Flávia Rodrigues Monteiro

# Staging Shakespeare:

# (Dis)solutions in Intermedial Processes

Belo Horizonte

Faculdade de Letras

Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais

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# Staging Shakespeare:

# (Dis)solutions in Intermedial Processes

By

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"Love sought is good, but given unsought, is better."

(*Twelfth Night* III. 1. 141)

"I count myself in nothing else so happy

As in a soul remembering my good friends. . ."

(*Richard II* II.3.46-7)

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"What's past is prologue."

(*The Tempest* II. 1. 252)

"Let me play the fool:
With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come,
And let my liver rather heat with wine
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans."

(*The Merchant of Venice* I. 1. 79-82)

# Abstract

Multiple theoretical contributions in media studies may generate conflicts that impair the understanding of key concepts. In order to mitigate these conflicts, this dissertation proposes an analogical approach inspired by nature, in which processes related to chemical "solutions" illustrate media dynamics. "Solvents" represent the materiality of the medium; "solutes" are connected to the human cognition. The result is an *Art Solution*. The configurations of *solute* and *solvent*, i.e. the possible variations and referential levels of their elements, are the *entropy* of an *Art solution*. As an artistic alchemist, Shakespeare provides material to illustrate my analogy concerning the internal dynamics of media manifestations (*entropic remediations*), and the interactions among hypotextual and hypertextual elements (*palimpsestic entropy*). An overview of the "Bard's" legacy, from sources to contemporary derivations, reveals recurrent elements that touch on human nature. The political content of *Coriolanus* and the gender conflict in *Much Ado About Nothing* support this point. By (re)mediating Shakespeare, the arts channel human essence, either in simple configurations or in complex mediatic manifestations. A hybrid *solvent*, broadcast theater exemplifies the *entropic* peak in Shakespearean hypertexts. The introduction and analysis of its productions of *Coriolanus* and *Much Ado About Nothing* in comparison to other screen adaptations attest these *entropic* movements in *solvent* and *solute*. Ultimately, we learn that man-made phenomena are closely related to natural phenomena, sharing even future projections. Also, despite technological improvements, human societies are still moved by the same dynamics of power, supporting Shakespeare's topicality.

**Keywords:** Shakespeare, intermediality, broadcast theater, solutions, entropy, reception.

# Resumo

Múltiplas contribuições teóricas em estudos de mídia podem gerar conflitos que dificultam a compreensão de conceitos-chave. A fim de mitigar esses conflitos, esta tese propõe uma abordagem analógica inspirada na natureza, na qual processos relacionados a "soluções" químicas ilustram dinâmicas midiáticas. "Solventes" representam a materialidade da mídia; "solutos" estão ligados à cognição humana. O resultado é uma *Solução Artística*. Configurações de *soluto* e *solvente*, isto é, as possíveis variações e níveis referenciais de seus elementos, são a *entropia* de uma *Solução Artística*. Como um alquimista da arte, o Shakespeare fornece material para ilustrar minha analogia sobre a dinâmica interna das manifestações midiáticas (*remediações entrópicas*) e as interações entre elementos hipotextuais e hipertextuais (*entropia palimpséstica*). Uma visão geral do legado do "Bardo", das fontes às derivações contemporâneas, revela elementos recorrentes que lidam com a natureza humana. O teor político de *Coriolano* e o conflito de gênero em *Muito Barulho por Nada* apoiam esse argumento. Ao (re)mediar Shakespeare, as artes canalizam a essência humana, seja em configurações simples ou em manifestações midiáticas complexas. Um *solvente* híbrido, o *broadcast theater* exemplifica o ápice *entrópico* nos hipertextos shakespeareanos. A apresentação e análise de suas produções de *Coriolano* e *Muito Barulho por Nada* em comparação com outras adaptações fílmicas atestam esses movimentos *entrópicos* em *solvente* e *soluto*. Em última análise, aprendemos que fenômenos produzidos pelo homem estão intimamente ligados aos fenômenos naturais, compartilhando até mesmo projeções futuras. Além disso, apesar da evolução tecnológica, as sociedades humanas ainda são movidas pelas mesmas dinâmicas de poder, dando apoio à atualidade de Shakespeare.

**Palavras-chave:** Shakespeare, intermidialidade, broadcast theater, soluções, entropia, recepção.

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# Staging Shakespeare: *(Dis)solutions* in Intermedial Processes

## Introduction

> Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature. For anything so o'erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it makes the unskillful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve, the censure of the which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. (*Hamlet* III.2.14-24)

The mapping of intermedial phenomena has been the focus of terminological attempts throughout several fields of study. The plurality of approaches results in conflicts that feed a chain reaction of misconceptions. My proposal with this dissertation is to offer an organic look over intermedial processes with a pragmatic approach inspired by nature. My main goal is to provide an analogical construction that integrates natural and man-made phenomena in order to shed some light on the dynamics of intermediality. Further on, I appeal to Shakespeare's legacy, from original productions to contemporary derivations, to illustrate my analogous approach. This way, a double objective is fulfilled: Shakespeare supports my analogical model at the same time it reveals Shakespearean potentialities, concerning issues that support the "Bard's" afterlives.

The first chapter provides a brief overview of terminological proposals from the field of intermediality in order to illustrate multiple conceptualizations and their consequences, familiarizing the reader with intermedial studies. Next, as the first step to an analogous construction to understand intermedial phenomena, I introduce a philosophical theory of the nature of general existence, highlighting the dualist constitution of natural entities, i.e. the view that every entity is mainly made up of two elements (form and content). From this philosophical basis, I move to the physical realm as this dualist constitution supports the use of the chemical concept of "solution" – the result of a process in which a "solvent" dissolves a "solute" – to build my analogy of media processes and their unfolding through time, considering the potentiality of form and content, with the emergence of media configurations.

My analogical approach intends to cover two fronts: phenomena among different media (collective interactions) and the constitutive elements of media productions (individual features). In order to illustrate my point on the evolving nature of phenomena among media, the second chapter presents the chronological development of the Shakespearean legacy through different media, culminating in the current popularity of screen resonances. I chose the Shakespearean legacy to exemplify my analogical construction because of its significance in the Western canon, probably as the result of the author's approach to human nature. So, first, I introduce Shakespeare as an *artistic alchemist*, who manipulated sources to transform them into his art, which is still regarded as the epitome of humanity. Then, the sampling of Shakespearean derivative manifestations illustrates the proliferation and multiplicity of productions, and the way in which they have been manipulated in the subsequent cultural *alchemy*. This chapter places Shakespeare's productions and their resonances as parts of an evolving system that displays progressive *entropic* states, i.e. dynamic variations.

Chapters three and four are centered on compositional aspects of the plays *Coriolanus* and *Much Ado About Nothing* along with their derivations. These chapters complement the

general overview of the second chapter, moving the focus to issues in the internal dynamics of the productions and their evolvement through time until recent technological configurations. Besides looking at the materiality of the productions, the study of specific aspects of the plays and their derivative productions corroborate Shakespeare's mastery of human issues. In *Coriolanus* and its adaptations, the influence of politics in collective and individual behaviors plays the central role. *Much Ado About Nothing* and its resonances cover the social dynamics concerning gender roles. The topicality of these issues justifies my choice of these plays. This way, in both chapters, media and subject (form and content) are contemplated, as they support, and are supported by, my analogical construction of intermedial dynamics. The introduction / analysis of derivations of the plays displays the potential of Shakespeare's words as we see which Shakespearean elements are preserved, transformed, and dismissed. Finally, screen resonances appear as the main representations of intermedial potentiality, culminating in the complex configurations of broadcast theater.

In the fifth chapter, I provide a brief examination of another issue related to intermediality: reception. Since production and product are subject to the dynamics of perception/consumption, the role of the audience is discussed as an inherent part of media processes. Audiences are not passive parts of media processes; rather, they contribute to meaning and media productions. Reception is subject to variations, contributing with / sharing the diversity of production processes.

The conclusion provides final impressions on contemporary intermedial dynamics, resuming the association of my analogical construction and its Shakespearean delineation. It also pictures potential implications of this interdisciplinary association. Therefore, by following Prince Hamlet's directions quoted above, I intend to hold a mirror to nature, suiting my object of study to its processes, in hopes of appeasing the ghosts of future conflicts.

# Chapter 1 - Staging Intermediality and Remediation

> Theoretical categorizations are vital for all types of science; however, in the end they do not represent absolute realities. They are tools for thinking, indicating that their validity is only proven if they turn out to be helpful for discriminating among things that are worth being discriminated among, and if they help avoid confusion and misconceptions. (Elleström *Media Tranformation* 10)

Media and intermedial studies have gained the attention of different fields of knowledge in recent years. Literary studies, Communication, and Film studies are just some examples of these fields. From early studies that focused on the relations between literature and film to current research on new technologies, the growing interest in issues related to media studies has aided the perception and questioning of the nuances in media related phenomena. The academic acknowledgement of several aspects belonging to this wide realm of studies has introduced issues regarding concepts and notions. Even though scholars, students, theorists and a variety of people interested in media studies have explored similar recurrent issues, there is no terminological harmony. Consequently, the understanding of media related processes is impaired. According to Lars Elleström:

> Although advanced terminology and theoretical sophistication are certainly not lacking, the vast majority of researchers still use largely undefined and deeply ambiguous layman's terms, such as text and image, to describe the nature of media products. Such terms refer to notoriously vague concepts and, consequently, misunderstanding and confusion are standard features of academic discussions. Attempts to create systematic and comprehensive

> methodologies and theoretical frameworks fail because the most basic concepts are not clearly delimited. (*Media Transformation* 2)

Thus, theoretical discussions on media related aspects fail to meet at a common terminological ground, resulting in more misconstrued or limited apprehensions of processes and progressions regarding this field.

Since this terminological chaos is already in place and shows no signs of agreement in the near future, alternative views on the understanding of media relations have become necessary. In order to address this need, this dissertation proposes a conciliatory map of media phenomena focused on the description of processes through a more organic and pragmatic means, which may work as a tool for a more effective apprehension of media related aspects. In other words, instead of trying to understand media phenomena as isolated manifestations of a specific realm of knowledge, it may be productive to draw associations to common natural processes that are part of the environment of every human being. This is my main proposal: hold man-made creations as a mirror to nature, revealing these creations as a reflection of natural processes in which this association works as a device for clarification.

In this chapter, I provide a brief overview of the concepts already developed in the intermedial studies, illustrating my argument on the deficiencies of such terminological variety. Next, I propose an analogical view of intermedial relations in order to shed some light on the understanding of processes instead of adding to the growing terminological dispute. Therefore, in agreement with Elleström's opening quote, I intend to provide tools for thinking and understanding media related phenomena.

## 1. The "Natures" of Media and Media Relations

This section introduces some terminology from intermedial studies ranging from basic

concepts (medium itself) to more complex interactions (e.g. remediation / transmediality) so as to make the development of intermedial studies and their inconsistencies clearer. In order to do so, I rely on renowned scholars from this field.

In 1964, Marshall McLuhan was the pioneer of media studies with the idea that media are extensions of human beings. Even though surrounded by the aura of novelty at first, McLuhan's and other ground-breaking studies were not absolute in their assertions, but paved the way for further developments.

Several years (and theories) later, the main obstacle in media studies came down to their most basic notion: the understanding of what a medium is. In 1999, Werner Wolf proposed the following definition:

> Without going into the other extreme and broadening the meaning of "medium" in the sense of Marshall McLuhan …, "medium" could be defined in a moderately broad sense as a conventionally distinct means of communication, specified not only by particular channels (or one channel) of communication but also by the use of one or more semiotic systems serving for the transmission of cultural "messages". This definition encompasses the traditional arts but also new forms of communication that have not or not yet advanced to the status of an "art" such as computerized "hypertexts" and "virtual realities". (*The Musicalization of Fiction* 35-36)

The first step in understanding art production (and other forms of communication) is to understand the medium, the channel, and later to turn one's attention to its message, art itself. Following this broader perspective, Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin define medium as "that which remediates. It is that which appropriates the techniques, forms, and social significance of other media and attempts to rival or refashion them in the name of the real" (65). In addition, they state that medium is "[t]he formal, social, and material network of

practices that generates a logic by which additional instances are repeated or remediated, such as photography, film, or television" (273). Although many scholars use Bolter and Grusin's definitions, more and more attempts to conceptualize the term "medium" have proliferated over time. Moreover, media relations have received special attention, along with features they share – and do not share.

More recently, in his work *Media Borders, Multimodality and Intermediality*, Lars Elleström gathered some essays about media and media relations by different scholars from the field, such as Claus Clüver, Irina Rajewsky, Jørgen Bruhn, among others. In one of the essays, Christina Ljungberg states that, "one way of defining 'medium' is to say that it is the necessary channel or conduit of communication which allows the transmission of a message to a receiver" (82). Something worthy of attention in her definition is the use of the phrase "one way of defining," which points to the openness of conceptualization regarding the definition of medium. As Elleström points out in his introduction, "[w]e have sought to avoid confusing conflicts between terminologies and the research angles are relatively compatible, but there is no absolute harmony between the essays" (5). This statement somehow summarizes the current situation of works produced by media scholars: research that may be consistent but does not work in harmony with others, leading to confusion in the understanding and delimitation of medium and media relations. The ultimate result is a cornucopia of theoretical material and terminologies that, despite their intentions to shed light on the field, fail to achieve unity and harmony. As Valerie Robillard argues in her essay, "Beyond Definition: A Pragmatic Approach to Intermediality,"

> … the current plethora of perspectives on 'intermediality' not only demonstrates the slipperiness of the term but also suggests that there may be more than one theoretical inroad by which to fully understand the multiplicity of intermedial operations. Current research into intermediality, with some

> notable exceptions, has primarily focused on defining the terms of the field; however, it is becoming increasingly clear that definitions, although essential in laying out common terms of discourse, do not fully contribute to our understanding, or articulation, of the various types and degrees of medial interaction. (150)

This last statement supports my point of constructing a model for understanding media manifestations as processes instead of just adding to the conceptualization. A movement towards the apprehension and understanding of processes connected with media manifestations seems imperative.

An unclear understanding of "medium" leads to more confusion with subsequent terms such as "intermediality," "remediation," "transmediality," and so on. After some time exploring the terminological heterogeneity concerning medium and intermediality, Gabriele Rippl recognizes that "Intermediality is a semantically contested, inconsistent term whose various definitions refer to a general problem centered around the term 'medium,' which itself has accumulated a wide range of competing definitions …" (6). Rippl echoes Elleström's claim for the lack of harmony in this terminological field and states, "[c]learly, media allow for the production, distribution and reception of signs, hence they enable communication, but in spite of the many definitions on offer, there is not one definition of 'medium' which scholars working in the field of literary, cultural and media studies would agree on" (6). The failure to understand the basis of the theory generates a harmful chain reaction in media studies, segmenting the field and demanding a better understanding of core phenomena.

If, in W. J. T. Mitchell's words, "[a]ll media are mixed media" (215), so, a medium is not an isolated phenomenon, untouched by the influence of its surroundings. The existence of "medium" is in itself the existence of "intermediality," which is part of the terminological

chain resulting from the variety of definitions of "medium." In my view, the term intermediality applies to the movement among media – *inter* –, and within media – *intra*. There is some argument about the distinction of *intramediality* and *intermediality*; however, my preference lies with the theoretical trend that argues that one is undeniably part of the other. There is a variety of possible configurations both among and within media. When we focus on intermediality as the transit of elements among media, two phenomena are worthy of attention: remediation and transmediality.

Intermediality is found in intertextuality and we can note the different movements this relationship entails. Remediation is an intertextual conversation moving vertically: the content of one medium is remodeled by the same and/or another medium or media in a progression of rewritings of a source text. Each new production takes place after the previous one and all of them are after their source text. According to Bolter and Grusin, remediation is "the formal logic by which new media refashion prior media forms" (273), but they also state that "remediation can work in both directions: older media can also refashion newer ones. Newer media do not necessarily supersede older media because the process of reform and refashioning is mutual" (59). Newer media and older media are connected by a two-way street in which the traffic of rewritings and reinterpretations goes both ways. Past and present form a channel of communication and mutual impact, i.e. past media affect the way we see newer media and vice versa. Interchange, influence, resonance, echo, and contamination seem to be suitable features to define media (re)formations. Still according to Bolter and Grusin, "[i]t would seem, then, that all mediation is remediation. We are not claiming this as an a priori truth, but rather arguing that at this extended historical moment, all current media function as remediators and that remediation offers us a means of interpreting the work of earlier media as well" (55). In other words, remediation is a vertical movement that follows a chronology of production with progressive recreation.

We can also perceive a horizontal movement in which new productions appear side by side; their progression is not a recreation but an extension. This intermedial configuration is known as transmediality. As in most medium-related terms, this concept figures as a work in progress in the intermedial theoretical field. I tend to follow Werner Wolf's understanding of the concept, according to which transmediality "concerns phenomena that appear in more than one medium without being (viewed as) specific to, or having an origin in, any of them" ("Literature and Music: Theory" 461). In my view, Wolf plants the seeds that are cultivated by Henry Jenkins, who complements the term "transmediality" with the concept of "transmedia storytelling."

The horizontal movement of transmedial phenomena differentiates them from the vertical movement of remediated phenomena. As the potential of remediation may be manifest through adaptations and appropriations, the potential of transmediality may be seen in transmedia storytelling. Remediation moves from a recognizable source. Transmediality is able to embrace this horizontal movement with and without a point of origin, which is a medium, a narrative, a story, a text, a work that gives birth to a chain of complementary works. That will be clearer as we approach the definition of transmedia storytelling. Henry Jenkins was one of the pioneers to study this medial phenomenon. In his book, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, Jenkins states:

> A transmedia story unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each new text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole. In the ideal form of transmedia storytelling, each medium does what it does best—so that a story might be introduced in a film, expanded through television, novels, and comics; its world might be explored through game play or experienced as an amusement park attraction. Each franchise entry needs to be self-contained so you don't need to have seen the film to enjoy the game, and vice versa. Any

> given product is a point of entry into the franchise as a whole. Reading across the media sustains a depth of experience that motivates more consumption. (95-6)

So, we can draw the following association: remediation is about new generations of productions while transmedia storytelling, as a branch of transmediality, concerns the expansion of productions from the same generation.[1]

Since "inter" means "between", the "inter" in intermediality encompasses the reflection of one or more medium in others, the general fluidity among media. However, we cannot disregard the "intra" part of intermedial phenomena. "Intra" means "within", "inside." Therefore, one can say that "intramediality" means the fluidity of elements within a medial manifestation. Once again, I must say that there is no absolute harmony among these terms and I am following a path that disregards major terminological conflicts for the sake of brevity in this overview. I prefer to treat intramediality as a part of intermediality and not as a rival concept.

In a pragmatic analogy, *inter*mediality is like the fact that the moon reflects the light of the sun and *intra*mediality comprehends the material that enables the moon to do this along with the fact that the full moon resembles the sun during this process – even though it presents a poor resemblance. Intramediality is the part of intermediality that regards what happens within the object, its material and content. Here, we return to Mitchell's claim that "all media are mixed media," or as Jørgen Bruhn states, "the pure, distinct medium, and the equivalent to this on the level of specific texts, is a historical as well as an ontological illusion. Such a pure medium or text has never existed, and it even appears to be a logical impossibility" (228-29). Either in the realms of form or content, there is no purity in the

[1] I do not mean generation in its chronological aspects conveyed by biology, for transmedia storytelling byproducts may be separated chronologically but share the same branch of origin. As Henry Jenkins points out, one good example is the BBC Series *Doctor Who*, whose byproducts transposed through different human generations and media since it was first produced.

constitution of a medium, and there are varied configurations we can map within a single manifestation.

The mapping of media phenomena, from their most basic configuration to the dance of multiple combinations, is not an easy task to accomplish. My main aim has been to present an overview of the theoretical path in media studies, combining some conceptions delivered by renowned scholars from the area with my own personal ideas. From the conceptualization of medium to the presentation of different movements regarding intermedial phenomena, the progression of manifestations is as varied as the definitions addressed to them. It would be a nearly impossible task to try to present all the contrasting points of view belonging to media studies. I trust this brief overview has provided an idea of the variety of approaches in the field in order to prepare my reader for my interdisciplinary proposal for better understanding media related phenomena.

## 2. The Chemistry of Media and Arts

In a world where form and content have hybridity at their core, art and other media products are caught in the middle of a conundrum of influences and reflections. Interdisciplinarity and intertextuality become the touchstone for understanding medium and media relations. Indeed, intermedial studies inherently promote dialogues among different knowledge brands, transposing borders and enabling integration, because their own object of analysis requires this dynamic interchange. Whether there ever was purity in human productions, this is not the case anymore. We live in a world in which generation is regeneration, formation is reformation, invention is reinvention, and mediation is remediation. Traces from the past prevail in our different media products, revealing creations as recreations in the palimpsest of human communicative productions. Thus, in order to

examine media products and how they come to be, I chose to guide my analogical construction by these lights of influence and contamination, the “inters” and “intras” of current categorizations. Elements from philosophy and chemistry will account for the interdisciplinary nature of this study, hopefully clarifying the understanding of medium and media relations.

Once again, I must state that I do not seek to oppose previous definitions and terminologies; I simply intend to propose a way of understanding the processes from their most basic forms. Since most definitions seem to mix channel and message, process and product, I intend to offer some thoughts on the basis of the relation between these two instances. My attempt is to build my analogy on a counterpart relation between natural and man-made phenomena. In order to achieve my goal, the initial path is to discuss philosophical issues regarding the nature of “being.” Below, concepts from chemistry are employed in a descriptive manner to present an analogical construction of “substance” as medium formation, properties, and manifestations.

### 2.1. Interdisplinarizing: A Touch of Philosophy

The point here is to say that man-made productions are a reflection of nature’s productions. So, the starting point of my analogy is the attempt to apprehend natural phenomena. In sum, in order to understand the existence of medium, it is necessary to understand “existence” in itself. Here, we have a touch of philosophy. It is not my place to cover deep philosophical questionings and concepts; instead, I intend to promote the development of ideas, aiming to establish a dialogue towards integration and understanding.

Integration seems to be a necessity between and among theoretical fields. Plurality does not imply segregation. This interdisciplinary conversation comes to prove that connection can be built once we are open to explore these information bridges. As a branch

of knowledge which explores the relations of concrete and abstract, philosophy works as the first dialogical step to aid in the construction of understanding in intermedial dynamics. The next step is the promotion of an interdisciplinary dialogue with a more "concrete" area: chemistry.

Aristotelian concepts supply our philosophical basis. In the work which was later entitled *Metaphysics*, Aristotle develops the concept of "hylomorphism," the idea that the things in our world are made of the association of matter and form. "Matter" stands for the materiality and "form" comprehends elements from the realm of ideas. The matter contains the form and the result of this union is the substance, i.e. existing objects.

Aristotle's hylomorphism reveals great potentiality within and outside of philosophical discussions. A fruitful argument for varied branches of knowledge, this binary integration of matter and form aids my attempt to explore something in the line of a "philosophy of intermediality." In sum, hylomorphism as an explanation for "general" existence provides an analogical path to explore the relationship of medium and art. Later, this concept is the skeleton that sustains my analogy of the existence of medium and its ramifications with art. Nevertheless, before engaging in such a discussion, some philosophical extensions from this binary relationship deserve attention.

As one may suppose, there is no need to go deeper into Aristotle's theories in order to find their common line with ancient and contemporary philosophical thought: the tensions between the forces of concrete and abstract, the unfolding of binary dynamics. In its definition of "metaphysics," the *Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* claims, "Perhaps the most familiar question in metaphysics is whether there are only material entities – *materialism* – or only mental entities, i.e., minds and their states – *idealism* – or both – *dualism*. Here 'entity' has its broadest sense: anything real" (563). This binary struggle has provided fruitful discussions over centuries and "dualism" is still present in Western

philosophical thought. Perhaps, the failure that accounts for the gap concerning dualist relations in the attempts to explain existence is the insistence on a relation of opposition instead of integration. Difference does not imply inherent contradiction. There is a third way of integration, which is enabled by hylomorphism. Instead of reading entities as a constant antagonism between materialism and idealism, a hylomorphic view of existence seems to be an adequate solution for acknowledging the possibility of a more harmonic relation of poles. The solution is integration, not confutation. The intention is not to discard tension – for it is a strong and even positive feature –, but to trace a line of connection instead of detachment, which is why hylomorphism is such an opportune concept.

This brief philosophical digression is actually the preface and the basis of my analogical construction, the attention paid to the abstract part, the original thought, in which my analogy is rooted. Now, it is time to ground these primary notions and establish a dialogue with a field in connection with physicality.

### 2.2. Interdisplinarizing: A Touch of Chemistry

By following philosophical precepts, any piece of medial manifestation is a conjunction of two preexistent aspects. Medium is the in-between, the channel that conducts a message from source to destination. In order to understand medium, we must pay attention to elements in close contact with it: the message and its source along with its destination. In this way, medium and message are a conjoined materialization. Medium lacks purpose without message and message is not manifest without medium, making both separate parts of unfulfilled potentiality. Therefore, media products are like the hylomorphic compounds of existence, the union of material and mental entities.

Medium and its implications exemplify the dualist view of general existence. This way, we can define medium as any material configuration that holds the potential for mental

manifestation; it is the vessel that holds and enables the manifestation of volition. This volition is what provides the essence for the medial manifestation; it is the core, the purpose of medial phenomena. In this sense, any being with cognitive skills could possibly be an agent of this mental communication. Dogs, humans, whales, and birds are just some examples of these potential agents. What I am trying to say is that expression, any expression, from its most primitive form to the most modern association of technological apparatus, is a medial manifestation, for it somehow associates materiality and mental volition. A dog barking at a cat, a whale's song summoning a mating partner, a filmic adaptation of *Hamlet*, or a book by Stephen Hawking figure as medial manifestations, as they display the combination of materiality and mental volition. Materiality is medium, for it is the common ground in which we can perceive the world and communicate. Mind/volition attributes meaning to the material manifestation, either in production and/or reception. For now, our attention will turn to (human) production and artistic phenomena will be our focal point.

For a significant period of time, the manifestation of what could be called "artistic volition" was treated as medium itself, either by metonymic association or for the absence of better terms. By then, intermedial studies were a glimpse in the horizon of interart studies. Currently, this research field has evolved and attention has been paid to borders and interactions regarding materiality and content. However, we may still observe some confusion when addressing this compound and its parts. Chemistry provides the analogical tools to construct a model that encompasses the constituents of this dynamic system: the concept of *solution*. In the same way we use media to navigate the world, solutions are a strong presence in our lives: "[i]n the course of a day, you use or make solutions many times. Your morning cup of coffee is a solution of solids (sugar and coffee) in a liquid (water). The gasoline you fill your gas tank with is a solution of several different liquid hydrocarbons. The soda you drink at a study break is a solution containing a gas (carbon dioxide) in a liquid

(water)" (Masterton et al. 295). The constancy of solutions in our lives makes this concept more comprehensible for building an understandable analogy.

According to Masterton et al., "[a] solution is a homogeneous mixture of a *solute* (substance being dissolved) distributed through a *solvent* (substance doing the dissolving). Solutions exist in any of the three physical states: gas, liquid, or solid" (295). In my analogy, a *solution* is a general representation of media products in which the *solute* stands for the mental volition, the ideas and intentions of the agent, while the *solvent* stands for the materiality, the channel that holds the manifestation of volition, the medium. Analogically, *solutions* embody the dynamics of manifested human volition on any given occasion. Intentionality dictates the *solute*, the core of a medial manifestation. The *solvent* is the material world, addressed throughout this text as "material" or "materiality," meaning everything that carries the potentiality of displaying creative determination.[2] For instance, Anne Sullivan's lessons with Helen Keller were a combination of Sullivan's pedagogical idealizations along with touch and the materiality at hand. Michelangelo's *David* is the junction of the artist's idealization to its execution in marble. An Elton John concert is the materialization of his musical cognitive skills through his voice and piano. Cave paintings are the material manifestations of our Paleolithic ancestors' cognitive elaborations using their prehistorical pigments. Thus, analogically, Sullivan's lessons, Michelangelo's *David*, an Elton John's concert, and cave paintings figure as *solutions*. Whatever the level of cognition, the materiality available, or even the supposed purpose of human expression; the *solution* analogy embodies all of them.

The analogical range of *solutions* seems almost limitless. How to classify different manifestations? In particular, how to address manifestations from our specific field of study? In order to find the solution for this problem, we must combine chemistry and philosophy. At

[2] Some theorists distinguish between the terms "material" and "materiality," basically, employing one as a substantial entity and the other as the physical possibility borne by this entity. In my analogical construction, I treat both terms interchangeably.

this point, it is safe to say that man-made manifestations come into being as reflections of the hylomorphic nature of general existence. As S. Marc Cohen claims, "… the builder has in mind the plan or design for a house and he knows how to build; he then 'enmatters' that plan or design by putting it into the materials out of which he builds the house." Cohen continues, "As for what is produced in such hylomorphic productions, it is correctly described by the name of its form, not by that of its matter. What is produced is a house or a man, not bricks or flesh" ("Aristotle's Metaphysics"). So, by following this way of thought, *solutions* may be classified according to their *solutes*, the ideas behind the productions. More specifically, we can treat them as *Art solutions*. Inside the classification of *Art solutions* we can find *Literature solutions, Music solutions, Theater solutions, Cinema solutions, Dance solutions,* and so on. Since intermediality deals with all of these manifestations, I address media products of our interest as *Art solutions*. These analogical terms suggested by me will appear in *italics* from now on.

Art is a man-made *solution* that employs the intentionality of the agent to the materiality available. The intentionality – human volition, ideas, mental capacity – is not a pure element in the *solution*. This *solute* is charged with the set of elements that characterizes the mental potentiality of the agent by combining physical and psychological apprehensions. The physical potentiality involves the state of the brain, whether or not it has been affected by pathological conditions and/or physical trauma. The psychological potentiality involves a complex range of conscious and unconscious experiences that result from social, cultural and historical influences – the molds of a personality. These three examples shall illustrate the complexity of factors that may influence *solutes*. First, Professor Stephen Hawking's brain, sadly taken by ALS[3], could still plan lectures, formulate theories, and write books. The physical pathology had no effect on his psychological abilities. Second, the fact that I am

[3] Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) is a neural disease that affects the neurons responsible for voluntary movements, causing their death and, consequently, leading the body to motor paralysis.

writing this dissertation in English attests to my mental skill of using this language to a certain degree; I cannot translate it into German or Gaelic, though – not due to pathological impossibilities but because I lack the experience, the learning of these languages. My life experiences – cultural, historical, social, and even biological backgrounds – have a direct impact on my psychological skills. Third, Lúcio Noeman[4], Dr. Nise da Silveira's patient, produced sculptures that were exposed for a period of time at the Museum of Modern Art of São Paulo prior to a lobotomy that destroyed his creative capacity. Even though he was diagnosed with schizophrenia, he was able to create sculptures that amazed art critics of that time; after the brain surgery, part of his brain was removed, also eliminating his artistic interest and skills. A physical intervention affected his cognition. Each example portrays different settings of cognition that depend on a variety of factors that revolve around biological, psychological, social, historical, and cultural conditions. Thus, we can say that there are as many possibilities of cognitive configurations as there are humans on the planet. Each cognitive apparatus embodies a specific combination of factors, possible aspects of human manifestations or, in other words, possible *solutes* to possible *solutions*. As the "soul" of the *Art solution*, the potentiality of the *solute* reflects on the *solvent* and on the final construction of their combination.

*Solvents* are the materiality, the world of perception itself as its potentiality is designed and employed to convey message and/or sensation. Every materiality that is structured to become channels of expressions figures as a *solvent*. In intermedial terms, Katerina Krtilova states:

> A street lamp, film, a mirror, a drawing, paper, money, art, or a laboratory can be described as a medium. However, it is unlikely that anyone would

[4] For more information on Lúcio Noeman, visit: http://www.ccms.saude.gov.br/Cinquentenario/lucio.html. For more information on Dr. Nise da Silveira, there is a bibliographical book written by Brazilian writer Ferreira Gullar entitled *Nise da Silveira: Uma Psiquiatra Rebelde*, among other sources, including Luiz Carlos Mello's book, *Nise da Silveira: Caminhos de uma Psiquiatra Rebelde*, and a movie, *Nise - O Coração da Loucura*.

> understand what a medium is looking at this list: it is not at all clear what these "things" have in common. Nevertheless, there is something that the concept of media can bring forth. The medium and the concept of a medium are not fixed ideal entities. They emerge in processes of perception, creation, and reflection: "Media are only insofar as they are always becoming and transforming" (Engell 56). (39)

There is fluidity in conception. The *solvent attribution* of the material depends on human volition in the same fashion as the message it carries. Natural minerals are just entities, examples of existence; however, when they are employed as pigments that have the potential to become paintings, these pigments may be classified as *solvents*. In the same way, cave walls are just part of natural existence, but when cave men saw them as potential canvases for painting, these cave walls became *solvents*. *Solvents* depend on human volition both to exist as such and to be deployed in the task of composing *solutions*. The following examples may help my point. First, when Dadaist artist Marcel Duchamp submitted a porcelain urinal for exhibition as a work of art entitled *Fountain*, the artist manipulated a materiality that was primarily built for another purpose turning it into an *Art solution*. In the same manner, in 2010, the American singer Lady Gaga wore an outfit made of raw flank steak – later referred as "meat dress" – at an award show, justifying her fashion statement by ideological reasons[5]. The point is that Lady Gaga dislocated a materiality from its ordinary ground and used it to send a message. Another common example is when ordinary objects as well as everyday pieces of clothing become props and costumes as they are used in a play or movie. All of these examples explore materials that were (re)signified by human volition to become *solvents* in *Art solutions*. They reveal that, along with a wide range of possible *solutes*, there

[5] Lady Gaga stated that the dress meant "dead meat is dead meat," in protest against the U.S. military policy of "don't ask, don't tell," which restricted the rights of gay soldiers. She said that someone who dies in action is not a deceased gay or deceased straight person but someone willing to die for their country. The extract of her interview can be accessed at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KaGnEtBkz1M

are countless possibilities for *solvents* and, ultimately, for *solutions*.

So far, our philosophical approach touched on hylomorphism as a condition for general existence. Man-made productions mimic natural conditions through the union of materiality and human volition. As we move from the philosophical to the physical part, chemistry presents a suitable allegory for man-made phenomena in the concept of *solutions*, in which *solutes* represent human cognition and *solvents* stand for the materiality. The closer we move towards intermedial studies, the easier it is to observe the growing number of variations involved in media phenomena. In the next section, my analogical construction looks at the resulting complexities of these possible variations, establishing the final analogical link between chemistry and intermediality.

### 2.3. *Entropic (Re)mediations*

The movement among *solutions* and their components presents different stages, from simple to more elaborate configurations. This section focuses on the dynamics of this evolution and advances my analogical proposal in order to illustrate these phenomena.

Human bodies are depictions of *primary solvents* for they hold the potential to communicate – and/or perceive communication – through their sensorial capabilities. As human cognition advanced through time, more and more natural entities have been manipulated into becoming *solvents* through evolving complex combinations. The evolution of technology dictates the evolution of media. In the same manner, the evolution of human communicative skills dictates the *solute*, an intertwined net of referential constructs. From rudimentary sounds to the countless languages spoken around the globe, the equation of human communicative skills has gained more and more factors through time. Consequently, *Art solutions* have become a lottery of manifestations, influenced by pieces of previous combinations. According to Bernd Herzogenrath:

> Much of today's art operates under such an aesthetic: the [re]combinatorics of different media that was forming an artistic and aesthetic profile in [Ralph Waldo] Emerson's times. From *intertextuality* to *intermediality,* today, the extent of that paradigm has become immense: today's art, creativity, and originality are marked by intermediality and sampling, by a combinatory juxtaposition of genres, media, styles and surfaces, a rejection of "objective" history that explores the various connections of aesthetic forms. (1)

Thus, both components of *Art solutions*, *solvent* and *solute,* have been subject to constant interference through different periods of human evolution. The addition of time to the equation of man-made phenomena verifies the growing complexity in the dynamics of *Art solutions*. Time is the pointer of medial progression.

In association with the components of *solute* and *solvent* mentioned in the previous section, time reveals itself to be a crucial element if one wants to understand the dynamics of *Art solutions*. Man-made phenomena are not chronological inconstancies. Their manifestations are subject to their point in time, at the same time bearing the influences of its temporal context and the echoes of previous contexts. The concepts of "hypertexts" and "hypotexts" developed by Gérard Genette help us understand the influence of time in the production of *Art Solutions*. Genette uses "hypertext" "to designate literary texts which allude, derive from or relate to an earlier work or hypotext" (Martin and Ringham 99). Some may argue that contemporary art productions are solely made up of hypertexts. We live in a time of hypertexts and hypermedia. Since all mediation is remediation, cross-contamination among texts and among media is not a matter of choice; it is a certainty. The passing of time is directly proportional to the accumulation of cultural baggage. Therefore, as time moves forward, it becomes harder – or even impossible – to escape connection, either in form or content.

Contemporaneity witnesses the expanding plurality of *Art solutions*, with layers over layers of resonances. Still according to Martin and Ringham, "[h]ypertexts may take a variety of forms including, for example, imitation, parody, pastiche, transpositions and continuations. A hypertext and its hypotext make up a multilayered palimpsest" (99). No matter the medium or genre, conscious or unconsciously, contemporary productions are part of palimpsests. Originally, palimpsest means "[a] surface, usually vellum or parchment, which has been used more than once for writing on, the previous writing having been rubbed out or somehow removed. Medieval parchment, being expensive, was often used two or three times" (Cuddon 507). Genette employed the term to talk about the literary relation between hypertexts and hypotexts. Linda Hutcheon borrowed the term to theorize about adaptations. Media studies may adopt the term to illustrate remediations. Currently, our palimpsestic constructions are not due to economic issues; instead, they signify the accumulation of artistic productions through time and the consequential extinction of originality – if it ever existed. Our perception can trick us by conveying that we are experiencing something new, but the traces of previous works are present whether we notice them or not. As the French writer Andre Gide once said, "Everything has been said before, but since nobody listens we have to keep going back and beginning all over again."[6]

Every *Art solution* has the traces of previous *Art solutions* in their *solvents* and/or *solutes*. *Palimpsestic solutes* have connections to previous contents, ideas. They are the primary idea of palimpsests in the sense employed by Genette and Hutcheon. Additionally, we could also talk about *palimpsestic solvents* to address connections among media elements regarding their materiality. In this case, we perceive elements from one medium in the structure of another medium. This *palimpsestic mediality* would also be the way some media erase parts from another media but preserve others during (re)mediation processes. Peter

[6] In the original, "Toutes choses sont dites déjà; mais comme personne n'écoute, il faut toujours recommencer." This quote can be found in Gide's *Le Traité du narcisse* (1891 - *The Treatise of the Narcissus*).

Greenaway's choice to project words on the screen in his adaptation of *The Tempest*, *Prospero's Books*, exemplifies the connection that the medium film may establish with literature. Actually, the medium film is charged with palimpsestic potentiality for it may present connections with a variety of visual and auditory media. In sum, as time passes, *Art solutions* inevitably become part of palimpsests.

The chronological effect of *Art Solutions* is *entropic*. I do not mean that a contemporary *Art Solution* is necessarily a new medium remediating an older one; as Bolter and Grusin state, it works both ways. What I mean is that the very existence and emergence of new media and *Art Solutions* corroborates this *entropic*[7] effect witnessed by contemporaneity. In physicochemical terms,

> Entropy is often described as a measure of disorder or randomness. While useful, these terms are subjective and should be used cautiously. It is better to think about entropic changes in terms of the change in the number of microstates of the system. Microstates are different ways in which molecules can be distributed. An increase in the number of possible microstates (i.e., disorder) results in an increase of entropy. Entropy treats the randomness factor quantitatively. … In general, the more random the state, the larger the number of its possible microstates, the more probable the state, thus the greater its entropy. (Masterton et al. 499)

Entropy is a game of possibilities; the higher number of possibilities means higher entropy. Brian Greene provides an explanation closer to our everyday lives:

> Entropy is a measure of disorder or randomness. For instance, if your desk is cluttered high with layer upon layer of open books, half-read articles, old

[7] For more information on the concept of entropy, its physical, chemical, biological, and mathematical developments, I recommend reading the chapters in "Part III" of George Gamow's *One Two Three… Infinity: Facts and Speculations of Science*; Arieh Ben-Naim's *Entropy Demystified: The Second Law of Thermodynamics Reduced to Plain Common Sense*; and chapter 6 of Brian Greene's *The Fabric of the Cosmos: Space, Time, and the Texture of Reality*.

> newspapers, and junk mail, it is in a state of high disorder, or *high entropy.* On the other hand, if it is fully organized with articles in alphabetized folders, newspapers neatly stacked in chronological order, books arranged in alphabetical order by author, and pens placed in their designated holders, your desk is in state of high order or, equivalently, *low entropy.* This example illustrates the essential idea, but physicists have given a fully quantitative definition to entropy that allows one to describe something's entropy by using a definite numerical value: Larger numbers mean greater entropy, smaller numbers mean less entropy. Although the details are a little complicated, this number, roughly speaking, counts the possible rearrangements of the ingredients in a given physical system that leave its overall appearance intact. When your desk is neat and clean, almost any rearrangement—changing the order of the newspapers, books, or articles, moving the pens from their holders—will disturb its highly ordered organization. This accounts for its having low entropy. On the contrary, when your desk is a mess, numerous rearrangements of the newspapers, articles, and junk mail will leave it a mess and therefore will not disturb its overall appearance. This accounts for its having high entropy. (*The Elegant Universe* 151)

Therefore, contemporary *Art solutions* are affected by a high level of *entropy*. More creations mean more possibilities. It helps explain the theoretical struggles to define and establish borders among media productions. The *entropy* of an *Art solution* is made of variations, the quantity of referential levels of both *solute* and *solvent*.

The number of connections in an *Art solution* determines its level of *entropy*. In physicochemical terms, temperature is a key factor to increase or decrease the entropy of a solution. As temperature increases, so does the entropy. Heat confers kinetic energy to

particles and their components. This energy is translated into vibration, movement. The greater the motion, the greater the entropy as the variation of microstates in a solution becomes more probable. When we apply the metaphor to media studies, we may say that time is the equivalent of temperature. Chronologically, it is as if the temperature of *Art solutions* has been increasing as time passes, because, as mentioned above, it is impossible to escape connections. As we consider our particular moment in time, a lot has been said and even more has been repeated. For instance, humans from the Paleolithic period could not make a reference to a *Star Trek* episode in their cave paintings, but a *Star Trek* episode can refer to cave paintings, Greek drama, Shakespeare, and so on. The progression of time is proportional to the amount of medial and cultural baggage produced by humans. The timeline of human history is similar to the temperature line in a thermometer. New forms of communication surface over time in a progressive accumulation of structures and contents, casting referential nets over history.

The construction and solidification of a palimpsest, a system of hypertexts and their hypotext, follows the arrow of time, always moving forward. It is necessary to emphasize that the number of connections in an *Art solution* depends on the volition employed in its production. The progression of time enables possibility not certainty. Today, one can choose to paint a copy of Van Gogh's *Starry Night,* referring to this particular work, or produce a documentary on the history of painting, full of references to different painters. The level of *entropy* of an *Art solution* is determined by the production agent, i.e. human volition. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that productions that take advantage of up-coming technologies are a mark of our times. New *Art solutions* emerge as fast as new media do. Even social media become the *solvent* in *Art solutions*. On YouTube, web series figure as a new trend of

using the vlog[8] format to adapt canonical literary works. For instance, *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* and *Emma Approved* are additions to the palimpsests of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Emma*. One cannot deny that human volition, conscious or unconsciously, is charged with palimpsestic potentiality. (Re)creation means connection, an opportunity for *entropy* to manifest.

Every time some new media product emerges, it becomes part of some palimpsest, modifying somehow the previous works in the connection line. This modification embodies the *entropy* I am discussing; it confers flexibility, disruption, and movement to previous *Art solutions*. Actually, there is a mutual instigation among the works in this line, which reveals itself as a two-way street of reflection. The reflective property of *Art solutions* is composed of three possibilities: a) *solvent* resonances; b) *solute* resonances; c) reception issues. *Solvent* resonances deal with medial reflections; *solute* resonances concern the content, the materialized ideas; reception issues involve perception and interpretation – matters that will receive more attention in my fifth chapter. A brief example can be mentioned to illustrate these patterns of resonances in palimpsests. James Joyce's *Ulysses* is part of the palimpsest of Homer's *Odyssey*. The Irish novel, as a literary piece, echoes the medium of the Greek poem – because both are written recordings. Even though Joyce transferred the narrative to modern day Dublin, a large number of connections have been preserved. The opposite path cannot be traced: Joyce's work cannot influence the medium and content of the Homeric piece. Yet, the line of reception goes both ways, for it is determined by historical context. Contemporary audiences may read *Ulysses* under the thematic light of the *Odyssey* (and vice versa), establishing connections to issues derived from contemporary experience, in turn, resignifying parts of the epic poem. In sum, chronology imposes some limitations to the mutual reflection of works in a palimpsest. If we analyze a palimpsestic line chronologically,

[8] "Vlog" means video blog. It is like a diary or notebook with entries through videos usually expressing opinions and/or talking about events.

we perceive that previous *Art solutions* may influence subsequent *Art solutions* through a, b, and c. However, hypertextual *Art solutions* can only influence hypotextual *Art solutions* regarding c. Yet, *entropic* power is a constant in any possibility. Any *Art Solution* necessarily causes some activity inside its respective palimpsestic line. This chain reaction of movement and influences is the major quality of *entropic (re)mediations*, that is, the internal dynamics of *Art solutions* that lend and borrow elements among themselves. This intertwined fluidity of *Art solutions* defines what we can call *palimpsestic entropy*. In other words, *entropic (re)mediations* deal with interactions *within Art solutions* and *palimpsestic entropy* covers interactions *among Art solutions*.

As time moves forward, entropy increases. The universe moves toward more and more disorder or randomness. Possibilities rise as well as the number of microstates in different systems. Most areas of knowledge may attest these points by approaching natural or man-made phenomena. In biology, life has evolved from simple forms to complex organisms. Linguistics has seen new languages emerge and interact. Forms of making music have passed through chanting, primitive instruments, complex instruments, different vocal techniques, and electronic music, among others. Architecture and civil engineering have moved from basic constructions made of wood and straw to buildings that use various materials like concrete, glass, polymers, and so on. Art and Media studies are not exceptions. New media emerge, refer, combine, and adapt. Metonymically, art follows the same pattern. *Art solutions* are referential mixtures and palimpsests are caldrons of potential connections.

The various intermedial phenomena and approaches mapped in the first part of this chapter demonstrate that theorization is also subject to *entropy*. The *entropic* process cannot be avoided. What we can try to do is find effective ways to map and understand phenomena. Human beings' insistence on categorizing through difference fails to acknowledge similarities, missing possible connections. The dialogue between different areas of

knowledge is an important tool for understanding concepts and processes. So far, I have attempted to attest this mirror effect in processes from different areas. The reason to approach intermediality and media phenomena in a parallel perspective with other fields of study is to raise some awareness of "inters" and "intras" in the construction of human knowledge. Intermedial studies are themselves a bridge among areas; so, it seems appropriate to shed some light on these studies by promoting their contact with different fields.

## 3. Staging Compositional and Extra-compositional Features

Every *Art solution* has compositional and extra-compositonal elements. The compositional elements integrate the materiality of the *Art solution*. The extra-compositional elements are those that surround production and reception, such as contextual information on authorship, audience, and criticism. Intrinsically, intermedial studies honor the dynamics among compositional and extra-compositional elements of *Art solutions* with the crossing of borders and the mapping of relations among *solvents* and *solutes*, acknowledging *entropic (re)mediations* and *palimpsestic entropy*.

As previously stated, every creation is a recreation. The existence of every *Art solution* points back to preceding *Art solutions*, forming a palimpsest. If we consider a palimpsest as an entity in itself, how can we address its composing *Art solutions*? Chemical mixtures and solutions have *stages*, preparation phases that mark parts of the process or portraits of microstates. Analogically, every *Art solution* belongs to a *stage* in a palimpsest; they are all like phases in constant referential development since they are assembled through mutual connection. So, a proper mapping of a palimpsest involves attention to its *Art solutions* along with their compositional and extra-compositional features. In other words, the staging of a palimpsest is the setting of contextualized portraits of its works.

Shakespeare is at the core of the Western literary canon. His palimpsest is one of the richest and most diverse artistic legacies that may be documented in the world. The Shakespearean legacy promotes a constant movement of art and media, one of the best examples of *palimpsestic entropy*. Due to Shakespeare's colossal cultural reach, the mapping of his palimpsest proves to be an impossible task. Yet, I intend to provide an overview of the playwright's *palimpsestic entropy* in chapter 2, with an occasional introduction of compositional and extra-compositional features. Each hypertextual *Art solution* has its own levels of *concentration*[9] of Shakespeare in their *solutes*, a compositional feature which is defined by extra-compositional context. Every contribution that reveals part of Shakespeare's palimpsest is valuable to list at least a piece of his immense legacy and shed some light on the continuous interest in his works.

Before moving to the next chapter, I must clarify that my choice to use the word "stage" throughout this dissertation is not arbitrary. "Stage" has a range of meanings that fit my approach and enables some puns, too. As a noun, "stage" can mean "level," "phase," "period within a structure," suitable terms for my analogical approach to chemistry. In theatrical context, "stage" may refer to the "theater platform" or, metonymically, to "theater" itself. Also, as a verb, "stage" is a synonym to "produce," "perform," "present." Since Shakespeare's original medium was theater and the Shakespearean heritage has been produced through diverse media, the word "stage" has alternate but related applications. Therefore, I assume lexical confusion will not be a problem, as contextualization will direct the reader.

This first chapter has provided the theoretical pavement for the rest of this dissertation. Previous and present conditions of intermedial studies were supplied along with their terminological gaps. An analogous path for understanding intermedial phenomena as

[9] In chemical terms, "concentration" refers to "[a] measure of the amount of substance present in a unit amount of mixture" (*A Comprehensive Dictionary of Chemistry* 35). I employ the term to the amounts of Shakespeare's texts (original and modified) as part of the *solutes* in *Art solutions.*

man-made creations that mirror natural creations was also introduced. The staging of intermediality aims toward an integrative approach, an inherent feature of intermedial studies. The analogous concepts displayed in this chapter intend to enlighten processes instead of antagonizing previous and current terminology. These parallel constructions will return in the following chapters in order to explore stages of the Shakespearean palimpsest.

# Chapter 2 - Staging Shakespearean *Palimpsestic Entropy*

> Every age creates its own Shakespeare. What is often described as the timelessness of Shakespeare, the transcendent qualities for which his plays have been praised around the world and across the centuries, is perhaps better understood as an uncanny timeliness, a capacity to speak directly to circumstances the playwright could not have anticipated or foreseen. Like a portrait whose eyes seem to follow you around the room, engaging your glance from every angle, the plays and their characters seem always to be "modern," always to be "us." (Garber, *Shakespeare After All* 3)

Shakespearean resonances mirror the polyphonic nature of drama. Until his consolidation as one of the main pillars, not to say the main, of western, not to say global, cultural production, Shakespeare's influence has fluctuated over the centuries. Shakespearean productions migrated from popular foundations to the Olympus of high culture, but this was not a one way trip. The dam of high culture was broken and Shakespeare flooded popular imaginary with enduring strength. The fluidity of his reach is not retained by conscious allusion; it is so culturally intrinsic to the collective unconscious that unaware reproductions have been constant. It is as if Shakespeare were his own medium, a way to communicate that may or may not assume the contextual legacy of the "Bard" from Stratford-upon-Avon. In other words, resulting manifestations of the Shakespearean legacy do not always receive the tag of adaptations, appropriations, allusions, references, and remediations; they are unwarily *dissolved* in ordinary communication.

