3000 to 1500 lines" and, in so doing, softened "Shakespeare's brutally uncompromising exploration of kingship, eliminating everything that might tarnish Henry's image: the treacherous earls are absent; Harfleur surrenders without Henry threatening to leave its 'naked infants spitted upon spikes' [(3.3.115)]; there is no mention of Bardolph's execution, no order from Henry that 'every soldier kill his

prisoners” [(4.6.37)] (Rosenthal 60, 63). Unlike Shakespeare’s Henry V, Olivier’s hero has no guile, cruelty, or sense of realpolitik. By propagandistic design, there is no ironic context complicating or qualifying Olivier’s main character. He is imaged simply as the inspiring adventure hero who—as with Bakhtin’s first ancient chronotope—is unaltered by the time-space in which his actions occur.

By depicting the Globe as carnivalesque, Olivier further downplays the horrors and effects of war. “The opening and closing scenes ... at the old Globe Theatre ... are played deliberately broad for comedy” (Jorgens 122). In contrast to the medieval French chronotope of a haughty court in a static, pictorial setting, the Renaissance England of the wooden O is full of activity, accessible to all, given to horse-play and rude humour. Democratic values are shown to be festive in a theatre for all the people, which is open to the sky. The theatrical time-space merges with the “Merry England” associated with public celebration and “the reign of good Queen Bess” with its special emphasis on “the May day festival” (Laroque 24, 111). This association—as well as spring being the season of renewal—perhaps explains why the play is supposedly being staged on May 1 rather than on the day of Henry V’s triumph at Agincourt, the Feast of St. Crispin, October 25. When the movie was released on November 22, 1944, English soldiers were still fighting and dying on the European continent. In that context, the festive aspects of the film, which has “heightened costumes and movement in [a] well-financed Technicolor work which sports the saturated colors of a Hollywood musical” (Jorgens 134), should feel incongruous. However, Olivier’s portrayal of a jolly, mirthful England centred on the theatre chronotope does not—despite the era of war and human slaughter in which his contemporary viewers existed—seem self-contradictory.

In the depiction of the Globe as carnivalesque fun, the director creates a kind of national dream, an idyllic time-space that asserts not only that this war, too, will be won but also that it is worth fighting. By merging the idyll with the Globe stage through which he retells *Henry V*, Olivier, in effect, promises that there will be ultimate victory and—after the foreshadowed military success—theatrical pleasure to be returned to, with applause at the end. This fantasy of Merry England is something that the director might plausibly hope would resonate with his World War II film audience. Many of the British wartime audience, who had lived through early military defeats and losses, would see in Henry V more than a fixed heroic type. By mentally situating him in the fuller context

of the *Henriad*, they could identify with the example of the scapegrace Prince Hal, a man of the people who transmutes failure and shame into redemptive triumph. The tetralogy's dramatic account of his transformation might very well buoy those first viewers. This more sophisticated awareness of history is comparable to Bakhtin's second ancient type, the adventure novel of everyday life, where time is linear yet with knots and crises, which—reassuringly, Shakespeare's cycle of history plays with Prince Hal as their focus demonstrates—can be surmounted.

With respect to Bakhtin's third major chronotope, the (auto) biographical, Olivier's *Henry V* offers only poignant glimpses. They are linked to the minor chronotope of the theatre. Although the expressive images and words of the communication technologies of the illustrated book and the cinema are given presence in this film as narrative media—the latter most memorably in an impressively choreographed battle scene shot outdoors—only the theatre is allowed a self-consciousness, through carnivalesque backstage activities and the appearance and re-appearances of the Chorus as our explicative guide. At the film's end, Olivier the actor having made “the transition from Burbage to Henry” reverses the process: “Henry once again in crude stage makeup and [the] boy actor made up as Katharine bow” (Jorgens 128, 275). This concluding moment of apparent biographical self-disclosure has Burbage stepping out of his royal role he has been playing. Simultaneously, for Olivier the actor there is an abandonment of his double role as both Burbage and Henry, again creating the sense of a biographical time-space.

In regard to Olivier's *Henry V* as a concatenated whole, its persuasive power stems from its interior chronotopic dialogism. The film closely accords with Bakhtinian theory: “[o]ne could say that ... the chronotope ... expands and intensifies the representation of diverse registers of time, from the narrowly mythical ... to the historically alive, fleshed out and future oriented” (Flanagan 88–89). At the movie's conclusion, when the airplane's camera swoops once more over the carefully constructed model of Shakespeare's Globe, Olivier the director signifies a return to the world he shares with the film-goers of that period: the London bombed out by the Blitz. But this city time-space is never shown. Instead, the dialogic interplay of a variety of historical time-spaces—the medieval, the Renaissance, and the modern—and their associated story-telling technologies creates a celebratory national vision that occludes the visible ruins of the present city by a promise of the future made visible by a triumphant past.

In keeping with the sustaining propose of propaganda, Olivier's retelling of *Henry V* uses heterogeneous chronotopes to shape a narrative that is partly escapist. The Merry England idyll embodied by the on-screen audience at the Globe is intended to induce hope in the off-screen audience leaving the cinema during World War II. While the director's choice of the adventure chronotope involving the heroic actions of Henry V is crucial to fulfilling that aim, the dialogic fusion of England's greatest war hero with the theatre time-space of her greatest writer within an idyllic chronotope is also essential to the achievement of the film's underlying ideology. Olivier's less obtrusive use of Bakhtin's other two major chronotopes, the adventure time of everyday life and the biographical, contribute to more subtle aspects of the film's emotive appeal.

