



5
December 2019

Transmedia as a Strategy:
Critical and Technical Expertise
for Today's Media Galaxy

Edited by
Stefano Calzati and Asunción López-Varela Azcárate

Guest Editors' Profiles	5
Introduction	7
<i>Stefano Calzati and Asunción López-Varela Azcárate</i>	

ARTICLES

From "Is" to the (News) World: How Facebook Jeopardized Its Life-Diary Nature and Occupied the Network	17
<i>Stefano Calzati and Roberto Simanowski</i>	
Proto-Transmedial Narrative Structures: Lewis Carroll's <i>A Tangled Tale</i>	37
<i>Asunción López-Varela Azcárate</i>	

A Broken Mirror Held to History's Face. On the Narrative Use of Computer Screens, Multi Screen Experiences, and a Transmedia Theoretical Console in the Popular <i>Assassin's Creed</i> Series <i>Michel Ottens</i>	61
Off-Modern Hybridity in TV Theatre: Theatrical, Cinematic and Media Temporalities in Rupert Goold's <i>Macbeth</i> (BBC - Illuminations Media, 2010) <i>Víctor Huertas-Martín</i>	81
Transmedia Narratives of Social Intervention: Affecting Reflexiveness in the Communicative Phenomenon as a Key Competence in Education <i>Xiana Sotelo</i>	103
New Possibilities in Audiovisual Ergodic Narratives <i>Raquel Crisóstomo Gálvez and Marc Valderrama Carreño</i>	123
Electronic Art: Modern Short Fiction Transmedia Storytelling in Japan <i>Evelina Saponjic Jovanovic</i>	135

Off-Modern Hybridity in TV Theatre: Theatrical, Cinematic and Media Temporalities in Rupert Goold's *Macbeth* (BBC - Illuminations Media, 2010)¹

Víctor Huertas-Martín

Universitat de València (España)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7358/ijtl-2019-004-huer>

victor.huertas@uv.es

ABSTRACT – Rupert Goold's screen production of *Macbeth* – firstly, staged in 2007 and, later, filmed in 2010 – has been studied as an example of the stage-to-screen hybrid corpus of Shakespearean audio-visual adaptations. Thus, much of the critical emphasis on the production has been placed on its filmic qualities. Particularly, the genre film conventions deployed across the film has summoned the attention of Shakespeare on screen scholars and it has been the creators' intentions to precisely point at Goold's filmic intertextual repertoire. Given the recent increasing attention to the multiple media and languages employed in stage-to-screen hybrid Shakespearean adaptations and other exchanges between the languages of the stage and film to rework Shakespearean and theatrical productions, it is instructive to observe the ways in which adaptations such as this one engage with larger processes of transmedia storytelling, not only paying attention to theatrical and filmic languages but to the transmedia strategies these TV theatrical films make use of. Importantly, it is instructive to look into the narrative and philosophical purposes served by transmedia storytelling as the multiple media and languages used in the film display a range of temporalities and film genres associated to them that allow us to expand the interpretive range of Shakespeare's source text. Following this premise, this essay examines Goold's *Macbeth* as a nostalgia narrative in which transmedia strategies serve to display a range

¹ Acknowledgements are owed to Dr. Marta Cerezo-Moreno's support, guidance, generosity and encouragement during the writing of the unpublished PhD dissertation this article derives from; likewise, thanks are owed to John Wyver for taking part in numerous interviews on the subject of hybridity and his involvement in stage-to-screen Shakespearean screen works; additional thanks are owed to Dr. Cristina Garrigós, Dr. Jesús Tronch-Pérez, Dr. Antonio Ballesteros and Dr. Juan F. Cerdá for their respective suggestions after reading the PhD dissertation. Article associated to the research project "Teatro Español y Europeo de los Siglos XVI y XVII: Patrimonio y Bases de Datos", University of Valencia (PID2019-104045GB-C54).

of media-based narrative strands that expand the film's range of possible interpretations. To prove this, I will insert Goold's film in the larger process of transmedia storytelling encompassing the performance history of *Macbeth*. Additionally, I will identify narrative strands in Goold's televisual, theatrical, musical, poetic and computer-based sources. The results will show that *Macbeth* – and, by extension, potentially this applies to TV theatrical adaptations of Shakespeare's plays – constitutes a strand of the larger corpus of transmedia storytelling wrapping up the Scottish play's performance history as well as Shakespeare's overall performance history.

KEYWORDS – film, hybridity, music, poetry, reflective nostalgia, theatre, videogame.

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2007, British director Rupert Goold directed a stage production of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* for the Chichester Theatre Festival featuring Sir Patrick Stewart and Kate Fleetwood as protagonists. In 2010, this staging, originally performed at the small stage of the Minerva Theatre – later, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (New York) and others –, was translated to television and broadcast by PBS and BBC Four. This essay studies the film's linking of Shakespeare's Scottish play to transmedia storytelling. Taking recent all-encompassing views on transmedia – e.g. Carlos Alberto Scolari's² – into account, this article contributes to developing analytical routes for renaissance plays as examples of transmedia storytelling.

As this essay shows, elements borrowed from different media – TV theatre, film, poetry, music, video-game, etc. – and audio-visual genres – war film, heritage film, meta-play, etc. – in the film allow us to think of Goold's *Macbeth* as a part of a larger process of transmedia storytelling inter-connected with Shakespeare's overall performance history. In the following pages I am going to give interpretive focus to the transmedia elements in the film. To do this,

² Scolari coincides with scholars and practitioners of transmedia when he affirms that transmedia goes beyond adaptation. Nonetheless, many of the principles of spreadability, drillability, continuity, multiplicity and world-building of transmedia apply to Goold's film. Scolari includes adaptations as examples of transmedia for they do not re-utilize contents in one medium in the same way they are used in another one. New characters and situations emerge in adaptations and, whenever characters are not new, they do not behave in the same way nor perform the same roles as in the original medium. Additionally, as Scolari proves across his study, adaptations create new spaces and geographies for the original narrative (2013).