In chemistry, water is treated as the universal solvent. In a literary parallel, Shakespeare provides the best example of a *universal solute* since he is widely *dissolved* throughout media and cultures. By considering a palimpsest as a closed system with layers upon layers of *Art solutions* that contain traces of their hypotexts, I shall approach Shakespeare's textual production and its derivations as *Shakespearean palimpsest*. As the best literary example of a universal *solute*, Shakespeare enables the illustration of my point on *palimpsestic entropy*, i.e. the chaotic net of mutual influencing *Art solutions*. Different *solutions* with different *concentrations* of Shakespeare make up his palimpsest. The aim of this chapter is to illustrate my analogical proposal by mapping Shakespearean productions from their original *stage of concentration* – theater – to contemporary *stages of dissolution* that display high levels of *entropy* – the media proliferation of twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Moreover, as additional factors that contribute to *palimpsestic entropy*, there are occasional hints of compositional and extra-compositional features of Shakespeare's palimpsest.

Any attempt to map the Shakespearean palimpsest is a hard task due to the numerous possibilities. The easy movement of Shakespeare through time, media, and culture offers different entry points to his palimpsest. One can approach it through media, genres, cultures, thematic reflections, language, and so on. My attempt to cover at least part of the playwright's palimpsest is chronological, moving from his original context to contemporaneity. This approach displays how Shakespeare's legacy followed the appearance of media through time and, as Marjorie Garber points in the opening quote of this chapter, how Shakespeare fits each historical, social, and cultural context, "like a portrait whose eyes seem to follow you around the room, engaging your glance from every angle." In addition, a chronological approach shows the movement of Shakespeare's palimpsest towards *entropy*. In fact, Shakespeare's original stage already blends several elements, as if foreshadowing his

future palimpsestic turmoil. This brief mapping enables us to observe the movement from *original concentration*, passing through *solutions* with *high concentrations*, until the coexistence of uncountable *solutions* with varying *concentrations* of Shakespeare as a *solute*. Additionally, we can observe the fluctuations of Shakespeare in different cultural spheres, between high and popular culture, from theater to the screens.

## 1. Shakespeare's Original Stage

Contrary to ordinary conception, Shakespeare's primary medium is not literature. Time has surrounded Shakespeare with the image of the writer, eclipsing the images of the actor and the businessman. In fact, the "Bard" from Stratford-upon-Avon was a versatile figure in London's entertainment scenario. Disregarding the dispute over the identity of the author who wrote around 40 plays, 154 sonnets, along with narrative poems and other collaborations, the man named William Shakespeare was an entrepreneur, which collaborated in his recognition as a playwright in a time when copyright was not in vogue.

This section displays an overview of Shakespeare's original stage regarding *solvent* conditions – the modes of Elizabethan Theater – and *solute* inspirations – the range of sources used by the playwright. My goal is to show that features related to *solute* and *solvent* already displayed some levels of *entropy*, foreshadowing the *entropic* nature of Shakespeare's palimpsest. The following subsections also introduce Shakespeare to those unfamiliar with his works.

### 1.1. Staging Shakespeare's *Solvent*: Elizabethan Theater

Even though he explored different genres, Shakespeare owns his enduring influence and recognition to his plays, but he did not conceive them as literary pieces to be individually

appreciated. According to Stephen Orgel, Shakespeare's plays "were scripts, not books; the only readers were the performers, and the function of the script was to be realized on the stage. For Shakespeare, there always was an imagination intervening between his text and its audience, the imagination of actor, director, producer – roles that, in his own time, Shakespeare played himself" (1). Thus, theatrical production and performance were Shakespeare's original *solvent*. Drama, as a literary genre, is a subsequent stage in the Shakespearean palimpsest.

Playhouses were Shakespeare's primary stage. There were two types: the indoor theaters, such as the Blackfriars, and the open-air playhouses, such as the Curtain, the Rose, the Swan, and the Theatre, which was later rebuilt into the Globe. Open-air theaters were circular buildings that accommodated the audience in upper/ bottom seats, in the covered galleries around the stage, and in the pit, the open-air ground in front of the stage. Wealthy members of the audience occupied the seats and those with fewer resources bought admissions to the ground. There were also VIP seats in the galleries over the stage, places reserved for patrons and sponsors of the theatrical companies. A theater like the Globe could receive around 3000 spectators per performance with no restrooms. Vendors would sell snacks such as fruit with two main purposes besides consumption: citric fruit to mask the smell of the place, caused by the agglomeration of people and members of the audience who would relieve themselves during the long performances, and fruit in general to throw at actors who displeased the audience in any way, usually due to poor performance and villainous roles. Performances, then, were interactive experiences among actors and members of the audience – an issue concerning reception, which I will return to in chapter 5.

The stage was generally a large platform with two large posts, a trapdoor, and back entrances that were used according to the production. The plays were performed during the day, starting between 12 and 2 p.m., to benefit from the afternoon natural light. All the roles

were performed by male actors, since women were not allowed to step on the stage. Female roles were performed by young boys. The costumes were extravagant, conveying gender stereotypical traits. The setting was composed of props and objects that formed the ambience according to the plot, an example of *solvent* supporting *solute*.

The *solute* would also consider the materiality of the *solvent*. Performances, costumes, and the use of the space were just part of the spectacle. Under such conditions, the audience's imagination played a large part during the presentations. This is the reason for several plays with lines that feed the fictional pact as, for instance, the opening prologue of *Henry V*. The metalinguistic richness of this speech embodies different levels of media elements of Shakespearean theater. First, Shakespeare writes this speech for the chorus, a group of singers that acted in ancient Greek tragedy by commenting on the action, and in Elizabethan theater, a single man in a long black cloak, responsible for talking to the audience and setting the action. The use of chorus refers to the theater tradition itself. This particular chorus in *Henry V* addresses the act of composing for theater, exposing the dynamics of cognition and materiality: "O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend / The brightest heaven of invention," referring to the imagination, cognitive skills, the *solute* of Shakespeare's *Art solution*; at the same time, the text exposes the limitations of the *solvent*, "Can this cockpit hold / The vasty fields of France? or may we cram / Within this wooden O the very casques / That did affright the air at Agincourt?" Also, Shakespeare invites the audience's imagination to pardon this limitation by working to help compose the actions and time-lapses, "Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them," "Turning th'accomplishment of many years / Into an hour-glass …." (*Henry V.* I. 1. 1-34). In sum, this speech addresses the processes of production and reception of Shakespeare's primary *Art solution*, exposing the *solvent* limitations as well as ways to remediate them through the use of imagination.

### 1.2. Staging Shakespeare's Hypotexts

Before influencing *Art solutions* to come, Shakespeare was highly influenced by past works, providing layers to previous palimpsests. Even though he lacked a formal college education, Shakespeare was a gifted adapter of a wide range of sources that vary from mere analogies to the exploitation of complete plots. But why should we study Shakespearean sources? As Stephen J. Lynch suggests, "the sources themselves can be reexamined as products of intertextuality—endlessly complex, multilayered fields of interpretation that Shakespeare refashioned and reconfigured into alternative fields of interpretation" (1). The knowledge of the source aids the appreciation/ interpretation of the object at hand. In the case of Shakespearean sources, such awareness is a tool to analyze Shakespeare's oeuvre as well as to attest his capacities as an adapter, an observer of his times, a reader of history, a social chronicler, a skillful linguist, and an overall critic. Shakespeare employs imitations, parodies, allusions, and adaptations. He *dissolves* elements from the Bible, Greek and Latin classics, historical accounts, literature, and news. Shakespeare was a literary chemist, combining varied *concentrations* of his hypotextual *solutes* into his own *Art solutions*. Below, we have some examples of *Shakespearean alchemy*.

Some theorists claim that of the playwrights from his time, Shakespeare is the one who presents more biblical allusions in his works. The *Henriad* is flooded with examples, such as when in *Henry IV – Part 1*, Prince Hal "promises a 'reformation,' 'Redeeming the time when men think least I will' (1.2.203, 207). Whether Hal is aware of it or not, his language derives from Ephesians 5:15–16, 'Take hede therefore that ye walke circumspectly, not as fooles, but as wise, Redeeming the time: for the days are evil'" (Hamlin 237). Ironically, King Henry V's piousness and biblical reverence might be a direct result of Falstaff's influence on his life, considering that "[n]o character alludes to the Bible more self-consciously, more frequently, or with more boldly revisionary misapplication. Biblical

allusion is, in fact, one of his [Falstaff's] most characteristic features, along with other forms of verbal inventiveness, a universal irreverence for authority, massive girth, and insatiable appetite" (Hamlin 234). Thus, the playwright's deliberate choices of biblical allusions seem to be part of his ideological playfulness.

In his poem published in the *First Folio,* Ben Jonson states that Shakespeare had "small Latin and less Greek," implying that the playwright did not learn these languages in depth as other writers of his time did, because he went to school but not university. The lack of Greek and Latin in a writer's education was surrounded by prejudice in the Elizabethan era, since art was valued by the imitation of Greek and Roman writers. However, Shakespeare was not limited by imitation; he was guided by (re)creation. He may not have used Greek and Latin traditions as much as his contemporaries demanded, but he definitely did not neglect Greek and Roman authors. Homer, Appian of Alexandria, Aesop, Lucian of Samosata, Seneca, Plautus, Terence, Ovid, Livy, Sophocles, Virgil, and Plutarch are reflected in the Shakespearean oeuvre. Ovid was one of Shakespeare's main sources for mythology and, maybe to credit the Roman poet as a source of inspiration, "in one scene of *Titus Andronicus* (4.1), Lavinia opens the text of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* to the very tale that served as a source for the play" (Lynch 61). As Stuart Gillespie points out: "[c]haracteristically of Shakespeare's use of Ovid, the exercise of imitation once again involves the dynamic of competition and transformation, so that the mythical figures are not simply assimilated but 'translated' by Shakespeare from the Ovidian materials" (397). Therefore, even with his "small Latin and less Greek," Shakespeare was able to dialogue with Greek and Roman sources.

People often confuse Shakespeare's stories with history itself. Even though Shakespearean history plays borrow from historical accounts, they are fictional pieces constructed to entertain, not inform. Shakespeare's method adjusts history to story, not the

opposite. All the history plays along with *Cymbeline*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear* had Raphael Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* as their main source, which are not limited to historical accounts. In fact, "[they] offer not only stories, but colour the narrative of events with set speeches and reflections upon the course of action" (Hattaway 14). Founded on conjectures and narrative choices instead of factual cohesion, the playwright, for example, surrounded Richard III's story with a sanguinary, mischievous, and monstrous aura, making historians work for centuries to prove or disprove his views.

As we go deeper into his sources, Shakespeare proves that in order to be a good writer, one must be a good reader. He might have lacked a college degree but was surely well-read. Above all, Shakespeare knew how to construct his scripts out of a plethora of source material. Adapter and developer, Shakespeare overcame language and cultural barriers to search for inspiration in literary works not only of English origin but also Scandinavian, Italian, Spanish, French, and Arabian origins. Shakespeare's productions were referential melting pots. For instance, *Hamlet* combines traces of a French version of the story of Amleth in François de Belleforest's *Histoires tragiques* and a previous version entitled *Ur-Hamlet*, attributed to English author Thomas Kyd, who also wrote another influential piece, *The Spanish Tragedy*.[10] Thus, a quick look at only some of the literary sources used by Shakespeare reveals some level of *entropy* in his *solute*.

Events from Shakespeare's time also contributed to the construction of his works. *The Tempest*, listed as one of the few "original" Shakespearean plots, was mainly inspired by a real shipwreck that happened in July 1609. The *Sea-Adventure* was travelling with colonists from Plymouth to Virginia when it disappeared during a storm off the coast of Bermuda. What made the news of this shipwreck worth Shakespeare's attention was the fact that, in May 1610, after almost a year missing, the colonists arrived at Jamestown, having survived

[10] Most of the information about Shakespeare's sources can be found in *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, edited by Michael Dobson and Stanley Wells.

and built another boat to finish the journey. Therefore, in an era of pre-globalization, in which humans started to have an idea of the size and cultural variety of the world, Shakespeare was up-to-date with previous and current events, attesting that inspiration may come from a wide range of sources, including extra-compositional origins.

The points of mapping experiences that composed Shakespeare's inspiration display the large set of references that may influence a *solute* and refute the popular collective ideas of Shakespearean originality. Yet, one must not dismiss the playwright's abilities to adapt his sources. His works were not gratuitous transformations; they brought impressions on varied levels such as discourse, cultural and social status. Stephen J. Lynch summarizes the point:

> For example, in refashioning Lodge's Rosalynde into *As You Like It*, Shakespeare does not merely undermine the Petrarchan and pastoral traditions of the romance, but also undermines and refutes the implicit gender structures of the source text. In refashioning *The True Chronicle Historie of King Leir* into the tragedy of *King Lear*, Shakespeare does not simply reject the explicit Christian setting and happy ending of Leir, but engages and responds to the highly reformational and at times Calvinistic tendencies of the source play. In rewriting Greene's *Pandosto* into *The Winter's Tale*, Shakespeare not only adapts the plot and characterization of the source, but consistently counters and refutes the highly euphuistic rhetorical and linguistic structures of the romance. In *Pericles*, Shakespeare adapts the *Appolinus* story from Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, but also responds to suggestions in the source text about the authority and role of the author. In his revisionary practices, Shakespeare borrows selectively and artfully from his sources, but also reacts against his sources – often by developing and expanding upon contrary suggestions already present in his sources. (2)

Before moving on to the following sections, we must keep in mind that Shakespeare is not an untouchable entity in the Olympus of (high) culture. He exemplifies the ways of exploring his work and contributing to his palimpsest: fit the word to the action, i.e. rework and adapt sources according to contextual demands. *Art solutions* must serve their times of (re)creation. Extra-compositional features dictate compositional features. Each time found its particular way to appropriate Shakespeare, attesting to the timeless nature of the "Bard." As an adaptor, Shakespeare confers merit on his sources and himself. Similarly, the oeuvre of Shakespeare's palimpsest owes to the playwright in the same way it owes to his adaptors.

### 1.3. Staging Musical and Pictorial *Dissolutions*

The very foundations of the Shakespearean palimpsest, his primary *Art solutions*, were already a patchwork of *solvents* and *solutes*. Theater is a medium that combines other media, visual and auditory, *dissolved* as part of theatrical materiality. In Shakespearean plays, music and visual arts may appear in different ways for different purposes. Music manifests in the form of songs and/or references to this medium. Likewise, we can note references to visual arts and ekphrastic moments. Elizabethan theatrical experience trusted heavily in the audience's imagination; so, the use of music and visual arts was an important device to convey the action, stimulating people's minds. This section introduces some Shakespearean examples of these media, which supports the *entropy* in the playwright's original[11] stage. I start with music, then, move to visual arts.

In the Elizabethan era, music was a popular form of domestic and public entertainment. There was church music, court music, town music, theater music, and street music. It is understandable that Shakespeare employed it in varied ways throughout his plays. There are moments in which we see comments on the function of music such as the opening

[11] Even though I use the term "original," the examples are based on literary documentation, i.e. the *First Folio* and its derivations.

scene of *Twelfth Night* with Duke Orsino's demand, "If music be the food of love, play on, / Give me excess of it; that surfeiting, / The appetite may sicken, and so die" (I. 1. 1-3). We have learnt that Shakespeare's choices are not arbitrary and it is a fact concerning the use and reference to music. Penny Gay points that when Orsino refers to music, "he establishes a self-indulgent, almost hothouse atmosphere … in which he performs, to an onstage audience of servants, his idea of the Petrarchan lover" (16). So, the idea Orsino has about music tells a lot about his personality, the lover who loves love, not the beloved. In other words, Orsino speaks of the idealization of love instead of the actual admiration for another person. Shakespeare was a critic of the poetic conventions of Petrarchan love, as we may note in sonnet 130. The evocation of song by some characters exposes idealizations to ridicule.

Music not only evokes but also conveys feelings to characters. In *The Tempest*, when Prospero wants to set the atmosphere for Ferdinand and Miranda's first encounter, Ariel sings "Come Unto These Yellow Sands." Ariel's song is suggestive to Ferdinand and the audience, affecting the expectators' mental state and aiding imagination. This way, they are more inclined to establish a fictional pact. Shakespeare's music conveys grief, happiness, solemnity, political views, and other themes. Songs even occur in association with magic in *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *The Winter's Tale*; and in association with madness in *Hamlet* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. In sum, music is a treasured element in Shakespearean productions, being always purposeful. According to David Lindley:

> For while the music for which Shakespeare calls does heighten atmosphere, or gives a particular emotional colouration to speech and action, it is always part of the world of the play itself, heard and responded to by the characters on-stage, and not, as in later theatrical practice, or in film and television, an

> independent adjunct for the audience's ears only, acting as a commentary or metatext. (112)

Above all, Shakespeare was a storyteller and every variation of music (songs, occasional references, etc) was integrated in his stories, not merely adjacent elements.

As we have seen, Shakespeare's use of musical and literary references is not gratuitous. They work in the construction of plot, character, themes, and other elements. References to visual arts are no exception. Tapestry, ornaments, pictures, sculptures compose the Shakespearean ekphrastic referential. Some critics point that Shakespeare's references to visual arts are poor and occasionally misguided. This argument says something about the playwright's context and, perhaps, his intentions. Nowadays, visual stimuli are an ordinary part of our lives. Our culture is extremely visual, with a myriad of images reaching our eyes in varied shapes. In Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, visual arts were not so accessible. Although Shakespeare has proven to be an accomplished researcher, intentionally or unintentionally, he might have been less accurate in some references either from his limited access or his audience's. Levels of (im)precision are *entropic* features.

Once again, concerning intentionality, Shakespeare suits the medium to the plot, i.e. he employs ekphrasis to support and advance his plots. *Cymbeline*, for example, presents an ekphrastic moment of vital importance to the plot. In order to prove Imogen's betrayal to Posthumus, Iachimo provides a detailed description of her room: "With tapestry of silk and silver; the story / Proud Cleopatra, when she met her Roman" (II. 4. 69-70), the chimney piece with "Chaste Dian bathing. Never saw I figures / So likely to report themselves. The cutter / Was as another nature, dumb; outwent her, / Motion and breath left out" (II. 4. 82-5), and the ceiling, "With golden cherubins is fretted. Her andirons – / I has forgotten them – were two winking Cupids / Of silver, each on one foot standing, nicely / Depending on their brands" (II. 4. 88-91). Besides rewarding his villainy and forwarding the plot of the play,

Iachimo's thorough account reveals the contextual preference for Roman and Christian motifs in the arts, as previously seen in his Biblical and Roman/ Greek references. Moreover, when Iachimo expresses his appreciation for the artist's skills on imitating nature, he touches on a controversial issue of the Renaissance: the relation of art versus nature. Thus, in different aspects, we note that Shakespeare's use of ekphrasis is not arbitrary.

A more elaborate use of pictures occurs during the Induction of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Inspired by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the "wanton pictures" are used by the Lord and his servants to trick Christopher Sly's to believe he is a lord that will enjoy the narrative of the Shrew with his wife. Either by his own desire of being a lord or by the power of the deception, Sly falls for the rhetoric concerning the pictures. Richard Meek advises us to hold back our impulse to ridicule Sly by revealing the double function of the pictorial art work in the Induction:

> The descriptions of art works within the Induction thus serve an analogous mimetic function to the Induction itself. They help Sly to be 'taken in' by the deception that is being practiced upon him and by the dramatic entertainment that he witnesses; … For what the Lord does to his onstage audience is both analogous to and part of what Shakespeare does to us. This moment, then, not only highlights Shakespeare's interest in reflecting upon the visual arts and the conventions of theatre but also suggests ways in which his plays often derive their sense of immediacy from a sly appropriation of, and comparison with, other modes of art. (4)

Therefore, the "wanton pictures" represent the alluring aspect of art in general.

There is an intriguing reference among Shakespeare's pictorial allusions. At the end of *The Winter's Tale*, Paulina reveals the existence of a statue of Hermione "by that rare Italian master, Giulio Romano" (V. 2. 82). Stephen Orgel informs us, "this is the only

allusion in Shakespeare to a modern artist and, indeed, one of the earliest references to Giulio in England – Shakespeare here, as nowhere else, appears to be in touch with the avant-garde of the visual arts. But Giulio was not a sculptor, and in fact the name is all the play gives us" (*Imagining Shakespeare* 112). Orgel also reveals that Giulio Romano is the author of a series of images with pornographic motifs, which leads us to think that Shakespeare's allusion to the artists might be ironic or the result of misinformation. Most critics stand on the second point. However, we cannot disregard the possibility of irony on Shakespeare's part. The critics' tendency to ignore sexual innuendos in his writings does not make them disappear. Shakespeare's sexual allusions and puns may have been suppressed by his elevation to high art through literature, but we must not forget that he produced scripts for popular entertainment.

Besides revealing the *entropy* in Shakespeare's original stage, these first sections show that Shakespeare purposefully (re)signified existing elements. *Shakespearean alchemy* provides ideas for using his legacy as a *solute* and deliberately managing *solvents*. The next sections show the development of Shakespearean palimpsest and its increasing *entropy* over time.

## 2. Staging Shakespearean Hypertexts

This section presents a map of hypertextual *Art solutions* that contribute to the construction of the Shakespearean palimpsest. As the reader may notice, as time moves forward, the examples become more numerous and varied, corroborating my point on *palimpsestic entropy*. The levels of *concentration* of *Shakespearean solute* vary as time passes and *entropy* increases. More *solvents* mean more possibilities of *dissolving* Shakespeare. First, in the following three sections, literary, musical, and pictorial resonances

are introduced up until the nineteenth century. Next, the proliferation of media and *dissolutions* in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries deserves a special section. This chronological division reflects the increasing *entropy* in the Shakespearean palimpsest up to the nineteenth century and the "*entropic boom*" in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, resulting in the highest *entropic* manifestations: "*screen dissolutions*." Oscillations between high and popular cultures end with the "Bard" regaining and maintaining his popular status.

## 2.1. Early Centuries, Early *Dissolutions*

### 2.1.1. Literature: The Pillars of Shakespeare's Palimpsest

If the Shakespearean palimpsest were a house, the theater would be the foundation and literature would be the pillars. The access to the foundation of a house is limited to the construction process. Once the following building steps start, the foundation is covered and we know of its existence because the house stands; however, we no longer have access to this foundation unless we consult the house's blueprint, a graphic representation of its structure. As we map the Shakespearean palimpsest, we provide a blueprint of the house, with conjectures on the material and structure of its foundation. This is what the mapping of Shakespearean original stage has been: a glimpse of the foundation through a blueprint. The pillars support the house walls and roof, being a suitable representation for literature. Even though Shakespeare devoted himself to the theater, the publication of his writings in literary form was the stimulus to his enduring legacy through the media and over the centuries. For this reason, my focus during this section is on literature and occasional interferences in theater. Here, we start to reveal new stages of the Shakespearean palimpsest. The "Bard" starts to be *dissolved* as a *solute* of subsequent *Art solutions*, as literature discloses its role as his main *solvent* in the path towards *entropy*. Moreover, the progressive forms of *dissolution*

displayed by literature pave the way for the varied *concentrations* of Shakespeare in other *solvents,* i.e. Shakespearean manifestations in other media.

There is no register of a text in Shakespeare's handwriting. Elizabethans did not have the concept of copyrighting and the plays were a collaborative work among the theater company's actors. The texts that we know derive from versions of the *quartos* and the *folio*. Since the material belonged to the theater companies, its circulation was restricted, for they "believed that the sale of printed texts might reduce the demand for performance" (Dobson and Wells 361). Thus, a more complete literary piece of Shakespeare's works only appeared after his death. In 1623, John Heminge and Henry Condell, actors and Shakespeare's partners in the King's men theater company, published the *First Folio*, with 36 plays printed in pages divided into two columns, the standard folio format. This became the main source of Shakespeare for contemporary printings. The *Folio* became Shakespeare's most *concentrated (literary) stage*, the starting point of further *dissolutions.*

The *Folio* marked Shakespeare's enduring medial shift; since it was the form of preservation and reproduction of the Shakespearean legagy, literature replaced theater as a primary source of Shakespearean works in terms of access. The publication urges appreciation through reading. In the preface by Heminge and Condell entitled "To the great Variety of Readers," there are indications that this shift from audience to readers becomes their focal point, "But it is not our province, who onely gather his works, and give them you, to praise him. It is yours that reade him. … Reade him, therefore; and againe, and againe …". That was the shift from the medium theater to the medium literature, more specifically, the drama genre. In order to produce a play, one would have to access the literary text. This new stage would assure the influence of Shakespeare's works over time.

It seems that Heminge and Condell hoped the publication would reach a wide range of people and popularize Shakespeare, but, at first, it did not happen that way. Even though it

was a medium in expansion, literature was a little more demanding, financially and intellectually. The *First Folio* was published at the cost of £1, a high amount for a worker at the time. So, the average citizen's access to Shakespeare's legacy was impaired. In addition, during the Restoration, the emergence of an elitist theatrical audience brought a demand for a sophistication that was not perceived in Shakespearean texts. As a result, Shakespeare's material demanded revision.

Shakespeare had to pass through modifications to reach stratified audiences. Despite common beliefs, British entertainment production in late seventeenth century allowed interferences close to what we currently address as "fan fiction." Different arrangements of scenes, compilations and rewritings of Shakespeare were not uncommon during this period and "[t]runcated versions called 'drolls', performed at fair booths and taverns during the Interregnum, continued to be performed at Southwark and Bartholomew Fair well after the Restoration" (Lanier *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* 27). One of the most famous and enduring interferences was Nahum Tate's 1681 version of *King Lear*, which eliminated tragic elements and inserted a romance between Edgar and Cordelia among the modifications. In sum, as Marjorie Garber observes, "… the conjectural or emendatory critic was required to make inspired guesses, inserting changes in Shakespeare's text to conform to his own taste and the taste of the age, replacing what the surviving quartos and folios said with what Shakespeare should have said—and, it was sometimes claimed, by what he had in fact said, or meant to say" (*Shakespeare After All* 13). The idea that Shakespeare speaks to all ages and cultures is not entirely wrong if we recognize the insertion of so-called proper adjustments. *Dissolving* Shakespeare's original *concentrations* has been guided by contextual demands.

The eighteenth century brought a Shakespearean revival that had literature as the main medium, despite the increasing influence of Shakespeare on other media such as painting,

music, and, naturally, theater. The 1709 collection *The Works of Mr. William Shakespeare*, by Nicholas Rowe, is pointed to as the pioneer in a line of numerous editions of Shakespeare's works released throughout the whole century. Writers such as Alexander Pope and Samuel Johnson edited their own collections of Shakespearean works. Literature was established as the leading mode of appreciation of the playwright oeuvre. The productions from other media, in a way, were byproducts of the literary experience.

The eighteenth century also witnessed a demand on style with the rise of neoclassicism in Europe. Shakespeare may have "adapted" the classics to a certain degree, but his style did not fit the neoclassical literary rules. Nevertheless, instead of harming Shakespeare's literary reputation, his stylistic misfit highlighted his uniqueness. Hence, the playwright became a symbol of nationalism, a metonymic representation of British culture. According to Douglas Lanier, Shakespeare "was being repositioned as a British bourgeois culture hero, brought in line with canons of domestic respectability, regarded as the 'genius' of a newly empowered middle class and British national culture, a status he would occupy throughout much of the nineteenth century" (31). Thus, Shakespeare became a symbol of British national pride and intellectual status, a condition that continued through the next century. Literature initiated the permanent expansion of Shakespeare's cultural reach and also paved his way to high art. Reading Shakespeare became an indication of cultural refinement.

Literature revived Shakespeare's plays with the support of groups such as the Shakespeare Ladies Club, aristocratic Londoners who gathered to demand more productions of Shakespearean plays. Theater returned the favor to literature and Shakespearean productions proliferated. This time, however, the stage was not male dominated; women played significant roles on and off stage during this period. Along with famous Shakespearean actors such as David Garrick and Spranger Barry, there were actresses such as Catherine Clive and Hannah Pritchard. So, Shakespeare's original *solvent* had a change in

constitution, an *entropic* trait. The eighteenth-century stage was more democratic than his original stage. As a result, "[i]n the season of 1740–1, a quarter of London performances were of plays by Shakespeare, and from mid-century the place of his plays in the repertoire became increasingly dominant" (Ritchie and Sabor 13).

One event made a major contribution to the long-living Shakespearean revival: the Stratford Jubilee in 1769. Produced and financed by Shakespearean actor David Garrick, the Jubilee was a series of events spread across three days in order to celebrate Shakespeare's bicentenary. Although part of the celebration was spoiled by bad weather, the Jubilee was a milestone in the playwright's canonical consolidation. Stratford became a tourist attraction and David Garrick became one of the most celebrated names in the Shakespearean palimpsest. Garrick's initiatives, among others, consolidated Shakespeare as a genuine British article, an item worthy of admiration and proud diffusion. Converted into a cultural item spread through a variety of media products, Shakespeare can be said to have been consolidated as an attractive *solute*.

In this same century, Shakespeare infiltrated all branches of literature as a patriotic symbol. Following the trend from previous centuries, drama kept adapting his work according to contextual needs. Shakespeare lent an erudite aura at the same time his texts had a popular appeal, a perfect combination to exalt drama and attract audiences to performances. The Shakespearean text was properly adapted to the historical context, as Tiffany Stern argues, "'Solving' or 'curing' Shakespeare of his inaccuracies would create a 'perfect' performing text, the kind of text Shakespeare would have written had he been born in the eighteenth century" (148). Under the example of Nahum Tate's *Lear*, material was added and removed from several plays. Stern points that "[f]amous emendations even now bear the names of their eighteenth-century originators, Pope, Theobald, Malone, Steevens and so forth" (150). In poetry, Shakespeare appeared as a source of affective inspiration and

linguistic appreciation. Physician and poet John Armstrong entitled his book *Imitations of Shakespeare*, evoking the direct influence of the "Bard" on his poetry. In prose, author Henry Fielding has clear Shakespearean references in his novels. In *Tom Jones*, for example, Tom and other characters attend a performance of *Hamlet*. So, either through adaptation or reference, the literary branch of Shakespeare's palimpsest witnessed a revival during the eighteenth century. In fact, adaptation and reference are two *dissolution* methods, which display their own levels of Shakespearean *concentration*.

The nineteenth century carried on an invitation to exploratory admiration as Shakespeare continued to be *dissolved* through extensions and references. Poetic explorations such as Robert Browning's *Caliban upon Setebos* (1864) provide extensions to Shakespearean characters and plots. In Browning's poem, Caliban wonders about Setebos, whom he considers a deity and creator, and his own condition as a creature. As a complement to poetical influence, poetic inspirations such as John Keat's digressions on how Shakespeare's "negative capability" did not get in the way of his geniality summoned a sort of empathic reverence. Shakespeare was food for thought on social conditions, theology, and human issues in general.

Despite prejudiced views that labeled novels as a transgressive and tasteless genre, their publication and consumption increased significantly during the nineteenth century. Novelists such as Herman Melville and Charles Dickens admitted that Shakespeare was a source of references. Jane Austen, another British literary icon, referred to Shakespeare in her novels. The most notable example is *Mansfield Park* (1814), in which the character Crawford argues that, "… Shakespeare one gets acquainted with without knowing how. It is a part of an Englishman's constitution. His thoughts and beauties are so spread abroad that one touches them every where, one is intimate with him by instinct …" (320). Here, Austen describes the Shakespearean reach among the English, maybe unaware that she foreshadows *dissolutions*

of Shakespeare in international scale. He was already popular in Europe, notably among German critics. It came as no surprise, therefore, that the playwright crossed the ocean and reached the U.S.:

> Mark Twain's treatment of Shakespeare in his novel *Huckleberry Finn* helps us place the Elizabethan playwright in nineteenth-century American culture. Shortly after the two rogues, who pass themselves off as a duke and a king, invade the raft of Huck and Jim, they decide to raise funds by performing scenes from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Richard III.* That the presentation of Shakespeare in small Mississippi River towns could be conceived of as potentially lucrative tells us much about the position of Shakespeare in the nineteenth century. (Levine 13)

Twain's reference reveals the popular status of Shakespeare in the U.S. Originals and parodies, such as the Burlesques, were part of American entertainment. Even Abraham Lincoln was known for quoting Shakespeare in his speeches[12]. So, Shakespearean *dissolutions* manifest in different media, cultures, and fields of study.

Accompanying and transposing the extent of British imperialism, Shakespeare went far beyond English culture. American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson even entertained the idea that if there were intelligent forms of life beyond our solar system, they would probably know us as "planet Shakespeare" not "planet Earth" (Garber, *Shakespeare After All* 32). Indeed, Shakespeare can be said to have gone beyond the Earth's atmosphere as he served as reference for other study fields such as astronomy. Honoring a tradition that probably started with astronomer Sir John Herschel in the nineteenth century, out of 27 moons from planet Uranus, 25 were named after Shakespeare's characters and the remaining two after Alexander Pope's.

[12] As Marjorie Garber informs us in her book *Shakespeare After All* (34).

During the nineteenth century, Shakespeare took part in the institutionalization of English in formal education. Lanier informs us that, "Shakespeare moved into the formal curriculum in the latter half of the nineteenth century and was central to the formation of English as a discipline during the period. Already established as an English 'classic', Shakespeare had the requisite depth and complexity to replace Latin and Greek classics in higher education" (*Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* 39). Cambridge and Oxford started to offer English as a course in 1878 and 1884, respectively. It was not different in the U.S. We learn from Garber that,

> Harvard was founded in 1636, twenty years after the death of Shakespeare, by a man whose family came from Stratford-upon-Avon, and Yale was founded in 1701. But the first Shakespeare courses taught at Harvard and Yale did not appear until the 1870s. Initially used for declamation, and then for the biographical study of the author, Shakespeare's plays were not studied in American schools and colleges as literary works – that is, with students each reading the complete text of a play – until the late nineteenth century. (*Shakespeare After All* 32)

Shakespeare in the academy has generated more literature, this time in literary and critical theory. Therefore, Shakespeare's path from popular entertainment to higher education took around three centuries. Nevertheless, his texts endured the test of time and have sustained an immeasurable palimpsest still in progress.

### 2.1.2. Palimpsestic Musical *(Dis)solutions*

Instrumental or accompanied by lyrics, original or borrowed from popular culture, Shakespeare's songs are part of his legacy. They were used in isolation in theatrical montages in the following centuries. The previously mentioned "drolls" were sometimes arranged in the form of "musicals," which gathered a repertoire of songs and/or musicalized verses. It did

not take long for Shakespearean plays to be musicalized and adapted into operas, semi-operas (masques), operettas, symphonic poems, overtures, ballets, and musicals. *The Fairy-Queen* (1692), a semi-opera adapted from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with compositions by Henry Purcell, was first performed in London during the Restoration. Sir William Davenant also contributed with a musical adaptation of *Macbeth* (1664) and in association with John Dryden and a group of musicians, he produced another Shakespearean adaptation, *The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island* (1667); both performances had a sense of spectacle. Besides the aura of grandeur of such musical montages that aimed at attracting spectators, Michael Dobson and Stanley Wells note that, "[o]ther important musical practices in the Restoration included the use of especially composed act music – instrumental music to be played between the acts of a play – and the addition of masques to several works" (312). Incidental music accounts for several compositions which endured under the Shakespearean brand, but failing to attribute credit to their rightful composers. The Shakespearean aura of an *Art solution* is a gift and a curse for it lends status to the work at the same time that it blurs "subsidiary" authorship.

Musical borrowings in the eighteenth century advanced the intertwined relations traced during the Restoration. Once again, echoes from Purcell's version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* were abundant. In 1711, Purcell's work had a performance that mixed puppets and actors. Parody and mockery dictated the tone of some appropriations. Musical echoes were in tune with Shakespearean literary uniqueness, which stood in opposition to neoclassical rules. Hence, "Shakespeare becomes a convenient basis for cultural opposition, bourgeois mockery of a fashionable high-cultural form, played to the same audience that flocked to the operas" (Holland 27).

Assuming another tone but still in the musical branch, David Garrick's adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* had its debut in 1755. *The Fairies* is an opera that preserves

only part of Shakespeare's lines amidst the inclusion of several songs, displaying Garrick's admiration and constant experimentation with Shakespearean works. In 1756, Garrick presented another musical experimentation by turning *The Tempest* into an opera. Later on, the musical nature of Garrick's *Shakespeare Ode*, performed during the 1769 Jubilee, would count as another contribution to the palimpsestic musical branch.

Music was an element of attraction in eighteenth century entertainment. It explains the elimination of speech and the addition of songs in the adaptations as well as the amplification of musical moments during the performances of the plays. According to Dobson and Wells, "[a]nother important factor governing the introduction of music was the desire to emulate on stage major events in real life. Hence the coronation scene in *All Is True (Henry VIII)* became an impressive spectacle, with music, around the time of the coronations of George II in 1727 and George III in 1761" (312). Like contemporary movies that make use of visual effects, big explosions and a lot of action, music supplied the "action" for eighteenth-century audiences.

Gradually, music became a more and more popular form of collective entertainment, entering the nineteenth century as a regular mode of adaptation. The quantity and variety of productions had an exponential growth. Operas were the flagship of musical productions from that time, surviving for decades and reaching contemporary audiences. According to Dobson and Wells, around three hundred operas were directly or indirectly inspired by Shakespeare's works. For instance, the Italian composer Giuseppe Verdi contributed with three pieces: *Macbeth* (1847), *Otello* (1887), and *Falstaff* (1893), which figure among the most prominent operas inspired by Shakespeare. The variety of operas proves that Shakespeare worked according to *solvent* and extra-compositional features. Directly or indirectly, operas have *dissolved* Shakespeare in different ways, disregarding language barriers or issues of fidelity and subject.

Fragmentation does not mean loss for the Shakespearean palimpsest. On the contrary, Shakespeare survives in particles, even in the smallest *concentration*. Nineteenth-century overtures, symphonic poems, and incidental music prove this point. The best example is Felix Mendelssohn's "Wedding March," a tune that is very popular during weddings nowadays, a piece from 1842 that was composed for an adaptation of *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

### 2.1.3. Palimpsestic Pictorial *Dissolutions*

*Titus Andronicus*, one of Shakespeare's earlier plays, is the one that offers the first Shakespearean *dissolution* by visual arts. The drawing attributed to Henry Peacham is known as the *Peacham drawing*, a part of the Longleat manuscript. Signed with the date of 1594 and probably the only pictorial reference contemporary to Shakespeare, the *Peacham drawing* is a polemic piece as a result of its "editing" style. A patchwork of drawing and text, the piece supposedly joins scenes from the first and fifth acts. The text blends speeches from the play with additional lines. The drawing displays Tamora asking for Titus's mercy on her sons. Some recent scholarly dispute has divided opinions on whether the drawing derives from Shakespeare's play for it might have been inspired by a German play, *Eine sehr klägliche Tragœdia von Tito Andronico und der hoffertigen Käyserin* (*A Very Lamentable Tragedy of Titus Andronicus and the Haughty Empress*). The fact is that the drawing displays an anachronism typical of Elizabethan stages: Titus in a Roman toga and Tamora's garments in the fashion of Renaissance royal outfits. Issues on authenticity aside, the *Peacham drawing* foreshadows common practices of pictorial Shakespeare: the depiction of performers, scenes from the plays, and illustrated textual works.

Shakespearean borrowings were not productive in seventeenth-century visual arts. The only direct allusion to a Shakespearean text in a seventeenth-century picture displays Falstaff and Mistress Quickly among other characters on the cover of *The Wits* (1662), the "collection of 'drolls' or comic episodes from popular plays adapted for independent

performance" (Dobson and Wells 521). There were no other contributions from the playwright to seventeenth-century images unless we consider his own portraits.

Eighteenth century brought the illustration of textual works with Nicholas Rowe's *Works of Mr. William Shakespear* (1709), containing engraved frontispieces of scenes corresponding to each play. A new way to appreciate Shakespeare gave birth to a new market: pictorial Shakespeare. Alexander Pope's first edition of the Shakeseparean works (1623-5) had two illustrations while his second edition (1728) had thirty-six. Soon, the trend changed and the Shakespearean *dissolutions* in visual arts went from illustrating the text to portraying the stage. William Hogarth represented a growing tendency when he produced an iconic picture of David Garrick as Richard III (1746), which "… conveys brilliantly Garrick's strikingly original conception of the character, not the half-comic machiavel of Shakespeare's text, but a figure of magnificent will and passionate intensity, satanic but also heroic and even glamorous. Through the combined efforts of Garrick and Hogarth, this became the standard interpretation of the role" (Orgel "Shakespeare Illustrated" 73).

After the Jubilee promoted by Garrick and its consequence for the popularization of performances, illustrators saw some advantage in the association of visual arts and theater. In 1775-6, John Hamilton Mortimer released his works, which tried to ad some depth to Shakespeare's characters. All the portraits are accompanied by a quote from their respective plays. The intensity in the eyes along with the depiction of props are noticeable features of Mortimer's work.

Another enterprise boosted the quantity of visual art works inspired by the "Bard:" the Shakespeare Gallery. An idealization of John Boydell, the Gallery, inaugurated in 1789, continued the work of the Royal Academy in the promotion of the British art scenario. Unfortunately, several factors led it to be closed in 1805, but its legacy was pervasive through the nineteenth century.

Among the artistic names that collaborated with the Shakespeare Gallery, Henry Fuseli deserves special attention for his works, produced at the end of eighteenth century and beginning of nineteenth century. The Swiss artist employed technique and elegance, gaining admirers in the years to come due to his mastery of light and dark. As a different *dissolving* method, the turn of the century witnessed the production of engravings after Fuseli's works, including some produced by William Blake, who also shared with Fuseli the taste for supernatural atmosphere with three illustrations based on phantasmagorical encounters from Shakespeare: Hamlet and his father's ghost, Brutus and Julius Caesar's ghost, and Richard III and the ghosts of his victims, all from around 1806.

Shakespeare crossed more than media borders during the nineteenth century. Austrian Artist Adam Vogler produced a drawing portraying Hamlet and his father's ghost, inspired by Fuseli's work. In France, between 1834 and 1843, Eugène Delacroix developed a series of thirteen lithographs based on *Hamlet*. Back in England, Shakespeare was also a source for the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (1848-1853), an idealization of the artists William Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, along with some friends. They despised the current artistic ideals and searched for innovation. According to Dobson and Wells,

> The Pre-Raphaelites identified in Shakespeare an ideal they could harness to their attempt to revitalize British art with noble ideas and fidelity to nature: in 1848 Rossetti and Hunt prepared 'a list of Immortals, forming our creed', wherein the 'first class' comprised Jesus and Shakespeare. Hunt chose episodes dramatizing moral conflict in *Valentine Rescuing Sylvia from Proteus* (1851) and *Claudio and Isabella* (1850-3). Millais's luminous *Ferdinand Lured by Ariel* (1849) enlivened popular fairy painting with an innovative realism which also characterizes his *Ophelia* (1852). Like the latter, Rossetti's sketches *Hamlet and Ophelia* (c.1854-9) and *The Death of Lady Macbeth*

> (c.1876), and his painting of the pining *Mariana* (1868-70), all explore tragic Shakespearian women – a theme popular with followers of the movement after 1853, when the formal Brotherhood ceased. (353)

During the transition from nineteenth to twentieth century, John William Waterhouse put the Pre-Raphaelite's sensibility and details into his works. Shakespearean women were also his focal topic with representations of Ophelia, Juliet and Miranda. His two representations of Miranda are analogous to Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience.* The version from 1875 is a vision of innocence with a blond Miranda in a white dress, calmly seated on a rock and observing the sea. Blake's 1915 counterpart version displays a red-haired Miranda in a blue dress with red details observing the shipwreck in the middle of the tempest; although she observes the scene from the shore, the effect of the wind in her hair and gown conveys the distress she witnesses. The contrast between the organization of the 1875 picture and the chaos of the 1915 version seem to mimic the path of the arts in the Shakespearean palimpsest, from occasional interventions to a borderless amalgamation of references.

### 2.2. The "Bard" in his Twenties: Multiple *Dissolutions*

The crescendo of Shakespeare's *palimpsestic entropy* could be well illustrated only by the early movements in literature, music, and visual arts. Nevertheless, a glimpse of twentieth and twenty-first century's *dissolutions*, including other media, reinforce my point. Despite facing some points of resistance, Shakespeare leaves the Olympus of high art and confirms his position as a popular icon. Moreover, he is borderless, a globalized *solute* that is *dissolved* in different parts of the globe. The following sections provide examples of the fluidity of the playwright as a universal *solute* in media and cultures. Literature, music, and visual arts demonstrate how Shakespeare adapts to the appearance of new genres in a medium,

harmonizing with existing configurations; Shakespeare is a constant in different coexisting arrangements. In relation to the appearance of new media, the fluidity of Shakespearean *solute* also displays its potential. In sum, Shakespearean *concentrations* are varied and suit multiple configurations, indicating the rapid increase of *palimpsestic entropy* in the last two centuries.

### 2.2.1. New Literary Stages

The progressive reach of Shakespeare as a cultural *solute* signals his *entropic* nature, exemplified by his wide proliferation over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. He is *dissolved* through established literary genres such as drama, poetry, and novels. Shakespeare has been constantly (re)contextualized to support a range of themes such as (inter)national conflicts, power relations, and gender issues, conveying the idea that all of these human issues are part of Shakespearean texts just waiting to be explored. In addition, Shakespeare has been a constant in popular culture, inherently with one foot in the sea of high culture and one on the shore of popular entertainment.

In drama, contextualization and conflict permeate the *Art solutions*. In the context of World War II, German playwright Bertolt Brecht constructed a satire on the rise of Adolf Hitler in *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (1941), the story of a Chicago gangster in the molds of *Richard III*. Federico García Lorca's *El público* (c. 1930) revolves around a theatrical production of *Romeo and Juliet*. An unfinished play by the same author, *Comedia sin Titulo*, is another metatheatrical piece, setting a theatrical production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the context of the approaching Spanish Civil War. During the Vietnam War, Barbara Garson released *MacBird!* (1967), a polemical piece on Lyndon Johnson's ascension to U.S. presidency after the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Highly influenced by *Macbeth*, Garson's play also alludes to *Hamlet* and *Richard III*. Moving from power issues in the U.S. to South Africa, Macbeth was adapted by Welcome Msomi to the context of a Zulu tribe in

*uMabatha* (1970), a history play set around Shaka Zulu's ascension to power. Post-colonial dynamics of domination and subjugation mark *Une Tempête* (*A Tempest*) (1969), an adaptation of *The Tempest* by Aimé Césaire, who inserts racial issues in the imperialist relations of Prospero, Ariel and Caliban. *Une Tempête* exemplifies the referential place *The Tempest* has acquired in Post-colonial studies.

Gender issues also permeated dramatic *dissolutions*. Toni Morrison, in association with theater director Peter Sellars and musician Rokia Traoré, composed *Desdemona* (2011), a musical sequel to *Othello* presenting Desdemona's impressions on issues such as gender roles and race. Gay themes and race issues in 1980s England are the focus of Philip Osment's *This Island's Mine* (1988); punctual allusions to *The Tempest* permeate the play. As we can note, occasionally, Shakespeare seems to be a support or a starting point to discuss conflicts. These are just a few examples. Cataloguing all *dissolutions* including adaptations, appropriations and allusions would be practically impossible. Just the sample anthology of the *Canadian Adaptations of Shakespeare Project* gathers on its website almost 50 works covering the last two centuries.

"Renewal" is a fit word for Shakespeare. His marriage with modern and contemporary popular cultures is a successful enterprise. American author Ian Doescher has made meaningful contributions to this marriage. Doescher is the author of the series *William Shakespeare's Star Wars*, a series of books that retell the stories of the *Star Wars* movies in the style of Shakespearean plays, with Dramatis Personae and Chorus, among other elements. Doescher even plays with iambic pentameter through the lines and his vocabulary matches the modern English of the Elizabethan age. The illustrations show *Star Wars* characters in Renaissance fashion. Doescher's contributions are meaningful for the Shakespearean palimpsest for their potential effect on audiences. By combining Shakespeare with *Star Wars*, Doescher makes Shakespeare more appealing to pop culture consumers at the same time that

he reveals the merits of popular entertainment to Shakespearean scholars and admirers. In a certain way, Doescher weakens the imaginary wall that divides cultural modes into high and low. It is basically the same effect of cinematic *dissolutions* of Shakespeare that will be introduced below.

In poetry, the *concentrations* of Shakespeare also vary. Robert Frost's "Out, Out" (1916) is about a boy that loses his hand (and his life) after an accident with a saw at work. The title of the poem comes from Macbeth's lines, "… Out, out, brief candle, / Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player / That struts and frets his hour upon the stage / And then is heard no more" (V. 5. 22-5). These lines summarize the idea of Frost's poem on the brevity of the boy's life. A subjective approach to Shakespeare comes from the Indian writer Suniti Namjoshi, who portrays Caliban as a lesbian third world woman. In a series of poems entitled "Snapshots of Caliban", a semi-biographical work, Namjoshi introduces Caliban as a complex figure who questions patriarchal values and exposes alternatives. Thus, instead of expanding from Shakespeare's original theme as Frost does, Namjoshi reworks Shakespeare to fit her own subjectivity.

A poem that works more like an answer to Shakespeare's portrayal of King Richard III is my final example of poetic resonance. In 2012, the alleged remains of Richard III were found and submitted to tests in order to prove their legitimacy. The confirmation that the skeleton belonged to the king came in 2013 through various tests and DNA comparisons with his descendants. On March 26, 2015, Richard's remains were reburied in a ceremony that took place at Leicester Cathedral. During the event, the actor Benedict Cumberbatch read a poem written by poet laureate Carol Ann Duffy entitled "Richard." In the poem, written in the first person, the king seems destitute of the ambitious aura of Shakespeare's portrayal of him, seeing the crown as something that causes a scar and in need of truth, history. The king's dream is to receive prayers in opposition to the disdain towards the Shakespearean

construction. In sum, by attributing to Richard a voice other than that of the Shakespearean villain, Duffy offers atonement to the playwright's negative portrayal as well as a final homage to Richard's memory.

Any approach to Shakespeare's influence on modern and contemporary literary genres offers a long list of works. The exponential growth of novels and other kinds of prose in popular consumption reflects in the number of Shakespearean *dissolutions*. In other words, more consumption demands more production, which means more possibilities of Shakespearean *dissolutions*. The high number of rewritings on plot is surpassed by the quantity of texts that quote or just refer to lines. *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are champions in all categories. Several authors seize their titles from Shakespeare's lines. Aldous Huxley provides some examples, including his most famous work, the science fiction novel *Brave New World* (1932), which borrows its title from *The Tempest*, "How many goodly creatures are there here! / How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world / That has such people in't!" (V. 1. 183-5). These lines, spoken by an astonished Miranda, are ironically employed by Huxley to name his dystopian account in which humans come into existence through artificial wombs to a socially stratified community. Less related to science fiction and more to science, the theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking's book, *The Universe in a Nutshell* (2001), borrows its title from *Hamlet*'s lines, "O God, I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself / a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams" (II. 2. 243-4), and explores some cosmological concepts in the path of the Theory of Everything[13]. Hawking relates *Hamlet*'s quote to his subject matter by saying that, "Hamlet may have meant that although we human beings are very limited physically, our minds are free to explore the whole universe, and to go boldly where even *Star Trek* fears to tread – bad dreams permitting" (69).