When Kenneth Branagh directs and stars in his *Henry V* in 1989, there is a chain of dialogism that links back through Olivier to Shakespeare. Re-telling Olivier's initial representation of the Globe, Branagh re-locates the opening of his movie to a different media chronotope, the film set—in a gesture of artistic self-consciousness that connects him, in turn, with Shakespeare's "Prologue." Derek Jacobi as the Chorus walks through an empty movie sound stage with its idle cameras, lights, and props. He ends his speech by thrusting open a heavy double-door (onto the past?) and shouting out the final two words of the "Prologue": "our play" (l. 34). Branagh's indirect faithfulness to the Shakespearean stage, however, is less evident than his dialogism with Olivier's unchanging hero.

With Branagh, the fixed figure of the adventure hero is replaced by one who learns and develops—who exists within the major chronotope of biography. "In the opening scene, in place of the comic posturing of the shrewd Henry and fatuous Bishops of the 'salique law' passage in the Olivier film, we get an image, largely from Branagh's eyes and posture, of a Henry lonely, still unsure of himself, capable of being led" (Manheim 129). Part of Branagh's recontextualization of *Henry V* as a character situated in a biographical time-space involves the use of the war film genre. This cinematic context allows for a retelling of Shakespeare's and Olivier's narrative as a development of self.

As Donald K. Hedrick observes in "War is mud," "the dirt of this visually dark movie is a deliberate counter to the cleaner and brighter visuals of Olivier's film of the play" (Hedrick 215). In consonance with this artistic decision, the image of clear, simple, unvarying heroism that is given to Olivier's protagonist is also muddled. "Parts of Branagh's

night-time Harfleur sequence evoke *All Quiet on the Western Front*, as MacMorris and Fluellen take cover from explosions in a trench, while Agincourt ... recalls the Shrewsbury carnage in *Chimes at Midnight*, as knights and soldiers hack away in agonized slow-motion, the sordid Pistol and Nym loot the dead, and Nym is killed as he steals" (Rosenthal 65). In exploiting war's chronotopic image of mud—"on the battle-field, on the troops, and on the King himself" (Hedrick 214)—Branagh ironizes Olivier's heroic adventure time-space by dialogizing cinematic variants on the war-as-hell sub-genre. By doing so, Branagh mutates Shakespeare's play into the biographical genre of the *bildungsroman*.

In the context of tragedy, the films of *Hamlet* by Olivier and Branagh, too, pose the question of chronotopic choices and their relative fidelity to Shakespeare. Olivier's adaptation will be discussed in my fourth chapter. Branagh's *Hamlet*, which has already been cited as coming from heritage traditions, is notable among movies of this play for several reasons, including its "unabridged" length: it has a running time slightly in excess of 4 hours. Most Shakespeare films, "aiming for the 'ideal' running time of less than 2 hours, ... have used no more than 25–30% of the original text" (Jackson, Russell 17). Paradoxically, Branagh's extraordinary faithfulness to Shakespeare's textual utterance very probably contradicts the historical theatrical experience. By conflating lines from both the Second Quarto and First Folio, Branagh mixes two distinct texts of *Hamlet* and almost certainly exceeds the duration of performances at the original Globe. With regard to the depicted time-spaces, there is a historicized, recognizably European setting, centred on the minor chronotope of the castle. However, Branagh treats this chronotopic choice ironically.

His innovative design detail of a stone statue of Hamlet, Sr. set up on the perimeter of Elsinore Castle personifies royal lineage and the orderly inheritance within the castle time-space. But by having the army of Fortinbras smash down the statue of the former king before seizing Elsinore Castle—with its endlessly mirrored interior walls—Branagh encapsulates the actions of Hamlet within the futility of a recurring revenge motif. The panels of reflecting glass, which have an anachronistic association with contemporary urban architecture, occupy the space where ancestral portraits traditionally hang. This displacement signifies not only a denial of the possibility of legitimate succession but also presents an entirely antithetical system of social values. The surrounding mirrored walls constitute a public space through images of persons randomly passing, characters who mock any respect for hierarchical figures, encourage the vanity of self-regarding, and denote transience.

Within this enclosure of mirrors, there is no locatable reference to one's role in a stable society. Left with only dream-like, reflective images bouncing off glass, everyone, necessarily, focuses on their own floating and fleeting ego. Branagh's chronotopic selection refracts the world as a mirrored passageway—where people move along to usurp another's image on the glassy wall, before being shunted aside in turn. By the choice of this chronotopic detail, the director dialogically captures an overarching theme of the Shakespeare's play.

Further obtruding upon the historical time-space associated with the castle, Branagh inserts unexpected shots of a railroad. The industrial age of railways, with its attendant values of mechanization and dehumanization, clashes even more overtly than Branagh's interior mirrored castle with Shakespeare's world. Thus, Branagh effects an ideological time-space shift that ironically retells Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. This dialogism of chronotopes results in a considerably weakened image of the protagonist as a reluctant but ultimately successful hero. Through the modern chronotopic intrusions of the railroad and the omnipresent, corporate-like walls of glass—which are dialogic to each other in signifying the technologies and economic forces of the nineteenth- and twentieth centuries—Branagh renders Hamlet's tragic heroism somewhat dubious: anachronistic and naive. The director undermines, through discordant time-spaces, the traditional order that the castle chronotope represents and where the hero's actions possess coherent social meaning. Composed of minor chronotopes that conflict historically, Branagh's film creates the major chronotope of the biographical, in which his protagonist exists problematically. Although often perceived to be a heritage work, this retelling of *Hamlet*, with its sense of disconnection and historical uncertainty, also feels contemporaneous.