I examine the concept of hybridity, which has been used to describe this and other stage-to-screen Shakespeare TV films produced by Illuminations Media – in association with BBC, RSC, Channel Four, Sky Arts, etc. – as well as the more recent RSC and Shakespeare’s Globe live broadcasts. I open the film’s interpretive scope and deal with the styles, media and genres informing the narrative complexity that adds depth to the film. Furthermore, I stress how the narrative strands afforded by intermediality allow us to think of the film as part of a larger process of transmedia. So far, this film and other Illuminations’ Shakespeare and recent live broadcasts of Shakespeare plays have been mostly studied as simply stage-film hybrids. Therefore, I am including forms of media, such as music, poetry, and video-game in my examination, since looking into those allows us to look into a wider picture of the intermedia interplay within the film. Overall, the essay discusses how the film’s variety of media and styles does not work randomly but develops an off-modern nostalgia narrative presenting ambivalent interpretive possibilities.

2. RUPERT GOOLD’S *MACBETH* (2010) AND TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING

For the stage production, Goold used cinematic references from J-horror, Hollywoodian slasher, war and gangster films as well as from a series of European war films. Explaining the creative process for both stage production and film, Goold lists his inspirations³. He took into account the context of persecution of Catholics and the network of espionage set in the English court in Shakespeare’s early seventeenth century context. Goold was interested in creating a storyworld in whose socio-political organization people could not speak their minds openly⁴. To that end, he found out that the above-mentioned twentieth-century Soviet context would help recasting such ideological, political and cultural map in a contemporary setting⁵. As an advocator of directorial intervention on classic and renaissance plays (Trueman 2014), Goold explains his rehearsal methodology by claiming that he thinks of scenes in filmic terms⁶. He tells the actors, as he says in an inter-

³ See interview with Rupert Goold in DVD.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

view, to imagine each scene as a film sequence, not in the play but in its own terms. This leads the actors' film-based and activity-based actions to energize Shakespeare's language⁷.

Goold's audio-visual input does not stop there. When the performance was taken to the screen, though Illuminations' Media insisted that the TV films presented the "essence" of what the audiences had seen on stage (Hindle 2015, 289), the production was reworked on TV film according to Illuminations' procedures in their previous recordings of *Macbeth* (dir. Gregory Doran, 2001) and *Hamlet* (dir. Gregory Doran, 2009). Rather than recording on stage or on a studio, they chose a location to rethink the stage production keeping the filming as close to the staging as possible (Hindle 2015; Huertas-Martín 2019). However, Goold admits that the stage production was even more cinematically inflected than the film was, for, as he says, he tried to focus much more on character development on the screen version whereas on stage film references had operated as pastiche (*ibid.*).

These and other creative strands invite thinking of Goold's *Macbeth* as part of the larger process of transmedia storytelling starting with the early performances of *Macbeth*. The Soviet context and the film's heritage flavour – shot in an iconic British mansion like Welbeck Abbey and surroundings –, the setting's katabatic atmosphere and its multiple framings have expanded or continued to expand, given the amount of adaptations of *Macbeth*, the already vast spatio-temporal and ideological horizons of the play's history⁸. Characters appearing in the playtext's lists, such as Lennox (Mark Rawlings), Porter (Christopher Patrick Nolan) or First Murderer (Hywel John), see their roles expanded and enlarged thanks to the actors' contributions and to their possible study of previous and contemporaneous films and performances, to which they have added new dimensions. The film's engagement with other interpretations and versions of *Macbeth* is explicitly shown on the BBC Four website⁹. There, the viewer has the chance to access a Wikipedia entry that succinctly explains Goold's film's rationale, cast of characters, awards, references and external links¹⁰. A link leads to the *BBC Shakespeare Unlocked*:

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ See Huertas-Martín 2018.

⁹ See BBC, *BBC Four – Macbeth*, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00wnstq>.

¹⁰ Such Wikipedia entry needs to be corrected, for it provides false information on the film. The entry indicates that Goold contextualized the play in the 1960s Romania and that the Macbeth couple were characterized to resemble the Ceaușescu couple. See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macbeth_\(2010_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macbeth_(2010_film)).

Macbeth website, which displays teacher's packs and clips of various productions of *Macbeth*. Given the scarce selection of *Macbeth* adaptations linked to BBC's website, BBC insufficiently inserts the film into the larger transmedia history of Shakespeare's Scottish play across centuries of adaptations. However, the website is proof of BBC's and Illuminations' corporate involvement transmedia storytelling.

3. HYBRIDITY AND REFLECTIVE NOSTALGIA

Goold staged *Macbeth* at the Minerva Theatre for the 2007 Chichester Theatre Festival. Regarded as one of the greatest screen *Macbeths*, it is grouped with several stage-to-screen hybrid Shakespearean films produced by Illuminations Media. John Wyver, head of this production company, previously collaborated with Deborah Warner, Phyllida Lloyd and Gregory Doran in bringing several theatre productions to the TV screen. It was the creators' explicit intent, as Wyver says, not making movies but hybrid forms, "somewhere between a theatre piece and a film [...] taken from the stage, placed in another world, and interpreted by the camera in a way that retains the essence of the original, but hopefully [working] distinctively in the new medium" (Hindle 2015, 288-289).

Hybridity, as Michael Bakhtin says, consists of "the mixing, within a single concrete utterance, of two or more different linguistic consciousnesses, often widely separated in time and social space" ([1981] 2014, 429). Such discourses "cannot be isolated by formal grammatical means, by quotation marks" (*ibid.*). Given that the Illuminations, the RSC productions and, as Susanne Greenhalgh has recently argued, all British screen adaptations of theatre plays have involved relations of hybridity¹¹. Due to the increasing attention to the part played by social media, transmedia and digital platforms in the dissemination and reception of theatrical contents, stage-screen hybridity analyses must include other forms of media¹².

¹¹ See Susanne Greenhalgh, "The Remains of the Stage: Revivifying Shakespearean Theatre on Screen", in *Shakespeare and the 'Live' Theatre Broadcast Experience*, edited by Pascale Aebischer, Susanne Greenhalgh, and Laurie E. Osborne, 19-40, London - New York - New Delhi - Sydney: Bloomsbury Publishings, 2018.