[13] M-Theory or Theory of Everything is a "theory that unites all five string theories, as well as supergravity, within a single theoretical framework, but which is not yet fully understood" (Hawking 205).

Shakespeare does not lend only ideas and quotes; he provides an aura of authority and collective interest. The Hogarth Press started the Hogarth Shakespeare Project, an initiative that hired eight novelists to write adaptations of selected plays. For instance, we have *The Gap of Time* (2015), Jeanette Winterson's "version" of *The Winter's Tale*, and *Hag-Seed* (2016), Margaret Atwood's metatheatrical account of a production of *The Tempest*. The Hogarth Shakespeare Project recognizes the popular appeal of the "Bard" as a *solute* that can be used as marketing strategy.

Besides people who willingly search for the *Shakespearean concentrations* in an *Art solution*, there are readers (and audiences) who consume Shakespeare unconsciously. Fantasy literature provides some examples. In *The Chronicles of Narnia* series (1950-1956), C. S. Lewis attributes to Prince Caspian a background similar to Prince Hamlet: King Miraz murders his own brother, Caspian's father, in order to assume the throne. Additionally, Lewis uses Hamlet to describe the mysterious knight that we later learn to be Prince Rilian, Caspian's son: "He was dressed in black and altogether looked a little bit like Hamlet" (*The Silver Chair* Kindle). C. S. Lewis's friend, J. R. R. Tolkien also fills his works with Shakespearean references. Tolkien's well-known work, *The Lord of the Rings Trilogy* (1954-5), has echoes from *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry V*, and *The Tempest*. An example is how Shakespeare's Macbeth and Tolkien's Witch-king of Angmar share similar fates by trusting prophecies about the way they can(not) die. Macbeth, who could not be killed by any man born of a woman, is killed by MacDuff, who "was from his mother's womb untimely ripped" (V. 8. 15-6). The Witch-king, who could not die by the hands of any man, is ironically killed by a Hobbit and a woman in a man's armour. My final examples are from the George R. R. Martin's series *A Song of Ice and Fire* (1996-forthcoming), which became very popular after their adaptation into the HBO series *Game of Thrones*. Martin borrows a huge amount of plots, subplots, and characters' archetypes from

Shakespeare. Just to name a few reflections on characters, King Robert Baratheon is a mixture of Falstaff and Prince Hal, "a man of huge appetites, a man who knew how to take his pleasures" (*A Game of Thrones* 42); Cersei Lannister is a double of Lady Macbeth, targeting power at the cost of blood; Arya Stark replicates the girl as a boy archetype of Viola and Rosalind; and all Stark siblings carry the burden of Hamlet in their individual journeys of revenge for their parents' deaths. In a clear reference, Bran Stark, unaware that he addresses a ghost, reports talking to his father in the family crypt (731). Jon Snow carries traces of more than one Roman character and when he is stabbed by some of his own fellow guards from the Night Watch, Shakespeareans recognize a touch of Julius Caesar's death by the hands of the Senate, an ultimate betrayal. Thus, from smaller hints to major plot replications, Fantasy literature contributions to the Shakespearean palimpsest may pass unnoticed, either because Shakespeare is so *dissolved* in the works or for lack of knowledge of readers.

Shakespeare lends authority, aids message construction, supports varied topics, and is even a silent presence. After theater, literature is the first *solvent* to *dissolve* Shakespeare, preserving a major part of his original *concentration*. As literature reinvents itself as a medium, Shakespeare is in every step, reinventing himself, too. Similar dynamics happen in music and visual arts as we may see in the following sections.

### 2.2.2. Music

As literature demonstrates, twentieth and twenty-first centuries preserve previous engagements with Shakespeare and offer new hybrid configurations. Operatic variations continued to be composed; additionally, more popular genres such as jazz, pop music, film soundtracks and musicals contributed to the Shakespearean palimpsest.

In the 1920s, jazz music flourished in the United States, making this period known as the *Jazz Age*. It did not take long for this innovative music genre to resort to Shakespeare. Duke Ellington's *Such Sweet Thunder* (1957) contains tracks inspired by different

Shakespearean pieces such as “Sonnet for Caesar,” “Sonnet for Sister Kate,” “Sonnet to Hank Cinq,” “Lady Mac,” “The Star-Crossed Lovers,” and seven other compositions. Seven years later, John Dankworth and his wife Cleo Laine released *Shakespeare & All That Jazz*, an album of fourteen musical arrangements of Shakespeare’s lines, including “If Music Be the Food of Love,” “Dunsinane Blues,” and “Shall I Compare Thee.”

Films and screen adaptations in general have been the best thermometers of Shakespeare’s popularity from the previous century until now. Filmic *dissolutions* lend to and borrow several aspects from Shakespeare, including audience interest. Many musicals inspired and were inspired by films, attracting different sorts of audience and critical responses. Some examples of musicals that were adapted into films are: Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart’s *The Boys from Syracuse* (1938), inspired by *The Comedy of Errors*; Cole Porter's *Kiss me Kate* (1948), based on *The Taming of the Shrew*; and Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim’s *West Side Story* (1957), a transposition of *Romeo and Juliet* to the Upper West Side in New York. Among the films that inspired musical adaptations figures the work that marked the high point of the Disney Renaissance, *The Lion King* (1994). Loosely based on *Hamlet*, the animation directed to children became very popular with various audiences and inspired a musical by the same name featuring Elton John’s music and Tim Rice’s lyrics. The musical production has been performed all around the globe.

Popular music is full of examples of Shakespearean references: the Canadian rock band Rush’s album *All the World's a Stage* (1976), Dire Straits’ song “Romeo And Juliet” (1980), Pink Floyd’s song “The Dogs of War" (1987), and Sting’s album ...*Nothing Like the Sun* (1987) are just some examples.

Far from an occasional reference, Shakespeare is *dissolved* as an active *solute* in the construction of meaning. Regina Spektor’s song “Pound of Flesh” (2005), a reference to Shylock’s demand in *The Merchant of Venice*, is a confession of a merciless individual

restricted to her bed. She receives a visit from Ezra Pound, who demands a pound of flesh to "cover his bare bones.," to which she answers, "I says, man, take a pound, take two / What's a pound of flesh between / Friends like me and you?" in a comparison between her own misdeeds and the poet's, since Pound displayed anti-Semitic feelings, and supported Hitler and Mussolini. My point here is to illustrate Shakespeare's presence in pop music beyond mere allusion.

The musical works registered here are just a sample of Shakespeare's opulent palimpsest regarding music. Shakespeare does not obey medial restrictions and even though certain *Art solutions* present only glimpses of his work, they still contribute to his *palimpsestic entropy*.

### 2.2.3. Visual Arts

Despite the decrease in the popularity of these *solvents,* Shakespeare continued to inspire visual arts. American painter Edwin Austin Abbey's works belong to the transition from nineteenth to twentieth century. Mostly inspired by Shakespeare's tragedies, Abbey produced *The Queen in Hamlet* (1895), *Richard, Duke of Gloucester, and the Lady Anne* (1896), *The Play Scene in Hamlet* (1897), and *Goneril and Regan* (1902). Abbey attributed dramatic expressions to all his subjects, conveying the tension of his chosen scenes. Contrasting to Abbey's classical characterization, British painter Frank Cadogan Cowper inherited the style of the Pre-Raphaelites. We can note similarities between Cowper's *Titania Sleeps in A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1928) and Millais's *Ophelia*, despite the opposite "tones" of the works. Another inherited practice was the illustration of Shakespearean editions. In 1912, Hodder and Stoughton published an edition of *Romeo and Juliet* containing twenty-two watercolor illustrations by British painter William Hatherell.

Innovation also touched Shakespeare in the visual arts and here we have three examples that *dissolved The Tempest*. Franz Marc's *Caliban* (1914) offers a cubist

representation of the Shakespearean character, breaking from previous representations that conveyed some sense of detachment between the viewer and the work. This way, Caliban is surrounded by psychological depth, facilitating some identification with his personal struggles and opening his context to new interpretations. The American artist Jackson Pollock created a new technique in the 1940's, his "drip" paintings, abstract works resulting from the dropping of paint on canvas. *Full Fathom Five* (1947) is one of Pollock's earlier experimentations of this new technique. From afar, this work looks like random paths of paint, mostly black, blue, and white; a closer look reveals the layer of random objects hidden by the paint, such as buttons, coins, nails, matches, a key, and cigarette butts. A friend suggested the name of the painting to the artist, maybe after realizing the connection between Ariel's song about a shipwreck and the drowning objects within Pollock's work. Still in the abstract trend, László Lakner's *Caliban* (1985) displays a distinctive black blur with a triangle that, according to Jaczminski's research on alchemy symbolizes water, which may hint at the fluid interpretation Caliban has inspired through time. The painting also displays an inscription: "Caliban," as if to certify that the fluidity has a focal point, a context.

As previously pointed in literature and music, Shakespeare paves a two-way street with visual arts by employing the medium and being reflected by it. The layer of visual arts in the Shakespearean palimpsest also displays diversification, adding to the plurality of media approaches, as we see in the sections below.

### 2.2.4. Film

In my view, after literature, film is the most influential medium in the Shakespearean palimpsest because it reflects and suits different cultural spheres. A precursor of screen media that proliferated in the last two centuries, film has provided the *dissolution* modes which are still followed by other media. The four basic modes of *Shakespearean dissolution* in films are: adaptations of his works, adaptations of literary adaptations of his works, appropriations,

and references either to his works or his life. Film is a complex medium still in development and Shakespeare has been present in every step of cinematic evolution. One could say that film is an advanced theatrical form and, as theater before it, film has delivered new Shakespearean artists, the "Garricks" of cinematic tradition. This section introduces the cinematic *dissolution* modes of Shakespeare as well as the playwright's presence in the development of film with the names of notable contributors. *Dissolution* modes and cinematic contributors are relevant for indicating the ways Shakespeare is remediated in contemporaneity.

The first mode of *dissolution*, adaptations can manifest as, to use Rajewsky's term[14], transpositions of the literary work into film. We could divide these adaptations in two types: the ones that try to preserve the lines and historical contexts of the plays, such as Carlo Carlei's *Romeo and Juliet* (2013); and the ones that try to preserve the lines through recontextualized settings, such as Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996).

In the second mode, more *diluted* resonances appear in the form of filmic adaptations of literary works based on Shakespeare such as Tom Stoppard's adaptation of his *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* in 1990, or Jocelyn Moorhouse's 1997 adaptation of Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres*.

[14] Irina Rajewsky proposes three categories to aid the mapping of material and compositional influence among and within media; they are medial transposition (*Medienwechsel*), media combination (*Medienkombination*), and intermedial references (*intermediale Bezüge*). According to Rajewsky, in medial transposition "the intermedial quality has to do with the way in which a media product comes into being, i.e., with the transformation of a given media product (a text, a film, etc.) or of its substratum into another medium" (51). The most common examples of this category are the adaptations of literary works into films. The second category, media combination, has its intermedial quality "determined by the medial constellation constituting a given media product, which is to say the result or the very process of combining at least two conventionally distinct media or medial forms of articulation" (51). The combination of music and image in a film exemplifies this category. Finally, in intermedial reference, "[r]ather than combining different medial forms of articulation, the given media-product thematizes, evokes, or imitates elements or structures of another, conventionally distinct medium through the use of its own media-specific means" (52). When a film makes reference to a painting or quotes a literary work, we have an example of intermedial reference. The manifestation of these three categories is not exclusive and it is not uncommon to find all of them combined in a single work.

Concerning the third mode, roughly speaking, appropriations[15] would be like interpretations of Shakespearean works, or films with considerable modifications but no direct references to source *Art solutions*. Gus Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho* (1991) exemplifies this category for it outlines the story of Prince Hal in Keanu Reeves's character, Scott Favor, a young man who keeps the company of fellow prostitutes and display's homosexual preferences. Favor is the son of the mayor of Portland and by the end of the film, after his father's death, rejects his former life and companions. Additional appropriations from the late 1990's and early 2000's are movies directed to teenagers and having high schools as setting. *Ten Things I Hate About You* (1999), *O* (2001), and *She's the Man* (2006) are prominent examples. These *dissolutions* were particularly relevant because they introduced Shakespeare to younger audiences by using their own language and conflicts.

The most common form of *dissolution*, references to Shakespearean works address textual and image-related features. In the same way literary references may use a title or a line, cinematic references appeal to visual and/or verbal hints. An example of verbal reference is in Joss Whedon's *The Avengers* (2012), when Thor faces Iron Man, who looks at the Asgardian's outfit and says in mockery: "Shakespeare in the park? Doth mother know you weareth her drapes?!" Here, the character addresses Shakespeare's style, but direct quotes also fit this mode. For instance, the 1991 film *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country* is loaded with references to various plays, including *Hamlet* in the title. During a dinner with members of the Enterprise, the Klingon Chancellor Gorkon remarks, "You have not experienced Shakespeare until you have read him in the original Klingon." Probably inspired by this scene, *Hamlet* was translated to the conlang[16] from the *Star Trek* universe in *The Klingon Hamlet* (1996). Moving to a visual reference of a play, Duncan Gibbins's *Fire*

[15] I follow Julie Sanders's idea that "appropriation frequently affects a more decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain" (*Adaptation and Appropriation* 26).

[16] "Conlang" means constructed language. It is an artificial language usually created in the fictional context. In the *Star Trek* universe, the conlang "Klingon" is spoken by an alien race from planet Kronos.

*with Fire* (1986) offers a reference through image in which the character Lisa tries to recreate Millais's *Ophelia*.

Another part of the fourth *dissolution* mode is inspired by the controversies about the playwright's life. *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) displays a fictitious affair between Shakespeare and a noble lady who loves theater, while *A Waste of Shame* (2005) speculates on the real inspirations for Shakespeare's sonnets. In *Anonymous* (2011), Roland Emmerich explores the theory that the Shakespearean works were actually composed by Edward De Vere. The comedy *Bill* (2015) portrays Shakespeare as an aspiring playwright who is caught in the middle of a Spanish plot to assassinate Queen Elizabeth. These are just some examples of the of *dissolution* modes; a chronological view of Shakespeare's popularity in cinematic history is another way of illustrating *palimpsestic entropy*.

Shakespeare appears in different stages of filmic technological evolution. The first attempts to put the "Bard" on screen could not voice his words. Film was a purely visual media and directors could rely only on actors' miming performances and texts that occasionally appeared on screen. These technical limitations did not prevent a great number of transpositions, ranging from short sketches to relatively full-length films and from steady camera shots to experimentations on camera angles and editing. As in other media borrowings, *Hamlet* figures as a champion and one of its early transpositions brings yet another innovation, an artistic Joan of Arc in the leading role:

> No wonder, then, that one of the more notable Hamlets of the early twentieth century was enacted *by* a woman. Sarah Bernhardt won acclaim in the part, though audiences had difficulty accepting her as Macbeth or Othello. In addition to popular stage performances, the legendary star performed in an early (1900) film version, a brief rendering of the climactic Hamlet-Laertes duel. . . . Following Bernhardt's minispectacle, there were numerous other

> *Hamlets*, all silent, the most memorable directed by George Melies (France, 1907), Luca Comerio (Italy, 1908), William George Barker (England, 1910), August Blom (Denmark, 1910), Cecil Hepworth (England, 1913), and Eleuterio Rodolfi (Italy, 1917). (Brode 117)

Sound would come to film by the late 1920's and film popularity would be cemented in the 1930s with a great number of productions. It was the 1930s that also witnessed a rising star that would later become a significant name in the palimpsest of Shakespearean films: Laurence Olivier. After playing Orlando in Paul Czinner's *As You Like It* (1936), Olivier assumed the direction as well as the leading roles in *Henry V* (1944), *Hamlet* (1948), and *Richard III* (1955). These adaptations, considered classic, integrated Shakespeare's primary stage to film almost as homage, a form of reverence to their source medium. At the same time, this integration is a mark of the early steps of cinema as a medium – something we are witnessing with broadcast theater, which I analyze in chapters three and four. As Anthony Davies notes,

> All Olivier's films are remarkable for their constant oscillation between the cinematic and the theatrical, and their fusion of the two distinctly different dramatic languages. Not only does this arise from the unconscious instincts of Olivier the film maker, an indication of his claim to be an auteur, but there is, too, a conscious shifting between the elements of the two media. ("The Shakespeare Films of Laurence Olivier" 167)

For instance, the beginning of his *Henry V* takes us back to the Globe, where we watch the first half hour of projection as a filmed play. Olivier performed in four other productions. He put dark make-up on and played Othello in Stuart Burge's 1965 adaptation and was the voice-over in Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968). Olivier played Shylock in John Sichel's *The Merchant of Venice* (1973) and Lear in Michael Elliott's *King Lear* (1983).

Another major name in the Shakespearean palimpsest is Orson Welles, who rose to stardom after *Citizen Kane* (1941). Even though he directed and played the title role in adaptations of *Macbeth* (1948) and *Othello* (1951), *Falstaff - Chimes at Midnight* (1965), a low budget production filmed in Spain, can be considered his best Shakespearean work. Welles's choice of the black and white system at a time when colored motion pictures were already popular may be a visual signification of Falstaff as a character, an undefined construction of gradations or the shades of a personality. Welles used *solvent* configurations to imprint his mark on the *Art solution.*

Integration seems to be a fit word for Franco Zeffirelli's Shakespearean contributions. Zeffirelli puts Shakespeare at the core and surrounds his texts with cinematic ornaments such as color and sound. The Italian director employs *solvent* potentialities as he uses aesthetics to instigate filmic perception and generate feeling regarding Shakespeare's legacy. Each adaptation is surrounded by an appeal to popularity. After the colossal success of *Cleopatra* (1963), Zeffirelli had the duo Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton playing Petruchio and Katharina in *The Taming of the Shrew* (1967). In his *Romeo and Juliet* (1968), the Italian director's cast selection of sixteen-year-old Leonard Whiting and fifteen-year-old Olivia Hussey to portray the protagonists conveyed a magnifying effect on romantic love and its sorrows, reaching an iconic status of popularity. In 1986, Zeffirelli directed a filmic version of Verdi's opera *Otello* with Placido Domingo in dark make-up in the title role. This film, however, did not receive the popular attention of his previous and his next adaptations. Under the aura of action films from the 1980s, *Hamlet (*1990), starring Mel Gibson as a resolute and troubled Hamlet, was another of Zeffirelli's steps towards popularization, "by stripping away all semblance of theatricality, replacing archaic conventions with the more immediate sensation of a mainstream 'movie-movie'" (Brode 136). This way, Zeffirelli's adaptations seal the triangle Shakespeare-film-popularity (*solute-solvent*-reception).

Popularization with experimentation marks Kenneth Branagh's eclecticism. The British actor/director provides examples of all the modes cited at the beginning of this section. Branagh is Shakespeare at the highest cinematic *entropy*. In his *Henry V* (1989), he adapts but also alters in order to present film as a new stage for Shakespeare. He preserves the chorus and changes setting; instead of a theater, the location for the opening "O for a muse of fire" is a film studio. Branagh had his mind set towards "populist, anti-elitist productions, rendering the plays easily accessible to the general public" (Brode 80). Thus, his performance of Henry V brought the character closer to a still evolving prince instead of presenting a consolidated king. Branagh's *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993) seems to be a recognition of Hollywood's popular appeal and a statement on diversity through the casting of Denzel Washington to play Don Pedro opposite Keanu Reeves playing his bastard brother, Don John. However, we must not mistake popularization with low quality. Branagh, as others did before him, seems to follow Shakespeare's example of treating instigating topics through popular eyes. Mark Thornton Burnett addresses Branagh's choices on locations and speech delivery as revealing marks of Shakespeare's cinematic potentiality as, "[b]y lacing *Much Ado About Nothing* with such textual intricacies and scenic messages, Branagh is able to maintain his audience in a critically active state" (88). Branagh played Iago in Oliver Parker's *Othello* (1995) opposite an unappealing Laurence Fishburne in the leading role. In the same year, Branagh wrote and directed the referential *A Midwinter's Tale*, the story of a performance of *Hamlet* assembled by an unemployed actor during Christmas. In 1996, Branagh released his integral text *Hamlet,* with nothing less than four hours of projection. Even though he maintained the text, visually speaking, "Branagh extended and revised the family focus of Noble's RSC production, which looked back at Shakespeare's play through the Scandinavian eyes of Ibsen, Strindberg and Ingmar Bergman" (Crowl 227). Branagh's *Art solution* honors the traditions of his *solute* and *solvent*. In *Love Labour's Lost* (2000),

Branagh remodeled the story of the King of Navarre and his friends into a classical musical, catching the eyes and the ears of the audience. The British director mixes admiration and criticism on Hollywood, "for Branagh cleverly makes a reverse allusion to Hollywood's star system and to *Clueless* when he borrows Alicia Silverstone as his own spoiled princess" (Guneratne 116). As a result, the film dialogues with its own industry. In *As You Like It* (2006), Branagh establishes a dialogue of cultures. Cast, setting and characterization reflect different ethnic groups and cultural values. For instance, the story happens in nineteenth-century Japan, Orlando and Oliver are played by Black actors, and Rosalind and Celia blend Western fashion with Japanese accessories. This mixture was not well received by critics and this film did not accompany the recognition of Branagh's previous productions. Nevertheless, his constant experimentation supported the potentiality of filming Shakespeare.

Branagh's experimentations are not isolated cases. Jack Bender's *The Tempest* (1998) recreates the play in the American Civil War context and Prospero, a destitute Mississippi plantation owner initiated in the arts of voodoo, ends up living with his daughter on an island in the bayou. Julie Taymor's *Titus* (1999) presents Shakespeare's tragedy under futuristic imagery while her *The Tempest* (2010) plays with gender and replaces Prospero for Prospera. Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet* (2000) turns the Danish Prince into the heir of the Denmark Corporation, wandering around a New York dominated by screens and surveillance. Fourteen years later, Almereyda's next appropriation transforms King Cymbeline into the leader of a motorcycle gang in conflict with the Roman police force. *Looking for Richard* (1996) is Al Pacino's exposure of adaptation issues and Shakespeare's ongoing influence in contemporary culture. There is no shortage of examples, even from Eastern cultures. Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* (1957) moves the story of *Macbeth* to feudal Japan and his *Ran* (1985) is a Japanese counterpart of *King Lear*. Bollywood also offers its contributions; for instance, Vishal Bhardwaj has recently produced a trilogy of films based on Shakespeare's most

popular tragedies. *Maqbool* (2003) is a version of *Macbeth*; Omkara (2006) takes inspiration from Othello; and *Haider* (2014) borrows from *Hamlet*.

Films introduced varied forms to connect with Shakespeare. These brief samples attest to this fact. The great challenge of filmmakers is how to approach Shakespeare according to the aimed audience. As Douglas Brode claims, "[t]he director of Shakespearean cinema is akin to an Arthurian knight searching for the Holy Grail, on a quest to achieve the impossible dream by reconciling Shakespeare's immortal poetry with cinema's potent imagery" (8). This legendary quest of Shakespearean cinematic *dissolutions* paved the way for further screen adaptations in TV and digital arts.

### 2.2.5. Other Screens

TVs, computers, tablets, videogames, and even smartphones are potential platforms for displaying Shakespearean *dissolutions*. New forms of consumption hold hands with new forms of production and Shakespeare continues to be a media chameleon, adapting to every new environment. Additionally, the screens are popular entertainment sets; so, *screen dissolutions* consolidate Shakespeare as an article of popular culture. This section provides a quick look at the playwright's adaptation skills in other screens.

TV follows the cinematic *dissolution* modes. *The Hollow Crown*, a series produced by the BBC, has had two seasons with film-length-long episodes. The first season (2012) adapted *Richard II*, *Henry IV – Parts 1 and 2*, and *Henry V*. Season Two (2016) adapted the parts of *Henry VI* and *Richard III*. Despite some editing and creative insertions, the series is an adaptation because of its highly *concentrated* transposition of source *Art solutions*. The series *ShakespeaRe-Told* (2005) exemplifies the term appropriation with varied *concentrations* of Shakespeare in four episodes that *dissolve Much Ado About Nothing*, *Macbeth*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. References continue to be the most common form of *dissolution*. An overwhelming number of series,

soap operas, and other TV shows quote, misquote, or just make allusions to Shakespeare. I will only cite here some examples collected in the last couple of years from American, Canadian, British, Mexican and Brazilian channels and streaming services such as NETFLIX: *Doctor Who, Star Trek, Red Band Society, Outlander, Luke Cage, Mindhunter, When Calls the Heart, The Librarians, Supernatural, This Is Us, The Crown, Dear White People, Manhunt: Unabomber, Revenge, Sherlock, Westworld, Big Little Lies, Sense 8, Once Upon a Time, Gotham, House of Cards, Young Sheldon, The Kominsky Method, La Tempestad, Som & Fúria, Orgulho & Paixão, Dia de Reis, Lucifer, The Simpsons, Criminal Minds, The Middle, Gilmore Girls, House M.D., Empire, Castle,* and *Downton Abbey*. The nature and length of this research does not allow detailing the references in all the *Art solutions* mentioned above. Nevertheless, as with all the productions in all sections, simply mentioning them serves my purpose of exposing the wide variety of Shakespearean reach as a direct support to the evolving *entropic* nature of the Shakespeare's palimpsest.

The internet is the greatest media phenomenon of the last decades. It enables new forms of *dissolving* Shakespeare, such as websites, social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and so on), and web series. An example of a Shakespeare dedicated website with interesting content is Mia Gosling's goodticklebrain.com, in which the artist offers several comic stripes featuring plays, characters, themes, and the "Bard" in the form of stick-figures. Gosling's approach to Shakespearean themes is full of humor and, as a result, "Bard-related" content becomes more accessible to contemporary young audiences. Moving to content produced for social media, an initiative in 2010 transformed Twitter[17] into another Shakespearean stage with *Such a Tweet Sorrow*[18], an adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* featuring six characters and their Twitter accounts: Romeo (@romeo_mo), Juliet

[17] Twitter is known as a microblog in which people share personal and collective content of 140 characters.

[18] For a detailed description and analysis of this project, I recommend Clara Matheus Nogueira's master's thesis, *Shakespeare in the Timeline: An Analysis of RSC's Such Tweet Sorrow and #dream40*.

(@juletcap16), Tybalt (@Tybalt_Cap), Jesse (@Jesse_nurse), Mercutio (@mercuteio), and Larry (@LaurenceFriar). The accounts were administrated by actors from the Royal Shakespeare Company who "interacted with one another as well as with the audience of Twitter followers in 'real time,' improvising on the 'missions' … and reacting to events taking place at the time, such as the 2010 political elections in Britain, the London Marathon and Champions League matches" (Calbi 137). A final example of stage for Shakespearean *dissolutions* is the video streaming website Youtube. A number of people can post their videos on a variety of topics and it did not take long to appear new modalities of contents. There are Youtube channels solely dedicated to Shakespeare. More recently, there has been a proliferation of webseries inspired by the playwright – a phenomenon I will exemplify in chapter 4. My aim was to show that the screens have Shakespearean *dissolutions* for all tastes and audiences.

On a final note on screen *dissolutions*, I just want to mention broadcast theater as a significant contribution with *palimpsestic entropy*. This hybrid medium that combines screen and theater will appear in chapters 3 and 4, illustrating the *entropic* potential a Shakespearean *solute* can reach.

### 2.2.6. Media & Cultures: More *Solvents*

In order to complete this panorama of *dissolutions* and their *entropic* effect in Shakespeare's palimpsest, attention must be paid to other cultural productions. Even though I could cover manifestations in everyday language, video-games, architecture, special issues of coins and stamps, clothes, jewelry, bags, and holsehold goods among other souvenirs, I will restrict this section to brief comments about *dissolutions* in comic books, radio, advertising, and sports, just to step outside the common ground of cultural analysis of Shakespearean resonances.

Comic books are a medium of their own that share *dissolution* methods with media such as literature and film. Comics and graphic novels offer samples of adaptations, appropriations, and references. It is not difficult to find adaptations and appropriations of Shakespearean plays in graphic novels in varied languages, but, once again, references are the most common manifestations. Marvel and DC Comics offer the most influential publications regarding the flagship of comic books: super-heroes. A sample *dissolution* from Marvel, Ian Doescher wrote a Deadpool story in which the mercenary lives an adventure in Shakespearean form, *Much Ado about Deadpool* (October 2016). Doescher blends Deadpool and several Shakespearean in a series of puns. In the DC front, Neil Gaiman features Shakespeare in three issues of *The Sandman*. The most notorious appearance is in *The Sandman #19 – Dream Country: A Midsummer Night's Dream* (September 1990), in which Lord Morpheus watches Shakespeare's theatrical company perform *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. These examples show the reach of Shakespeare in cultural niches considered improbable for four-hundred-year-old *Art solutions* to be *solutes*.

Like other media, radio has evolved and Shakespeare was a presence in its development. The marriage of radio and drama invited audiences to exercise imagination. As Lanier argues, "Commentators and practitioners agree that radio drama is, in the words of CBS Radio Workshop, 'the theater of the mind.' It requires its audience to envision a fictional world – characters, blocking, settings, props, time frames, and the like – from aural cues, from dialogue, sound effects, music, and the actors' intonation delivery"("WSHX: Shakespeare and American Radio" 196). Before his success in cinemas, Orson Welles was responsible for performances of *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth* in the 30s. Meanwhile in Britain, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) brought Shakespeare to the intimacy of homes, with options to all ages, including children. Later on, in a manifestation of media interaction, cinema influenced radio productions as Susanne Greenhalgh informs us, "[t]he

Branagh-led wave of Shakespeare films in the 1990s influenced the development of 'audio movie' versions, as when the 2001 *Much Ado About Nothing* borrowed his 1993 film's opening by having Beatrice sing 'Sigh No More Ladies' to accompanying female laughter" (187). Currently, we can find diversified material in the form of podcasts[19].

Shakespeare's notoriety has contributed for his career in marketing. Chocolate and canned food advertisements featuring Shakespeare date back to the nineteenth century. In the last century, he was used on posters selling Ford cars and Budweiser beer. More recently, TV commercials featuring Shakespeare or referring to his works are not hard to find. Reinforcing its famous slogan "Red Bull gives you wings," one of Red Bull's animated pieces features the playwright drinking it and having a wave of inspiration while he writes *Hamlet*; then, the drink is taken from him along with his inspiration leaving him to write, "and the rest is silence." As we may note, Shakespeare provides context and a final pun, aiming at some humor. An additional example comes from Apple's TV commercial of its iphone 7, in which we watch a performance of *Romeo and Juliet* by children surrounded by a cinematic aura, only to realize that it was a father filming his daughter's school play; the commercial ends with "Your movies look like movies on iPhone 7." Thus, as Hamlet urges the actors to "suit the action to the word, the word to the action," these advertisements suit Shakespeare's words to the action of presenting their products.

My final examples cover the interaction Shakespeare-sports. Much is explored in Shakespeare's texts about politics, love, power, and metaphysics, among other topics, but the playwright also talked about sports such as fencing and tennis. Having this in mind, two Shakespeareans and sports aficionados, Chris Coluluzzi and Matt Toner rewrote Shakespearean plays into matches in their book *Shakespeare's Sports Canon* (2005). More like a parody, the book seems to be an attempt to explain Shakespeare through sports,

[19] Podcasts are audio files on the internet available for listening or downloading.

appealing to this popular form of entertainment. On the other hand, we have an example of Shakespeare being used as a symbol of national pride through interference in the opening ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games in London. Kenneth Branagh, impersonating British inventor Isambard Kingdom Brunel, recited the speech "Be not afeard. The isle is full of noises…" from *The Tempest*. The act was an exaltation of the host country through the words of their most well-known literary icon, lending an aura of high culture to the popular event.

Shakespeare's original *alchemy* was already a mixture with multiple elements and, consequently, it displayed significant levels of *entropy*. In the seventeenth century, literature compiled the Shakespearean production and became the basis of a productive palimpsest. At first, theatrical, literary, musical, and pictorial hypertexts *dissolved* Shakespeare but maintained high *concentrations* of the original *solute*, i.e. the *Art solutions* were clearly identified as belonging to the Shakespearean palimpsest. As time passed, there was an increase in *palimpsestic entropy*, for multiple *solvents* were at work in the *dissolution* of multiple *concentrations* of the playwright. The twentieth and twenty-first centuries feature an *entropic boom*; media and cultures have displayed varied co-existing Shakespearean *concentrations*.

All the world and media are Shakespearean stages. As Garber states, "Shakespeare is in a way always two playwrights, not one: the playwright of his time, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in England, and the playwright of our time, whatever time that is. The playwright of now" (*Shakespeare After All* 28). Shakespeare speaks to us because he touches the core of what is human. This idea has been prevalent for centuries. It is not my place to contest it, but some addition seems providential. A complementary reason for Shakespearean popularity may be that even though we change technologically and gather new knowledge and cultural paradigms, humans have not changed; we are still moved by the

same passions, virtues, and vices Shakespeare dealt with. The playwright has the merit of accessing these elemental emotions as well as humans failed to evolve at their essence.

This chapter has offered an overview on the growing *entropy* of the Shakespearean palimpsest. In order to have a better picture of Shakespeare's timeless influence, the elements that instigate Shakespearean *dissolutions*, the next two chapters will focus on *entropic remediations*, i.e. the multiple explorations of Shakespearean content covering the trajectory of two plays: *Coriolanus* and *Much Ado about Nothing*. The choice of these two plays is not arbitrary. They support my point on the stagnation of human sentiments as well as Shakespeare's talent to exploit them. *Coriolanus* seems suitable to the current planetary political situation; *Much Ado about Nothing* echoes issues concerning gender roles and relations.

# Chapter 3 - *(Dis)solving* Stages:

## *Coriolanus* from Text to *National Theater Live*

I shall be loved when I am lacked.

. . . . . .

. . . Tell these sad women
'Tis fond to wail inevitable strokes,
As 'tis to laugh at 'em. Mother, you wot well
My hazards still have been your solace: and
Believe't not lightly—though I go alone,
Like to a lonely dragon that his fen
Makes feared and talked of more than seen—your son
Will or exceed the common or be caught
With cautelous baits and practice.
(*Coriolanus* IV. 1. 15-33)

Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* dates from between 1605 and 1608. The story portrays Rome around 500 B.C. This chronological distance has not prevented several (re)productions of the play over the centuries. As an *Art solution* which turned into a *solute, Coriolanus* accounts for *entropic* movements in the Shakespearean palimpsest with stages over stages of *entropic remediations*. Although there may be connections to *palimpsestic entropy*, this chapter aims to introduce and analyze some *Art solutions* and the way they *dissolve* Shakespearean elements. I use *Coriolanus*, hypotext and hypertexts, to illustrate *palimpsestic*

*entropy* (briefly) and *entropic remediations* (in more details), in order to show *entropic movements* (combinations / variations of elements) according to *solvent* dynamics (new *solvents* mean new *dissolution* forms) and contextual influences (extra-compositional features). The study of these *dissolutions* reveals their progressive *entropy*.

The variation of elements in sources and derivations of *Coriolanus* is connected to aspects of human nature (social organization, politics, and human relations and psychology in general). The conducting thread of my analysis in this chapter is in how the political / hierarchical organization of society affects human behavior and is affected by human nature. These political issues account for the continuous elements in: a) the historical narrative which inspired Shakespeare; b) the playwright's *Art solution*; and c) hypertexts of *Coriolanus*. Thus, the inertia of human nature is confirmed by this map of the Shakespearean palimpsest.

The chapter is divided into five main sections, the "acts." Each act contains "scenes," subsections, smaller blocks of unified content. In order to avoid confusion with the scenes from the *Art solutions*, I do not refer to these subsections as scenes in my text; this division aims to illustrate the journey of Shakespearean content in parallel with the dramatic structure: (I) starting with the exposition to the elements in the sources, (II) the transmutation/complication of these elements in the play, (III) changes through the reverberation of these elements outside the play, (IV) the consolidation of these elements in cinematic resonances, and (V) the final *entropic* outcome of the elements in broadcast theater. In more details, the first act illustrates the *Shakespearean alchemy* by introducing sources that were *dissolved* by the playwright in the construction of *Coriolanus*, revealing the *entropy* of the original *Art solution*. Historical, literary, biblical, and contextual references are *dissolved* in the theatrical vessel. In the second act, I provide an analysis of *Coriolanus*, with elements connected to the main character's journey in three characteristic spheres of human nature. Besides providing background for those unfamiliar with the story, the interpretation of

these textual elements will be useful to see how they are *dissolved* in hypertextual *Art solutions*. The third act exemplifies this (re)arrangement of Shakespearean elements in some hypertextual *Art solutions*, touching on *palimpsestic entropy*. The *entropic crescendo* within contemporary hypertexts will be introduced in the fourth and fifth acts, two sections with a more detailed analysis of *dissolutions* in film and broadcast theater, providing ultimate examples of *entropic remediations*. The sections may have occasional parallels between *Coriolanus* and other Shakespearean plays, indicating *entropic* movements in the playwright's oeuvre and aiding the reader's understanding of some aspects surrounding this "less notorious" play.

### 3.1. Act I – Hypotexts: *Dissolving* Sources

In order to practice his *alchemy*, Shakespeare had to consider the features of *solvent* in association to his *solute*. In a manner, these components get into a symbiotic relation that is surrounded by extra-compositional aspects related to audiences. According to Martin Wiggins,

> Probably one of the first plays the King's Men performed at the Blackfriars was *Coriolanus*: its composition coincided roughly with the acquisition of the new theatre, and in several respects Shakespeare seems to be testing out the dramatic possibilities of the different space. The play has little heroic sweep of the earlier tragedies: with its narrow, geographically restricted setting of early republican Rome, it is his most relentless and gripping portrayal of political debate; even the densely compacted language demands an attention that is more intellectual than emotional. (29)

*Coriolanus* suits the action and the words to this new stage and its particular audience. As Lee Bliss informs, "*Coriolanus*'s intense political debates and prominent use of legal terminology would also have appealed to the law students of the nearly Inns of Court, who frequented the Blackfriars and often themselves entered politics . . ." (5). So, the intellectual demand and density of the play result from the configurations of the *solvent*.

As previously stated, Shakespeare is an expert in patchwork. The playwright combines his source material focusing on two types of contextualization: Rome of the early republic and England of the Renaissance. Material on the story of the Roman soldier Coriolanus provides inspiration for plot and historical background, the play's ambience. References to events and elements known to contemporary audiences attribute critical association along with some didactical presentation of the story. The combination dynamics of these two dimensions attest Shakespeare's levels of *entropy* and foreshadow the *entropic* movements in his palimpsest.

The following subsections will introduce the referential realms of *Coriolanus* with occasional comments on the human issues that are reverberated. Further analysis will be developed in the close reading section so we can finally move to the sections on hypertexts. This way, my point about the inertia of the human nature that supports Shakespeare's notoriety will be supported, for the same elements are recurrent from sources to hypertexts.

### Scene 1 – Historical References

"The Life of Caius Martius Coriolanus" in Plutarch's *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans*, translated by Sir Thomas North, figures as the main direct source of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*. Dobson and Wells inform that although "several major passages, notably Volumnia's appeal in 5.1 (95-183), are taken almost verbatim," Shakespeare expanded her influence in the play as well as Menenius's (90). This was a way to build a

parental influence to the mind of Coriolanus, a psychological element that is *dissolved* in some hypertexts.

William Camden's *Remains of a Greater Work Concerning Britain*, Titus Livy's *History of Rome*, and William Averell's *Meruailous Combat of Contrarietie* are additional sources, all three containing "the fable of body parts" used by Menenius in the first act. The *dissolution* of these sources shows that the rhetoric that defends social hierarchy is just appropriated by Shakespeare.

### Scene 2 – Literary References

Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* account for direct and indirect references that, here, bear the social division between men's and women's duties in society. Volumnia's reference to Hector and Hecuba can be traced back to the *Iliad*. In psychological terms, the mother seems to fulfill her wishes and place her frustrations on her son's shoulders, demanding the martial behavior she cannot put into practice because of gender roles. Polarizing the female roles, as a dutiful wife, Virgilia's absorption in her needlework while her husband is at war echoes Penelope's deceptive weaving during Odysseus's absence in the *Odyssey*.

Further resonances from Greek and Latin literature are numerous. For instance, Shakespeare seems to develop some Aristotelian ideas in the construction of the main character according to Hannibal Hamlin:

> But Shakespeare also seems to have had in mind a more universal political problem expressed in Aristotle's *Politics*: "But he that cannot abide to live in companie, or through sufficiency hath need of nothing is not esteemed a part or member of a Cittie, but is either a beast or a god." Man is by nature a social animal, according to Aristotle, essentially interdependent with his fellow

> humans, which makes a fiercely independent loner like Coriolanus an anomaly, with no legitimate place in the *polis*. (199)

Indirectly, Aristotle provides an idea of the three realms potentially enclosed in human nature: the "beast" (animal), the "man" (human), and the "god" (divine). This notion will be developed in my close reading of the play.

**Scene 3 – Biblical References**

Even though they may disturb some viewers, readers, critics, and scholars, anachronisms are helpful tools in the construction of understanding. They bring story closer to history; they are the direct interference of extra-compositional elements in compositional elements. In *Coriolanus*, these anachronisms appear explicitly or implicitly. In order to identify them, one must have some knowledge of English Renaissance aspects. For instance, religion was a strong force in people's lives and members of the audience could identify biblical references and infer on possible biblical connections during the performances. So, even though the story is set in 500 B.C., elements of a more developed Christianity contextualize the play to English Renaissance audiences.

As I intend to bring to light in the next section, the association of Coriolanus to biblical ideas of divinity is a recurrent issue. In the present section, two examples provided by Hamlin support this point. First, in an explicit allusion:

> The tribune Sicinius states that Coriolanus's hatred of the people
>
> > Will be his fire
> > To kindle their dry stubble; and their blaze
> > Shall darken him forever. (2.1.255–7)
>
> Though the tribune is, of course, unaware of it, his language echoes Isaiah's description of the judgment of Jehovah: "Therefore as the flame of fyre

> devoureth the stubble, and as the chaff e is consumed of the flame . . . . Therefore is the wrath of the Lord kindled against the people, and he hathe stretched out his hand upon them" (Isa. 5:24–5). The godlike Coriolanus's wrathful disposition toward the people of Rome thus parallels that of Isaiah's wrathful god toward Israel. (200)

The biblical touch in the play is not exclusive from the *Old Testament*. Coriolanus is constantly associated to the most important divinity in the *New Testament*: Jesus Christ. The samples are not so explicit but they can be inferred in the scenes, "2.3, in which he must humbly seek the favor of the people; 3.3, when the crowd turns on him and calls for his death; 5.3, when he returns to Rome in judgment but shows mercy to the city after the intervention of his mother; and 5.6, which returns to the situation of 3.3 but with a different outcome" (201). My close reading returns to some of these passages; however, I build a simile to another Christian Martyr whose life is not narrated in the Bible.

**Scene 4 – Contextual References**

As stated above, contemporary events are reflected in the *solute* composition in Shakespeare. The most explicit reference to contemporary events is the plebeian revolt that opens the play, which audiences would associate to the Midlands uprisings of 1607–8, protests over the abusive increases of food prices. According to Michael Hattaway:

> Like the aggrieved and starving plebeians in the play, the ill-organised and ill-equipped peasants in England protested the hoarding of grain and the laws that ignored the poor to make the rich richer. R. B. Parker observes that the phrasing of complaint in the play, particularly the plebeians' paradoxical resolve 'to die than to famish' (1.1.3), appears also in a Warwickshire petition

> (*c.*1607); moreover, Roman arguments and images, particularly those of cannibalism, idle bellies, and cormorants, echo contemporary protests. (211)

Story shows that history repeats itself. The dynamics and tensions of social division in Rome are not far from those in the Jacobean era. The clash of social classes and the politics of the new King also find recognizable parallels in the play. Still as reported by Hattaway:

> In 1598 James articulated his absolutist doctrine of monarchy in *The True Law of Free Monarchs*, and upon his accession in 1603, entered into continuous debate with the House of Commons about royal prerogatives and popular rights. In 1605, while arguing that the crown had the right to purchase goods below market rates, James, who disliked staging himself in public performances for commoners, disparaged his opponents as 'some tribunes of the people, whose mouths could not be stopped'. James' habit of identifying his reign with imperial sway naturally prompted identification of opponents as tribunes here and elsewhere. And like Coriolanus, many English aristocrats insisted on their innate superiority to the masses. These groups debated the issue of representation and the processes of appointment and election, with all the attendant questions concerning the rights and responsibilities of the electorate. The play reflects contemporary tensions between classes and theories of rule as it depicts opposing claims and competing centres of authority. (211-2)

Therefore, more than a piece of entertainment inspired by the life of a man from ancient Rome, *Coriolanus* is a disguised chronicle of Shakespeare's contemporary context. Considering the Shakespearean palimpsest, the hypertexts of the play will preserve this tendency and reflect contextual ideologies.

### 3.2. Act II – Close Reading: The Play Within The Play

*Coriolanus* is permeated by ambiguity. Its protagonist has the potential to inspire sympathy and antipathy. Caius Martius is a Roman soldier during a period of conflict between Romans and the Volscians. Part of the privileged class, Martius despises the plebeians and their causes. After returning from a successful campaign against the Volscian Army, whose leader is his enemy Aufidius, the newly named Coriolanus is directed to submit his candidacy for consulship in spite of his reluctance to join politics. At first, he is elected by the plebeians he despises, but soon after, he has to face their inconstancy as they withdraw their votes by the influence of two tribunes. His martial nature and the political articulations of the tribunes cause his exile from Rome. The enraged Coriolanus allies himself with Aufidius's army to attack Rome. When Rome is about to be attacked, his mother's plea changes his mind and he gives up the attack, causing the wrath of Aufidius and the Volscians, who stab Coriolanus to death. The play reveals the thin fabric of social structures in democratic societies. Individual and collective forces struggle as human fickleness emerges. Ambiguity is a strong force in human behavior, manifesting itself in a dance of contrasts in the play.

This section is different from a close reading that exposes all the aspects of a work. Besides introducing *Coriolanus* to those unfamiliar with the play, my close reading intends to focus on elements in character construction and social dynamics, passing through the three spheres of human nature (animal, human, and divine realms), mostly guided by political bias. The reworking of these elements will attest the *entropic* movements within *Art Solutions* and *palimpsestic entropy*. This analysis is not attached to any specific theoretical view; it is my own reading of the play within the play.

### Scene 1 – Hero or "The Dog to the Commonalty"

The strong presence of ambiguity in the play enables ideological approaches in its hypertexts. The dance of contrasts in *Coriolanus* is established at the beginning of the play, in which we have the indirect introduction of its protagonist through the points of view of two characters. During a revolt caused by the dearth of grain, two citizens exchange impressions about Caius Martius. First Citizen adopts an accusatory tone, describing Martius as an enemy to the people, and justifies his view, ". . . for the gods know, I speak this in hunger, not in thirst for revenge" (I. 1. 18-9). This perspective receives the support of other citizens who describe Martius as ". . . a very dog to the commonalty" (I. 1. 21). Second Citizen seems to recognize these accusations as the desire to have an escaping goat and tries to call the others' attention to Martius's military service for Rome. To the First Citizen's reply that Martius ". . . did it to please his mother and to be partly proud, which he is, even to the altitude of his virtue" (I. 1. 29-30), Second Citizen tries to justify the soldier's behavior: "What he cannot help in his nature you account a vice in him. You must in no way say he is covetous" (I. 1. 31-2). Somehow, this exchange anticipates the complexities displayed by the protagonist, from a war hero to a contemptuous noble who despises common people. As readers and audiences tend to favor their own perspectives regarding the character, Martius stands as a lonely figure in the spotlight. Maybe the greatest tragedy of this play lies in the alienation of the protagonist. Martius is hated, admired, loved, envied, and even worshiped by other characters, but he has no pairs. All in all, Martius is singular because he is the only character that passes through the three potential realms of human nature one may find in the play.

### Scene 2 – The Three Realms

The atmosphere of the play establishes an interaction among three realms: the animal realm, characterized by instincts, lack of rationality, and stoicism; the human realm, governed

by rationalization, rhetorical expressions, human bonds and feelings; the divine realm basically embodies godlike qualities such as immortality and abnegation of ego. Somehow, these realms depend on each other in order to exist and, consequently, they establish a symbiotic relation, mostly but not entirely, guided by political interests.

Initially, the divine appears as a human creation used to explain and justify the organization of the human world. For instance, echoing absolutist arguments from European kings in the centuries to come, Menenius transfers the responsibility for people's suffering from government to the gods, ". . . For the dearth, / The gods, not the patricians, make it, and / Your knees to them, not arms, must help" (I. 1. 58-60). The source of human suffering as well as its solution is in the divine realm and commoners must submit their pleas to the gods instead of threatening the nobles. In sum, the divine is reduced to a rhetorical figure. What Menenius fails to acknowledge is the Patricians', including Martius's, accountability for storing grain and depriving people's access to it.

Hierarchy and, in particular, social hierarchy seems to be at the core of Roman society. Menenius's rhetoric also makes use of mundane elements for the purposes of argumentation. As a member of Senate, he defends the privileges of his class as condition for the greater good. Here, Menenius illustrates social order by telling the "fable of body parts," in which all the other organs of the body revolt against the belly, accusing it of idleness. The belly answers by pointing out its own vital importance to the functioning of the whole body since it stocks and redistributes the energy of food to the organism. The Patrician concludes:

> The senators of Rome are this good Belly,
> And you the mutinous members: for examine
> Their counsels and their cares, digest things rightly
> Touching the weal o'th' common, you shall find
> No public benefit which you receive

But it proceeds or comes from them to you,

And no way from yourselves. (I. 1. 131-7)

Thus, the noble senator appeals to mundane and divine elements to construct his argument to ease the hungry and angry mob, suggesting that the benefits the commoners enjoy derive from Patrician efforts and the plebeian misfortunes are acts of the gods.

Politics and rhetoric are closely connected in the play, designating politics as part of the human realm. Menenius's use of mundane and divine elements is not what makes the senator a skillful orator and a member of the human realm; it is the way he tries to employ them. In order to prove this point, we may call attention to the use Martius makes of similar elements with a different outcome; instead of manipulation, Martius employs honesty. The soon to be Coriolanus addresses the citizens with undisguised disdain:

. . . and your affections are

A sick man's appetite, who desires most that

Which would increase his evil. He that depends

Upon your favours swims with fins of lead

And hews down oaks with rushes. Hang ye! Trust ye?

With every minute you do change a mind,

And call him noble that was now your hate,

Him vile that was your garland. What's the matter,

That in these several places of the city

You cry against the noble Senate, who

Under the gods keep you in awe, which else

Would feed on one another?

(I. 1. 160-171)

In Martius's speech, the body didactically used by Menenius to illustrate the Roman social stratification turns into a sick organism, desirous of what worsens its condition, in a parallel to plebeians and their desires. Martius places the senators as a disciplinary force "under the gods," employing the divine as a parameter to the Patrician (and plebeian) stations in society. The noble soldier does not hold back possible offences against the citizens and his attitude, despite being honest, inspires antipathy. However, further on in the story, the citizens' fickle behavior vouches for Martius's assessment of them. This way, *Coriolanus* is not a simple narrative founded on the binary of good and bad, hero and villain. Shakespeare's use of ambiguity results in an open field for interpretation.