Having considered examples of films that adapt Shakespeare's histories and tragedies, it is interesting to look briefly at a comedy in terms of the director's choice of chronotopes. Michael Radford's *The Merchant of Venice*, a play that the First Folio designates as a comedy, appears to approximate the time-space of Shakespeare's work. However, unlike the play, the movie opens with images of burning Torahs. In negotiation with wary, post-Holocaust sensitivities, these images reframe the anti-Semitism that follows. Although the time-space of death camps—which has been shown in numerous films (both documentary and fiction)—is visually omitted, painful chronotopic images of that horror and slaughter are, nevertheless, evoked in the minds of most viewers. Through an initial semiotic image of visceral anti-Semitism, the spitting in the face of a

Jew, Radford makes a dialogic link to the twentieth-century Holocaust. By doing so, the director historically re-contextualizes and reconfigures Shylock, so that the antagonist of Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* becomes Radford's suffering protagonist. Laughter is absent throughout. To accommodate himself to the contemporary time-space of his film-making, the director subverts the play's indexical placement within the genre of comedy, whose Shakespearean signature of a concluding marriage is reduced almost to an irrelevancy. Through disturbing images of the locked Jewish ghetto, Radford reconceives Shakespeare's Venetian time-space of merchants, commercial endeavor, and maritime trade as a prison chronotope.

This film—like Branagh's *Hamlet* and the two versions of *Henry V* discussed—makes clear that heritage is not sameness. Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope reveals a diachronic tension in all of these cinematic adaptations. Although their responsiveness to Shakespeare's plays is evident not only in their commitment, in the main, to appropriate historical time-spaces but also in their quotation of much of his dramatic utterances, they all pose the question of infidelity.

The repetition of distant words is more difficult than it seems, as Jorge Luis Borges reminds us in "Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Quixote*." In that story, the protagonist's "aim was never to produce a mechanical transcription of the original" but "to produce pages which would coincide—word for word and line for line—with those of Miguel de Cervantes" (49):

[Menard] undertook a task that was complex in the extreme and futile from the outset. He dedicated his conscience and nightly studies to the repetition of a pre-existing book in a foreign tongue. The number of rough drafts kept on increasing; he tenaciously made corrections and tore up thousands of manuscript pages. (Borges 54)

In this amusing and insightful paradox, Borges narrates how Pierre Menard's imaginative labour, "which is subterranean, interminably heroic, and unequalled," produces fragments of an identical but new novel that "is more subtle than that of Cervantes" (48, 51).

With this quixotic piece of fiction, Borges imaginatively sets out Bakhtin's premise of unrepeatability, in which the exact words of another are assimilated into a distinct and creative act of re-utterance even if the two discourses are identical. Although perfect agreement appears

deferential, duplicative, and monologic, it necessarily involves speech by two or more temporally separated speakers, and the later voice (in this case the filmmaker in relationship to Shakespeare) retains—even if unwished—an inescapable singularity of utterance:

Two or more sentences can be absolutely identical (when they are superimposed on one another, like two geometrical figures, they coincide).... But as an utterance (or part of an utterance) no one sentence, even if it has only one word, can ever be repeated: it is always a new utterance (even if it is a quotation). (Bakhtin, *Speech* 108)

The logic of this passage denies the possibility of the monologic. It also explains how actors in performance can repeat identical words as new utterances night after night—usually after they have already dialogized them in multiple ways in rehearsal.

Although the term “dialogism” usually refers to difference and opposition, it is important to recognize that as “Bakhtin observed, agreement, too, is a dialogic relation” (Morson and Emerson 4). Joseph Grigely, who also uses Borges’s fiction to explain Bakhtinian theory, argues that “Bakhtin’s position is one that suggests that the utterance’s singularity is protected by the utterance’s volatility: we can never go back to that utterance with complete assurance, can never, literally or conceptually, conceive it in totality” (106). From this perspective, all cinematic adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays can be understood as double-voiced responses that imitate and initiate: co-authorings.

Jean-Luc Godard illustrates this Bakhtinian notion in response to an interviewer who quotes from the autobiographical documentary, *JLG/JLG*: “An image is the creation of the mind by drawing together two different realities; the further apart the realities, the stronger the image” (Sterritt 189). When the interviewer observes that this quotation also appears in Godard’s film, *Passion*, the director mentions, “It’s in *King Lear*, too. It’s a poem by Pierre Reverdy, one of the first dada surrealists ...” (Sterritt 189). But, even in the act of acknowledging the source, Godard makes a claim of ownership: “That’s an old quotation. There’s almost not a word of my own in *JLG/JLG*, but since I was reading and noting them, they became mine” (Sterritt 189). Analogously, films relatively faithful to Shakespeare’s lines (such as those examined above) become co-authored utterances due to the later historical situatedness of the filmmaker—with the ownership of the pre-existing words shifting towards the recent speaker’s quotation of them.

In Bakhtinian theory, there is no choice except dialogism. Even if the transposition to a different medium were disregarded, there can be no simple “repetition” of an utterance. While in Shakespearean heritage movies the diachronic is often muted—in order to give the illusion of a single historical plane—other filmmakers highlight the dialogism of time-spaces. This latter group creates a heteroglot or polyglot consciousness of at least two kinds of words and voicings through differentiated locales, layers of time, and languages. Their co-authoring is marked off as openly dialogic. If even with relatively faithful cinematic adaptations there is significant chronotopic dialogism, then what of Shakespeare-inflected films that overtly depart from both his words and his world? Does “Shakespeare” vanish altogether?

Bakhtin’s premise is the opposite:

in art, we recognize everything and we remember everything But this is precisely why the constituent of novelty, originality, unexpectedness, freedom has such significance in art, for here there is a background against which novelty, originality, freedom can be apprehended—the recognized and coexperienced world of cognition and action. It is this world that looks and sounds in a new way in art, and it is in relation to this world that the artist’s activity is perceived—as free. (*Art* 279–280)

Chronotopic examples of this aesthetic and cognitive phenomena of novelty include the substitution of a military tank for “a horse” (5.7.13) in Richard Loncraine’s *Richard III*, a rifle for a “long sword” (1.1.68) in Baz Luhrmann’s *Romeo + Juliet*, and a Pepsi machine for “the cellarage” (1.5.153) in Michael Almereyda’s *Hamlet*. Paradoxically, through unexpected linguistic displacement and updating, Shakespeare’s words may take on greater freshness and emphasis against a background of thwarted viewer expectations.