¹² On stage-screen hybridity, see Michael Ingham, *Stageplay and Screenplay: The Intermediality of Theatre and Cinema*, London - New York: Routledge, 2017; Pascale

Despite the film's contemporariness, the sources of Goold's *Macbeth* derive from various art forms including the cinema of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, from early British TV theatre as well as a host of other influences and layers of meaning produced by Welbeck Abbey's iconicity. Huertas-Martín says that "[the Abbey] was one of the settings for the English Civil War and, also, long before this, for two of Ben Jonson's court masques: *The King's Entertainment at Welbeck Abbey in Nottinghamshire* (1633) and *Love's Welcome at Welbeck* (1633)" (2019, 81). This way, the setting establishes links between the Jacobean theatre history, its predominant nineteenth-century *décor* and its contemporary treatment as an entire fictional universe.

Goold's intermedial assemblage forms a catalogue of sources drawn from Goold's past viewings and readings which is not at all incongruent with the screen Shakespearean work developed by Kenneth Branagh, Michael Almereyda, Michael Hoffman, Baz Luhrmann and other Shakespearean directors of the 1990s and the Millennium. Taking Frederic Jameson's and Ginette Vincendeau's works into account, Philippa Sheppard associates many of these adaptations with a nostalgic gaze revelling in reflexivity, pastiche and allusion to past artistic forms (2017, 4). Sheppard makes a specific case for the nostalgia drive of Shakespearean films. As she argues, "the Shakespeare film is the perfect expression of the postmodern age – it is a hybrid, a collage of old and new that smacks of nostalgia" (*ibid.*, 134). Goold's sources may be explained by nostalgic gaze. While Goold's indebtedness to Branagh's intertextual filmmaking is evident, his approach referencing to old genres are not celebratory but deepens into the different dimensions of horror and violence in the story. As Boika Sokolova says, "the Stalinist iconography, featuring enormous red posters with Macbeth's face in profile, reminds the viewer of other twentieth-century totalitarian regimes and their recent representations on film" (2013, 163).

The film's capitalizing on the play's theatrical origins reinforce nostalgia too. For Sheppard, Shakespearean film directors tend to visually remind viewers of the language of theatre, a fact that "seems to be one of the defining

Aebischer, Susanne Greenhalgh, and Laurie E. Osborne (eds.), *Shakespeare and the 'Live' Theatre Broadcast Experience*, London - New York - New Delhi - Sydney: Bloomsbury Publishings, 2018; John Wyver, *Screening the Royal Shakespeare Company: A Critical History*, London - New York - Oxford - New Delhi - Sydney: Bloomsbury Publishings Plc, 2019; Víctor Huertas-Martín, "Hibridaciones de Royal Shakespeare Company entre el Escenario y la Pantalla. Revisión Crítica y Perspectivas Metodológicas Recientes", *Nerter. Revista dedicada a la Literatura, el Arte y el Conocimiento* 32-33 (2020): 66-78, <https://mbrito.webs.ull.es/NERTER/NERTER%2032-33%20%2866-78%29.pdf>.

characteristics of a film adaptation of a famous play, and another symptom of Shakespearean directors' nostalgia for the past" (2017, 133). Goold's interest in prestige and popular horror and war films from the 1970s onwards seems driven by nostalgia as well, for he actively reveals these sources in interviews trying to appeal to viewers who may regard these works as classic hits in the history of cinema¹³. Actively, Wyver and Goold converse during the Director's and Producer's Commentaries trying to make clear to audiences the specific filmic source for particular scenes¹⁴. The catalogue covers war archives, Peter Greenaway, Stanley Kubrick, Francis Ford Coppola, etc. Goold at once encourages thinking of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* from the lens of prestige and popular cinema and suggests ways of interpreting the play as an interpretation of the twentieth-century violent history. If Goold's fantasy repertoire seems boundless, equally boundless seems to be its interpretive scope. In the film's blogs, Wyver also encourages viewers to identify the film's filmic references (2010). By encouraging viewer to give their views, Wyver generates opportunities for hypothesizing and for rewarding exchanges between viewers whose memories of a common cinematic past culture may remain vivid.

Svetlana Boym redefines nostalgia after decades of critical disregard. For Boym, nostalgia, apart from a sense of loss and displacement, involves a romance with one's own fantasy (2001, 19). It implies a double exposure or a super-imposition of two images coincident with being home and abroad, in the past and in the present, in dreams and in everyday life (*ibid.*, 19-20). Rather than focusing on the future or the past, Boym's model looks sideways, takes pains to explore the past, though the object of such retrospective gaze remains elusive (*ibid.*, 20). The current culture of globalisation and the pervasiveness of cyberscapes and global villages have exacerbated nostalgia against general accelerations (*ibid.*, 20-21).

Goold's work looks into the twentieth-century wars not in order to merely present a bleak view but to suggest alternatives too. Boym's creative model throws light upon Goold's work. Rather than restorative, Boym's model of nostalgia is reflective, "coeval with modernity itself" (2001, 25), and curious about the unrealized possibilities. Showing an eclecticism between a prospective and a retrospective position, Boym invites a negotiation between one's biography and everyone's collective memory (*ibid.*, 27). It does not shy away from the contradiction of modernity (*ibid.*, 30-31); rather than explor-

¹³ See interview with Rupert Goold in DVD.

¹⁴ See Director's and Producer's commentaries on DVD.

ing a single plot, it explores ways of inhabiting many places at once, revels in imagining different time zones, focuses on specific details – not symbols –, favours ethical and creative challenges and does not just indulge in melancholia. It achieves this via privileging social memory and collective frameworks rather than worshipping national memory (*ibid.*, 31).

For theorists of the “off-modern art” that Boym proposes, reflective nostalgia does not equal to decay but searches for new flexibility in the mediation of history and the passage of time (2001, 138). In line with a reflective nostalgia, this type of art allows room for irony, inconclusiveness, fragmentariness, opening up of teleology paths and potentialities, awakens multiple planes of consciousness, rejoices in literary fugues – not in returning home (*ibid.*, 139-141). It does not create a single plot but a playground of collective memory (*ibid.*, 148-149). Its relationship to the future is playful (*ibid.*, 152), not pessimistic. Similarly, Goold’s film revises filmic and theatrical pasts not to design restorative narratives but by taking a self-reflexive view to examine the film’s many narrative strands materialised through transmedia.