### Scene 3 – The Animal Realm: Preys and Predators

Animal behavior is mostly based on survival instincts. The predator hunts its prey and the prey tries to escape its predator, both based on self-preservation instincts. These animal kingdom dynamics aid the understanding of several similes used in the play. Since human beings are no prey to other animals, we are our own predator. When the citizens call Martius "a very dog to the commonalty," they place him in the category of predator. Indirectly, he endorses social stratification as a reflection of the animal kingdom, portraying plebeians as a horde that must be controlled; otherwise they "feed on one another." He states:

> What would you have, you curs,
> That like nor peace nor war? The one affrights you,
> The other makes you proud. He that trusts to you,
> Where he should find you lions, finds you hares,
> Where foxes, geese you are – no surer, no,
> Than is the coal of fire upon the ice,
> Or hailstone in the sun. (I. 1. 151-7)

Martius addresses them as “curs,” representing citizens as stray dogs; in addition, instead of predators such as lions and foxes, he compares them to prey such as geese and hares. Martius sees them as mild-natured animals that can easily turn into prey and predators of themselves. As stated above, he is not wrong in his assessment, for they fall prey to opposite discourses and are responsible for shifting Coriolanus from the position of predator to the position of prey. Therefore, we could conclude that in human societies, the relationship of predator and prey lies in the ideological realm. If one conquers the body, it does not mean the conquering of the mind; but if the mind is conquered, the body succumbs. In the human realm, rhetoric equals animal fangs. Humans hunt with words.

Still concerning animal similes, Martius describes his Volscian enemy Tullus Aufidius as follows,“He is a lion / That I am proud to hunt” (I. 1. 218-9). For the Roman soldier, the Volscian is also a predator, an equal. Even the name of the antagonist bears the symbolism of one of nature’s most dangerous predators, the ophidians or snakes, dangerous and poisonous animals that can be deadly. Also, in a human appropriation inherited from Christian mythology, snakes stand for deceptive creatures. The name Aufidius points to two levels of deception: first, it foreshadows the ultimate betrayal suffered by Coriolanus in the play – the Volscians kill Coriolanus under the influence of Aufidius; second, by considering the three realms introduced at the beginning of this analysis, we tend to place Aufidius in the animal realm, the realm of instinct, and by doing so, we misread the Volscian who, in fact, shares a stronger connection to the human realm in what concerns rhetoric. Even though he has battled Martius in several occasions and raises armies, Aufidius, in comparison to Martius, is more politician than soldier. Yet, Aufidius transits in both realms, animal and human, for he is able to lead his “pack” of Volscians both physically and ideologically. Men follow him in battle in the first act of the play and succumb to his ideas in the last act. Martius, on the other hand, is still confined to the animal realm, putting his predator instincts

only into personal use and unable to convince the men to follow him into Corioles. Martius seems to be aware of his own limitations and expresses jealousy towards Aufidius: “I sin in envying his nobility; / And were I anything but what I am, / I would, wish me only he” (I. 1. 214-6). Much is discussed about Coriolanus’s reasons for venturing into politics and Volumnia is often pointed as the main trigger. However, one must not neglect the influence of Aufidius on Coriolanus’s decision. The way the Roman soldier refers to his Volscian enemy implies a level of admiration. One could say that Coriolanus sees Aufidius as a Henry V, as noble and skillful in politics as in the battlefield. Accordingly, it is possible to interpret Coriolanus’s candidacy for Consul as a way to become more like his Volscian antagonist.

### Scene 4 – Body and Wounds

The Romans’ triumphs over the Volscians along with the conquest of Corioles are attributed to Martius, who receives the title of Coriolanus. This addition to Caius Martius’s name attests his supremacy in aspects related to the animal realm. His wounded body, frequently mentioned during the play, turns into a symbol of victory, an affirmation of his predator status. In addition, there are characters that perceive his wounds as assurance of power and notoriety in the human realm. For instance, Volumnia and Menenius talk about the scars as signs of merit, worthy of adoration, actual tickets to his consulship. The display of Coriolanus’s body and his wounds become a rhetorical device, a sort of currency in exchange for political influence.

Once again, what I address as the animal realm is the dimension of physical deeds, in which instincts manifest through action and the abnegation of feelings prevail as a matter of self-preservation. This is the world Caius Martius is conditioned to inhabit. The main agent of this conditioning is Volumnia; she rejoices in her son’s martial deeds and displays her inclinations to a sorrowful Virgilia:

> Away, you fool! It more becomes a man
> Than gilt his trophy. The breasts of Hecuba,
> When she did suckle Hector, looked not lovelier
> Than Hector's forehead when it spit forth blood
> At Grecian sword, contemning. (I. 3. 34-8)

By showing her preference for Hector's bloody brow instead of the bonding between mother and son, Volumnia expresses her disdain for emotional connection. As Lee Bliss states, "She has taught him that neediness – for food, for love – is a mark of dependency and that the best defence against this weakness lies in aggression, where the wound becomes an instrument of attack that denies its own vulnerability" (49). In order to survive in the animal kingdom, animals must become autonomous as soon as possible, dismissing maternal care. Apparently, Volumnia raises Martius according to this parameter, but actually, she fails to break the emotional dependency of her son; after all, they are human. This is a point of *entropy* in the palimpsestic branch of *Coriolanus*, for some productions insert this psychological tension and others dismiss it.

### Scene 5 – Literary *Dissolutions*

The courage displayed by Coriolanus in war and the pride rendered to Roman citizens are Coriolanus's ways of reflecting his Greek counterpart, Achilles. His apparent self-destructive behavior in battle reflects his choice between *kleos* (fame, glory) and *nostos* (return, homecoming)[20]. During the Trojan War, narrated in *The Iliad*, Achilles faces the choice of returning home and living a long life or joining the Greeks in the war against Troy and dying to gain fame and glory. Achilles's inclination to choose *nostos* is overpowered by his rage concerning Patroclus's death, which leads him to stay for revenge and die – as we

[20] Martin Mares offers a study of these elements in his essay "Kleos, Nostos and Ponos in the Homeric Tradition."

later learn in *The Odyssey* –, achieving *kleos*. Coriolanus acts according to the way he is raised by his mother who, clearly, intends her son to be like a Roman Achilles. Volumnia affirms, "If my son were my husband, I should freelier rejoice in that absence wherein he won honour than in the embracements of his bed where he would show most love," and confesses that she, "was pleased to let him seek danger where he was like to find fame" (I. 3. 2-11). This demigod's education aids the understanding of Coriolanus's contempt for plebeians since it mirrors the attitude of Greek gods such as Zeus, who sees humans as deceitful creatures. After being deceived by Prometeus, as Hesiod narrates in his *Theogony* and confirms in *Works and Days*, Zeus turns against humanity. The ultimate result is that "the gods have hidden and kept hidden what could be men's livelihood" (*Works and Days* 43). Likewise, Martius supports the Patricians' decision of increasing the rates of grain, hindering the plebeians' subsistence. As pointed above, Martius sees the senate as a force under the gods, somehow meaning they are like the representatives of the gods, and justifies his position on the citizens' coward behavior: "Being pressed to th.' war, / . . . They would not thread the gates; this kind of service / Did not deserve corn gratis" (III. 1. 123-6). Since they do not "work" for their corn by going to war, plebeians should not have it. Corn is a currency earned through courage and action in the same way men must earn their livelihood from work. Therefore, Coriolanus's education blends the "wrath" and the "contempt" of the human-like gods. Still, these features do not stand for Coriolanus's passage to the divine realm, for Greek and Roman gods display feelings that can be seen as human flaws. At the most, the protagonist is granted a trial to enter the human realm.

### Scene 6 – The Human Realm: (Mis)Using Language

In contrast to the animal realm, the human realm nurtures human emotion and values connection. Also, it is more based on words than in actions. Human beings even find a way to

transform actions into argumentation. When the men return home after the conquest of Corioles, Cominius provides a speech accounting for the lifetime of military contributions made by Coriolanus, each military action adding another argument to defend a political position for the Roman soldier. Cominius starts by mentioning the deeds of a sixteen-year-old Martius, who still had "Amazonian chin," and ends with Coriolanus striking "Corioles like a planet." More than argumentation in support of the consulship, Cominius's speech provides valuable material to understand Coriolanus's previous and further journey. First, the most poignant thing all fail to see is that the protagonist changes physically, but his actions are unaltered. From a beardless boy to a planetary force, Coriolanus is still a war machine. His body gains new scars, but his mind does not evolve. He is still in the survival mode of the animal realm; thus, pushing his undeveloped personality into the intrigues of the human realm is a huge mistake with disastrous results either to him or his community.

Politics and rhetoric are at the core of the human realm. This is not a comfortable field for Coriolanus. For humans, all the world is a stage in which they are merely players. Most animals use deception only as a survival tool. Humans resort to deception for varied reasons. In order to enter the political world (as well as the human realm), Coriolanus must be deceptive, follow the protocol to gain people's voices, i.e. their votes for consulship, which consists of dressing the gown of humility and going to the market-place to ask for votes.

Coriolanus is indifferent to people's feelings and accepts the task of going to the market-place in the humility gown only to fulfill the formalities to gain consulship. The association of Coriolanus in the gown of humility to the image of a wolf in sheep's clothing is alluring because he hates commonalty. However, there is an ironic foreshadowing in the situation: "disguised" as a sheep, Coriolanus becomes the prey of this pack of wolves, the people. Even though we see that the people are composed by distinct subjectivities, they act as a collective, a pack of wolves in search for a leader. Perhaps, it justifies the reason they

accept Coriolanus as their new consul even perceiving his disdain for them. The officer's description of the people's inclinations seems fair because they love or hate with no justification. Therefore, it is no surprise when the temporary acceptance of Coriolanus as new consul turns into a revolt asking for his head as the people's tribunes assume the leadership of the pack.

It is worthy of attention that Coriolanus also questions the theatricality of the gown of humility protocol in reverse. The gown is not sheep's clothing but a predator disguise from the human realm: "Why in this woolvish toge should I stand here, / To beg of Hob and Dick that do appear / Their needless vouches? Custom calls me to't" (II. 3. 101-3). Coriolanus knows deception to be the predatory behavior of the world of politics, a substantial part of the human realm. Yet, it is against his nature, hence the poor performance he delivers in the market-place and the rush to get rid of the garment. We can also note that Coriolanus is aware of the predatory nature of the people as he often refers to them as a monster with many heads, an allusion to the mythological "Hydra". Citizens are represented by a monster because they dangerously act in unison according to the single idea that affects their multiple minds and, the one who has their minds, controls the monster. In the human realm, one must be a predator of minds and, in doing so, not only suppress the will of the prey but also turn it into one's own will. The people's tribunes understand their own prerogative and face Coriolanus in the only way they can, outside his domains and inside theirs, by manipulating people's minds. Coriolanus seems aware of these dynamics of mind hunting in the human realm. His despise for the common people justifies his appeal to the Patricians in the form of a warning:

> CORIOLANUS. 'Shall'?
>
> O good but most unwise patricians! Why,
>
> You grave but reckless senators, have you thus
>
> Given Hydra here to choose an officer,

> That with his peremptory ‘shall,’ being but
> The horn and noise o’ th’ monster’s, wants not spirit
> To say he’ll turn your current in a ditch,
> And make your channel his? If he have power,
> Then vail your ignorance; if none, awake
> Your dangerous lenity. If you are learned,
> Be not as common fools; if you are not,
> Let them have cushions by you. You are plebeians,
> If they be senators; and they no less,
> When, both your voices blended, the great'st taste
> Most palates theirs. (III. 1. 91-105)

Coriolanus’s instinctive reaction of self-preservation comes out of his pride because he tries to point the mistake of the senators in allowing the tribunes to represent the plebeians. Additionally, he implies that common people lack discernment and should not have voice in the Patrician’s democracy.

As we have seen so far, Coriolanus is inserted in the animal realm because he can only act on instinct and fails when some level of evasion is needed. Instead of following Lady Macbeth’s advice, “Look like the innocent flower, / but be the serpent under't” (1.5.64-5), he would rather follow Edgar, “The weight of this sad time we must obey, / Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say” (5.3.300-01). Menenius offers a suitable description of the protagonist as he says, “What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent” (III. 1. 257-262). In short, Coriolanus is not a pretender. One could even say that his honesty lies on the edge of innocence. His fearless behavior derives from his principles. His own personal traits foreshadow the outcome of his attempt to regain the citizens’ voices.

**Scene 7 – Theatrical Judgment**

In order to reverse the situation caused by the tribunes, Coriolanus must address the people in a way to regain their minds. Like directors of a theatrical production, Volumnia and Cominius instruct Coriolanus on his redemptive act. Knowing the nature of her son as well as the plebeians', Volumnia notes, "Action is eloquence, and the eyes of th' ignorant / More learned than the ears" (III. 2. 77-8), and later claims, "My praises made thee first a soldier, so, / To have my praise for this, perform a part / Thou hast not done before" (III. 2. 109-11). Cominius uses military vocabulary, "Arm yourself / To answer mildly" (III. 2. 143-4). Even after being carefully instructed, Coriolanus, who has already questioned, "Why did you wish me milder? would you have me / False to my nature? Rather say I play / The man I am" (III. 2. 15-7), fails to perform accordingly. He cannot act against his nature, but his unsuccessful performance is not the single reason for his banishment. Once again in a manipulative move, the tribunes, Brutus and Sicinius, exercise their power over people's minds, directing their support.

The conditions in which Coriolanus is exiled signal his future shift from the animal realm to the human realm and, consequently, to the divine realm. Parallels with elements that belong to Christian mythology indicate his fate. Coriolanus's candid nature is only one factor for his exile, for we learn that Brutus and Sicinius persuade the people to agree with their own suggestion of punishment. This fact reminds us of the popular trial Jesus faces which is described in the following biblical passages: "But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus" (*King James Version* Matt. 27.20); "But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them" (Mark 15.11). The portrayal of an unfair trial, which mirrors the most well-known case of injustice in Christian tradition, may be Shakespeare's attempt to instigate some sympathy for Coriolanus.

**Scene 8 – The Soul of a Dragon**

In a parallel with Christian mythology, Greek and Roman gods are closer to the god from the *Old Testament*, quite different from the god of love and forgiveness portrayed by the *New Testament*. *Coriolanus* is set in ancient Rome, but the context of production is the Jacobean era in which Great Britain was under Christian denominations. Accordingly, to recapitulate, what I call the "divine realm" has traces of Greek and Christian mythologies. The animal realm covers instincts and their resulting actions; even though it has honesty, it lacks elaborate sentiments. The human realm embodies more complex feelings and rhetoric, including simulation and manipulation of words. If we consider the Christian cultural context, the divine realm encompasses undisguised emotions, connection and self-sacrifice – conditions that elevate human souls, leading to salvation and, ultimately, immortality. If Coriolanus is not able to enter the human realm by using deception, his option is acknowledging more complex feelings and human bonding. The last two acts of the play comprehend a new stage in Coriolanus's journey, with a closer attachment to Christian tradition.

When he is considered for consulship, Coriolanus states, "I had rather be their servant in my way / Than sway with them in theirs" (II. 1. 178-9). This statement echoes Achilles's confession to Odysseus when they meet in Hades: "I would prefer to be working the earth, hired out to another, / even a landless man, whose living is far from abundant, / than to be lord over all of the phantoms of those who have perished" (*The Odyssey* 489-91). Both choose to be servants in their own way than to be rulers according to the whims of others. In an analogy to the animal realm, they choose to be predators – even though they are pushed to the condition of prey. Banishment leads Coriolanus to serve the Volscians instead of ruling the Romans. Progressively, Coriolanus gains the status of a ruler among the Volscians. He

becomes a ruler in Hell because he fails to be a servant in Heaven. Parallels between Coriolanus's situation and the figure of the fallen angel in Christian mythology seem inevitable. They both gain new titles: Lucifer becomes Satan and Martius becomes Coriolanus. Satan governs Hell and Coriolanus subjugates Corioles. Satan is expelled from Heaven by God and, ironically, in Coriolanus's case, "Vox Populi, Vox Dei."[21] Additionally, we observe the association of Coriolanus with a dragon, which is connected to Satan in the *New Testament*.

The dragon analogy in *Coriolanus* adds to the complexities of the main character, instigating a careful view of his choices. The dragon is a monster, closer to the animal realm; yet, in human imagination, it is also a mythological figure, closer to the divine realm. Coriolanus is first presented as a killing machine, "a thing of blood," "one mechanically motivated, like a ticking clock or a bomb. This is a movement away from human ties, a movement that is at the root of Coriolanus's political troubles, making him, like Othello, both a superb soldier and a particularly innocent and naïve private man" (*Shakespeare After All* 787). Coriolanus as a monster, an entity from the animal realm, is constantly called to enter the human realm and continually declines the invitation, either through the doors of rhetoric or the acknowledgment of bonding and emotion. Another connotation of the dragon figure is loneliness. The opening quote of this chapter is from the fourth act of the play, after Coriolanus is banished. In this speech, Coriolanus compares himself to a dragon, "[a] lonely dragon—a heroic, belated, socially isolated survival of another world" (*Shakespeare After All* 785). More than denoting isolation and loneliness, this simile implies uniqueness; still according to Garber, "Coriolanus is neither commoner nor political senator. He is often spoken about, seldom speaking" (785). We do not have a good sample of his domestic routine as if it does not exist. We are presented to the public figure and social interactions. He

[21] Latin expression not coined but registered in *The Judgment of Whole Kingdoms and Nations*, attributed to Daniel Defoe et al., meaning "the voice of the people is the voice of God."

passes through the human realm but does not belong to it. In the mythological simile, he is a dragon in the den of public imagination.

Still concerning conflicting ideas about his personality, we note that Coriolanus displays some self-awareness along with accurate impressions of other characters and situations. For instance, he recognizes the instability of people's minds and his mother's pride for his martial actions, but his actions are on the edge of naiveté, almost uncontrolled ignorance. How to explain such disparity? The dragon inside Coriolanus is a solidified code of conduct. Consciousness does not interfere in his decisions. It is like he denies the reasoning that makes him human. His internal dragon governs his choleric reaction to banishment without minding the consequences. In Aufidius's house, the vengeful Coriolanus seeks the means to torment Rome for his banishment. The protagonist is once again in war mode. The dragon in Coriolanus intends to burn Rome with his vengeful fire – despite having to befriend his former enemy to get his revenge.

**Scene 9 – Repetitions**

What he finds in his enemy's house reflects what he has in his own hometown. At first, he meets the hostility of the servants who do not recognize him. After verifying his true identity, Aufidius's servants start to imply they have recognized the greatness in him. Here, we see in the Volscians the same volatility of Roman minds. Aufidius, like the good Roman politicians, embraces Coriolanus, probably because he also sees the Roman as a tool. Aufidius cannot be trusted; as someone from the human realm, he knows how to manipulate language. So, when he professes his sentiments for Coriolanus, "But that I see thee here, / Thou noble thing, more dances my rapt heart / Than when I first my wedded mistress saw," he may look like the innocent flower while he is actually the serpent under it.

After Coriolanus's connection with Aufidius and his countrymen, it does not take long

for the Roman to gain the status of a god. As he has his deeds "monstered" by Roman tongues in the way to consulship, so it happens in Volscian soil. He mesmerizes Aufidius as a servant reports, "Our general himself makes a mistress of him, sanctifies himself with's hand, and turns up the white o'th'eye to his discourse" (IV. 5. 189-9). The Roman also receives a godlike position among the Volscians who, somehow, worship him. This beguiling power of Coriolanus cultivates more than admiration in Aufidius, who reveals his true intentions in the following lines:

> When he shall come to his account, he knows not
> What I can urge against him. Although it seems,
> And so he thinks, and is no less apparent
> To th' vulgar eye, that he bears all things fairly
> And shows good husbandry for the Volscian state,
> Fights dragon-like, and does achieve as soon
> As draw his sword; yet he hath left undone
> That which shall break his neck or hazard mine,
> Whene'er we come to our account.
>
> ……
>
> One fire drives out one fire; one nail, one nail;
> Rights by rights falter, strengths by strengths do fail.
> Come, let's away. When, Caius, Rome is thine,
> Thou art poor'st of all; then shortly art thou mine. (IV. 7. 2-57)

Once more, Coriolanus's godlike status makes a thing of him, like a dragon: a thing to be admired and to be used as a weapon. Coriolanus's godlike condition is, in fact, an

objectification. He is the one who has more names in the play: Caius, the man; Martius, the warrior; Coriolanus, the hero and destroyer. He is a soldier, a machine, a son that is more an emblem, a means to an end of war or, as we see in the last act, a functional tool for peace. Therefore, the godlike status of Coriolanus is an attribution from the human realm, the way Romans and Volscians make sense of this singular figure. His deeds and behavior still maintain him closer to the animal realm.

**Scene 10 – The Trinity of Plea**

Banishment increases Coriolanus's stoicism. This fact and the godlike treatment he receives from the Volscians work like a shield that prevents Coriolanus from acknowledging human connections, especially the ones based on love. Revenge is his goal and his code of conduct prevents any deviations from his purpose. He embraces the persona of a god of wrath. Coriolanus becomes a thing of darkness mother Rome must acknowledge hers. So, the imminent attack upon Roman grounds prompts the Romans' desperate measures. Adding to the long line of the number "three" appearances in Shakespeare's plays, a trinity of "saviors" is sent to try to change Coriolanus's mind. In an inversion of the plea of Lear's daughters, the first two attempts have no effect. Cominius notes on Coriolanus's denial of naming: ". . . He would not answer to; forbad all names. / He was a kind of nothing, titleless, . . ." (V. 1. 12-3). Naming is a very human part of language and Coriolanus seems determined to refuse anything from the human realm because it reminds him of Rome. In fact, Coriolanus seems willing to deny any human communication. According to Garber:

> No speech, no human communication— 'his speechless hand," and a letter of instruction or command, sent after the fact. The denial of speech is the denial of presence, and of emotion. Menenius is next, and to Menenius and his wordy petition Coriolanus makes the same reply. "O, my son, my son" (5.2.68) is

> Menenius's opening gambit, and he makes an appeal rather like that of Falstaff to the new King Henry V, the former Prince Hal. I am your real father, I made you what you are, fools have blocked my access to you. And like Falstaff, Menenius gets a dismissive reply: "Away!" Once more Coriolanus offers, instead, a written communication: "Yet, for I loved thee, / Take this along. I writ it for thy sake, / And would have sent it" (85–87). But there is to be no conversation, no voice, no speech: "Another word, Menenius, / I will not hear thee speak" (88). He will neither speak nor hear.
>
> This is indeed the posture of godhead, the attitude of something either above or below the merely human, and it might well be his salvation and his escape if he were willing to spend his life in exile from humanity as well as from Rome. (794)

The completion of the "trinity of plea" comes in the form of another trinity, the only three women that have a voice during the play: Volumnia, Virgilia and Valeria. Like the three witches in *Macbeth*, they symbolize a bad omen for Coriolanus's future because their speech is not received as meaningless words and influences his next move. The women are accompanied by young Martius, Coriolanus's son, symbolically his past and his future. Volumnia's words present two portals to the divine realm – immortality through fame. One way is by holding the position of Rome's opponent, the dragon, the Satan-like figure. The alternative is to assume the role of savior and embrace love and human bonding. Coriolanus is before two kinds of sacrifice: Rome's or his own. If he chooses to sacrifice Rome, his name in history will be associated with the enemy. Otherwise, he must go against his code, his martial nature, and move towards humanity. The choice to be Rome's savior implies that Coriolanus must kill his inner dragon, the monster, the machine, the thing. The moment of choice is filled with awareness as Coriolanus reaches for his mother's hand:

CORIOLANUS. O mother, mother!

What have you done? Behold, the heavens do ope,

The gods look down, and this unnatural scene

They laugh at. O my mother, mother! O!

You have won a happy victory to Rome;

But, for your so – believe it, O, believe it –

Most dangerously you have with him prevailed,

If not most mortal to him. But let it come. –

Aufidius, though I cannot make true wars,

I'll frame convenient peace. (V. 3. 183-191)

The imagery of this scene is comparable to Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*. Internally, Coriolanus's god-like being reaches for Coriolanus's new-born man. Volumnia is the agent of these two births: the birth of the warrior and the birth of the man. Also, as Coriolanus points, she is an agent of death; when he was a boy, she killed his humanity, and now, she kills the stoic soldier. Coriolanus returns to a former condition, young Martius, visually represented by the presence of his son, who recalls the boy Coriolanus once was and becomes once again. It is as if the entrance in the human realm were the beginning of a new life, a return to boyhood. The boy-warrior gives way to the "boy of tears," who embraces emotion.

**Scene 11 – Immortality: Entering the Divine Realm**

There is an addition to the symbolism in Coriolanus's act of reaching promoted by the comparison to Michelangelo's work. In the same way the god-like being reaches for the new-born man, this new Coriolanus of the human realm reaches for his divinity. Actually, the abnegation of his ego opens the doors to the human and divine realms. In an allusive construction inserted in the British context, the killing of his inner dragon in association to

the decision to adopt love and bonding transforms Coriolanus into Saint George's counterpart. Both are Roman soldiers who slain dragons and adopt the teachings of the *New Testament*. In their own ways, England's patron saint and Shakespeare's character enter the divine realm as martyrs because they are killed for defending equivalent beliefs. Saint George is executed for embracing Christianity. Since the play is set in a Pre-Christian context, Coriolanus is killed for embracing humanity, which corresponds to Christian values in the play's context of production.

In a parallel with *Hamlet*, the Danish prince's memory is preserved by his friend Horatio, while the good reputation of the Roman soldier is ensured by his enemy:

> AUFIDIUS. My rage is gone,
>
> And I am struck with sorrow. Take him up:
>
> Help, three o' th' chiefest soldiers; I'll be one.
>
> Beat thou the drum, that it speak mournfully:
>
> Trail your steel pikes. Though in this city he
>
> Hath widowed and unchilded many a one,
>
> Which to this hour bewail the injury,
>
> Yet he shall have a noble memory. (V. 6. 149-56)

In a way, Coriolanus causes Aufidius to access his human potential of noble feelings as the Volscian abandons hatred and decides to confer a noble memory on the Roman.

*Coriolanus*'s transit through the three realms is about changes and returns. Change can be a positive or negative force in the play. It is negative when it denotes fickleness and indecision, but its positive side manifests through improvement. The instability of some characters is a stationary force that prevents their development. For instance, the plebeians are not able to sustain a single opinion in relation to Coriolanus. Coriolanus exemplifies the positivity of change when he abandons his old martial self. His decision implies mobility. He

leaves the animal realm of violence and instinct to pass to the human realm and, consequently, to be nobly inserted in the divine realm of immortality. As Coriolanus returns to the boy he once was, his parallel with Saint George turns Rome back to England and compositional elements to extra-compositional features. Therefore, once again, Shakespeare holds art as a mirror to society.

### 3.3. Act III – Hypertexts: The Plays Within The Play

This section intends to provide a chronological sampling of some *Art solutions* that used *Coriolanus* as a *solute*, addressing the preservation and neglect of Shakespearean elements in order to shed light on the role of the play in *palimpsestic entropy* as well as its hypertexts' levels of *entropic remediation*. I intend to focus on the *entropic* tendency among theatrical productions and visual arts of Coriolanus, i.e. their attachment to political matters and occasional shift to psychological issues. Therefore, hypertextual *dissolutions* of *Coriolanus* tend to favor the human realm, highlighting rhetoric and human bonding issues.

The choice of mapping some *dissolutions* of *Coriolanus* is especially relevant, for it is not among Shakespeare's most popular works, a fact that contributes to the construction of Shakespeare's palimpsest as solid and comprehensive, including every work attributed to the playwright. There is favoritism in branches of the Shakespearean palimpsest but not exclusivism. *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*, for instance, are champions of adaptations accounting for large parcels of the palimpsest; however, adaptations inspired by *Titus Andronicus* and *Timon of Athens* occupy a smaller space in the palimpsest but cannot be ignored as contributions. Shakespeare's *palimpsestic entropy* goes as far as the number of works attributed to him plus their adaptations, what results in an inapprehensible inheritance that supports Shakespeare's place at the core of Western literary canon.

The *concentration* of *Coriolanus* as a *solute* in hypertexts is determined by contextual demands. In a comparative study, we may note that subjective conflicts in *Hamlet* and romantic idealizations in *Romeo and Juliet* find no difficulty to overcome political matters in these plays; at the same time, politics is such a central issue in *Coriolanus* that it cannot be ignored, only manipulated. Thus, (re)arrangements of elements from the play along with their contextual demands are composing factors that determine the levels of *entropy* in hypertexts. In other words, since *Coriolanus* is a highly political work, historical context is the modeling agent in the production of its adaptations. The ideological partiality of the hypertexts is mainly determined by the portrayal of nobles and plebeians revealing the political view of the adaptor. Therefore, the influence of extra-compositional aspects on compositional features usually displays more than a historical mark, it displays personal political bias.

### Scene 1 – Early Political Reflections[22]

The Restoration in English history is also a period of recreation. Nahum Tate represents this tendency of the period. Ewa Panecka describes Tate as "always ready to praise a new master: pre or post Revolution, Stuart or Hanovian. He mourned Charles II, yet welcomed both James II and William III with equal dose of enthusiasm" (31). So, the author's political view, favoring monarchical power, seems evident in the title of his adaptation of *Coriolanus, The Ingratitude of a Commonwealth* (1681), in which Tate reworks Shakespeare's text in order to exalt the nobility of Caius Martius before the ungrateful ignorant mob. Tate's *Art solution* uses sixty percent of Shakespeare's text as a *solute* and *dissolves* large doses of family drama with a bloody ending for Coriolanus, his family, and Aufidius. The general impression is that the political plot is replaced by a melodramatic spectacle focused on massacre – but still inside the borders of the human realm.

[22] Sources of information on *Coriolanus*'s hypertexts are: Bliss's Introduction to *The Cambridge Shakespeare*; Bate and Russell's *Shakespeare: An Illustrated Stage History*; and *Coriolanus on Stage in England and America, 1609-1994* by John Ripley.

In John Dennis's *The Invader of his Country: or, the Fatal Resentment* (1719), the Shakespearean text is heavily edited to focus on Coriolanus's threat of invasion instead of family issues. Preserving the modes of the human realm, the political context paints the *Art Solution* in allegorical colors with Coriolanus representing James, the Old Pretender, and the menace of his French-Jacobite alliance over Britain.

Near the end of the eighteenth century, the walking shadow of French Revolution on British stages witnesses the rising star of an actor who leaves a mark comparable to David Garrick. John Philip Kemble gains notoriety performing Thomas Sheridan's *Coriolanus: or the Roman Matron,* which blends Shakespeare and James Thomson's adaptation of Dionysius of Halicarnassus's and Titus Livy's versions of the story. At first sight,

> Kemble's adoption of this [Sheridan's adaptation] is a sign of the nineteenth century theatre's growing impatience with formal Renaissance rhetoric. Where Shakespeare achieved a classical effect in his Roman plays through an elaborate rhetoric which would have had his more educated audience members thinking of Cicero, Kemble relied instead on a visual rhetoric. The vast size of the theatre and the resources of elaborate set design meant that Kemble's audience could see something resembling ancient Rome where Shakespeare's had to rely on hearing it. The Regency Coriolanus returned from his victories via a triumphal Roman arch through which over 150 extras processed. (Bate 99)

We are led to think about Kemble's production as one of the seeds that planted the popularization of a more visual culture in the following centuries – the consolidation of visual spectacle. Nevertheless, this *Art solution* is not free of extra-compositional influence and, considering *dissolutions* of *Coriolanus,* one should not look at media products in isolation. They are part of a bigger picture. Kemble's visual hyperbole is not for the sake of spectacle

only; it also reflects the political atmosphere of the historical context. According to Ritchie and Sabor:

> Kemble appears to have voluntarily retired his celebrated depiction of Coriolanus when parallels with events in France became unavoidable, David Rostron has noted, performing the role to great acclaim in 1789 but not again until his celebrated production of 1796, when the 'rabble', the *Times* reviewer approved, 'bore so strong a likeness to the savage barbarity of modern France that it was greeted with a 'laugh of contempt' at every appearance. By bending the effect of the 'rabble' to his own artistic ends, Kemble conveyed the subtle impression that an English crowd is a very different thing from a French mob. Nationalism at the end of the century, as Malone's response to *Vortigern* and the *Times* reviewer's to Kemble's *Coriolanus* suggest, associated Shakespeare with notions of order, self-restraint and authority that opposed him to republican and, in England, Jacobin disorder. (290-1)

Kemble's production of *Coriolanus* uses Shakespeare as a kind of political signifier to the conflict between Monarchical and Republican ideologies. Its political subtext places the "civilized" British in the human realm and the "unruly" French closer to the animal realm.

In 1832, the British parliament passes the "First Reform Act" or "Representation of the People Act," a political reform with new parameters to occupy seats in the House of Commons, a more democratic process of election. In 1838 / 1839, William Charles Macready, an actor and playhouse manager, edits Kemble's *Coriolanus* with the intention of preserving more of Shakespeare's original *concentration*. Bliss notes that, "[p]erhaps because it was now six years after the passage of the Reform Bill, his citizens were no longer a fickle, ill-dressed, comic mob. . . . Yet Macready's emphasis was still on Coriolanus's nobility, and a sentimental dumbshow prevailed over Shakespeare's ending . . ." (75).

Productions from the second half of nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century favor this shift from politically to psychologically invested approaches. John Ripley tells us that, "[t]he hero's relationships with himself, his troops, his family and friends, his community were exhaustively probed; formative influences were identified, and strengths and weaknesses catalogued" (20). This change of focus in the productions is justified by the growing interest in psychological studies and psychoanalysis through Europe. Additionally, the political stability of Victorian period can be accounted as a reason. Besides maintaining the dynamics of the human realm, reflexes of contextual politics dictate the atmosphere of *Coriolanus*'s derivations either by highlighting or eclipsing political matters.

**Scene 2 – Visual Arts: A Political Break**

Individual representations only of Coriolanus or any other character are restricted to portraits of actors. Kemble's most famous picture displays the actor dressed as Coriolanus under the statue of Mars. The overwhelming majority of paintings and other types of visual art inspired by *Coriolanus* depict the "plea scene." Ignoring its political aura, visual depictions of *Coriolanus* focus on religious and psychological motifs; aspects from the human and divine realms prevail. Following the topic of Nicolas Poussi's *Coriolanus Entreated by His Wife and His Mother* (c.1652/53), paintings and drawings depict an authoritative Coriolanus and the women kneeling in supplicant positions. There are variations inspired by the same scene such as William Hamilton's (c.1803) and Soma Orlai Petrics's (1869) paintings. These works do not portray a submissive Volumnia; instead, she assumes a commanding posture that equals or overcomes Coriolanus. Despite the variations, the psychological tone can be attributed to the underlying mother-son relationship. The religious tone is a visual reference to the Madonna figure, represented either by Volumnia or Virgilia. One can note that some of the works seem to have been inspired by Plutarch's account, not

Shakespeare's. Still, the thematic tendency follows Shakespeare's choice of expanding the role of Coriolanus's mother in the play. Plutarch does not share Shakespeare's inclination to develop family issues.

### Scene 3 – Brechtian *Dissolution*

Although Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* allows different thematic focuses, the political matter prevails. Two World Wars and situations of political distress in Europe in the twentieth century corroborate this point. As Dobson and Wells suggest, "[d]espite some notable revivals at the Old Vic in the 1920s, the play did not enjoy particular prominence in the 20th century until the rise of fascist movements across Europe brought it a renewed topicality" (92). They also inform us of Nazi fondness for the play, a fact that ironically resulted in the banishment of *Coriolanus* from Germany after the war until 1953. Bertolt Brecht, a German author who faced exile to escape Nazism, conceived one of the most celebrated adaptations of *Coriolanus*. Openly against Nazi ideals, Brecht eliminates the individual concentration of leadership. According to Inga-Stina Ewbank:

> Brecht's work on Coriolanus has been much written about, here we need only note how it focused on making the conflict between the hero and the Roman people meaningful in modern and Marxist terms. Brecht shifted what he saw as Shakespeare's tragedy of the individual to 'the tragedy of the individual's indispensability'. Hence he reduced Coriolanus' motivations to strictly social ones, minimizing any inner conflicts and the complexities of the hero's relationship with his mother, his wife and his antagonist Aufidius. His Coriolanus abandons his attack on Rome because Volumnia informs him that Rome is united and prepared to defend itself.

> Brecht's leading idea, which he discusses in journals and notes – that the play must be prevented from becoming the tragedy of the 'unersätzlich' (indispensable) individual – led him not only to make cuts and alterations to Shakespeare's text but also to add a final scene in which the Roman senate learns of Coriolanus' death but, after a brief silence, carries on with its daily business, which includes rejecting a request from the Martius family to be allowed to wear mourning. His text ends on the one ruthless word, 'Abgeschlagen' ('Rejected') and the stage direction 'The Senate continues its normal business'. (138)

Brecht's version, *Coriolan*, was a posthumous production of the Berliner Ensemble in 1964. The group respected Brecht's partiality for epic theater. It means that, instead of focusing on *solute* and trying to erase the awareness of *solvent* in an *Art solution*, Brecht prized the *solvent* as an equal partner of the *solute*, not a mere channel. In other words, the German playwright defended something close to hypermediacy, "[a] style of visual representation whose goal is to remind the viewer of the medium" (Bolter and Grusin 272). This way, a theatrical performance leaves escapism behind in order to embrace confrontation and stimulate critical thinking. The audience is not a receptor of information, but a reviewer. Brecht instigates the rationality of the human realm also in terms of reception, inserting *entropic* features that will reverberate further on in the Shakespearean palimpsest.

**Scene 4 – A Visual Quotation**

Brecht reshapes *Coriolanus* and denies the rising star of those potential subjects of dictatorship. In 1959, Peter Hall's production of the play starring Laurence Olivier provided a visual reference of the consequence of dictatorial ambitions. As Marjorie Garber describes,

> . . . in an athletic feat (and a visual tableau) that made the production and the performance legendary, he leaped headfirst from a twelve-foot platform without the support of wires, his ankles caught at the last minute by two (doubtless terrified) actor soldiers, and dangled upside down, the stage picture a deliberate echo of the dead body of Mussolini. After the Fascist dictator was captured and shot by Italian Communist partisans, Mussolini's body was taken to Milan and hung, upside down from a meat hook, as a lesson and a sign of ridicule. (*Shakespeare and Modern Culture* 69)

This specific part of the performance, Coriolanus's body hanging by the ankles, has an anachronistic aura, but more than this, it is a direct imprint of an extra-compositional element into the *Art solution*. Garber puts it as a "visual quotation." In my view, we could classify it as a "visual quotation of an extra-compositional element" because it touches on significant contextual iconography from the twentieth century. I have dedicated two subsections to these productions (Brecht's and Hall's) because some of their elements contribute with the *entropy* of the broadcast theater production I analyze in a section below.

### Scene 5 – Anachronistic *Dissolutions* and *Entropy* in Contemporaneity

There is a difference between significant visual reference and anachronistic elements. For instance, Peter Hall's 1984 production of *Coriolanus* starring Ian McKellen displayed mixed costumes, with modern and classic pieces of clothing, and allowed members of the audience to go on stage. These anachronistic (and methodological) marks bear meaning that can interpreted by the audience. They may be a way of contextualizing the play to the audience, suiting the action to contemporary perception. However, the strong iconographic reference in Olivier's performance provides a straightforward statement that narrows the

reading focus of the play. In either way, anachronisms and specific quotations of extra-compositional elements figure as *entropic* components in *Art solutions*.

Anachronisms, simple or in the form of specific quotations, may be temporal compasses. As we have seen, the first adaptations of *Coriolanus* focus on *solute* manipulation, adding and deleting elements, *dissolving* the Shakespearean hypotext in varied *concentrations*. As time passes, *entropy* increases and we can note an exponential dance of experimentations with both *solute* and *solvent*. Time provides more cultural / historical / social baggage. Consequently, contemporary productions have a wider range of available elements than Renaissance productions due to historical and cultural accumulation and technological progress. These elements involve compositional and extra-compositional features. Shakespeare's skills to manipulate *solvents* and *solutes* in order to build his *Art solutions* reflect on the *entropy* of his palimpsest.

More than inspiration, Shakespeare provides freedom. As Canadian director Robert Lepage argues, "Shakespeare offers a lot of permission to the actor, the translator, the director," and "you don't feel in a literal environment when working with him" (qtd. in Smallwood "Directors' Shakespeare" 187). Lepage's experimentations with *solvent* are a personal trait. As pointed in chapter 2, film has high influence on twentieth-century cultural production and consumption. Lepage's 1992 production bears this fact in mind, for "[t]his ten-actor *Coriolan* was seen, as on a small CinemaScope screen, through a 4 foot X 16 foot rectangular frame which cut off the actors' legs or, when they stood on tables, their heads, so 'they look like ruined figures in a Roman frieze'. Action took place in bars, restaurants and, for the public speeches, a broadcasting studio . . ." (Bliss 95-6). Lepage's *Art solution* attests that *solvents* also *dissolve solvents* in a symbiotic form.

Besides integration, experiments in collaboration appear in nets of reference as, for instance, the 1994 Royal Shakespeare Company production of *Coriolanus* "embarked on an

ambitious marketing campaign" with a poster of the protagonist, played by Toby Stephens, "as a blood-soaked Coriolanus in close-up, with the caption, 'natural born killer too.' The reference was to the film *Natural Born Killers* (1994) . . ." (Lanier *Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* 85-6). The greatest *entropic* mark of contemporaneity seems to be collaborative processes among *Art solutions*, *dissolving* borders concerning *solutes* and *solvents*. Ideas as well as their material manifestations entertain their growing possibilities.

Physical-chemical interactions manifest according to the physical states of substances: from solid, with static and organized molecules, passing through liquid, in which molecules gain movement, to gas, the highest *entropic* state in which molecules are disperse in total disarray. *Art solutions* follow this pattern. No wonder why cotemporary theories employ the word "fluidity" abundantly. Shakespeare's canonical and popular status vouches for this openness in the construction of hypertexts – as Lepage implies.

**Scene 6 – Another Contemporary Mark: BAME Casting**

As a medium itself, human body is another piece in the materiality of an *Art solution* that can be addressed in Shakespearean hypertexts. Besides the marks inflicted by history, culture, and technology on *Art solutions*, contemporaneity interferes in the human factor of the productions: casting. Campaigns for BAME (Black, Asian, and Ethnic Minority) casts have gained strength in environments long monopolized by white actors. The cradle of Shakespearean productions, British stage and screen, has been taken by the wave of diversity. In the 2018 summer season at the Globe, under Michelle Terry's artistic direction, the stage received not only BAME actors but also a deaf actor, Nadia Nadarajah, and an actor with dwarfism, Francesca Mills. In addition, Terry played the title role in a gender blind production of *Hamlet*. So, color-blind/gender-blind casting signals new tendencies in casting, another point of *entropy* in contemporary productions.

In Canada, the 2018 Stratford festival had another production of *Coriolanus* directed by Robert Lepage. André Sills, a Black actor, played the title character. Here, a Black Coriolanus is more than an anachronism. It signs the time of its production in the same way whole male castings signed Shakespeare's. Therefore, contemporary inclusive casting is an *entropic* mark, a variation in the composition of contemporary *Art solutions*; after all, BAME casting is a political statement, a reflection of the growing awareness concerning the need for equal opportunities to people from different backgrounds, the antithesis of Coriolanus's prejudiced point of view at the beginning of the play.

### 3.4. Act IV – The Cinematic Stage: Ralph Fiennes's *Coriolanus*

The influence of film during the twentieth century has consolidated Western culture as predominantly visual. The increasing popularity of film generated a "screen culture appreciation" that reached people's homes and personal devices. The popularity of the *solvent* stretched to the *solute*, and Shakespeare, a constant source of inspiration, profited from the association. The forms in which Shakespearean cinematic hypertexts manifest are described in chapter 2. This section introduces some examples of these forms connected to *Coriolanus*, with an analysis of Ralph Fiennes's 2011 adaptation, in order to expose how elements of screen related media interact among and within *Art solutions*. The previous section already touched on filmic influential features on theater. The present section paves the way to the analysis of the ultimate association of theater and film – broadcast theater – in the creation of hybrid *Art solutions*.

Unlike theater, the editing processes of film are more under the control of the art producer rather than of the audience. During a play, people's eyes follow the action according to personal volition. In a film, the camera controls the focus. Films develop a series of

conventions and the cinematic education of the viewer determines the proper apprehension of a product. I hope to shed some light on these notions through my analysis of Fiennes's film.

### Scene 1 – Filmic *Dissolutions*

Before moving to the main analysis of this section, some samples of filmic hypertexts of *Coriolanus* aid a brief illustration of this part of the Shakespearean palimpsest. In comparison to other Shakespearean tragedies, the interest in adapting *Coriolanus* for the screen is limited. Consequently, the examples offered here are restricted to adaptations and references.

In 1965, an Italian adaptation of the play was directed by Claudio Fino and starred Franco Graziosi as Coriolanus. Fino's *Coriolano* tries to be closer to the Shakespearean hypotext in terms of speech and *mise-en-scène*, with theatrical settings and costumes. Graziosi's performance conveys austerity, privileging the portrait of a noble over a passionate soldier and preserving the hypertextual tendency to portray a Coriolanus of the human realm. In Britain, the BBC produced *The Spread of the Eagle* (1963), which adapted *Coriolanus* in three fifty-minute episodes: *The Hero*, *The Voices*, and *The Outcast*. The series was directed by Peter Dews and had Robert Hardy as Coriolanus. Thirty-one years later, the BBC produced another adaptation of *Coriolanus*, a 145-minute film directed by Elijah Moshinsky and starring Alan Howard in the title role. This version is particularly bold for painting the Martius and Aufidius's relationship in homoerotic colors during the outbreak of AIDS, which was named GRID (Gay-Related Immune Deficiency). Once more, we note the proximity of extra-compositional and compositional features.

In the field of references, *The Hunger Games Trilogy* (2008-2010), a series of books for young adults, has a lot of Shakespearean references preserved in their cinematic adaptations. For instance, the character President Coriolanus Snow, whose breath smells of

blood, is a tyrannical type who rose to power by poisoning his prospective opponents. Snow also uses the military as forces of oppression. The films, as the books, display the dangerous and restricted conditions of underprivileged citizens in tyrannical regimes. So, even though references to Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* are *dissolved* in lower *concentrations*, they are still present and surrounded by a political aura, contributing to *palimpsestic entropy*.

### Scene 2 – Introducing Fiennes's *Coriolanus*

The directorial debut of the Shakespearean actor Ralph Fiennes, who also plays the title role, is an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*. This film deserves special attention for two main aspects: it is the only cinematic adaptation of *Coriolanus* in English language and it touches on several points that account for *entropic remediation*. Moreover, its analysis is an opportunity to provide some background on film dynamics, a relevant topic for the introduction and analysis of broadcast theater in the next section.

Film is an *entropic* medium and Fiennes's adaptation uses this cinematic potential. Fiennes edits the Shakespearean text, transposing the events to an unclear setting, which is historically placed at the turn of the twentieth to the twenty-first century. In an interview at the 2011 Toronto International Film Festival[23], Fiennes cites Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* as a source of inspiration and confidence to pursue the idea of a modern take on the Shakespearean text, i.e. contemporary setting associated to Renaissance lines. In my view, this type of association emphasizes the topicality of Shakespeare; contexts change, but human conflicts remain. The film was shot in Belgrade intending to represent anywhere and nowhere at the same time. The association is explicit for members of the audience who recall the news from conflicts in cities such as Sarajevo, Kosovo, Baghdad, Tehran, Kabul, and Damascus. In terms of genre, the film is a Shakespearean adaptation and a war film, with

[23] Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vugacjbKOBs.

hints of political thriller and family drama. As the descriptions of the scenes will indicate, the main points of *entropy* in the *Art solution* are visual compositions. Ultimately, as ambiguous as it may seem, Fiennes's film uses this impersonal atmosphere to convey very personal conditions caused by wars / conflicts. The abstraction of the setting enables political criticism since it opens the film to possible connections to different contemporary conflicts.

**Scene 3 – Opening Sequence**

The opening scene displays some recurrent features of the film at the same time it foreshadows its ending, creating a circular composition. Fiennes does not repress the use of close-ups and extreme close-ups[24], dark compositions with colors and lighting. In this scene, we have Aufidius sharpening the knife with which he kills Coriolanus at the end. Aufidius's face is not clear to the viewer due to the dim lighting. The camera focuses on the knife and on the TV, which displays Martius and his fellow soldiers in military outfits and the caption "Roman Food Crisis." As his hands sharpen the knife, the camera informs us of his visual focus with an extreme close-up of the name tag on Martius's uniform. Martius is established as a name, the same name which is dressed and undressed of the epithet "Coriolanus," giving place to "boy of tears." Aufidius is silent as the silence that follows Martius's death.

The following sequence shows a woman (Second Citizen) walking through the housing projects in order to meet other rebel citizens in one of the apartments. There are interpolations of TV news, displaying the food crisis in Rome, members of the senate, and demonstrations with the captions "Senate declares state of emergency" and "General Martius suspends civil liberties." This sequence works as an establishing shot[25] for it introduces

[24] For cinematic analysis and terminology, I relied on two main sources: David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson's *Film Art: An Introduction* and James Monaco's *How to Read a Film.*

[25] In cinematic language, an "establishing shot" is a kind of contextualizing shot with an overview of setting and is followed by a shot identifying setting elements and characters.

different city locations and the polarity between the people and the government. The projects are associated to the people in urban territory and the graffiti on the stairs and walls of the buildings hold special significance. Graffiti were already a popular form of expression in the Rome of historical Coriolanus, displaying messages on politics, love, art, sex, news, and even gossip[26]. The subject matter may have changed but graffiti survived as a form of urban intervention until nowadays. The graffiti we see in the projects sequence represent this tradition at the same time it connects the fictional world of the film – a society on the edge of civil war for food – and the historical hyperinflation of 1993-4 in Belgrade – a devastating event for poor families at the time. The two identifiable graffiti, "fuck the rules" and "heroes 1994," suit fictional and historical events, implying popular dissatisfaction concerning politics. So far, we already notice elements of the medium cinema causing *entropy* in the *Art solution* (shots choices, *mise-en-scène,* visual foreshadowing) and instigating political criticism. Contextual information on location also enriches the work as it connects general to specific, nowhere to somewhere; as a result, we have a highly *entropic remediation*.

**Scene 4 – Nowhere, Everywhere**

Apart from the graffiti, another visual reference plays with the relation of fiction and history. The caption "A place calling itself Rome" establishes the location of the popular riots reported by TV. It is a reference to John Osborne's unperformed adaptation of *Coriolanus*. Osborne was known for his political and social criticism. One can say that the title *A Place Calling Itself Rome* (1973) is a reference to the British Empire, the Roman Empire of the twentieth century. Fiennes's use of the title to establish the setting of his film criticizes the fictional location and the historical locations it may represent. After all, the greed of some usually triggers wars that are fought by many. The connections between Shakespeare and

[26] For more information about graffiti in ancient Rome: Kristina Milnor's *Graffiti and the Literary Landscape in Roman Pompeii* and Robert Knapp's *Invisible Romans: Prostitutes, Outlaws, Slaves, Gladiators, Ordinary Men and Women … The Romans that History Forgot*.

Osborne demonstrate the continuation of Rome's imperialist dynamics in the British Empire, another evidence of the playwright's topicality, for human societies keep repeating their hierarchical organizations. Two thousand and a half years after the Rome of historical Coriolanus, humanity still faces social inequality. In a planetary scale, it is not hard to find examples of food storage and waste of resources by some while others perish. Therefore, Osborne appears as an *entropic* mark as well as a political statement.