For Bakhtin, “any and every literary image is chronotopic” (*Dialogic* 251), and, in the examples just given, the startling temporal shift from the Early Modern period to contemporaneity is achieved through vivid time-space images of shifted technology. In their dialogic non-recurrence, such chronotopic images become markers of disjunction, of a strongly Bakhtinian retelling that—often for comic reasons—exposes the heteroglot gap between Shakespeare’s historical utterances and current speech. Because many Shakespearean lines exist as a familiar background for native speakers of English and others globally, their voicing within

contemporary chronotopes—however truncated, translated, misquoted, isolated, and occluded—creates dialogic retellings and novelty through a reckoning with history and global dispersal from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century London. Via shocking, frequently carnivalesque dislocations of the Shakespearean time-space, the viewer can experience an acute recollection of what is missing on screen. Paradoxically, striking or witty chronotopic dialogism may reinvigorate the verbal imagery of his distant theatrical world.

With respect to Shakespeare-inflected films in other languages, the director's dialogic freedom becomes even greater due to the added distance inherent in any act of translation—one that necessitates an awareness of cultural variegation, non-congruence, and, frequently, political opposition. However, some audiences may be unaware of the heteroglot or polyglot dialogism, perceiving the act of co-authoring to be “monologic.” Such perceptions may occur even in anglophone films. For example, a friend was surprised to learn that *She's the Man* had a link to *Twelfth Night*.

Whatever the choices about time-space dialogism in Shakespeare-inflected films—hidden or overt—Bakhtin reminds us that “[t]he represented world, however realistic and truthful, can never be chronotopically identical with the real world it represents, where the author and creator of the literary work is to be found” (*Dialogic* 256). He comically emphasizes this gap between the artistic and the biological, even with a first-person narrator: “It is just as impossible to forge an identity between myself, my own ‘I,’ and that ‘I,’ that is the subject of my stories as it is to lift myself up by my own hair” (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 256). In his earliest writings, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, Bakhtin stresses in dense, Kantian prose that

[a]esthetic intuition is unable to apprehend the actual event-ness of the once-occurrent event, for its images or configurations are objectified, that is, with respect to their content, they are placed outside actual once-occurrent becoming—they do not partake in it (they partake in it only as a constituent moment in the alive and living consciousness of a contemplator). (1)

Through the heteroglossia or polyglossia of their Shakespeare-inflected movies, filmmakers announce their own sense of artifice, and acknowledge thereby a separation from real events. But in their laying bare of the device of chronotopic dialogism, they are able to make tangential links to

contemporary actuality, expressing indirectly via their chosen time-spaces their individual experiences and ideologies.

For example, Tim Blake Nelson retells *Othello* in *O* (2001) using the contemporary minor chronotope of the basketball court at a privileged white prep school as a site of jealousy and violence, thereby voicing an American perspective on racism. The time-space of the basketball court has emerged fairly recently among several chronotopes that are linked to popular sports: the baseball diamond, the football field, the ice rink, and the soccer pitch. All of these have their own histories, cultural contexts, and associated values. Nelson dialogizes *Othello* by chronotopically layering the world of elite school basketball onto Shakespeare's mytho-historical Venice.

The director's cinematic co-authoring in *O* foregoes nearly all of Shakespeare's lines by substituting colloquial American speech, including African-American Vernacular Speech (or what is sometimes controversially known as Ebonics). Aside from an excerpt from a teacher's thematically relevant lecture to distracted students about how manipulative imagery can induce evil behavior—which has a quote from Lady Macbeth chalked on the board [“How tender ‘tis to love the babe that milks me” (1.7.55)]—the filmmaker conspicuously avoids Shakespeare's lines. With *O*, a fidelity critique—to change a word in a recitation is to make a mistake—would be a category error. Nelson is typical of indie directors in drawing upon narrative elements of a Shakespearean play while using the costuming, props, and speech of contemporary chronotopes to create character-based realism.

In his re-shaping, the American time-space is largely defined by marginalization, dislocation, and racism. The prep school functions as a microcosm of the tensions, racial privileges, and violence of the larger society with its fervid gun culture. (The film's release was reportedly delayed a year because of the Columbine High School massacre.) Other recent films that resituate Shakespeare's plays within a school setting include Peter Weir's *Dead Poets Society* (1986), Gil Junger's *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999), Léa Pool's *Lost and Delirious* (2001), and Andy Fickman's *She's the Man* (2006). In the teenaged time-space of *O*, a talented African-American athlete, Odin James (Mekhi Phifer), unknowingly blocks the recognition—both public and paternal—of his white schoolmate, Hugo (Josh Hartnett), an Iago figure who plots revenge. Nelson's dialogism involves not only updating Shakespeare's chronotope through contemporary images and ideology, but also extends to a

documentary narrative, *Hoop Dreams* (1994), which offers real-life parallels in which racialized prejudices and basketball prowess contend.

The director of *O* imaginatively reverses and recontextualizes Shakespeare's rhetoric on race and racism through an initial focus on whiteness. With opening imagery of white birds linked to Hugo's lyrical voice-over, the outsidership that is Othello's in Shakespeare's play is first associated with Hugo. This reversal derives from the fact that in the National Basketball Association blackness is the prominent image of success. On the hardwood floor, it is Hugo who is looking in from the fringe of the huddle as the coach scripts a play centred on Odin's outstanding ability. Because for much of the film the tight, hand-held camera reacts quickly to keep this star player in the frame as he swerves past (mainly) white opponents—and since the film editor never cuts away from the basketball being released from the shooter's hand until after it falls through the hoop—the footage in its visual continuity “documents” the actor's triumphant athleticism. The cinematographer, in effect, validates the character's self-assured, dominating on-court presence, which engenders Hugo's racially tinged envy.