4. THEATRE FOR TV

British TV theatre has been characterised, through its many historical stages, by its oscillations between theatrical conventions and filmic techniques deployed in them¹⁵. As Jason Jacobs sums up, the overall impression left during the early 1950s was that British TV was a hybrid medium that combined theatre, radio, newsprint and film and could also enjoy immediacy and intimacy (2000, 28-29). According to Lez Cooke, “television drama aesthetics has changed from the primitive era of live studio drama in the 1950s through to the ‘post-modern’ era of visual incongruity and self-reflexivity of the 21st century” (2013, 3). Before British TV drama developed as an art form, theatre was live broadcast on TV. Rudolph Cartier’s *1984*, based on George Orwell’s novel, was composed of, as Cooke continues, “studio drama scenes with 14 film sequences [...] to open out the drama, enabling it to depart from the naturalism of studio drama in quite significant ways” (7-8), thus challenging

¹⁵ See John Caughie, *Television Drama: Realism, Modernism, and British Culture*, Oxford - New York: Oxford University Press, 2000; Jason Jacobs, *The Intimate Screen: Early British Television Drama*, Oxford - New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, etc.

the “intimate model” of British television drama in favour of more expansive and cinematic uses of camera (*ibid.*, 9). The camera became fundamental for the narrative process. Goold’s film implicitly comments on these theatrical-filmic interplays.

Though Illuminations re-conceived plays for TV, they theatrically inflected them. For *Macbeth*, Welbeck Abbey’s passages, corridors, facilities, entries, exits and rooms would be presented as theatrical, for they would operate as symbolic backstage to the ballroom, major performing area. There, Macbeth and Banquo met the Witches (1.3); there, the banquet scene took place by way of displaying a banquet table and a banner with Macbeth’s Stalinist portrait to symbolize the personalism and tyranny of his rule (3.4); also, there the Witches showed Macbeth the line of Kings descending from Banquo (4.1); finally, Macbeth’s operation centre was that ballroom in act five. Though Goold and DoP Sam McCurdy utilized a film equipment – steadycams, hand-held cameras, etc. –, the aesthetic frame of the film approached that of studio TV and, as the use of the ballroom shows, no significant modification of setting took place in there to present different geographic spaces.

A comparison between Cartier’s 1984 and Goold’s *Macbeth* is not amiss. Cartier’s work opens up with tele-cine insert sequences displaying the dystopian effects of the atom bomb, revolution and downfall of civilization. A Narrator’s voice-over describes Oceania, settled amongst the ruins of what used to be London. The “The Big Brother is Watching You” banner at the very entrance of London is echoed in Goold’s frequent use of Patrick Stewart’s effigy to emphasize Macbeth’s parallels with Stalin. Similarly to Cartier’s, Goold’s film begins with a Montage sequence stitched up by World War Two’s Newsreel documentary fragments of past conflict which has, arguably, left the world devastated. Cartier’s film begins with the face of Winston Smith looking out of the window of his building. An offscreen voice hails him so that he stops looking out. Smith’s excuse is that he has been looking for a replacement valve for his speech-write, which ceased to function. The offscreen voice reprimands Smith for not having notified this incidence and, in a matter-of-fact tone, tells the protagonist that his irregularity has been recorded. At the beginning of act three in Goold’s *Macbeth*, Banquo’s voice is recorded by one of the room’s intercoms, which he finds and, in an act of rebellion, tears from the wall¹⁶. Both films depict via making use of outside

¹⁶ For a study of Goold’s use of surveillance film conventions, see Víctor Huertas-Martín, “Rupert Goold’s *Macbeth* (BBC 2010): Society of Surveillance and Society of

cinematic scenes the world outside the theatrical space where the main action takes place. Goold's film takes departure from early forms of TV drama in the wider range of cameras employed in his film, for the six-week shooting period allowed the crew to show the fluid boundaries between the interior of Welbeck Abbey and the numerous spaces outside the area.

Goold's opening up of the camera lens brings reflexive effects for the production, not only because the inside-outside relations present a dialectics between an artificial and conventional insider world (theatrical) and the outer world of reality offstage. It does it because the characters behave, to an extent, as self-conscious actors. The two opening scenes are re-arranged in the film, so scene 1.2 – the Bleeding Sergeant's speech – precedes the Witches' appearance in 1.1. The Sergeant is brought on a stretcher before Duncan and his generals. The Witches are Nurses taking care of the Sergeant's wounds, which they stitch. When the generals leave the Sergeant, the Witches apply a lethal injection on his body. After this, they look at the viewer and recite the incantatory preface in scene 1.1. They vanish and then lights go off, as if it all were the conclusion of a theatre performance. The lights return and the action re-starts. These lights also go off after Malcom's triumphant speech, which implies the finale of an intra-diegetic performance. Other examples, such as Stewart's slow and psychologically analytical delivery of the lines and Fleetwood's strong-colour characterisation as a brutally violent Lady Macbeth strengthen the film's overt sense of theatricality.

5. FILMIC INTERTEXTUALITY

Goold borrows icons and deploys reflexive mechanisms alluding to war films. Intentionally, Goold relates Stewart's iconic baldness to Marlon Brando's characterization of Col. Walter Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now* (1979)¹⁷. When Macbeth confesses to the Doctor how his “way of life / Is fall'n into the sere” (5.3.23), he washes his head in a basin and then covers it with a towel. The intimacy with which Macbeth addresses the Doctor parallels Kurtz and Willard's in Coppola's anti-war film. In Coppola's work, Brando carries this water-splashing gesture as his bulk and skull are perceived in the darkness.

Control”, *Sederi Yearbook* 27 (2017): 81-103, <https://recyt.fecyt.es/index.php/SEDY/article/view/61979>.

¹⁷ See Director's and Producer's Commentaries.