It is worth noting that Fiennes is careful not to base the conflicts on ethnic issues, reinforcing the neutrality of the fictional piece and its possible contextual connections. The film owes a great part of the casting to Serbian actors who play the citizens. Yet, we see different ethnics represented on screen as citizens, military forces, and politicians. Also, we hear Shakespeare in different accents. For instance, Cominius is played by a South-African actor, John Kani; Sicinius is played by the Irish actor James Nesbitt; Jessica Chastain, who plays Virgilia, is American; the Servian actor Dragan Micanovic plays Titus Lartius; Aufidius is played by Scottish actor Gerard Butler. Consequently, characters convey the impression of belonging to nowhere and everywhere at the same time. Fiennes reproduces the effect of Shakespearean texts in relation to the immutability of human nature.

### Scene 5 – *Dissolving Solvents*

As a news medium, TV is a character in the film. In the play, the citizens' meeting is interrupted by the physical presence of Menenius; in the film, Menenius's appearance on TV causes the interruption. There is no physical contact between them because TV is the mediator. By doing so, Fiennes establishes, right from the beginning, a distance between the citizens and the government, a distance that is mediated by the army under Martius's command. Physically, the Roman city is made of segmented spaces. Bodyguards in secret service fashion protect members of the government from personal contact with citizens.

Roman Police and the Army restrict people's access to places. When the citizens march to invade the "Central Grain Depot," they are repressed by these forces and Martius delivers the "What would you have, you curs" speech. His display of disdain and contempt for the people is matched by the people's posters against him. The hate is mutual. We have the impression that their conflict could escalate, but Martius decides to end it because of the several cameras that register the event. He does not want to put up a show and have his hatred monstered. TV becomes a character that affects action, a messenger that encourages Aufidius to lead the Volscian threat on Roman borders. "Fidelis TV" is the news channel that appears throughout the film. "Fidelis"[27], from Latin, means faithful, loyal, trustworthy, and the characters rely on the medium for information. The choice of this name denotes irony for, as contemporary society constantly attests, information media are subject to points of view and, therefore, partial. Along these lines, the adaptation calls our attention to current issues such as partiality and fake news; TV works as a rhetorical device from the human realm.

Aufidius seems aware of TV potentiality and the second scene of the first act is replaced by one in which the Volscian videotapes an interrogation of a Roman soldier. The young soldier works as a source to verify information about the insurrections in Rome. Once he confirms the information, Aufidius executes the soldier and the Roman commanding forces, including Martius and Cominius, watch the video and decide to attack the Volscians. In another contemporary parallel, the execution video reminds viewers of hostages being executed by paramilitary and guerrilla soldiers[28]. The scene is shocking and breaks the sympathetic bonds viewers may have with Aufidius. The audience tends to favor the Roman point of view.

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[27] In another *entropic* movement, the name "Fidelis" may be a reference to the play *Cymbeline*, in which Princess Imogen disguises herself as a boy named Fidele, after being wrongly accused of adultery by a false report.

[28] This type of video appears in the news. It is usually used by extremist groups to display power and intimidate their hostages' home countries.

Nevertheless, following the ambiguity of the Shakespearean text, the film deconstructs simplistic relations of right and wrong during the Roman "counterattack" at Volscian ground. Under the aesthetic and thematic influences of recent war movies, Ralph Fiennes employs handheld shots[29], a technic he reproduces in other moments of the film to bring the audience closer to the action. This way, viewers join the perplexed soldiers who witness Martius's violent outbreak and go further, side by side with the Roman general in the invasion of civilian apartments in Corioles. Martius is portrayed as a killing machine, a thing that does not care if civilians are caught in the crossfire. This thing of darkness only pauses for a brief moment after invading an old man's apartment and drinking some water from a bottle offered by the terrified civilian at gunpoint. Thus, besides setting the political atmosphere or establishing an *entropic* mark as a *solvent dissolving* other *solvents*, Fiennes uses cinematic devices to portray a Coriolanus that fully belongs to the animal realm, without feelings towards humans.

**Scene 6 – The Martius Family**

The description of the domestic dynamics aids the understanding of character construction regarding Coriolanus's psychological background; at the same time, it enables comparisons with the broadcast theater production, illustrating *entropy*. Young Martius, Virgilia, and Volumnia are introduced in an intercalated scene corresponding to act I scene 3. Young Martius, a boy about eight years-old, plays with his monothematic martial toys in the garden of a spacious house under the eyes of his mother. Virgilia conveys an aura of purity through her sweet countenance and light colored clothes. In contrast, Vanessa Redgrave's Volumnia dresses in black and displays coldness. Unlike Virgilia's explicit suffering as she turns off the TV with its war news, Volumnia blends austerity and satisfaction. The matriarch

[29] "Handheld shot" is a technic that uses or implies the use of the camera supported by the hands of the cameraperson. It attempts a realistic effect to the shot, like a documentary.

of the Martius family is an oppressive presence in the house and the domestic dynamics legitimize Coriolanus's modus operandi. As in Shakespeare's text, these women are polarized representatives from the human realm that establish contrasting relationships with this (animal realm) Martius.

### Scene 7 – Martius Versus Aufidius

By employing a polarized characterization of Martius and Aufidius, Fiennes shakes the waters of *entropy* in his *Art solution* and directs the audiences' empathy. As the narrative progresses, the contrast between Martius and Aufidius becomes gradually clearer. Martius's army is a professional military force while Aufidius commands a paramilitary group, similar to a militia. The costumes, military uniforms with name tags in contrast to guerrilla outfits with no identification, highlight the precarious condition of the Volscian soldiers.

In a clash between the animal and the human realms, Martius and Aufidius display distinct behaviors. It appears that Martius develops a taste for blood. As he returns from the assault in the apartment building, the Roman soldier is covered in blood and frenetic for more action. Aufidius's motivations sustain ideology, not instinct. Martius does not care for civilian lives, neither Roman nor Volscian. Aufidius displays concern for civilian lives. After he fights Martius and the Romans go back home, there is a very moving scene in which the men encounter the bodies of a woman and a child caught in the crossfire. Aufidius is taken by hurt and desperation. This dreadful vision urges Aufidius's resolution to abandon his "fair play," replacing "true sword to sword" for "craft." One can conclude that Martius fights for himself, while Aufidius fights for his people.

The people's posters against Martius in Rome contrast with graffiti of Aufidius's heroic face on the walls of Corioles. Later on in the film, when Coriolanus is banished and goes to Antium, we see how different its urban dynamics are from Rome's. Civilians and

soldiers share the same spaces and Aufidius has a good relationship with the people. The mutual admiration and jealousy they share is supported by Martius's need to fall into popular grace and Aufidius's urgency to be a better soldier and commander. In political terms, the contrast between Martius and Aufidius is comparable to the dynamics of historical and contemporary conflicts involving "official" armies and paramilitary groups.

On an extra-compositional note, the actors' professional backgrounds might affect the audience's impressions of their characters. Ralph Fiennes has a solid career on stage and cinema but he is popularly recognized for playing the villain Voldemort in cinematic adaptations of the *Harry Potter* books. Gerard Butler is popular for his heroic roles in action movies, in particular, for playing the Spartan warrior King Leonidas in the cinematic adaptation of the graphic novel *300*. The villainous and heroic auras around the actors contribute to the polarity construction, adding one more element to the net of intermedial connections that contribute with *entropy*.

**Scene 8 – An Inner Look**

Fiennes adopts Shakespeare's method of blending intertextual and "intercontextual" elements in some creative insertions in his *Art solution*, meaning more *entropic* traits. Intertextual elements appear as echoes of Sophocles's Oedipus and Osborne's Coriolanus. The adaptation provides a glimpse of Coriolanus's domestic life after he returns from Corioles. His mother proudly attends to his wounds in an atmosphere of awkward intimacy that is interrupted by Virgila unwanted presence. She briefly reads the situation and leaves in silence to her own son's bedroom. The implicit cyclicality of this sequence validates an Oedipal centered psychoanalytic view – the bonding of mothers and sons. Virgilia does not share Volumnia's strong presence. The matriarch's personality dominates the domestic atmosphere. However, Volumnia seems responsible only for part of Coriolanus's issues;

military life has also affected his behavior. In Martius and Virgilia's bedroom routine, the lack of intimacy is evident when he is lying down and she hesitates to lie beside him. Virgilia awkwardly touches him and he looks at her. Their silence indicates limited communication. This scene is not from Shakespeare and reminds us of Osborne's adaptation in which we are introduced to an insomniac Coriolanus who, instead of joining his wife in bed, writes about his problems: "Concentration difficult. More so today. Woke suddenly. Foot almost through the sheet. Today more difficult… sure to. Senate…people…crowds" (Osborne 147). Osborne's Coriolanus aids the understanding of Fiennes's Coriolanus and, to some extent, Shakespeare's.

Intercontextually, this thing of darkness from the animal realm – instinctive, sanguinary, and lonely – can be the manifestation of a condition called PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), which affects many members of the military community. Violent experiences may cause this condition and "[i]t's normal to have upsetting memories, feel on edge, or have trouble sleeping after this type of event. At first, it may be hard to do normal daily activities, like go to work, go to school, or spend time with people you care about"[30]. Considering that Coriolanus is a walking display of these symptoms, PTSD has probably shaped his personality since his early years in battle. In sum, Volumnia's actions nurture a soldier and military life forges a broken being, unable to acknowledge human bonds. PTSD also justifies Coriolanus's connection with Aufidius, for he might see in the Volscian an equal, who shares similar war experiences and traumas. Therefore, more than assigning *entropy* to an *Art solution,* intertextual and intercontextual interferences aid the understanding of this network of common components in Shakespeare's palimpsest. In other words, Fiennes's adaptation affects our reading of its Shakespearean hypotext and hypertextual system.

[30] Source: U.S. Department for Veteran Affairs. Detailed information on PTSD can be accessed at https://www.ptsd.va.gov/understand/what/ptsd_basics.asp

**Scene 9 – Coriolanus's Inertia**

The contemporary dressing of Fiennes's adaptation sheds new light on Coriolanus's transit through different realms. The traumas Martius's "Amazonian chin" had to face find a coping mechanism in constant attack, constant thirst for battle. His predatory instincts, typical to the animal realm, walk side by side with his reluctance to move to the human realm because it is an aspect of his traumatized condition (PTSD). He sees the human realm as the realm of emptiness, for words are shallow descriptions of true action. So, when he leaves the room at the senate, refusing to hear his "nothings monstered" in Cominius's speech, he is actually refusing to have his "monstrosities" emptied. It is not modesty or false modesty, it is self-preservation, instinct. Words are empty to those who listen, but words carry memories of real events for him; they bring back his combat mode. The man of action has no place among the men of words. Cominius's speech echoes through the corridor, where Coriolanus awaits. In the cinematic language of the scene, the unsteady focus in association to close-ups and dutch angles[31] are constant reminders of Coriolanus's mental instability. As a symbol of the human realm, a janitor passes by the soldier and they exchange intense looks. We expect some kind of action, a hint of connection. However, their brief exchange comes down to nothing, breaking expectation. This is an "anti-*anagnorisis*"[32] moment, a scene of non-recognition for the characters. There is no connection between Coriolanus and the janitor. They are and remain strangers to each other's experiences, beings from distinct realms. In a way, the unsuccessful recognition of the other is a failed recognition of the self. Since awareness is not achieved, events remain unchanged. Thus, inertia keeps its control over the

[31] "Dutch angle," "tilt shot," or "oblique angle" is when the camera registers the scene from a diagonal angle, conveying a sense of imbalance and abnormality.

[32] *Anagnorisis* (recognition or knowing) and *Peripeteia* (reversal) are concepts developed by Aristotle in his *Poetics* in relation to tragedy. The terms are in association but not mutually exclusive. Essentially, *anagnorisis* describes a moment of awareness, which leads or not to a turn of events, *peripeteia*. According to Aristotle, "Reversal of the Situation is a change by which the action veers round to its opposite, subject always to our rule of probability or necessity. . . . Recognition, as the name indicates, is a change from ignorance to knowledge, producing love or hate between the persons destined by the poet for good or bad fortune" (*Poetics* 15-6).

narrative. Coriolanus goes with the political flow, contradicting his own nature. This failed *peripeteia* foreshadows Coriolanus's inability to accomplish the consul position since he is not ready to embrace the human realm.

There is a collective ignorance regarding Coriolanus. Everybody favors social status and protocol over a closer look at his explicit symptoms. His outbursts and cold behavior are reduced to personality traits. Coriolanus remains an undiagnosed victim of PTSD. Without proper treatment, he is unable to assume a position in the human realm, with no capacity to manage political and social matters. Senate, army, and family fail to recognize his condition. He is pushed to the upsetting position of crowd pleaser at the market-place, where he wears civilian clothes for the first time, clearly uncomfortable in the plain grey suit, a version of the play's humility gown. The audience recognizes that Coriolanus is out of place, physically and emotionally. The citizens join the other groups that fail Coriolanus through an ironic moment in which he gains their support by delivering a speech in front of a monument with the words "Rome knows the value of her own". Next, in the same spot, Sicinius persuades the people to withdraw their support. Consequently, the ignorance and negligence of all these groups in relation to the protagonist have unpleasant results as he turns against his hometown.

**Scene 10 – Visual Foreshadowing**

Fiennes transforms Shakespeare's subtext into visual subtext. In the scene Menenius, Cominius, and Volumnia try to convince the reluctant Coriolanus to regain people's trust, *mise-en-scène* reinforces their domestic dynamics. The physical space of the house isolates Virgilia from the action. We see her agonizing helpless figure through glass doors as her husband moves away from her and closer to his mother. When she begins to speak, the camera frames Redgrave and a picture of Jesus Christ on the wall. It foreshadows the martyr condition to which she pushes her son. This scene echoes the scene she attends his wounds

when, after Virgilia leaves, the camera focus on a picture of an eagle with a hare in its claws. In the human realm, Volumnia is the predator and her son is her prey. She gets tough in her rhetoric to convince him to be mild with the people, angrily throwing the Roman flag in front of him. Knowing her soldier son, Volumnia resorts to his patriotic duty. Martius moves away from her and we see that, instead of family pictures in portraits, we have pictures of him side by side with soldiers, conveying the impression that his true family is the army – the human correspondence of a pack that he is proud to lead. Volumnia pushes the right buttons and he yields. The whole scene exemplifies Fiennes's manipulation of visual hints as an interpretation of the Shakespearean text.

**Scene 11 – The Colors of Banishment and Exile**

The banishment scene takes place in a TV studio. Having in mind his PTSD condition, one is able to identify what triggers his wrath. The bright and crowded atmosphere is hostile to his mental condition. His discomfort escalates during the scene, which gradually increases the use of handheld shots, Dutch angles, and close-ups. The menacing tone of the whole situation causes Coriolanus's initial annoyance with microphone problems to quickly turn into rage after the tribunes accuse him of treason. This is the ultimate offence to the patriotic soldier. Fiennes delivers the speech "You common cry of curs" as an explosion, displaying his heated complexion along with ejections of saliva. When he reaches the line "There is a world elsewhere," the performance assumes a resigned tone and his departure is marked by an optical effect of dim focus, a literal representation of Roman blindness regarding Coriolanus.

Coriolanus is no longer a Roman soldier but a homeless citizen in the following scenes. The first shots of his "walk of exile" recall the citizen's walk through the projects. Coriolanus starts his walk through a peripheral road, with poor houses, the rural

correspondence of the urban projects. His soldier boots and civilian outfit bear the colors of his military uniform, implying that he is still a soldier at heart. However, his surroundings present a harsh civilian life. During his first steps on the road of exile, he witnesses two boys playing on the ground, with hounds, trash, and in poor living conditions. We can read these elements symbolically. The boys stand for his (re)birth as a citizen. The hounds are related to the "curs" despised by him in Rome. Trash and poor living conditions are his current reality, away from the comforts of a Patrician life. Gradually, he becomes part of this environment, a beast in its den. The soldier's appearance gives way to the hairy citizen, who physically integrates the animal realm, sleeping on the ground, into the wild. Winter takes over. The cinematography conveys isolation by employing color desaturation, i.e. images with a bleached effect. Color returns to the film as season changes, giving a false sense of comfort. Coriolanus arrives at a place near Antium. In a counterpart moment to the senate scene, Coriolanus exchanges intense looks with a young man who passes on a horse. Visually, this young man could represent the protagonist's progress in citizen life – from boy to man. However, once again, we have a non-recognition moment. Change is not consolidated. The soldier who could not be a politician is unable to be a civilian. Historical and contemporary parallels to this fictional situation are not difficult to be drawn since veterans' accounts of the hardships associated with the reintegration into civilian life are not scarce. Therefore, Fiennes provides material for criticism on the conditions of veterans in the real world.

Coriolanus arrives at Antium, a place where, unlike Rome, social segregation is not evident. With admiration, he witnesses Aufidius's popularity among its citizens. Coriolanus's volition to be more like Aufidius may be his silent cry for help, an unconscious wish to be cured of PTSD, which, apparently, does not affect the Volscian.

Aufidius is moved by revenge disguised as a sense of justice. The fact that Coriolanus does not arrive at Aufidius's house but successfully invades Volscian headquarters attests his

military skills at the same time it shows Aufidius's lack of personal life. The Volscian seems dedicated to his cause, payback for all the suffering caused by Rome. As if preparing a weapon against Rome, Aufidius brings the soldier back to life, shaving Martius's hair and beard. Some Volscians worship the weapon lost by the Romans and copy his appearance. Therefore, according to his own prediction, "he is loved when he is lacked." The menace at Roman gates puts into action the persona of the "lonely dragon that his fen / Makes feared and talked of more than seen."

### Scene 12 – The Man with the Dragon Tattoo

Once again, Fiennes is skillful in the use of visual elements to interpret Shakespeare's text. The animal realm confronts the human realm. Having lost their soldier, Roman defense is rhetoric. Menenius's plea at Volscian camp takes place at night and the visual disposition of the scene mirrors Coriolanus's personification of a dragon in his den. We have the impression that the lighting source is only from the fires in the camp and in the middle of all fire sits the man with the dragon tattoo, Coriolanus. The dragon tattoo is an identifying mark, a result of the negligence directed at his mental condition. Despite his divine status among the Volscians, this dragon-like Coriolanus belongs to the animal realm – extracting a specific connotation from the Shakespearean text. If he cannot be a human in Rome, he chooses to be a beast among Volscians. Menenius is denied to speak with Coriolanus. Since Menenius is rhetoric, Coriolanus's denial kills the Patrician before he actually takes his life. Disappointment, heartache, failure, and fear overtake Menenius. On his way back, Menenius reports the event to Cominius, describing Coriolanus as a merciless dragon.

In Rome, Menenius throws his watch in a channel and cuts his wrists, another creative insertion by Fiennes. There are three ways of interpreting Menenius's suicide in the adaptation. First, within the *Art solution*, the fact foreshadows Coriolanus's own sacrifice and

establishes a kind of balance between human and animal realms, each one losing their most prominent figures. Marlena Tronicke suggests that besides Coriolanus's oblique lines "Cut me to pieces," ". . . another line suggesting suicide is uttered by Menenius, who, in the face of the approaching attack on Rome, proclaims 'He that hath a will to die by himself, fears it not from another' (Cor. 5.2.102-103). . . . Thus, even though the text itself does not have it that way, it seems that for both characters, suicide could well be a fitting ending" (Kindle). Second, in a Shakespearean reference, the film reinforces Menenius as Falstaff's counterpart since both father figures die ignored by their sons. Third, in a contextual extrapolation, Fiennes – who was granted Serbian citizenship in September 2017 – may have attempted a reference to the Shakespearean scholar and politician Nikola Koljević. According to Tim Judah:

> Nikola Koljević was Yugoslavia's foremost Shakespeare scholar. . . . Koljević's son had died in an accident a few years before the war, and some believed that as a result of that trauma Koljević had become intent on playing out a full-blown Shakespearean tragedy of his own with himself in a starring role. (Suspicions that this may well have been the case were only enhanced then when, in January 1997, he put a gun to his head and killed himself.) (Kindle)

In the 90's, Koljević became deeply involved in an ultra-nationalist movement, known for ethnic discrimination. He was also one of Bosnia's collective presidency but lost political prestige after some years – another attributed cause for his depression and suicide.[33] Thus, by adding Menenius's suicide to his *Art solution*, Fiennes's establishes three referential levels and increases its *entropy*.

[33] Source: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/people/obituary-nikola-koljevic-1276825.html

### Scene 13 – The Boy with the Dragon Tattoo

The human realm overcomes the animal realm with Volumnia's plea. Unlike the full display of Coriolanus's dragon tattoo in Menenius's plea scene, the dragon is partially hidden by his paramilitary uniform during the women's plea. It does not take long for Volumnia to take control over her son's mind. She kneels before him three times. When she rises, after the third time, her work is done. He is not the man with the dragon tattoo anymore. The scene is an intercalation of close-ups, medium shots and full shots,[34] in a constant juxtaposition of family and soldiers, conveying the interference of domestic dynamics into state business. Coriolanus's emotional reaction is a cathartic step towards healing. He embraces the tension of his mental condition instead of repressing it. This is a self-referential moment of the film, a reflection of Aufidius's cry over the bodies of a woman and a child. Coriolanus's cry makes him more like his adversary and, like in the journey of his literary counterpart, he enters the human realm.

A peace treaty is signed by Coriolanus, representing the Volsces, and Cominius, representing the Romans. Coriolanus usurps Aufidius's military status in the same way Volumnia usurps her son's condition of savior as Cominius announces, "Behold our patroness, the life of Rome!" However, there is no real reversal. Coriolanus remains exiled and Romans only replace their defenses. Here we have an echo of Brecht's Coriolanus in relation to the "indispensable individual" issue. Despite his services, he is replaceable.

### Scene 14 – The Rest is Silence… And Music

There is no progression in the healing process. There is no learning. Like an Odysseus who is condemned to an everlasting journey, Coriolanus remains on the road, symbolically and literally. In the last scene of the film, Coriolanus returns to the Volsces to offer his

[34] In a "medium shot" the camera registers the subjects from medium distance, usually from the waist up. A "full shot" is the camera angle that registers the subjects and their surroundings.

military services and Aufidius intercepts the Roman on a road. Once again, he is accused of treason. Unable to control his anger, his verbal outburst is his suicide by the hands of the Volsces. He does not go down without a fight and shoots down some of the soldiers before being mortally wounded. Sound vanishes. Aufidius provides the final stab with the knife he sharpens at the opening scene. The cycle closes. The soldiers who adopted the looks of the Roman soldier remain on the floor. There is no continuity, no legacy. Fiennes's Coriolanus does not enter eternity. There is no repercussion. He dies and the rest is silence. His body is thrown in the back of a truck. Fade out.

Coriolanus has something more to say. The film credits are accompanied by Mikis Theodorakis's song "Sta Pervolia," performed by Lisa Zane. This Greek song is Coriolanus's message from the afterlife. In the song, a soldier asks Charon[35] to take him back to life only for a night to visit his mother, who did not see him off when he got on the train to the front, the train to his death. Coriolanus's emotional subjugation to his mother is his train to the different fronts he has been to (and to his death). She does not attend his battles, only the glories of the aftermath. Likewise, she enjoys the glories of being the savior of Rome and is absent during her son's demise. Still, he longs to see her one last time.

Fiennes preserves, dismisses, modifies, and adds elements in his *Art solution*, considering his Shakespearean *solute* as well as *solvent* advantages and limitations. Great part of this process is determined by the interaction of compositional and extra-compositional features. *Dissolving* is what determines the *entropy* in an *Art solution*. Shakespeare's *Art solution* is turned into *solute*, an idea to be *dissolved* according to *solvent*. After all, intermedial processes are *dissolution* processes with varied levels of *entropy*, either within or among *Art solutions*. A film, as this analysis indicates, is a cauldron of possible *dissolutions*. Moreover, it is a political statement. Fiennes's Coriolanus represents the great number of

[35] In Greek mythology, Charon is the ferryman who takes the souls of the dead to Hades, the underworld.

anonymous soldiers whose message from the afterlife of social reintegration is their growing number in the statistics.

### 3.5. Act V – *Hybrid Remediation*: Broadcast Theater & *NTLive*

Every (re)mediation implies *dissolution*. As previously stated, *Art solutions* can be turned into *solutes* and be *dissolved* by different *solvents*. This is close to what Bolter and Grusin mean by "all mediation is a remediation." Since its early days, cinema has flirted with theater. Sarah Bernhardt's *Hamlet*, for instance, is closer to a filmed play with its steady camera filming the action on a stage-like setting. In 1964, cinema and theater successfully matched in John Gielgud's Broadway production of *Hamlet*, starring Richard Burton. This film is not a steady cam recording. Cinematic resources such as long shots and close-ups were already employed. This media encounter could be considered as the starting point of a fruitful relationship that would bloom in the turn of the twenty-first century. Broadcast theater, this *dissolution* of theater by cinema, has become the best option to enjoy theatrical performances in large scale, worldwide, overcoming physical and geographical limitations.

This section focuses on broadcast theater as the ultimate example of *entropy* in the individual (*Art solution*) and collective (*palimpsest*) levels. The first two subsections introduce the concept and history of broadcast theater as we currently understand the term. The other subsections focus on the *National Theater Live* production of *Coriolanus*: at first, concerning technical aspects such as casting, costumes, stage and screen directions, lighting, and sound; then, I pinpoint these aspects in the sequence of events in the performance, with occasional touches on the production approach to politics and the characters' insertion in the three realms (animal, human, divine). My intention with the description of the production of *Coriolanus* is a metonymic introduction of the aspects of broadcast theater as an emerging

medium with high *entropic* potential. Occasional parallels of Josie Rourke's production and Ralph Fiennes's film aim to illustrate *entropic* movements within and among the *Art solutions*, regarding elements in *solvents* and *solutes*.

**Scene 1 – What is Broadcast Theater?**

Broadcast theater is any recording of a theatrical performance and its distribution, regardless of time (simultaneous or not) and media (cinema, internet, TV, and so on). Broadcast theater comprises configurations and interactions among media. It unites two complex media, film and theater, but it is not reduced to media combination in the sense suggested by Rajewsky. Broadcast theater can be classified as a *hybrid remediation*, a configuration with inherent high *entropy* that cannot be classified as "pure" remediation. It produces *Art solutions* with many variables regarding *solute*, *solvent*, and adjacent features. According to Pascale Aebischer and Susanne Greenhalgh:

> Broascast theatre offers a spectrum of 'expressive potentialities' arising from who is behind the camera; where, when and how the performance is filmed; how it is mixed together either 'live' or in post-production, and how it is framed by additional paratexts. These elements combine to make of theatre broadcasts something other than a transparent 'representation of one medium in another', in Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin's basic and influential definition of 'remediation' (2000:45). The more theatre broadcasts combine reproduction (or 'representation') with expression, the more urgently they challenge received definitions of what constitutes live performance and an original artwork. (5)

For this reason, I decided to analyze *Art solutions* of broadcast theater as ultimate samples of *entropic remediations*, hypertexts full of *entropic* potential.

### Scene 2 – Early Steps and *NTLive*

The first sparkle of broadcast theater was a BBC live broadcast on September 7th, 2003, of a *Richard II* production, starring Mark Rylance on the stage of the Globe. In 2009, the birth of broadcast theater was consolidated by two main enterprises: *National Theater Live* and *Digital Theater*. Later on, new projects such as *Shakespeare's Globe on Screen* (2011) and *Branagh Theatre Live* (2015) joined the practice.

The first *NTLive* broadcast was in June 2009 with the play *Phèdre*, starring Helen Mirren. Since then, around seventy productions have been broadcast in cinemas worldwide. According to the *NTLive*, "[o]ur broadcasts have now been experienced by over 5.5 million people in over 2,000 venues around the world, including over 650 venues in the UK alone." The broadcast venues cover around forty countries all over the world at the moment. Concerning technical specificities, *NTLive* informs,

> Though each broadcast is filmed in front of a live audience in the theatre, cameras are carefully positioned throughout the auditorium to ensure that cinema audiences get the 'best seat in the house' view of each production. Where these cameras are placed is different for each broadcast, to make sure that cinema audiences enjoy the best possible experience every time. Satellites allow the productions to be broadcast live to cinemas throughout the UK, as well as many European venues. Other venues view the broadcasts 'as live' according to their time zone, or at a later date.[36]

They also promote "encore screenings," offering new opportunities to enjoy past productions. Besides the Royal National Theatre, other places such as the Theatre Royal in Plymouth and the Young Vic in London were performing venues.

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[36] Source: http://ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk/about-us

### Scene 3 – Introducing the *NTLive Coriolanus*

Currently, the *NTLive* is in its tenth season and *Coriolanus* was part of the fifth season repertoire. Its performing venue was at the Donmar Warehouse in Covent Garden, London. As a *hybrid remediation*, the production of *Coriolanus* has an indissoluble double constituency. Theatrical and cinematic components and protocols manifest in a way that is neither one nor the other; it illustrates liminality. For instance, there was marketing at the theater door and cinematic promotions as teasers and trailers. There is also information on the website. *Coriolanus* promotion relied on large posters of the characters in front of the theater. In the website and cinemas, advertising relied on posters of the actor Tom Hiddleston, who plays the title role, bare-chested in front of what can be classified as a red blueprint of a heart, shaped by arteries and veins, a reference to Menenius's lines, "His heart's his mouth: / What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent." Similar to films, before the actual broadcast (or encores), audiences may watch trailers of other productions of the season. Trailers are also available on the website.

The original broadcast of *Coriolanus* was in January 2014, with encore screenings in September (U.K.) and November (worldwide). The broadcast opens with a teaser of *The Weir*[37]. Neither theatrical nor cinematic, the broadcast has a hint of TV show. From stage, the presenter Emma Freud advertises the other productions of the season along with encores and, in a strategic move to attract cinematic audiences, she reminds that *King Lear* is directed by Sam Mendes, who is also director of the new *James Bond* movie, *Skyfall*. Before the actual performance, there is a short film introducing the Donmar Warehouse and this *Coriolanus*. This small documentary blends historical and recent images of the Donmar Warehouse, cast and crew testimonies about the story, characters, and production notes. Also, highlighting the

[37] *The Weir* is a 1997 play, written by the Irish playwright Conor McPherson.

relevance of play, the video draws some comparisons to historical events and political dynamics. This contextualization sets the tone of the play for those familiar with Shakespeare and directs the understanding of those unfamiliar. The historical background on Donmar Warehouse places it as a meaningful setting for such production. A former banana-ripening warehouse, in the fruit market district not far from Westminster, parallels the proximity of plebeians and senators in the play. The space converted in a squared arena theater does not allow large scale spectacles. Since democracy is in its infancy in the context of the play, passing through a process of trial and error, the confined stage is like a frame to a failed experiment. As in Fiennes's adaptation, setting is a meaningful part of the production. Perhaps, *Coriolanus* clumsy democracy is closer to our own democratic practices. The actor Mark Gatiss and the director Josie Rourke mention contemporary examples of parliaments around the world, in which politicians engage into physical confrontation. Gatiss uses the attempted assassination of a Bulgarian politician during a speech in 2013, an event that escalated from normality to chaos, to exemplify the quick progression of the banishment scene. Once again, surrounded by a political aura, fiction flirts with fact. Shakespeare is within reflection distance.

**Scene 4 – Casting and Performance**

The casting in a broadcast theater production can be tricky. Performance must balance theatrical and cinematic conventions. One must have in mind the association of artistic merit and popularity in order to disrupt the fallacy that "popular" implies low quality. Rourke is fortunate in her choice of a protagonist. Tom Hiddleston combines stage experience with cinematic popular appeal. The actor has played Shakespearean roles on stage and TV, including the 2008 Dowmar production of *Othello* and the first season of BBC *The Hollow Crown*. He became famous worldwide for playing Loki in cinematic adaptations of Marvel

comic books, *Thor* and *The Avengers*. Hiddleston's artistic background is comparable to Fiennes's, aiding the combination of popularity and artistic quality. Following this pattern, Rourke's cast has many familiar faces to British TV audience and three actors that may be recognized by audiences outside Britain. Mark Gatiss, who plays Menenius, is part of the cast and writing team of BBC *Sherlock*. Titus Lartius is played by Alfred Enoch, who was in the *Harry Potter* filmic adaptations and the ABC series *How to Get Away with Murder*. Rourke states that she chose Birgitte Hjort Sørensen to play Virgilia because she admired her performance in the Danish TV series *Borgen*. Therefore, Rourke's cast harmonizes highbrow and popular tastes.

The first scene has a Black woman playing First Citizen and two men, one Black and one Caucasian, playing Second Citizen. More than fitting the contemporary demand, the mixed ethnics cast conveys the plebeians' multiple voices. Also on stage, the rest of the cast – except Hiddleston – remains seated, frozen like statues. Hiddleston's absence grants impact to Martius's first appearance. He enters shouting his lines and pushing one of the citizens. His physicality and dominance are established from this moment. Other characters are confined to certain portions of the stage or walk with hesitance. Martius moves with ease and agility through the stage. His assertive and wide gestures pour supremacy. In addition, his physical disposition seems natural in contrast to the restrained physical display of the tribunes, who limit their presence to one portion of the stage for most of the play. Junius Brutus and Sicinia Veluta, a man and a woman, are inert figures, plotting their moves from the corner of the action. Martius is at the center, exposing himself.

Aufidius, played by Hadley Fraser, supplies an opposite pole to Hiddleston's Martius. The production replicates the filmic adaptation with a bearded Volsce in contrast to a clean-shaven Roman. Aufidius is active but not as intense as Martius in his physicality. In this production, age difference could explain these aspects, implying an Aufidius older than

Martius. However, the two actors seem to be close in age, a fact that leads us to another interpretation. Age would not be a physical marker, but a psychological. A beardless Martius conserves the "innocence" of his "amazonian chin," still green and unwise. On the other hand, Aufidius grows a beard as he retains experience. The punctuation of these "life stages" anticipates the portrayal of a Coriolanus from the human realm, an *entropic* mark of this production in relation to the Shakespearean text and Fiennes's film.

Performance choices concerning Virgilia attribute more *entropic* movements to the production. Unlike the film and the impression one may have after reading Shakespeare's play, Sørensen's Virgilia is not a submissive creature. She is not diminished by Volumnia's authority. This Virgilia has outbursts when she speaks. At first, her behavior might be confused with Sørensen's exaggerated theatrical technique. However, as the play progresses, we realize she is a counterpart of her husband, as visceral as her gender allows her in the context. If she feels, she displays. Like her husband, she tries to hold back, but fails – if not to the other characters, to the audience that perceives her sentiments. This counterpart relation can be read as an adaptation to a feminist context. The "gracious silence" is her defense mechanism to avoid harshness. Like her husband, she is less words and more action. The couple's physical displays of affection are not uncommon during the performance. Consequently, Hiddleston's Martius distances from his cinematic equivalent and sets foot in the human realm.

Deborah Findlay's Volumnia is controlling and proud. However, her relationship with her son is not painted in the same pathological colors portrayed by Redgrave. Unlike the film, there is no sense of competition between Volumnia and Virgilia. Despite their differences, they support each other, respecting their own roles in Martius's life. Through feminist lines, they endorse sorority, mimicking Coriolanus's fraternal bond with fellow soldiers. Thus, this feminist approach eliminates psychological issues of Coriolanus's

domestic dynamics, placing the focus of the production on political criticism. Moreover, the casting of women for tribune and citizen roles further gender balance – a trace of contemporaneity. In sum, casting and performance choices explore possibilities, feeding the *entropy* in the *Art solution*.

### Scene 5 – Screen Direction

The liminality of broadcast theater is challenging in technical terms. There are two sets of direction to think about: stage and screen. Any conflicts between these two fields can ruin the *Art solution*. Light and sound must be adequate to theater and camera. Performance capture must be in sync with stage action to avoid gaps and misinterpretations of the story. So, once the theatrical part is finished, each production is carefully studied by the screen director in order to position the cameras in the correct spots and check if any changes are necessary on stage. In *Coriolanus*, the stage director Josie Rourke worked in association to the screen director Tim van Someren, who has been responsible for several *NTLive* productions. The theatrical audience controls the capture of the action, but cinematic audience relies on the choices of the screen director. In an article by Lucy Handley in *The Telegraph*, Tim van Someren acknowledges, "I can affect the experience of the play by deciding what the audience sees, and how they see it – but it can't be distracting. They want to see the play and enjoy it, not be asking: 'What's the camera doing now, is he in focus?' If you get it all right, viewers don't notice, but it's a lot of work." Despite this urge for immediacy[38], broadcast theater does not want to convey the physical presence of the audience in the performance venue neither produce a film. There is a negotiation in terms of media devices to achieve this hybrid result. Still according to van Someren, "[w]hen I review our

[38] The opposite of *Hypermediacy*. According to Bolter and Grusin, immediacy is "[a] style of visual representation whose goal is to make the viewer forget the presence of the medium (canvas, photographic film, cinema, and so on) and believe that he is in the presence of the objects of representation" (272-3).

rehearsals, I'm usually trying to add in art and emotion, so, for example, if you can get [a shot of] Tom Hiddleston crying [as *Coriolanus* in 2014] that's great, but if you can get Tom Hiddleston crying with his wife looking at him in the background, it is much stronger. I'm always trying to find those moments."[39] Once again, we have this sense of "neither nor" and "both" in the final product. In sum, Broadcast Theater is still a work in progress.

In relation to image capture features, there is a predominance of full shots and medium shots. The cameras in front of the stage capture the action through high angles, low angles, full shots, and medium shots. Side cameras focus on closer shots, but do not register close-ups, a reminder that it is not cinema. There are steady shots from different angles. Cameras also move accompanying characters, especially Martius. Yet, we do not have the trembling hand-cam perception like in a film. In relation to image capturing features, the montage pace during the siege of Corioles scene indicates the particularity of broadcast theater as a medium. The montage is the editing of shots and it is a cinematic device to convey the tone of a scene. Tim van Someren provides a faster pace to the scene with shots that do not last more than eight seconds, intercalating with shots of four, two and one second. The director does not overuse quick shots in the process like their agglomeration in certain war films such as Ridley Scott's *Black Hawk Down*, which employs several one-second and two-second shots. Once more, it is not the aim to imitate a cinematic production.

### Scene 6 – Stage Direction

The opening scene of *Coriolanus* has a single source of light coming from the top center back of the stage. This light fades and a square of light appears on the stage. A soft piano song and humming accompanies young Martius who paints a red square following the light. This red square is slightly diagonal in relation to the squared space of the stage. This

[39] Tim van Someren's interview for *The Telegraph* offers a description of screen director's function in a live broadcast production. Link: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/national-theatre-live/filming-with-tim-van-someren/

asymmetry represents the uncanny nature of the play, which does not fit in traditional interpretations. There are no sides, no good neither bad, only a general sense of flaw. The fact that young Martius is the one who paints the floor implies that, maybe, Coriolanus's fate was determined during childhood. The red square symbolizes the delimitation of his bloody destiny. In a way, the red square frames the transference of the dynamics of prey and predator from the animal realm to the human realm. Even though this Coriolanus belongs to the human realm, he does not live in it fully because he fails to embrace political conventions. In brief, in the human realm, Coriolanus is a prey.

In the pre-performance film, Lucy Osborne, responsible for set and costume design, informs us that Romans would paint a few feet of their walls bright red in order to keep the population in constant state of war and terror. The back wall is painted in red following the style described by Osborne and it manipulated during the production to contextualize events. So, the back wall is a character of its own, an equivalent to the TV in Fiennes's film. All actors, except Hiddleston, enter the stage forming a horizontal line and go to chairs at the back wall, where they sit. Under the shouts of "Annona Plebis," two actors paint the phrase in white on the back wall. Annona was the Roman system of grain supply to the population, which was controlled by the authorities. The expression "Annona Plebis" denotes the plebeians' share of the grain supply[40]. Once again, the graffiti is a bridge between the production and its historical source. This time, graffiti appears by two different methods. The hand painted graffiti on the wall is joined by digital projections of "Grain at our own price." These two sources set the tone of the production: a mixture of Latin and English, Rome and London, body as medium in conjunction with technological devices. Broadcast theater displays its *entropic* potential in this production in several hybrid associations.

[40] For more information on Roman "Annona," one can consult *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* and Charles Freeman's *Egypt, Greece, and Rome: Civilizations of the Ancient Mediterranean*.

There is a limited use of props on stage, which puts the audiences' imagination to work. Chairs are the main and almost only props used in scene. During the battle of Corioles, the chairs stand as the trenches as if inviting the audiences' imagination to embrace the fictional pact proposed by the chorus of *Henry V*. The back wall receives the projection of many ladders side by side as if the conquest of Corioles is at a climbing distance. Martius has the fighting disposal of Henry V, but an opposite approach to the soldiers. He urges the men to battle by threatening their integrity instead of motivating their courage. We have different methods with different outcomes. Martius does not gather a band of brothers. This production evidences his lack of political skills / rhetoric to be a leader for the Romans.

**Scene 7 – Costumes**

Costumes support *solvent entropy* as they reinforce the connection between old and new, Rome and London. Dark and faded colors, wool, cotton, and leather fabrics, skinny pants and hoodies provide a timeless atmosphere to the performance. The action takes place in ancient Rome but it could be associated to other contexts. Layers over layers of clothing used by the citizens and Menenius create a sense of identification between them. Also, layers enable actors to double parts by changing a single piece of clothing. The leather-like vests identify the soldiers. The design of the women's dresses conveys nobility and *différence*. Costumes, like camera direction, aid the story without getting in its way.

**Scene 8 – A Brechtian Touch**

Stage painting (red square, back wall), limited props, and versatile costumes are theatrical features that move the production away from the immediacy of film as a medium. Additionally, the presence of all the actors on stage taking their cues to get in and out of scene is a hypermedial method, reminding the audiences they are appreciating an *Art*

*solution*. The presence of hypermediacy in broadcast theater can have a productive effect in reception regarding the interpretation of the material.

Hypermediacy is one of the main features of "epic theater," a method perfected by Brecht and an influence on modern theater. Brecht uses a sketch scene to illustrate his view on "epic theater:"

> An eyewitness demonstrating to a collection of people how a traffic accident took place. The bystanders may not have observed what happened, or they may simply not agree with him, may "see things a different way"; the point is that the demonstrator acts the behavior of driver or victim or both in such a way that the bystanders are able to form an opinion about the accident. (qtd. in Fischer-Lichte 181)

As the bystanders, audiences are incited to build their own opinions about the events they witness. In a political play such as *Coriolanus*, this freedom of interpretation is a positive aspect, for it contributes with critical thinking instead of directing the audiences' point of view, dismissing partiality. Shakespeare is a range of interpretative possibilities and modern theater embraces ambiguity like no other performance methods in history. This Brechtian touch adds to *solvent entropy*.

**Scene 9 – Sound and Lighting**

On the theatrical front, sound and lighting play important parts. The scene transitions are marked by sound effects that electronically manipulate electric guitar, bass, and drums. When the men are at the gates of Corioles, we hear bass and drums. The percussion sound continues to be a convention to evoke conflict. During the scene, distorted cord sounds in association to sirens set the menacing mood of the battle, and the soldiers run to the trenches, leaving Martius alone to conquer the city. An instrumental hum works as incidental music as

Martius incite the soldiers. Explosions from the top of the back wall in association to the fall of sootlike material look like bombs being thrown by the Volsces. Fire crosses vertically the stage, complementing the warlike atmosphere. This fire effect is intensified by the dim lighting of the scene. The source of light produces many shadows on stage (chairs and characters). Throughout the performance, light has different levels of intensity, but it does not fill the stage completely. If the production were a black and white film, some would classify it as film noir. Together with the projections on the back wall, light sets the undertone of the production. Light almost fades in situations of danger for Coriolanus. When he climbs the ladder to Corioles, light totally fades for a moment. As incidental music, light sets the visual mood of the scenes, even emulating the moods of characters. For instance, Martius returns from Corioles emerging from the side of the stage as a source of light with smoke effects grant him a godlike aura, the way soldiers see him. Covered in blood – make-up makes its first full appearance –, Coriolanus does not wear his soldier vest anymore; he is a thing of blood. More than delivering their entropic contributions, sound and lighting are important narrative devices, like the camera. In communion, these devices paint the complexities of this evolving medium.

### Scene 10 – Hybridizing Theater & Film

In the fight scene with Aufidius, the red square becomes a fighting ring. The actors do not limit the performance to the tingling of swords and engage into a body combat that balances film stunts and theatricality. Here, cinematic audiences have a hand-cam effect that brings them closer to the action. As the men become physically engaged, the shot gets closer conveying the impression that, for the characters, there is nothing outside their hate for each other. Still, the camera does not emulate the shaky shots of the filmic adaptation. The

spectator is a close observer of events, not a participant. In technical terms, the overall effect is of a mature production of broadcast theater, balancing filmic and theatrical elements.

### Scene 11 – A Coriolanus from the Human Realm

After the conquest of Corioles, the soldiers led by Cominius crown Martius with the oaken garland. The combination of blood and the garland on his head provides a visual reference to the figure of Jesus Christ at Calvary, a connection that is repeated further on. However, this connection does not highlight divinity. Actually, the godlike soldier gives way to the wounded man. Coriolanus seems genuinely upset with the fanfare made by the soldiers. He storms and shouts at them to stop, quickly trying to control his temper. Hiddleston's performance portrays a stubborn, violent creature that is not interested in praises, but accepts them out of respect, not protocol. More than embarrassed, he is exhausted and in pain. For the first time, he sits. During the previous scenes he is not part of, while the other actors are seated, he stands outside the red square. This theatrical mark reinforces the idea of weariness during the scene in which he forgets the name of the man who treated him well in Corioles.

Hiddleston's Coriolanus seems on the verge of crying in several moments of the play. This makes him a more sympathetic figure, supplying ambiguity to the interpretation of his motives and actions. This Coriolanus is human, from beginning to end. He recognizes that all the world is a stage and man and women merely players. However, his pride and stubbornness prevents him from leaving the act of a soldier. His acts still vary from the whining school-boy, passing through the lover sighing like furnace, to the soldier, who seeks the bubble reputation even in the cannon's mouth. As he refuses to transition to political life, the "justice," his own life comes to an end, not shifting into "the lean and slipper'd

pantaloons.[41]" In sum, Rourke and Hiddleston construct a Coriolanus from the human realm, with emotions and flaws but unable to embrace political deception.

**Scene 12 – Body & Blood**

The body is an element that corroborates Coriolanus's human condition in the production. The Shakespearean text mentions body and scars. The cinematic adaptation provides glimpses at his wounded body. The Donmar production escalates in the exposure of the soldier's wounded body to the audience. Coriolanus, the man in pain, takes off his shirt and cleans himself under a narrow stream of water from the ceiling in the middle of the stage. He trembles, gasps, and groans in pain, displaying physical vulnerability. A shower of red liquid spreads through the stage as he shakes the water off his body. Then, he slowly leaves the stage, pressing his arm wound with his shirt. This intimate moment is shared only with the audience, building the tendency to sympathize with the character. Even though we understand his hubris and violence, moments like this scene soften any harsh judgments we might have.

Three actors, doubling as Aufidius's servants, wipe the floor. In the last scene of the first act, Aufidius pours his anger and frustration into words. A line of red liquid remains on stage and he soaks his hands in the liquid, transferring it on his face as he states he would wash his fierce hand in Martius's heart. The marketing of the production suggests and Hiddleston's performance confirms: this Coriolanus is heart, feeling. Hence, Aufidius's lines are prophetical because he will be part of the Roman's demise. This scene visually foreshadows the disturbing view of Aufidius bathing in Coriolanus's blood at the end. In a way, this scene depicts an animalized Aufidius, to whom it is harder to sympathize. It is like the production inverts the characterization of Fiennes's film.

[41] I based this parenthesis about Coriolanus's personality on the speech "All the World's a Stage," uttered by Jaques in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, seventh scene from second act.

**Scene 13 – Protocol & Idealization**

Coriolanus's arrival in Rome repeats some of the points mentioned above. There is a comic tone in the scene when he expresses his discontent over Cominius's praises and the commander says, "your mother," stopping the soldier's protest. If it pleases his mother to have her son praised, no harm done. Still, his concession does not come out of psychological dependency. His behavior is out of affection and respect, still supporting a Coriolanus from the human realm, connected with human feelings. This Coriolanus highlights the ego of the man – which is constantly ignored by those around him. His encounter with his wife is also affectionate. They exchange kisses and caresses. However, something is missing to totally insert the character in the human realm; his lack of rhetoric and political skills is evident. It is the central topic of the performance. It is suggested that he steps into political position and as he replies, "I had rather be their servant in my way / Than sway with them in theirs," everyone is urged to the Capitol, ignoring his utterance. He speaks and is not heard. They pay attention to their own (mis)perceptions of this man instead of seeing him as he really is. After his candidacy for consulship, he tries to decline the tradition of the gown of humility. Menenius ignores Coriolanus's wishes and forces him to fulfill the tradition.

The (mis)perceptions in relation to Coriolanus continue in the market-place – where people previously received papers to give as representing their votes. He expresses his disdain to citizens that willingly give him their votes. They seem to accept him not for who he is but for what they think he should be. They focus on the social position, the deeds, the wounded body in the transparent gown, instead of paying attention to the volition of the man. Most of the citizens are portrayed as simpletons who fall for the act of a bad actor. Indeed, "the wisdom of their choice is rather to have [his] hat rather than [his] heart" (II. 3. 87). So, Coriolanus knows he does not need to be a good trickster to win their voices. Politicians need

to seem, not be. More than two thousand years after this newborn democracy, the dynamics portrayed by the play still ring a bell about contemporary practices. Shakespeare continues to be our contemporary because inertia still surrounds our political practices.

Coriolanus reads the plebeians and so do the tribunes who manipulate them to retrieve their votes. The tables of politics turn in Rome and the tribunes feel empowered enough to deliver the news to the Senate with the same violence Martius treats one of the citizens at the beginning of the play. Brutus pushes Coriolanus and throws the basket with ripped votes at him. For a moment, Coriolanus seems disoriented like a boy who lost his toy; he kneels on the floor to assemble the papers in a humiliating position. Suddenly, as his soldier mode returns, he reacts and takes Brutus's place at the pulpit, shouting his disdain for the citizens. The senators, especially Menenius, try in vain to prevent him from worsening his condition. The tribunes accuse him of treason; he is painted as an enemy of the people and, being the city its people, an enemy of Rome. Brutus and Sicinia stab him politically and instigate his literal death.

As the play transitions to the next scene, young Martius steps on stage with his toy sword, simulating a fight. Coriolanus paces from one side to the other. Besides establishing Martius's house as the setting of the new scene, this double presence on stage is symbolic. The boy that limits the stage also limits Coriolanus's decisions. The stubborn boy is a stubborn man who needs to be chastised by his parents in order to change his behavior. Menenius, the father figure, and Volumnia, the commanding mother, join forces to convince their son that "the word is mildly." Like a spoiled brat, Coriolanus obeys their commands.

### Scene 14 – Theatrical Banishment

Brutus and Sicinia are the ones who, literally and metaphorically, set the stage for the banishment scene. The man paints a small black square on the floor and Sicinia instructs the

people's responses to their suggestions. Here we have an *entropic* movement that results from the casting of a woman and a man to the roles; proud of their plans, the couple kisses, echoing another Shakespearean power couple: the Macbeths. Coriolanus is their Duncan and his destruction consolidates their ascension to power.

