Bernarda Maria Carneiro Esteves

**Shakespeare for the People:
Kenneth Branagh's Revision of
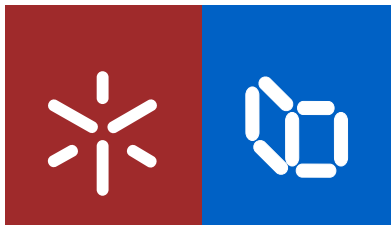Romantic Comedy.**

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Universidade do Minho
Instituto de Letras e Ciências Humanas

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Shakespeare for the People: Kenneth Branagh's Revision of Romantic Comedy.

Dissertação de Mestrado
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DECLARAÇÃO

Nome : Bernarda Maria Carneiro Esteves

Endereço electrónico: besteves@ilch.uminho.pt

Número de Cartão de Cidadão: 12519630

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Abstract

Shakespeare for the People: Kenneth Branagh's Revision of Romantic Comedy

The present study will demonstrate how film is connected to other art forms, especially literature and how the relationship between film and literature has become the object of numerous studies due to its richness and significance. It will focus on the principle of re-creation, i.e. how the transposition of literature into film can be seen as an act of re-creation.

It analyses two of Kenneth Branagh's romantic comedies *Love's Labour's Lost* (2000) and *As You Like It* (2006), focusing on how he brought Shakespeare into the 21st century and thus to the people. Branagh made these adaptations more accessible to audiences by updating genre, plot, characters which, as a result, made the adaptations separate entities from the plays.

Kenneth Branagh's intent is to make Shakespeare into something more audience-friendly and new. He attained this through his creative choices in terms of screenplay, cast and soundtrack. The director's main concern is to take the Bard's work to everyone, to the people.

Resumo

Shakespeare para todos: a revisão da Comédia Romântica de Kenneth Branagh

Este estudo demonstrará como o cinema está ligado a outras formas de arte, especialmente a literatura e como a relação entre o cinema e a literatura se tem tornado objeto de numerosos estudos devido à sua riqueza e importância. O foco deste estudo residirá no princípio da re-criação, isto é, como a transposição da literatura para cinema pode ser vista como um acto de re-criação.

Analisaremos duas comédias românticas de Kenneth Branagh *Love's Labour's Lost* (2000) e *As You Like It* (2006), focando-nos em como o realizador trouxe Shakespeare para o século XXI e por conseguinte para todos. Branagh tornou estas adaptações mais acessíveis às audiências através da actualização de géneros, argumento, personagens, o que consequentemente, transformou as adaptações em entidades independentes das peças.

O intuito de Kenneth Branagh é o de transformar Shakespeare em algo de fácil compreensão e novo. Conseguiu-o através das suas escolhas relativamente ao argumento, elenco e banda sonora. A força motriz do director é a de levar Shakespeare a todos.

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1. Introduction

This study aims to demonstrate the existence of an intersemiotic relationship between literature and film. Both exhibit a trans-aesthetic affinity in sharing the same material, to be precise the verbal sign. They consist in the representation of a series of events happening in a given time and space, and both possess enunciation structures (a narrative dimension) as well (Sousa, 2001). Both film and literature deal with literary texts, however they are separate aesthetic and expressive realms with separate semiotic profiles. They do, nonetheless, evidence a connection, pertaining to forms and content, which has existed from the very birth of film. Therefore, this study will demonstrate the ways in which film is seen as derivative in relation to the text and the ways in which new academic interest in film has challenged this subordination of film to the literary text.

Film began as an art of replication, that is, early motion pictures were stationary shots, portraying an event or action, with no editing and no other cinematic techniques. Film and painting had a very close relationship during this period, for both relied on the pictorial. When it comes to distinguishing film from other art forms that preceded it, one may say that the former, operating in real time, has more limitations than the latter. Monaco (2000) draws attention to the difference in acting styles concerning dramatic narration in film and on the stage. According to the author, in Shakespeare's period, the unit of construction for stagework was the scene, the plays consisting of twenty or thirty scenes, but by the nineteenth century this had changed. With film, the scene was restored as the basic unit of construction.

Since film is able to portray real locations, it was no longer necessary for theatre to have realistic stages. Nonetheless, theatre still possesses something that film can never have, it is live, and as a result an interaction between actors and audience can occur. Theatre itself has developed immensely due to film; stages and stage props can be reduced to a minimum thus leaving it to the audience's imagination to create the rest. Furthermore, nowadays we have interactional plays, in which the audience contributes actively to the play, sometimes even to the plot.

We see therefore, that film has many affinities with several art forms, not only literature and theatre, but also with music, containing in itself rhythm and melody like the latter. Film employs a series of musical concepts conveyed in visual terms. Since *Entr' acte* (René Clair, 1924) and *Ballet Mécanique* (Fernand Léger, 1924-25), abstract and avant-garde film has relied on music theory for its effect (Monaco, 2000). While silent films were habitually complemented by live music, with the development of film technology, music became an essential part of film. Sergei Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) already consisted in an intricate junction of music and image, with images correlating with the score composed by Prokofiev. After the inclusion of sound in film, the introduction of colour gained more and more importance, after the Second World War, for Americans began to perceive colour as essential to attract audiences when competing against television, the latter having remained a black-and-white medium until the mid-1960s.

Continuing to look at film's relation to the other arts, one may say that the epitome of this relation is the fact that film can be employed to record almost all of the other art forms. Furthermore, it can translate many codes and tropes that are used in the narrative, musical, and dramatic arts, having, nonetheless, a system of codes of its own. It is this magnificent miscellany that characterizes film and makes it an ever surprising and new form of art.

Returning to the adaptation of literature into film, the transcodification from the former into the latter, two different perspectives must be taken into account. The first postulates that the adapted text must obey the original text in terms of fidelity. Defending this perspective we have authors like Bazin (*What is Cinema?,* 1967-71) and Boyum (*Double Exposure: Fiction into Film*, 1985). The second claims that the transposition from literature into film is based upon the principle of re-creation. This position is defended by Sinyard (1986), Hutcheon (2006), and others. This study tends to agree with the second position, in which film is perceived as a new and autonomous entity, as an interpretation and re-vision of the written work, not having to obey or be faithful to it in any means. It agrees with Susana Senteros (1996 in Sousa, 2001) when she calls the relationship between literature and cinema one of "retroalimentación"; cinema feeds off of literature but the result is something new, different. With the concept of "retroalimentacion" I wish to demonstrate that literature is an inspiration for film; the latter drinks from that fountain in order to get inspired and to create something not mimetic, but new, creative, original.

By transposing literature into film, aspects such as society and culture must be taken into account and thus, Hamlet's "mirror up to nature" theory, or the mirror to literary source argument is totally inadequate. Hamlet when giving instructions to a group of actors advises them to "suit the action to the word, the word to the action" and "overstep not the modesty of nature". However, in terms of filmic adaptations the mirror should be shattered for the film does not have to be the same as the literary source.

If we apply Bakhtin's theory of dialogism[1] to the relationship between literature and film, we will see that the latter, in a dialogic relation to the former, renovates the literary discourse through filmic, technical and compositional techniques.

This "to and fro" relationship between literature and film becomes even more evident when we acknowledge that literature has affected cinema in more than one way, but the opposite has also occurred. Some writers, such as Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Jorge Luis Borges even affirm that, in their texts, there is a cinematic presence, in terms of form, conventions, mechanisms and themes.

Therefore, when analysing a film adaptation, the technological and economic determinants, pivotal in any art, are as important as the cultural and social determinants, and in the analysis of Branagh's comedies, this study will consider all of these in order to understand how the films may influence the audiences' knowledge of Shakespeare, and making them more Shakespeare literate. This determinant entails, therefore, the study of the relations between the work and the artist, but also between the work and the audience.

The viewers increase their perception of the work of art, as well as make choices concerning the dramatic, pictorial and the narrative for themselves, thus putting them on a more equal footing with the artist. This is in synchrony with our concept of adaptation as a co-creation between the literary work, the director, the screenwriter and, to a lesser extent, the actors.

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[1] The notion of dialogism gains great importance in Bakhtin's (1929) *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* in which he contrasts the "dialogic or polyphonic interplay of various characters' voices in Dostoevsky's novels with the 'monological' subordination of characters to the single viewpoint of the author in Tolstoy's" (Baldick 1990:56). In accordance with Gray (1992:86) a text is dialogic if it allows "the expression of a variety of points of view, in the manner of dialogue in drama, leaving the reader with open questions".

> Where once the work of art was judged purely according to arbitrary ideals and artificial requirements, now it can be seen as "semifinished" material, to be *used* by the observer to complete the artistic process rather than simply consumed.
>
> (Monaco, 2000:37)

Therefore, contemporary film is marked by a generalized production of audiovisual communication as entertainment. It can be seen as a synthesis of the forces that have each at one time or another seemed to dominate the cinematic formula. Therefore, film history is best comprehended as the product of a wide range of contradictions. Even a particular film is the product of a number of oppositions: "director versus screenwriter, the ideal of the script versus the practical realities of shooting, shadow versus light, sound versus image, character versus plot, and so on" (Monaco, 2000:230). Each film becomes an element in a larger system of oppositions: "genre contrasts with the individuality of scripts; studio styles are in logical opposition to personal directorial styles; thematic tendencies contrast with the concrete physical reality of the medium" (Monaco, 2000:231).

As seen previously, music and image are pivotal parts in all films and being that our corpus of study is Kenneth Branagh, we must acknowledge that as a director he is very much preoccupied with the soundtrack in his films, to the point of discussing everything with his musical director, Patrick Doyle. Furthermore, when considering *Love's Labour's Lost (2000)* and *As You Like It* (2006), we can see that the director chooses when to use black and white images and when to change back to colour; these choices having to do with particular moments of the films.

This thesis thus aims to analyse film history through adaptation theory, attempting to establish that adaptation is connected to the very origins of film and has nowadays become ubiquitous to the point of fidelity to the literary work no longer having any real validity. Nowadays, the creative and innovative aspects of an adaptation are far more valued than its remaining true to its literary origins.

This study will analyse two of Branagh's romantic comedies, *Love's Labour's Lost* (2000) and As *You Like It* (2006), adapted from two of Shakespeare's plays and the analysis will focus on how the director brought these two plays into the 20th and 21st centuries. Its main interest is to show that the director did bring Shakespeare to the people via his adaptations and did this through a

series of creative choices. It is our belief that this director, born in Ireland into a middle-class family, who took on the quest of bringing Shakespeare to everyone, is indeed very important because of how he spread Shakespeare throughout the world, but also because of his creativity and ingenuity making each of these comedies his own. One question that may arise from this pertains to the choice of these two comedies and not the inclusion of *Much Ado About Nothing (1993)*. Even though *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993) was a big box office success and turned Branagh into a well-known and respected Shakespearean comedy director, it is our belief that it is not as innovative as the two later comedies. We believe that the two main alterations introduced by the director were the change in location, setting the film in Tuscany and the multi-racial cast. *Love's Labour's Lost* and *As You Like It* are more useful examples of adaptations for they transcend the criteria of fidelity. These two films have become independent and new entities that resonate of Shakespeare but breathe Branagh and our contemporary society and culture. Furthermore, *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993) has been thoroughly analysed and probed, for example by Hatchuel (*A Companion to the Shakespearean Films of Kenneth Branagh*, 2000) and Crowl (*Shakespeare at the Cineplex. The Kenneth Branagh Era*, 2003). *Love's Labour's Lost* and *As You Like It*, though having already been analysed by some, have not undergone this process as much as the former, mainly due to the fact that they are more recent and that they were not as big a box office success as *Much Ado About Nothing*.

I will thus examine both films focusing on how Branagh brought them to the people making them more accessible to today's audiences, to be exact, concentrating on the processes of updating in terms of genre, plot, characters/casting, in order to demonstrate that the director has fought to popularise Shakespeare and his weapon was the creation of two adaptations that excelled in having updated Shakespeare's plays, thus becoming separate entities on their own.

This dissertation about film studies and the adaptations of Kenneth Branagh is of great interest to me and gains importance when very little has been done in this realm nationally. The focus has remained on theatre adaptations, Rayner (*The representation of sexual transgression in three portuguese productions of Shakespeare,* 2004; *Caught in the act: the representation of sexual transgression in three portuguese productions of Shakespeare = A representação da transgressão sexual em três produções portuguesas de Shakespeare,* 2006). One exception is the work by Márcia Barros under the supervision of Prof. Anthony Barker, who wrote her Master's

dissertation on the cinematic adaptation of Shakespeare's *Richard III*. Nonetheless, very little has been done in Portugal in terms of these two comedies adapted by Kenneth Branagh.

2. Film theory

Film theory is, in short, a verbal representation of the film complex
(Andrew, 1984:3)

2.1 Historical Overview

Cinema, encompassing image, movement and sound, is without a doubt a mesmerising entity that might, at times, mimic life for it can be seen as a magical mirror. As a result, it can be seen as a "side-effect" of the *simulacra* postulated by Jameson (1929), being accordingly perceived as "a man-made world between total truthfulness and total falsehood" (Elsaesser & Buckland, 2002:1).

Each film theory has its own set of values directing theorists' attention to specific aspects of film. The first phase of film theory, the *Soviet Montage Theory*, with Lev Kuleshov, Dziga Vertov and Vsevolod Pudovkin put forth the idea that the essence of film lay in editing (the Kuleshov effect) and explained how the collision of independent shots could manipulate the audience's reactions and expectations. This was followed by the classical film theory (until the mid 1930s) which attempted to define film as an art focusing on its essence, that is, film's photographic recording capacity. This theory was essentially formalist and the main practitioners were Arnheim, Eisenstein and Munsterberg (*The Photoplay: A psychological study*, 1916). Arnheim (Film as an Art, 1957) supported film's ability to interpret and shape material.

Until the 1960's, André Bazin and Siegfried Kracauer (1960) dominated film theory with their classical realism that shared some conventions of literary realism and naturalism. Here the core was the content in preference to form and the conviction that film could actually present social and historical reality. This goes in total contrast with the previous vision of film that had as a focus the techniques and forms of film, while this is based on the content and its possible verisimilitude towards real life. Bazin "emphasised the way that certain films tried to conceal the fact that they were films by making sure that the viewer was always given enough information to follow the plot and by ensuring that shot transitions were as inconspicuous as possible" (Vincendeau (ed), 1995:386). Therefore, this film realism went directly against the Soviet film theories of the 1920s and 1930s that postulated that film could manipulate reality (Kuleshov effect).

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Semiology emerged in the 1960s and film semioticians tried to define film according to a precise combination of codes. Most of the work was carried out by Christian Metz, who incorporated into the field of film semiotics, work from other disciplines, namely linguistics and psychoanalysis. Metz's masterpiece (*Film Language: a Semiotics of Cinema* (1974)) in which he included his *grande syntagmatique* a system that divided filmic narrative into eight independent units or syntagmas, including the autonomous shot (a syntagma consisting of one shot), the parallel syntagma (the montage of motifs), the bracketing syntagma (montage of brief shots), the descriptive syntagma (objects are shown in sequence to evoke spatial coexistence), the alternating syntagma (two sequences alternating), the scene (shots implying temporal continuity), the episodic sequence (organised discontinuity of shots) and the ordinary sequence (relying on ellipses in order to exclude insignificant details) (1974, chapter 5).

It was also in the 1960's, more precisely 1968, that film critics turned back to Adorno and Benjamin, especially the latter's positive view of the cinema and its capacity to transform people's consciousness, going directly against Adorno's negative view of the cinema as a reproducer of mass conformity. Film journals such as *Screen* (Britain) and *Cahiers du Cinéma* (France) emerged, portraying film as a privileged medium to confront ideology. *Screen* was originally very much inspired by structuralist theories, namely those of Althusser[2], Lévi-Strauss[3], Barthes[4] and Foucault[5]. If one perceives film as a medium to confront ideology and a mode to transform people's consciousness, we envisage Branagh's adaptations as touchstones for bringing back the interest for Shakespeare, reacquainting the audiences with the Bard, educating them but also giving them a good time.

Film theory in 1970's accompanied feminist criticism, with *Camera Obscura*, the first feminist film criticism journal, highlighted the role of women in cinema, especially their sexuality and the way it was portrayed in film. Noteworthy were the works of Claire Johnston (*Notes on Women's Cinema*, 1973), E. Ann Kaplan (*Women and Film: both Side of the Camera*, 1983), Teresa de Lauretis (*Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema,* 1984) and Laura Mulvey (*Visual and Other Pleasures*, 1989). It was due to Mulvey's set of essays, *Visual and other Pleasures* that a

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[2] His notion of "interpellation", meaning that ideology constructs individuals as subjects.
[3] Lévi-Strauss' structural anthropology was an inspiration for *Screen*.
[4] Barthes' notions of mythological critique were used.
[5] Foucault served as an inspiration due to his vision of films as "discursive formations".

major shift occurred in terms of film theory; it was due to her that film theory began to be more directed towards psychoanalysis, using as inspiration the theories of Freud and Lacan.

The 'New Film History' which emerged in the 1970's, when film studies became institutionalized in the universities, developed precise areas of film history to research, and performed this research using thorough, methodical, and unambiguous processes, using citations of primary archival data, this having resulted in a revision and rewriting of film history[6].

Cognitive and psychoanalytic film theorists were mostly concerned with the particular type of the relationship between film and spectator, namely the modes a film may address unconscious desires and fantasies, or the knowledge and skills the audience employs to understand films. According to this theory, film viewers are seen as *subjects* and what they see on screen is the coming to life of their most intimate desires; thus the viewer is always trying to identify himself/herself with what is seen on the screen.

What is common to all these theories is that they try to define the nature of film, creating declarative knowledge. The role of the film theorist is important for the better understanding of film as an art form and she/he is expected to "challenge and go beyond the common-sense ideological understanding of film as a mere form of harmless entertainment, and instead maintain that it is an intrinsically significant medium integral to twentieth-century modern and postmodern society" (Elsaesser & Buckland, 2002:2). The analysis of film and the analysis of it as an abstract entity, not regarding its contexts of production and reception, is a possible explanation for the evolution of film theory, namely the shift from structuralism to post-structuralism, the "progression from the study of unconscious mechanisms (voyeurism and fetishism) to theories envisaging the spectator's position to film as fluid and heterogeneous and in terms of cognitive film theory, the shift from the study of the audiences' rational mental activities to their emotional activities" (Elssaesser and Buckland 2002:3).

Film theory becomes essential as a means of coming up with methods and concepts that support the film scholar to analyse a film. Nevertheless, Bordwell (1989: xii) contends that film analysis need not be influenced by film theory, arguing that film analysis may pursue general human

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[6] For this, academia started using concepts from established disciplines such as gender studies, anthropology, literary theory, semiotics and linguistics.

cognitive and inferential skills. To some extent I agree with Bordwell because when basing the analysis of film solely on our cognitive and inferential skills, we are opening this realm to more people and thus including the audiences in this process, making film analysis more democratic.

Elsaesser and Buckland (2002:5) postulate that the form of inquiry in film studies entails a threefold division between (i) theory, (ii) methods, and (iii) analysis. The authors postulate that films are analysable because of their "inherent form and structure". This structure not being instantly visible in itself, a theoretical perspective is necessary. Therefore, theory concentrates on creating diverse conceptual perspectives concerning a film, each of these based upon a set of values.

2.2 What is Film Theory?

Cinema is a social institution, created by people and for people, who in their terms are inserted in a certain society with determined mores and tastes, meaning that "everything is intrinsically political; there is nowhere outside history; language is constitutive; the subject is not originary" (Lapsley and Westlake, 2006:220).

If the political facet of films is recognized, they will be perceived as ideological processes, being consequently no longer seen as simple entertainment. Accordingly, a new focus of attention stems, from the relationship between audiences and film. As a consequence the spectator's role in co-creating the text is highlighted.

One may say that Film Theory gained momentum and importance when cinema itself was perceived as an art form and this arose with Ricciotto Canudo's *Manifesto* (1911) *The Birth of the Sixth Art*, in which the author would refer to cinema as a new art form. Canudo perceived cinema as a synthesis of the six ancient arts, architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry and dance; cinema encompassing all former art forms was a perfect symbiosis.

The centre of attention of early film theory was the delineation of the key elements of film, developing mostly from the works of directors who emphasised how film should be considered an

art form, such as Germaine Dulac[7], Sergei Eisenstein[8], Lev Kuleshov[9], Dziga Vertov[10], Paul Rotha,[11] early film theorists like Rudolf Arnheim[12], Béla Balázs[13] and Siegfried Kracauer[14]. Whereas Arnheim, Balazs and Kracauer saw film from a formalist point of view, perceiving it as a fine art due to the fact that it was different from reality, Bazin[15] posited the essence of film in the ability to mechanically reproduce reality.

André Bazin reacted against the Formalist attitude towards the cinema, stating that film's spirit rested precisely in its skill to mechanically replicate reality not in its divergence from it. In the 1960's and 1970's, film theory was embraced by academics who adopted concepts from Lacan's psychoanalysis, gender studies, anthropology, literary theory, semiotics and linguistics to

[7] A feminist critic/filmmaker, part of the *Cinema Pur Movement*, Dulac's aim was to create a ''pure'' cinema, free from any influence from literature, the stage, or even other visual arts. "Her first films were conventional melodramas, but a chance meeting with theoretician Louis Delluc led to them formulating the tenets of the avant-garde" (Vincendeau (ed), 1995:122). *The Seashell and the Clergyman* (1928) was a rare attempt at portraying the unconscious on screen.

[8] Russian film director, who made his first film in 1924. Eisenstein is reputed for his use of cutting in films such as *The Battleship Potemkin* (1925), *Alexander Nevsky* (1938).

[9] Soviet director and theorist. Along with Barnet and Pudovkin, many experiences were attempted labelled "films without film" and thus the notion of the Kuleshov effect was developed. In this editing exercise, shots of an actor were intercut with various meaningful images (a casket, a bowl of soup, and so on) in order to show how editing changes viewers' interpretations of images. "But Kuleshov never believed in Sergei Eisenstein's notion of "typage", preferring instead to train actors or, as he called them, "models" (naturshchiki), aiming for maximum screen expressivity with minimum gesture and effort" (Vincendeau (ed), 1995:250).

[10] A Soviet pioneer documentary film maker, newsreel director and cinema theorist. His work was the basis for the Cinéma Verité style. The *Kino Pravda* series were also part of his work. He advocated a film that captured the truth, the film would capture fragments of real life, that when organized, would show a deeper truth that was not seen with the naked eye. With the Kino-Pravda series, Vertov's everyday experiences were focused upon, disdaining the bourgeoisie by means of filming marketplaces, schools, bars, sometimes with a hidden camera and without permission. Eisenstein himself showed admiration towards Vertov and his work. In *The Montage of Film Attractions* (1924), Eisenstein mentioned Vertov and the concept of Cine-Eye. While Eisenstein was predisposed to incorporate ideas from other art forms, Vertov was against it, for it was tainted by the bourgeoisie.

[11] A British documentary film-maker, film historian and critic; Rotha was crucial on the British documentary movement. He gained notoriety in 1930 with his book *The Film Till Now*, the first English-language history of the cinema.

[12] German art and film theorist and perceptual psychologist. "One of the most prominent exponents of the anti-realist tendency in film aesthetics, Arnheim saw film less as an optical-mechanical reproduction process than as an autonomous art form translating reality into significant forms (colour, shape, size, density, brightnesss), through which all human perception of natural phenomena takes place" (Vincendeau (ed), 1995:19). He himself said that his major books are *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye* (1954), *Visual Thinking* (1969), and *The Power of the Center: A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts* (1982), but it is *Art and Visual Perception* for which he was most widely known.

[13] Hungarian film theoretician, screenwriter, poet and film critic. Balazs "was one of the first important theorists of the cinema, proclaiming its independence as an art form" (Vincendeau (ed), 1995:28). His first theoretical work, *Der Sichtbare Mensch* (*The Visible Man*) (1924), helped found the German ''film as a language'' theory, which also exerted an influence on Sergei Eisenstein and Vsevolod Pudovkin. In *Der Sichtbare Mensch* "he emphasizes the importance of the "physiognomy of the visible world" as the basis of cinematic expression" (idem). In *Der Geist des Films* (The Spirit of the Film) (1930), Balazs "treats in a detailed manner the dynamics of montage, taking a position opposed to the intellectual montage theory of Eisenstein" (idem).

[14] German theorist, between 1920s and 1930s, Kracauer was one of Germany's major film critics and cultural affairs editor of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. "Kracauer was the first to analyse film from a sociological perspective, grounded on his extensive research in problems of epistemology (*Soziologie als Wissenschaft, 1922*) and class analysis (Die Angestellten, 1930) (Vincendeau (ed), 1995:248). From 1922 to 1933 he worked as the leading film and literature editor of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* building up theoretical methods of analyzing circuses, photography, films, advertising, tourism, city layout, and dance, which he published in 1927 with the work *Ornament der Masse* (published in English as *The Mass Ornament*). In 1960, he released *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality*, which argued that realism is the most important function of cinema.

[15] French film critic and theoretician, although "he had predecessors – Louis Delluc, Rudolf Arnheim, Béla Balázs, Paul Rotha – Bazin's uniqueness was to combine rigorous film analysis, militant pedagogic vocation and popularising journalism (...) His idea of cinema as a "window on the world" and his defence of long takes and deep-focus cinematography against Soviet montage are his best know (...) and most controversial views" (Vincendeau (ed), 1995:35).

analyse film. Whereas Bazin advocated for the directors to be invisible but for the films to represent their personal views; the films should depict an objective reality. Conversely, a Formalist attitude towards film is more preoccupied with combinations of shots and montage.

It was in the 1990's, in the midst of the digital revolution in image technologies, that a refocusing occurred due to the ability of film to capture an indexical image of a moment in time. Departing from a psychoanalytical viewpoint, following the Lacanian[16] conception of the Real, new modes to analyse film were provided by Slavoj Žižek[17]. Following the postmodern acts of revision and revisiting, a historical revisiting of early cinema screenings, film mores and forms of spectatorship has been performed by writers such as Miriam Hansen (*Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film*, 2005.