Whereas baldness has been interpreted as a symbol of Kurtz's absorption into an ambitious quest for absolute power, in Goold's scene, the washing gesture seem to signify Macbeth's last desires to find pristine purity, though the time to face his ending approaches. Two meanings and their respective interpretations blend in Goold's treatment of the hero.

Goold alludes to his referencing to Coppola's *The Godfather* (1971) across the film, mainly through his use of montage before the banquet scene – a sequence which arguably resembles the killing of the five families in Coppola's work – and during Macbeth's interview with the two murderers in his kitchen while he prepares a sandwich he then shares with them. Goold may also have drawn inspiration from Coppola's saga when the Witches bring Lady Macbeth's body to him. As the script of *The Godfather* reads, Don Corleone “draws down the grey blanquet” to see the corpse of his son Santino played by James Caan. Such gesture is followed by Brando's moving close-up sequence: “I want you to use all your powers, and all your skills. I don't want his mother to see him this way [...]. Look how they massacred my boy” (*ibid.*). In Goold' film, Macbeth draws the blanquet from Lady Macbeth' body and her pale face is revealed to us. However, the sense of identification which Brando's moving mourning portrays against the background's blackness is, in Goold's case, not looked for. Macbeth is shown sitting down on the edge of the stretcher long shot as he addresses her. The lights go off and they are left in the dark. Suddenly, Welbeck Abbey's theatrical mechanisms arrange the lighting so that this intimate encounter takes place. Poignantly, Macbeth addresses the last lines of the “Tomorrow” speech to the viewer, not to Lady Macbeth. The man and his dead wife's initial intimacy is interrupted by Macbeth's voluntary gesture to the viewers.

Goold borrowed from Coppola his use of montage in *The Godfather*. For Mark Joyce, “the montage technique is based on the theory that when two pieces of film are placed side by side the audience immediately draws the conclusion that the shots must be directly related in some way”, thus, achieving a maximum of impact when these two shots collide following the formula thesis plus antithesis equals synthesis (2012, 450-451). Goold's film opens up with a montage of archive war film and the hospital routine section in which the Bloody Sergeant's body is carried. After Banquo's assassination, an additional montage presents, inspired by the “assassination of the five families” in *The Godfather*¹⁸, the preparation for the banquet scene – with

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

the Witches preparing the table – and the many state assassinations commissioned by Macbeth as well as the many surveillance operations led by Angus, Lennox and Macbeth’s service. A third instance of montage ensues when Malcom’s soldiers enter Dunsinane castle. Military inserts are part of the thirteen sequences composing the fifth act.

The soldiers’ entrance in the Abbey are recorded outside. As Wyver says, “There are moments when it feels as if we’re trying to shoot the sequel to *Saving Private Ryan*, albeit on a budget that might buy lunch on a couple of days for a production like that” (2009). As a matter of fact, McCurdy quotes Spielberg’s work. A troupe of British theatre actors, unlike the cast who spent weeks in boot camp to be fit for *Ryan*, who seems more driven by their vocal power than by their action film acting, are led by Macduff’s “Blood and death” interpellation, which they all choir. The mid-shot in which the soldiers cry in unison quotes the section in which Spielberg’s soldiers cry before attacking a German squad in a ruined house. This masculine ethos embodied in Spielberg’s film seems to symbolize Malcom’s new – and, arguably, better – regime.

The film’s feminine and marginal characters portray misogynistic and classist anxieties via Goold’s use of J-horror and slasher. Slasher is characterised by its appeal to human emotion rather than cognition or narrative content (Grant 2011, 23). Roughly speaking, both slasher and J-horror subvert capitalist and patriarchal structures. Such genre gives way to ghostly stories with pale-faced women and video-based murders. Merging Japanese Shinto and Buddhist beliefs, they produce a mythology in which dead characters inhabit multiple hells and return to life when they feel that something has not been fulfilled. Goold’s Witches and Lady Macbeth are partly characterized as *Yuurei*, i.e. ghostly women fulfilling such a mission for revenging their murders. Belonging to a Japanese male-centred world, *Yuurei* have been portrayed as revengeful women fulfilling their revenge and oftentimes appear in video screens announcing someone’s death. In contrast to this, American slasher horror tends to end up with the extermination of the monstrous Other who haunts characters. The slasher monster may be a woman, a working-class fellow or some marginal type with special powers that escape human understanding. Slasher monsters like Freddy Krueger or Jason prove that the capitalist civilization does not succeed in bringing peace except to those inhabiting a self-absorbed middle-class world. As Robin Wood sums up, the subject matter in horror tends to be the coming of an Other, previously repressed, as a deviating life form (1979, 9-11).

The Witches in Goold's film are in control of the place they inhabit. They have power to reanimate the death and to endow inanimate objects with life. Furthermore, the anxiety produced by their powers seems to align to their command of a technological apparatus which, in a world depicted as still primitive, produces terror in characters who, like Macbeth, do not know how such mediated world comprising of organic life and communication technologies blend. The technological mediation they embody resembles what Eric White perceives as the invasion of "posthuman otherness" that alters life as we know it (2005, 41). In fact, the frame alters when they animate the mannequin. A series of rapidly edited unintentional shots show the scene in which they transform their cantilena in scene 1.3 into rap.

The Porter – as said, played by Patrick Nollan – embodies the features of the slasher monster. According to Carol J. Clover, these monsters are roughly human types inhabiting or frequenting underground spaces (1987, 196-197). Nolan's Porter inhabits a little room with rotten food and booze bottles scattered around and the TV set always on. He is a child molester who obscenely addresses Macduff's family when they arrive in the castle. Macduff, despite his awareness of the approaching danger, remains calm. Following slasher's conventions, only children perceive the threats by monsters. Adults, on the other hand, fear that paying attention to monstrous Others may unbury buried injustices for which they might be impeached. Lady Macduff plays her husband's game and takes over Lennox's lines "The night has been unruly, etc." (2.3.49-56). She does it using inverted commas quoting her sulking daughter, who must have been trying to interpret the signs offered by the thunder and the storm. As Noël Carroll says, slasher films from the 2000s onwards would normally assure the re-establishment of normalcy and the saving of the family after the monster's destruction (2005, 199). Yet, Goold embraces the nihilism of the *Shaw* films, for all children die under Porter's brutal force.