This scene is an inversion of the stage dynamics we observe in the beginning of the play. Now, Coriolanus is confined to the black square, static. The tribunes move all over the stage. This inversion is the unfolding of the dynamics of the human realm in which political and rhetorical skills overcome any other competence. The black square confines Coriolanus to the condition of prey in the human realm; at the same time, the black square represents the human cage of the merciless dragon that Coriolanus is about to become. Projections on the back wall read "enemy" and, as the scene progresses, it changes to "traitor" and "it shall be so," under shouts that repeat the sentence. Coriolanus has arrived holding his garland – a visual counterpart of Christ's crown of thorns –, but throws it to the ceiling. He is not Christ and does not go down passively. His heart once more comes to his mouth as he professes the "you common cry of curs" speech. The shots frame Hiddleston from the chest up, the closest form of close up in the production. We see his eyes water in anger. The lines and the emotions progress with ejections of saliva, similar to Fiennes's performance. Nevertheless, opposite to Coriolanus's departure from setting in the film, Hiddleston's Coriolanus is left alone on stage. The other characters leave as if obeying his line "I banish you." He is completely alone when he says, "there's a world elsewhere."

As Coriolanus remains onstage, he is the element of transition to the departure scene. He leaves the black square to comfort Volumnia, who is uncontrollably desperate. Virgilia, as her husband's double, is moved with the situation but keeps strong. Part of his farewell speech is spoken like a monologue to the front audience and then, he turns to the women, Menenius and Cominius. They all leave him alone on stage once again. He returns to the

black square and tomatoes are thrown at him under shouts of "it shall be so." This dramatic way of ending the first half of the production may signal to the renaissance practice of throwing fruit at actors on stage according to role and / or performance; also, it can be a visual expression of his inner state, like a mental repetition of a trauma, or a preview of what is about to come because his final expression is of anger. Black out.

**Scene 15 – Intermission**

During the interval, Emma Freud interviews Josie Rourke on some aspects of the production. This interview locates the broadcast between TV show and DVD / Bluray extra features. Yet, it is neither. Freud reminds the audience to visit the *NTLive* website for more information and content. The cameras also shoot part of the audience in the theater; so, we have an idea of the facilities. It is also a reminder that cinema audiences are witnessing a theatrical production – another hypermedial feature. By placing the interval between banishment and exile, the production provides a sense of temporal disruption.

**Scene 16 – Exile**

A deep bass sound accompanied by piano notes define the transition to the exile scene as the camera gives the idea of an "establishing shot" with a movement from high to low angle. A blue light gradually floods the stage. A man with a bucket enters the scene to clean the graffiti on the back wall, surprising a hooded figure, whom we learn to be Coriolanus. This emulation of "establishing shot" introduces a new location to the audience: Antium. Theatrical and broadcast devices repeat in their own ways the cinematic adaptation of the friendly atmosphere of Antium. As he reaches Aufidius's house, Coriolanus is introduced to a relaxed environment contrasting with the tensions of Rome. It is comical as people, including Aufidius, break his naïve expectations of being recognized. Coriolanus states, "Prepare thy

brow to frown", but it is the Roman's brow that frowns. Coriolanus sets a mood transition in motion as he introduces himself and his misfortunes with severity and bright watery eyes. As if the intention of using the Roman soldier as a weapon was not enough to justify Aufidius's mercy, the production echoes some of its predecessors by introducing the homoerotic hint in this scene. The Volscian offers a tender welcome to the once Roman menace, kissing him on his forehead and mouth. The audience in the theater laughs at the gesture. Contemporary eyes fail to grasp the contextual aspect. In ancient Rome, homosexual relations were not uncommon. It was not about the type of relation but how it was conducted. As Robert Knapp enlightens us,

> Even if complicated in the details, the overriding elite male ethos valuing domination and being ashamed of subjection meant that all sex, whether homosexual or heterosexual, was evaluated as specific circumstances of control and submission. So a particular sexual act was acceptable or not depending not so much on the physiology of the act itself, but on who was involved and the part played by an individual in it. (29)

Coriolanus places himself at Aufidius's mercy. The kiss is the visual confirmation of Volscian dominance. Under the incredulity of his servants and his "guest," the scene establishes Aufidius as the conductor of events from now on. He prevails over Martius but will not prevail over Rome. By the end of the scene, the graffiti that once read "annona plebis," loses part of the word "annona." "Plebis" stays. Roman people also prevail over Martius as we are about to see.

### Scene 17 – Biblical and Shakespearean Reflections

From the lion Coriolanus is proud to hunt, Aufudius reveals to be a more cunning type of predator. The Volsce offers his vest to his former enemy. The leather-like vest with a lion

emblem is Coriolanus's new soldier outfit. As an exiled leader, the lion is a suitable symbol for Coriolanus because, in Christian mythology, it is a symbol of the tribe of Judah, a people who also faced exile and their leaders during this period were called "Exilarchs." In addition, the Lion of Judah is related to Jesus Christ as a Savior in the book of *Revelation*.[42] Thus, this is a new *dissolution* of *Coriolanus*, but the biblical references still proliferate. Here, the reference is visual and the connotation is not of predator but of savior.

Menenius's hubris leads him to think he is going to be Rome's savior. After having a heartbroken Cominius confirm that Coriolanus is not open to dialogue, he behaves like a buffoon, a true Falstaff type, full of confidence. Yet, his eyes start to display some insecurity as he leaves. He is received with indifference that turns into menace and, finally, into mockery. He parts from Coriolanus as a humiliated clown, the cause of Volscian laugh. The production preserves and modifies biblical and Shakespearean elements, inciting *entropy*.

**Scene 18 – The Final Plea**

The final plea scene starts with Coriolanus sitting on a chain in the middle of the stage. As a Coriolanus from the human realm, his determined tone with Aufidius is shaken by his son's shouts of "father." Light gets dim and a spot lits his chair. He stands up and narrates his family's movements. Virgilia enters the square and bows to the chair. We realize that the Martius who is standing is the expression of his inner thoughts while his body is still on the chair. "He" walks to his mother and child and young Martius looks him in the eye. It does not mean that the child sees his father. Actually, it may indicate that their thoughts are more alike. We are witnessing his internal fight between the whining school-boy and the soldier. This "walking conscious" of Coriolanus returns to his seat, resolute "to stand as if a man were author of himself and knew no other kin." Virgilia sits on his lap and appeals to the

[42] The Tribe of Judah is said to be descendants of Jacob's son, Judah (*Gur Aryeh* – "young lion" or "lion's cub"). The reference is the *Old Testament*, book *Genesis* 49:9. In the book of *Revelation*, which belongs to the *New Testament*, we find a reference to the Lion of Judah is in 5:5.

lover in him. He weakens but pushes her away. Then, he kneels to his mother – not in mockery like Fiennes's Martius. Hiddleston's Coriolanus is more respectful even when he tries to be cruel. In comparison to Redgrave's arrogant portrait, Findlay's Volumnia looks devastated, with her hair loose and a sweeter voice. This Volumnia is a humble beggar. Instead of overcoming his stubbornness with authority, this Volumnia destabilizes him with shame. Redgrave seems to appeal to the boy disrespecting authority; Findlay talks to the conscience of the soldier. Coriolanus stands with his back to his mother. Camera catches his rolling tears in a middle shot. As the women are about to leave, we have the shot mentioned by Tim van Someren: Coriolanus cries in the foreground and, in the background, we see Virgilia with her hurt pride. After the "O mother" speech, Volumnia seems aware of her son's ill fate. She is surprised by her gain to Rome and shocked by her loss of a son. Ambiguity also permeates Aufidius's "I was moved withal," which expresses affection and carries vexation. In their performances, Butler accentuates the words and Fraser underlines the content of the line. These "repetitions with variations"[43] are the *entropic* traits of the Art solutions.

**Scene 20 – Coriolanus's Death**

The death scene is played in continuity. As Volumnia says goodbye to her son, Findley's performance makes clear she is aware of his doomed fate. Aufidius's verbal attacks happen as Coriolanus stands in the black square like a lamb about to be killed by a wolf. When he physically reacts, he seems to realize it will be in vain. Coriolanus throws his sword on the floor and vents verbally. Aufidius, taken by the emotional awareness of the outcome, says: "My rage is gone and I am struck with sorrow. Let him die for it." As one man holds a sword to Coriolanus throat, the other ties his feet so he hangs from the ceiling in a visual

[43] I borrow this expression from Linda Hutcheon in *A Theory of Adaptation*, page 8.

reference to Olivier's performance in Peter Hall's production, consolidating a referential net that corroborates *palimpsestic entropy*. Coriolanus struggles in vain as his body rises. In a shocking display of violence, Aufidius holds his enemy upside down with his back to front stage and a man cuts Coriolanus's torso. The Roman offers one last struggle, spraying blood around as the Volsce fulfills his desire of bathing in his rival's heart. In a reverential frenzy, Aufidius professes his rival shall have a noble memory. The red square is lit as if showing the completion of its symbolism. A child's voice sings as light and rose petals bathe Volumnia, like a statue on the opposite side of the stage. Aufidius leaves Coriolanus's body spinning. The cycle is closed. Volumnia gives and takes his life. End scene. Lights go out. Actors bow under applauses. The audience in the theater leaves as the cinematic audience can see the credits of the production, theatrical and cinematic. The final impression for broadcast viewers is not of having watched a film and neither a theatrical performance. There is a third space in the apprehension of this *Art solution*, a highly *entropic* space that blends referential nets of *solvents* and *solutes*.

Shakespeare is an architect of hypotexts and hypertexts. Even a play that is not so popular, such as *Coriolanus*, reaches considerable *entropy* either in the analysis of individual *Art solutions* or within its own branch of the Shakespearean palimpsest. I hope to have demonstrated through the sections on sources and hypertexts that *Coriolanus* is not a static *Art solution* and it has endured influences through time. The Shakespearean original *concentration* has been *dissolved* into different *Art solutions*, most of the time under contextual political agendas. These *dissolutions* do not appear disconnected in their stages of the Shakespearean palimpsest. They *dissolve* different elements from common sources such as the use of biblical references. *Solutes* and *solvents* may be connected by constituency as, for instance, the reference made by the Donmar production to Olivier's performance. In sum,

there are *dissolutions* of elements other than the Shakespearean text. Additionally, the political aura remains open to the audiences own interpretations, following the contemporary trend to let the audience built part of the meaning of the *Art solution*.

More than replication, there is association. The *hybrid remediation* introduced by broadcast theater elevates the *entropy* in the Shakespearean palimpsest. The combination of two media and the dynamics of their resulting manifestation should be considered. It is as if the same *Art solution* coexists with its *doppelgänger* from another dimension: a copy affected by the laws of a parallel universe, actually, a parallel *solvent*. Shakespeare reaps the benefits of this mutual existence. Through broadcast theater, film shares its popularity with theater in a global scale. This new kind of *Art solution* is the purest way to experience theatre without actually attending the live performance. My intention with this brief analysis of the Donmar production is to testify the *entropic* potential of broadcast theater. The Shakespearean text goes through cuts and additions. Connections are established and shared. Tradition and new experimentations join a dance of possibilities as if crying out loud: "Hail, Shakespeares! Hail, *entropy*!"

# Chapter 4 - *(Dis)solving* Stages:

## *Much Ado About Nothing* from Text to *Globe on Screen* and *Digital Theater*

> Princes and counties! Surely a princely testimony, a goodly count, Count Comfect, a sweet gallant surely, oh that I were a man for his sake! Or that I had any friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into curtsies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too: he is now as valiant as Hercules, that only tells a lie, and swears it: I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving. (*Much Ado About Nothing* IV. 1. 301-7)

*Much Ado About Nothing* first appears in the 1600 quarto. Its first performance might have been a couple of years earlier, in the autumn of 1598 (Dobson and Wells 307). At first sight, this play does not provide as dense critical ground as the political entanglement of *Coriolanus*. Shakespeare's comedies provide better disguise for moral hints, which are still there, waiting to be unveiled. I owe my choice of this play as an object of analysis to several factors, one of them being my belief that *Much Ado* has more than meets the eye in terms of morals. Its subtexts have reflected in derivative *Art solutions* over the centuries beneath the humorous disguise. It is as if some *solute* components are yet to be discovered in order to have an accurate formula of the *Art solutions*. This chapter intends to explore some features of this formula to show how they are arranged and rearranged in *Art solutions* of their palimpsestic branch, touching again on *entropic* movements.

Once again, the inertia of human nature permeates my analysis, now in relation to gender roles. In this chapter, we observe that besides being outlined by politics, the hierarchical organization of society obeys power relations based on gender[44]. Shakespeare's sources have touched on this issue as well as his hypotexts and hypertexts. As the play illustrates, gender notions influence the construction of identity and social relations. The last decades have witnessed the intensification of the debates around these issues; therefore, I seize the opportunity to read *Much Ado* focusing on gender notions and their repercussions regarding social masks and (mis)communication.

The section division follows the structure and the objectives of the previous chapter. In the first section, I identify biblical, literary, historical and contextual sources of the play; since these last two types of sources are connected, they share one subsection. In the second section, I deal with character construction, focusing on how conceptions related to gender roles guide their behavior and communication issues. Section three shows the how the constant interest in subjects such as love and deception stimulates the proliferation of hypertexts of the play in different media. The fourth section takes advantage of the popularity of cinema as a medium to add *entropy* to my study as I introduce a parallel view between two films. Finally, the last section follows and increases my *entropic* study by introducing another double analysis of two broadcast theater productions. This way, more variations are exposed in terms of *Art solutions* and two additional projects of broadcast theater diversify the approach to the medium. Once again, occasional references to the filmic adaptations will aid the understanding of the transit of elements within and among *entropic remediations*.

### 4.1. Act I – Hypotexts: *Dissolving* Sources

[44] Gender studies, in short, covers subjective and social constructions based on gender differences. It is not my intention to go deeper into this subject; I simply use it to support my idea that Shakespearean elements related to power relations are unaltered, hence Shakespeare's topicality.

### Scene 1 – Biblical Reference

Our mapping of Shakespeare's patchwork in *Much Ado* starts with one of his main sources: the Bible. The story of a woman wrongly accused of sexual misconduct is found in *Susanna and the Elders*, an addition to the *Book of Daniel* in the *Old Testament*. The story shares two elements with Hero's misfortune: voyeurism and false accusation. In short lines, two elders observe Susanna bathing in her garden. They blackmail her by saying that if she does not have sex with them, she will be accused of betraying her husband with a young man. She refuses and they accuse her. As she is about to be executed for her crime, Daniel intercedes and demands a closer examination of the facts. The two elders are interrogated separately and present different versions of the fact. Susanna is saved and they are condemned. Susanna's story was a popular motif in the arts of late sixteenth century and Shakespeare follows this trend by placing Hero at the center of accusations by two respectable gentlemen, who "see her" with another man.

### Scene 2 – Literary References

The literature of the Renaissance replicates the biblical motif and provides more sources for Shakespeare. According to F. H. Mares, Matteo Bandello's *Novelle* (1554), the story of Timbreo and Fenecia supplies "the main plot [Hero's], the setting in Messina and the names of important subsidiary characters: King Piero of Arragon as the local source of authority and Messer Lionato de' Lionati as the father of the heroine" (1). In the story, Fenecia's honor is questioned because her betrothed sees a man climbing through her window. The man is actually a servant dressed as a noble and hired by Girondo, who is in love with Fenecia. An earlier version of the story is Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516), translated to English by Sir John Harington in 1591. As Gillespie narrates,

> The Canto V story of Ariodante and Ginevra is recognized as a direct or indirect source for the plot involving Margaret's impersonation of Hero, and perhaps a few associated elements, in *Much Ado about Nothing.* The episode is set in Scotland, so had at least a measure of particular interest for British readers. Rinaldo travels to St Andrews to champion the Princess Ginevra in the face of an accusation of unchastity which would otherwise result in her being condemned to death. On the way he rescues Dalinda, Ginevra's maid, who reveals that Polynesso, a suitor of Ginevra's with whom the maid was in love, treacherously persuaded her to dress as her mistress, inviting Ginevra's true love Ariodante to witness Polynesso's entry to Ginevra's window by night. (27)

Ariosto's story also echoes in François de Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques* (1559), George Whetstone's *The Rock of Regard* (1576), and Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590). Dobson and Wells also note: "[t]he story had already been dramatized in English at least twice, once as *A History of Ariodante and Genevra,* acted at court in 1583, and once as *Fedele and Fortunio* (1585), an adaptation, probably by Anthony Munday, of Luigi Pasqualigo's *Fedele* (1579)" (307). These are all potential sources for Hero's plot in Shakespeare's *Much Ado*.

Sources of the Beatrice-Benedick plot are not so easy to track. Their interaction model is probably based on Baldassare Castiglione's *Libro del Cortegiano* (1528), translated into English as *The Book of the Courtier* (1561) by Sir Thomas Hoby. Mares points that "[t]he sparring witty lovers are anticipated by Shakespeare himself at a rumbustious level in *The Taming of the Shrew* and more elegantly in *Love's Labour's Lost* – particularly in the pair Berowne and Rosalind. The rapid, elegantly articulated prose and the equally matched lovers have precedents in the comedies of John Lyly" (6). Thus, although some scholars and critics

attribute the Beatrice-Benedick plot to Shakespeare's originality, we notice that the playwright simply follows a model of interaction previously (re)produced.

*Much Ado* duplicates some themes and structures of previous Shakespearean plays. The contrast between Hero and Beatrice mirrors the Bianca-Katherina dynamics of mild feminine model against the outspoken witty woman. The denial of love and battle of sexes in the King of Navarre's court are replicated in Messina. This way, *The Taming of Shrew* and *Love's Labour's Lost* might share sources with *Much Ado*. Their hypotexts are *dissolved* by Shakespeare to the point we only recognize their echoes.

### Scene 3 – Historical and Contextual References

There are extra-compositional aspects to be considered in the production of *Much Ado*: the historical context mentioned in the play and the context surrounding its production. First, the play portrays Spanish and Italian soldiers returning from a war. They are under Don Pedro of Aragon's command. Despite the chronological separation, Don Pedro and Don John are based on historical figures. In the thirteenth century, King Peter III of Aragon, whose wife had a claim over the Sicilian throne, aided Italian rebels in an uprising against the French domination. This episode is known as the Sicilian Vespers, the background of Bandello's story. Peter of Aragon was successful and gained the Sicilian throne. In the sixteenth century, Don John of Austria, the illegitimate brother of King Philip of Spain, commanded the Spanish-Venetian fleet against Ottoman forces. Don John's success carried his name and the threat of Spanish naval forces to English shores.

The Spanish dominance over Italy was a reality. The progression of the Spanish Armada and its imperial system connect the plot of the play to the context surrounding its production. According to Hugh M. Richmond, "[w]ith the recent Armada, and the concurrent wars in the Low Countries, Elizabethans in the 1590s were acutely aware of the threats of

Spanish imperialism" ("Much Ado in Spanish Sicily" 2). The situation in Italy was a menace to the future of England. Shakespeare's contemporaries witnessed a series of Spanish attempts to land on English soil:

> In 1588 the Spaniards failed to land a single soldier upon English soil and the English sailors failed to destroy in battle more than half a dozen ships of the great Armada. Next year the English counter-stroke did put an army ashore, first at Coruña, then in Portugal; but in the end it withdrew without being able to take a single town of any consequence. English efforts to cut off Spain's supplies of silver from America were as unavailing as Spanish efforts to exploit rebellion in Ireland. . . . Nevertheless, the striking thing about this long-drawn-out war – even for England it lasted nineteen years – was its indecisiveness. In the end all the combatants had to pause out of mere exhaustion. Yet, just because the pausing was due to mutual exhaustion, the treaties between France and Spain in 1598 and England and Spain in 1604 and the truce between the Dutch and Spain in 1609 left most of the great questions unsettled. (Wernham 9)

This way, Shakespeare's portrayals of Spaniards followed the fluctuations of the conflict. In *Love's Labour's Lost*, for instance, Don Adriano de Armado is a braggart, probably an allusion to the exhibitionist fame of the Spanish Armada. In 1598, France and Spain signed the Treaty of Vervins, a breath of hope for Elizabeth I. Since the play was probably produced in that year, Shakespeare assumed a cautious portrayal of Spaniards in *Much Ado*, like yin and yang. Don Pedro and Don John are opposite forces, exercising their power during the story but not really mingling with the locals. Therefore, as Richmond observes,

> Shakespeare's doubts about the compatibility of the two cultures as ruler and ruled is validated by the ultimate expulsion of the Spanish from Italy. At the

> end of *Much Ado* Claudio has been reclaimed by Italian social dexterity while the two Spanish brothers still remain unassimilated to the Messina community: Don John as a criminal, Don Pedro left outside the matrimonial cycle. ("Shakespeare as Social Historian" 4)

It is a mistake to attribute simplicity to any of Shakespeare's *Art solutions*. A closer look on possible sources used by Shakespeare attests the entanglement of literary and historical elements in a complex network of *dissolutions*. *Much Ado* exemplifies this point by revealing layers of complexity under its inoffensive comic surface.

### 4.2. Act II – Close Reading: The Play Within The Play

The plot of *Much Ado About Nothing* is the conjunction of two subplots covering two couples: Hero and Claudio, and Beatrice and Benedick. The men are soldiers that have just returned from the wars to stay a month in Messina, whose governor, Leonato, has a daughter, Hero, and a niece, Beatrice. Count Claudio gets Hero's hand in matrimony with Don Pedro's help. The Prince also plots to unite Beatrice and Benedick who, apparently, hate each other. Meanwhile, Don John, the Prince's bastard brother, plots to separate Claudio and Hero. Both brothers are successful as Hero is humiliated and abandoned during her wedding ceremony, and Beatrice and Benedick confess their love for each other. While Claudio and the Princes think Hero died because of the humiliation she suffered, the truth about the slander comes to light and Hero's reputation is restored. Eventually, Hero reveals herself and forgives Claudio. Beatrice and Benedick overcome their pride and embrace the prospect of marriage.

*Much Ado About Nothing* is an iceberg. Its text is only the tip of a giant subtext. Words and images seem to engage in a battle between truth and falsehood. What is seen and what is heard deliver bits and pieces of reality connected to confusion and misunderstanding.

As in the human realm of *Coriolanus*, we observe the use and misuse of language. Communication seems closer to miscommunication. In a time of social media and fake news, the play offers instigating examination regarding human communication. Therefore, like an iceberg, whose density allows it to reveal a small percentage of its total mass, the play touches on serious matters under its comic façade. This section introduces the play in more details to those unfamiliar with the plot and characters; also, concerning Shakespeare's exploration of human nature, it presents elements related to gender roles, social masks, and (mis)communication.

### Scene 1 – Prelude

The play opens with Leonato, the governor of Messina, reading a letter about the imminent visit of Don Pedro of Aragon and his company. We are informed of the successful campaign and indirectly introduced to Claudio and Benedick. The young Florentine Claudio "hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb the feats of a lion" (I. 1. 11-2). These lines reveal that Claudio had a good performance in battle despite his inexperience. Additionally, they foreshadow his aggressiveness during the wedding scene. The man with lamb features becomes a lion that preys over the real lamb of the story: Hero. This image symbolizes the polarization in gender roles: aggressive and passive behaviors.

### Scene 2 – The Noisy Contenders: Benedick and Beatrice

Benedick is indirectly introduced by Beatrice as she inquires after "Signor Mountanto." According to Maurice Charney,

> "Mountanto" is a fencing term for an upward thrust, and it implies that Benedick is a fencer rather than a soldier, but it also has an obviously phallic connotation. Beatrice continues with her comically contemptuous

> observations: “I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he killed? For indeed, I promised to eat all of his killing” (1.1.40–43). She cannot stop insulting Benedick’s status as a warrior: “He is a very valiant trencherman; he hath an excellent stomach” (1.1.49–50). A “trencherman” is a gluttonous eater, hardly a heroic figure. (73)

The demeaning first impressions we have of Benedick are delivered by Beatrice. In fact, these impressions reveal more about her than about him. Since she asks about him, he must be in her thoughts. The mocking way she addresses his fighting skills may indicate her hard feelings concerning his military career. It is clear Benedick and Beatrice know each other from before the military campaign. The sexual connotation of her expression is also a hint of the nature of their previous relations. Corroborating this point, she says about Benedick: “He set up his bills here in Messina, and challenged Cupid at the flight: and my uncle's fool, reading the challenge, subscribed for Cupid, and challenged him at the birdbolt” (I. 1. 29-31). F. H. Mares reveals that he came to understand that “my uncle’s fool” is actually Beatrice’s self-reference, which also “fits with Beatrice naming Benedick as ‘the prince’s jester’ (2.1.103) and could be a reference to the earlier association between them that is mentioned at 2.1.211-13” (45-6).

After Benedick storms out of the ball, alleging he cannot endure his “Lady Tongue,” Beatrice offers another hint of their romantic involvement in a dialogue with the Prince:

> DON PEDRO. Come, lady, come, you have lost the heart of Signor Benedick.
>
> BEATRICE. Indeed, my lord, he lent it me a while, and I gave him use for it, a double heart for his single one: marry once before he won it of me, with false dice, therefore your grace may well say I have lost it. (II. 1. 209-13)

Benedick only lent his heart while Beatrice gave her own. He won her heart under false pretense; so, she really lost the heart she gave him. Her hostility towards him is actually a coping mechanism for past disappointment. Against what is expected of her gender, she reacts aggressively. In modern vernacular, she follows the motto, "full me once, shame on you; full me twice, shame on me." Perhaps their former attachment was dissolved because of the imminent war. It explains Beatrice's disdain regarding his soldier status and the pun in her answer to the Messenger, describing Benedick as "a good soldier to a lady" (I. 1. 40).

In the "merry war" between Benedick and Beatrice, the soldier also uses his wit as a defense. His first interaction may be a hint on why things did not work out with Beatrice:

> DON PEDRO. You embrace your charge too willingly. I think this is your daughter?
>
> LEONATO. Her mother hath many times told me so.
>
> BENEDICK. Were you in doubt, sir, that you asked her?
>
> LEONATO. Signor Benedick, no, for then were you a child.
>
> DON PEDRO. You have it full, Benedick: we may guess by this, what you are, being a man. (I. 1. 76-82)

One way to interpret this interaction is to see Benedick's fear of infidelity. He voices his own apprehensions as he tries to engage in Leonato's response to the Prince. Then, Leonato and Don John read him, pointing his immaturity in such matters. Benedick, as Claudio later in the play, joins a line of Shakespearean characters that are anxious about women's infidelity. This anxiety is restated several times during the play and becomes its central source of conflict. After all, in a society that represses women, female adultery becomes a major aggression against men. In the gender battle, adultery is the women's ultimate weapon.

The first interaction we see between Benedick and Beatrice is a merry war of wits. The duel of words is made of attacks and defenses. They attack each other's personalities and raise their invisible shields against the possibility of love:

> BENEDICK. What, my dear Lady Disdain! Are you yet living?
>
> BEATRICE. Is it possible Disdain should die, while she hath such meet food to feed it, as Signor Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to Disdain, if you come in her presence.
>
> BENEDICK. Then is Courtesy a turn-coat: but it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted: and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love none.
>
> BEATRICE. A dear happiness to women, they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that: I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me. (I. 1. 88-98)

Why do they reaffirm to each other this aversion to love? Is this a smoking gun of a past crime? Duels do not happen over nothing. Strangely, these adversaries duel in accordance to the same point: love is off the table. Reverse psychology spreads its wings. Expressed aversion may indicate unexpressed desire. Finally, it is interesting to note that the "adversaries" fight with equal forces. Beatrice is not the silent type who gets attacked without reaction. Her responses are quick and of equal measure. In a world where gender roles relate active behavior to men and passive behavior to women, Beatrice is a protofeminist[45], being as active as the limitations of her time allow her to be. Shakespeare spices irony even in the meaning of their names, making Beatrice ("the one who blesses") an active figure and

[45] "Protofeminism" or "pre-feminism" are terms used to describe earlier marks of feminism, prior to the spread of the term "feminism" in nineteenth and twentieth centuries. For more information on terminological issues, please, refer to Karen Offen's article "Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach."

attributing the passive role to Benedick ("the one who is blessed")[46]. Ultimately, their forces are equally energetic, a perfect match as Don Pedro deduces.

In *Much Ado* we have to read between the lines, in particular, Benedick's and Beatrice's lines. When the Florentine asks for an opinion on Hero, the Paduan's wordplay is tricky:

> BENEDICK. Why i'faith, methinks she's too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise. Only this commendation I can afford her, that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome, and being no other, but as she is - I do not like her. (I. 1. 126-30)

Benedick constructs an argument against the lady only to disprove it by saying that if she were different, she would not be beautiful, but being as she is, he is not interested. Further on, by comparison and with some drops of disdain, he voices his true interest: "There's her cousin, and she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds / her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December. / But I hope you have no intent to turn husband, have you?" (I. 1. 139-43). In a way, Benedick claims that Hero is not comparable to a high spring's day: Beatrice. At the same time, he identifies her with a fury[47], a vengeful entity. Why does he associate her to an avenging force? Does he think he wronged her in the past? Does he see her behavior as retaliation? We see the tip of the iceberg and try to guess what is underneath.

Since Beatrice displays independence and no disposition to be tamed, she is the type of woman that deviates from the expected behavior of her gender. Men are expected to be successful at war, holding respectful positions in society, and women are expected to get married. Beatrice avoids "husband talk." She speaks her mind instead of adopting the

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[46] References in Garber's *Shakespeare After All*, p. 371, and in the *New Cambridge Shakespeare Much Ado About Nothing*, edited by F. H. Mares.

[47] According to the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, the furies (*erinyes*) were "chthonian powers of retribution for wrongs and blood-guilt especially in the family" (556).

"precious silence" and conformity required of her gender. By denying gender conventions, she assumes a position of equality in relation to men, the ones who "were deceivers ever" with "one foot in sea, and one on shore," and "to one thing constant never." Therefore, as a possible object of Benedick's love interest, it is justifiable that her persona causes him some anxiety about being cuckolded. After all, he advocates against marriage with imagery that reflects his anxiety:

> That a woman conceived me, I thank her: that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks: but that I will have a recheat winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an invisible baldrick, all women shall pardon me. Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none: and the fine is (for the which I may go the finer) I will live a bachelor. (I. 1. 177-82)

Benedick associates "horns" to adultery and refuses to borrow them from savage bulls. Is Benedick's point of view a personal trait or a general characteristic of men? Does Claudio assume Benedick's anxiety? Does Claudio mistreat Hero as a result of his inexperience or he reaffirms a pattern?

### Scene 3 – The Silent Lovers: Claudio and Hero

Claudio is a distant echo of Coriolanus in terms of love and war. His soldier's eyes eclipse his lover's will to the point that he volunteers to accompany Don Pedro in his return to Aragon right after his nuptials with Hero. Don Pedro, who plays the role of a mentor to Claudio, points to the absurdity of the offer. The Florentine depends on Don Pedro even to court Hero. A common practice of the time, someone assuming the courtship on behalf of another person, Claudio trusts Don Pedro with the task. This act leads to the prelude of Claudio's misguided jealousy. Claudio's youth limits his experience in different realms of

life. The young Florentine relies on male bonding and its implicit code of social behavior. However, he begins to change as he entertains love prospects and Benedick criticizes him. Seemingly, the band of brothers in war becomes a band of rivals in times of peace as love is added to the social equation. Adultery is the invisible battle to be fought in times of peace. This is a point of conversion of Claudio's and Benedick's anxieties. Don John perceives these tensions and uses them to cause much ado.

Unlike her outspoken cousin, Hero is the silent type. Beatrice, like Benedick, offers a headstrong version of herself to society. Hero, like Claudio, acts according to social conventions. Hero's will is her father's will. According to Marjorie Garber:

> Hero, like several other virginal heroines in the plays, begins as a dutiful daughter submissive to, and unquestioning of, her father's will. Leonato tells her that he thinks Don Pedro loves her, and she seems to prepare herself for marriage to the Prince. Then it turns out that Claudio is the actual suitor, and she accepts without question this change in plans for her future, submitting willingly to the new marriage. She is entirely accepting, and relatively passive, especially when compared to the more spirited Beatrice. Equally significantly, she is – again like a number of Shakespearean comic and even tragic daughters – shy and reluctant in sexual matters. (*Shakespeare After All* 384)

Hero is the angel side of the female coin of gender roles while Beatrice is the monster[48]. Hero lacks agency. Her submission erases her subjectivity and generates some questions[49]. Do we know about Hero's true self? Does she know her true self? Does she really love Claudio or embrace feelings others attribute to her? Hero seems to live in a symbiotic relation to her

[48] For further references and exemplification on the angel-monster duality in the portrayal of women in literature, refer to Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic*.

[49] "Subjectivity" and "agency" are concepts that gained attention from several studies focused on minorities, including feminist studies. In short terms, "subjectivity" is the personal set of beliefs and features that constitute one's identity. "Agency" is the capacity of action, the manifestation of one's will.

social mask to the point her own subjectivity gets lost in the void of the fusion. In other words, she portrays the role of the jewel fit for exhibition with so much perfection that we do not have access to anything besides this mask. She is the object of a business transaction between Leonato and Don Pedro on Claudio's behalf. This way, Hero is just an image of an ideal woman. She is the "nothing" we have much ado about.

**Scene 4 – The Villain: Don John**

Don John echoes Richard III as a soldier and a villain. Peace is the "winter of his discontent made glorious summer" by his brother's successful campaign. An addition to Coriolanus's counterparts, Don John is not a man of words as he states in his first line (I. 1. 116); also, he prefers to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven, condemning any attempt to change his nature:

> DON JOHN. I had rather be a canker in a hedge, than a rose in his grace, and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all, than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any. In this (though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man) it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle, and enfranchised with a clog, therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my mouth, I would bite: if I had my liberty, I would do my liking. In the mean time, let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me. (I. 3. 20-7)

He is a prototype of Edmund's more refined villainy in *King Lear*. Although Don John employs manipulation to disturb social peace, he does not mingle as Edmund does. Don John is not a flatterer; he is a plain villain, a force of disturbance. In an effort to read between the villain's lines, one could say that his status in his brother's court in times of peace makes him prefer war. During war, Don Pedro needs his services. However, in times of peace, he returns

to his renegade position and seems unable to form a meaningful bond with his brother. Therefore, he is "determined to prove a villain and hate the idle pleasures of these days" by planting the seed of intrigue in the fertile ground of infidelity tensions. First, he plants the seed by saying that Don Pedro courts Hero for himself. Claudio easily takes the bait and, momentarily, sees Don Pedro as a traitor, anticipating the Othello-Cassio dynamics in *Othello*. The misunderstanding is quickly solved and Claudio gets engaged with Hero. Then, with Boracchio's help, Don John prepares for the harvest of Hero's public humiliation by fertilizing his words with visual evidence. In sum, we can say that Don John is simply an honest villain who seizes the opportunity to be who he is by weaponizing gender constructions and social anxieties. After all, he seems to know that gender roles are masks constructed and imposed by society.

### Scene 5 – The Legitimate Brother: Don Pedro

Don Pedro, like his illegitimate brother, interferes in the events of the play. Both brothers act to reaffirm their own positions. Don John is a plain villain. Don Pedro has a position of dominance in Messina's society. Since times of war are over, Don Pedro directs his control to affairs more suitable to peace times: matchmaking. As a man of his word, Don Pedro courts Hero on Claudio's behalf. Still, unlike Don John, he fails to take under serious consideration the signs of jealousy in the Florentine and, later on, supports Hero's public humiliation. Even though it may not seem so, Don Pedro's actions bear the potential for disastrous consequences. If Don John is a plain villain, we could consider Don Pedro as an ambiguous hero.

We can speculate about the motives behind Don Pedro's plot to "bring Benedick and Beatrice into a mountain of affection" for each other (II. 1. 276). Apparently, he intends to pass the time until Claudio and Hero's wedding in a search for glory also in times of peace,

"if we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer, his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods" (II. 1. 290-2). However, his intentions might be even more complicated than we realize. During the masquerade ball, Don Pedro voices his interest for Beatrice, "Will you have me, Lady?" (II. 1. 248), and later restates it, "I would she had bestowed this dotage on me, I would have daffed all other respects, and made her half myself" (II. 3. 144-5). Since Beatrice is not an heiress like Hero, she does not seem a suitable match for a Prince. So, is Don Pedro serious about his interest? If so, how does he really receive Beatrice's denial? If not, what does his jest tell about him? The illegitimate brother is very legitimate about his feelings, at least to his collaborators and the audience. The legitimacy of Don Pedro's feelings is questionable. As a man of his word, his plot to unite Benedick and Beatrice may be a way to prove his statement to the Paduan, "I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love" (I. 1. 183).

In a contemporary parallel, we could say that both Don Pedro and Don John spread "fake news." Regardless of any knowledge of a previous attachment between Benedick and Beatrice, Don Pedro's scheme is founded in truth; otherwise, the joke could have had an unpleasant outcome. What would happen if only one of the parts was misled to believe in the prospect of love? Does the Prince believe in the effectiveness of his plan? Why does he try to confuse Benedick about Beatrice's feelings in the fifth act? Does he think she would be a poor association after her cousin's demise? Does he regret orchestrating the farce? His lines are as blurry as his true intentions:

> DON PEDRO. I'll tell thee how Beatrice praised thy wit the other day: I said thou hadst a fine wit, true said she, a fine little one: no said I a great wit: right says she, a great gross one: nay said I, a good wit: just said she, it hurts nobody: nay said I, the gentleman is wise: certain said she, a wise gentleman: nay said I, he hath the tongues: that I believe said she, for he

> swore a thing to me on Monday night, which he forswore on Tuesday morning, there's a double tongue, there's two tongues: thus did she an hour together trans-shape thy particular virtues, yet at last she concluded with a sigh, thou wast the properest man in Italy. (V. 1. 147-56)

In the end, Don Pedro might not be the model of a wise ruler. As a character, he dances with other Shakespearean counterparts such as the thoughtless Lear and the inattentive Gloucester.

**Scene 6 – Masquerade Balls and a Failed Wedding**

There are two masquerade balls in *Much Ado*: the party in Leonato's house in act II and the constant conflict between the social masks and what really exists underneath them. The mask is what is seen. One must choose between "appearance" and "content" and we learn that, for the characters, "appearance" overcomes "content." As long as Benedick and Beatrice think they hate each other, they support their masks and hide their true essence. As soon as Don Pedro's scheme is in motion, the possibility of another reality melts their social personae. Even readers or the audience are prompted to be fooled by appearances. As we observe Benedick and Beatrice's combats, we tend to see their strong personalities as narrow-mindedness. Yet, during Hero's failed wedding, they are the ones who display consideration regarding the whole situation. At least in this moment, they trust what they feel, not what they hear or see.

Paradoxically, Benedick is the one who opposes the union at first. Here we have more questions on the Paduan's motivations: Why is Benedick displeased by Claudio's intentions? Is he afraid of losing his "sworn brother" or uncomfortable at his stationary position in relation to the Florentine? Benedick's insistence in constructing a sexist image, a tyrant of the opposite sex, raises suspicion. His condition to get married summarizes all the gender expectations regarding women, an idealized image:

> I will not be sworn but love may transform me to an oyster, but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool: one woman is fair, yet I am well: another is wise, yet I am well: another virtuous, yet I am well: but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace: rich she shall be, that's certain: wise, or I'll none: virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her: fair, or I'll never look on her: mild, or come not near me: noble, or not I for an angel: of good discourse, an excellent musician - and her hair shall be of what colour it please God. (II. 3. 19-27)

It seems he puts on a mask not only for society but also, above all, for himself. Ironically, unlike Claudio, he falls for a woman by simply knowing she loves him back. He does not display interest in her position or financial prospect. Benedick breaks from the cult of the mask to value feelings in the opposite direction of Don Pedro and Claudio. As the story progresses, the contrast between Benedick and his fellow soldiers solidifies the dichotomy seem/be, exterior/interior.

Leonato, Claudio and Don Pedro fail to see past the surface. They pay attention to form instead of pondering about meaning. For instance, as they prepare the bait for Benedick, Balthazar sings the following lyrics to entertain the men:

> Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
> Men were deceivers ever,
> One foot in sea, and one on shore,
> To one thing constant never.
> Then sigh not so, but let them go,
> And be you blithe and bonny,
> Converting all your sounds of woe,

Into hey nonny nonny.

Sing no more ditties, sing no mo,
Of dumps so dull and heavy,
The fraud of men was ever so,
Since summer first was leavy.
Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,
Converting all your sounds of woe,
Into hey nonny nonny. (II. 3. 53-68)

The song works as a prelude to Don Pedro's scheme in which men are the agents of deception – and women are collaborators. The Prince praises Balthasar for his performance but nothing is mentioned about the content of the song. As Garber points, in a pun between noting and nothing, the men "do not note the song, which means nothing to them. They hear the sweet melody and do not heed the piquant words. As so often with onstage performances in Shakespeare's plays, . . . there is a discrepancy between what the offstage audience learns and what the onstage audience thinks it knows" (*Shakespeare After All* 381). Indeed, we learn that the source of deception in the play is masculine and women are subjected to men's judgment while the opposite does not happen. After all, Hero agrees to marry her accuser. The song unmasks men's mercurial nature and warns ladies to free themselves of the sorrow caused by men. In a contemporary reading, the song advices women against emotional dependency, inviting them to put down the masks of gender roles and embrace empowerment. Women are self-sufficient beings with no need to endure deception and suffering.

Inside the masquerade ball of gender roles, Don Pedro's deception reinforces the conflict between men's words and women's behavior. This is a point of confluence between Benedick and Claudio. They both believe the words of men instead of examining women's actions and personal aspects. Benedick, even after being mistreated by Beatrice, overhears a report of her love for him and almost instantly changes his disposition against marriage:

> I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me, because I have railed so long against marriage: but doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth, that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour? No, the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married - here comes Beatrice: by this day, she's a fair lady, I do spy some marks of love in her. (II. 3. 192-200)

Benedick's stubbornness gives way to a radical change. He even justifies this shift as something natural to men and the maturity process. Accordingly, the Paduan exemplifies the lines: "One foot in sea, and one on shore, / To one thing constant never." Even after discrediting his own previous discourse, Benedick is so infected by the men's words that, when a hostile Beatrice comes to call him to dinner, he fails to visualize what is right in front of him and "[spies] some marks of love in her." In addition, he attributes an opposite interpretation to her words, resignifying what she said, "Ha, against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner: there's a double meaning in that: I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank me: that's as much as to say, any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks" (II. 3. 208-211).

Don John deceives his brother and Claudio by simply playing by the social rules. The villain associates his word with fabricated evidence to discredit Hero. In David Margolies

view, "[t]he window scene organized by the villainous Don John depends on the same quality of relationship based on externals rather than individual qualities" (40). These "externals" are the social masks dictated by patriarchal values which place men in a superior position to women, who are reduced to polarized stereotypes of angel or whore. Hero's individual qualities are nothing but what is attributed to her by men's discourse. The chaste Hero is erased from existence with no regard for previous evidence. Still according to Margolies:

> Claudio's response to seeing a staged representation of Hero bidding goodnight to a supposed lover on the eve of her wedding is instant rejection. Although he has watched the scene in conditions of doubtful clarity, from a distance and in the dark, he is not prepared to entertain the idea that an image may be no more than that and therefore misleading. The evidence is all external and there is no personal experience, no depth of relationship, to counter it. Thus Hero, who was for Claudio hardly anything more than a virgin bride with family money, has her whole being instantly reduced by the illusion of the window scene to being a sexual malefactor. (40)

Hero is nothing more than an image; and an image nurtured by slanderous words is what she becomes. Hero bears the legacy of her mother, Innogen, a silent character, an image with no words besides those attributed to her by Leonato, the words that reaffirm him as man outside the curse of being a cuckold. Once Don John's words, in association to the fabricated image, awaken tensions regarding adultery, Claudio must act as expected from his social mask. As in contemporary propagations of fake news, he does not check the reliability of the source or investigate the issue any further. Claudio simply buys the evidence as true and acts accordingly. His image has to be preserved and her image must be torn apart. Therefore, he plans Hero's public humiliation and performs it as a gentleman whose honor has been wounded by a vixen.

During the wedding, Leonato tries to speak for Claudio. He tries to treat another man as he treats his voiceless daughter, but it does not work. The Florentine dominates the premeditated spectacle with his text, his version of Hero's story. His speech describes Hero's horrified reaction before his eyes in broad daylight only to cover it with the image he thinks he saw in the previous evening. As Benedick in the dinner call scene, Claudio delivers his own erroneous interpretation of what is before him:

> CLAUDIO. Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness:
>
> There, Leonato, take her back again,
>
> Give not this rotten orange to your friend,
>
> She's but the sign and semblance of her honour:
>
> Behold how like a maid she blushes here!
>
> Oh what authority and show of truth
>
> Can cunning sin cover itself withal!
>
> Comes not that blood, as modest evidence,
>
> To witness simple virtue? Would you not swear
>
> All you that see her, that she were a maid,
>
> By these exterior shows? But she is none:
>
> She knows the heat of a luxurious bed:
>
> Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty. (IV. 1. 25-37)

Don Pedro aids Claudio's narrative as both men assume the role of victims on the edge of having their reputation destroyed by a scandalous association: "I stand dishonoured that have gone about / To link my dear friend to a common stale" (IV. 1. 58-9). They reduce the image of the real victim to nothing by ruining her reputation. Don Pedro and Claudio actively place themselves as the passive targets of Hero's predatory instincts. They behave in a way that contemporaneity would address as self-victimization and, by doing so, Hero is placed as a

criminal. They transform the church into court, the wedding into trial. Otherwise, why wait until the wedding to accuse Hero? Why ask for a defense after sentencing her reputation in front of the community? They already have the verdict: she is guilty.

Hero is not used to have a voice and when they accuse her, she barely defends herself. She is lost, astonished, unprotected in front of a firing squad of accusations. When Claudio asks about the man she was talking to and she denies knowing of any man, Don Pedro uses her denial as evidence she is lying, because "they" heard "her" with a man. Their testimony of what they think they saw is stronger than her word. Even her father turns against her. The tip of the iceberg here is male rhetoric. Unfortunately, what lies beneath is error and self-indulgence. Don Pedro and Claudio reaffirm their power while Don John enjoys the spectacle. Besides spreading fake news, these men exemplify the dynamics of witch hunting. Unable to defend herself, Hero swoons. This deprivation of her senses represents the long deprivation of her own will, her silenced voice. The men leave her to die for her sins. Social order is restored. The wedding is cancelled and the social masquerade ball continues.

### Scene 7 – No Woman's Land

Iago's predecessor, Don John is successful because he knows "[t]his is a world where those who seek maliciously to disrupt the social order can find a wedge against their betters by exploiting a universal anxiety concerning women's sexuality as an index of her agency and potential unruliness" (Suzuki 148). Extra-compositionally, Shakespeare plays with the anxieties of a time when an unmarried queen has to wear the mask of virginity, approximating her image to the Virgin Mary's. A woman in a position of power is still a woman and she must dance in the masquerade ball of social conventions.

*Much Ado* is a comedy that flirts with tragedy. At first, tragedy surrounds female characters due to the tensions of female adultery. Mihoko Suzuki observes:

> The ubiquitous joke about cuckoldry in Shakespearean comedies expresses the anxious fantasy of male characters about women's sexuality as an index of their agency. In *Much Ado* this fantasy appears to be fulfilled when the majority of the male characters join in denouncing Hero. . . . Although in other Shakespeare comedies the cuckolding jokes appear harmless enough, in *Much Ado* Shakespeare not only calls attention to and critiques these male fantasies *as* overdetermined fantasies, but also dramatizes their cost to women – how they serve as instruments of patriarchy to discipline and subjugate women. (159)

Once women are taught to aspire to marriage, their success depends on male concession, trapping women under male control. In the grammar of gender roles, women wander in the realm of stative verbs and men are free to explore action verbs. In the confinement of the realm of feelings, adultery or any type of sexual expression are the possible actions for a woman to display her will, hence the male apprehension about being cuckolded. This specific apprehension is what paves the road to female tragedy in the play.

After her public shaming, Hero is "saved" by the interference of a male voice, Friar Francis, who suggests deception to regain honor and, in case of failure, religious seclusion. If her honor is not restored after her false death, she must become a nun. Friar Francis is the counterpart of Friar Lawrence, the one who triggered the final tragedy in *Romeo and Juliet* with a similar suggestion. In *Much Ado*, we do not have the slight indication that Claudio would act like Romeo, even after knowing that Hero "died." One may say that Claudio gives up his life by putting it in Leonato's hands and agreeing to marry another woman. On the other hand, Suzuki suggests that "Claudio's initial motive to marry Hero only because she is the heir of Leonato is underscored when he willingly accepts Leonato's supposed niece – now his heir – as a substitute for the apparently dead Hero" (159). Following this line of

thought, we can say that Claudio only shares the youth with Romeo, not the passionate feeling for his dead bride to the point of taking his own life.

The patriarchal system of Messina's society leads tragedy to knock on male door when Beatrice, outraged by her own impotence as a woman, asks Benedick to challenge Claudio:

> BENEDICK. Is Claudio thine enemy?
>
> BEATRICE. Is a not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? Oh that I were a man! What, bear her in hand, until they come to take hands, and then with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour? Oh God that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market place.
>
> ……
>
> BENEDICK. Enough, I am engaged, I will challenge him. (IV. 1. 290-313)

In a parallel with his Danish namesake, Claudio "kills" by poisoning. The real poison that vacates the throne of Denmark is replaced by poisonous words that erase the pure image of an heiress. Unlike Hamlet, Beatrice does not hesitate. At the same time she laments the limitations of her gender, she highlights the hollowness of the accusers' gender and social status. Part of the passage above, her lines that open this chapter display an association between Claudio and Hercules, which joins a line of negative allusions to the Greek hero, building a less than reputable comparison. In the words of Alison Findlay:

> Casual allusions to Hercules underline the fragility of masculine prowess. The manly hero is pictured as metaphorically castrated, turning a spit at the command of Beatrice's Omphale (2.1.191–2), his labors reduced to match-

> making (2.1.275), and to lust in "the smirched worm-eaten tapestry where his cod-piece seems as massy as his club" (3.3.111–12). (403)

In sum, Beatrice uses the accusers' behavior to expose the emptiness of manhood and how patriarchal values protect it under titles of nobility and the appearance of integrity. Her frustration derives from the impossibility of a woman to react in this situation either with words or with actions. It is proved that a woman's word is worth less than a man's. Additionally, a woman cannot enter the realm of action except by verbal instigation. Lady Macbeth instigates her husband to act against Duncan. Beatrice urges Benedick to kill Claudio. She depends on a man to fulfill her wishes. Therefore, men's actions bring disgrace to a lady and a woman retaliates by inciting a counteraction that makes tragedy knock on male door.

Don John plots. Claudio and Don Pedro perform the public shaming. If the Friar and Benedick did not intercede on Hero's behalf, would Beatrice be able to defend her cousin? It is unlikely. In this society, authority means male authority. Women are reduced to images painted by men. Male tongues paint Hero with slander and only male tongues can atone for their own transgression. Ironically, truth comes to light by the defective speech of Dogberry, the head of the watchmen that uncover Don John's plot. A suitable representation of male speech in the play, Dogberry seems so worried about verbal form that he fails to express the content of the message. This society is so worried about image that fails to see what is beneath it. Dogberry's confusing language reveals Don John's plot as a series of fake news, false reports. Garber notes,

> As he [Dogberry] reports the crimes of Don John's men, it is striking that he describes all their offenses as versions of bad speech: "Marry, sir, they have committed false report, moreover they have spoken untruths, secondarily they are slanders, sixth and lastly they have belied a lady, thirdly they have verified

> unjust things, and to conclude, they are lying knaves" (5.1.202–205).
>
> (*Shakespeare After All* 389-90)

In brief, Dogberry's miscommunication evidences the great problem of Messina's society: the contrast of what is uttered and what is felt / done. It is dangerous, especially for women, to rely on this type of communication that gets lost in the translation of reality.