2.3 The Analysis of Film

In this subsection the issue of film analysis will be dealt with, namely what it is and the sort of critical writings concerning cinema that exist. The aim is to make clear that film theory is inevitably connected with other theories/fields of thought, such as literary theory, linguistics, semiotics, but has, nevertheless, its own realm and corpus of analysis.

Analysis of film has a place in textual analysis, this meaning a return of *exegesis*. In general, *exegesis*[18] presumes an attempt to view the text objectively, while *eisegesis* implies more subjectivity (Bellour, 2000:1)[19]. Traditional *exegesis* entails the study of noteworthy words in the text in terms of translation; the assessment of the general historical and cultural background; the corroboration of the confines of the passage, and last of all, the examination of the structure of the text. Foucault acknowledged this as historically associated with a concern with the formalization and development of literature. We believe that associating film analysis to *exegesis*

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[16] Lacan developed an analysis of psychoanalytic practice which influenced a generation of French Structuralist, Post-structuralist, and Feminist thinkers. "Lacan's central thesis is that the unconscious is structured like a language; a thesis that he locates in Freud's discovery that condensation and displacement (and their prototypes, Metaphor and Metonymy) are the primary mechanisms of the unconscious. (...) Formations of the unconscious (slips of the tongue, memory lapses, dreams, etc.) are understood by Lacan as instances of failed communication" (Mautner (ed), 1996:129). Lacan's concept of the Real postulates that it can only be "reconstructed on the basis of the structural distortion it produces in the symbolic order of the subject." (idem:230).

[17] Lacanian Marxist Sociologist and cultural critic. Žižek used works of Lacan in order to give a new reading of popular culture.

[18] "Explanation of the meaning of a text; interpretation of a text" (Mautner (ed), 1996:140).

[19] An *exegesis* is the interpretation and understanding of a text having the text itself as basis. The word *exegesis* can signify *explanation*, however as a technical term it signifies ''to draw the meaning out of'' a certain text. Exegesis differs from *eisegesis*, which means to read one's own interpretation into a given text.

implies that the former will be very much concerned with the textual part of its corpus, i.e. the screenplay and, concerning adaptation, how the process of "translation" from one medium into another is performed. We would prefer a looser approach to adaptations, i.e. the analysis not focusing on the text but rather on the whole *ensemble* and what resulted from the entire process of the adaptation.

If one perceives film as a social construction, it may therefore be seen as an expression of mass culture. Film magazines such as *Sight and Sound; Film Quarterly; The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* included cinema as a theme worthy of consideration. In the early 1960's, film gained a place in American universities, most theorists being Aristotelian, they intended to "divide the "film complex" into a series of hierarchically related questions and to conquer this complex with consistent propositions" (Andrew, 1984:11). Their intent was to totalize the field of cinema by the use of their encyclopaedic knowledge of what had been done before. "The film theory born in the world of the humanities has been one based on the efficacy and import of *metaphors* about the film phenomenon", thus "[t]he Humanities approach to film theory has, in other words, developed a tradition that is virtually self-sufficient" (Andrew, 1984:9). This meaning that the theories put forth by humanists can be tested and verified because an audience shown a film sequence can either substantiate or disapprove these theories. Furthermore, humanists have used empirical sources to demonstrate under the rule that a speculative theory can be empirically tested.

Jean Mitry published *Esthétique et psychologie du cinema* in 1964, his works being a compendium of the classical era of film theory. Also in this year appeared the works of Christian Metz, who pioneered the application of Saussurean concepts of Semiology to film analysis[20]. Modern theorists concentrate on topics deriving from Mitry, although they do not acknowledge this, by changing the name of those topics and concepts. According to Andrew (1984:17) the turning point between modern theory and the previous occurred in 1964. Issues such as "perception, representation, signification, narration, adaptation, valuation, identification, figuration and interpretation" (idem), are perennial when it comes to film theory but critical theory, according to the author, took off from the constructions of the past in 1964, mainly due to the reconstruction of the territory of the humanities.

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[20] *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema, trad. Michael Taylor, 1974; The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema, 1977; Language and Cinema (Approaches to Semiotics), 1974.*

> Modern theory approaches nothing directly, neither the audience through questionnaires and neuro-physiological experiments, nor the films through minute formal analyses and experiments. Such audience studies and formal experiments which do go on in mainstream film theory are invariably guided by the current general discourse, that is, by reflective concepts. (Andrew, 1984:3)

When considering the different sorts of critical writings relating to film, one comes across a myriad of works. There has been a sizeable collection of theoretical and critical writings when it comes to cinema, the latter having reached their peak with Bazin, Truffaut, Rohmer and Rivette. Conversely, we have directors writing about film, and many times about their own films (Eisenstein, Bazin, Kuleshov, and so on), explaining their creative process and intents.

Structuralism can be seen as responsible for the origin of a Semiology of cinema. The first semiology of cinema was created by Christian Metz's[21] *Film Language: a Semiotics of Cinema (1974);* his methodology towards cinematic facts was based on four historical points: criticism, history, theory of cinema and filmology. Metz used as inspiration Freud and Lacan and he postulated that film had become a popular art form because it could be an imperfect reflection of reality. Christian Metz advocated that cinema is structured as a language, i.e. using Saussure's notions of *Langue* and *Langage*, the former being a language system and the latter a system of conventions. Cinema does not have a langue, for it does not have a strict or definite grammar and syntax. Film's basic unit, the shot, is neither symbolic nor arbitrary, like a word, but rather iconic; however, Metz proposes that a film functions as a sentence, in which all shots are united to form a whole. Stephen Heath (*Questions of Cinema*, 1981) and Umberto Eco (*Articulations of the Cinematic Code*, 1976) contradicted Metz, postulating that film does indeed work Saussure's concept of langue.

John Carroll created a transformational grammar of film aiming at the discovery of the grammaticality in film; whereas Noel Burch, David Bordwell, and Kristin Thompson study the grammar of "constituted bodies of film, like the Hollywood system, the pre-Griffith system, the 1930's Japanese system" (Andrew, 1984:8-9).

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[21] French Film Theorist who applied Saussure's theories of Semiology to film.

Analysis of film poses as a contribution both to the history, as well as theory of the cinema; on the former it bestows formal and stylistic standards, on the latter it presents Sociology, Semiology and Metapsychology.

3. What is Film Adaptation?

Nullum est iam dictum quod non dictum sit prius [22]. Terence

"Art is derived from other art; stories are born of other stories"
(Hutcheon 2006:2)

Adaptation can be seen as an intersemiotic exchange in which the seeking of cultural prestige has a central role, although it also has economic motivations, for cultural prestige and money are seldomly apart. The adapter chooses, normally, a prestigious literary work, for this is the safest mode to achieve acknowledgement and also capital. The literary work of art has a cultural wealth that the adapter wants to take advantage of, thus turning this cultural wealth into an economic one. If a literary work is prestigious, this means that the film will probably have more audience, thus earning more in revenues, paving the way to success of the director and maybe to some awards.

The notion or rather understanding of what an adaptation is has changed over the years, mainly due to the shift in meaning of cinema itself. The act of being shown a story is not the same as being told that same story.

> To tell a story, as in novels, short stories, and even historical accounts, is to describe, explain, summarize, expand: the narrator has a point of view and great power to leap through time and space and sometimes to venture inside the minds of characters. To show a story, as in movies, ballets, radio and stage plays, musical and operas, involves a direct aural and usually visual performance experienced in real time (Hutcheon, 2006:13).

Notwithstanding an adapter's attempt to transfer the original story to film as closely as possible, film being another medium with its own conventions, artistic values and techniques, alters the original story into a different work of art. Furthermore, "[i]f we take seriously the arguments of Marxist and other social theorists that our consciousness is not open to the world but filters the world according to the shape of its ideology, then every cinematic rendering will exist in relation to some prior whole lodged unquestioned in the personal or public system of experience" (Andrew 1984:97).

Adaptation, as an interpretative action, engages at least one person's reading of a text or another type of source, which results in choices about which elements to convey into film, and decisions

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[22] Nothing is said that has not been said before. (My translation)

regarding how to actualize such elements in a medium of image and sound. This act is so significant that in any one year, approximately one-third of all commercial films produced in the United States derive from literary works. Additionally, the greater part of films nominated for Academy Awards in the category of best picture are adaptations. In fact, literary fashions have on occasion influenced the cinema significantly. It may be said that the Romantic fiction of Hugo and Dumas defined the stylistic requisites of American and French film subsequent to the silent era. The requisites nowadays have unfortunately become *kitcher*. The adaptations one sees nowadays are not so much of literary canon, but of works such as *Harry Potter*, *The Lord of the Rings*, and even more recently the *Twilight Saga*. Times are changing, as well as interests, but nowadays adaptations are more of unknown works than of literary canon possibly because the canon has been explored over and over again, making it possibly exhausted, but also, this could be a safer choice for there are many adaptations of literary canon by the great directing masters.

3.1 The validity of the concepts of fidelity/infidelity

Should a film be faithful to the original literary work or are there degrees of fidelity? When considering fidelity towards the textual version as the core of adaptation, films are judged according to whether the adaptation bears the essential narrative elements and core meanings of the printed text. However, how do we identify the core meanings of a text, when the text itself encompasses a myriad of meanings? One infers therefore that fidelity cannot be an evaluative term, but a descriptive term, helping to simplify the relations between text and film.

One of the core convictions of film adaptation theory is that audiences are more demanding of fidelity in the case of the classics. Stam (2000:54) sees the term infidelity as resonating "with overtones of Victorian prudishness, betrayal evokes ethical perfidy; deformation implies aesthetic disgust; violation calls to mind sexual violence; vulgarization conjures up degradation; and desecration intimates a kind of religious sacrilege toward the sacred word".

Although a tripartite approach had been followed for many years, namely that using the concepts of "close, loose and intermediate" (Desmond and Hawkes 2005:3) or "literal, traditional, or radical" (Cahir 2006:17) focusing on the degree of proximity/independence towards the source

text, Kamilla Elliott (2003: 133-83) created six approaches to adaptation, that is psychic[23], ventriloquist[24], genetic[25], de(re)composing[26], incarnational[27] and trumping[28] . Furthermore, Desmond and Hawkes (2005), as well as Cahir and Welsh (2006) see adaptation as 'the transfer of a printed text in a literary genre to film' (Desmond and Hawkes 2005: 1). The common denominator between these theorists is that they all warn against the concept of *faithfulness* as a means of evaluating an adaptation. Desmond and Hawkes postulate that "we use *fidelity* not as an evaluative term that measures the merit of films, but as a descriptive term that allows discussion of the relationship between two companion works"(2005:2–3). This is the road we am going to take in terms of the analysis of *Love's Labour's Lost* and *As You Like It*.

Cahir & Welsh (2006 :17) distinguish between three modes of adaptation, literal, traditional and radical, however they favour traditional adaptations over literal adaptations that lack "the audacity to create a work that stands as a world apart" and radical adaptations that are "so self-governing as to be completely independent of or antithetical to the source material". According to the author, "[t]he first step in exploring the merits of literature-based films is to see them as *translations* of the source material and to understand the difference between ''adaptation'' and ''translation''". While adaptation engages changes in the structure or function of the text, translation implies the creation of a new text "a fully new text—*a materially different entity*— through 'a *process of language*" (idem:14).

For Sanders (2006:26), appropriation is a broader concept than adaptation. Adaptation "signals a relationship with an informing source text or original", whilst appropriation "frequently affects a more decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and

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[23] According to this approach, what passes from book to film is "the spirit of the text" (Elliott, 2003:136) and the author continues by remarking that the "spirit of a text is commonly equated with the spirit or personality of the author" (idem).

[24] Kamilla Elliott postulates that the difference between the psychic and the ventriloquist concepts of adaptation lies in the fact that the latter does not "pay lip service to authorial spirit" but rather "blatantly empties out the novel's signs and fills them with filmic spirits" (2003:143).

[25] This consists of a narratological approach to adaptations for "Narratologists figure what transfers between literature and film as an underlying "deep" narrative structure akin to genetic structure" (2003:150).

[26] By this concept, Elliott means that "[t]he adaptation is a composite of textual and filmic signs merging in audience consciousness together with other cultural narratives and often leads to confusion as to which is novel and which is film (2003:157). Elliott continues to ascertain that what some critics call "unfaithful" adaptations are in fact operating under this de(re)composing model because "[t]hey are condemned as unfaithful because critics read only one way – form novel to film- and find that the film has made changes. But if one reads in both directions – form novel to film and then form film back to novel- one often finds the alleged infidelities clearly in the text" (2003:157). These so called infidelities are no more that creative choices of some parts over others and not a rejection of anything.

[27] Originating from the biblical word becoming flesh, the incarnational concept, "the word is only a partial expression of a more total representation that requires incarnation for its fulfillment", thus adaptation is incarnation (2003:161).

[28] The trumping concept of adaptation has to do with "which medium represents better. Although it can take either side, the majority of adaptation criticism favors the novel over the film" (2003:174). According to the trumping concept of adaptation, the novel no longer has authority over the adaptation, in this mode "[t]he adapting film claims to have represented that signified better" (idem).

domain" which "may or may not involve a generic shift" and might not recognize this relationship.

Andrew envisions adaptation as the appropriation of a meaning from a previous text. When the original is put in a privileged stance and the adaptation process foregrounded, the possible relations between film and text are borrowing, intersection and fidelity of transformation (Andrew, 1984). According to the author, borrowing is the most common mode of adaptation, to be precise, the text is extensively utilized. Taking Shakespeare as an example, the adaptation would attempt to attract a larger number of viewers due to the prestige of its borrowed title or subject. Moreover, the adapter endeavours to attain a certain degree of respectability. When analyzing this sort of adaptation, the study should focus on the use made of the original; adaptation would thus be perceived as a continuing form. Shakespeare's works are known worldwide, even if the plays have not been read, the plot is known. When the audience watches a Shakespeare adaptation, this should be seen as a continuity of the Bard's work, of a bringing the play to life again, modernising it and refreshing it. Nowadays there are all sorts of adaptations of Shakespeare's works, for example a *Hamlet* adaptation in *The Simpsons*.

The last mode postulated by Andrew was fidelity of transformation, in which the film endeavours to be consistent with a literary work, to be precise the film would try to "equal" the literary work as much as possible.

It is exceedingly complicated to achieve fidelity to the spirit, tone, values, imagery and rhythm of the original text; one might even argue that it is an unrealistic objective. Nevertheless, the director may always infer or conjecture what the literary work means and, subsequently, reproduce the original (which in itself is an adaptation). Words become images, thus bearing resemblance to one another, both involve connotation; "narrativity is the most solid median link between novel and cinema, the most pervasive tendency of both verbal and visual languages. In both novel and cinema, groups of signs, be they literary or visual signs, are apprehended consecutively through time; and this consecutiveness gives rise to an unfolding structure, then diegetic whole that is never fully *present* in any one group yet always *implied* in each such group" (Braudy & Cohen, 1979:4).

The concept of "pure" film is connected to the notion that film is visual rather than literary, thus it would be closer to painting and sculpture than to literature. However, we must not forget that both film and literature share the same raw material, i.e. words, and literature and film thus intersect with one another.

3.2 Adaptation and Intertextuality

The process of transference from a literary work into a screenplay may be seen as a simplification, for a film needs to convey its message by images and relatively few words, the basis of this process being the rewriting. "Uma reeescrita é o resultado escrito da transformação de um texto"[29] (Ben-Porat in AGM, 2008:33). Rewriting is connected to the intention of citing, and thus it implies a fresh look at an original text. A re-presentation takes place however, its historical setting should always be taken into account.

> Todo o processo de reescrita intertextual é, em nossa opinião, em larga medida, um processo comprometido, não um processo cego (Jameson's *blind parody*), o qual nos remete necessariamente para o diálogo de linguagens, textos e culturas (...) (Macedo, 2008:36)[30].

An adaptation has its own aura, its own existence in a given time and space. Walter Benjamin in *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1936) develops four main concepts: reproducibility, aura, cult value and exhibition value. Reproducibility is the consequence of the advances of productive classless society, there being a political interest in artistic reproducibility. Art can be used as a weapon, examples of this are films of *Henry V, Titus Andronicus* and *Richard III* being used to portray dictatorships. Cult value expresses ritual and tradition, specifically the aura of the work of art, its uniqueness. The idea of Aura is associated with magic, religious and secular rituals. With art's mechanical reproducibility the experience of art "emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual" (Benjamin, 1968:223). The technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the sphere of tradition.

An aura encompasses the distance of contemplation and it is through reproduction that distances close and the work of art becomes repetition and transition, allowing for a political manipulation

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[29] " Rewriting is the written result of the transformation of a text".
[30] "All the intertextual rewriting process is, in our opinion, largely, a compromised process, not a blind process (Jameson's 'blind parody'), which leads us inevitably to a dialogue of languages, texts and cultures".

of reality. There are no more rituals, instead there is politics; as a result, in the mechanical age of reproduction the work of art becomes independent from ritual, thus art becomes based on politics (Benjamin, 1968:226). Adaptations could be seen as never simply reproductions that lose their aura; rather they have a message that is being conveyed. In *As You Like It*, Kenneth Branagh decided to set the film in Japan because of the existence of those "small kings" that ruled their lands in accordance to what they wanted but also because of the "morals issue" in Japan. This choice was not innocent; it was carefully considered and thus, the adaptation serves the purpose of also educating the audience in terms of history and culture, namely that of Japan.

Film has revolutionized traditional aesthetics, the audience becoming the "optical tester" and a critic, this going against cult value. Benjamin affirms that with the performance media, the audience sits in the dark as a group and react to what they are seeing and hearing, thus the audience has a mass response, opposite to the reflective individual response to viewing a painting (Benjamin, 1968:231). Cult value is lost because when seeing a painting or a museum, one is either alone or in a small group, and when seeing a film, one is in a room with dozens of unknown people. Furthermore, there is a precise place to see a museum, that is the Louvre can only be seen in Paris, while a film can be seen everywhere, any time, even in your living room; therefore cult value is lost for the art, in this case film, becomes ubiquitous.

Peter Brook (1987:190) goes further claiming that film engulfs its audience with the image in all its immediacy: "When the image is there in all its power, at the precise moment when it is being received, one can neither think, nor feel, nor imagine anything else". Christian Metz (1974:185) sees the film viewer as an isolated and distanced voyeur with no relation to the actors whom he or she regards with "unauthorized scopophilia". Metz (1977) contends that the spectators identify themselves with the characters and, thus, the pleasure of looking (scopophilia) is fostered because cinema trades on the desires of the spectators. Cinema's symbolic and technological forms create unconscious identification processes in the spectators, or quite conscious particularly nowadays. It is because of these identification processes that dictators are unmasked (Duke Senior in *As You Like It*), morals appraised (Duke Frederick and Orlando in *As You Like It)* and meaning it or not, the audience becomes part of film and lets the film become part of themselves.

Adaptations have become ubiquitous. There are even films on the subject of the process itself; Jonze's *Adaptation* or Gilliam's *Lost in la Mancha* both from 2002. "Shakespeare transferred his culture's stories from page to stage and made them available to a whole new audience. Aeschylus and Racine and Goethe and da Ponte also retold familiar stories in new forms. Adaptations are so much a part of Western culture that they appear to affirm Walter Benjamin's insight that "storytelling is always the art of repeating stories" (Hutcheon 2000:2).

However, many moralistic words are used to attack film adaptations of literature such as "tampering", "interference", "violation" (listed in MacFarlane 1996:12), "betrayal", "deformation", "perversion", "infidelity" and "desecration" (Stam 2000:54). The transposition from literature to film or television has entailed a shift to "a willfully inferior form of cognition" (Newman 1985:129). Virginia Woolf in 1926 criticized film as deploring the literary work, calling film a "parasite" and literature its "prey" (1926:309). Jonathan Miller(1986), a theatre director, declared that

> Most novels are irreversibly damaged by being dramatized as they were written without any sort of performance in mind at all, whereas for plays visible performance is a constitutive part of their identity and translation form stage to screen changes their identity without actually destroying it.(in Hutcheon, 2000:36).

One may believe that in the process of transposition from written form to visual, much is lost. Nevertheless, one must not forget that much is gained. Classics were brought back to life due to film adaptations, for example *Love's Labour's Lost* (2000), *Pride and Prejudice* (2005), *As You Like it* (2006), *Sherlock Holmes* (2009), just to name a few. This process of "updating" a classic is important and fecund for it makes sure that the classics do not stay in the past, but it also gives way to a "revamped" version of the classic, according to the director's views and creativity. As Hutcheon (2000:36) points out, "the differences in material scale alone make the novel-to-performance adaptation difficult, but the same is obviously true in reverse".

Christian Metz sees cinema as telling us "continuous stories; yet it says them differently. There is a reason for the possibility as well as for the necessity of adaptations" (in Hutcheon, 2000:3). Robert Stam (2000:58) argues that some literature will always have axiomatic superiority over the adaptation due to its seniority as an art form, nonetheless, this superiority is imbued with what he calls iconophobia (a suspicion of the visual) and logophilia (love of the

word as if it were sacred). The same can be said about Shakespeare; the playwright himself adapted many stories.

Hutcheon defends the idea that adaptation is repetition with variation (2000:4), "recognition and remembrance are part of the pleasure (and risk) of experiencing an adaptation". Hollywood films of the classical period relied on adaptations from popular novels, whereas British television has specialized in adapting eighteenth and nineteenth-century novels, this being what Ellis calls the "tried and tested" and "tried and trusted" (1982:3).

Adaptations can be seen as palimpsestuous works, haunted at all times by their adapted texts. To see an adaptation as an adaptation is to treat it not as a work, but a text, a "plural stereophony of echoes, citations and references" (Barthes, 1977:160). This phenomenon is very important nowadays for there is a severe lack on interest in terms of reading; with adaptations of classical literature we are one step closer to getting people acquainted with the classics and maybe the interest will be triggered in order to get them to read, or serve as substitute for reading.

For a long time, fidelity was the critical orthodoxy in adaptation but as Bluestone (1957/1971:114) illustrates, when a film becomes a financial or critical accomplishment, the issue of its faithfulness is no longer posited any value. In fact, the similitude to the original was the catalyst for the creation of several typologies of adaptation processes: borrowing versus transformation (Andrew 1980:10-12); analogy versus commentary or transposition (Wagner, 1975:222-31); using the source as raw material versus reinterpretation of only the core narrative structure versus a literal translation (Klein & Parker, 1981:10).

The notion of fidelity should not the basis for adaptation theories, rather the opposite; adaptations should be defined from "three distinct but interrelated perspectives", the first seeing it as a formal entity or product; the second as a process of creation and the last it should be seen from the perspective of its process of reception (Hutcheon, 2006:7). As a formal entity or product, "an adaptation is an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works"; "this transcoding can involve a shift of medium or genre" (Hutcheon, 2006:7). As a process of creation, the "act of adaptation always involves both (re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation", this being called both an "appropriation and salvaging" (Hutcheon, 2006:8).

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When considering the reception of an adaptation, we inevitably come up against its intertextuality. We perceive it as an adaptation and also a palimpsest, echoing some previous work, but merely this, echoes, for they have been altered and varied in accordance with the aesthetics of the adapter. Pursuing this line and in accordance to Barthes (1977:52), a text is a "multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash". Thus, "the text is a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centres of culture". Therefore, a "writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior never original; his only power is to mix writings". This is the very epitome of intertextuality; a theory conceptualised by Kristeva but based upon her readings of Barthes and Bakhtin. Julia Kristeva substituted the Bakhtinian concept of "intersubjectivity" for "intertextuality". The author defended that "a escrita é sempre uma releitura de textos culturais e de diálogo destes com o literário"[31] (Kristeva, 1969 in AGM, 2008:31). From this flourishes the concept of "rewriting", and with it, a change of perspective, i.e. privileging "no escritor um "leitor de textos culturais" nos quais se insere "re-escrevendo-os" através da indefenida construção textual da história e sociedade"[32] (Macedo, 2008:30).[33]

Since we "live immersed in narrative, recounting and reassessing the meaning of our past actions, anticipating the outcome of our future projects, situating ourselves at the intersection of several stories not yet completed" (Peter Brook, in AGM, 2008:25), we have become accustomed to this revisiting of the past performed by adapters. Novels, plays, texts themselves all have echoes of other works, it is part of the postmodern condition, therefore it is only natural for film to have them as well. Matei Calinesco (1997 in AGM 2008:37) claims that the act of rewriting is reasonably recent and employed as a set of literary composition techniques including imitation, parody, burlesque, transposition, pastiche, adaptation and translation. The author also states that rewriting is postmodernism's fundamental strategy of composition. Nevertheless, and

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[31] "Writing is always a re-reading of cultural texts and a dialogue of these with the literary one)"

[32] "the writer as a "reader of cultural texts", in which he/she is inserted "re-writing" them through the undefined textual construction of the story and society".

[33] Intertextuality "means the mapping of the interrelationships between texts. The exact degree of interrelationship between any two texts (in the broad sense of cultural artifacts – be they novels, poems, essays, or films) varies enormously: it may be overt, in the sense that quotation from a text and explicitly sourced, or it may amount to a more covert reference allusion to a well-known plot or character, or a subtle reworking which may be reverential or subversively parodic in its intent" (Murray (ed.), 1999:559). When concentrating upon the intertextual character of a work, one "highlights that the text's location in an infinite web of other linguistic products, be they high literary works or the products of popular media such as cinema, television, or advertising. By implication, a work of literature becomes less about itself – in the "pure," New Critical sense – than about the circulation of general cultural types and modes of discourse" (Murray (ed.), 1999:559). Kristeva's intertextuality concept entails that "any "new" text can only ever rework and recycle the existing body of literature in a combination specific to itself" (Murray (ed.), 1999:560). Each text is seen as being part of an infinite network of "difference – signaling their associations with previous or contemporaneous works at the same time as they bespeak their derivations from surrounding texts" (idem).

previously stated, Shakespeare had already adapter stories for example, Shylock could be perceived as an adaptation of Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*.