Decided not to represent Lady Macbeth as an over-motivated character from the early scenes, Fleetwood's pale characterisation associates her Lady Macbeth with the Witches¹⁹. Her first appearance, coming out of the lift, reveals her in chiaroscuro as she gathers courage for the assassination of Duncan. Conscious of her feminine strength, she lullabies lines to Macbeth – "hie thee hither" (1.5.23) – when he is not present, which evokes the private language they seem to have, for he echoes it as he sings the line "And thane

¹⁹ See interview with Kate Fleetwood in DVD.

of Cawdor” (1.3.115). Though she is able to pretend to act like a complacent housewife in front of Duncan, her body gets transformed into that of a bird of prey in scene 2.2 as she waits for her husband’s return from the assassination. After she returns from Duncan’s chamber where she leaves the daggers, Fleetwood appears covered in blood, showing that she has concluded the murderous work that presumably Macbeth left unfinished. A close-up reveals her half-smile after having finished Duncan off, one she has used to persuade Duncan several times. One wonders why, after having so fiercely sustained such characterization of Lady Macbeth, Goold decided after act three to follow the male-centred stage and film tradition, relegating Lady Macbeth to the background while Macbeth grew vigorous and domineering from act three onwards.

6. LOOKING BACK INTO SHAKESPEAREAN FILMS

In the 1990s, as Samuel Crowl says, Kenneth Branagh championed a generation of Shakespearean filmmakers engaged in quotation, allusion, parody and pastiche from Hollywood films, paying specific attention to war films, westerns, Disney, gangster, epic films, etc. (2003, 7-8). Such a practice is current in contemporary Shakespearean filmmakers.

Goold admits to have grown up with Branagh’s inspiration as a film viewer of Shakespeare film during the 1990s²⁰. Goold may be indeed following Branagh’s idea to conclude *Hamlet* (1996), in which Fortinbras’ army – led by a strong-willed Rufus Sewell as the Norwegian Prince – breaks into Blethenheim Castle while Hamlet and Laertes cross swords in the Palace’s exhibition room. In the last scenes of Goold’s *Macbeth*, consisting of a series of crosscuts featuring the Anglo-Scottish army breaking into Welbeck Abbey (Dunsinane) and what goes on inside Dunsinane’s rooms, including Macbeth’s departure from Lady Macbeth.

Goold, as Sokolova (2013, 153) has noticed – with her recognition of Goold’s apparent indebtedness to Orson Welles and Roman Polanski –, is influenced by directors of previous Shakespearean screen and stage performances. From Welles, he draws the idea of having Macbeth taking part in

²⁰ See “Making-off of *Richard II*”, in “*Richard II*”, *The Hollow Crown*, directed by Rupert Goold, BBC, 2012.

the assassination of the Macduff family. When Lady Macduff meets face-to-face with the Second Murderer, Porter and Lennox, she turns away from them in search for escape and she meets the Scottish King, machete in hand, gazing at her and ready to start the killing. From Polanski's *Macbeth* (1971), Goold's draws his idea of showing the execution of Cawdor. While Polanski has Cawdor heroically face the King's authority during his public execution by crying "God save the King!", Goold has Lennox enter the interrogation room where Cawdor waits for his sentence, his head wrapped in a bag. Lennox shoots him on the head and leaves the room. When Malcom retells the execution to Duncan, the young Prince's account of Cawdor's noble death emerges as Malcom's interpretation of the facts. This might be Malcom's assumption of what Cawdor's guilt recognition must have been or, perhaps, what he himself experienced in a last interview with Cawdor before he was taken to the death corridor. We are left with an ambiguous set of events and with the question of whether Malcom is trying to comfort his father with a positive account of Cawdor's end. Goold also borrows ideas from Jim Brozel's *Macbeth Retold* (2005), in his use of the kitchen as a place for plotting and conspiracy. In Brozel's work, Joe Macbeth is a chef in Duncan Dorchester's restaurant and is in charge of training young Malcom in the art of cooking. Joe's cutting of a pig's head in his triumphant sing-along number in the kitchen with his mates is echoed in Goold's kitchen scenes, in which often a pig's head is present, as a potential scapegoat for ritual sacrifice. From Grzegorz Jarzyna's *Macbeth* (2007) – as Goold's film, first played on stage, then translated to film –, Goold may have borrowed his inspiration to use an Eastern European setting as well as the gritty textures in an abandoned building whose inter-connected levels permit the heroes' vertical moves as if they were inside a video-game. Likewise, though Goold's film, addressed to BBC and PBS viewers, lacks the explicit brutality in Jarzyna's work, it is suggested that, after killing his enemy, Macduff has cut Macbeth's head with his own knife himself, a gesture which may indeed have been taken from Jarzyna's production. In fact, Malcom's grabbing of Macbeth's head in Jarzyna's film is a gesture later repeated in Goold's. The alienated features of the actor playing Macbeth - Cezary Kosinski - in Jarzyna's work parallel Stewart's vigorously Brechtian and heart-hardened characterisation. Whatever their differences, it is evident that these productions all dialogue with each other and, taken as a whole, they expand Shakespeare's play sideways and forward while keeping an eye in contemporaneous and past interpretations.

7. OTHER MEDIA: MUSIC, POETRY, VIDEOGAME

The interplay between theatre, TV theatre, filmic genres and filmic intertextuality unfolds and gives way to the blending of the film with other forms of art and media which – except for a few examples – cannot possibly be thoroughly accounted for in this article.

The film opens up with music accompanying the bombs and war sounds and images from war archive newsreels. A musical overture, *Wait for Me*, composed by Adam Cork, based on Konstantin Simonov's Russian poem, written in 1941, and published by Pravda in 1942, plays. This poem was addressed to Valentina Serova, Simonov's lover, who got married while Simonov was at the front. The poem was successful amongst the youth, who carried copies of it as they fought the Germans away from Moscow. Also, they sent copies of the poem to their girlfriends and wives urging them to expect their return after war.