Hero's image is tainted by male tongues and they are the ones that must restore her honor. The punishment imposed to Count Claudio by Leonato is that the Florentine should mourn Hero and declare her innocence; also, Claudio should marry Hero's look-alike cousin, Leonato's remaining heir. Claudio and Don Pedro verbally atone for their "mistake" as they hang the following epitaph at Hero's tomb:

> Done to death by slanderous tongues,
>
> Was the Hero that here lies:
>
> Death in guerdon of her wrongs,
>
> Gives her fame which never dies:
>
> So the life that died with shame,
>
> Lives in death with glorious fame.
>
> Hang thou there upon the tomb,
>
> Praising her when I am dumb. (V. 3. 3-10)

Hero lies, in their belief, as a dead body slayed by slander. The dead body is not the true Hero but the result of their slanderous tongues. Following Margolies, we can agree that "[t]he six-line epitaph Claudio composes for Hero lacks any sense of his personal involvement and of Hero's personal qualities. Fame is the theme and takes up two of the lines, but the notion of fame is made almost meaningless . . . The effect of the scene is that Claudio fulfills the form and neither he nor Leonato is interested in any other aspect" (45-6). The eloquence Claudio displays during the wedding vanishes as he remains dumb, transferring the responsibility of

reparation to the small epitaph. Yet, protocol is fulfilled. In other words, men still conduct the masquerade ball of Messina's society.

It seems that male unity is able to forgive wrongs caused to women. Margolies sums the idea by saying that, "Leonato, in less than 20 lines, moves from the bitter irony of thanking Claudio and Don Pedro for Hero's death, beyond forgiving Claudio's 'mistaking' to inviting him to marry into the family" (45). Male bonding is alive and well, despite any damage to female image. Leonato welcomes (yet again!) a Count into his family. Hero obediently follows the plot to regain her bridegroom and fulfill social conventions.

**Scene 8 – Happily Ever Before**

In a society that values appearance, failure to visually recognize one's lover is a type of anti-blazon[50]. As Imogen confuses the headless body of Cloten to the body of her beloved Posthumus in *Cymbeline*, so does Claudio when he takes Hero by the hand and fails to recognize her. Later on, Benedick does the same by asking "which one is Beatrice?" If they fail to recognize what is visible, one cannot expect them to see beyond. Masks and veils still need to be removed. Otherwise, much will continue to come out of nothing / noting.

In the mythological tale of Hero and Leander, Leander swims to meet his beloved who lives in a tower. One night he drowns and, after seeing her lover's body, Hero jumps off her tower to meet him in the afterlife. As an echo of the mythological tale, Claudio drowns in the sea of deception devised by Don John, killing Hero in the process. Both lovers are granted an afterlife; however, this new opportunity has the same dynamics of their former lives:

> CLAUDIO. Give me your hand before this holy friar,
>
> I am your husband if you like of me.
>
> HERO. And when I lived I was your other wife,

[50] "Blazon" is a common technique of renaissance poetry in which the physical attributes of one's lover are described through exaggerated comparisons as, for instance, to natural wonders.

And when you loved, you were my other husband.

CLAUDIO. Another Hero?

HERO. Nothing certainer.

One Hero died defiled, but I do live,

And surely as I live, I am a maid.

DON PEDRO. The former Hero, Hero that is dead.

LEONATO. She died, my lord, but whiles her slander lived. (V. 4. 58-66)

By proclaiming her chastity, Hero still swims in patriarchal waters. As Don Pedro denotes, she is the former Hero, who had to die while her behavior was not socially accepted but now lives with her sexuality as well as her agency under control. The social organization is shaken by Don John's deception, but there is no change indicating they have learned something. Patriarchal values remain along with their tensions.

The immutability surrounding the Hero-Claudio relationship is confronted by the movement towards change in the Beatrice-Benedick romance. Don Pedro teases Benedick about his decision to get married. The Paduan ignores the Prince's mockery. Benedick is blessed with a lesson taught by love: personal feelings should not be annulled by social tensions. His response to Don Pedro displays maturity:

BENEDICK. I'll tell thee what, prince: a college of witcrackers cannot flout me out of my humour: dost thou think I care for a satire or an epigram? No, if a man will be beaten with brains, a shall wear nothing handsome about him: in brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it, and therefore never flout at me, for what I have said against it: for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion . . . (V. 4. 98-104)

Benedick acknowledges human beings' fickleness and shields his feelings from external influence. He does not accept his former point of view to belittle his resolution.

Benedick undermines Don Pedro's authority and social protocol. The Paduan takes control of the scene and turns the table on social anxieties of cuckoldry as he mocks the Prince's mood: "Prince, thou art sad, get thee a wife, get thee a wife, there is no staff more reverend than one tipped with horn" (V. 4. 114-6). Also, Benedick chooses merriment over conflict as he instructs the Prince to leave Don John's punishment for later and enjoy a pre-matrimonial dance: "[t]hink not on him till tomorrow, I'll devise thee brave punishments for him: strike up, pipers" (V. 4. 119-120). The final dance, even briefly, postpones weddings and law enforcement. No social obligations intervene in the celebration.

Shakespeare plays hide and seek with readers and audiences in *Much Ado*. The playwright invites us to see past immediate impressions. The open ending, with prospective but not consumed wedding ceremonies, sustains the "iceberg analogy." We are offered a promise of what is to come instead of really seeing it. Instead of offering a "happily ever after," Shakespeare delivers a "happily ever before."

### 4.3. Act III – Hypertexts: The Plays Within the Play

In comparison to comedies such as *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Much Ado About Nothing* has a modest place in the Shakespearean palimpsest. Despite this modest status, hypertexts inspired in *Much Ado* are not scarce. The play has been *dissolved* in several *Art solutions* that experiment, revise, (re)interpret, adapt, and emend its content into *solutes* for different *solvents*. Shakespearean *concentrations* are varied. War, battle of sexes, gender roles, romance, and deception are some of the elements that contribute to constant interest of producers and audiences. In the box office, romantic comedies seem more appealing than

other genres. The romantic aura and the open possibilities to display the elements mentioned above also create an attractive field for artistic and social criticism. Therefore, once again, context is the spoon that mixes *solute* and *solvent* in derivative *Art solutions*.

### Scene 1 – Revisions with Alterations

Sir William Davenant's *The Law against Lovers* is a famous adaptation from the Restoration; it *dissolved Much Ado About nothing* and *Measure for Measure*, editing plots and characters. Mares informs that "Beatrice was the ward from Angelo from *Measure for Measure*, and – a significant variation – a great heiress. The Claudio is the one in *Measure for Measure*, and Hero is not there" (11). The production was first performed in 1662, being a pioneer of the trend of "revisions with alterations" that lasted until the late 1700's according to Dobson, who also describes it as "a devoutly royalist version of *Measure for Measure* which deliberately highlights the parallels between Angelo's short-lived rule and England's recent experiences of Puritan government, while at the same time managing to incorporate the courtship of Beatrice and Benedick from *Much Ado about Nothing*" ("Improving on the Original: Actresses and Adaptations" 50). Extra-compositional features leave their flavor in the mixture. Thematically, politics rivals with gender issues in the *dissolution*.

Another hybrid production is Charles Johnson's *Love in a Forest* (1723), mostly a *dissolution* of *As You Like It* with elements of *Much Ado*. The emphasis in *As You Like It* can be attributed to the repercussion of The Black Act, created by British Parliament against poachers[51]. Johnson sided with the new Act. *The Universal Passion* (1737) adapts *Much Ado* inside the restrictions of the Stage Licensing Act, "which made the censoring Lord Chamberlain a servant of Parliament rather than the Crown, producing a much more rigorous system of state surveillance" (Dobson 64). Its author, the clergyman James Miller, even

[51] In *Shakespeare Survey 51* (1998), edited by Stanley Wells, Katherine West Scheil's essay "Early Georgian Politics and Shakespeare: The Black Act and Charles Johnson's *Love in a Forest* (1723)" draws a parallel between the play and its historical context.

promises in his prologue a play with no improprieties to chaste ears. Once again, extra-compositional features are responsible for the politics in the *dissolutions*.

One of the most significant roles of David Garrick was Benedick, first performed in 1748 and repeated every year until his retirement in 1776, according to Mares. The growing Bardolatry, as a result of the solidification of Shakespeare as a national poet, made the "practice of rewriting his plays to be seen as positive treasonous" (Dobson 64). However, it does not mean total absence of interference in the Shakespearean text. Theatrical productions are inherently adaptations. Each one is an interpretative exercise, an *entropic* movement that may highlight or downplay aspects such as gender issues.

The nineteenth century establishes a symbiotic relationship between Shakespeare and performers in relation to success. One of the most famous Beatrices is Ellen Terry, whose performance in the 1882 Lyceum production provides an example of interference in the Shakespearean text. According to Terry:

> When I first rehearsed Beatrice at the Lyceum I was told by Mr Lacy, an actor of the old school who was engaged by Henry Irving to assist him in some of his early Shakespearean productions, of some traditional 'business' which seemed to me so preposterous that I could hardly believe he really meant me to adopt it. But he was quite serious. 'When Benedick rushes forward to lift up Hero after she has fainted, you "shoo" him away. Jealousy, you see. Beatrice is not going to let her man lay a finger on another woman.' I said, 'Oh, nonsense, Mr. Lacy!' 'Well, it's always been done', he retorted, 'and it always gets a laugh.' (qtd. in Mares 15)

As we can note by Terry's report, direction and performance are points of revision in the dynamics of *dissolution*. They *dissolve* the text with different colors, tones, intentions. Also, they reflect their context of production and the producers' points of view. Mr. Lacy, for

instance, was more interested in a comic approach at the expense of Beatrice's jealousy, a view that seems misguided depending on the way we read Beatrice. Probably influenced by gender stereotypes, he tried to reproduce jealousy as a female trait – a misconception if we analyze the play because we see that men are the main source of jealousy.

Shakespeare's texts are not absolute. Each layer of the Shakespearean palimpsest contains *dissolutions* that are subjected to an evolving net of influences. These ever changing dynamics support my points on *entropic remediations* and *palimpsestic entropy*. This small sampling of hypertexts is a preface that illustrates these points, introducing possibilities already explored which signal possibilities to come in the constructions of derivative *Art solutions.* One last example about the dynamics of theatrical productions is given by Robert Smallwood, who compares different approaches to the opening scene of *Much Ado*:

> On the Stratford main stage in 1988, in a modern dress production by Di Trevis, the stage lights came up on Leonato's family lounging in the sunshine on the terrace of what was clearly their very expensive villa. They looked languid and listless, each isolated from the other, clearly rather irritable; and into this scene of bored wealth came the messenger in battle-dress. The image of society that was rich, decadent, and selfish had been economically created with not a word spoken and was to colour our response to the rest of the play. In the preceding year Judi Dench's production for the Renaissance Theatre Company, set in nineteenth century, has also presented Leonato's family sitting on a sunny terrace, but the relationships we saw were of co-operation and mutuality – Beatrice helping Leonato with a jigsaw puzzle, Margaret and Hero winding wool together – a community at peace with itself, in contented interdependence. One director wished the disintegrating events of the play to be unsurprising, almost what such a society deserved; the other made them

> seem a shocking intrusion into harmony, eliciting from us a response of pain and pity. (192)

Both productions are from late twentieth century. Diane Trevis and Judi Dench are English women with similar age and formation. However, their productions have different configurations, for extra-compositional features enable different mixtures in an *Art solution*. Here, we return to issues concerning personal volition in the manipulation of *solutes* according to the conditions of *solvents*. In other words, possibilities are the basis of *entropy*.

**Scene 2 – Much Ado About Visuals**

Unlike the recurrence of the plea scene in resonances of *Coriolanus* in visual arts, hypertexts of *Much Ado* are more diverse. John Boydell's catalogue of pictures based on Shakespeare depicts four different scenes in the *Much Ado* section – against just one based on *Coriolanus*. Variation means *entropy*. By considering Boydell's catalogue as a sample, we can say that *Much Ado* is more *entropic* than *Coriolanus* in the branch of visual arts. Besides pictures inspired by act 3 scene 1 and act 5 scene 4, which I introduce below, the catalogue has William Hamilton's depiction of the church scene in act 4, and Robert Smirke's *The Examination of Conrade and Borachio*, based on act 4 scene 2. Both compositions are oil on canvas that were transposed into engravings, adding more *entropy* in terms of *solvent*.

In the *Much Ado* section, Francis Wheatley contributes to Boydell's catalogue with one engraving inspired by Hero's revelation scene in the fifth act. Wheatley provides a varied sample of *Art solutions* to the Shakespearean palimpsest. As other artists in Boydell's catalogue, he had works based in more plays. Also, he has an engraving based on act 3 scene 3 of *Much Ado* that is not in the catalogue. In the same way a scene may inspire different productions, an artist can contribute with varied *Art Solutions* to the same palimpsest.

Human volition accounts for variations in the disposition of similar elements in *Art solutions*. The first scene of the third act is depicted by Reverend Matthew William Peters in oil on canvas from 1788-9, in which Ursula and Hero appear in the foreground while Beatrice listens in the background. Around the end of the nineteenth century, the scene also inspired Robert Alexander Hillingford, who promoted an inversion and brought Beatrice to the foreground, leaving Ursula and Hero in the background. These are just simple examples of variations that attest *entropy* to hypertexts. Some of them restate each hypertext as an interpretation that suits personal and contextual choices, touching (or not) on gender issues, with Shakespeare just as a reference.

**Scene 3 – Strike up, Pipers!**

Besides the (re)arrangements of Shakespeare's poetry for theatrical productions and filmic soundtracks, *Much Ado* inspires tunes of contemporary music aiding *palimpsestic entropy*. Music joins other media in the proliferation of Shakespearean *dissolutions*. *Sigh No More* is the title of the debut studio album of British band Mumford & Sons. The song borrows other lines from the play, basically from Benedick's speeches, such as "Serve God, love me and mend" (V. 3. 71) and "man is a giddy thing" (V. 4. 104). Overall, the message of the song is that despite the giddy and impure nature of men's hearts, love is a positive force if one gives it a try. It follows the lesson taught by Benedick and Beatrice in the play.

Before contemporary *dissolutions*, *Much Ado* inspired operas which revised the content of the play. For instance, Hector Berlioz's *Béatrice et Bénédict* (1862) is a French opera that focuses "on the eponymous lovers rather than Shakespeare's complementary plotline of Hero and Claudio's disrupted wedding" (Sanders *Shakespeare and Music* 97). In 1901, Sir Charles Villiers Stanford, in association to librettist Julian Russell Sturgis, preserved the plot but reduced the Shakespearean play to a four-act opera.

Musicals also figure among the hypertexts of *Much Ado*. A production by the American Music Theatre Project (AMTP) from Northwestern University's School of Communication, *The Boys Are Coming Home* (2006) offers a chance to look critically on the aftermath of World War II in the U.S.[52] Don Pedro's company turns into American soldiers returning from WWII. *These Paper Bullets*[53] (2015) turns Don Pedro's company into a rock band returning from tour in the London from the 60's. The Beatles-like songs set the atmosphere of the story. These two examples of musicals display only two of the multiple possibilities concerning historical and cultural settings in hypertexts of *Much Ado*.

### Scene 4 – My Dear Lady Internet

The production of content to the internet has been a trend of recent years. Youtube has become a launching platform of webseries – serialized stories with smaller episodes than a conventional TV series. Webseries are usually low budget projects. Most of them are directed to teenagers and young adults, hence the (re)contextualization of plots and visuals to this kind of audience. New *solvent* means new compositional possibilities. Moreover, gender issues gain contextual nuances.

In 2014, four webseries based on *Much Ado* were released. *Nothing Much to Do* (2014) by The Candle Wasters group is set in Wellington, New Zealand, where Beatrice just started to attend Messina High, the local high school. The actors are teenagers. The series is organized as a series of Vlog entries, a contemporary break of the fourth wall with a sense of verisimilitude. Interestingly, instead of calling attention to the *Art solution* fictional nature,

[52] The local nature of the production restricts the access to information about it. A review from *The Chicago Tribune* is one of the few sources: http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-2006-08-07-0608070153-story.html

[53] For complementary information on *These Paper Bullets*, I recommend the following reviews: *The New York Times* https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/16/theater/review-in-these-paper-bullets-a-chance-to-twist-and-shout.html and *The Guardian* https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/dec/15/these-paper-bullets-shakespeare-green-day-billie-joe-armstrong

the constant awareness of the medium reinforces the illusion of truth. We tend to believe we are really watching teenagers' entries in their video-journals.

*Much Ado about a Webseries*, by Ophelia Street production, seems a collage of homemade videos. The setting is Messina Records, a musical studio that receives the Band led by Pedro. Benedick is a rock star with eye liners, selling the image of a groupie heartbreaker. When Claudio falls in love with Hero, Ben compares her to Yoko Ono, a potential reason to break up the band. Some male characters are female characters: Leonato is the woman who manages the recording studio; Conrad is a girl in love with John; Boracchio and Margaret are lesbians. The series seems to be an updated version of *These Paper Bullets*.

In *A Bit Much*, Messina is a camp in upstate New York and the conflicts involve campers and counselors. Brigitte is a young counselor at her father's camp. Her cousin Haley comes to help and starts a relationship with one of the campers, Claudio. Pedro and Ben are counselors that cannot stand each other. Pedro has a relationship with Beatrice, but afraid of her protective father, he brings her closer to Ben. The Vlog format is replaced by handcam shots, as if we are eye witnesses of the story in the camp.

My final example is *Shakes*, a webseries that blends characters from *Much Ado*, *Hamlet*, and *Romeo and Juliet*. In an urban contemporary setting, the story is about a group of friends that include Hamlet and Ophelia, Romeo and Juliet, and Beatrice and Benedick. Hamlet is a law student and Ophelia is the sweet daughter of the town mayor. Romeo is a romantic hipster type[54] and Juliet is a kleptomaniac with a cold heart. Benedick and Beatrice are competing journalists, a fact that may remind us of the 2005 BBC *ShakespeaRe-Told* version of *Much Ado*.

The variety of narratives brought by the webseries aids my point on hypertextual *entropy*. A single *solvent* can provide numerous *entropic* movements to the Shakespearean

[54] According to the *Dictionary of Contemporary Slang*, a Hipster is "a culturally aware person, a cool bohemian" (217).

palimpsest by *dissolving* the Shakespearean *solute* in varied ways and echoing other *dissolutions*.

### 4.4. Act IV – The Cinematic Stage: Modern Classics – Branagh & Whedon

*Much Ado* has cinematic hypertexts from different cultures. However, instead of talking a little about different contributions to Shakespeare's palimpsest, I intend to parallel the analysis of two *Art solutions* in order to exemplify their *entropic* movements. The adaptations by Kenneth Branagh (1993) and Joss Whedon (2012) are my objects. Both films (re)arrange the Shakespearean text, omitting and adding verbal and visual cues. Once again, my study resumes elements explored in the close reading and their *dissolution* in film in order to support the enduring presence of Shakespearean *alchemy* in culture, whose basis is human nature. Also, I hope the comparison and contrast among compositional and extra-compositional features of these two *Art solutions* illustrate the potential *entropy* of Shakespeare's words within films. In brief, my descriptions / analyses are permeated by the *entropic* potential of the iceberg structure of *Much Ado*, particularly in terms of gender roles in social relations.

#### Scene 1 – Blithe and Bonny Settings and Costumes

Kenneth Branagh is a well-known Shakespearean actor and director. His first adaptation for the big screen was *Henry V* (1989) and its good reception opened the doors for more adaptations of the "Bard" in the years to come. Some critics and scholars distinguish Branagh by his popular appeal, which benefits Shakespeare's afterlives in cinema, TV, and theater. In *Much Ado About Nothing*, Branagh blends Hollywood and British actors in a slight

colorblind casting. The general tone of the film is a marriage of classic and modern. In Douglas Brode's words:

> Taking his cue from Shakespeare's anachronistic approach, Branagh avoided setting his film at any one moment in history. He opted for an indefinite-past golden age, as we might imagine while listening to a storyteller relate a tale from "once upon a time." The "period," if one can call it that, falls somewhere between Shakespeare's own 1600 and 1900, when the modern age began and magic disappeared from the world. Women's clothing appears seventeenth century; the heroic men's tailored uniforms, eighteenth century; and the black leather breeches worn by villains, nineteenth century S & M garb. If the *mise en scene* suggests a collage from past periods, the tone is decidedly modern. As heroes and ladies lounge about in the midday sun, the interracial as well as international crowd of attractive people appear to have stepped out of a Ralph Lauren advertisement. In scouting locations, production designer Tim Harvey fell in love with the idyllic quality of Italy's central region, particularly the lush, seductive landscapes surrounding Villa Vignamaggio in Greve, where, in 1503, Lisa Gherardini Giaconda (the model for the *Mona Lisa)* lived. (*Shakespeare in the Movies* 87-8)

Branagh's production travels to the location often visited by Shakespeare in his plays: Italy. The director explores the vila's outdoor spaces for most of the scenes, highlighting Tuscan landscapes and reserving indoor action for occasional moments. Branagh's temporal allusion, an undefined past, contrasts with Joss Whedon's undefined present. As descriptions will show, these temporal settings influence the approaches to gender roles and other elements of the play.

Joss Whedon is an American director best known for Sci-fi and fantasy TV series, such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Firefly*, and the cinematic adaptations of the Marvel comic books. In 2012, Whedon gathered part of the crew of the blockbuster *The Avengers* in an independent adaption of *Much Ado*. Whedon was in charge of the screenplay and direction, using his house in California as the primary location of the twelve-day shooting production. Unlike Branagh's colorful portrait of an undefined past, Whedon presents a black and white production that displays contemporary technology at the same time it borrows visual elements from around mid-twentieth-century films. Whedon dresses contemporaneity in black and white classic Hollywood. Costumes and *mise-en-scène* recall films from the 40s and 50s, with tailor-made suits for men and vintage dresses for women. Sheath and sword are replaced by holster and pistol. The predominance of outdoor shots in Branagh's film is replaced by a more balanced use of indoor spaces. We actually see the rooms in Leonato's house. Finally, Tuscan idyllic rhapsody contrasts with Californian bohemian rhapsody as Whedon introduces constant visual reminders that the film is set in a wine producing region. In Whedon's Dionysian production, wine bottles and glasses are the dominant props.

**Scene 2 – Opening Scenes**

The 1993 adaptation opens with an intermedial homage as oral and written words connect literature to film. Music and painting are also present. Accompanied by a guitar, the lyrics of the song "Sigh No More" are spoken by Beatrice as the words appear on the screen. After the first stanza, the scene cuts to a painting of the Tuscan villa where the film is set and the camera slowly moves from the art piece to the "establishing shot" of Messina, "from the canvas to the landscape itself, peopled with tanned picnickers responding to Emma Thompson's Beatrice, perched in a tree, nibbling on an apple [sic] and reading Shakespeare's song to her fellow revellers as a bee buzzes about her face and birds chirp in the soundtrack"

(Crowl "Flamboyant Realist" 229). Besides honoring literature, music and visual arts, Branagh mostly pays his respects to cinema. After the exchanges with the Messenger, Leonato and his party see Don Pedro's company approaching Messina and run to prepare for their arrival. The Ladies rush downhill and quickly undress in the bathing chambers, visually reminding us of some scenes in Robert Wise's *The Sound of Music* (1965). The shot of men approaching on their horses is unanimously described by critics as a visual quotation of John Sturges's *The Magnificent Seven*. Next, the men take off their clothes and bathe in the public waters of the town, going one step further in comparison to Sylvia in *La Dolce Vita*. When the soldiers enter the town gates to meet Leonato and the members of his household, Branagh provides a bird's eye view[55] of the two groups disposed as two arrows facing each other as if foreshadowing Cupid's moves during the story.

The "Sigh No More" verses in Beatrice's mouth work as an indication of her wisdom concerning the nature of men. How does Beatrice know men should not be trusted? Is it because of her natural wisdom or something happened in her past? The opening of Branagh's film may reinforce the subtext of a past affair between Beatrice and Benedick. The poem hints at her life philosophy: trust no man and be happy. In his *Hamlet*, Branagh uses images of Hamlet and Ophelia in bed to provide a subtext to her disappointment and subsequent madness. Whedon mimics Branagh's *Hamlet* and opens his adaptation with Benedick uncomfortably dressing up and leaving the bedroom while Beatrice lies in bed pretending to be asleep. Whedon completes the suggestion of this first scene by starting the next scene with the shot of the roots of a tree, a visual hint of the roots of Benedick and Beatrices's antagonism. This way, with different levels of subtlety, both directors frame the picture of Beatrice and Benedick's conflict from the first shot. Also, they both hint at a previous love interest between Hero and Claudio; in both films, Beatrice touches Hero's arm as Leonato

[55] "Bird's eye view" is an aerial shot, usually produced with the aid of an airplane or helicopter, used for panoramic establishing shots. Branagh uses the camera from a high angle but not so high in the sky.

provides an amused tone to the sentence “I find here, that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine called Claudio.”

In Whedon’s film, the message interrupts household affairs in the kitchen. Leonato enters holding a cellphone and indicating it as Don Pedro’s letter. An assistant places a paper in front of Messina’s governor with the statistics of losses in the war. The contrast between the technological devices, phone and paper, signal the general aura of the film: the communication between old and new.

The use of indoor spaces lends an aura of intimacy to Whedon’s film. In the adaptation, Beatrice and Benedick’s first verbal sparring happens in private. Benedick arrives as if looking for Beatrice and finds her in a small adjacent patio, where they begin their first battle. In Branagh’s film, the argument takes place in public, with Benedick trying to win the approval of the witnesses and ending the quarrel; Beatrice reinforces her past resentment in the tone of “You always end with a jade's trick: I know you of old” (I. 1. 107).

There is a dance of contrasts within Branagh’s and Whedon’s *Art solutions* and in their mutual comparison. The intimate ambience of Whedon’s film, for instance, has the presence of a photographer who registers state affairs and social events. This “intrusion” points to heads of states’ contemporary practice of having an official photographer and public relations staff. Still concerning intrusions, in contrast to Branagh, who uses the patio as the setting of Benedick and Claudio’s exchange about the Florentine’s feelings, Whedon promotes an invasion of domestic space as Claudio and Benedick are directed to share a bedroom that clearly belongs (or belonged) to young girls, for it is furnished with stuffed animals and a dollhouse. Besides playing with gender marks with this male invasion of female space, one can interpret the room as a reflection of its new inhabitants, mentally immature in the affairs of love. Claudio is an easy prey to jealousy and Benedick avoids commitment.

### Scene 3 – Don John's Alcove

One of Branagh's rare uses of indoor spaces happens in Don John's scene with Conrad and Boracchio. Conrad massages Don John in a poorly lighted room in what, in my view, seems to be Branagh's version of a monster's den. Opposite to Denzel Washington's reasonable Don Pedro, Keanu Reeves plays an unstable type, whose hate causes aggressive verbal and physical outbursts that surprise even his accomplices. There is no apparent cause for Don John's hate. He is a resentful villain, driven by hate and envy. His pleasure comes from disturbing the peace. As Branagh follows Shakespeare's ambiguity, we only have a subtle indication of a family feud in the disparity between the colors of their uniforms.

In Whedon's adaptation, we observe a psychological focus and hints of a background story in the construction of Don John. When Don Pedro arrives at Leonato's house, Don John and his accomplices are restrained by cable ties, suggesting that they were part of the trouble in the war campaign. This interpretation follows the point of view of some critics who defend that the wars were actually between Don Pedro and his bastard brother. Whedon implies a sense of confinement to Don John as he is in bed with Conrad – now a woman and his lover – and looks outside his window to see the Prince's security detail guarding the perimeter. Conrad's loyalty comes from the infatuation with the villain. Don John's hatred is sustained by his restricted agency.

### Scene 4 – Two Masquerade Balls and a Hangover

Branagh's masquerade ball echoes Venetian carnivals in the design of the masks. Hero wears a simple white mask with no details, as if representing her lack of agency and blunt personality. Claudio's mask is a cherub, an angel from Christian mythology commonly associated to the Greek Cupid; besides its association to love, his mask represents naiveté.

Benedick's mask recalls Thalia, the Greek goddess of comedy and idyllic poetry. The theatrical mask of comedy suits Benedick and supports Beatrice's report of his functions as the Prince's jester. Benedick thinks he is unrecognizable under the mask, but we know Beatrice offends him on purpose. Finally, the most interesting and symbolic mask is Beatrice's. She wears a cat mask similar to the one of a Gnaga[56], an outfit wore by men disguised as women during the Venetian carnival. Through inversion, the Gnaga makes us think about the artificiality of gender roles. Her mask is symbolic because, as a protofeminist, Beatrice sees herself in equal terms to any man; however, she has to wear the mask of gender role, the social limitation of her sex. In general, Branagh floods the outdoor space with dance and seduction among couples. The Tarantella-like soundtrack marks the carnival atmosphere of permissiveness during the ball.

Whedon's masquerade ball is closer to the black-tie party at the Larrabee's mansion in Billy Wilder's *Sabrina* (1954). Even Beatrice's dress recall's Hepburn's. Trapeze artists entertain the guests in the garden while a woman sings a Bossa Nova / Cool Jazz version of "Sigh No More" in the living room. Claudio drinks and watches the Prince and Hero from afar. The disguised Benedick tries to ridicule Beatrice among some people and she gets the best out of the interaction by describing him as the Prince's jester making everybody laugh. Benedick does not silence Beatrice in public. Whedon promotes an inversion in comparison to Branagh's film, for Branagh follows a pattern in which men manage to be superior to women in front of an audience and, before the last scene, women only reply in private. This disparity may be a reflection of the temporal settings in the *Art solutions*, indicating that social relations have evolved in terms of gender equality.

[56] A traditional costume of Venetian carnival, the "Gnaga" outfit had a usually colorful female cat mask. Men dressed in women's skirts and produced "meow" sounds. For more descriptions of the traditions of Venetian carnival, I recommend James H. Johnson's *Venice Incognito: Masks in the Serene Republic* and Peter Burke's "The Carnival of Venice," in *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication*.

Whedon differs from Branagh also in dividing the events of the masquerade ball into party and aftermath, inserting more *entropy* in his *Art solution*. Conflicts result from hangovers. As the sun rises, in a pop art reference, Claudio is wearing a snorkel and enjoying a martini in the pool when John poisons his ears. The conflict caused by John's words is solved inside the house, full of glasses and bottles, where a sleepy Leonato approves the match between his daughter and the Count. Unlike the sincere proposal from Denzel Washington's Don Pedro in Branagh's adaptation, Whedon opts for the idea that the Prince's proposal to Beatrice is just a joke from a drunken man who falls at her feet. Consequently, the idea to bring Benedick and Beatrice together is the whim of a drunkard, in opposition to the honest move towards matchmaking in Branagh's film.

**Scene 5 – Cupidtraps**

In the 1993 adaptation, the vast gardens of Messina witness the plot idealized by Don Pedro. Balthasar, played by the musician Patrick Doyle, sings "Sigh No More" near a fountain, where Leonato, Claudio and Don Pedro sit. Benedick hides behind the nearby bushes to enjoy the idyllic atmosphere and avoid "the Prince and Monsieur Love." During the farce conducted by the Prince, Benedick displays some humorous reactions. He breaks the fourth wall and looks surprised at the camera. Then, when the Prince says Benedick has "a contemptible spirit," he groans and pretends to be a crow passing by. Likewise, the trap to catch Beatrice happens in the gardens. Beatrice hides behind a statue to hear Hero and Ursula talking about Benedick's love interest. The sequence ends with juxtaposed images of intermedial references: the convinced Benedick dances in the waters of the fountain as a double of Gene Kelly in *Singing in the Rain* (1952); in a cinematic quotation of Jean-Honoré Fragonard's *The Swing* (1767), Beatrice seems to fly with the wings of love.

Whedon's adaptation uses spaces in and out of the house to construct the scene. Benedick is exercising outdoors when he sees the confabulators enter a room. Balthasar is replaced by an instrumental Bossa Nova tune coming from an iphone. Benedick spies on the conversation from outside. From the double doors and windows, the men and the audience see his effort to hide. Beatrice's trap is set in the kitchen. She hides near a cupboard. When Ursula and Hero leave the kitchen, she pours herself a glass of wine and we know she is trapped. After he takes the bait, Benedick delivers his speech at the center of the small arena that is about to be the stage of Hero's public humiliation. This way, Whedon manages to end the sequence with two Dionysian elements: wine and theater.

**Scene 6 – Theatrical Weddings**

Instead of relying on the verbal description of Hero's affair, Branagh and Whedon portray Claudio and the Princes' view of Boracchio with Margaret by the window. By seeing Claudio's disappointment and heartbreak, the audience may be more inclined to empathize or, at least, understand his wrath in the wedding scene. However, Claudio's reaction is exaggerated in both films, pushing the audience's sympathy towards Hero.

Both adaptations employ theatrical elements in the (failed) wedding scenes, varying from setting arrangement to performance. Samuel Crowl comments on Branagh's version:

> Setting the wedding outside the villa's small chapel gives Branagh's camera ample scope to record Claudio's petulant tantrum. He savagely shoves his bride to the ground and makes a triumphant circuit of the scene, overturning benches and ripping away decorations before nestling in next to Denzel Washington's elegant Don Pedro to re-establish what he smugly believes to be the primacy of the male order. By contrast, Branagh's Benedick goes to his knees to join Beatrice at Hero's side and looks on in amazement as Leonato,

> with an ugly violence, makes the opposite move to join the male club by condemning his own child. The father is restored to his senses only by Benedick's pledge to honour the Friar's plan. ("Flamboyant Realist" 233)

Claudio's overdramatic performance blends physical and verbal violence. Hero's major protection is Beatrice's arm and shouting until the moment Benedick and the Friar interfere.

Whedon shoots the scene in a space that reminds us of ancient Greek theaters. The arena format provides suitable *mise-e- scène* for the tragedy idealized by Don John. Benedick watches Hero's entrance but leaves for a drink – as if trying to fight an allergy to this type of event. Benedick's absence justifies the time he takes to intervene. As Claudio starts his outraged attack, Leonato's assistant directs the exit of the guests. Benedick returns and takes some time to understand what is going on. This adaptation limits Claudio and the Princes' attacks to the verbal sphere. With no audience to watch the public spectacle, Don John directs their exit. Leonato attacks Hero but soon, even confused, supports her. Benedick joins the Friar in the logic interpretation of the events. From then on, they must focus on the deception of Hero's death. Ultimately, in both films, the theatricality employed in Hero's humiliation eliminates any sympathy we may have for Claudio. Branagh's Claudio offers an exaggerated performance; Whedon's Claudio is a puppet manipulated by Don John. Nevertheless, it is important to restate that the temporal settings display changes in gender relations over the centuries. For instance, the strategic absence of Benedick to justify his delayed intervention to defend Hero in Whedon's film contrasts with the hesitant behavior of Branagh's Benedick, implying different levels of trust in women's words and behaviors.

### Scene 7 – Extra-compositional Dogberries

Dogberry is a secondary character that has a fundamental role in the resolution of the conflict in *Much Ado*. Branagh and Whedon share Shakespeare's intertextual / extra-

compositional touch in the construction of Dogberry. In order to grasp the comedy surrounding the character, the audiences of hypotext and hypertexts must connect the dots between characters and actors. After Dogberry is called "an ass" by Conrad, he laments that the Sexton cannot record the insult and bids his fellow watchmen to remember, "I am an ass." This is a pun that depends on extra-compositional information. Garber enlightens us: "[t]he role of Dogberry was originally played by Will Kemp, the same actor who played Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and we might imagine that spectators would make this connection. Dogberry/Kemp had already been 'writ down an ass,' with equal insouciant triumph, in Shakespeare's earlier play" (*Shakespeare After All* 389). Therefore, it would be funny for an Elizabethan audience to hear former Bottom declare "Oh that I had been writ down an ass!" (IV. 2. 70).

Branagh's Dogberry manages to honor literature and cinema. He is constructed as a Don Quixote type, a good heart spiced with madness. Lanier reminds us that Verges and Dogberry's imaginary horses can be appreciated in reference to the film "*Monty Python and the Holy Grail* (dir. Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones, 1975)" (*Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* 48), in which the character Patsy uses two halves of a coconut to simulate the sound of King Arthur's imaginary horse. In Branagh's adaptation, Verges uses his mouth to produce the sounds of horns, announcing Dogberry's arrival. The final intertextual / extra-compositional touch is Branagh's choice of Michael Keaton to play Dogberry. Keaton was already famous for playing Batman in Tim Burton's adaptations of DC comics in 1989 and 1992. This way, Messina's watchmen Dogberry and Verges are comparable to Gotham's vigilantes Batman and Robin. Moreover, if we think about Batman as Bruce Wayne's alter ego, a rich man who lost his parents, we have another possible parallel to Dogberry's biography, for he reaffirms his position in society as "a rich fellow enough . . . and a fellow that hath had losses" (IV. 2. 68-9). As Brode observes, it is unfortunate that Branagh cut off

these lines[57]. Perhaps, for Branagh, the extra-compositional hint was enough to build the character.

Whedon updates quixotic features by characterizing Dogberry and the watchmen as police detectives from noir films. The headquarters is full of clichés, such as pictures of suspects on the walls, surveillance monitors, and boards with investigation schemes. Also, the casting choice is significant. The actor Nathan Fillion, well-known for the police procedural show *Castle*, plays a Dogberry that reproduces the stereotypes of film and TV detectives, with their cheap suits and sunglasses. In the interrogation scene, almost a visual quotation of Edward Dmytryk's *Crossfire* (1947), Dogberry and Verges poorly perform the "bad cop and good cop routine." Therefore, Whedon and Branagh's maintain intermedial and extra-compositional references as Dogberry's *entropic* marks, conveying some complexity to the character; maybe, as a recognition of his fundamental role in the play.

**Scene 8 – Framed Lovers**

In the scene that Benedick challenges Claudio, Branagh and Whedon use different strategies to direct our sympathies to the challenger – as if publicly dishonoring Hero was not enough. Branagh follows the Shakespearean text with some editing. His Benedick seems to challenge a schoolboy who, with the Prince, mocks Leonato's pain and age. Whedon supports his Dionysian theme by portraying Claudio and Don Pedro as two drunkards who walk through Leonato's house as if they own the place. Benedick's challenge sobers them up.

After Dogberry reveals Don John's plot, Claudio places himself at Leonato's mercy. The overdramatic Claudio of Branagh's adaptation becomes a "boy of tears," kneeling in front of Leonato. The drunkard Claudio of Whedon's version tries to hold his integrity by classifying his actions as results of a mistake. Considering gender roles, it is interesting to

[57] In his *Shakespeare in the Movies: From Silent Era to Shakespeare in Love*, Douglas C. Brode cites the opinions of some critics regarding Branagh's approach to Dogberry (89).

note how grown men, old enough to start a family and go to war, still justify their wrong doings as mistakes. Claudio's lack of beard, Othello's dark beard, and Lear's white beard, among others, illustrate Shakespeare's repeated display of male lack of judgment. Branagh follows Shakespeare to the letter: "[h]is *Much Ado About Nothing* is the filmic equivalent of that mid-nineties bestseller *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus;* true to the Bard, Branagh suggests that the earthy, sensuous wisdom of women is far preferable to the macho posturings of men, which he mercilessly ridicules . . ." (Brode *Shakespeare in the Movies* 88). Whedon's different (but existent) configuration of male immaturity points that gender roles are still a contemporary issue. Society frames women and men, shaping their behavior.

Don Pedro frames Benedick and Beatrice who are, after all, guilty of their love for each other. Before the final scene, the couple professes their love in two private moments: the sequence after the failed wedding and a scene in which they learn of Hero's attested innocence. Both directors provide a "visual frame" for the couple, translating their situation into cinematic language. Branagh's frame is the small alter that foreshadows Benedick and Beatrice's future. Later on, the couple seems to be part of a pre-Raphaelite painting, framed by a large balcony window with an idyllic landscape. In the scene that precedes the denouement, Whedon uses a small balcony as location. There is a subtle reference to the balcony scene in several adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet*. Whedon places the camera inside the house and we see the couple through the two halves of a closed window. As they get closer to each other, they are framed by the same side of the window, an indication of their union. Thus, in both adaptations, social / visual frames complement textual frame.

**Scene 9 – Musical Denouement**

Branagh uses the same location of the failed wedding for Hero's disclosure. The same conditions of her public humiliation are repeated in the resurrection of her reputation.

The whole community watches Hero come back to life. Claudio kneels during the revelation and holds Hero as a boy holding his mother. Then, he stands up and holds her like a man in love. Once again, he is beguiled by Hero's innocence and the couple regains their status from before Don John's evil plot. Hopeful members of the audience may interpret the visual indication of progress from boy to man as a sign of growth – the lesson is learned. Beatrice and Benedick's personal growth is a result from the public revelation of their love. Beatrice and Benedick assume the center of the action and are framed by the doors of the chapel as they surrender to the written evidence of their love, delivered by Claudio and Hero. The general happiness is interrupted by the soldiers that bring the captive Don John. Benedick suggests they ignore the villain and resume their happiness with music. On a side note, Benedick's difficulty to assume his feelings is connected to music in the film. His failure to sing "The God of Love" is replaced by his invitation to the final dance, indicating his personal growth. People crowd the gardens in celebration, leaving a sad Don Pedro to watch from afar. Everybody dances to an orchestra and choir version of "Sigh No More." The camera moves through the outer spaces to assume a Bird's eye view of the dancing community in a cinematic version of a theatrical jig.

In Whedon's adaptation, Hero's revelation has an intimate atmosphere. Claudio and Don John have to walk between two lines of people to get to Leonato and the veiled women on a porch. Soon, we learn that there is no need for Leonato to publicly shame Claudio, for he is very skillful in doing it himself. When Leonato asks if the Count is still determined to marry his niece, Whedon (ingeniously and maliciously) puts Claudio and a black woman in the same frame while the Florentine says, "I'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiope." Benedick and Don Pedro display their (and our) embarrassment with the line. Most productions of *Much Ado* omit the line; Whedon uses it to make the Florentine even more unsympathetic. There is no indication of personal growth. This Claudio does not kneel, but

we see Hero higher than him, physically and metaphorically. She does not step down from the porch and her face displays hurt when she reaffirms her chastity. Seemingly, reconciliation only happens during their joined efforts to unite Benedick and Beatrice, who physically struggle to catch each other's love notes. After reading the notes, they soften the tone of their verbal sparring. The imminent celebration is interrupted by Leonato's assistant, who shows the news of Don John's arrest on a cellphone screen. Benedick quickly redirects the attentions by calling for music. Don Pedro resumes his drinking and joins the party inside the house. While everybody dances to a happy song, Benedick and Beatrice enjoy the calmer atmosphere of their love. The film ends as it begins: the connection between Beatrice and Benedick minus the initial discomfort. Whedon closes the cycle with these characters' personal growth. According to Douglas Lanier,

> What is most striking about this final scene, then, is that Whedon positions Benedick and Beatrice apart from the dancing household, in their own separate world of romantic reverie marked off by its own plaintive music cues, not noticed by the photographer. For these two, marriage is not so much a capitulation to social pressure as a rapturous release from it, the creation of a social space all their own within that of the larger community. This space of marital freedom is ambiguously situated vis-a-vis the dancing crowd–their shared erotic moment is both public and private, amidst the partygoers but available only to the viewer. In this moment, too, we return to the silence between Benedick and Beatrice with which the film began, only now that silence expresses the intensity of their bond and their newfound freedom from fear of social sanction. ( "'Good Lord, for Alliance': Joss Whedon's *Much Ado About Nothing*" 140)

Therefore, considering the temporal settings, the undefined past Branagh's film signals a positive future for gender relations as Claudio's and Benedick's personal growth may stand for male improvement. On the other hand, Whedon's undefined present seems to indicate a male division in contemporary relations with the blending of preserved immaturity and stable growth.

**Scene 10 – Epilogue**

In terms of thematic exploration, Branagh's idyllic rhapsody delivers a more binary portrait of gender relations, closer to the polarizations in the Shakespearean text. Disguised as a romantic narrative of simpler times, Branagh's adaptation is a temporal display of male dominance and female subjugation; Beatrice's protofeminism is the point of disturbance in these dynamics. In other words, it is like male immaturity is a contextual mark of the story. Whedon's update of the story delivers male inconsequence as cause and result of the bohemian rhapsody that permeates the narrative. Instead of being a disturbance, Beatrice's behavior is justifiable as a defense mechanism. Moving away from polarizations, Whedon's adaptation portrays the resulting plurality of the subjectivities involved in gender relations and, above all, in human relations.

Cinematic technicalities, close-ups or extreme close-ups are not noticeable features in both adaptations. Occasional shots of the facial expressions dissipate in comparison to the use of medium angle shots and full shots. Despite moments of tension and villainy, both films are comedies and, unlike Fiennes's *Coriolanus,* do not aim to convey abnormality or awkwardness. Branagh and Whedon are storytellers that use Shakespeare to instigate thought inside the lines of light entertainment. Nevertheless, we can notice the peculiarities of each

director. Branagh adopts arc shots[58] to take advantage of his external locations and convey the idyllic atmosphere. Whedon employs high and low angles to convey the perspectives of certain characters in relation to others. For instance, Don John is shot in high angle observing other characters, like the puppet master he intends to be.

Branagh and Whedon have similar styles, for they evoke elements from cinema, theater and literature in webs of references that balance classical and modern auras in their adaptations. Some critics and scholars disapprove the mixture of references by arguing that it indicates lack of originality. My reading of both films agrees with Samuel Crowl's opinion: "Branagh is a product of the postmodern moment dominated by a sense of belatedness; a sense that originality is exhausted and that only parody and pastiche and intertextual echo remain. Rather than finding such a condition enervating, Branagh's work seizes on its possibilities" ("Flamboyant Realist" 227). Both directors produce *Art solutions* that result from a time of elevated *entropy*. Shakespeare is already a very dynamic *solute* and, as time adds more prospects to *solvents*, contemporary *dissolving* embraces higher levels of *entropy*. Consequently, a detailed analysis of all elements in an *Art solution* is close to impossible, but even this reduced comparison reveals *entropic* movements. In sum, Branagh and Whedon use cinematic potential to deliver highly *entropic Art solutions*, paving the palimpsestic way for hypertexts such as the hybrid manifestation of theater and cinema in broadcast theater.

### 4.5. Act V – *Hybrid Remediations*: *Globe on Screen* & *Digital Theater*

As stated in the previous chapter, broadcast theater constitutes a *hybrid remediation* with inherent high *entropy*. Once again, I use examples of this type of manifestation to illustrate advanced *entropic* states in the Shakespearean palimpsest. Since *Much Ado About*

[58] "Arc shots" happen when the camera circles the subjects in a scene. In the scene Balthazar sings to the Prince, the camera moves around the fountain and we see all the characters and extras in the scene.

*Nothing* overcomes *Coriolanus* in popularity, once again, I go one step further and increase the *entropy* of my dissertation by analyzing two *Art solutions*. Following the model of my previous section on cinema, I provide parallel analyses of two productions of *Much Ado*. This way, I introduce two more broadcasting projects: *Digital Theater* and *Globe on Screen*.

In 2011, two productions of *Much Ado About Nothing* in London were part of projects of broadcast theater. The Globe production, directed by Jeremy Herrin, was first performed on May 21st. A week later, Josie Rourke's production was first performed at Wyndham's Theatre. In this section, I introduce general aspects of each production; then, I move to specific points of comparison. I repeat my intention to map the *entropic* movements in broadcast theater by pointing which elements of the Shakespearean hypotext were preserved, what was inherited from previous hypertexts, and the presence of new aspects in the *Art solutions*. In my view, double comparisons shed more light on the movements within *entropic remediations* and how they contribute with *palimpsestic entropy*.

As the theatrical performance needs some exaggeration to convey the action to all members of the audience, from the first to the last row, people must identify the emotion of the characters and their actions, demanding hyperbolic facial and body expressions. In film, the camera connects audience and actors, so performance can be subtle. Broadcast theater is a hybrid form that seeks symbiosis. This way, we understand the lack of close-ups in broadcast productions. Cameras do not need to build a bridge in particular; their function is to balance the mediation of performance and reception. The performance in a small theater such as Donmar differs from the performance in a theater like the Globe. Cameras must be calibrated to mediate spatial nuances. A failure in this calibration might convey the wrong tone to a scene and interfere with the experience of the filmic audience. Since I did not have direct access to the theatrical performance, my analysis is grounded in the filmic experience, hence

my occasional cinematic parallels. In order to illustrate *entropy*, I contemplate character construction and social interactions, focusing on performance choices and *mise-en-scène*.

### Scene 1 – Two Projects, Too Much Ado

*Digital Theatre* was developed around 2009 and uses the internet as broadcasting medium. It is a kind of "on demand" service in which several productions can be viewed from digital devices, such as laptops and tablets. Its website[59] informs, "Digital Theatre brings the live theatre experience to your screen by instantly streaming the best theatre productions from around the world anytime, anywhere." People can visit the website, subscribe for £9,99 and have access to all productions for a month or rent single productions for £7,99. Additionally, the project offers free content for educational institutions, the *Digital Theatre Plus*, which intends to "bring live performance into every classroom and library, accompanied by a range of invaluable educational resources for illustration, explanation, and critical reflection." Still according to its website, "Digital Theatre+ is already the world's leading educational platform for the performing arts. Today, we provide 3 million students in over 1300 schools, colleges and universities across 65 countries with unlimited access to over 900 full-length productions and educational resources"[60]. As we can notice, more than entertainment, new technologies enable art to achieve educational purposes.

The new Globe Theatre in London opened its doors in 1997. Initially, the performances were recorded to be released on DVD. After the initiative of other broadcasting projects, the Globe released the *Globe on Screen*. In partnership with other institutions, the Globe broadcasts its plays in cinemas in the United Kingdom, New Zealand, United States and Canada. The Globe's website informs the productions and venues. In addition, the *Globe on Screen* offers an "on demand" service, the "Globe player," in which you can rent (£5,99),

[59] https://www.digitaltheatre.com/consumer/about-us

[60] https://www.digitaltheatreplus.com/education/about-us

buy or send plays as a gift (£11,99). One can also access free content under the section "Muse of Fire," consisting of interviews with actors and other extra material. DVDs, Blu-rays and other products can still be purchased in the "shop" section. Thus, the Globe Theatre offers varied options for the fans to enjoy its productions, which, in part, try to mimic the authentic experience of Shakespeare's time with, for instance, the inclusion of jigs[61] in the performances and all-male productions. The *Globe on Screen* was not the pioneer to work with this configuration of entertainment; however, it kept up the pace and became the most comprehensive alternative to enjoy Shakespeare on stage.

In the realm of technicalities, productions from the *Globe on Screen* and *Digital Theatre* catalogues share several features. According to Erin Sullivan:

> Live recordings from the Globe, which are typically shown in cinemas the year *after* the stage production's run, offer an interesting counterpoint to the two approaches discussed thus far. While their mode of production is arguably more mediated—each show is filmed on multiple nights and a composite edit of the best takes is made for the final release—their style of filming produces what is arguably the most open and theatrical perspective of all. Unlike live broadcasts at the NT and RSC, these recordings rarely involve cameras on cranes, which are not only costly but also require considerable space to operate. Instead, two cameras located in the sides of the yard, two in the back of the lower gallery, and one in the middle gallery allow a variety of stage views that cut across the theatre from different angles and almost always include the audience. ("The Forms of Things Unknown" 17)

Both productions of *Much Ado* share the features described by Sullivan as well as shooting styles. They have no close-ups or extreme close-ups. Medium shots and full shots prevail.