Consequently, an adaptation becomes a transposition of a recognisable other work or works. It is an innovative and an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging, but also an intertextual commitment to the adapted work. Accordingly, an adaptation is a derivation and not derivative, a "work that is second but not secondary. It is its own palimpsestic thing" (Hutcheon, 2006:9).

As we can see, adaptation encompasses/uses intertextuality, i.e. inside an adaptation many sources can be found. Inside the adaptation of *As You Like It*, we can find Shakespeare, Kenneth Branagh's prologue, a history lesson on 19th century Japan. Thus the title of this sub-section is supposed to demonstrate that an adaptation borrows and changes a/several previous text(s) to create a new whole.

3.3 What gets to be adapted?

The just value is not given to the adapters, rather the opposite; they are called thieves for stealing. However, one must acknowledge that the adapter is not stealing but using/improving something previous, trying to create something new.

If we do not talk about the creative process in adaptation, we cannot completely appreciate the desire to adapt and in consequence the very process of adaptation; "we need to know why" (Hutcheon, 2006:107). Nevertheless, the creative practice itself is often a taboo or not considered by the critics.

> In the act of adapting, choices are made based on many factors, as we have seen, including genre or medium conventions, political engagement, and personal as well as public history. These decisions are made in a creative as well as an interpretive context that is ideological, social, historical, cultural, personal, and aesthetic. And that context is made accessible to us later in two ways. First, the text bears the marks of these choices, marks that betray the assumptions of the creator (...) Second, and most obvious, is the fact that extratextual statements of intent and motive often do exist to round out our sense of the context of creation (Hutcheon, 2006:108-109).

When the audience is aware of the adapter's intentions, their interpretation of the film can be biased. Both adapter and viewers interpret in a determined context and thus, the work of art

becomes not solely an amalgamation of formal structures, but also composed of what was used to create it.

A couple of questions arise from this. Is the screenwriter, she/he who "creates or (creatively adapts) a film's plot, characters, dialogue, and theme" (Corliss 1974:512) or the adapter? Or is it the actors, composers, editors?

> It is hard for any person who has been on the set of a movie to believe that only one man or woman makes a film. At times a film set resembles a beehive (...) But as far as the public is concerned, there is always just one Sun-King who is sweepingly credited with the responsibility for story, style, design, dramatic tension, taste, and even weather in connection with the finished product. When, of course, there are many hard-won professions at work. (Ondaatje, 2002:xi).

Throughout the process of adaptation, the original work undergoes several "adaptations", namely at the hands of directors, actors, screenwriters, costume designers, and the list could go on forever. The script itself is frequently altered in the course of the interaction with the director and the actors, and the editor.

> William Goldman sees the finished film as the studio's adaptation of the editor's adaptation of the director's adaptation of the actor's adaptation of the screenwriter's adaptation of a novel that might itself be an adaptation of narrative or generic conventions. (Hutcheon, 2006:83).

This quote is the perfect explanation for the inaptness of the *fidelity* concept. The adapted text becomes something not reproduced, but interpreted and recreated, it is a "reservoir of instructions, diegetic, narrative and axiological that the adapter can use or ignore" (Gardies in Hutcheon, 2006:84). Themes are the easiest to transpose into film, they may be used to "reinforce or dimensionalize" the plot, due to the supremacy of the storylines, one exception being that of European "art" films (Seger 1992:14). Art films, defined by Bordwell as a genre on their own are different from mainstream Hollywood films due to their specificities. They possess their formal qualities, namely the emphasis on authorial expressivity of the director, thus being very much associated with the term "auteur films". Whereas, most Hollywood producers want to take the safer way of tried-and-tested plots, making sure the films will be successful in terms of revenue, "auteur films", for example Truffaut's, are more concerned with originality, visual aspects, own cinematic codes.

Attempting to answer the tile of this sub-section, when trying to answer the question about which texts are adaptable, one must acknowledge that some literary works are more adaptable than others, for example the works of Shakespeare, Dickens, and Christie have been repeatedly adapted, whereas those of Beckett, Joyce, among other, have not. One could also argue that aside from the adaptability facet of some works, their cultural value might also bear some importance to the adapter.

Why and how do the adapters choose this winding road of adaptation then, if it seems such an ungrateful and untrustworthy task? Adaptations have been acknowledged as translations, denoting the transposition to another medium. If this idea is pursued, we see "translations in the form of intersemiotic transpositions from one sign system (for example, words) to another (for examples, images)" (Hutcheon, 2006:16).

The answer to my question lies in the fact that this act lures producers and filmmakers for it brings with it economic, cultural, and personal advantages. Producers collect money from investors for they have limited budgets, this implies the existence of allegiances between investment banking and corporate production from the beginning (Bluestone 1957/1971:101): the law of the marketplace is at work for both investors and audiences. "Adaptations are not only *spawned by* the capitalist desire for gain; they are also *controlled by* the same in law, for they constitute a threat to the ownership of cultural and intellectual property" (Hutcheon, 2006:89). There are very specific laws when it comes to film adaptation as they are dealing with intellectual property, sometimes canonical pieces of literature. When a piece of literature has not yet become part of the public domain, rights must be arranged for the adaptation to be performed legally, and here the investors play a big part.

When it comes to the cultural prestige instilled in an adaptation, the focal point is that adapters often choose to adapt canonical literary works for they are already imbued with respectability and popularity. The first known adaptations of literary works were of Shakespeare plays for the playwright's works have a substantial amount of cultural capital and therefore this would contribute to the success of the filmic version.

The market for adaptations of canonical literature has been increasing substantially and a proof of this is the existence of an educational industry totally devoted to aiding teachers and students to make use of the adaptations, for example the 1992 *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales.*

Furthermore, as Margarida Esteves (2009:150) points out " a adaptação cinematográfica dos clássicos não tem necessariamente de constituir, como muitas das vezes se pretende insinuar, uma forma de arte cinematográfica menor relativamente a outro tipo de cinematografias"[34].

In order for an adaptation to become an artistic work it must "subvert its original, perform a double and paradoxical job of masking and unveiling its source" (Cohen, 1977:255). An adaptation can take advantage of the original's cultural prestige, or it might want to replace its cultural influence and authority. If the original works has cultural prestige it is very likely that the adaptation will succeed in terms of box office revenue, though this was not the case with some adaptations of canonical works, such as *Love's Labour's Lost*. However, the odds are in their favour. One other phenomenon might be that of bringing the forgotten past back to life. The adaptation might be a way of the classic regaining its influence and claiming back their cultural influence, examples of this are Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Conan Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes,* Fernando Pessoa's *Livro do Desassossego*.

Adaptations are living proof that traces of the adapter/interpreter cling to them, as Benjamin states "traces of the story-teller adhere to the story the way the handprints of the potter cling to the clay vessel" (1968:91). In this mode, we can infer that traces of the adapting interpreter adhere to the adaptation. In this mode, adaptations are both creative and interpretive works, just as literature, as Said mentions in *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (1985:12) that literature is "an order of repetition, not of originality-but an eccentric order of repetition, not one of sameness".

3.4 The adaptation process and how the audience responds

As mentioned previously, adapting is a process of appropriation, in which the adapter "recycles" the literary work into another art form, using her/his creativity and sensibility. This process consists of interpreting something that already existed and creating something new. In the case of long novels or plays, the adapter must subtract some parts of the original text, Abbot (2002:108) names this a "surgical art", as an example we have the adaptation of *Hamlet* that is

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[34] Cinematic adaptation of the classics does not have to necessarily constitute, as often insinuated, a minor form of cinematic art in terms of other cinematographies.

extremely difficult for it is a long play and even undergoing cuts, the film becomes long for this short attention span society; as an example we may consider Branagh's Hamlet with his 242 minutes hours of film.

With the process of appropriation[35], the adaptation becomes progressively more an "original" work, therefore we should not perceive it as an imitation or mimesis of something else. On the contrary, we should analyse it in terms of its intertextuality, in which the "receiver is acquainted with the adapted text" (Hutcheon, 2006:21). "It is an ongoing dialogical process, as Mikhail Bakhtin[36] would have put it, in which we compare the work we already know with the one we are experiencing" (Stam, 2000:64).

Adaptations thus have, a double perspective, that of a product (extensive, particular transcoding) and that of a process (creative reinterpretation and palimpsestic intertextuality) (Hutcheon, 2006:22). When emphasizing the adaptation as a process, different sorts of engagement arise. To be exact, we become aware of how they permit an audience to interact with a story being told or displayed. Hutcheon (Hutcheon, 2006:22) names three modes of engagement, telling, showing and interacting. Though these concepts are also associated with other media, when it comes to film, telling implies the immersion of the audience in a fictional realm; showing entails the immersion of the audience via perception of the aural and visual; interacting presupposes a physical and kinesthetical engagement.

A change in medium often occurs in adaptations, and the medium "does not lie between sender and receiver; it includes and constitutes them" (Mitchell, 2005:204). The adaptations raise the issue of the formal specificity of arts and media, presenting the questions of hierarchy of art forms. Adaptations that imply a change of medium provoke this discussion, namely that of each art form staying true to itself and not endeavouring to use devices from other art forms.

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[35] By this I mean, the process in which the director makes the adaptation his/her own by means of his/her creativity, cinematic codes, ideas, concepts and so on.

[36] Dialogism is at the centre of Bakhtin's work. According to the author it is the foundation of language, meaning that all language is permeated with dialogic relations. It also implies the relativity of authorship for it foregrounds collectiveness, and the social production of ideas and texts. There is no individual, but a social one. In "The Dialogic Imagination" the author contrasts the "dialogic" and the "monologic" work of literature. Dialogic literature continues a dialogue with other literary works, informing and is informed by the other literary works, having as its core communication. This resonates with T. S. Eliot's assertion that "the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past" in "Tradition and Individual Talent" (1922). In the 1970s and 1980s, scholars began to associate Bakhtin's "dialogism" with the concept of "intertextuality".

When discussing film, it is believed to be the most inclusive and synthesizing of performance arts, "[a] composite language by virtue of its diverse matters of expression – sequential photography, music, phonetic sound and noise – the cinema inherits all the art forms associated with these matters of expression ... - the visuals of photography and painting, the movement of dance, the décor of architecture, and the performance of theatre" (Stam in Hutcheon, 2006:35). Indeed film is the quintessential form of art that manages to incorporate all other art forms and that is what pleases us the most about it.

The most frequent adaptations consist of the change from novel/play into film, in other words, the change from telling into showing. The opposite does occur, but as Burroughs (1991:76 in Hutcheon 2006:38) argues "If you took the actual filmscript of *Jaws* and turn it back into a novel, with no reference to the actual novel and just the filmscript as your given material, you would most likely end up with a very dull novel and also quite a short one". Whilst proceeding to the shift from telling into showing, descriptions, narration, and even thoughts must be performed, "[w]hen theorists talk about adaptation from print to performance media, the emphasis is usually on the visual, on the move from imagination to actual ocular perception" (Hutcheon, 2006:40).

A shift from a telling to a showing mode possibly will also signify a change in *genre* as well as medium, and therefore a change in the expectations of the audience. "Richard Loncraine's 1995 updated cinematic version of Shakespeare's *Richard III* has been called a generic mix of the British "heritage film" and the American gangster movie (...) causing conflicting responses in audiences" (Hutcheon, 2006:45).

When it comes to the audience's response, "twin experiences spectators are given in every film: that of recognizing something they can identify and that of constructing something worth identifying" (Andrew, 1984:14). According to Hutcheon (2006:120), there are two sorts of audiences, the knowing and unknowing audiences; the former are smart and knowledgeable, while the latter have no previous knowledge of the literary source. These knowing viewers are able to complete the spaces in the adaptation from the literary source and one might say that some directors expect this aptitude. However, an adaptation must be created for both knowing and unknowing audiences, we could have Luhrman's *R+J* as an example. The commonsense point of view would be that unknowing audiences would be preferable to the directors for the viewers would be in a "clean-slate" position and would judge the film in terms of its own qualities

and flaws, not comparing it to the literary original. The tendency, though, is for an adaptation to overtly announce its nature, mainly on legal grounds. If an audience knows that the film is an adaptation, it becomes the knowing kind, therefore the literary text will serve as source to supply their expectations.

There are other facets to this knowingness of the audience, Hutcheon (Hutcheon, 2006) puts forth the ideas of context (cultural, social, intellectual and aesthetic), the form of the adaptation and the medium shift (the institutionalization of a medium can itself create expectations).

> Differently knowing audiences bring different information to their interpretations of adaptation. For example, film buffs likely see new movies through the lenses of other ones. Watching Kenneth Branagh's 1989 film adaptation of Henry V, they are probably going to see it as much as an adaptation of Laurence Olivier's famous 1944 film as of one of Shakespeare's play, translating the early version's shining clean world, with its self-conscious and stylized theatricalism, into the dank and dirty one of filmic realism. (Hutcheon, 2006:125).

We believe that each adaptation should be considered on its own and judged for what it offers of new and innovative. The ordinary film-goer would not know of Olivier's adaptation, therefore he would only consider what Branagh did.

Media and literature literacy, while important to the understanding of the adaptation as such, may be a hindrance to the understanding of the adaptation's full potential, for the intertextual knowledge might influence the interpretation of the interpretation. Suspension of disbelief[37] is an important tool/resource for the viewer to perceive and interpret the adaptation's real worth and value.

Showing a story requires a perceptual decoding of the information. Kamilla Elliott calls this a mutual connection between mental imaging and mental verbalizing (in Hutcheon, 2006:130). Conceptual work is required of the audience because being shown a story requires that

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[37] "Willing suspension of disbelief", coined in *Biographia Literaria* (1817), was a procedure devised by the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge as a validation for the use of fantastic and non-realistic devices and elements in literature. We may understand this as the willingness of the spectators to accept the limitations of a medium, with the intention that these do not obstruct the acquiescence to those premises. The audience consequently agrees to momentarily postpone their opinions and judgements in return for their amusement. "... it was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth on the other hand was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us ..." (*Biographia Literaria*, chapter XIV).

perceptual decoding skills are put into use by the audience, which actually makes film audiences quite sophisticated audiences.

When bearing in mind types of audience it is vital to take into consideration the reality of *interpretive communities* (Fish, 1976). The concept of *interpretive communities* first appeared in "Interpreting the Variorum" (1976), and it implies that these communities are responsible for the shape of the reader's activities in terms of interpretation. In *How to recognize a poem when you see one (1980)*, we become aware that definitions of poetry function like a recipe that direct readers in terms of what to look for in a poem. The act of interpretation is therefore, not subjective, but communal, because the act of interpretation is done through publicly presented systems of intelligibility; meaning that what we see are products of social and cultural patterns of thought. A reader, therefore, needs to be skilled, that is to say, to know how to discern what is in front of him/her.

Taking into account Boyum's (1985) opinion, that audiences are communally interpreting, then if a text is prone to numerous interpretations, a film will function correspondingly. "In assessing an adaptation, we are never really comparing book with film, but an interpretation with an interpretation" (Boyum, 1985:61). Here the author means that the adaptation is the product of an interpretation, that of the adapter, and will also be subject to a later interpretation, that of the audiences. However, not all interpretations are valid, and in accordign to Boyum, and so for an interpretation by the adapter to be valid and correct, some criteria must be followed. The author mentions five criteria to be taken into consideration in order to proceed to a valid reading, which should be (i)"one that reflected a recognition of this quality" [literary complexity], (ii) "that was sensitive to such riches and nuances" , (iii) "that was somehow nuanced itself", (iv) "deal with the work as a totality" and (v) to unify them [plot, characters, images] in a way consistent with the text's own logic" (1985:73). Boyum's conclusions mirror the concept of fidelity which is, by no means, supported here, rather the opposite. The concept of fidelity is no longer valid, for it is in infidelity that all the fun and interest rest.

Returning to spectators and the act of interpretation, a "spectator must move from the perception of objects presented in a certain way to an understanding of a state of affairs (story, argument) and finally to a comprehension of its poetic and rhetorical significance" (Andrew, 1984:14). The spectator becomes immersed when seeing a play or film and, bearing in mind the reader-

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response theory[38], which flourished in Europe and North-America in the 1980's, one notices that the reader is no longer considered a passive recipient of textual significance but rather an active contributor to the aesthetic process, trying to decode signs and then to create meaning (a co-creator).

All readers are engaged in the active making of textual meaning. The concept of interpretive communities becomes relevant for these communities are said to be responsible for the shape of the reader's activities and for the texts those activities produce.

3.5 Conclusion

"Filmmaking, in other words, is always an event in which a system is used and altered in discourse. Adaptation is a peculiar form of discourse (...)" (Andrew, 1984:106)

The adaptation may be faithful towards the literary work or not, but if so, there are many levels of fidelity. If one focuses on the similarities between the two forms of art, one will fall in the error of discrediting everything that is not the same, all that is not faithful. One erroneously believes that the literary work should be a blueprint for the filmic version, thus disregarding the fact that the literary work has a myriad of meanings and signifiers that can be reproduced in a multitude of modes. Therefore in this view, both the literary and the filmic works of art are reduced and limited.

> [...], cuanto mayor es la riqueza de un texto literario, mayor es también su potencial de adaptaciones posibles, porque cada adaptación responderá a un punto de mira distinto [...][39] (Gimferrer, 1985:64 in Guimarães, 2001:31).

In addition, if the filmic version is only considered in terms of fidelity, one loses the myriad of possibilities that derive from the adapter's imagination and creativeness. When interpreting what she/he reads, the adapter is engaging in a hermeneutic act, from which her/his creation will arise. By considering the literary work as the one and only source to be considered, one ignores the skills of the adapter, thus perceiving her/him as a mere reproducer, devoid of any creative spark.

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[38] When dealing with the reader-response theory we are talking about Norman Holland, Stanley Fish (*Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics* 1970), Wolfgang Iser (*The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* 1974); I. A. Richards.

[39] "The bigger the richness of a literary text, the bigger also the potential for possible adaptations because each adaptation will answer to one distinct point of view."

Film works from perception toward signification, from external facts to internal motivations and consequences, while literary fiction works in the opposite way. It begins with words, building to propositions which develop into perception. In a Postmodern age, the aim should be rewriting universal practices and to "challenge (..) master narratives with the discourse of others" (Owens, in Foster 1983:10).

Considering that adaptations appeal to the ""intellectual and aesthetic pleasure" (DuQuesnay 1979) of understanding the interplay between works, of opening up a text's possible meanings to intertextual echoing" (Hutcheon, 2006:117), the matter of fertility should be considered and not of fidelity. The analysis of adaptation must point to the achievement of equivalent narrative units.

Film adaptation personifies our age and thus when analysing an adaptation, culture and mores are also being analyzed, as well as postmodern works of art. As Suleiman indicates, "[t]he appropriation, misappropriation, montage, collage, hybridization, and general mixing up of visual and verbal texts and discourses, from all periods of the past as well as from the multiple social and linguistic fields of the present, id probably the most characteristic feature of what can be called the «postmodern style» (Suleiman in Hoesterey, 1991:118).

4. Introduction to Cinematic Comedy and to Kenneth Branagh's Cinematography

4.1 Shakespearean comedy versus cinematic comedy

This sub-chapter is an attempt to ascertain the main characteristics of Shakespearean and cinematic comedy. For a better understanding of Shakespearean comedy, one must go back to its origins, to be precise, the classical authors. Aristotle in Book IV of *Nichomachean Ethics* broaches the perils of an excess of laughter, therefore advocating a middle term, one attempting to avoid the excesses of "vulgar buffoons, striving after humour at all costs" (*Nichomachean Ethics*, II, 1780 [1128a]). He goes on to explain that the protagonists of comedies, in direct contrast to those of a tragedy that are men of importance, are "an imitation of men worse than the average; worse, however, not as regards any and every sort of fault, but only as regards one particular kind, the ridiculous, which is a series of the ugly" (Poetics, II: 2319 [1449a]). This very much resembles Touchstone and Audrey in *As You Like It* and Moth and Costard in *Love's Labour's Lost*.

Plato in *The Republic* stated that the general concern about laughter derived from its connection to the common and vulgar. Apprehensive that the spectators of comedy would, because of it, accept behaviours they would not normally accept, Plato proclaimed that "in comic representations, or for that matter in private talk, you take intense pleasure in buffooneries that you would blush to practice yourself, and do not detest them as base" (The Republic, 831 [606c]). This echoes Jacques position about the Fool, for according to him, the Fools had such a freedom that they could do and say anything they intended, but he could not, for he stood in a socially superior position to them.

Cicero in *De Oratore,* focusing on comedy, established the difference between "two types of wit, one employed upon facts, the other upon words" (De Oratore, 379). The former is of an anecdotal type for "the character, the manner of speaking and all the facial expressions of the hero of your tale, are so presented that these incidents seem to your audience to take place and to be transacted concurrently with your description of them", while the latter creating laughter through "something pointed in a phrase or reflection" (idem).

During the early phases of the Renaissance, the most important classical treatment of comedy taken into consideration was Aelius Donatus, who postulated that comedies should be constituted by four parts, going against Horace's *rule* of a play having no more and no less than five parts. According to Donatus comedies should be divided into the prologue, "the first speech"; the protasis, "the first action of the drama, where part of the story is explained, part held back to arouse suspense among the audience"; the epitasis, "the complication of the story, by excellence of which its elements are intertwined"; and the catastrophe, "the unravelling of the story, through which the outcome is demonstrated" (in Galbraith, 2002:9). According to Galbraith, the aforementioned definitions of a comic plot would serve as basis for the theory of comedy,

> these definitions of the components of a comic plot, together with the parallel insistence that a comedy be comprised of five acts, provided Renaissance Europe with the essential vocabulary and the structural understanding of the genre which would inform the theory of comedy throughout most of the sixteenth century. (Galbraith in Leggatt, 2002:9).

With the Renaissance, there was a revival in the interest about the classics. Erasmus was still very much concerned with the matter of decorum, thus creating principles to govern characters, words, plot.

> During the first half of the sixteenth century, then, rhetorical models of decorum informed discussions of comedy and of the comic, whether in arguments over the aims and methods of using drama in the classroom, or in the elaboration of Cicero's account of the orator's uses of humor in Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (idem:11).

The renaissance humanist Francesco Robortello attempted at creating an equivalent model to that of Aristotle. According to the author "the Plot, because it imitates, must bring out Character and accurately express the manners of diverse people" (On Comedy, 231). This postulates thus the main difference between a comedy and a tragedy. Comedies, nonetheless, have constructions rules according Robortello,

> The plot ought not to be episodic, for such a plot is faulty. I call that plot episodic in which many things are inserted over and above the one action that was set up in the beginning... since the imitation of Comedy is not only of low and trifling affairs, such as take place in the private actions of people, but also of disturbances, there should also be present that which is taken from the nature and custom of human actions, which always have in them something troublesome or distressing. (Of Comedy, 232 in Leggatt, 2002:12).

Ludovico Castelvetro, the writer of *Poetica d'Aristotele vulgarizzata e sposita* ("The Poetics of Aristotle in the Vulgar Language"), 1570, postulated four types of events that triggered laughter, "everything that becomes ours after we have desired it long or ardently"; "[d]eceptions, as when a person is made to say, do or suffer what we would not say, do or suffer unless we were deceived"; "wickedness of the soul and physical deformities"; "all the things to do with carnal pleasure, like the privy parts, sexual intercourse, and the memories and representations of both" (Castelvetro in Leggatt, 2002:13).

Conversely to this formalism and theoretical framework, we encounter Ben Jonson supporting through Cordatus that "we should enjoy the same license, or free power, to illustrate and heighten our inuention, as they did; and not bee tyed to those strict and regular forms, which the niceness of a few (who are nothing but forme) would thrust vpon us" (Jonson, III, 1.1, 266-70). Shakespeare took advantage of this license to create without restrictions and a clear evidence of this is *Love's Labour's Lost* with its' strong sexual content and innuendo, still present on film for example in *Let's face the Music*.

One cannot precisely isolate Shakespeare's influences concerning comedy theory for he worked for stage comedy and his work is also characterised by a continuum of change of form, content, and so forth. However, according to Gay (2008:1), Shakespeare, who wrote in the 1590s and the first decade of 1600s combined laughter-causing moments with a form of dramatic story-telling that has a long and ancient story. Nevertheless, no matter what happens throughout the play, the ending will consist of an image of happiness, though sometimes only for some. One other constant when it comes to Shakespearean comedies is the presence of the clown. All of these elements are present in both films studied, i.e. the plays end happily with the couples getting together and to amuse us throughout the play, we have the presence of clowns such as Costard (*Love's Labour's Lost*) and Touchstone (*As You Like It*). One must acknowledge that Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* does not have a traditional romantic ending, that is, the couples are not re-united. However, Branagh's *Love's Labour's Lost* does have the traditional ending. The director added another scene so that the audience would know that *Jack has Jill*.

Aside from the laughter and amusement of the audience, comedies have a narrative pattern or structure. "This form is based on the expectation that the delightful temporary disorder of the tale will be resolved with reincorporation into normal society [...]. Comedies, as a genre, end with

weddings and feasts rather than deaths and funerals [...]" (Gay, 2008:5). Interestingly, *Love's Labour's Lost* does not follow this pattern for the play ends with the death of the King of France and the separation of the couples. As mentioned previously, Branagh decided not to respect the tradition and going against the bard's decision, adds an extra scene to his film, so that the couples are reunited and all ends well.

When considering Elizabethan comedy, it has been stated that "[d]uring the first half of Elizabeth's reign we might say that comedy in the generic sense is relatively undeveloped, while comedy in the sense of comic matter is alive and well, kicking its way every possible dramatic shape" (Dillon in Leggatt, 2002:48).

In the earlier part of Elizabeth's reign[40], there was a great miscellainity in terms of the construction of the plays for they would bring together comedy, tragedy, biblical, moral and romantic elements which would be very confusing for our contemporary audience.