Reading the poem in the light of the events presented in the first scenes and thinking of the poem as a letter, it is possible to associate it to Macbeth's promising letter to his wife. Nonetheless, as the film progresses and the story unfolds, the song is repeated several times transforming this initial motif. The third time takes place alongside the "Stasi Montage" in which Macbeth's police kill and prosecute dissident thinkers. Simonov's family actually had been victims of the purges in 1935. Reckoning that he might not live long, he wrote poems which suggested images of death for old men that parallel the events taking place in the new Russia. In "Comrades in Arms", a more hopeful Simonov imagines a future in which some new friends will join him in a fight that will re-unite mankind together in the upcoming war of 1938. When he returned from various wars, he felt in love with the 21-year-old actress Valentina, whose soul he was eager to win. He knew well when writing the poem that she would not wait for him, but his readers found inspiration in his words. Such romantic ethos in the film fades away as Goid sets the song against a background in which tyranny tests loves, friendships, loyalties and honesty under Macbeth's regime. Nonetheless, the song's iterations leave one with the hope of re-encountering the beloved one even at the possibility of such lover's death. Malcom's final command to call friends in exile confirms that, even after Macbeth's decimations and purges in what Goid makes of the film's rather problematic pan-Soviet context, may yet prevail.

An additional function of music leads a transitionary movement that opens up the interpretive possibilities in the story. As already said, Macbeth,

Porter and other well-known characters in the play take part in the assassination of the Macduff family. Ross, who in Shakespeare's play-text previously leaves them all to fly away, returns on second thoughts to the house to take them with him to England. Ross finds them butchered in the shower-room as he re-enters the house. A broken shower, a doll dropped on the floor and a hand lying on the watery floor are sufficient indicators that the boys, the girls and the mother have been savagely butchered. As a crying and repentant Ross crumbles in tears, a gentle piano piece played in the salon of an Edwardian house leads the transition to the English scene, in which Malcom, dressed for a concert, listens to the player in this courtly and friendly atmosphere. This long scene, taking place in the concert hall and the chapel of this mansion, brings a retrospective gaze to heritage films and TV works such as *Downton Abbey*, *Downstairs/Upstairs* and works presenting an embellished England in which servants and masters know their place and, generally, depict the Victorian or the Edwardian periods as declining but still glamorous, simple and tidy. This momentary respite in Goold's film operates after almost two hours of interplay of generic codes and conventions and plenty of psychedelic scenes in which Witches handle unfamiliar technology in an atmosphere of horror. This return to a naturalistic type of acting in this realistic setting – with extras to play the attendants to the concert, the waiters and the ladies who visit the mansion – brings the audience to a momentary relax where Malcom may, after testing Macduff, initiate his confession to him in the chapel and so that they both may start reconstructing their unity under God's gaze in that sacred space. The film's Manichean turn, though momentary, is not bereft of significance, for it engages the viewer with the moving reaction of Macduff to the news of his children's deaths: a long pause in which the camera closes up on Michael Feast before he utters his fears on his children's deaths aloud in front of his friends.

Goold's nostalgia is reflective inasmuch as it does not contemplate a single plot resolution nor narrative. In the Director's and Producer's commentaries, he explicitly states that he does not want to conclude the film leaving the impression that a second Macbeth will come to take over Malcom's kingdom²¹. Thus, Goold implicitly assumes the viewer's familiarity with the endings of previous Macbeth films such as Roman Polanski's, Jack Gold's and Gregory Doran's. Despite Lennox's moral ambiguity in the film, we may be sure that Goold's attention does not leave us only with a single plot.

²¹ See Director's and Producer's Commentaries.

For, whether or not Malcom's reign will indeed mean that a different, more transparent, regime will start, the dynamics of the last scenes suggest a video game atmosphere offering alternative interpretations. Macbeth and the Anglo-Scottish forces fight throughout the corridors and levels of Welbeck Abbey. Macbeth meets Young Seyward and kills him in what seems a quick encounter in a *Die Hard* session. Following Marcello Arnaldo Picucci, levels of determination in videogames are given by (1) the degree of linearity/non-linearity that lets the story unfold, (2) the level of in-game interactivity and its priority over main storyline, and (3) the randomness with which combinations of variables determines narratives (2014). The Witches' constant interventions in the story – which are not registered in the Folio edition of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* – suggest that they take part in how the narrative and dramatic events occur as if stories' possible strands were, in part, their own decision-making. Once the lights go off the main corridor and Malcom's figure holding Macbeth's head disappears, a final montage monitors the spaces in the film in succession. The kitchen, the sink corridor, the dark rooms, the campaign hospital for reanimation of the dead, the basements and plenty of other spaces are shown, as used to do primitive video-games once they concluded. For Goold, this would give the viewer the feeling that the play itself could be a re-enacted ghost-story²². As Linda Hutcheon says, "in the games, there is none of the film's security that the protagonist will prevail; that insecurity or tension is, of course, part of the fun for the player. As with the various forms of hypermedia, it is process, not final or finished product, that is important" (2006, 50). Macbeth and Lady Macbeth with their hands together descending in the lift during the last shot suggest that this game could be re-started and that the story did not close at all. In an interview with Scolari, Susana Pajares Tosca stresses the differences between watching films and playing videogames. For Pajares Tosca, the latter activity gives way to new stories in new geographical areas related to the original story. Goold's ending, following the director's words²³, creates the impression, by showing the couple descending on the lift, that the viewers have seen a ghost story which may re-start any time with multiple outcomes though checked by a restrictive nightmare frame.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

8. CONCLUSIONS

Taking Scolari's encompassing view of transmedia into account, my particular view of transmedia storytelling in this essay has focused on the multiple narrative strands afforded by the film's intermediality, filmic intertextuality and by the many artistic media deployed in the production. Such sources expand Shakespeare's source texts and, though the film itself might not be the most obvious example of transmedia – given its restrictive status as a prestige BBC TV theatre piece –, it is indeed inserted in transmedia's over-arching logic, according to which, this type of storytelling disseminates the “integral elements of a particular narrative [...] across multiple delivery channels using multiple media for the purpose of creating an integrated and coordinated storytelling experience. This is also sometimes referred to as transmedia narrative or storytelling across multiple platforms” (O'Byrne 2015).