An Oedipal grievance further motivates this resentment and urge for revenge: the coach who ignores Hugo is his father (Martin Sheen). As a dialogic variation on Shakespeare's Iago, Hugo is made more sympathetic, partly due to his adolescence and partly due to his psychological distress. “With Hugo, Nelson seems conflicted, torn between presenting a condemnable villain and recuperating Iago's perfidy, as well as the high school genre itself” (Brown, “Cinema” 80). Hartnett's performance, through its exposure of the inner motivations of Hugo's character, achieves a disturbing complexity. By using the minor chronotope of basketball in retelling *Othello* through a contemporary lens, Nelson makes visible America's ethnic rapprochements and hatreds. With an ideology that is related to but distinct from that inherent in Shakespeare's Jacobean utterance, Nelson particularizes in his artistic time-space the legacy of slavery, freedom, inequality, uncertain affirmation, and murder in the United States.

In this responsive revoicing of Shakespeare's tragedy, Odin's vulnerability as virtually the only African-American at the prep school emerges off-court—a dialogic restatement of Othello's psychological and social uncertainties as an ethnic and cultural outsider beyond his respected military role. The protagonist of *O*, like Othello, is ambiguously situated. Both are valued for their function as effective leaders acting on behalf

of a mostly xenophobic society. Odin's two opposing chronotopes, the prep school and the ghetto, are congruent only on a third: the basketball court. In a fraught moment of interior dialogized heteroglossia, the director graphically renders Odin's troubled identity as an outsider from the African-American ghetto existing within a privileged prep school chronotope. Through a fantasized racial transformation that is as much a frustrated wish as a threat, Odin, out of a mixture of curiosity, narcissism, and anxiety, watches himself in the mirror making love to a white girl, Desi (Julia Stiles), and sees his dark naked image replaced by that of Michael, his handsome, wealthy, white-skinned teammate. "Not only does the mirror shot image a fantasized homoerotic relationship that suggests a floating sexuality, it also momentarily turns O into a white boy, a threat to his identity that he plays out in anger, despite her telling him to stop, on Desi's body" (Hodgdon 103). Nelson's rendering of Odin's traumatic confusion through semiotic images of race that American history has made into opposing and resistant binaries is innovative, yet, at the same time, remains comparable to Shakespeare's verbal imagery that reveals Othello's tragic unbelonging.

In his on-court role, Odin, like Othello as General, is in command, but off-court he is plagued by an uncertain social status, as is Othello outside of the chain of command. If Venice and North Africa represent conflicting time-spaces that define Othello's identity, then Odin's chronotopic split between an elite prep school and the ghetto creates an internal heteroglossia that corresponds to that within Shakespeare's characterization. In what single language can Odin speak for himself? With Verdi's *Otello* and gangsta rap alternating on the sound track, the director of *O* creates something akin to Bakhtin's concept of polyglossia: "the simultaneous presence of two or more national languages interacting within a single cultural system" (Holquist, in Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 431). The auditory presence of contrastive musical types in *O*, opera and rap—both dialogically remote from the music of Shakespeare's England—vocalizes not only historical and linguistic differences (Italian and English), but also the chasm in socio-economic time-spaces between the privileged and the ghettoized. The filmmaker's jarring alternation of opera and rap expresses the protagonist's dialogized "polyglot" interior speech, and vocalizes indirectly Odin's divided self, one that is explicated by the two antithetical time-spaces that he tries to inhabit simultaneously.

The dialogic *mélange* of contradictory music also reflexively discloses the filmmaker's own heteroglot and hybridized act of chronotopic

retelling, implicitly mingling ghettoized contemporary speech with the “classical” utterance of Shakespeare. Nelson’s film, expressive of its moment, place, and angle of re-utterance, is chronotopically dialogic with *Othello*, and for some contemporary film viewers the omitted Shakespearean language is likely more elusive than allusive. In Bakhtinian terms, *O* “refutes, affirms, supplements, and relies on” Shakespeare’s dramatic utterance (*Speech* 119). Like *Othello*, the plot of *O* concludes with catastrophe, and in both works the rhetoric of the dynamic imagery—verbal and visual—concerning ethnicity remains, in Bakhtin’s terms, unfinalized. In its co-authoring, Nelson’s *O* is oriented towards the present-day, but despite its modernizing chronotopic choices, it remains responsive to Shakespeare’s theatrical discourse.

If a filmmaker creates out of the specific moment and particularized world he or she inhabits, how does this concept extrapolate to Shakespearean translations and retellings on “foreign” screens? Akira Kurosawa’s other-language *Kumonosu-jô* (1957), like *O*, retells a Shakespearean tragedy on film without quoting any of its words. Although much less obviously than Nelson’s movie, Kurosawa’s film—titled in English as *Throne of Blood* (North America) and *The Castle of the Spider’s Web* (Britain)—is also, despite its historical chronotope, a contemporary ideological utterance. Without translating a line of *Macbeth* into Japanese, this “foreign” film is a tense, subtle, inward yet detached exploration of character, plot, and theme that re-imagines Shakespeare’s theatrical discourse. *Throne of Blood* is clearly a dialogic act, an imaginative rejoinder via a personal vantage point from another culture and a different era.

Also key to the extra-aesthetic present of Kurosawa’s filmmaking, paradoxically, is the medieval Japanese epic, *The Tale of the Heike*. “Large structural elements” make their way into the film (Anderer 47). With roots in a narrative from both Kurosawa’s native tradition and Shakespearean tragedy, a polyglot speech communion is created. The director uses the medieval setting of both sources as paired, distant mirrors to express—from the zone of post-World War II and post-American Occupation of Japan—a sense of disenchantment and futility. Against the ashy backdrop of the recent defeat of Japan’s military aspirations, *Throne of Blood*, with its cycles of violence, voices a cool, sometimes mocking perspective on the delusive pursuit of power—an ideology that Kurosawa’s dialogic engagement with *Hamlet* in *The Bad Sleep Well* conveys more directly via the choice of a modern corporate chronotope.