It was George Peele and John Lyly that brought on change with *The Arraignment of Paris* and *Campaspe* and *Sappho and Phao* respectively. Previous comedies consisted of knights falling in love with and fighting for the love of their ladies, it was Lyly who subverted this model. As Dillon points out,

> We find the musings of lovers on their own feelings, the mockery of their folly by others, the careful plotting of the game of love all very familiar in Shakespearean comedy; but it is Lyly who first introduces this kind of subject matter into English drama. (Dillon, 2002:51).

Lyly was also the one to introduce minor characters who take part in extended banter, in Shakespeare we find these roles in such characters as for example Costard in *Love's Labour's Lost*, Touchstone in *As You Like It* and Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*.

According to Sidney, English comedy is

> nothing but scurrility, unworthy if any chaste ears, or some extreme show of doltishness, indeed fit to loft up a loud laughter, and nothing else: where the whole tract of a comedy should be full of delight, as the tragedy should be still maintained in a well-raised admiration.

> But our comedians think there is no delight without laughter; which is very wrong... Delight hath a joy in it, either permanent or present. Laughter hath only a scornful tickling. (Apology for Poetry, p.136 in Dillon, 2002:52).

Dillon asserts that Sidney saw art as a "golden world" and that Sidney along with Peele, created exotic fictional worlds, relying on mythical and pastoral settings, with "epiphanic resolutions", that would also be adopted by Shakespeare, especially in the creation of subplots. The author also draws attention to the similarities in the intrigue of *As You Like It* and *Gallathea*,

> Where Lyly demonstrates the parity and seriousness of his two lovers, Shakespeare puts one figure on a position of greater awareness, seriousness, and depth than the others, thereby exposing the others as absurd and anticipating the pointlessness of their misdirected love. And where Lyly solves the conundrum of same-sex love by having Venus descend and transform one of the girls into a man by their mutual agreement, Shakespeare keeps Rosalind true to her given sex, and makes her the beloved of both a man and a woman, so that frustration and absurdity are incorporated into the complex mix of feelings that the revelation of her true sex must inspire (2002:53).

The use of the clown arises from a will to cut down intellectual pretension and to draw attention to what Mikhail Bakhtin has called the "the material bodily lower stratum," that is, the world below the belt and the sphere of the human urges, which would allow the spectator to distance himself/herself from cerebral activity and discourse.

This opposition between high/low stratum functions particularly well in *Love's Labour's Lost*, where Costard and Jaquenetta express their bodily needs without embarrassment in a blatant contrast with for example the King of Navarre and the Princess of France. This opposition between high and low is also very present in *Much Ado About Nothing* and becomes very subversive when it is the Watch that finds out the truth and saves Hero from her slander.

However, as Bates mentions "[m]en and women meet, match, marry and mate. This is the eternal story which Shakespeare's comedies retell again and again" (Bates in Leggatt 2002:102). This is the usual formula for Shakespeare's comedies. *Love's Labour's Lost* is an exception, for the play ends with the parting of the couples. One other general characteristic is cross-dressing, women dressing as men or the other way around; things are restored at the end, however love has changed the characters, for example Benedick and Beatrice and, mainly the gentlemen of *Love's Labour's Lost* become men. Courtship is a time of change and adjusting to the loved one

and as, Bates mentions, there is the establishing of a new *Gestalt* after the falling in love and the union of the couples.

> Whatever form it takes, a courtship narrative always charts some kind of development or progress. It moves its protagonists from one state of being to another that is clearly differentiated. The emphasis is on process – on the character's passage through a sequence of normally well-organized steps toward a desired, however distant, destination. [...] Indeed the romance between Celia and Oliver is an exception, the rule in such cases being precisely those obstacles, delays, and misunderstandings which constitute the tortuous plots of most comedies of love. (Bates in Leggatt, 2002:103)

The tale of the boy meets girl, they fall in love, they endure some mishap like war, being outcast, abstinence vows, and subsequent to all that, getting married and living happily ever after, was very popular during Shakespeare's time and still is nowadays in Hollywood. The convention of the happy ending in romantic comedies, may be one of the reasons why Kenneth Branagh decided to alter the ending of *Love's Labour's Lost*, so that the couples would reunite and live a fairy tale life afterwards. As Benedick puts it, "the world must be peopled" (*Much Ado About Nothing,* 2.3, 242). At the end of the courtship, the couples surrender to the laws and mores of the society and order is restored as each member of the couple retreats to his/her position regarding gender and household position.

In *Love's Labour's Lost* and As *You Like It*, at the end, there is more than one couple being united which entails that "since the couple is the basic building block of the social group, matrimony celebrates not only the union of one particular couple but, more importantly, the absorption of that couple into the larger group as a whole. Ultimately the individual is subordinate to the group [...]" (Bates in Leggatt, 2002:104).

Both in Shakespearean plays and in Hollywood Romantic Comedies the audience does not get to see what the "happily ever after" entails, this because it simply does not interest the viewers. It is the courtship that is filled with emotion, action, dilemmas, not what comes after it.

Cinematic comedy can be considered the oldest film genre and one of the most prolific and popular. Comedy was ideal for the early silent films, as it was dependent on visual action and physical humour rather than sound. *Slapstick*, one of the earliest forms of comedy, made fun of situations consisting of practical jokes, accidents, acrobatic death-defying stunts, water soakings,

or wild chase scenes with trains and cars. Burlesque was also one other form of early comedy that focused on the ridicule.

The fathers of cinema, the Lumiére brothers, included a short comedy film in their very first public screening in 1895 titled *Watering the Gardener* or ''The Sprinkler Sprinkled'' (*L'Arroseur Arrose*). One can easily assume that the film would focus around a gardener that while watering his plants would end watered himself – the focus being again in physical comedy.

It was soon realised that romantic comedy would be a more sophisticated type of comedy, not having as main focus physical comedy, and would also attract a wide range of audience. Throughout the years the popularity of this genre has been pointed out by for example Babington and Evans (1989), Frank Krutnik (1990), Andrew Horton (1991), Steve Neale (1992) and Kathleen Rowe (1995).

The authors establish as a main feature of romantic comedies the privileging of the eternal nature of love, leaving aside whatever exists that threatens this love. Krutnik and Neale (1990:63) distinguished and theorised the cycle of the "nervous romances" that "betrays an intense longing for the restitution of faith in the stability of the heterosexual couple as some kind bulwark against the modern world". A few years later, Krutnik and Neale (1990:287) made another distinction, this time between the "nervous romances" and the "new romances" the latter pertaining to the popular romantic comedies of the 1980's.

Consequently, both authors perceive the new romantic comedies as entities that self-consciously establish a link with their own tradition, perceiving their conventions as valid and trying to maintain a line between the filmic and literary history. One may say that, "the popular success of Kenneth Branagh's *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993), neither strictly a nervous nor a new romance, although sharing traits of both, attests to the apparent irrelevance of those cultural and historical changes that have affected the genre since its Renaissance beginnings" (Evans & Deleyto, 1998:2). This comedy, an adaptation of the Shakespearean play but also a contemporary romantic comedy, is a good representation of the Hollywood comedy genre. Branagh skilfully chose a comedy to be re-introduced in the 20th century which contained main traits that could cause empathy on the audience.

> The lesson that *Much Ado* teaches us is that, important though the historical emphasis may be, divorce and remarriage, screwball and sex comedies, nervous and new romances all belong to an

artistic tradition which embodies a very specific and relatively unchanged view of love, sexuality and marriage, a view which was already being put into circulation four hundred years ago. (Evans & Deleyto, 1998:3)

Bearing in mind that the name of the genre is romantic comedies, and the basis of all romance is love, one must not forget that the concept of love itself has undergone changes in our culture. After all, what is love? One can say that traces of love perceived as a madness or infirmity may be found in Shakespeare's comedies, for example in *As You Like It* Rosalind will try to cure, vaccinate Orlando against that disease.

Salingar (1974) sees romantic comedies as means of discovering a new identity through all the difficulties that come with erotic attraction and courtship. If we look at this carefully, we will see that this is the basis for most of our romantic films and series, i.e. they focus on the difficulties of meeting someone and then on how complicated it can be to learn how to live with someone else.

The former arbitrary and unreliable sense of passion gave way to a more tamed notion of love, which Belsey (cf. Belsey 1985:138-48 and Rose 1988:12-42) perceives is the centre of a social structure that has as basis marriage and family. It is here that the contemporary notion of romantic comedies is born according to Belsey, a form that celebrates love and marriage. Love appears as something spiritual and emotional that compels everyone and is also a means of ensuring social structures. Love appears in these romantic comedies as a force that cannot be tamed, but will ultimately be beneficial for it will ensure the maintenance of the social structures, i.e. marriage leads to reproduction and the cycle continues. Because Hollywood romantic comedies constantly end with marriages, happy endings seem to mean the same as marriage, we are left not knowing what comes afterwards, being left with the erroneous feel that they are followed by an unproblematic happiness (which is very unrealistic).

Interestingly enough, the persistence of some types of comedy are directly correlated with sociological events. Charles Musser (1995) and Tina Lent (1995) pointed out that the periods of the greatest success of the early *divorce* and *screwball comedies* coincide with the periods in which there was an historical crisis in the institution of marriage. Furthermore, Krutnik (1990:58-62) argued that the cycle of *sex comedies* in the 1950's and 60's appeared at a time of the great discussions in the USA concerning sexual matters, however these comedies still ended with the happy ending of marriage.

It could be said that the romantic comedies of the 1980's and 1990's were a sort of response to a period of crisis in marriage in the western world and the success of these comedies could be linked with a feeling of "nostalgia for paradise of innocence evoked by classical examples of the genre" (Evans & Deleyto, 1998:6).

According to some authors, Giddens (1992:61-3) contemporary romantic comedies, instead of transmitting the idea of the idealised love between a man and a woman, they transmit the idea of "confluent love"; this means that what is keeping the couple together is the acknowledging, by each member of the couple, that sufficient profit is being taken from the relationship make it worth it.

4.2 Shakespeare on Film

Shakespearean film or Shakespeare on film is not a film genre on its own however, and as Kathy Howlett citing Leo Braudy, mentions "Shakespeare films share with other genre film the quality of speaking to the audiences' desire for repetition and formula" (in Anderegg, 2003:1). This means that the audiences crave for films that are based on or adaptations of classics; there is something appealing in the familiar, for when we go to the cinema to watch an adaptation, we cannot help but feel like an "expert" for we already know something about the film if we have read the novel/play it is based on.

One can argue that using Shakespeare's plays but with a different twist and with a modern context had been occurring since the English Restoration in 1660, as Hatchuel postulates "[t]heatre actors-producers, from David Garrick in the late 1770s to Henry Irving in the late 1800s, have felt this same desire to stage Shakespeare in impressive and spectacular sets, using lighting, stage machinery, and mechanical devices to increase the impression of realism" (Hatchuel, 2000:13). So it becomes more than natural for filmmakers to do the same, i.e. use Shakespeare's words and stories on film.

In the past twenty years there have been numerous Shakespearean adaptations, many of which subsequent to the blockbuster success of Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo+Juliet* (1996). Hollywood realised that adding Shakespeare to a group of young hip actors equals a lot of money. Directors also realised "how Shakespeare films can exploit generic and recognitial abilities in viewers, so

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that the untrained spectator is able to master visual conventions with little or no reference to linguistic ones (the original Shakespeare)" (Anderegg, 2003:2). This meaning that most of the viewers know Shakespeare's stories, in most of the cases without having read the actual plays, and when watching such films, the audience members recognise the plot and characters as Shakespeare. Furthermore, language is no longer a handicap, i.e. we are able to follow the story because of what we know beforehand and also because of what we see on screen.

Having as example Branagh's adaptations here in question, one sees that Shakespeare's English is no longer an obstacle for teenagers to understand the film. Directors have used a myriad of techniques to overcome this, in our case, Branagh in *Love's Labour's Lost*, substituted the most difficult parts with songs that mean the same, but are more easily understood. Hindle (2007) argues that most of the Shakespearean adaptations aim at communicating "accessibly" and "coherently" with the film audience, for this they need to be realistic and actors must communicate in an effective way. Setting *Love's Labour's* Lost in the 1930s is a way of making the film more realistic and easier to understand for the audience knows that at that time there was a war going on, thus understanding the seriousness of the couples' parting for example.

One has argued that directors see in Shakespeare a good source for success and revenue, however some director wilfully hide the origin of the film, for example Julie Taymor's *Titus* (1999), in which she conceals the Shakespearean origin by presenting it as *A Julie Taymor film*. The question that comes to our mind is when does a film stop being an adaptation; how far does the director have to go so that the film is no longer an adaptation? Taking as an example Branagh's *Hamlet*, a word-for-word adaptation of the Shakespearean play and contrasting it with Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* (1957) which is considered one of the best Shakespearean films, but it does not use Shakespeare's language, both are adaptations. The issue then is not Shakespearean language but rather the aura or essence and as Anderegg (2003:9) states "in practice Shakespeare films are not simply adaptations of Shakespeare's play but allusions to and commentaries on the play they adapt". Anderegg's quote thus explains how Kurosawa's film is indeed an adaptation of *Macbeth*.

As aforementioned, Shakespearean adaptations have been linked with success, Kenneth Branagh, a virtual stranger to the audiences, financed and produced his first Shakespeare film (*Henry V*), starring in it and from this moment onwards became known to the public. Further

examples would be Branagh's *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993) and Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo+Juliet* (1996), that were a vehicle for stardom to some directors and actors. In *Love's Labour's Lost* Adrian Lester was nominated by the British Independent Film Award for Best Actor and in *As you like It* two actors were nominated for acting awards, Bryce Dallas Howard was nominated for a Golden Globe and Kevin Kline won a Screen Actors Guild Award.

So how have directors overcome the possible handicap that is Shakespearean language? Anderegg (2003) points out that Shakespeare films frequently provide an introduction, prologue or marked-off section taking us from present to past (Taymor's *Titus*), Olivier's *Henry V*, from production to performance. One further example may be Loncraine's *Richard III* giving us a blood-red lettering on screen, informing about a Civil War diving the Nation, a non-diegetic introduction, followed by a close-up of a machine shooting tape on which we witness, now in a diegetic mode, Richard of Gloucester approaching. Branagh himself uses a Prologue in *As You Like It* to tell the basic information of what is happening and in *Love's Labour's Lost*, the director uses newsreels to keep the viewers up-to-date.

Still the audience may have some problems with the diction and words of the film (Shakespearean ones), but the directors created ways out of these situations, for example in Branagh's *Much Ado About Nothing* and Luhrmann's *Romeo+Juliet* we see the initial words of the film in a written and spoken form. Branagh presented *Much Ado About Nothing* in a very modern way so as to facilitate the understanding of what is being said, one needs only to see the opening dialogues that were in prose to realise the director wanted the audience to understand what was being said.

Something also very important is the length of the film. Branagh directed a 242 minute adaptation of Hamlet (150 minutes cut version), which made the adaptation word-for-word one. The same was done with *Much Ado About Nothing*, however when it comes to *Love's Labour's Lost* and *As You Like It* we see that the director cut seriously the Shakespearean text. The question then is how to shorten a play?

Anderegg postulates two primary ways of shortening a play, the first being eliminating entire scenes, characters and blocks of text, like Olivier's *Hamlet* (1948); the second, trimming throughout, shortening every scene or speech but keeping in the film the outline of everything in the play, for example Grigori Kozintsev's *Hamlet* (1964). Nonetheless, Shakespeare film always

alludes to the original, no matter how loose the adaptation may be, and these allusions also refer to the three or four hundred years of theatrical history (Anderegg, 2003:11). What Baranagh did was eliminating blocks of text and substituting it with musical moments in *Love's Labour's Lost*, while in *As You Like It*, the director re-ordered scenes and cut many lines as well.

As seen with the Kurosawa adaptation, a Shakespeare film need not keep most of the original text but rather, finding a way of transmitting, as mentioned previously, Shakespeare's aura; it is "not just a substitution of words for images, but allowing words to coexist with some performative dynamic (Anderegg, 2003:12).

One further important aspect when it comes to an adaptation is casting choices; many directors try to achieve a balance between high-brow, middle-blow and low-brow in an attempt to attract as many viewers as possible. We believe Branagh is part of this group of directors for in his adaptations one sees Shakespeare veterans such as Richard Briers, Branagh himself and Brian Blessed with novices such as Alicia Silverstone, Bryce Dallas Howard and Nathan Lane, precisely to attract the widest range of viewers possible. Branagh frequently mixes Renaissance actors with Hollywood mainstream actors.

Setting the films in terms of location and historical time is also very important as a means of making the film more accessible to the public. What is impressive and amazing about Shakespeare is that there is a great flexibility when it comes to this, leading Anderegg to state that this shows the "multigeneric possibilities inherent in Shakespeare's plays, themselves a mix of literary genres and subgenres" (Anderegg, 2003:21). It is precisely this that allowed Branagh to historically set *Love's Labour's Lost* in the 1930s and *As You Like It* in the 19th century Japan.

Concerning location, filmmakers nowadays are opting more and more for shooting their films on location which allows films to be more realistic and believable. Branagh shot *As You Like It* on location, however not in Japan, for the production could not afford such a thing. Nevertheless, to shoot *Much Ado About Nothing* (1996), Branagh chose Tuscany in an attempt of trying to be true to the original play, that was also set in Italy.

When it comes to the more technical decisions as for example shots and how they are put together so as to form a coherent filmic narrative, it is clear that modern audiences want what Hindle (2007:15) calls "action driven" images, that is the audience can follow the film simply by

looking at the images, and for that the images must "flow coherently and connectedly" (idem). What Branagh does is rely on shot/reverse shot and the use of the steadycam to create visual interest on the part of the viewers. As noted by Hatchuel, "Branagh started such a revolution in the modern Shakespeare world because he felt the urge to do so. He consciously set out to change Shakespeare's place in the popular imagination" (Hatchuel, 2000:18).

The last aspect to be dealt with here is the soundtrack/ score of the film. One way of trying to create a sort of rapport with the audience is by means of the soundtrack. It is through the soundtrack that the director further communicates/guides the audience on what he/she expects them to feel. For this Branagh has a precious help, that of Patrick Doyle, his long companion in all Shakespearean adventures. It has been argued that Kenneth Branagh is famous for the soundtracks of his films as a mode of controlling the audiences' response. It is also our intention to, aside from showing that Branagh wants to take Shakespeare to the people/ to everyone, he is also a very controlling director which comes from him caring a lot about what he does and how he does it. Branagh is concerned with every single aspect of his films, from the tiniest detail as a newspaper left on a table giving further information to the audience (*Love's Labour's Lost*). This concern could not come from anywhere else rather than his genuine intent of sharing Shakespeare with the world.

4.3 Who is Branagh?

> So many actors talk of taking Shakespeare to the people, but Branagh does it. He could have been a stalwart star of the [Royal Shakespeare Company]. Instead, he used his own money to set up his company, to get Shakespeare away from the big companies and into the actor's power again. If you bring greater excitement, and people, into the theatre, then that's what counts. (Richard E. Grant in Hatchuel, 2000:17)

Branagh, the second of three children, was born and raised in Belfast to working-class Protestant parents Frances and William Branagh. He was educated at Grove Primary School and at the age of nine, he relocated with his family to Reading, Berkshire to escape "The Troubles". At school, he feigned an English accent to avoid being bullied. Concerning himself today, he sees himself as Irish and he believes it is because of that he loves words so much.

Interestingly, until he was sixteen Branagh's sole contact with Shakespeare was through Olivier's adaptations, at the age of sixteen he saw Derek Jacobi play Hamlet in Oxford. Talking about this first experience, Branagh says:

> When I felt the power of the live theatre and was caught up in the power of words, it acted upon me in a way I couldn't put my finger on except that the little hair at the back of your neck would rise and you'd think: I don't know what it is but it's different, it's got me going and it's just touched me like music would touch you, there's a deeper chord struck by this great poetry. (Branagh in Hatchuel, 2000:22)

Branagh was accepted into RADA (Royal Academy of Dramatic Art) where he studied acting under very prominent teachers, some of them would later on help him in his Shakespeare adaptations for film, such as Sir Derek Jacobi, Sir Trevor Nunn, among others.

After graduating, Branagh was incorporated into the Royal Shakespeare Company, which he quit in 1987 to form his own theatre company, Renaissance along with his friend David Parfitt.

> When I left the RSC part of my reaction was to pursue the same kind of work, the classical repertoire, made available to people who might not otherwise go see it. In this case by travelling around Britain to theatres and to cities that might not otherwise see three Shakespearean plays in repertoire with the same company, a young company not telling them Shakespeare was good for them but being excited by the fact that they were excited. By conveying and carrying the torch of the enthusiasm, saying: listen, we don't know these plays in great details. We're telling them as if the plays were being discovered for the first time, for that's how we feel about them. We're not going to assume that you've seen the plays before or that you know that famous essay about it or this famous book about it. We're just going to say: What a great yarn Hamlet is. (Branagh in Hatchuel, 2000:24).

Although Renaissance struggled at first because no public subsidy was granted to the company, it managed to gain a reputation for its quality work and began to count with the collaboration of Dame Judi Dench, Richard Briers, and Derek Jacobi, many of whom were afterwards cast in Branagh's directorial debut, *Henry V*. Dench and Jacobi, while at Renaissance, directed plays such as *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Hamlet* which would later on serve as inspiration for Branagh's cinematic versions of the plays.

> Renaissance's intention was to surprise the spectators, to disarm them with a natural, real, clear, and simple way of acting. [...] Thus the style of Renaissance attempted to be in tune with its audience, the majority of which consisted of people unfamiliar with Shakespeare's works. (Hatchuel, 2000:25).

This is precisely what Branagh moved on to do with his films, taking Shakespeare to people who were unfamiliar with his works. Because this company was very successful, getting great

feedback from the audiences, Branagh decided to take it one step further, moving from stage to screen. Thus Renaissance Films was created, subsidiary to Renaissance Theatre. Branagh's first incursion into cinema was with *Henry V* (1989) which was considered a huge success and got him hailed as the next Olivier. The 1989 film can be seen as a sharp contrast to Olivier's (1994) version and was a major boost to Branagh's directorial career giving him credibility as a filmmaker and confirming his acting skills internationally.

It was on account of this film that Branagh was nominated for both Best Director and Best Actor, who continued to win other honours, including British Academy and National Board of Review Best Director awards.

> The plot was linear and easy to follow, and the film could combine a political story, a thrilling adventure, and an exciting battle. Moreover, the character of the king could be made much more interesting and deeper than Olivier's 1944 movie portrayed, and the war sequences could be made so much harsher. (Hatchuel, 2000:26).

We believe that to portray Henry V, Branagh pretty much focused on himself, i.e. a man in his journey to maturity, this would later on be present again in *Love's Labour's Lost*, in the men's journey towards maturity, being guided by the women. Before and after producing *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993), Branagh worked in theatre, but as he was becoming progressively an independent worker, he decided to part ways with Renaissance. *Much Ado About Nothing* was a very successful adaptation, which may have given Branagh the courage to move on to an adaptation of *Hamlet*. However, *Hamlet* (1996) was considered exceedingly long (242 minutes/ 150 minutes cut version), but if nothing else, served the purpose of showing that Branagh really "knows his Shakespeare".

At the end of 1998, Branagh created the Shakespeare Film Company, announcing furthermore that he would direct and star in *Love's Labour's Lost*, *As You Like It* and *Macbeth*.

We have chosen to only mention his Shakespearean directorial and acting endeavours for they are what concerns us in terms of this study, aside from these, Branagh has directed and starred in many other films. Only recently he directed *Thor* (2011) and starred in *Valkyrie* (2008). Nowadays he is part of a theatre production of *The Painkiller* by Francis Veber in Belfast.

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4.4 Branagh's Cinematic Themes and Codes on his way to popularizing Shakespeare

Aside from his cinematic roles, Branagh has a long history with Shakespeare on stage. Having played the role of King Henry V in 1984 for the *Royal Shakespeare Company*, the part of Benedick in Judi Dench's production of *Much Ado About Nothing* in 1988, Hamlet at RADA in 1980 and in 1988 for the Renaissance Theatre, in 1992 for a BBC Radio version and 1993 for the Royal Shakespeare Company, Branagh has an ample experience in Shakespearean roles.

Branagh stated that one of his intents was that of making Shakespeare easier and more understandable to the ear,

> One of the things that has always challenged me, inspired me and makes me enthusiastic about working with Shakespeare is the attempt to make it sound as natural as possible. I've always been anti-declamatory. The very best Shakespeare in acting for me is when it's just people – people walking and talking like people do. But the extra juice you get is this dramatic poetry. (in Hatchuel, 2000:33).

In *Love's Labour's Lost* there comes a moment when Branagh gives us a lesson on iambic pentameter and on how to read Shakespeare out loud. Further on this issue, when giving an interview to *Plays and Players*, the then actor, gave his opinion on what it was to act Shakespeare,

> Acting Shakespeare begins with understanding the character, not with saying the words in a particular way. I loathe the concept of verse speaking [...] the verse must not be separate from the character [...] the emotion and the vocal delivery are inseparable. So it follows that if you've found the character, if you feel in your gut what he feels, then you must be speaking the part. The character and the emotion is the truth, the guide. (in Hatchuel, 2000:34).

This becomes a very important tool in his films for it is a mode of transforming the plays into something "understandable" to the contemporary viewers and this is precisely what he does.

One other manner of facilitating the audiences' comprehension of the film is via the score, and for this Branagh has very much relied on Patrick Doyle. As the director points out,

> Shakespeare is a strange language and the music can help an audience which is unfamiliar with it grasp the significance of the lines. It can tell you when to be scared or when to be moved but it should always communicate through the subconscious. (in Hatchuel, 2000:35).

A big importance is given to music by Branagh in his adaptations, for he does perceive it as a powerful tool to help the audience along the film,

> In Shakespearean films, the music has to really underline a lot of dialogue. It has to find its way in and out of those fairly famous speeches. [...] There tends to be more music in Shakespeare pictures because it does help the audience along a bit. The music helps to tell them: This is a very important point, this is the twist of the story, listen carefully. (idem).