My analyses of transmedia strands in Goold's *Macbeth* reveal that the broad categories “theatre” and “film” insufficiently explain the film's hybridity features. Displaying intertexts and media belonging to different time-zones, Goold's appeal to the viewer's nostalgia romanticizes the director's fantasies that he materializes with the conventions of J-horror, slasher, heritage, video-games, his own readings of *Macbeth* and his own fancies with media experimentation. Images belonging to different temporalities – for instance, war archives and contemporary horror scenes – are doubly exposed to make us think of the past through a cinematic lens by way of exploring such past dialectically. The film refuses to cinematically materialise any utopian expectations but, by being playful with media associated to different temporalities, it negotiates and balances anxieties produced by technology in an increasingly mediatised world. Such anxieties are alluded to in the film but, constantly, Goold shifts styles and codes in order not to allow the viewer to be too comfortable with a passive reception of the meanings produced by specific generic and media features. At a formal level, Goold's reflective approach to transmedia is playful, often ironic, critical, often off-focus and contradictory, calling into doubt the linearity and the surety of the narrative by super-imposing conflictive media strands. Crucially, it inserts the *Macbeth* intertexts within the larger webwork of transmedia storytelling within which different productions and readings of the play move sideways and forwards.

REFERENCES

- Bakhtin, Michael. (1981) 2014. *The Dialogic Imagination*, translated by Carly Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Boym, Svetlana. 2001. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books.
- Braudy, Leo. 1977. *The World in a Frame: What We See in Films*. New York: Anchor Doubleday.
- Carroll, Noël. 2005. *Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart*. New York: Routledge.
- Clover, Carol J. 1987. "Her Body, Himself: Gender in the Slasher Film". *Representations* 20 (Fall): 187-228.
- Cooke, Lez. 2013. *Style in British Television Drama*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Crowl, Samuel. 2003. *Shakespeare at the Cineplex: The Kenneth Branagh Era*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Grant, Barry K. 2007. *Film Genre: From Iconography to Ideology*. London: Wallflower Press.
- Hindle, Maurice. 2015. *Shakespeare on Film*. 2nd ed. London: Palgrave.
- Howlett, Kathy. 2000. *Framing Shakespeare on Film*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
- Hutcheon, Linda. 2006. *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York: Routledge.
- Huertas-Martín, Víctor. 2018. "Katabasis in Rupert Goold's Macbeth (BBC, 2010): Threshold-Crossing, Education, Shipwreck, Visionary and Trial Katabatic Experience", *Literature/Film Quarterly* 46 (3, Summer).
https://lfq.salisbury.edu/_issues/46_3/index_46_3.html
- Huertas-Martín, Víctor. 2019. "Theatrum Mundi and Site in Four Television Shakespeare Films". *Cahiers Élisabéthains* 99 (July): 76-88.
- Jacobs, Jason. 2000. *The Intimate Screen: Early British Television Drama*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jones, Jenny M. 2007. *The Annotated Godfather: The Complete Screenplay*. New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers.
- Joyce, Mark. 2012. "The Soviet Montage Cinema of the 1920s". In *An Introduction to Film Studies*. 5th ed., edited by Jill Nelmes, 445-479. London: Routledge.
- O'Byrne, W. Ian. 2015. "Transmedia Storytelling". Post in Weblog, December 22, 2015.
<https://wiobyne.com/transmedia-storytelling/>
- Picucci, Marcello Arnaldo. 2014. "When Video Games Tell Stories: A Model of Video Game Narrative Architectures". *Caracteres. Estudios Culturales y Críticos de la Era Digital* 3 (2, November): n.p.
<http://revistacaracteres.net/revista/vol3n2noviembre2014/model-video-game-narrative-architectures/>

- Scolari, Carlos Alberto. 2013. *Narrativas Transmedia. Cuando Todos los Medios Cuentan*. Barcelona: Grupo Planeta.
- Shakespeare, William. (1623) 1997. *Macbeth*, edited by Albert R. Braunmuller. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sheppard, Philippa. 2017. *Devouring Time: Nostalgia in Contemporary Shakespearean Screen Adaptations*. Montreal - Kingston: McGill-Queen' University Press.
- Sokolova, Boika. 2013. "‘Horrible Imaginings’: Rupert Goold’s Film Adaptation, a *Macbeth* for the Twenty-First Century". In *Shakespeare on Screen: Macbeth*, edited by Sarah Hatchuel, Nathalie-Guerrin, and Victoria Bladen, 149-169. Mont-Saint-Aignan Cedex: Presses Universitaires de Rouen et du Havre.
- Theatre Talk. 2008. "Theater Talk: Patrick Stewart, Rupert Goold on *Macbeth*". *YouTube*, April 18, 2008.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMyfSQQamIA>
- Trueman, Matt. 2014. "Rupert Goold: ‘Every Show Should Aim to Change Theatre’". *The Guardian*, February 12, 2014.
<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/feb/12/rupert-goold-almeida-headlong-theatre-chimerica-american-psycho>
- White, Eric. 2005. "Case Study: Nakata Hideo’s *Ringu* and *Ringu 2*". In *Japanese Horror Cinema*, edited by Jay McRoy, 38-47. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Wood, Robin. 1979. "An Introduction to American Horror Film". In *American Nightmare: Essays on the Horror Film*, edited by Richard Lippe and Robin Wood, 7-28. Toronto: Festival of Festivals.
- Wyver, John. 2009. "Production Blog: ‘Blood and Death’". *Great Performances*, November 30, 2009.
<http://pbs.org/wnet/gperf/macbeth-production-blog-blood-and-death/887/>
- Wyver, John. 2010. "Macbeth with Sir Patrick Stewart: The Scottish Play from Stage to TV". *BBC - TVBlog*, December 9, 2010.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/tv/2010/12/macbeth-patrick-stewart-tv.shtml>