In *Throne of Blood*, the minor chronotope of the castle carries much allegorical and ironic significance. To become the lord of Kumonosu Castle, Washizu, the Macbeth figure, kills the lord of Kumonosu Castle (who had killed the previous lord), and in the film's famous culmination Washizu (Toshirô Mifune) is killed there spectacularly in a virtual forest of arrows. The violent politics of over-reaching ambition, incessant warfare, and abrupt discontinuities reflect Japan's experience at the time of Kurosawa's filmmaking. In ironic counterpoint to what the castle time-space represents, dynastic primacy and the transfer of hereditary rights, Kurosawa uses this minor chronotope as a chaotic site of disloyalty, which lacks a viable tradition, familial continuity, or the possibility of orderly succession. In his co-authoring, he dialogically reverses Shakespeare's ending to *Macbeth*, which ostensibly at least is one of royal restoration, reaffirmation of political and moral order, and the positing of divine redemption: "by the grace of grace" (5.11.38). In Kurosawa's retelling, there is no legitimacy, only egotism, mist-shrouded ignorance, killings, and existential pointlessness.

His film also has surprising dialogic ties to another chronotope, one that has crystallized into a genre: the Hollywood Western. Kurosawa's admiration for John Ford, the director of *Stagecoach*, *My Darling Clementine*, and *The Searchers*, is well known: "I feel I would like to resemble [him] as I grow old" (*Something* xii). But *Throne of Blood*, unlike *Seven Samurai*, is an anti-Western. Kurosawa in revoicing *Macbeth* shows no horse and cowboy galloping freely across majestic open prairies against magnificent mountain backdrops or menacing massed figures atop hillsides. Instead, he films two horses spooked by a mysterious creature—a paring down of Shakespeare's three witches—who spins a wheel inside a bamboo cage. Then these same two horses with their distraught riders begin circling too, until exhausted and lost in woods and fog. Later, when Washizu is urged by his wife to commit murder, a single horse relentlessly careens outside their dwelling, around and around, inside a walled-off courtyard—kinetically imaging both indecision and the emptiness of the human ambition that animates and imprisons Kurosawa's protagonist.

Subsequently, a violent horse escapes a retainer's control and bolts, not only signifying the release of Washizu's homicidal impulses but also reprising the technical turning point in Shakespeare's tragedy—the first critical thwarting of the protagonist's goal when Fleance on horseback escapes Macbeth's murderous plans (3.4.19). Fittingly, for a retelling

of a drama about regicide, this animal later returns masterless. In making dialogic use of the western chronotope that has become a genre, Kurosawa transmutes its central symbol of the horse as signifying freedom into an illustration of Buddhist tenets. Like the fogged-in, backtracking, madly charging pair of horses, and the later circling, bolting, riderless horse, Washizu is caught up in the delusive realm of Samsara, the futile cycle of earthly existence that also confounds Macbeth: “Life’s but a walking shadow .../.../ Signifying nothing” (5.5.24, 28).

Whereas the Western uses violence narratively to enforce a moral code, Kurosawa’s film in its verbal and imaged discourse denies any inherent ethical meaning to its slaughter-filled plot. However, an on-screen text, “The devil’s path will always lead to doom,” functions as a Buddhist analogue to Shakespeare’s Christian references in *Macbeth*. While the movie’s moral perspective is externalized, the characters remain caught uncomprehendingly in a vicious circle of violence. As with *The Tale of the Heike*, “[r]epeatedly, in the wake of every disaster or defeat in battle, the tale will draw out certain Buddhist lessons: of the impermanence of worldly things, of the necessary fall of the proud and the mighty. Many episodes highlight alliances but also treachery between warriors” (Anderer 46). Through the spinning wheel of the phantom witch-like figure, a graphic representation of the Buddhist wheel that inexorably links birth to death, Kurosawa shows that human desire for power is an entrapment, thereby explicating the cause of suffering as a psychological attachment to mastering the revolving physical world.

Anthony Dawson points out that Washizu’s death functions as a “black comedy,” since the “whole sequence is excessive and contrived, so many arrows, so few actually finding their mark” (172). Here, Kurosawa half-parodically dialogizes the Hollywood Western, making exaggerated use of a familiar convention of the genre whereby Indian arrows or bullets just miss hitting the isolate hero. Fusing a medieval Japanese time-space, *The Tale of the Heike*, with an ironic use of the Western movie chronotope, Kurosawa re-utters Shakespeare’s Scottish play to voice disillusionment with militarism and self-aggrandizement. Instead of translating the play-text of *Macbeth* word for word (a problematic variant on the already problematic recital mode), the film director instead shapes a polyglot work of great artistry that emerges from a chain of contending time-spaces to express his contemporary ideology.

From a Bakhtinian standpoint, Kurosawa’s other-languaged *Kumonosu-jō* shares with Nelson’s indie *O* a similar approach: a dialogism

of chronotopes. Both films are creative acts of co-authoring in which Shakespeare's preexisting lines are essentially inaudible but, nevertheless, present. By removing Jacobean English from their soundscapes, both directors work with dialogic freedom to make chronotopic choices that refract their own cultures, eras, and ideologies. Bakhtin's observations about the novel as a genre are transferable to such filmmaking: "Out of the actual chronotopes of our world (which serve as the source of representation) emerge the reflected and *created* chronotopes of the world represented in the work (in the [film] text)" (*Dialogic* 253). Embodied in extra-aesthetic reality, "the author-creator, finding himself outside the chronotope of the world he represents in his work, is nevertheless not simply outside but as it were tangential to these chronotopes" (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 256). In relating their contemporaneity to Shakespeare's theatrical utterances through internally dialogized speech, non-heritage filmmakers can express individual perspectives. Their retellings, for the most part, use colloquial prose and are situated in locales remote from the Globe Theatre's chronotope and aura. In this transformative process, directors fragment, translate, obscure, distort, contemporize, and leave unspoken Shakespeare's words, making use of what Sobchack sees as unique about Bakhtin's chronotopic phenomenology: "its structural provision of historical specificity, relativity, and dynamism" (151).