Having a twenty-year career in film, Branagh both performed and directed five Shakespeare adaptations, namely a history play *Henry V* (1989), a tragedy *Hamlet* (1996) and three comedies *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993), *Love's Labour's Lost* (2000), *As you Like It* (2006). Branagh was also part of Nunn's *Othello* (1995), playing the role of Iago.

His adaptations may be seen as hybrid for they are of Shakespeare, therefore being considered by some elitist, but they underwent Branagh's cinematic views and techniques, becoming part of the Hollywood world. As it was stated by *Sight and Sound* in 1993:

> For those in the middle classes brought up on that streak of Puritanism which thinks that anything culturally serious must be painful, Branagh's approach is trivializing. But it depends on where you're coming from. For those who wouldn't usually go near a theatre, Branagh might seem intensely serious... what looks like vulgarity and mediocrity (both repeated insults in the repertoire of Branagh-bashers to someone bookish or expert in film may feel like an entry into high culture to someone else. (in Hatchuel, 2000:14).

The possibility for the "masses" to enter into this elitist and high-brow world is precisely what Branagh tries to do, and is, subsequently, the core of this study. Baranagh opens the doors for everyone to get acquainted with Shakespeare. It may be said that his works make the playwright's work more audience-friendly, because the producer's sole intention is to transmit the essence of Shakespeare's work to the larger public. Since the director does not restrict his work to Shakespeare films, the audience may also be led to believe that his Shakespeare adaptations are nothing more than ordinary films. Furthermore, the casting of actors such as Alicia Silverstone, Nathan Lane, Michael Keaton, leads the audience into deeming these films, once again, as ordinary films. Kenneth Branagh's quest was to turn Shakespeare's language into something more accessible and new.

His techniques and ideas have been severely criticized, and one has to acknowledge that at times he seems to be exaggerating, but this very exaggeration generates the so much needed

theatricality in his work, so that the drama will be prominent, for *example Much Ado About Nothing*'s opening scene.

Branagh's adaptations demonstrate "[h]is taste for romantic lyricism, slow motion, great melodies, and twirling camera moves has divided critics [...]" (Hatchuel, 2000:14), but they have also delighted audiences and enticed them to the world of Shakespeare. He removed Shakespeare from the scholar and gave it to Hollywood and consequently, to everyone.

Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V* (1989) generated a revival of interest in Shakespeare as a potential source for commercial and artistic success. Branagh started by setting himself up with *Henry V* as the heir to Sir Laurence Olivier, but doing his predecessor one better due to the "overall sweep, the freshness of approach" (Anderegg, 2003:118).

The 1990s were dominated by Branagh, but other directors followed suit, like Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* (1990) with Mel Gibson, Glenn Close, Helena Bonham Carter; and Oliver Parker's *Othello* (1995) with Laurence Fishburn and Kenneth Branagh; and Trevor Nunn's *Twelfth Night* (1996) with Helena Bonham Carter and Imogen Stubbs. In 1996, two renderings of Shakespeare's plays guaranteeing mass reception were Luhrmann's *Romeo+Juliet* and Loncraine/McKellen *Richard III*. Afterwards, Julie Taymor's *Titus Andronicus* (1999) with a brilliant cast Anthony Hopkins, Jessica Lange, Alan Cumming, among others. Additionally we have Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* (2000) with Ethan Hawke starring.

The 1990s were very prolific for Branagh: *Henry V*, *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993), *In the Bleak Midwinter* (1995), *Hamlet* (1996), *Love's Labour's Lost* (2000). *Much Ado About Nothing* was a box office success grossing reportedly $22 million on a $8 million budget. What Branagh did to overcome the sophistication of Shakespearean plays was as Anderegg postulates, "Branagh indulged in popularizing gimmicks-slapstick" overcoming thus sophistication (Anderegg, 2003:118). If we look at the characters of Don Armado, Moth and Costard (all *Love's Labour's Lost*), we will see that slapstick is very common in these characters and in their interaction with the others.

Furthermore, Branagh consistently mixes well-established Shakespeare stage actors with Hollywood stars for example, Dame Judi Dench, Sir Derek Jacobi, Denzel Washington, Keanu Reeves, Nathan Lane and Alicia Silverstone, for example. As Anderegg has argued Branagh's

"casting strategies can reveal a healthy disregard for traditional Shakespeare acting" (Anderegg, 2003:119).

Lang (2007) refers to Branagh as being an artistic magpie, for his first three Shakespeare movies consisted of recycled ideas from stage productions he had participated in, namely, he had played Henry V for RSC in 1984; he had played Hamlet several times; he had played Benedick in Judi Dench's production (1988); he had played Navarre as well. What Lang postulates is that Branagh gains experience and knowledge on the sets/stages of other directors, "steals" their best ideas and then incorporates them into his new projects. Therefore, Branagh combines old conventions and trusty models and the end result is something not only new, but also surprising and original. Like Olivier and Welles, Branagh's films reveal a wedding of his directorial and acting personalities; as director he is fond of circling, elaborate camera movements, thus turning everything into action and spectacle. As an actor, Branagh likes movement and business. As director and actor simultaneously, Branagh can be extremely literal, that is, he does not wish anything to remain unexplained or mysterious and "his penchant for effect can be ludicrous" (Anderegg, 2003:119).

Crowl states that Branagh's films are indebted to Welles, Hitchcock, Coppola and Lean because he gathered inspiration in classic Hollywood films and also through research into screen history preceding him; critics have noticed that in *Hamlet* there are some borrowed elements from Coronado's *Hamlet* (1976). Furthermore, Crowl affirms that Branagh "is a product of the postmodern moment dominated by a sense of belatedness; a sense that originality is exhausted and that only parody, pastiche and intertextual echo remain" (Crowl in Lang 2007:31).

Branagh can be perceived as a rather traditional filmmaker because he uses his tried-and-tested formulae, for example always relying on a famous and international cast, eliminating troublesome parts of the Shakespearean text and recurring to familiar entities the audience will recognise, for example setting *Love's Labour's Lost* in the 1930s and using songs from the period.

How has Branagh popularized Shakespeare in Hollywood, bringing the playwright to the people? Hatchuel (2000:17-8) mentions some of the possible reasons, namely the clarity and naturalness of his acting, his vocal ability and his method of directing actors. Furthermore, we cannot forget his theatrical roots, for Branagh has always worked through each play on stage prior to the adaptation into film. He makes his plays accessible through subtle changes in the text and story,

by means of line cutting or reassignment and the addition of a subtext, usually via interpolated sequences. Moreover, his cinematography, that is, his choices of lighting and colours, of camera angles and moves, and how he chooses to illustrate some words with literal images are also very characteristic of Branagh. As Hatchuel (idem) mentions "Branagh's cinematic choices are very successful at bringing meaning and accessibility to the movies, as he has never lost sight of the fact that e was making movies in the tradition of Hollywood".

Throughout his career as a film director, Branagh has developed his expertise and therefore created a set of personal repertoire of images and techniques employed both in his Shakespearean and non-Shakespearean films. "He successfully recycles filmic codes drawn from and easily associated with Hollywood's most popular genres: westerns, musicals, thrillers, war movies, gangster movies, and others" states Hatchuel (2000:142).

Branagh being mostly concerned about the audience, conceives his films so that we can enter into the set, and even into the character's minds by means of zooming and close-ups. Furthermore, his steadicam travellings are done in such a way so as to make the audience feel the exhilaration of the characters in *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Much Ado about Nothing* for example. In *Love's Labour's Lost* the director employs tracking shots and backward moves to follow the character's dance routines and the same are used in *Hamlet* for the audience to experience the intricacy of the character's mind.

Considering Branagh's cinematic techniques, one must acknowledge that his favourite and most used practices in terms of arranging and filming characters in space is the technique of encircling the actors with the camera in one continuous shot, for example in *Dead Again* the hypnosis scenes; *Peter's friends* the arrival of the friends and the final dance in *Much Ado About Nothing* and *As You Like It*. This technique of circular uncut filming creates the impression of being there with the characters; therefore, there is a sort of interaction between audience and characters. One further filming technique is the progressive forward movement of the camera, zooming up to a character experiencing a loss, of the loved one, a parent, and so on.

One further recurrent motif is that of the doors. Branagh's first entrance in a Shakespearean film occurs when young King Henry enters the throne room through an enormous door. The doors of Leonato's villa are closed behind the soldiers returned from war at the beginning of *Much Ado About Nothing*, thus marking the transition between two worlds. Also the doors of Navarre are

frequently shown demonstrating the difference between the world of the men and the world of the women; moreover signalling the confinement of a small group of people whose "self-contained world is going to be followed by the camera" (Hatchuel, 2000:144). Doors are thus symbols of passage "from one state to another, the transition of power, of progress, of realizing a new order – or in a world over-done with doors, the vanity of hoping to achieve any such state" (Hatchuel, 2000:145).

The use of masked faces which emerge suddenly in front of the camera, as if they are terrifying or supernatural monsters is persistent in Branagh's films. In the masked ball in *Much Ado About Nothing*, there is a whole series of close-up shots on masks turning suddenly towards the camera. The sensuality of the masks is emphasized in *Love's Labour's Lost*, for the moment in which the men were supposed to meet the women disguised as Russians, becomes instead a sensual, masked dance accompanied by Irving Berlin's *Let's face the Music and Dance*. In *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Hamlet* the masks allow the characters to reveal their innermost feelings.

Candles and torches are also used to create an atmosphere both warm and sensual. The masked ball in *Much Ado About Nothing* is filled with torch light and the *Pardon the Goddess of the Night Scene* begins with a procession of candles. In *Love's Labour's Lost* the night club sequence consists of a poorly lit space to give the ambience of a cabaret and also make the sequence more erotic. Moreover, dancing regularly appears in Branagh's films in order to express the happiness of the moment. *Peter's Friends*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *In the Bleak Midwinter, As You Like It* all have dancing scenes, this culminating in *Love's Labour's Lost*. These dances serve as a way of celebrating restored friendship, love and success.

In his films, Branagh also conveys his attraction with snow and fire, most prominent in *Hamlet* and *Frankenstein* though. The image of the character alone in an enormous room or lost in an endless scenery is also frequent and very present in *Hamlet*.

The last cinematic trait to be discussed here is the presence of Religion in Branagh's films. Possibly due to the director's Irish background, religious signs are present in Branagh's films, namely a chapel where Benedick reveals his love for Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*, where Ophelia confesses her relationship with Hamlet to her father in Hamlet, where Claudius confesses his sins in *Hamlet*. Furthermore, the cross of Christ is apparent in all these chapels.

4.5 Conclusion

Shakespeare, writing in the 1590s and the first decade of 1600s combined laughter-causing moments with a form of dramatic story-telling that regardless of what happened throughout the comedy, the ending would consist of a happy image. Also present in the playwright's comedies was the opposition between high/low stratum in *Love's Labour's Lost* there is the contrast between the King of Navarre and the Princess of France and Costard and Jaquenetta, with the latter blatantly expressing their bodily needs and affections without embarrassment; in *As You Like It* we have the opposition between Orlando and Celia and Touchstone and Audrey, for example.

Most comedies, Shakespearean and Hollywood, are based on the structure boy meets girl, they fall in love, something goes wrong but the couple overcomes it all and they end happily married. This convention of the happy ending in romantic comedies, may be why Kenneth Branagh decided to alter the ending of *Love's Labour's Lost*, so that the couples would reunite and live a fairy tale life afterwards; audiences nowadays expect comedies to end this way, thus they would also expect a Shakespearean adaptation to end so. Even though Shakespeare on film is not a genre per se, "Shakespeare films share with other genre film the quality of speaking to the audiences' desire for repetition and formula" (in Anderegg, 2003:1), which means that there is something appealing in the familiar, audiences have a desire for adaptations.

Considering the two adaptations studied here, one sees that because of the director's creative choices, Shakespeare's English for example is no longer an obstacle to understanding the film.

As mentioned previously, Branagh in *Love's Labour's Lost*, substituted the most difficult parts with songs that mean the same, but are more easily understood, which leads us to Hindle (2007) arguing that most of the Shakespearean adaptations aim at communicating "accessibly" and "coherently" with the film audience. Simplifying the language, making the films shorter in terms of length by eliminating entire scenes or just lines is also very present in adaptations and a useful tool to make the film more understandable to the audience.

Other tools used by the director to make the films more audience-friendly are for example casting choices, by having a multinational cast thus appealing to audiences all over the world, location and historical setting by which the director can set the film in a place and time that is more familiar to the audience and thus making it more attractive and more "understandable" for the

audiences. In addition, the soundtrack/score of the film is also a very important tool used by Branagh, with the help of Patrick Doyle, to create a sort of rapport with the audience and at times to control their expectations, i.e. when hearing certain parts of the score the audience is "told" that something exciting or something sad is going to happen, for example before the coup in *As You Like It* we are told by the score that something bad was about to happen.

Thus, Branagh makes his plays more audience-friendly by means of subtle changes in the text and story, for example line cutting or reassignment and the addition of a subtext, usually via interpolated sequences. Additionally, his choices of lighting and colours, of camera angles and moves, and how he chooses to illustrate some words with literal images are also very characteristic of Branagh and used to make the plot of his films more explicit.

Branagh wishes to share Shakespeare with everyone by uniting/mixing the high-brow and low-brow in his films, and for example the casting of actors such as Alicia Silverstone, Nathan Lane, Michael Keaton, leads the audience into deeming these adaptations as ordinary films. Kenneth Branagh's quest was to turn Shakespeare's language and consequently works into something more accessible and contemporary.

5. Love's Labour's Lost

5.1 Introduction and Contextualisation

Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* is similar to one of a comedy of errors, in which letters are delivered to the wrong person, identities are exchanged and the clumsiness of some characters, mostly Costard and Don Armado, ensures that, on film, the audience will have a good time.

The King of Navarre (Alessandro Nivola) and his three closest friends – Berowne, (Kenneth Branagh), Dumaine (Adrian Lester) and Longaville (Matthew Lillard) – vow to dedicate themselves entirely to their studies, therefore renouncing women for three years. After taking a formal oath, no woman is allowed inside the court of Navarre; however all of this is altered with the arrival of the Princess of France (Alicia Silverstone) and her three lady friends – Katherine (Emily Mortimer), Maria (Carmen Ejogo), and Rosaline (Natascha McElhone).

One might perceive *Love's Labour's Lost* as being about four gentlemen who secluded themselves in order to study, therefore refusing all carnal urges, advocating prudence, temperance, strength and justice. Longaville is happy to sign up to the king's contract "I am resolved: 'tis but a three years' fast. / The mind shall banquet though the body pine." and so is Dumaine "To love, to wealth, to pomp to pine and die, / With all these living in philosophy". Berowne however, shows some reservations when it comes to this oath. He agrees to enrol in this programme of study though having doubts concerning sleeping only three hours, fasting and not seeing a woman,

> So much, dear liege, I have already sworn./ That is, to live and study here three years./ But there are other strict observances. / As not to see a woman in that term,/ And one day in a week to touch no food,/ And but one meal on every day beside./ And the to sleep but three hours in the night,/ And not be seen to yawn of all the day - / O, these are barren tasks, too hard to keep:/ Not to see ladies, study, fast, not sleep. (*Love's Labour's Lost*, 1.1,23)

This new resolution by the men is portrayed on film by Browne, showing his reserves towards it and this leading to a new musical moment *I'd rather Charleston*. These young men forgot, however, Aristotle's maxim "bare knowledge and contemplation thereof in [the] brain is insufficient". Furthermore, Berowne's reserves are well justified for this stoic ambition of keeping the passions fully under control is an illusion, and these young men will only learn that lesson from the women.

We mentioned how Berowne decided to express himself through a song, all of this because Branagh himself as a director decided to use songs for it was the easiest and most amusing way for the audience to understand a play that the director sees as "full of rhymed line endings. Verbally, or musically, it is a "great feast of language" which might present some difficulties for actors and producers"" (Branagh in Rasmussen and Bate, 2008: 138). The problem resides in the fact that

> [t]hey have to decide whether to play the language to the hilt knowing that, because it is so dense, the audience isn't necessarily going to pick up everything, or whether to slow it down a bit in order to give away as much of the meaning as possible. This may be a reason why the play has been neglected since Shakespeare's day really until this century. (Branagh, in Rasmussen and Bate, 2008: 138-9).

However, we believe that Branagh succeeded in bringing the play into nowadays, overcoming skilfully what could be seen as a handicap, i.e. the language. The director conveyed Shakespeare's ideas, but in a different way, that is, through music.

Kenneth Branagh cut the Shakespearean text into less than half, generating a 90 minute film in which song and dance routines substitute the missing text. This possible language handicap is dealt with in such an efficient and professional approach that the director used the musicality of Shakespearean language and conveyed it in music. Consequently, Gilbert (in Rasmussen and Bate, 2008:129), postulates that the four gentlemen became

> [v]ersions of the Beatles, especially since they were pursued by teenyboppers and camera-flashing reporters as they arrived for the first scene. Like the Beatles, they escaped the modern world to go to India/Navarre where the long-haired and full-bearded King, accompanied by incense-bearers and sitar player, wore a long white robe and, though noticeably younger than Maharishi, obviously alluded to that cult figure.

Setting this play into film can be a difficult task, but the director decided to set the film in the 1930s, the era in which Hitchcock, Ford, Hawks, von Sternberg would already maintain a recognisable personal signature from film to film. Hollywood cinema was the product of a series of craftspeople then, "[i]t was this dialectic between auteur and genre that drove the classic Hollywood cinema: the clash between an artist's sensibility and the defined mythic structures of the popular story types" (Monaco, 2000:299). The 1930s were considered the Golden Era of Film in Hollywood,

> The 1930s was the setting for Kenneth Branagh's film musical adaptation of 2000. Sympathetic to the concept, most critics found its realization incomplete. The project was a promising possibility,

not an instant sacrilege. The trouble is that the promise was not well kept. (Kauffman, in Rasmussen and Bate, 2008:129-30).

The critics were not all kind towards this adaptation, some were rather harsh, when stating that

> "there is no doubting Mr Branagh's sincere enthusiasm for the material, which is not only Shakespeare but also old newsreels, Casablanca and classic MGM musicals. He throws them together with the gusto of a man playing a tuba with a bass drum strapped to his back while his pet monkey leaps around with a squeeze box. It's not art exactly, or even music, but it's entertaining, albeit in an intermittently annoying kind of way" (Scott, in idem:130).

We do believe that this previous quote demonstrates the possible prejudice that critics may have when it comes to adaptations of classical texts, particularly populist ones. One may argue that the critics could have been less harsh had it been some other adaptation, not Shakespeare. Nevertheless, Branagh managed to put together Shakespeare, songs and dance into a harmonious entity, that not only portrays the plot of Shakespeare's play, but also offers many solutions to the difficulties postulated by the language of the play. It was an inspired idea to change this play into a musical, especially set on the 1930s, in which Europe was ravaged by war, even the names of the young men bear reminiscence to the French wars, and to use those particular songs (huge hits that everybody knows, for example *I got a crush on You, Let's face the Music*) to substitute those parts that would be more difficult and tedious to the contemporary audiences. We do believe that the general public will have some notions concerning the 1930s and also concerning the great musicals of the time; it is virtually impossible not to know who Fred Astaire was ans consequently not to know of musicals such as *Casablanca* and so on.

If one considers what had been done before Branagh, with *Love's Labour's Lost*, one will see that he was not the first to pursue a musical path for the play. An operatic version by W. H. Auden, Chester Kallman and Nikolas Nabokov was created in 1973. One might consider this as the forerunner of this adaptation for it might have shown Branagh the musicality of the play. One might say that because of the minimal plot and the intellectual content, *Love's Labour's Lost* may belong to the *opera buffa*[41] type. This type, *opera buffa* is described as "comedy in music" (*Encyclopædia Britannica Online)* and the plot has as its centre two groups of characters: the comic group of characters (male and female) and the pair (or more) of lovers. In *Love's Labour's*

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[41] Opéra bouffe, a farcical comic opera from the Italian Opera buffa. (Webster's New Encyclopedic Dictionary1993:703). A farcical or satirical opera, a form popular in the 18th century (The Penguin English Dictionary, 2000:979).

Lost the comic characters would be Jaquenetta and Don Armado, while the lovers would be the King and the Princess plus the other three pairs.

Bringing romantic and musical codes into adaptations becomes even more relevant in *Love's Labour's Lost* because the play was adapted as a classic Hollywood musical inspired by Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. As stated by Hatchuel (2000:159) "[i]t includes famous numbers like *Cheek to Cheek, The Way You Look Tonight,* and even presents a synchronised swimming sequence which evokes the aquatic ballets of Esther Williams". The artificiality of the set creates a fairy tale atmosphere recalling the look of the musicals from the thirties to the fifties, "sometimes destroying the filmic illusion when Don Armado kicks the moon out of the set during his number *I Get a Kick Out of You*" (idem). Nevertheless it is precisely this that captivates us the most, the sort of fairy tale mood and the peculiar aura that seems to cover all the characters, making it look like a sort of dream that you do not want to wake up from. Furthermore, one may also find here some touches of postmodern self-consciousness, i.e. the blatant reference to the fact that what is being created is a work of art in this case by exposing the fictionality of the set.

Kenneth Branagh has a "history" with *Love's Labour's Lost*, he had played Navarre, in the Royal Shakespeare Company's 1984-5 production, playing the character as "a boyish, amiable monarch whose attempts to be strict with himself and his courtiers were doomed from the beginning. His shyness is soon overcome by his enthusiasm for the pursuit of the ladies [...] he seems like someone making the transition from adolescence to early manhood" (Jackson, in Rasmussen and Bate, 2008:142).

In addition to the closeness of the director to the play, *Love's Labour's Lost* is said to be a play for Shakespeare's connoisseurs, for it is a great feast of linguistic sophistication. It is full of poetry and mockery thereof. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this was the least performed Shakespeare play due to the rhetoric and linguistic games. However as stated previously, in order to overcome this possible "handicap", Branagh proceeded to a very refined selection of the text, substituting the more "problematic" parts by musical moments that convey the same message but in a simpler mode. Furthermore, some of the jokes and puns present in the play are now so obscure that a modern audience finds itself in the position of Dull, not understanding the "taffeta phrases".

When it comes to location, *Love's Labour's Lost* is confined to one single location, that of a court of Navarre, which functioned very well for the filmic production for they did not have ample means. The action takes place within the king's park in a very short time-frame and with only a few scenes. One may say that this play and film are a lesson on the triumph of love over intellectual labour. The lesson is that wisdom belongs to the simple, Costard and Don Armado, who are not afraid of taking their chances and surrendering to love. The "victory of the underdog" is a common feature when it comes to Shakespearean comedies, in *Much Ado* it is the Watch and especially Dogberry that manage to save Hero and set the truth straight, re-establishing the order of things.

In *Love's Labour's Lost*, the men of Navarre, supposed intellectuals, not only renounce their pact but yield to love in such a way that they write poetry and really bad poetry. Whereas in the play the ending consists of a sort of suspended animation, in the film, there is a continuation and the audiences see what each character went through during that year. On film, the dramatic suspension of time would not have worked very well because when the audiences[42] go to see a romantic comedy they expect Jack to have Jill, and Branagh made it work this way.

We have spoken about how important war is in terms of the film and one further aspect to be analysed here is the introduction of newsreels which will be giving information to the audience throughout the film. The newsreels are a very important device for the understanding of the film and plot. It is through them that the audience is first introduced to what is going on and throughout the film it is through them that the audience is constantly updated in terms of what is going on in the "real" world. One can perceive the newsreels as a sort of map that has pinpointed important information and details that help us understand what is going on and help us keep up with all the characters. Creatively speaking, we believe this was an ingenious idea, it saves time and it informs us thoroughly yet concisely.

The first newsreel tells us that the young men came from war and decided to devote themselves to their studies. We have been using the expression "young men" to refer to the main male characters for it is our belief that they are not yet adult men. They let themselves be fooled by the

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[42] Reader-response theory, referring to a number of critical theories emerging in the 1960s, focusing on the responses of the reader rather than on the text. The text is no longer a fixed entity with one "correct" meaning, but an activity pursued in the reader's minds. "In a sense, the literary work has its existence in the mind of the reader, not on the printed page, so that the reader participates in its "creation"" (Morner and Rausch, 1991:181).this is a theory which puts the "emphasis on the different ways in which a reader participates in the course of reading a text and the different perspectives that arise(...)" (Washer, 2001:491).

idea that they will thrive and excel only due to their academic features, making foolish oaths that cannot be kept; they need the help of the women to mature and be led into the right path. Conversely, we call the main female characters women, for it is our belief that they are fully grown and adults; their main task here is showing the men their wrong ways and teaching them a lesson on life. The point to be taken here is that in women's eyes one finds "the books, the arts, the academes, / That show, contain and nourish all the world" (*Love's Labour's Lost*, IV,3).

The language used by the men and their overall bookish knowledge, in the play, is proven completely inapt to deal with the harshness of the real world, it is up to the ladies to teach them, or lead them, to learning a more apt language to deal with reality. The Princess acknowledges that it is a sin for the men not to keep their oath, however it would be an even bigger sin for the men to keep it. After dwelling on neo-stoic notions and aspirations, the young men proceed to the teachings of the ancient philosopher Epicurus[43]; emphasising the power and importance of friendship.

5.2 Intertextuality[44] and innovation

The opening titles are set in a way so as to explain the tone of the film, that is an old-fashioned and a romantic musical comedy. In the opening credits one sees pictures of the actors with their names and the names of their characters, so that the audience can start identifying the actors to their characters. Behind the opening credits one sees a red satin cloth used to give the impression that this was a credit sequence of a 30s, 40s or 50s[45] Hollywood film. This would also serve as an introduction to the vibrant colours used afterwards.

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[43] For Epicurus (341-270BC), "the goal of all action, the epicurean life was pleasure, which was held to be naturally and visibly pursued by all creatures and alone good in itself" (Mautner, 1996:130). The purpose of this philosophy was to attain the happy, tranquil life, characterized by *ataraxia* i.e. the wellbeing of the mind, peace and freedom from fear, and *aponia*, the absence of pain, and by living a self-sufficient life surrounded by friends. "The virtues, including justice, were explained in terms of enlightened self-interest on hedonist principles; nobody was thought to be virtuous for any other end except the maximization of pleasure and minimization of pain" (Mautner, 1996:130). Epicurianism became the second most influential philosophy in the Greek world after stoicism.

[44] Intertextuality was a term coined in 1966 by the Post-Structuralist Julia Kristeva to classify the various relationships that one particular text may have with other texts; "these intertextual relationships include anagram, allusion, adaptation, translation, parody, pastiche, imitation, and other kinds of transformation" (Baldick, 1990:112). This term "denotes the interdependence of literary texts, the interdependence of any one literary text with all those have gone before it. (...) She challenges traditional notions of literary influence, saying that intertextually denotes a transposition of one or several sign systems into another or others" (Washer, 2001:294).

[45] Monaco believes that "the ratio between the height of the projected image and its width is dependent on the size and shape of the aperture of the camera and on the types of lenses used (2000:106). "An anamorphic lens squeezes a wide image into the normal frame dimensions of the film and then unsqueezes the image during projection to provide a picture with the proper proportions. The standard ratio for the most common anamorphic systems is 2:1 – that is, a subject will appear in the squeezed frame to be half as wide as in reality" (2000:109). This system is considerably more efficient but anamorphic lenses are much more sophisticated optical devices, much more expensive though having some limitations. Famous during the 50s, being known as CinemaScope.

The newsreels were an idea that appeared during post-production. The director felt the need to tell the audience exactly where they were story-wise, this way also introducing the basic idea of the plot. Branagh also intended with the newsreels to put a smile on peoples' faces, demonstrating that they were aiming at presenting some fun to them. The voice-over tone heard during the newsreels is Branagh's own voice. Newsreels were common in British comedies, as well as in wartime newsreels. Voice-overs are often used to create the effect of storytelling by a character/omniscient narrator. The voice-over technique can be used to aid continuity in edited versions of films, so that the audience gains a better understanding of what has gone on between scenes. The voice-over is also very much evocative of the period, serving as a device to locate the audience in terms of historical time. In this particular case, the voice-over was performed by Branagh; though they had auditions for this part, the producer ended up doing it, for no one seemed to achieve the tone intended.

One second innovation to be broached here concerns scene eight of the film, *Pick-Purses in Love* in which many modifications were made so that the modern audiences would understand what was been said but also so that the momentum and action would be maintained. As an example, when Berowne mentions "killing sheep", we actually see sheep dying. This crude metaphor was intended to demonstrate love's effects on people, making them "mad as Ajax". However, Berowne does acknowledge that love has its benefits; it has taught him to rhyme and to be melancholy. It is during this moment that a very important issue, concerning film, arises. How to act and film a soliloquy? Should the actor talk to the camera or to the audience, or just talk to himself, or to all of the above? Here, Berowne, is talking to himself, just being overheard by the camera, ergo the audience. Another interesting thing happens here, if Berowne is being overheard by the camera, and us, then we become instantly part of the plot. We, as the other characters in this part, are overhearing the confessions and we are also hiding. It almost feels that the audience is hiding somewhere in the library, along with Berowne, and we are witnessing all the love confessions; it almost feels like an intimate moment. It is also here that the Berowne offers a lesson on iambic pentameter. By tap-dancing the words in the rhythm of iambic pentameter, the audience learns how to read Shakespeare in a very creative way.

The third alteration under analysis here has to do with Intertextuality. Branagh imported motifs from famous film romances due to the fact that he set the film at the onset of a World War; this could also be a post-modern self-consciousness about the medium. By this we mean that

Branagh opted for some "tried and tested" motifs, common in famous film romances. When the men and the women have to part, the scene takes place at a deserted airport reminding us of Casablanca. Branagh added more scenes to the film, inexistent in the play to extinguish the ambiguity that the play had, and furthermore, restoring the romantic harmony. Until scene fourteen, the Farewells[46], none of the young men had said the three magic words, I love you, and the women were about to leave. This delicate moment is the final chance for them to say "I love you" and please be mine. Branagh refers to this moment as the "tortured anguished" one. The director decided to separate the lovers, so that they would have a moment on their own to privately talk to their lovers, venting their frustrations and showing their affection. The dialogue was extended here, in comparison with the play, to demonstrate the emotional weight of the moment. It becomes clear here the difference between the men and the women, namely in terms of constancy. The women have to ask the men to wait a year for fear that they might not be ready to embark on a relationship. The men think this time is exceedingly long and will be tough on them "that's too long for a play", however if we compare it to the three years of their supposed oath, it is but less than half of it.

Berowne is the one with the toughest task here, that of convincing Rosaline of his good ways. If the film were to end here, Jack would not have Jill, and the audience would not be very pleased with the outcome, therefore the director decided to add two more scenes. Here Hollywood comedy conventions are quite blatant. Branagh included two more scenes so that he could have the traditional romantic ending in which Jack has Jill. When we think about it, almost all of Hollywood romantic comedies end with a happy ending; it is part of their conventions. Branagh followed this by giving the audience what they are used to, i.e. a happy ending with the couples reuniting.

The fourth innovation to be mentioned here is the director's detail-focused approach in terms of creating an old-fashion glamour, through the use of lighting, veils, make-up and costume. It has been pointed out by the director that Natasha McElhone evokes Joan Crawford[47] in her looks and

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[46] On this scene all the characters must say goodbye to each other for the ladies must return for the funeral of the Princess' father. At first, they are in the King's park and afterwards they move on to the airport, re-stating their goodbyes. In this moment, when the women depart on an airplane, we see them leaving behind, written in smoke in the sky "You that way, we this way".

[47] Joan Crawford (born Lucille Fay Le Sueur, 1906-77) was a film actress, born in San Antonio, Texas. "A chorus girl, she came to Hollywood in 1924, worked as an extra, and then was featured in *Pretty Ladies* (1925). She was usually cast as a working-class girl with her eyes set on wealth, later becoming the other woman. She won an Oscar for *Mildred Pierce* (1945)" (Bowman, 1995:160).

charm. A Hollywood film usually asks us to get caught up in the story, in the world that has been created, trying to make the set as real as possible. One thus tends to forget or not consider the minute decisions that made that artificial world look as real as it does.

The lovers' colour-coded attire, identifying which woman will pair with which man (or mis-pair with which man), in the musical number that replaces the *Masque of the Muscovites*, derives from the colour-coding (particularly female) use in Technicolor musicals like *On the Town* to clarify who pairs up with who.

When it comes to the attribution of the colours, the Princess was assigned the colour red, Rosaline blue, Katherine green and Maria orange. From this moment onwards, that is, from the moment we see the women on the barges, we know who their male correspondent will be. Symbolically, red means passion, fire, blood, sex, courage. This symbolism goes very well the Princess, for she is the most intelligent and the most high-status of all the characters, courageous for she is not afraid of standing against the King and showing his wrong ways, but she is also in love, and in a mode, lusting for her loved one. The King, being her loved one, is also given the colour red and he too is passionate about his oath, but also about the Princess.

Rosaline was given the colour blue, this representing firstly the sky and the ocean.This colour also stands for hope, constancy, purity and truth. Rosaline is a virgin, and a hopeful one for she expects her lover to wait for her for a year and also to change his ways. The colour blue suits Berowne for he lacks constancy and this is what his mistress bids him, to stick to something and become an adult.

Katherine's clothes are of a greenish hue; this colour stands for naivety, youthful love and natural desires. Katherine is a young maid who fell in love and is still quite innocent; green deriving from the Latin *viridis* means exactly this, youthful and naive. In addition, in *Hamlet*, we hear Polonius tell Ophelia "You speak like a green girl"(I,3) this further emphasising my point of naivety. Her counterpart is Dumaine who can be characterized by his love towards her, though we do not hear much from him.

Maria was given the colour orange and this is connected with heraldry, for in English heraldry, this colour is synonymous of *tincture tenne*. Interestingly, Longaville was eager to know who that lady was, and Boyett mentions that she is heir of Falconbridge. This demonstrating how lineage

and heraldry was important at the time and how it served to impress Longaville, as if belonging to heraldry defined you as a person or made you interesting.

The fifth aspect to be noted here in terms of modifications is the revival of the "feature number" that was a tradition of the classical Hollywood musical with the appearance of its one genuine Broadway-musical star, Nathan Lane in the role of Costard, in a kitschy, ballad version of *There's No Business Like Show Business.* Costard has a Vaudevillian[48] vibe to him but also, as the director points out, he is a tribute to the Three Stooges[49].

The sixth change has to do with casting and is still tied with the actor mentioned on the last paragraph. Branagh in *Love's Labour's Lost* introduces a new ethnic presence, one whose participation in the American minstrelsy tradition is clearly evoked, namely, the American Jewish entertainer. Nathan Lane to some extent simply embodies all (non-black) ethnicities: a Jewish performer himself, he plays Costard as borrowing various gags from such ethnic vaudevillians as Groucho Marx, with the voice, Milton Berle, because of the clothes and the open sexuality, and Señor Wences because of the Spanish-accented hand puppet. For one moment, however, Lane impersonates a specific Jewish star of vaudeville, Broadway, and Hollywood, one who used to perform with black makeup on his face, Al Jolson. This could be quite paradoxical in terms of race and ethnicity, but what Lane did was, getting the best of all those worlds. Getting inspiration from all those different comedians and creating a character that has a bit of all of them, is a difficult task but it makes sense for this miscellainity is likely to appeal to a wider range of viewers.

As the actor himself points out, *Love's Labour's Lost* has a "deeply silly quality. Shakespeare revelling in language not on plot." [...] "beautiful songs, beautiful language, he's assembled a wonderful cast. I can't imagine people not being charmed". Thus Costard's comedy relies on actions and not on words.

Considering the characters of Don Armado and Costard, the overtly comical ones, one sees that the former is a recurrent character in Shakespeare's works, being a prototype of the Spaniard

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[48] Vaudeville was a theatrical genre of variety entertainment in the United States and Canada from the early 1880s until the early 1930s. It was a form of "show popular in the USA (...) and more respectable than the American burlesque show. In Britain, this form of entertainment with various songs, dances, sketches, acrobatics, ventriloquisms, and other "acts" is more often called music hall. In 18th- and 19th-century France, however, vaudeville was a more coherent form of light-hearted comedy interspersed with satirical songs; it evolved into the comic opera" (Baldick, 1990:236)

[49] *The Three Stooges* were an American vaudeville and comedy act of the early to mid–20th century. Their main feature and what made them famous was physical slapstick comedy.

who had a funny accent and who had just been beaten, for the Spanish Armada had been defeated by British ships. We can establish a parallel here with the Prince of Aragon in *The Merchant of Venice*. An arrogant Spanish Prince who wanted to marry Portia, however, when picking the silver casket, he learns that not only does he not get Portia's hand in marriage, but he is also called an idiot by a note left inside the casket.

When describing Don Armado, Branagh mentions that "[h]is heart may be on the right place, but his language is all over the place". Don Armado falls in love with Jaquenetta and his affection is true and deep, to the point of making us believe that he is the truest lover of all the characters. In fact, he is the only character who is able to utter *I love you*. The other characters, though more learned than Armado, cannot find the words and the courage to confess their love in an honest and straightforward mode. Armado being the only one able to confess in an outspoken manner his love for Jaquenetta, is a living lesson to the other characters on how to be real and simple when it comes "to the messy business of love" (Branagh; *Love's Labour's Lost*, 2000).

The seventh innovation can be encountered on scene four of *Love's Labour's Lost*, in which we find a lot of physical comedy, for example the gag with the handkerchiefs during Costard's trial, Jaquenetta's cleavage and also how Costard behaves himself. During the trial, Costard is unaware of how to classify the lady, whether she is a wench, a virgin or a maid, but Jaquenetta gets nervous and slaps him. Afterwards, bowing to the King, as to show her respect towards her liege, Jaquenetta's reaction towards Costard, reminds us or evokes slapstick[50] comedy. When Armado is confessing his love for Jaquenetta to Moth, he himself mistreats his servant in a very funny way (throws him against a tree; kicks him in the groin), all seeming to be a choreography. This was shot in anamorphic widescreen so that we could see him moving around and get the full length of the comic effect. Armado instead of kissing Jaquetta hits her head with his own, knocking her out.

In the play, the King hides behind a bush, on film, and very cleverly, the king hides behind a small vase, holding it so as to cover his face, in a very comic manner. This, alteration, number eight, had been used by the *Stratford Shakespeare Company* and Branagh re-used it in this

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[50] Slapstick a considered "broad comedy with knock-about action, fighting, clowning, people falling over each other, and so on. So called after the stick carried by the Harlequin (in the commedia dell' arte) which was constructed out of two pieces of wood which slapped together to produce a loud crack when used in mock fights" (Gray, 1992:267).

pantomime[51] moment. After this moment, still on scene 8, *Pick-Purses in Love*, several other instances of comedy follow, mainly physical and slapstick. The King faints when he sees Berowne has heard everything; there's the linguistic problems of Costard not knowing how to pronounce Don Armado's name; Berowne tearing and eating the letter containing his verses and Costard bumping into the door when exiting, "Walk aside the true folk and let the traitors stay".

An interesting change, number nine here, happened with/to two characters. Branagh changed Holofernes into a female, Holofernia. This was brought on by the desire to have one further couple in the story, that of Holofernia and Sir Nathaniel. Branagh stated that if these characters were kept the way they were in the play, then the film would be approaching the realm of a gay couple, which is considered by the director a cliché. The focus he intended here was on the couples' flirtation with each other, therefore the Latin malapropisms found on the play were not included. This couple-to-be would represent a more mature love, which interested the director. However, we do believe that adding yet another heterosexual couple is nothing more than a cliché. It would have been far more innovative and interesting if the couple remained the way Shakespeare created it.

The casting of a more mature couple for the film leads us to a very important decision taken by Branagh, that of casting. Not only did he opt for a multinational, multiracial cast, he also decided for some Shakespearean veterans along with people who had no Shakespearean experience, but were very popular at the time. Choices like Alicia Silverstone clearly demonstrate how the director wanted to make sure that he could have as many viewers as possible[52]. This is also linked with the casting of Alessandro Nivola and Adrian Lester, thus trying to reach to as many countries as possible.

Along with casting choices is the choice of the songs to be featured on the film. All songs are very popular and widely known, having been composed for musicals and by famous composers such as Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, and so on. This again is a conscious decision to include what would appeal to the widest audience possible. Whereas names as Alicia Silverstone and Alessandro

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[51] A *pantomimos* in Greece was originally a group who 'imitated all' (*panto-* - all, *mimos* - imitator). Miming "is the art of acting without speech by means of gestures, facial expression and bodily movement, often exaggerated and comic" (Gray, 1992:208). Pantomime may also refer to the ancient Rome when it was a play "on a mythological subject, in which a single performer mimed all the parts while a chorus sang the story" (Baldick, 1990:159).

[52] Alicia was enjoying a huge level of popularity at that moment due to her recent success in *Clueless* (1995).

Nivola would interest teenagers, these songs would interest an older audience that would still remember the songs and could have watched musicals such as Casablanca.

5.3 Musical and Music halls

Concerning *Love's Labour's Lost*, Branagh mentioned that

> It's a really heart-breaking romantic comedy and it responds, as many commentators have suggested over the years, to music. We have chosen a twentieth century setting, a sort of impressionistic 1930s setting, to borrow music from that time from geniuses like Cole Porter and Irving Berlin. Having made that choice, we've come here to record what are about ten or eleven numbers that are in the movie that are sung by the actors who go from speaking Shakespeare into singing Porter or Berlin. So we've very much gone for actors who can sing, rather than singers who can act. (Branagh; *Love's Labour's Lost*, 2000).

Interesting and wise decision that of choosing actors who can sing, even though it would not have mattered the most, when what was more important was what they were singing about and not how they were doing it. The director refers to film production as

> a musical comedy boot camp. They would rehearse much harder than they would be used to doing. It would be fun but it would be hard work and then you would have to work quickly. So all of these things can be intimidating but it became clear that there were people out there ready to do that, like Alicia Silverstone, who was very keen to be involved. (Branagh; *Love's Labour's Lost*, 2000).

Furthermore, when commenting on his work, Timothy Spall (Don Armado) refers that "the whole style of the thing is big, broad, theatrical. I'm trying to match that and push it beyond the bounds of theatricality" (Spall; *Love's Labour's Lost*, 2000). The result is precisely this, a big, broad and theatrical production that went above and beyond our expectations, especially because the director carefully thought and controlled every single aspect of the film, making it this astounding musical.

If music leads the way to romance, what better way to talk about and show romance than through music? As Alessandro Nivola mentions "Ken has chosen very specifically and carefully songs whose lyrics are somehow appropriate to the scene in which they are placed. The style of the play demands, almost begs, for people to break into song at some point" (Nivola; *Love's Labour's Lost*, 2000).

When considering the type of film here studied, i.e. the musical, one must go back to its origins and what it is. One must acknowledge that

> The Hollywood musical is a product of the advent of sound, of the industry's commitment to an ethos and to forms of entertainment represented, among other things, by theatrical musical, by Broadway, and by Tin Pan Alley, of its stake in the music publishing, recording and radio industries (acquired during the conversion to sound in the late 1920s), and of developments in and on the musical stage in America and elsewhere during the previous eighty to ninety years. (Cook & Bernink,1999:209).

So what are musicals? Music-hall acts were very famous in the early period of British cinema, "the sheer novelty of movement on a screen being adequate recompense for the absence of sound" (McFarlane, 2003:473). It was in the late 1920s that notable music-hall performers such as Dick Henderson, Lily Morris and Albert Whelan, were captured in short sound film. Some of the most notable music-halls actors of the 1930s and 40s are Gracie Fields and George Formby.

> [...] the musical has often been discussed under the headings provided on the one hand by names of its producers, directors, choreographers and performers, and on the other by the names of the studios responsible for its production. (Cook & Bernink, 1999:210).

This is important here because Branagh's name has long been linked to Shakespeare and that was important publicity for the film. Furthermore, having names such as Alicia Silverstone connected to the film, along with a multicultural, multinational cast was in itself great publicity for the film.

Musicals are cinematic forms that emphasise song and dance routines in a considerable way, normally having musical and dance performances as part of the film narrative. Furthermore, in musicals the lyrics support the plot of the film. The Golden Age of the Musical was during the 1930s. Some of the foremost songwriters and lyricists, such as Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, and George Gershwin, began to write original screen musicals or provide words and music. Interestingly, the songs chosen by Branagh for this production were composed by those masters, such as Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, George and Ira Gershwin, Jerome Kern, among others.

The studio associated with these productions was MGM. Along with the work of Ernst Lubitsch and Roubin Mamoulian at Paramount Studios in the early 1930s, the Astaire-Rogers Films are usually seen as points of reference, *Top Hat* and *Shall We Dance* for example. Fred Astaire had a very important role in this genre as choreographer and director of musical numbers as well as

being singer, dancer and starring in the films. The musical is perceived as a studio form and the number of musicals produced by the studios has declined since the 1960s, however the style has not died, for example *Fame* (2009), *Hairspray* (2007), *Chicago* (2002)*, Moulin Rouge* (2001), and so on, have recently been produced.

The Hollywood musical was a form of modern industrial mass entertainment, but going back to the origins of the musical "film versions of stage musicals like *The Merry Widow* and *The Student Prince* and of operas like *Carmen* and *La Bohème* had been produced during the silent era" (Cook and Bernink, 1999:209), often accompanied by live music, which prompted experiments with sound film and music. The first feature-length musical was *The Jazz Singer* (1927) featuring elements of song, music and dance.

The musical, defined by Collins (in Cook and Bernink, 1999:209) as "multifaced, hybrid, and complex", this because throughout the years musicals varied tremendously in measures and combinations, in the songs used and dance routines, in music, therefore having numerous forms, styles and traditions. Consequently, Cook and Bernink call the musical a "mongrel genre" (Cook and Bernink, 1999:209).

The musical genre has as origins the minstrel show, vaudeville and other forms of variety entertainment, and we attest this with the musical's dedication to comedy and the comic, to the popular and vernacular styles of the music and songs. Costard (Nathan Lane) is the very impersonation of Vaudeville characters.

When considering the corpus of musicals, Altman defines it as a "dual-focus" structure in which the

> [t]ext proceeds by alternation, confrontation, and parallelism between male and female leads (or groups), and which a romance plot and a couple (or couples) provide the basis for the construction and reconciliation not just of differences of gender, but also of differences of class, age, wealth, personality and outlook and so on. (in Cook and Bernink, 1999:212).

What is here then meant is that there is a displacement of the traditional narrative values such as causality and motivation and of the conventional "apposition between the narrative and the numbers, are displaced by structures and devices of comparison and contrast whose role is to articulate the dualities with which any particular film is concerned" (Cook & Bernink,1999:212).

This is how musicals are innovative and *sui generis* on their own and how their own narrative structures vary from film to film.

Altman created a new typology of musical forms when he conceived three main musical types. He achieved this by "using the relationship between the musical's romance plot and its ideological oppositions as a basis" (Cook & Bernink, 1999:213). According to the author, the first, the "fairy tale musical" consists in the process of re-establishing order to an imaginary kingdom; the second, "the show musical", is the typical Broadway show and Hollywood film, and according to Altman (in Cook & Bernink:idem) "creating the couple is associated with the creation of a work of art"; the third is named "the folk musical", which consists of "integrating two disparate individuals into a single couple heralds the entire group's communion with each other" (idem).

In accordance with this typology Love's Labour's Lost is "the show musical" and this becomes quite blatant when watching the film, because we can realise that everything about it is grand, spectacular and to the top; it screams Hollywood tradition and conventions.

5.4 Musical scenes in *Love's Labour's Lost*

Branagh, playing Berowne, begins to tap-dance on a library table in percussion to his speech, in this mode resounding Shakespearean metrics because he noticeably replicates the rhythms of iambic pentameter. The junction of rhyme and metrics with spectacle does not last long because dance and singing overtake it all. The first musical moment appears right on the first scene setting the mood for the film, when the king mentions the word intellect and this is the cause for the young men to burst into singing.

The word intellect is featured in the first verse of *I'd rather Charleston*, a composed by Guershwin in 1924. This song was originally sung by Fred Astaire to his sister, for he believed that she was frivolous and trivial. This fits here like a glove on two levels, firstly because the King wants Berowne to take the oath seriously and the latter is acting silly; secondly because the men are being silly and naive because of their attitudes and also due to their oath, that is itself ridiculous. This dance routine was shot-in-one, which implied that everything had to be done perfectly. The

result was that this take had to be shot fifteen times and during this odyssey Branagh actually hurt himself.

It is also here, in this first scene, that we see the musical and dancing gifts of the actors. Adrian Lester[53] revealed himself to be an extremely gifted dancer and singer, mainly due to his past as classical actor, though having a smaller part in this production alongside with Matthew Lillard. Branagh acknowledges the smaller part of these actors but also mentions that due to the medium of film, the actors' presence on screen is a constant.

The exchange between Berowne and Rosaline sets the mood for the next musical moment, *I won't dance*. "Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?" asks Berowne, and Rosaline immediately answers with another question "Did not I dance with you in Brabant once?". Suddenly, so that the rhythm would not be lost and in a mode to amaze and delight the viewers, the cast begins singing and dancing Jerome Kern, Oscar Hammerstein II and Otto Harbach's song, written for the 1934 musical *Three Sisters*. This song would subsequently be altered by Dorothy Fields and Jimmy McHugh for the film *Roberta* (1935), only the title being kept.

I get a kick out of you (1934) changes from close-ups to anamorphic widescreen depending on the focus, whether the focus is on expressions or on the dance-comic routines. This song, composed by Cole Porter and originally featured in the Broadway musical *Anything Goes* (1934), becomes quite a special moment on film especially due to the mood that the director created around this moment. The song becomes some sort of fairy tale and we accompany Don Armado during this tale, making us root for his success with Jaquenetta.

Meanwhile a non-diegetic voice, in the mode of a radio programme, tells us that the war continues but what we see before us is the men falling in love with the women.

The subsequent musical moment happens when Don Armado says out loud "I love thee", to which he hears "so I heard you say". Once again, we have a musical moment with the Princess and her entourage. Branagh's attention to detail is here, once again, prominent for the Princess opens her eyes the same time as her teddy bear. This implied that a prop-man had to be lying

[53] Lester is known in the United Kingdom as the character of a big-time con artist Michael ''Mickey Bricks'' Stone in the first three series BBC TV series *Hustle* between 2004 and 2006. Lester received a British Independent Film Awards nomination for his performance in *Love's Labour's Lost*. He has appeared on stage in the musical *Company*, for which he won an Olivier Award. In 2003, Lester played Henry V in the Shakespeare play of the same name at the Royal National Theatre.

under her bed with a hand pump to open the teddy's eyes, but several takes had to be made. This very detail here is the very essence of film and cinema and what makes it great. The Princess opening her eyes simultaneously as her teddy, impersonates the dream factory that cinema is and also gave the ambience of fairy tale to the scene.

This musical moment, brought to life by the women as an anthem to their freedom is the song *No Strings (I'm Fancy Free)*, a popular song written by Irving Berlin for the 1935 film *Top Hat*, where it was introduced by Fred Astaire. Branagh mentions that this was a tribute to Esther Williams, who was known for her musical films that featured her swimming and diving abilities. Once again, Branagh took Shakespeare to the limit by including in this adaptation a synchronized swimming moment. Though this may seem unsuited for the play, it does in fact make sense. This moment shows the freedom the women feel to have but also the cliché that women are organized, graceful, and limber, therefore nothing better than synchronized swimming to show that. In this scene we also find another cliché, i.e. that when women are alone, or sleep together they have pillow fights in their pyjamas and here they also go to a pool and swim together touching each other and rubbing against each other. This scene is the dream of every man and Branagh brings it to the screen, but maybe also with the intention of beginning to highlight the sexual tension that is a constant in this play and will reach its peak with the *Let's face the Music and Dance* routine.