Of the binary approaches set out by Bakhtin to the already uttered—recital or retelling—the directors of *O* and *Throne of Blood* choose the latter, which correlates with radically altered time-spaces that carry ideological implications. Such filmmakers, in their retellings, do no more than Shakespeare himself did. For example, his stage play, *Julius Caesar*, is also a co-authoring in a different medium involving polyglossia. Dialogically re-uttering Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* (as translated by Sir Thomas North), Shakespeare refracts contemporary concerns about the nature of monarchy, its uncertain succession, and a fear of civil war near the end of the Elizabethan period. As Marjorie Garber observes, like Elizabeth, "Caesar was a ruler without an heir of his own body, as Shakespeare's Caesar makes clear in the second scene of the play, when he urges Anthony to touch Calpurnia, Caesar's wife, when he races in the Feast of Lupercal, the ancient festival of fruitfulness and fertility..." (410). Garber notes that this episode was not in the Plutarchan source (410). In short, Shakespeare makes polyglot use of an account of Caesar's life to articulate a political concern of his own day. For Bakhtin, "the artist of the word ... finds literature to be already on

hand: it is necessary for him to fight against or for old literary forms, to make use of them, to combine them, to overcome their resistance or to find support in them" (*Art* 284). Behind the formal choices made by the artist concerning various time-spaces that represent the actual world lies the individual artist's own experience and cognition.

In keeping with Bakhtin's observations, directors of Shakespeare-inflected films refract in their chronotopic choices the disquieting issues of the world they live in, via a tangential connectedness:

at the heart of all this movement and struggle within the bounds of a purely literary context, there is a more essential, determining primary struggle with the reality of action and cognition: in his work, if it is significant and serious, every artist is *the first artist*, as it were; *he must immediately assume an aesthetic position with regard to the extra-aesthetic reality of action and cognition*, even if only within the bounds of his purely personal ethical-biographical experience. Neither the work of art as a whole nor any constituent of it can be understood in terms of abstract regularities alone. (*Art* 284)

In their mixture of attachment to and departure from the authority of Shakespeare's words, anglophone and non-anglophone directors share a dialogic method.

But there are significant chronotopic distinctions between these two huge subsets of Shakespeare-inflected films. Although both usually "translate" Shakespeare's words into current speech, thereby foregrounding a historical distance, "foreign-languaged" filmmakers retell from within an alternative, alien, and sometimes "colonized" point of view. English-speaking directors do so from a vantage point of seeming linguistic continuity—though one that is quite often experienced as a rupture, with a consequent sense of protest and loss. The created chronotopes for these two subsets of dialogic filmmaking can differ greatly in their geographical and socio-linguistic refractions of Shakespeare's words. To take an obvious example, filmmakers from Asia or Africa might be shaped by post-colonial sensibilities that resist English as an instrument of imperialism. By contrast, anglophone directors might feel inspired, proud, inadequate, or stifled by the linguistic heritage of Shakespeare's dramatic works. However, both groups of directors in response to his plays frequently use the same techniques of parody, irony, and satire as tactics of self-assertion and oppositionality, and with regard to the aesthetic representation of reality and its underlying ideology, they both acknowledge the contingencies of time and history.

Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope helps to explain the simultaneous existence in literature or film of "phenomena taken from widely separate periods of time":

the process of assimilating an actual historical chronotope in literature has been complicated and erratic; certain isolated aspects of the chronotope, available in given historical conditions, have been worked out, although only certain specific forms of an actual [extra-aesthetic] chronotope were reflected in art. These generic forms, at first productive, were then reinforced by tradition; in their subsequent development they continued stubbornly to exist, up to and beyond the point at which they had lost any meaning that was productive in actuality or adequate to later historical situations. (*Dialogic* 85)

While the inadequacy of Shakespeare's plays to later historical situations runs counter to my own experience, I can understand why Radford in *The Merchant of Venice* reconceives Shakespeare's comedy as a "problem play." There are also economic and cultural reasons why Billy Morrisette retells Shakespeare's tragedy of *Macbeth* as a comedy in *Scotland, PA* (to be discussed in Chap. 8).

Even without transposing a play's generic form, film directors often noticeably break with Shakespeare's settings through updating—making their dialogic retellings visible through innovative chronotopic choices. *O* is an obvious example of such a work. The motivation behind such transformations is explained by an inset scene: a classroom of students disengaged from Shakespeare's art. To try to make his plays accessible or relevant, many directors of Shakespeare on film behave like Bakhtin's novelist:

In the first place, he does the observing from his own unresolved and still evolving contemporaneity, in all its complexity and fullness, insofar as he himself is located as it were tangentially to the reality he describes. That contemporaneity from which the author observes includes, first and foremost, the realm of literature—and not only contemporary literature in the strict sense of the word, but also the literature of the past that continues to live and renew itself in the present. The realm of literature and more broadly of culture (from which literature cannot be separated) constitutes the indispensable context of a literary work and of the author's position within it, outside of which it is impossible to understand either the work or the author's intentions reflected in it. (*Dialogic* 255–256)

Contemporaneity informs the director's artistry as a reflection of his or her extracinematic experience and cognition. In Bakhtin's theorizing, "the world of aesthetic seeing—the world of art" (*Act 61*)—which is extrapolated here to cinema, has widespread communicative and even epistemological value. He asserts that in its "concreteness and its permeatedness with an emotional-volitional tone, this world [of art] is closer than any of the abstract cultural worlds" to "the actual world-as-event" (*Act 61*).