Continuing with this analysis of the musical moments, *The Way You Look Tonight* is the next and this song featured in the film *Swing Time* (1936), performed by Fred Astaire and composed by Jerome Kern and Dorothy Field. The verses that Holofernia reads, awake in her the desire to show her affection towards Nathaniel. Curiously, this song had already been used by Branagh on *Peter's Friends*. This shot was recorded all-in-one, so that we could see everyone and also the complete choreography, which was a sort of comic ballet. This moment is very endearing to the audiences, though. Seeing Richard Briers and Geraldine McEwan attempting to ballet dance is very sweet and also funny, but this was exactly what the production intended.

The next song is a Guershwin song, *I've Got a Crush on You*, composed by George Gershwin, with lyrics by Ira Gershwin. It is unique among Gershwin compositions in that it was used for two different Broadway productions, *Treasure Girl* (1928), and *Strike Up the Band* (1930). In this scene we are presented with a slapstick comedy moment, Berowne is at the library and ends up

hurting himself when the King strikes the ladder. This song seems to be following Branagh around for it had been used at a RADA production, when the actor was still a student there. Whereas on the play, each character upon arrival at the library, reads the poems they have written to their ladies, on film, each sings parts of the same song, *I got a crush on you*. This works very well because the main idea is transmitted to the audience, they are in love, and the audience is not puzzled by the density and difficulty of the original verses. Furthermore, we get to see Lester (Dumaine) thriving with his great, enthralling vocals and his dancing abilities.

During Dumaine's routine, we are slightly reminded, by the newspaper on the table, that a crisis is still happening outside this fairy tale world. This is further evidence that the director planned everything almost to the atom. No detail is left unattended and all was planned thoroughly so that almost everything on set would have meaning and function.

Adrian Lester's routine was also intended to be a tribute to Fred Astaire with the falling chairs, reminding us of the movie *Shall we Dance* (1937). Dumaine's part was the only one to be shot in widescreen anamorphic and all-in-one.

The next scene, *A Change of Plan*, starts with a close-up of their signed treaty and moves on to Berowne tapping the iambic pentameter. This is a very well-achieved moment for this shows the audience how the iambic pentameter is and works, in a sort of "slow-motion" accompanied by tapping, and then moves on to show the pentameter put into practice. Branagh mentions that Berowne shows the iambic pentameter and Elizabethan blank verse at its most extreme and the director was very proud of doing this. Here the intention to educate and to bring Shakespeare to the people/audience is at its highest. Branagh makes use of every little thing to convey Shakespeare and here it was through tap dancing, which is a really clever way to show and teach iambic pentameter. It may be argued that young people may not enjoy tap dancing scenes, however this one is so unexpected and quick that it cannot be but enjoyed by the audience. Furthermore, we cannot forget that Branagh is following the iambic pentameter rhythm and thus teaching the viewers how it works, so this part has an even greater value.

From this moment you see Berowne being transformed by the words he utters, to a point that words are not enough for what he is trying to utter, so he is going to sing. "Have found the ground for study's excellence/ Without the beauty of woman's face?/ From women's eyes this

doctrine I derive;/ They are ground, the books, the academes/ From whence doth spring the true Promethean fire." The word that links this speech to the song, *Cheek to Cheek*, is heaven and its chosen form "And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods/ Make heaven drowsy with the harmony.". This song was composed by Irving Berlin and performed by Fred Astaire in the movie *Top Hat* (1935).

Here the men are suspended by some invisible ropes, pretending to be floating among the clouds, that are in fact the roof of their academy. This too was shot in anamorphic so that we could see the eight people in full length dancing, each couple then having *a pas de deux* moment.

This scene begins with an image of the oath and ends with the same oath but now being torn up by the young men, making at the same time the decision of wooing and winning the women of France.

After the young men take a second oath to conquer the ladies, we are directed to another newsreel, that here compresses and contracts part of the story involving out scenes. This means that, in this newsreel we are informed that Don Armado was getting acquainted with Jaquenetta, the women had received mysterious gifts and a gala was being organised by Don Armado and Holofernia. Again this is a clever way of saving some time because the audience was informed that all of this had happened, but we didn't actually see it happening, we just got the summary like you do when you are watching a news report.

We are led into the gala, in which we see Dull as a Liberace, playing proficiently the piano. The women are sitting and sipping their cocktails, which do match the colour of their outfits and their masks. Here Boyett approaches them to let them know of the men's plan to fool them using the favour they had sent them. These lines were created by Branagh along with a Professor of English Literature. The Moskovite scene (in the play) was cut from the filmic version, which means that in the play, the Muskovite scene took place in Act V, scene ii, and the men appear dressed as Muskovites and each talks to their supposed suitor, however here on film we only see them dancing in pairs in the most sensual scene of the film. The men intend to "mock for mock merriment" and the women will "mock for mock".

The night club sequence changes the whole tone of the film; they become overtly sexual creatures, getting down and dirty. *Let's face the music and dance* was composed by Irving Berlin for the film *Follow the fleet* (1936), and introduced by Fred Astaire in a duet with Ginger Rogers. It is here that all the sexual imagery and puns in the play come to life. This was not shot in one, there were some cuts to it. The lighting is darker, it seems that we are in an X-rated night club and the women start dancing with corsets and fishnets.

Continuing with the different musical moments, Nathan Lane came up with the idea of singing the first part of *There's no Business like Show Business* in a slow melancholic fashion, says the director. This dance was practiced by everyone every day. Technically it is noteworthy to mention the top-shots used for they are difficult to use, when attempting to keep it geometrical, but here it was achieved. This song was primarily sung by Ethel Merman, having been composed by Irving Berlin.

All fun is paused because of the coming war, which is used here to underscore the emotional quality of this separation. Because of the war, the couples must part and the director decided to express their parting with a famous song *Can't take that away from me*. Furthermore, the director points out that their clothes indicate the pathos of the moment. This song was composed by George Gershwin and Ira Gershwin in 1937 and introduced by Fred Astaire in the 1937 film *Shall we Dance*.

When leaving, at the impromptu airport, we get a *Casablanca* reminiscence. Don Armado's words are written on the sky and said by Berowne. The plane is a real plane however the part in which we see the women flying away was achieved through computer technology.

We are then interrupted by a newsreel (*Can't take that away* still playing) about how war began and what the characters are doing meanwhile. The men are keeping up their promises, staying true to their ladies. Armado and Moth were taken to a camp. Jaquenetta has a baby. The Princess is dethroned. Then we see Don Armado and Jaquenetta back together with a little Armado with a moustache. Holofernia and Nathaniel are together, "And when love speaks, the voice of all the gods/ Make heaven drowsy with the harmony./ From women's eyes this doctrine I derive./ They are the books, the arts, the academes". This scene ends with an upbeat credit sequence on a rewind mode. Thus ends the film with us knowing that is will be alright.

5.5 Conclusion

Branagh's adaptation of the Shakespearean play may be seen as classic yet modern. Branagh opted for a musical and we know that this had already been done by W. H. Auden, Chester Kallman and Nikolas Nabokov in 1973. Yet, the rest of his decisions were quite innovative and modern.

We start with the choice of the setting, the 1930s and one single location, Navarre. For a low-budget film, it was a very wise choice just locating the action in one place and setting this film at the heyday of the musicals, because thus he could use hits immortalised by Fred Astaire. With the help of songs created by the masters Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, and George Gershwin, Branagh was able to cut almost two-thirds of the Shakespearean text, but still maintain true to the plot. It is also important to mention that 1930's and 1940's musicals offered a sort of escape from the real world that was plagued by war, destruction and poverty, by offering a world of fantasy and elegance. This is precisely what Branagh gives the audience, i.e. a sort of fairy-tale world, a way of escaping from our stressful and crazy reality, but being called back to reality (1930s that is) at times by the newsreels.

One further tool used to reduce the Shakespearean text, save time and keep the viewers up-to-date were the newsreels. The former were used to introduce characters and situate the action right at the beginning of the film, but also to condense information that was less important, cut lines but still keeping the audience informed about what had happened and what was about to.

By cutting portions of the Shakespearean text, Branagh put the emphasis on action and characters and not on language as was the case with the play, for

> "Late Elizabethan England was fascinated by language and its potential for persuasion, poetry, argument, and entertainment. As Shakespeare settled into his career as a playwright he took the opportunity to write a comedy that reflects almost obsessively upon the material of his art – words and their power". (Gay, 2008:58)

Shakespearean words were not just cut but rather they were disposed in another way, via image, music, dance routines. At times it almost feels like some musical moments are

soliloquies, for example, scene 8 *Pick-Purses in Love*, when the men are saying out loud/singing they are in love.

Focusing on action and on the characters allowed the existence of characters such as Don Armado and Costard, who did not have many lines, but had, nevertheless, important roles. Don Armado and Costard personify the comedy though not speaking much they sing and dance and through their hilarious bits entertain the audience. Branagh when directing *Much Ado* had already had Michael Keaton perform Dogberry, relying on physical comedy and thus making the character absolutely comical.

What is also noteworthy is how Branagh managed to create some sort of harmony/levelling between the characters, that is, one does not notice a great difference between the major and minor characters. It is these minor characters, for example Don Armado and Jaquenetta and Nathaniel and Holofernia, who are not afraid of openly showing their affections and they are also in charge of most of the comedy moments (mostly by Costard).

In terms of the major characters, the pairs of lovers use the musical moments to show their love and their concern for the upcoming war and separation. One does not agree with Anderegg when he postulated that "[t]he dancing and singing performed entirely by the lead actors seldom rise to a level above amateurish" (Anderegg, 2003:127), firstly because this may be precisely what Branagh intended, for when we are experiencing/conveying true feelings, one does not care about being in the right pitch. Secondly, because the actors were not professional dancers/singers, what mattered the most was their acting abilities. One cannot help but be touched and to smile when watching Richard Briers and Geraldine McEwan singing and dancing.

Ultimately, we believe that it was due to the successful mixing of high-brow, Shakespeare, and low-brow, musical comedy, that Branagh's directorial work was so triumphant. If Shakespeare is considered as a classic, there is no better mixture than associating it with Hollywood classics and that was what Branagh did with the choice of songs. Furthermore, by having chosen these songs, the audience comes into play as well because they might very well know the songs and this is a very important triggering technique in *Love's Labour's Lost*. Whereas in Hamlet people were familiar with, for example the scene involving Yorick's skull, here since this is one of the least known plays, the audience will be more familiarised with the songs featured.

6. As You Like It

6.1 Introduction and Contextualisation

As You Like It is a romantic comedy as is *Love's Labour's Lost*, however they are very different from each other. Whereas the former focuses on simple people and on love/courtship notions, the latter focuses on elegant and rich people and how they can fool each other through their use of language. In *As You Like It*, Orlando is educated on how to behave towards women through the use of disguise, namely through cross-dressing. The director describes the play/film as being "about many things, but centrally, I suppose, is about the idea of romantic love, and the idea of the simple life, which so many people recognize. It's a sort of beautiful set piece that absorbs human nature." (Branagh, *As You Like It*, 2006).

The plot revolves around the difficult relationship between two pairs of brothers and also around courtship and falling in love. Starring as both the Duke Senior and Duke Frederick is Brain Blessed; the other pair of brothers are played by Adrian Lester (Oliver de Boys) and David Oyelowo (Orlando de Boys). These four characters represent two different generations of brothers, but who nonetheless have difficulties in getting along due to jealousy between siblings. The romantic pairs are brought to life by Bryce Dallas Howard (Rosalind) and David Oyelowo (Orlando de Boys), Romola Garai (Celia) and Adrian Lester (Oliver), Janet McTeer (Audrey) and Alfred Molina (Touchstone) and Jade Jefferies (Phebe) and Alex Wyndham (Silvius). Whereas the former two couples represent high-society, the latter two stand for lower-class, peasants. Once again love comes more naturally and easily to the lower-stratum for Audrey and Touchstone, much like Jaquenetta and Don Armado in *Love's Labour's Lost*, uncomplicate things, acknowledging right away they have feelings for each other and acting on them. Before Rosalind and Orlando can really be a couple, the former has to cross-dress as a man and teach the latter how to court a woman, how to talk to a woman and basically how to deal with women. Rosalind cross-dressing as Ganymede[54] claims that he will cure Orlando of love, washing his liver clean of all affection for he has magical powers. However, what happens is that Orlando grows even more attached to Rosalind and the latter falls even more deeply in love with him.

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[54] Ganymede was a beautiful young man who was abducted by Jupiter to become his cupbearer. Ganymede was a Trojan Prince, the most attractive among mortals, this being the reason for his abduction by Jupiter, who was disguised as an eagle. There is a very famous painting concerning this by Rubens called *The Rape of Ganymede*.

Co-starring, we find Richard Briers (Adam), who has great acting experience and a rapport with Branagh when it comes to Shakespearean adaptations for he was part of *Much Ado About Nothing* (Signor Leonato) and *Hamlet* (Polonius). Jimmy Yuill is also an important member of this production due to his Shakespearean experience, he is a member of the *Royal Shakespearean Company*, and also played a role in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Friar). One further noteworthy cast member is Kevin Kline, who made his Shakespearean debut in Michael Hoffman's *Midsummer Night's Dream* (1999), and here played Jacques, granting him a *Screen Actors Guild Award for Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Miniseries or Television Movie*.

Once again, Branagh compiled a group of actors that come from several countries, some with Shakespearean experience, others with none, some who had worked several times with the director and others who had not, in a way as to appeal to as many people as possible, in as many countries as possible.

This film was shot in Shepperton studios and also in Wakehurst Studios, the latter being a park dating from the 13ᵗʰ century, managed by the Royal Botanic Gardens. Where to shoot the forest scenes would be a very important decision for the forest has a major role on the film and for the plot.

It is by going into the woods that people really get to know each other, but also themselves. This seclusion into the woods becomes very relevant here, for the Forest of Arden becomes some sort of enchanted place where peace and love are found. The Forest of Arden here could be compared to Thoreau's *Walden*, for it is here that the characters will learn how to deal with each others equally and peacefully, as Thoreau postulated

> I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.'' (Thoreau, Where I lived and What I lived for, 1854:143).

Branagh himself declared that he "wanted the Forest of Arden to be something that had a transformative effect. When you go to the Forest of Arden, your life changes" (Branagh, *As You Like It,* 2006) and this is exactly what happened to the characters. They learn how to become humble and also some are taught valuable lessons when it comes to courting and loving a woman.

Duke Senior (Brian Blessed), Celia (Romola Garai), Rosalind (Bryce Dallas Howard), Jaques (Kevin Kline), Touchstone (Alfred Molina), Orlando de Boys (David Oyeolo) are forced to flee into the Forest of Arden due to the coup performed by the Duke Frederick. In the play, this coup is performed offstage, however Branagh decided to show this to the audience and we get to see it all happening in front of our very eyes.

In order to bring the concept of the coup and exile closer to the audience, Branagh cleverly decided to set the film in the 19th century Japan. By setting the film in the 19th century Japan, everything becomes more concrete to the audience and easier to start making connections because of our general knowledge of world history. As Adrian Lester mentioned

> "[a]s soon as Ken said *We are setting it in Japan* and I began to read the script, it made sense, that you've got the honour, you got the revenge, you got the mistrust, the love, the magical nature of the forest. All of these elements Ken brings into play to give the story its weight." (Lester, *As You Like It*, 2006)

In fact it does make a lot of sense setting the play when and where the director did, for the concepts of honour and revenge have been present throughout Japanese history (Samurai honour for example) and in the middle of the 19th century, Japan was trying to become an industrial nation. It opened itself to the West for about fifty years:

> In Europe, the idea of Empire was still in full flow and European adventurers were all over the world, often setting up their own little kingdoms. In Japan they often lived in little enclaves around what they called 'treaty ports', basically the areas around docks where much of the trading of silk, rice, etc was going on. (Branagh, *As You Like It*, 2006)

This phenomenon gave Branagh the idea of setting the play among a group of Europeans who form a court and are influenced by the local culture but retain their European mores. This was an opportunity to borrow from the Japanese culture and celebrate it, namely the landscape, gardens, costumes, dance and natural life.

However, how did this idea come about? During a trip to the Far East in 1990, Branagh had the idea of setting *As You Like It* in Japan. As the director mentions,

> I sat in a rock garden at a temple in Kyoto for two hours and was surprised at the extraordinary meditative calm that descended on me. It seems to me that one of the central themes in this play is the idea of the effect that nature can have upon us, and that by relocating the Forest of Arden in

> Japan, it would be possible to get audiences to experience the story in a new, different and exotic way. (Branagh, *As You Like It*, 2006)

Indeed the calmness of Japan and consequently of the Forest of Arden becomes very clear right at the beginning of the film. The calmness was the feeling that Branagh wanted to put across, so as to show how "[i]t is very different from the urban, rushing world of the court and I really felt that that strong contrast was available in some impression of Japan" (Branagh, *As You Like It*, 2006). Fifteen years after his trip to Japan, Branagh's film production began.

Once the director had the basic concept for the film, some very important questions were still to be dealt with. As the director pointed out, "[w]hen you start working on an adaptation like this, I think you have to find the nuts and bolts of the story and then meet the difference between a 400-year-old text and a contemporary medium" (Branagh, *As You Like It*, 2006). Important issues were still on the table, as for example how do we solve the gap between the contemporary audience and a 400-year-old text but also what do we keep and what do we cut?

The next questions on Branagh's mind were "So, what do you leave out? How do you tell the story with pictures? And how do you strike the balance between presenting the story and finding a visual language that lets the words that remain sing out? It's also about being bold enough - if you think there is a cinema narrative that is crying out to be followed - to sometimes abandon the structure of the play." (Branagh, *As You Like It*, 2006).

When the film starts, the audience is presented with the basic information needed to understand when and where the action is taking place. We can read:

> In the latter part of the 19th century, Japan opened up for trade with the West. Merchant adventurers arrived from all over the world, many of them English. Some traded in silk and rice and lived in enclaves around the 'treaty ports.' They brought their families and their followers and created private mini-empires where they tried to embrace this extraordinary culture, its beauties and its dangers... A dream of Japan, Love and nature in disguise, All the world's a stage.

What comes afterwards is precisely this. This scene starts with the dance of the Taikomochi, the original male geisha of Japan[55]. There are different quick shots of the interior where there was light, peace, happiness and the outside that is dark, violent. The difference between the two Dukes becomes apparent right here, for the young Duke is outside where you see him in all

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[55] The male geisha – a man dressed as a woman is the traditional Japanese geisha. First instance of cross-dressing on the film.

black, resembling Darth Vater, where necks are broken and inside, the old Duke is calm, happy, nurturing fostering an environment of giddiness and peace with Touchstone playing with an origami and trying to grope Audrey. It is also here that we see that the westerners are fond of the Japanese culture by the decoration of the house and also by their attentiveness to the dance routine.

No lines are spoken and we know that there is a coup happening and the former Duke was banished. The new Duke reveals himself and resembling Darth Vader in attire but also in the heavy breathing, therefore we know that he is not to be played with. Visually we can instantly see that although resembling one another, the Dukes are very different in terms of personality; the younger Duke is in black and the Duke Senior is wearing more gentle, softer colours.

Duke Senior and his followers go to the Forest of Arden where they are greeted by an old religious man who offers them bread, as a welcoming present. Back at the court the new Duke is getting acquainted with the court. Rosalind and Celia were forced to stay behind, not for long though, for they escape with Touchstone to the Forrest of Arden.

Throughout the rest of the film, the main action takes place in the Forest of Arden, with some shots back to Duke Frederick's court where we see how miserable he is without his daughter. In the Forest, couples are formed and the characters learn about what is truly important in life, being true one's feelings and to the others.

6.2 Innovation

One first instance of innovation and intertextuality on this film is in the opening credits. The opening credits roll and this first scene seems to function as a Prologue. Prologues have their origins in Greek plays in which a speaker would announce the facts that the audience needed to know so as to understand the play; this was performed before the beginning of the play itself. This preface or introduction to the play was very common in Restauration and eighteenth century England. The presence of a Prologue can be seen in Shakespeare's *Henry IV* or *Richard III*, in which the first speech serves as an introduction to the forthcoming action. It is through the prologue in this film, *As You Like It*, that the audience learns about the when and the where of the action.

Aside from setting the film in 19th century Japan, which has already been discussed, Branagh decided to give more importance to the dispute between the two sets of brothers, the Duke senior and Duke Frederick, and Orlando and Oliver. As the director points out,

> *As You Like It* is not exclusively a bucolic, lyrical comedy. The play begins with the bitter dispute between Orlando and Oliver and I wanted to ensure that our story was not too soft and easy. There has to be a possibility of disaster in order to heighten the dramatic stakes. (Branagh, *As You Like It*, 2006)

As the quote mentions, Branagh wanted to give a bit more density to the film. What the director wanted was for this not just to be a film about some people living happily in the woods, but also to show the intricacies of human relationships, between man and woman and between brothers.

Thus, the director brought the coup into screen while in the play it happened offstage. Branagh placed it at the beginning of the film, whereas the play starts with Orlando confronting his brother over neglecting his upbringing and plotting against Oliver. "In the play, the overthrow of Duke Senior by Duke Frederick happens offstage and is reported rather confusingly," explains Branagh (Branagh, *As You Like It*, 2006).

In this way, further emphasis is given to the interaction between the four brothers, which means that the theme of the fraternal dispute is quite permanent throughout the film. This happened perhaps because the director wanted to keep the sense of danger alive and to have a negative energy to go along with the comedy and romance. Furthermore, we could say that there has also been a shift from political questions of authority to more personal questions. We move from a fight concerning political power to a more personal sphere, to two brothers who do not get along.

Aside from this plot change, the director also made some structural changes right at the beginning of the film. Firstly, on film, we keep going from the court to the forest and vice-versa, and secondly, because there were many repetitions in the play, mainly used to help the audience know where each scene took place, the director decided to cut all that. He says,

> At the beginning of each act someone will come on and say 'Aha, so here we are in the forest of Arden' and reset where they are for all the people who've come late. We didn't need to do that. (Branagh, *As You Like It*, 2006)

Aside from cutting the references in the play concerning location, Branagh also cut parts of the narrative and according to David Oyelowo, this decision was quite important for the audience because it ensured that focus was maintained,

> I think Ken has done an incredible adaptation. I think he's cut away any fat that can take you away from the core narrative. So you believe both the love at first sight between Rosalind-Orlando and the sibling rivalry. He's kept away from the fluffier parts that can sometimes make the whole play lack focus. And he has raised the stakes. I really think people might view the play differently after seeing this. (David Oyelowo, *As You Like It*, 2006).

Along with what has been mentioned so far, intersemiotic references can be spotted from the very beginning of the film, for we see many references to Japanese painting, architecture and clothing. The latter being crucial for the creation of characters because a Japanese world was created with all that comes with it. The set has Japanese buildings and objects/artefacts and the characters are all dressed in Japanese attire, even the Westerners.

It is through costumes that two different characters are created, namely the Dukes. They are acted by the very same actor and the characters look the same, their only distinction is their clothes. Frederick appears as a Samurai Warrior with black kendo breastplates, an aggressive mask and helmet, which was contrasting with the Duke Senior who was a gentle man, wearing moleskin jackets in moss green and woollen robes.

One finds evidences of intertextuality in Touchstone (Alfred Molina). Branagh wanted Touchstone to resemble Max Wall[56], as Susannah Buxton (costume designer) postulates "Ken had a sort of Max Wall image in his head and I found an original tailcoat lined with silk with tails down to the ground. We used that as a pattern and I lined it in kimono silk. Fred loved it" (Buxton, *As You Like It*, 2006).

Some actors are in fact Japanese Nobuyuki Takano (William), some are British (Adrian Lester), others American (Bryce Dallas Howard). This multiplicity of nationalities had already been noticed in *Love's Labour's Lost* and a bit less, but also in *Much Ado About Nothing.*

In terms of score, there are also some traces of Intertextality, because the score for this film comes from three songs Doyle had written for the Renaissance production of *As You Like It*,

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[56] Max Wall, born Maxwell George Lorimer (12 March 1908–21 May 1990). His father, Jack Lorimer, 'The Hielan Laddie', was a popular comedian. Max Wall excelled in dancing, acting in theatre ad on film. His best known character was *Professor Wallofski*.

Under the Greenwood; Blow, Blow thy winter wind; It was a lover and his lass. These songs we already loosely based around the pentatonic four-note scale that is Japanese. Furthermore, Doyle confesses to have watched Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* to get inspired for this score. He wanted to give a Japanese feel to the score but also bearing in mind that the court was Western. Therefore, in these three songs we find Japanese instruments, instead of the harp, Doyle used the *koto*, for instance, this being a stringed instrument that derives from the Chinese *guzheng*. This goes to show that the Japanese world was brought into a Shakespearean play, showing on the one hand, how flexible and easy to work with Shakespearean plays are, and on the other hand how the director managed to include different aspects of Japanese culture on the film.

One further presence of Intertextuality can be seen in the interaction between Aliena[57] (Celia in disguise), Ganymede (Rosalind in disguise) and Touchstone, for at times they seem to resemble the three stooges[58], with the physical comedy predominance. The presence of physical comedy had already been present in *Love's Labour's Lost* and is here again blatant. One obvious explanation for the director favouring these sorts of moments, therefore this type of comedy, is that it is an easy way to get a laugh from the audience. Examples of this physical comedy can be seen almost continuously in the interaction between Audrey and Touchstone. At times one cannot help but be reminded of Jaquenetta (*Love's Labour's Lost*) when looking at Audrey for the same sort of close-sots are used, mostly focusing on their breasts.

As You Like It, the play, but also the film have a pastoral drama influence and this becomes quite blatant especially in the moments we see Silvius and Corin's interaction, but also in Jacques defence of the innocent peaceful life in the woods. When considering Pastoral literature, it "describes the loves and sorrows of musical shepherds, usually in an idealised Golden Age of rustic innocence and idleness" (Baldick, 1990:162). In *As You Like It* the characters that impersonate this style are Silvius, Corin and Phebe.

On scene 8 *Welcome at our table*, when Orlando interrupted the Duke and his men to demand for food, he threatens to kill anyone who touches the food till his needs are met. The Duke welcomes him and speaks courteously to him; as a result, Orlando apologizes for he supposed that in a hard place, hard words would be needed. Orlando fetches Adam to feed him. The Duke

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[57] Aliena has to do with her condition of an alien, estranged from her father. Connection to the *Merchant of Venice*, in which Jessica also runs away from her father because he was mean to her, and during her escape, she too was dressed as a man.
[58] *The Three Stooges* were an American vaudeville and comedy act of the early to mid–20th century best known for their numerous short subject films. Their hallmark was physical farce.

comments that they are not alone in misfortune. "Thou seest we are not all alone unhappy: this wide and universal theatre/ presents more woeful pageants then the scene/ wherein we play". Here one finds evidences of Metatheatricality/metadrama[59].

From the Prologue onwards, the audience is told that "All the world is a Stage" and in this scene, Jacques tells us that again, further emphasising that we are all actors in our life, but also indirectly reminding us that what we are watching is a film. This had already been done in *Love's Labour's Lost*, when we see Don Armado (Timothy Spall) kicking the moon, therefore totally destroying the notion that the set was real. As Baldick defines it, metadrama is "any moment of self-consciousness by which a play draws attention to its own fictional status as a theatrical pretence", here we would be talking about metafilm, in which Branagh insists on showing the fictionality of the set and of the characters.

The last aspect to be mentioned in this section having to do with innovation is when Ganymede/Rosalind/Bryce Dallas Howard appears in the form of Epilogue – speaking directly to the audience. It is not a convention to give the last word to a woman, but Rosalind is dressed as a man. This Epilogue is one further mode of ending the film in good humour and insinuating comic banter, which was already present in the play.

 The Epilogue, in which one of the actors remains onstage after the play has ended, was a standard part of many plays in Elizabethan times, very common in the works of Shakespeare and Jonson for example. The Epilogue is a means of summing up and commenting on the previous action and at times "begging indulgence and applause" (Baldick, 1990:72). What is innovative here is that Shakespeare had a woman perform the Epilogue, Rosalind is no longer dressed as Ganymede, but rather as the boy actor who dropped the mask of Rosalind. The actor thus asks for the approval of the men in the audience by saying "If I were a woman I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me" (Epilogue, 14–16). This rather complicated ending in terms of gender is yet another way of showing how complicated life and affections are. Ending a play and a film with an actor that played a woman, who disguised herself as a man, but then appears

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[59] Stuart Davis suggests that ''metatheatricality'' should be defined by its fundamental effect of destabilizing any sense of realism: ''"Metatheatre" is a convenient name for the quality or force in a play which challenges theatre's claim to be simply realistic – to be nothing but a mirror in which we view the actions and sufferings of characters like ourselves, suspending our disbelief in their reality. Metatheatre begins by sharpening our awareness of the unlikeness of life to dramatic art; it may end by making us aware of life's uncanny likeness to art or illusion. By calling attention to the strangeness, artificiality, illusoriness, or arbitrariness – in short, the theatricality – of the life we live, it marks those frames and boundaries that conventional dramatic realism would hide.Stuart Davis, "Metatheatre," Spring 1999. http://courses.cit.cornell.edu/engl3270/327.meta.html visited 29/08/2009.

as a hermaphrodite is innovative and ingenious for it shows life and love is equal to everyone, gender aside.

In *As you Like It*, we see the Epilogue talking to us while walking around the set, moving towards the actress's trailer. Once again the filmic illusion was shattered because we see not only Bryce Dallas Howard but also some of the other characters talking to each other off-set, still in costume; we also see the cameras following her and in the middle of the crew, we see Branagh himself. Once Bryce Howard gets to her trailer and she is finished with the Epilogue we hear the director's command "and cut!". This is very interesting for it almost feels like a wake-up call for reality before the credits roll; the audience is told that the film is about to end, the crew is packing up and so we should also get ready to leave the theatre and head home.

Branagh adopting this into his film, ending with this hermaphrodite character saying goodbye to the audience is yet another instance of innovation by means of intermediality. Branagh brought something that was part of the play (the Epilogue), part of the literary conventions during Shakespearean times, but with a modern twist, this being the fact that we do not really know who is talking to us, is it a boy, is it a girl or is it the actual actress, Bryce Dallas, who is talking to us? But even more important is the change of medium. We are in the presence of something typically theatrical, i.e. the Epilogue, that now is used on film, we are in the presence of intermediality.

6.3 Gender and gender roles

One aspect to be studied here pertains to when Rosalind disguised as Ganymede persuades Orlando to woo her as if she were Rosalind in order to cure him of his love. Rosalind speaks to him like a "saucy lackey", engaging him on a discourse on time in which she explains how time passes for the lover proving that he is not one. Ganymede offers to cure him by counsel, claiming he has cured a lover by having him court him, driving him to madness by feigning a giddy changefulness that made him renounce the world.

Orlando is intrigued by her refined speech and Ganymede says that it was his uncle who taught, "one that knew courtship too well" and spoke against it charging women with many giddy offences. Orlando says he does not wish to be cured, but when Ganymede offers to cure him by having him come on a daily-basis to his cottage and woo him as if he were Rosalind, Orlando

agrees. Here traditional courtship is shown to be a silly game and an intelligent woman can turn the tables on the conventional male behaviour. This takes us to Portia, from the *Merchant of Venice*.

Portia means to be assertive without arousing hostility and in order to save Antonio, disguises herself as Balthazar. Through dressing as a man, she made herself worthy of entering courtroom and of defending Antonio. Such was her defence of Antonio that she won the cause and heard this complement:

> So young a **boy** with so old a head.
> How much elder art thou than thy looks
> (*The Merchant of Venice*, IV, 1, 150)

As a man, Portia was assertive, eloquent and very intelligent in what she said and how she acted. As Portia, she would succumb to her husband's needs and wills. Quite the same happens with Rosalind. The difference between Ganymede and Rosalind becomes very clear; whereas Ganymede is calm and sure of himself, Rosalind is nervous and emotional. Even though they are the same person, Ganymede is Rosalind cross-dressing, they seem to be totally different people; when dressing as men, the women seem to have won independence and become more assertive and eloquent as Claiborne Park (1983) points out, cross-dressing can be seen as a way for a woman to be assertive without casing hostility.

This raises one question concerning the volatility of gender, i.e. is gender defined by clothes? A woman dressing as a man, as Rosalind does, could mean that gender is constructed. In this film, we find two different instances of cross-dressing. The first, when the film starts we see the traditional Kabuki[60] dance which was initially played by women, but when they began to attract unwanted attention, they were banned and men took their place. Therefore we see a man dressed as a woman performing a very delicate dance routine. And the second instance of cross-dressing is with Rosalind dressed as Ganymede so as to teach him how to court a woman, who is ultimately Rosalind.

Cross-dressing or transvestite theatre has flourished during historical periods when attitudes to sexuality and the position of women have been challenged. This sort of theatre could serve as a

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[60] Kabuki is a Japanese form of "theatrical entertainment which is more popular than the aristocratic nō plays, and combines song, dance and stylized gesture in a prolonged spectacle set on a low stage" (Baldick, 1990:117) these are played by male actors who wear heavy make-up and they are based in legends and myths.

symptom that something was wrong in society or it could be a response to tension. It can also be seen as a departure from *status quo*, thus functioning as a rebellious expression, for one sex impersonates the other, and by doing so, shows some ridiculous constraints which define femininity and masculinity. Catherine Belsey (1985:178) sees cross-dressing as a "symptom of a radical discontinuity in the meaning of family", whereas Garber (1997) perceives it as some sort of a cultural anxiety due to the destabilization of the social hierarchy.

According to Beauvoir, "One is not born, but, rather, *becomes* a woman" (Beauvoir, 1949: Bk. 2, Pt.. 4, Ch. 1: Childhood, p. 267), this meaning that femininity is something you construct throughout time, something you gain consciousness of[61]. Gender is not a stable identity from which various acts proceed; it is an identity constituted in time – instituted through a stylized repetition of acts, having to do with conventions as well. Ultimately, the body is an historical situation and a manner of doing, dramatising, and reproducing a historical situation.

Beauvoir explores the distinction between sex, as biological facticity, and gender, as the cultural interpretation. According to the author, to be a female is a fact that has no meaning, but to be a woman is to have become a woman, to induce the body to become a cultural sign, to materialize oneself in accordance to an historical possibility and to do this as a sustained and repeated corporeal project.

In Shakespearean plays like *The Merchant of Venice* we get to "see" how women create men, thus understanding how they define men, for example when Portia is cross-dressing as a young lawyer she says:

> They shall think we are accomplished with that we lack
> (...)
> "When we are both accoutred like young men
> I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
> And wear my dagger with the braver grace,
> And speak between the change of man and boy
> With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps
> Into a manly stride; and speak of 'frays
> Like a fine bragging youth; and tell quaint lies
> How honourable ladies sought my love,
> Which I denying, they fell sick and died –

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[61] Phenomenology is a philosophical movement based on the investigation of "phenomena", meaning "things as apprehended by consciousness) rather than on the existence on anything outside the human consciousness" (Baldick, 1990:166). Phenomenology has as its father the German philosopher Edmund Husserl (early 20th century). It can also be described as a "method of philosophical enquiry which lays stress on the perceiver's vital and central role in determining meaning" (Washer, 2001:441)

> I could not do withal. Then I'll repent,
> And wish for all that that I had not killed them;
> And twenty of these puny lies I'll tell,
> That men shall swear I have discontinued school
> Above a twelvemonth. I have within my mind
> A thousand raw tricks of these bragging jacks,
> Which I will practise. "
> (*The Merchant of Venice*, III, 4, 60)

Here in *As You Like* we do not see how Rosalind created Ganymede, there is no speech describing her change, we only see the result but her behaviour does change when she is dressed as Ganymede. Suddenly she is far more outspoken and people come to her for advice and help.

In Hollywood films many examples can be found of cross-dressing for example the blockbuster successes of *Tootsie* (1982) and *Mrs*. Doubtfire (1993); in both cases we have a man dressed as a woman so as to get a particular job.

In terms of narrative functions, cross-dressing can occur due to a plot driven function, namely for humour or so as to cause changes in characters through disguise and deception. The latter is what happens in *As You Like It*.

If indeed gender is something that can be constructed, when Rosalind changes her clothes and her hair, her way of walking and talking, she no longer is Rosalind, but rather Ganymede, a man; and this can be understood and believed by the audience.

6.4 Musical scenes in *As You Like It*

Patrick Doyle composed nineteen original tracks for this film, three of which had already been present in the Renaissance production of *As You Like It*, namely *Under the Greenwood Tree; Blow, Blow thy Winter Wind; It was a lover and his lass*. In this production, Doyle acting as Amiens, sings two of his own compositions to be precise *Under The Greenwood Tree and Blow Blow thy Winter Wind*. As mentioned previously, these songs were loosely based on the Japanese pentatonic four-note scale.

Doyle used as inspiration Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* and his goal was to give a Japanese feel to the tracks, but still bearing in mind that the court was composed by Westerners. Kurosawa's film thus functions as an important intertext, i.e. the taking a classical work like *Macbeth* and re-

visiting it and transposing that world into a Japanese setting. Consequently, we Doyle using Japanese instruments such as the Koto, the flute accompanied by harp, finger cymbals and cello.

Aside from this three tracks, we also have sixteen more merely instrumental tracks, namely *Kabuki attack, Brother's fight, Niece!, Too Late a Week, The Forest of Arden, Roynish Clown, Eat no more, Thy Brother, Trip Audrey, Fake Wedding, Lion Attack, Celia and Oliver, I Love Aliena, Tomorrow, Weddings* and *Violin Romance*.

When listening to these tracks we see that the composer also used *taiko* drums and a gong, in for example Too Late a Week. The violin is present in the majority of the tracks, culminating in the last *Violin Romance*, that seems like an ode to love and romance.

Looking at the three more prominent musical moments, one finds that in *Under a Greenwood Tree*, scene 6 *The Forest of Arden*, the scene starts with an overshot, moving into the musicians and Amiens (Doyle). We see Jacques sitting in the middle of a circle, surrounded by some rocks. This image reminds us of the film *The Next Karate Kid*, in which we would see Julie practicing her jumps form one rock to another. Here, however, Jacques is trying to meditate while listening to Amiens singing. When Amiens stops, Jacques bids him to continue with his song that is actually a praise to life in nature, i.e. free form any ambition; this almost feels like a pastoral note, containing idyllic notions of life in the forest.

The second musical moment to be analysed in more depth is *Blow, Blow Thy Winter Wind*, scene 8 *Welcome to Our Table*, come is an very tender moment when Orlando brings his faithful servant to the Duke's company so that he can eat. This songs serves as a feel better moment for it comes right after Jacques has delivered his speech on *The Seven Ages of Man*.

The songs tell us that "Most friendship is feigning, /Most loving mere folly, however this is not applied to what is happening with Duke Senior on the Forest for he welcomes Orlando and his servant, giving them food, but this does apply to Duke Frederick and Oliver. This song come right before we are sent, in a flashback, to Duke Frederick's court where he is threatening to take over all of Oliver's possessions if he does not find his brother Orlando. The Duke needs Oliver to find Orlando for he was told that his daughter (Celia) was with Orlando in the Forest of Arden.

The last major musical moment is right at the end of the film, scene 18 *The Bearer of Good News*, after the couples have wedded a messenger comes, the other son of Sir De Boys, telling the group that Duke Frederick has left the court and gone to the Forest of Arden where he was converted by an old religious man. All of the Duke's possessions and his power are returned to him.

They will all celebrate the weddings in the forest and then move back to the court. As the song plays, we see the couples partying and also running back to the court. Once again we see Branagh's characteristic overhead shots and once they are all back n the court we see them performing dance routines that are shot from above. Once gain Branagh's preference for geometrical forms are seen. This song is sung by all the characters. It is a very beautiful part, for the characters are dancing, enjoying themselves and during this they are being showered by a rain of petals.

Overall the main musical theme in this film is love, either between brothers, friends or couples and music makes a lot of sense for it has been argued that this is one of Shakespeare's most musical plays, thus this film has many musical moments that either complement the action or accompany it.

6.5 Conclusion

As you like it was only released to theatres in the United Kingdom, in the United States of America it was directly aired on TV and then released on DVD. It was quite a shame that the film was not released on theatres throughout America, but Shakespearean films are perceived as quite a risk in terms of audience, as an example we have Julie Tamour's *The Tempest* that was only released in a couple of theatres throughout the USA. Branagh's film was released in a couple of theatres after having been aired on TV by HBO. This is quite saddening because such a

film should have been publicized and released throughout the whole world, not just the United Kingdom.

This production had all the reasons to be successful and to reach to as many people as possible. Once again the cast was composed by actors form many countries thus a worldwide audience would be reached. Furthermore, we have young actors together with more experienced ones, some of the latter with Shakespearean experience; this too is a good way of appealing to different sorts of viewers.

Additionally, Branagh's creative choices made this a unique adaptation thriving in its' creativeness. Setting the film in 19ᵗʰ century Japan was a pleasant way of feasting our eyes with beautiful landscapes and delighting our ears with different sounds and tunes. Also, it matched well with Branagh's vision for the film, i.e. focusing on honour and respect. One finds that the court portrayed by Branagh, though Western, was very fond of the Japanese culture. We begin by watching something typically Japanese and by seeing that that household was decorated with Japanese influence and we end the film by seeing a Japanese print of the couples celebrating their weddings.

The end of this film is also very Branagh-like for, just as in *Much Ado About Nothing*, the film ends with the couples dancing, running around and also performing dance routines, with very geometrical moves, that are captured by an overhead camera.

The decision to highlight the relationship between brothers was also interesting, even more with the Dukes and how two different characters were achieved just by using different clothes.

Once again music is used in his adaptations and the films ends with music. *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Love's Labour's Lost* and *As You Like It* all end with music while we watch the couples getting together and we thus know that all will be alright, the order is re-set. One further aspect to be noted, also present in *Love's Labour's Lost*, is the deliberate deconstruction of the filmic illusion. As noted in *Love's Labour's Lost*, we see it blatantly when Don Armado kicks the moon during a dance routine; this demonstrating that the moon was part of a set. Here in *As You Like It* the same happens when we see the Epilogue walking through the set and the cameras following. As we see the Epilogue, we also the camera crew along with the director. This, as mentioned

previously, could be perceived as postmodern self-consciousness, i.e. the blatant reference to the fact that what is being created is a work of art, here a exposing the fictionality of the film.

Aside from these Branagh adaptations, we also find traces of other films, novels poems on this film. As mentioned previously, on scene 6, *The Forest of Arden*, one finds traces of the film *The New Karate Kid*, when Jacques is sitting in the middle of some rocks, it looks as if those were the rocks used to teach Julie how to jump and kick. Moreover, we find throughout the whole film, especially in Jacques some traces of Thoreau's Walden. The whole film is some sort of ode to the beauties of nature and how life is purest in the forest, this is exactly what Thoreau advocated in *Walden*.

7. Conclusion

> The appropriation, misappropriation, montage, collage, hybridization, and general mixing up of visual and verbal texts and discourses, from all periods of the past as well as from the multiple social and linguistic fields of the present, is probably the most characteristic feature of what can be called the «postmodern style». (Suleiman in Hoesterey, 1991:118).

If one ponders on this quote, we will realise that adaptations are ubiquitous nowadays and it truly does not matter whether the adaptation is faithful towards the literary work or not. What is more noteworthy is that the adaptation is something on its own and thus must be value because of what it is and not on what it is based on. In addition, if the filmic version is merely considered in terms of fidelity, one is not contemplating/taking seriously the director's creative choices and decisions, for the director is presenting the viewers something that derived from his hermeneutic act, i.e. Branagh is presenting us his hermeneutic act of Shakespearean plays.

Branagh opted for adapting two romantic comedies which is a clever choice for this is the oldest film genre and one of the most popular and in terms of revenue they would be a safer choice. Interestingly, in Shakespearean plays and in Hollywood Romantic Comedies the audience does not get to see what comes after the "happily ever after", this because it simply does not interest the viewers. What we see on film or read on the play, the courtship, is what interests us the most because it is filled with emotion, action, dilemmas, not what comes after it.

One can verify that aside from Branagh, in the past twenty years there have been numerous Shakespearean adaptations, many of which following to the blockbuster success of Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo+Juliet* (1996). Directors and Hollywood realised that the combination of Shakespeare and a group of young popular actors would yield a lot of money. Furthermore, they realised "how Shakespeare films can exploit generic and recognitial abilities in viewers, so that the untrained spectator is able to master visual conventions with little or no reference to linguistic ones (the original Shakespeare)" (Anderegg, 2003:2).

Shakespearean adaptations have been connected with success, Kenneth Branagh, who before he began his Shakespearean endeavour was a virtual stranger to the audiences, financed and produced his first Shakespeare film (*Henry V*), starring in it and from this moment onwards

became known to the public both as an actor and as a director. Other examples would be Branagh's *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993) and Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo+Juliet* (1996), both vehicles for stardom to Branagh and Luhrmann, but also to the actors. In *Love's Labour's Lost* Adrian Lester was nominated by the British Independent Film Award for Best Actor and in *As you like It* two actors were nominated for acting awards, Bryce Dallas Howard was nominated for a Golden Globe and Kevin Kline won a Screen Actors Guild Award.

Nowadays, having a twenty-year career in film, Branagh both has performed and directed five Shakespearean adaptations, to be exact a history play *Henry V* (1989), a tragedy *Hamlet* (1996) and three comedies *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993), *Love's Labour's Lost* (2000), *As you Like It* (2006). Branagh underwent this quest with the sole purpose of showing/taking Shakespeare to the people, i.e. to the widest range of audiences possible. The director wanted to make it possible for everybody to get acquainted with Shakespeare by making the plays more audience-friendly, because the producer's sole intention is to transmit the essence of Shakespeare's work to the larger public. Kenneth Branagh's quest was to turn Shakespeare's language into something more accessible and new.

Branagh always mixes well-established Shakespeare stage actors with Hollywood stars for example, Dame Judi Dench, Sir Derek Jacobi, Denzel Washington, Keanu Reeves, Nathan Lane and Alicia Silverstone, for example. As Anderegg has argued Branagh's "casting strategies can reveal a healthy disregard for traditional Shakespeare acting" (Anderegg, 2003:119). The director wants to have a solid acting base and mix it with whoever is in vogue at the time, namely young hip actors that are chosen for the leading roles of the films.

When considering Branagh's directorial choices and why they led him to success, Hatchuel (2000, 17-8) mentions the clarity and naturalness of his acting, his vocal ability and his method of directing actors. Furthermore, Branagh has a history with Shakespearean plays; he has acted them both on stage and on screen and has also directed them which gives him an even broader perspective of the plays. The director used his experience on stage to make his adaptations more accessible to the public through subtle changes in the text and story, by means of line cutting or reassignment and the addition of a subtext, usually via interpolated sequences.

 Moreover, when analysing his cinematography, his choices of lighting and colours, of camera angles and moves, and how he chooses to illustrate some words with literal images one sees that

these choices are carefully made so that the film is more accessible to everyone, for example the decision to substitute words for images. As Hatchuel (idem) mentions "Branagh's cinematic choices are very successful at bringing meaning and accessibility to the movies, as he has never lost sight of the fact that e was making movies in the tradition of Hollywood" (2000, 17-8).

Considering the director's choices in *Love's Labour's Lost*, we start with the choice of the setting, the 1930s and one single location, Navarre. Choosing the 1930s allowed the director to use all the cinematic codes of the 1930s musicals along with the hit songs of the time. These songs were used to reduce the Shakespearean text, save time but still convey the same message. By cutting parts of the Shakespearean text, Branagh brought the emphasis to action and characters and not on language, which would be the biggest handicap of the film. Moreover, to save time and to keep the audience up-to-date with the action of the film, Branagh cleverly used newsreels. Branagh also created a harmony/levelling between the characters, that is, one does not notice a big difference between major and minor characters.

It was due to this combination of high-brow, Shakespeare, and low-brow, musical comedy, that Branagh's directorial work was so triumphant. The cast of *Love's Labour's Lost* was composed by actors from many countries thus a worldwide audience would be reached. Furthermore, we have young actors together with more experienced ones, some of the latter with Shakespearean experience; this too is a good way of appealing to different sorts of viewers. The mixing of Shakespeare with young hip Hollywood actors who can dance and sing proved to be very lucrative.

When it comes to *As You Like It*, setting the film in 19th century Japan was appealing to the audience both visually with all the beautiful landscapes but also in terms of sounds, namely the different Japanese tunes. Furthermore, the setting the film in 19th century Japan matched with Branagh's focus of the film, honour and respect. The decision to emphasize the relationship between brothers was also interesting and it becomes even more creative when two different characters are created solely by using different clothes, namely Duke Senior and Duke Frederick. The director wants to present the audience with a sort of fairy-tale world, presenting the audience with beautiful dreamlike sets in which the characters co-exist as if in a dream-mode but at times calling the audience back to reality, for example in Love's Labour's Lost through the use of the newsreels.

Once again music is used in his adaptations and the films end with music. *Much Ado About Nothing, Love's Labour's Lost* and *As You Like It* all end with music as we watch the couples uniting and we therefore know that the order is re-set.

In *Love's Labour's Lost* and As *You Like It*, at the end, more than one couple is united which entails that "since the couple is the basic building block of the social group, matrimony celebrates not only the union of one particular couple but, more importantly, the absorption of that couple into the larger group as a whole. Ultimately the individual is subordinate to the group [...]" (Bates, 2002:104). This is common to Branagh's romantic comedies, *Much Ado About Nothing, Love's Labour's Lost* and *As You Like It* all end with the couples getting together and dancing and the camera encircles them.

It is through the casting of reputed Shakespearean actors along with young Shakespeare-inexperienced but popular actors, who come from different countries that Branagh tries to reach the widest range of viewers possible. The director gives his films different locations and periods so that the audience can better identify and understand them, in the case of *Love's Labour's Lost*, choosing the 1930s facilitated the director's works because he was able to substitute words from the play by famous songs that conveyed the same message. It is through line-cutting that Branagh makes his films shorter but also more audience-friendly, for he cuts what might be difficult to understand and substitutes it with something that the audience can relate to.

> "Shakespeare is a strange language and the music can help an audience which is unfamiliar with it grasp the significance of the lines. It can tell you when to be scared or when to be moved but it should always communicate through the subconscious. (Branagh in Hatchuel, 2000:35)

Branagh's clear focus on action and on the characters allowed the existence of characters such as Don Armado and Costard in *Love's Labour's Lost*, who did not have many lines, but had nevertheless a strong presence thoughout the film; one cannot forget Don Armado's solo "I get a kick out of you". Don Armado and Costard personify the comedy though not speaking much they sing and dance and through their entertaining bits amuse the audience. One also finds the

presence of physical comedy in *Much Ado* with Michael Keaton performing Dogberry, relying on physical comedy and thus making the character absolutely comical and in *As You Like It* with Alfred Molina playing Touchstone and Janet McTeer playing Audrey. Branagh's focus on the characters and on action is substantiated by his use of circular uncut filming which creates the impression of being there with the characters; therefore, there is a sort of interaction between audience and characters.

One may perceive Branagh to be as a rather traditional filmmaker because he uses his tried-and-tested formulae, relying on a famous and international cast, eliminating troublesome parts of the Shakespearean text and going back to familiar things the audience will recognise, for example setting *Love's Labour's Lost* in the 1930s and using songs from the period. However, I would like to see him as a quite courageous director who took many chances and succeeded in bringing Shakespeare not only to the people but also to the world. It was because of him that many got to see Shakespeare and understand it because he took special care in making sure the audience got the message and the Shakespearean spirit.

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