However, it is striking that two of the most popular Shakespeare films, Olivier's *Henry V* and John Madden's *Shakespeare in Love*, centre on an artistic form of representation consciously removed from historical reality, the idyll—and use the chronotope of the Globe Theatre to embody it. As we have seen in discussion of the multiple time-spaces of Olivier's *Henry V*, this theatrical chronotope takes on the pleasingly hermetic qualities of the unchanging: "This little spatial world is limited and sufficient unto itself, not linked in any intrinsic way with other places, with the rest of the world" (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 225). By reprising as a unifying chronotope at a time of national crisis a "remembered" Globe theatre rendered a-historical and ageless by Shakespeare's plays, Olivier creates an idyllic chronotope, "primarily defined by the *unity of place*" with an "immanent unity of folkloric time" (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 225). It is an idealized space cordoned off from alarming historical events.

François Laroque asserts that "[u]nder the Stuarts, people set about retrospectively re-creating the myth of 'Merry England' and began to hark back nostalgically to a joyful, festive England ..." (4). Olivier's "vivid depiction of a Globe performance of *Henry V* ... surely influenced the theatre scenes in *Shakespeare in Love*" (Rosenthal 60). Madden's film, the winner of seven Academy Awards, celebrates even more fully than Olivier's the vitality of this idyllic time-space, albeit with revisionary dialogism about what is historically known—and the inclusion of a feminist and democratic ideology. Although these two film productions do not emphasize the idyll's feature of generations rooted in a single rural locale with its "cyclic rhythmicalness of time" (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 225), the seasonal images and settings of many of Shakespeare's plays, which are co-extensive with a disappearing agricultural world, create a nostalgic time-space.

It is from a seasonal perspective that Northrop Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism* formulates his theory of archetypes and, in that theoretical framing, Shakespeare's plays as a whole—made up of diverse genres—reflect the cyclical rhythm of folkloric time: Spring (comedy), summer

(romance), fall (tragedy), and winter (irony or satire). Olivier's spring-time retelling of the tangled historical dynamism of the Wars of the Roses as a timeless Shakespearean idyll combines with the heroics of Henry V. The King is given the sealed-off characteristics of epic space, which, in Bakhtinian terms, is "an 'absolute past,' a time of founding fathers and heroes, separated by an unbridgeable gap from the real time of the *present day*..." (*Dialogic* 218). Ironically, that gap is exactly what Olivier as propagandist sought to overcome through an analogy to his nation's World War II combatants.

As the success of Olivier's film demonstrates, the idyllic chronotope is not insulated psychologically from a modern zone of cognition, experience, and action. Bakhtin points out with regard to the development of the novel that an idyllic time-space can also involve nostalgic or ironic commentary on another chronotope within the same aesthetic utterance: "The destruction of the idyll may be treated, of course, in a multitude of ways" (*Dialogic* 233). For the bored students in *O, Shakespeare's* language and theatre is experienced as the opposite of idyllic. Bakhtin writes about the "overturning and demolishing of the world view and psychology of the idyll," since it proves "increasingly inadequate to the new capitalist world" (*Dialogic* 234). The word "new" should be stressed, as Shakespeare's London, too, was increasingly capitalist and therefore seemingly antithetical to the rural traditions that nurtured the idyll. *Shakespeare in Love* shows a rapidly expanding centre of commerce, albeit without the pervasive forces of industrialization that Bakhtin presumably references. The time-space of the idyll that is directly associated with Shakespeare in two hugely popular films indicates the ongoing appeal of a chronotope that exists "in isolation from the uninterrupted process of historical becoming that is characteristic of all living language" (*Dialogic* 228). In Bakhtin's phrasing, the idyllic is opposed to "the frivolous, fragmented time of city life or even to historical time" (*Dialogic* 228).

Despite their differently represented worlds and conflicting ideology, the idyll and other chronotopes can exist dialogically within the same work of art. Kristian Levring's *The King is Alive* (to be discussed more fully in Chap. 7) is an example. It is hard to imagine a film sub-genre—survival in the desert—that is more hostile to the chronotope of the idyll. Yet Levring's desperate tourists in the Namibian Desert utter imperfectly remembered and amateurishly recited lines from *King Lear* as a survival tactic that becomes a sustaining microcosm in their crisis. The filmmaker's use of this play within the film is not dissimilar in that respect to

Olivier's use of the Globe idyll in *Henry V*. The stranded passengers facing death in the desert find such comfort in their shared performance of Shakespeare that they ignore their rescuers! Under the spell of their co-created and co-authored *King Lear*, they momentarily exist outside of historical time.

Levring, in his strategy of artistic retrieval, also dialogizes T.S. Eliot, whose Shakespearean allusions in *The Waste Land* bring into sociolinguistic focus the historical distance between an ordered past and a fragmented present of chaos and anomie. However, Levring avoids the notion of a timeless, universal Shakespeare. The chronotopic design of *The King is Alive*—in which the re-utterance of Shakespeare's lines in another time-space gives voice to personal and contemporary angles of understanding—is echoed by many film directors.

The dialogism they share as a method, visibly and audibly expressed through time-space re-sitings, heteroglossia, polyglossia, and carnivalization, leads to a wide-ranging variety of chronotopes. It is out of this dialogic sensibility that their films emerge. Individual directorial choices in their Shakespeare-inflected cinema concerning the replication, re-conception, and interplay of chronotopes provide "the ground essential for showing-forth, the representability of events" (Bakhtin, *Dialogic* 250). The chronotopic decisions also provide critical access to the forms and meanings that shape individual films.



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