[61] As Dobson and Wells define, a jig is "A short verse ballad on a comic, often sexual, theme accompanied by vigorous dancing and performed in the theatre as an afterpiece to the main play" (224).

Finally, wide shots are used to show the whole stage. Thus, broadcast theater seems to be solidifying its own identity as a medium as similar production modes are adopted in different projects.

Herrin's production of *Much Ado* sets the story in an intersection of Morocco and Italy[62], in an undefined time prior to the nineteenth century – like Branagh's film. Stage layout and costumes blend Arabic and Italian designs. The final result is similar to the idyllic aura of Branagh's adaptation with a touch of *Arabian Nights*. Also, the production enhances Branagh's colorblind casting and has Black actors playing Leonato, Hero, Conrad, and one of the watchmen. This characterization approximates the play to the Venetian-Turkish conflict that contextualizes another jealousy tale: *Othello*. However, there is no clear indication of which wars the men return from. In general, Herrin follows the tendency of the Globe to approximate the context to the Shakespearean hypotext, providing the audience with a reminiscence of the playwright's original *solvent*.

Rourke sets her production in the 1980's Gibraltar, implying that Don Pedro's troops are actually returning from the successful campaign against Argentina in the Falklands. If a double comparison is allowed, one can say that Rourke's production is to Whedon's film in the same way Herrin's is closer to Branagh's. Both productions work with the Shakespearean text, but Rourke delivers more modifications. In fact, she even released a book with the production version of *Much Ado*. Her casting is also closer to Whedon's choices, for she plays with gender. Innogen, Leonato's silent wife, who is neglected in most literary editions and performances, replaces his brother Antonio. The Wyndham's Theatre production is explicitly directed to contemporary popular taste. For instance, as Benedick and Beatrice, it reprises the duo of actors David Tennant and Catherine Tate, famous for their partnership in the BBC TV series *Doctor Who*. The whole production is full of references to the 80s popular

[62] As *The Guardian* critic Michael Billington also points out in his review: https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2011/may/27/much-ado-about-nothing-globe

culture. Costumes copy the fashion followed by popular celebrities. A rotating stage is divided into two areas by four huge pillars, and Venetian shutters cover the back of the stage. Colorful beach chairs and large speakers are common props on display. Constant smoking and drinking are part of the performance. In sum, elements from the 80s popular culture account for most of the *entropic* movements in the production.

**Scene 2 – Much Ado About Nostalgia**

Broadcast theater manifests nostalgia in its own configuration, the bridge between an older medium (theater) and recent media (cinema, TV, computer, tablet). The productions of *Much Ado* mentioned above are particularly nostalgic for reflecting different stages of *solute*, *solvent*, and extra-compositional aspects.

More than nostalgia, the Globe bears historical urgency because it (re)presents a cultural item of high significance. The set of projects embedded in the *Globe on Screen* defy temporal and geographical restrictions in order to apprehend a closer experience to the "Bard's" original *solvent*. The design of most productions considers this fact, reproducing Elizabethan and other traditionalist *mise-en-scène*. The result is that theatrical, cinematic, domestic, and institutional audiences have the impression of experiencing the "original Shakespeare." Unlike most broadcast projects, the *Globe on Screen* constantly displays the audience. Its productions include the audiences' conditions and reactions as part of the experience. Its broadcasts open with an outside view of the Globe and an inside view of the audience in the galleries and the groundlings. *Much Ado* follows this pattern.

Since the Globe opts for this traditionalt approach, most *entropic* movements result from the blending of palimpsestic traces with performance choices and improvisation. In the opening scene of Herrin's production, a mandolin player provides the soundtrack to the

routine in Messina. The Messenger enters from the audience[63] and interrupts the general harmony. When the Messenger talks about Claudio's success in battle, he makes a movement as if reading some notes from his hand. This implies that Claudio asked for this special commendation because he is already interested in Hero. When the men arrive, Claudio and Hero exchange looks. As Don Pedro announces that they are going to stay in Messina for a month, the Florentine exaggerates his happiness by raising both arms and shouting. These performance choices are interpretative routes on Shakespeare's text. Each interpretative route is a touch of *entropy*, the unmasking of one among numerous possibilities embedded in Shakespearean *solute*. The path followed by Herrin's production favor a prior relationship between Hero and Claudio, something that might not be clear by only reading the play.

The nostalgia of Rourke's production provides much of its *entropic* elements. The evocation of the 80s and their cultural icons, regardless of being part of Anglophonic cultures, can be easily recognized by audiences from different backgrounds, mirroring Shakespeare's cultural reach. Furthermore, the Wyndham's Theatre production values the nostalgia of a very specific cultural niche: the *Doctor Who* fandom. Rourke's appeal to popular taste directs the production's *entropy*.

The opening of Rouke's production is in cinematic style, for it displays the names of main actors and director. We have the date the performance was recorded. The routine in Messina is represented by Hero with her Walkman, dancing to a rock song, while Beatrice reads a magazine. There is an initial differentiation between the cousins in attitudes and costumes: Hero wears pink girly outfits and Beatrice opts for blue clothes, which some would say that are "less feminine." Hero seems worried about looking feminine and sexy. Apparently, Beatrice wants to look like "one of the guys." Their characterizations are distinct marks of gender roles. In the Globe production, Hero's dresses display nobility while

[63] This is a common form of entrance and exit in the Globe. Don Pedro and his men repeat the same entrance when they return singing from the wars. In general, there is a high level of interaction between actors and audiences during the performances.

Beatrice sustains the looks of a peasant. Hero's manners are shy and restricted. Beatrice verbally places herself as an equal to the men. The Globe production touches on gender issues by polarizing the characterization of Hero ("angel") and Beatrice ("monster"); also, it hints at their social status with the well-dressed heiress and the ward/cousin in humble outfit.

In order to grasp the *entropic* movements in the Wyndham's Theatre play, one must be aware of the high influence of extra-compositional features. The soldiers are naval officers in white uniforms that remind us of the pilots in the 1986 film *Top Gun*. They enter the stage marching, causing the ladies' furor, except Beatrice's. Benedick is another exception, for he arrives in a golf cart, ornamented with British flags. Among the flags, there is a single Scottish flag, a reference to Tennant's nationality.

In general, to an audience literate in Shakespeare, Rourke puts the "Bard" in the background of a nostalgic trip to the 80s. Herrin, on the other hand, places Shakespeare in the foreground, suiting the Globe's inherent nostalgia. In both cases, a meaningful apprehension of the *Art solutions* depends on connections to extra-compositional knowledge.

### Scene 3 – Ben & Bea: Are You Yet Lively?

The merry war between Benedick and Beatrice is a formula that can be painted in varied colors but still preserves comedy. It is up to each production to attribute (or not) layers of meaning to their relationship. Performance becomes crucial to balance the text and its potentialities. Considering Hero and Claudio, the Globe opts for the classic silent mode of interaction with shy looks and smiles. On Wyndham's stage, Claudio and Hero are silent to the audience but deeply entertained in a private conversation, during Beatrice and Benedick's first quarrel. This way, Rourke's direction attributes agency to Hero, who openly flirts with Claudio. Since she paints an active Hero, Rourke feels the need to elevate Beatrice's tone in comparison to her cousin. By doing so, Rourke loses balance and deviates from the

Shakespearean formula. The merry war turns into a slapstick comedy. That's the main point of diversion among the productions.

On the stage of the Globe, the first verbal sparring between Benedick and Beatrice is well paced. The actors Charles Edwards (Benedick) and Eve Best (Beatrice) supply nuances to the interaction. Beatrice calls Benedick's attention, when he says that he is loved by all ladies, to have him name her as an exception. Her gesture annoys him and he delivers the "scratched face" line in a way that makes her get closer to him in order to answer in the same angry tone. In an anachronistic reference, the argument ends with Benedick making a "zipper" on his mouth as a command to Beatrice. She says he always ends with a "jade's trick" and he replies by making the sound of a horse's kick with his mouth, a reference to the original meaning of the expression in the Elizabethan era, making her laugh. Dissimilar to Branagh's film, Beatrice leaves the verbal struggle in a good mood and Benedick looks disturbed. This inversion does not spoil the implication of a previous relationship. In the words of the critic Charles Spencer[64], "[d]espite the period costumes, Eve Best's Beatrice puts one in mind of a bluestocking spinster, fiercely intelligent, ironic and good-hearted but using her prodigious wit as a shield against hurt. She makes it plain that her heart has already been bruised by Benedick and that her insults and jibes are intended to keep him at a distance." Edwards's Benedick offers an equally lively counterpart under a fragile sexist mask that barely hides his own fears concerning love. He stammers to say words such as "love," "husband," and "marriage," mixing cleverness, comedy, and vulnerability. A lively balance is the verdict on their performance.

As mentioned above, Rourke's production fails to balance the battle of wits between the resistant couple. Tate's Beatrice exaggerates in her verbal expressions, occasionally harming the rhythm of interactions. Her angry tone in "a dear happiness to women" and her

[64] Spencer's review in *The Telegraph* can be accessed at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-reviews/8545980/Much-Ado-About-Nothing-Shakespeares-Globe-review.html

dragged speech in "than a man swear he loves me" might contribute with comedy but forsake motive, nuance. Once again, I agree with Spencer[65]. In another review for *The Telegraph*, he observes: "[s]he's very funny in her bolshie sarcasm but never quite captures the poignant pain of a woman who hides deep hurt behind her wit. Indeed she often seems downright rude rather than amusing, and hysterical rather than funny." Gradually, Beatrice's comedy becomes more acid than comic. In the words of the critic David Benedict[66], "her multi-voiced sarcasm is distancing, showing more of the actor than the character, and the cumulative effect is sour." Consequently, we have the impression that any nuance from Shakespeare's text falls on Benedick's shoulders. For instance, when she accuses him of always ending with a "jade's trick," it is his upset expression that indicates some prior connection. Ultimately, we have the impression that Tennant is up to Rourke's challenge of a populist Shakespeare while Tate gets lost in comic translation. Both performances are lively but imbalanced.

### Scene 4 – Don John: Disney Villain Versus Repressed Bastard

The Globe production differentiates the Princes by their Scottish accent, playing with inversion in the history of dominance on the British islands. It is a nice touch for Matthew Pidgeon, who plays Don John and doubles up as the Sexton. A Scot himself, he gets to do his own accent as the Prince and another British accent as the Sexton. Pidgeon portrays a villain driven by gratuitous hatred. In a podcast for the Globe[67], the actor states:

> . . . there was a belief that if you were a bastard there was something in your blood, there was something actively wrong with you, that meant you were sort

[65] https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/theatre-reviews/8550121/Much-Ado-About-Nothing-Wyndhams-Theatre-review.html

[66] His *Variety* review can be accessed at https://variety.com/2011/legit/reviews/much-ado-about-nothing-2-1117945374/

[67] Podcasts are audio files that can be downloaded, a kind of recorded radio show. The Globe makes available some podcasts containing interviews with actors and other production staff members. Pidgeon's interview can be accessed at http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/discovery-space/adopt-an-actor/archive/don-john-sexton-played-by-matthew-pidgeon

> of devious and envious and melancholic and all these things. You can either believe that or you can believe that if he is a bastard he's been treated in a certain way all his life, that is going to potentially make him envious, devious, melancholy.

As a bastard, Don John's fate to be a villain is more of a certainty, either by nature or by nurture. Pidgeon conveys the triangle "devious and envious and melancholic" mostly with his voice and facial expressions. He speaks like the words are explosions produced by his mouth, with "r sounds" often prolonged, producing the effect of a "machine gun of sound." Intense look, eyes wide open, and occasional arched brows complete his villainous mannerisms. The actor tries to avoid a caricature; however, since it is a theatrical performance, filmic audiences may draw an association to Disney villains, such as Scar from the animation *The Lion King*.

Elliot Levey plays Don John in Rourke's production. If one word could describe his performance, it would be "restriction." His performance conveys how trapped Don John feels by conventions and social masks. There is also a hint of the repression imposed by his own brother when the bastard speaks to Leonato. As he says, "I thank you. I am not of many words. I," it seems he is trying to talk more about himself, but a censuring look from Don Pedro interrupts his speech and he simply concludes by saying a plain "thank you." One can infer the subtext of this repression by the historical context in the production. During the 80s, after the AIDS outbreak, homosexuals were a demonized group. They were seen as the carriers of disease, promiscuous creatures with no moral. Homosexuals were "the bastards" of society. Don John expresses his lack of morals when he gives a cigarette to a child, a gesture that identifies him as a villain right from the start. In the scene with the bastard's accomplices, Levey's performance hints at Don John's sexual interest in Conrad. When Conrad advices caution and touches him, apparently he censors the man's suggestion as well

as his touching. Don John's tense posture is more than a military trait; it is a behaviorist response to repression.

**Scene 5 – Carnival Versus Discotheque**

The masquerade ball brings to the Globe a reminiscence of the European carnivals in which large dummies joined the revelers in the streets. Two large dummies of a man and a woman walk through the groundlings during the scene. The festive elements represent the major conflict of the play: gender relations. Meanwhile, the revelers dance on stage to a tarantella-like music – similar to Branagh's adaptation. The men are in plain red masks, with colorful ribbons attached to their clothes. Women do not wear masks or costumes. Is it an allegoric message saying that all the deception in the play is caused by men? Indeed, social masks are strong motifs in the production. For instance, to sustain her maiden pride, Beatrice rejects men with and without beard (II. 1. 21-30). Eve Best's improvisation using Antonio's beard and a beardless member of the audience results in general laughing. Additionally, the offended Benedick pours his wounded heart to the audience as he reports being called "the Prince's jester," only to put his social mask back and return the offence to Beatrice by calling her "harpy." After he leaves the stage, Best provides a remarkable performance by balancing sentiment and social mask. She displays Beatrice's hurt feelings as she recalls her past with Benedick, but turns to joy and aids Hero and Claudio's match. The young couple indicates lack of social skills because they need to be directed by others in order to act. Claudio is directed by Beatrice and Hero seeks her father's approval before kissing the Count.

Wyndham's Theatre stages a costume party with discotheque atmosphere. A version of Bonnie Tyler's song "Holding Out for a Hero" provides the soundtrack of the party. The characters' costumes revive pop icons from the 80s. Claudio wears an Adam Ant mask and copies the outfit of the pop singer in his album *Prince Charming*. Hero matches the irony

with a Lady Di mask and a pink prom dress. The couple represents the romantic ideal in the play. In contrast, Beatrice and Benedick are far from romantic idealizations; they manifest the battle of sexes through outfit inversion. Benedick's costume blends a Miss Piggy mask and a Madonna outfit. Beatrice dresses as one of the Blues Brothers. Still symbolic, as an honest plain villain, Don John wears no costume and Don Pedro wears an Indiana Jones costume, a suitable choice, for both Dr. Jones and the Prince get the girls but are always alone. The game between masks and true feelings continue partially in this version. Tennant's Benedick seems truly hurt by Beatrice's comments. Tate's Beatrice fails to demonstrate any other feeling besides scorn. Claudio continues on the road of poor social skills, but Hero takes no time to kiss her intended. Some members of the audience may wonder whether Rourke offers a misinterpretation or another possible interpretation of Hero.

### Scene 6 – Causing Toothaches

The "cupid trap" scene bears the tradition of exploring the physicality of the actors in the role of Benedick and Beatrice because they have to run and hide to hear the conversations. Theatrical performance demands synchronicity among actors and audience during this scene. It is not surprising that Branagh breaks the fourth wall in his film. In fact, most productions break the fourth wall and turn the audiences into accomplices of the action on stage, both concerning Don Pedro's plan and Beatrice's and Benedick's efforts to hide.

Edwards and Best are very successful in their relationship with the audience. Both actors place the audience as part of the play by delivering their soliloquies as if chatting with friends. The physical arrangement of the Globe aids this relationship and we are able to attest it on the screen, with constant shots framing actors and audiences. Benedick tries to convince the audience and himself of the futilities of love, prior to Don Pedro's deception, and of the necessity of love, after he falls for the deception.

Herrin's direction values the stage architecture of the Globe to provide hiding places for Benedick and Beatrice. The Paduan uses both columns to hide from the men. A comic moment is when he hides in plain sight disguised as a peasant working the land. The comedy climax happens when he climbs a ladder against one of the columns and hides near the ceiling, behind some bushes. After some bad words are spoken about his personality, he throws an orange at the men. After they leave the stage, in a comic moment, some extras take the ladder away and Benedick has to use a rope to climb down. When the deception is applied to Beatrice, the scene does not demand so much physicality from Best. Beatrice simply hides behind a bed sheet hanged on a clothesline between the two stage columns. Since she is also hid from the audience, comic effect is achieved by her occasional appearance and reproving sounds. When she calls the women's attention, she pretends to be a passing bird, repeating the tactics of Branagh's Benedick. Here we have a rare close-up as the camera catches her eyes in amazement over the sheet. The lack of access to her reactions during the women's dialogue works to intensify the impact of the deception on her. After the women leave, Beatrice's soliloquy consolidates her strong bond with the audience. She delivers it holding hands with one of the groundlings, whom she hugs at the end of the scene.

On Wyndham's stage, Benedick's major hangover makes him vulnerable to the Prince's deception. Dressed in a Superman t-shirt – a representation of his ego, Benedick delivers his treaty against love. The end of the text is modified for comical purposes. In his description of a perfect woman, Benedick stops midsentence, simulating a Freudian slip "… and her hair shall be re…", an allusion to Beatrice's red hair; then, he is quick to complete, "what color pleases God." Further changes in text are usual. However, the comic focus of the sequence is physical. The stage columns divide Benedick's hiding place and the men's amusement area. Theatrical and filmic audiences have visual access to both spaces as the stage spins around. Benedick mocks the "Sigh No More" song enjoyed by the men. He

dances clumsily and accidently gets his hand into a tray of white paint. Then, the amazement caused by the men's interlude makes him transfer the paint to his face and clothes. He is so nervous with the information that he drinks some soda and spits it all over the men, who check if it is raining. Benedick bonds with the audience at the end of his scene, during his soliloquy for love. Tennant has moments of improvisation as he pours Benedick's heart to the audience and responds to their reactions with gestures and sounds. We do not see the audience's reactions, but by their reacting sounds, we are certain that Tennant's Benedick gains people's sympathy. He ends the scene replacing the line "if I do not love her I am a Jew" by "if I do not love her, I'm a fool." Edwards's Benedick changes it to "if I do not love her, I am a dog." All productions, theatrical and filmic, edit or omit the "Jew reference," a legitimate alteration in a post-World War II context.

Still on Wyndham's stage, Shakespeare's text is neglected in favor of physical comedy in the deception scene that catches Beatrice. A painting job provides the excuse to attach Tate to a cable and lift her to the ceiling. The attention of the audience is disputed by Beatrice's hyperbolic gesticulation in the air and Hero's speech on the middle of the stage. Tate gets the best of her scene companions and when they leave the stage, she gets rid of the cable to receive the audience's applause. We have the impression that the character Beatrice is lost as the actor Tate thanks the audience. Different from Tennant and the Globe cast, she fails to connect character and audience. Instead, we witness the connection between actor and audience. As a result, Shakespeare is pushed aside.

### Scene 7 – Marry Wars

The preservation of Shakespeare's text in the Globe production sustains the battle of sexes that permeates the play. In the wedding scene we perceive a clear division of sympathies, reinforced by some performance details. On the one hand, men assume a

negative image. Since Hero's betrayal emerges only from Don John's report, the emotional abuse promoted by Claudio and Don John degrade their images. The groom and his friend are so busy humiliating the young bride that they do not notice Don John's satisfied countenance. On the other hand, performance supports sympathy for women. Michael Billington notes, "I've also always been puzzled why Margaret, unwittingly complicit in the plot against Hero, doesn't speak out in church: here it is because she has fled at the first sign of trouble."[68] This way, Margaret is spared a bad reputation. It is worth noting how Benedick moves from one side to the other during the scene. As soon as Hero faints, the Princes and Claudio leave the scene. Benedick hesitates between following the men and supporting the ladies. He chooses the second option and remains on stage. Besides his love for Beatrice, his choice reveals maturity. The couple is united in love and war. In sum, the performances entertain the potentialities of Shakespeare's text.

Rourke's production preserves extra elements to convey verisimilitude to Don John's plot. A drunken Claudio crashes Hero's bachelorette party at a nightclub and sees Boracchio making out with Margaret, wearing her mistress's imitation of a bridal veil. This false image provides ammunition for Claudio's war declaration during the wedding. Hero, in a copy of Princess Diana's wedding dress, doubles Lady Di's shy looks as the accusations start. It rings as a production misstep because this behavior is not coherent with her outgoing manner earlier in the play. In fact, another of Rourke's alterations backfires during the wedding scene: the presence of Innogen. Leonato's wife is silent during the entire event, conveying her discontent through body and facial expressions; moreover, she watches everything from her chair, unable to move even when her daughter is physically abused by Claudio. Unlike successful cinematic adaptations that match Shakespeare's text with modern settings, the Wyndham's production feeds a war between its historical setting and Shakespeare, which

[68] https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2011/may/27/much-ado-about-nothing-globe

reaches its most dissonant point during the wedding scene. Time turns back as men assume chauvinistic roles and women go under a submissive stupor. Claudio hits Hero's face and she faints. Leonato, in a violent frenzy, kicks his daughter and a chair next to his wife, who remains stunned. Another conflict emerges at the end of the scene when Beatrice and Benedick admit their love for each other. The actors perform a battle between drama and delight. Tate lacks gradation in her shift to euphoria, squealing and running around. Consequently, the resumption of seriousness with the line "Kill Claudio" is abrupt. In short, audiences witness a battle of extremes throughout the whole scene.

### Scene 8 – Dogberry: Tics and Tactics

It is safe to affirm that Dogberry is one of the most *entropic* characters in the several productions of *Much Ado*. The approaches vary from idiotic, bully, pathetic, and so on. The Globe production maintains the traditional line in terms of extra-compositional connection. Ironically (or deliberately), as his original predecessor, Paul Hunter played Bottom in the 2008 Globe production of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Once again, the Globe uses a Dogberry who was an ass. However, it is a mistake to think that the production does not innovate. As Hunter comments[69] on the casting of Dogberry and Verges, ". . . it's interesting the way Jeremy [Herrin, director] has cast it. . . . because traditionally it is played the other way round, so that Dogberry is the bigger physically and Verges is often the small, older man. And he's cast it completely inverted, with Adrian who is enormous and me not so." Big Verges commanded by small Dogberry produces an amusing effect. The pair recalls the dynamics of *Laurel and Hardy*. Unfortunately, Hunter's overuse of verbal and physical tics

[69] Hunter's comment is part of a podcast available at the Globe website: http://www.shakespearesglobe.com/discovery-space/adopt-an-actor/archive/dogberry-played-by-paul-hunter

gets tiresome and lessens comedy instead of boosting it. Dogberry becomes a repetitive sitcom character.[70]

Sylvester Stallone's Rambo is Dogberry's idol in Rourke's production. As the leader of the watch, the Green Beret wannabe displays his (poor) military skills to the men, in front of a Rambo poster. He tries to impress them by putting on a Daniel-san[71] act, assuming the position of a "crane kick" to break a baguette and breaking it with his hand, instead. Since Gibraltar is part of Spain, the selection of his men considers their foreign language abilities, which are as phony as his own military talent. He endeavors to convey professionalism in the introduction of his security tactics but only endorses his amateurism. Verges's cheap suit, glasses and worn out hat portray an intellectual counterpart, the brains to Dogberry's muscles. Rourke follows Shakespeare's tactics of inversion by placing the phony military in opposition to the real soldiers who slander Hero. Ultimately, in their own clumsy way, they are the true heroes of the story, restoring Hero's reputation. Each production attributes specific features to the contrast between Dogberry and Verges's "heroism" and Don Pedro and Claudio's "villainy" – since both actions are accidental.

### Scene 9 – Top of the Mourning

Some hypertexts offer insightful comments on the original productions. My decision to offer a brief comment on the mourning scene of both broadcast productions is justified by the way they shake the waters of *entropy* in the ocean of Shakespeare's palimpsest. Unlike the majority of former hypertexts, the productions display Hero to Claudio's mourning scene. On the stage of the Globe, Hero pretends to be a corpse, piercing Claudio's consciousness by

[70] During the podcast cited above, Hunter says: "Well it's funny, when I came to meet Jeremy [Herrin], the director, to talk about it, we found ourselves sort of talking about the character in relationship to *Dad's Army*, the Seventies British sitcom about the home guard."

[71] Daniel-san, a.k.a. Daniel LaRusso, is the protagonist of 1984 martial arts movie *The Karate Kid*. The "crane kick," a type of frontal kick, is an iconographic mark of the film.

delivering the result of his mistake. Her presence in the scene and later appearance as a living bride offer a final comment on how deceitful images can be. On Wyndham's stage, Claudio drinks heavily in front of Hero's tomb, listening to a rock version of the song "Pardon, goddess of the night." In the climax of his guilty conscience, Claudio pulls a gun to take his own life and is prevented by Hero's ghostly presence. This suicide attempt is a reference to *Romeo and Juliet* and comments on the potential outcome of the Friar's plan. Pain and guilt are intensified by this Claudio. He is taken by shock and shame when Hero reveals herself as his new bride. This way, Rourke indicates what should be Claudio's reaction if he really loved Hero and questions the veracity of Claudio's feelings in the hypotext.

**Scene 10 – Ending with a Jade's Trick**

Hero's call for justice is fulfilled in the final scene. Claudio finally learns she is alive and, above all, innocent. In order to do so, the Florentine must take a leap of faith and swear to marry Leonato's niece with no knowledge of her physical appearance. In Herrin's production, Claudio is blindfolded and pushed around by the veiled ladies before having to express his oath. Besides the comic innuendo, we have a visual reference of Lady Justice. The moral is that one must be objective when presented with images and discourses, for they can be fabricated. Before assuming the role of Hero's judge and executioner, Claudio should have considered the source of the slander along with the Lady's behavior. The blindfold symbolizes an opportunity of impartiality; in this case, without gender bias. When the blindfold is removed, Claudio's vision comes back to life with Hero. It is a new beginning for the couple. Another beginning is offered to Benedick and Beatrice as well. Benedick blindfolds himself and asks for Beatrice. Then, he removes the blindfold to question her about love. After trying to escape, she removes her veil to face him. The sequence is simple but full of meaning, for it reflects Benedick and Beatrice's journey. Both are the agents of

their own prejudice and the ones who break it. The couple seals their new attitude with a kiss and even the Prince's provocation does not shake Benedick's determination. Likewise, the Paduan does not let the news about Don John interrupt the jig that closes the play. Benedick aborts external influence over their recent status. This is his final jade's trick.

Rourke provides agency to female characters. After revealing herself, Hero comforts the shocked and ashamed Claudio. She breaks his embarrassment by hugging him. The couple's reconciliation is interrupted by Benedick, who gets down on one knee in a silent proposal. Beatrice signals for him to stand up. This addition breaks with the Shakespearean script by anticipating Benedick's love declaration. Her denial is what leads him to abort the proposal and question her about love. There is a ping pong of denials until their final deliverance from stubbornness. However, some tension remains among the male characters. For instance, Benedick hits Claudio on the face as he says "live unbruised, and love my cousin." The Paduan's final act to pacify the atmosphere is to play a tape with a version of "Sigh No More" by a band called Pipers. Rourke tries a final pun with the line, "Strike up, Pipers." Music is a jade's trick to break off tensions.

## Scene 11 – More Than One Foot in Sea and One on Shore

More than different *Art solutions* in the same branch of the Shakespearean palimpsest, these broadcast productions of *Much Ado* are a display of possibilities. A character or a scene is subject to variations that depend on several factors, including performance choices and *mise-en-scène*. The Shakespearean text is fluid to the point of suiting different compositional and extra-compositional temporal settings. Setting the story closer to Shakespeare's original context or in contemporaneity does not affect the *concentration* of the original in terms of the message. Producers can have one foot in sea and one on shore and still enjoy the moral breeze of the "Bard's" ocean. Herrin's production is able to connect an old contextual setting

to a contemporary audience. The nuances of gender relations are exposed and criticized in entertaining performances. Rourke's production is not so fortunate, for it may repeat elements from the play but empties their Shakespearean *concentration*. Gender roles and their resulting issues get lost in a confusing approach to Shakespeare's text. For instance, despite dressing to convey gender equality and speaking Shakespeare's lines, Tate's Beatrice is far from her textual counterpart. Therefore, we learn that production choices determine more than the technical presence of Shakespeare's words; it determines the essence of his message. Shakespeare is not empty entertainment; human nature is preserved in the amber of his works. The *entropic* movements of Shakespearean elements in an *Art solution* are not limited to the tip of the textual iceberg; they can also explore the possibilities underneath the words.

**Scene 12 – Broadcast Theater is a Giddy Thing**

Word is potential. Shakespeare's palimpsest proves that there is no simple relation between signifier and signified. His texts already play with a web of meanings and puns. The *entropy* of his hypotexts enables more *entropic* movements in each hypertextual manifestation. Each analysis, either hypotextual or hypertextual, introduces layers of interpretation, small extracts of potentiality and modes of understanding the *dissolution* of elements in *Art solutions*. As this last section confirms, the same historical context can deliver different productions, attesting the *entropic* potentials of time. As human timeline moves forward, more and more extra-compositional elements become available to be *dissolved* in conjunction with interpretative variations. It is worth noting that the palimpsest does not distinguish between high and low cultures. Everything gets in, independent of cultural / social value. This is the true state of *entropy* and its main cause.

The history of broadcast theater is connected to cinematographic history. Much has changed since the timid attempts from the previous century. This hybrid mode of

entertainment started its consolidation in the last decade. Since then, we can observe an evolving symbiotic construction. The *NT Live* production of *Coriolanus* has offered a look on a more recent production, more mature in technical terms. The productions of *Much Ado* analyzed above are slightly older but already reveal differences in technical terms and performances. My distinct analytical studies in both chapters aim to prove the search for balance in this new medium.

Broadcast theater, in its varied forms, offers opportunities to connect with Shakespeare. The theatrical space is no longer limited by its physicality. Productions reach more audiences. Maurice Hindle reports the point of view of a screen producer and director who contributed with several *Globe on Screen* productions:

> As Ian Russell says, filming Shakespeare in the theatre "isn't to replace the stage performance – it couldn't anyway. It is to bring a wider audience to it, which I think is beneficial, for all sorts of obvious reasons. I think the job of the screen director is to be as invisible as possible. You don't want any tricksy, filmicky things going on – just to watch a stage performance going on, without too many flashy camera angles. You should just be drawn into what's happening on the screen as you would be in the cinema, to be enveloped by it, to forget where you are. Which is why I think at the end of a *NT Live*, or a *Globe on Screen*, or an opera from the opera house, or wherever, I've never been to one where the audience didn't applaud – they applaud the screen! That's because they feel they've been part of a shared experience – and that's whether it's live or recorded." (qtd. in Hindle 95)

Therefore, connections between audiences and productions as well as among audiences represent positive outcomes. Chapter 5 briefly touches on issues related to reception.

# Chapter 5 - Receptions and Perceptions of Shakespearean Stages: The Reach of *Art Solutions*

Without an audience, ideas remain mere words on a page.[72]

If all the world is a stage, where is the audience sitting?[73]

The constitution of *Art solutions*, their context of production and materiality cover great part of this dissertation to illustrate the progression of *entropy* in Shakespeare's palimpsest. Media productions account for *palimpsestic entropy*, but there is one important element that affects their constitution: consumption. Audiences play a crucial role in the reception and perception of *Art solutions* to the point of influencing production processes. So, in order to complement the ideas already discussed, this chapter briefly touches on issues concerning the role of audiences, in general and in specific stages of the Shakespearean palimpsest.

The dichotomy between high and popular culture permeates the construction of Shakespeare's legacy. Still a work in progress, broadcast theater struggles to solidify its status as a medium, balancing artistic quality and economic demands. Audiences assume their participatory role in different forms; one example is the organization of communities dedicated to the appreciation of specific cultural objects: the fandoms. The paths towards Shakespeare vary as much as his *dissolutions*. Diverse modes of consumption coexist, indicating that *entropy* also affects reception.

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[72] This line is spoken by the character Percy Shelley in the film *Mary Shelley* (2017), directed by Haifaa Al-Mansour.

[73] This quote is often attributed to American comedian and actor George Carlin. In his book *Meaning and Humor*, page 262, Andrew Goatly provides a paraphrase of the line without reference to its source.

### 5.1. Two Cultural Branches, Both Alike in Dignity

Shakespeare's legacy is involved in a feud which has intensified in the last decades. Like Montagues and Capulets, representatives of highbrow and lowbrow cultural branches carry on a feud over Shakespeare's legacy. Marjorie Garber, for instance, states:

> But Shakespeare's effect upon modernity, and modernity's effect upon Shakespeare, should not be confused or conflated with the idea of media or popular culture. Quite the opposite is the case, as we have already seen in the case of psychoanalyst Ernest Jones – and indeed with Jones's friend and mentor, Sigmund Freud. Some of the most engaged and passionate readers, quoters, and rewriters of Shakespeare have been philosophers and theorists, from Karl Marx to Friedrich Nietzsche . . . . (*Shakespeare and Modern Culture* xxii)

Garber writes about Shakespeare's presence in modern culture focusing on items classified as high culture. Indeed, she makes a fair point placing Shakespeare as a huge influencer for writers and theorists, i.e. an intellectual elite within society. However, as many examples of derivative *Art Solutions* prove, there are no restrictions for the playwright's influence. In Douglas Lanier's words, "It's obvious that Shakespeare is everywhere in popular culture. Movies, television, radio, pulp fiction, musicals, pop music, children's books, advertisements, comic books, toys, computer games, pornography: nearly every imaginable category of contemporary pop culture features examples of Shakespearean allusion or adaptation" (*Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* 3). Therefore, Shakespeare is not exclusive to any cultural branch. The categorization of cultural manifestations and of the Shakespearean oeuvre is what feeds this cultural feud. Still according to Lanier:

> And yet for most observers Shakespeare, as *the* icon of high or 'proper' culture, seems to stand apart from popular culture. Popular culture, so the story goes, is aesthetically unsophisticated, disposable, immediately accessible and therefore shallow, concerned with immediate pleasures and effects, unprogressive in its politics, aimed at the lowest common denominator, mass-produced by corporations principally for financial gain. By contrast, Shakespeare is aesthetically refined, timeless, complex and intellectually challenging, concerned with lasting truths of the human condition and not fleeting political issues, addressed to those few willing to devote themselves to laborious study, produced by a single genius 'not of an age but for all time'. (*Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* 3)

The conflict between high and low cultures fails to acknowledge that Shakespearean *entropy* actually unites both cultural branches. Shakespeare has the potential to popularize items of high culture at the same time he may convey authority to items of low culture. Shakespeare is a point of convergence, not dispute.

The segmentation of culture is a social stratification. High culture has been associated to the elites, the intellectualized layer of the population who has access to more refined cultural objects. As Lanier points, popular culture supports productions aimed for the masses and lacking intellectual refinement. Yet, if we look at the use of Shakespeare in certain items of popular culture, it owns little (or nothing) to his thought-provoking echoes in high culture. My point is close to Hamlet's when he says, "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so" (II. 2. 239-40). In other words, the eyes of the viewer have great influence on the viewed object. I do not intend to go further on the discussion about how to study different cultural manifestations and value assessment. Henry Jenkins shares my point of view:

> As a media scholar, I have been taught to suspend judgment about the line separating high and popular culture. We know that this border has shifted dramatically over time. Many works taught in literature classes (by Shakespeare, Dickens) were once regarded as popular culture. And many of the attacks currently directed against contemporary popular culture were also once directed against novel and theater. Each medium has to be evaluated on its own terms – not as a debased form of literature but as an aesthetic tradition with its own standards of accomplishment. Some approaches to literature seek to narrow and refine student's tastes, weaning them from their attachments to popular culture. My own approach seeks to broaden students' tastes and expand the range of works with which they can meaningfully engage. ("Four Readers 4: Reading (Moby-Dick) As a Media Scholar" 78)

My point is to call attention to Shakespeare's status as a force that unites opposite branches of culture. The *dissolutions* of Shakespearean elements among/within varied objects in these cultural spheres illustrate the *entropy* of Shakespeare's legacy.

### 5.2. "Put Money in Thy Purse!" & "To Thy Own Self Be True"

The challenge for art in a capitalist system is to generate profit as well as aesthetic recognition. Art is an abstract construction that touches human beings in multiple ways; at the same time, it is a product in our consumer society. Financially, art producers must follow Iago's advice to Roderigo (*Othello* I. 3. 330), putting money in their purses. Artistically, art producers must deliberate on the significance of the *solutions* that they deliver to society, being authentic artists above all, according to Polonius's advice, "This above all, to thine own self be true, / And it must follow, as the night the day, / Thou canst not then be false to any

man" (*Hamlet* I. 3. 78-80). Financial profit and artistic recognition depend on the reception. Audiences are potential critics and consumers of *Art solutions*.

The true popularity of a cultural item is measured by its appeal to consumers from different social spheres. Elizabethan theater, for instance, gathered different audiences. As Austin Tichenor reminds us:

> Elizabethan audiences clapped and booed whenever they felt like it. Sometimes they threw fruit. Groundlings paid a penny to stand and watch performances, and to gawk at their betters, the fine rich people who paid the most expensive ticket price *to actually sit on the stage*. The place was full of pickpockets and prostitutes, and people came and went to relieve themselves of the massive quantities of beer they've consumed. Theatre was not only a major social occasion; it could often feel like a competition for attention. Audiences came from every class, and their only other entertainment options were bear-baiting and public executions – and William Shakespeare wrote for them all.[74]

Shakespeare produced for commoners and members of the court. In terms of entertainment, one may say that Shakespeare provided a common ground for different social classes. In the last decades, technology replicated the appeal of Elizabethan theater regarding entertainment. The democratization of technology facilitates cultural distribution among several social classes that can have access to the same content. The screen (cinema, TV, computers, tablets, cell phones) has become the most popular form of entertainment as well as vehicles to appreciate varied kinds of cultural manifestations, such as opera, ballet, and theater via broadcast events. Broadcast theater has become the most accessible form to enjoy

[74] Extract from Tichenor's article "Elizabethan Theater Etiquette and Audience Expectations Today," which can be accessed at https://shakespeareandbeyond.folger.edu/2018/09/25/elizabethan-theater-etiquette-audience-expectations/.

Shakespearean performances. Consequently, in order to mimic Shakespeare's popular appeal, producers must have in mind the diversity of the audience.

On Elizabethan stages as on contemporary screens, art is also a product. Most of those who have art as a job have to consider consumption because the interest of the audiences turns into financial profit. Since Shakespeare is a cultural icon, the performances of his works are loaded with expectations. As a new form of entertainment in its earlier years, broadcast theater faces the challenges of being a hybrid configuration, technically and socially. The varied manifestations under the umbrella of broadcast theater[75], especially concerning Shakespearean performances, are still learning how to conciliate medium technicalities and audiences' expectations.

Broadcast theater is neither theater nor cinema. It associates the popularity of the screens to the cultural authority of theater. So, it attracts highbrow and lowbrow audiences. In order to be considered successful, a production has to aim for critics' positive appraisal and box office numbers. For instance, on the one hand, Josie Rourke's production of *Much Ado About Nothing* seemed focused on box office numbers. Casting and performance choices attracted popular eyes but neglected nuances in the story and characters' depth. Part of the TV audience of *Doctor Who* may enjoy it in opposition to Shakespearean scholars who might not find it so amusing. On the other hand, Rourke's production of *Coriolanus* is more likely to please Tom Hiddleston's fandom and avid readers of the "Bard." The main difference between both productions is the balance of elements. *Coriolanus* does not repeat the exaggeration[76] of *Much Ado*. Unlike the comedy, which highlights elements of the medium theater, the Roman play tries to find a performance balance for stage and screen, with no loss for theatrical audience and more gain for screen audiences.

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[75] It is worth to reinforce that, following Pascale Aebischer et al. in the book *Shakespeare and the 'Live' Theatre Broadcast Experience*, I consider as "broadcast theater" all the productions that were recorded in a theater in front of an audience, disregarding differences in production and distribution.

[76] Here I mean exaggeration in the sense of theatricality, highly focused on humor.

The expectation of either theatrical or cinematic experiences may be a frustration for those who attend broadcast performances. Michael Ingham states that cinema is "as a realistic medium making an artistic intervention into reality and documenting a jointly experienced 'lifeworld'… This 'lifeworld' simultaneously partakes, as the play itself does, of art and imagination. The reflexivity of the aesthetics draws attention to the medium of theater, while downplaying the medium of film to a considerable extent" (76). Considering theater, he continues, "[b]earing in mind the commercial and pragmatic realities of a market-driven practice, I seek to show that it is nonetheless feasible to view the phenomenon as beneficial to theatre as an art-form" (76). In short, Ingham defends that broadcast performances fail to meet the sociopolitical significance of theater.

In my view, although comparisons to cinema and theater may prove useful to understand the evolution of broadcast theater as a medium, such analytical exercises should avoid value judgments that reinforce the dichotomy "high and low culture" by connecting the medium to one of these cultural branches. Even unintentionally, some of these comparisons might reinforce concepts long deconstructed by media studies, such as "the book is better than the film,"[77] meaning that one medium is better than another medium. Additionally, I consider a fallacy to state that an *Art solution* loses sociopolitical significance because of its medium. Once again, one must not underestimate the subjectivity of the viewer. The message is as good as the interlocutor's capacity to decode it. Reception and interpretation is potential. Members of the theatrical experience bear the same interpretative potential as the ones that experience the product on screen. Otherwise, it would be correct to say that British audiences are more equipped to grasp Shakespearean texts than audiences from other parts of the world.

In technical terms, it is a mistake to evaluate broadcast theater via comparisons, disregarding media peculiarities. In reception terms, it is also a mistake to underestimate the

[77] In order to know and understand the fallacies that were deconstructed by media studies, I recommend Thomas Leitch's essay, "Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory."

audiences' capacity to "adapt" to this new medium and its nuances, in the same way one must not connect popularity to high or low quality of the *Art solution.* Susan Bennett reports:

> The Donmar *Coriolanus* 'grossed £754,000 from a single night' and with Encore screenings the total rose to £952,000 (Gant 2014:15). To underscore the significance of these particular receipts, Charles Gant compared revenue generated by the broadcasts of the Donmar production with that of Ralph Fiennes's 2012 feature film version of the same play. Both were critically admired interpretations of *Coriolanus*, but Fiennes's film, with production costs reported at £5 million, earned only £901,000 for its entire UK cinema run (Gant 2014: 15). (41)

This information does not question the quality of Fiennes's film in comparison to Rourke's production. Box office numbers are not an indicator of high or low quality. What the data illustrate is that the receptive potential of broadcast theater, as the hybrid medium, evolves. In the same way that audiences demanded some time to adapt to cinema, people are still in the process of adaptation to this new medium.

I believe the evolution of broadcast theater as a medium moves towards integration and balance. This is not an easy goal to achieve. Each production is an experiment that may generate successes and/or failures. Once producers pay attention to the peculiarities of broadcast theater as a new medium other than theater or cinema, the more established it will be as a new *solvent*. The balance is about the conciliation of elements from the two media involved in broadcast theater, taking into consideration their integrated contributions to form a new medium, instead of being independent media parts. In sum, broadcast theater is a complex *solvent*, which is made up of other complex *solvents*. In order to have an *Art solution* true to this hybrid *solvent*, its parts must find harmony in the final composition. Likewise, audiences negotiate their own behavior in the maturation process of this new

medium. Screen audiences should not expect a cinematic or theatrical experience. They must learn they are consumers of a new type of medium, with traits of already existing media forming its own distinctiveness. Once negotiations take place and balance is reached, one may see that it is possible to be true to quality respecting the particularities of this new medium and gain the audiences' positive appraisal in association to financial profit.

### 5.3. "This Happy Breed of Men, This Little World"

The difference between Elizabethan and contemporary audiences is basically the mediation involved in their participation. As Tichenor points above, Elizabethan audiences were physically and directly engaged in theatrical performances. They talked during the play, threw things on stage, and some even paid to be on stage. The whole Globe – and other theatrical venues – was literally a stage. Audiences were not bystanders; they were active part of the performance, commenting and even editing it. Instant feedback prevailed. This behavior continued for years as Douglas Lanier indicates, "[t]hroughout the Restoration and the eighteenth century the decorum that hovers over audiences of the 'legitimate' theatre had not yet come into being. Performers frequently addressed the audience directly from the projecting apron stage, and in response the audience in the pit offered their own contributions, criticisms, and misbehavior" (*Shakespeare and Modern Popular Culture* 27). Additionally, after the Restoration, another form of participation emerged: the formal editing / rewriting of the plays. Before the renewal of audiences' participatory behavior by the end of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first century, a new code emerged.

From the nineteenth century on, audiences were affected by the behavior code of the growing bourgeois, in which refinement was a synonym of passivity. Participation was

reduced to the point of being eliminated from the theatrical scene. The actor Samuel McClure Taylor is partial about this new role attributed to the audience:

> I mean, look: every convention of your average modern theatre serves to make people passive, docile, distanced from the play and from one another, almost entirely erased. We've taught American audiences…where to sit. We give them a potty break. We tell them to shut up and turn off anything at all that might make any kind of noise. We provide them no reason to ever have to interact with the person seated next to them. The pacification is profound: we don't even trust them to unwrap a sucker in the theatre. We imply in a thousand ways that everything has been worked out in advance, encouraging total passivity of body, mind, and spirit. And then we turn the lights off and expect them to listen hard to complex, antiquated verse poetry that relies on an active, social, participatory relationship. Can we really blame them for taking fifty-dollar naps? (qtd. in Tichenor's "Elizabethan Theater Etiquette and Audience Expectations Today")

Despite his implied criticism, Taylor's description is accurate. This decorum has also prevailed in cinemas, with an addition: no clapping after "the show." As a result, the response of movie theater goers was even more restricted. As mentioned above, feedback came through critics' pens and box office numbers.

In a way, audiences only regained their agency as technology enabled mediation. The behavior code to physically attend events remains the same, but the internet has made new forms of response possible. Audiences' participation varies from comments on social media to blogs with elaborate reviews of *Art solutions*. There is also the production of derivate material, expanding and/or modifying content. In sum, contemporary audiences follow a hybrid organization of codes that regain the participatory mode of Elizabethan audiences

through digital means in conjunction to the inherited passivity of nineteenth century decorum. Moreover, as in the case of *Digital Theatre* and other "on demand' services, audiences can enjoy plays at home. Contemporary audiences have to handle the choice to be more or less participatory. Feedback can assume multiple forms.

In his study about nation and nationalism, Benedict Anderson proposes that a nation is an *imagined community*, which is "imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (6). This concept can easily be stretched to groups virtually united by the common interest in a medium, a product, an actor, and so on. I am talking about the kingdoms of fans, the "fandoms," this happy breed of men[78], women, and whoever has a shared interest in a cultural object that results in this (sometimes not little) imagined community, their world. The main distinction between fandom members and common consumers is in their engagement regarding the object of interest. In another analogy to nations, it is as if the common consumer were just an occasional visitor, a tourist who enjoys sightseeing and local customs, while the fans "live" in this virtual space connected to the object of interest; they are citizens that (re)produce the customs of their nation. According to Jenkins,

> Fans have always been early adapters of new media technologies; their fascination with fictional universes often inspires new forms of cultural production, ranging from costumes to fanzines and, now, digital cinema. Fans are the most active segment of the media audience, one that refuses to simply accept what they are given, but rather insists on the right to become full participants. None of this is new. What has shifted is the visibility of fan culture. (*Convergence Culture* 131)

[78] In a Shakespearean parallel, I use part of John of Gaunt's speech about his nation (*King Richard II* II.1. 45) to address the kingdoms of fans.

Therefore, fandom is identity and participation. Like the identification of a nation and its citizens, the sense of belonging is reinforced by naming the fandom and their members. For instance, fans of *Star Trek* are "Trekkies" or "Trekkers;" "Potterheads" are fans of *Harry Potter*; and the term "Whovians" refers to the fandom of *Doctor Who*.

As Jenkins points out, the engagement of fans is not new. Currently, the internet has become the main channel of congregation and diffusion of fan culture[79]. Additionally, all over the world, there are physical gatherings of fans to celebrate their interests. The best examples are conferences, the popular "cons," in which fans wear cosplays[80], get in touch with writers and actors, and buy products related to the cultural object. Analogously, one could say that "Bardolators" are passionate members of Shakespeare's fandom and the 1769 Jubilee in Stratford-upon-Avon was the first "conference" of this imagined group. Fandoms are not recent phenomena. What is new is their organization and diffusion through new media such as the internet.

Fandoms are communities of consumers and producers. Fans absorb and spread. Besides consuming the primary cultural products, the ones that originated the fandom, fans produce derivative material. A segment that has become very popular in fan culture is the production of "fan fiction" or "fanfic," stories written by fans, expanding, modifying or retelling official accounts of the universe of their object of interest. Fan fiction is simultaneously appropriation and adaptation; it is like the fans' dialect inside the original language. To a certain extent, fan fiction is responsible for the afterlife of several cultural objects. So, fan culture increases *palimpsestic entropy*. As Jenkins et al. state, "if it doesn't spread, it's dead" (*Spreadable Media* 1).

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[79] According to Jenkins, "fan culture" is the "culture that is produced by fans and other amateurs for circulation through an underground economy and that draws much of its content from the commercial culture" (*Convergence Culture* 285).

[80] Cosplay (costume + roleplay) is the reproduction by fans of the outfit and/or features of a character. For example, fans of *Star Wars* usually wear costumes that mimic the Jedis, Stormtroopers, and other characters from the saga.

In the Shakespearean palimpsest, we have countless examples of *Art solutions* that are analogous to the concept of fan produced content. Nahum Tate's *King Lear*, the Lambs' rewritings of the plays in prose, and some of the Pre-Raphaelites' paintings are just some examples of this secondary production of material. The greatest difference between this Shakespearean related content and the fan fiction produced nowadays is their connection to the dynamics of high and mass cultures. Apart from that, both types of content promote the consumption and circulation of derivate material.

All the world is really a stage. Despite previous considerations of their role, the audiences have become important players. They are responsible for what can be described as "an emerging hybrid model of circulation, where a mix of top-down and bottom-up forces determine how material is shared across and among cultures in far more participatory (and messier) ways" (Jenkins et al. *Spreadable Media* 1). It is the *entropy* of reception in which perceptions become exercises of production that influence further receptions. Jenkins et al. summarize my point:

> This shift from distribution to circulation signals a movement toward a more participatory model of culture, one which sees the public not as simply consumers of preconstructed messages but as people who are shaping, sharing, reframing, and remixing media content in ways which might not have been previously imagined. And they are doing so not as isolated individuals but within larger communities and networks, which allow them to spread content well beyond their immediate geographic proximity. (*Spreadable Media* 2)

(Re)production is the pulse of *entropy*, i.e. coexistent variations in an *Art solution* and/or palimpsest. What is special about our historical moment is the *entropic* dance of production and reception, a phenomenon that blurs the borders between high and mass cultures.

### 5.4. Showing How a King May Go a Progress Through the Guts Of a Beggar

The border between high and popular culture is a frail line easily shaken by Shakespeare. In Hamlet's words, "A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, and eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm" (IV. 3. 25-6). The Danish Prince illustrates how social constructions are transitory and vulnerable. Likewise, the Shakespearean legacy contributes to question cultural classifications. In the era of digital media, Shakespeare is the synonym of *entropic* reception. His fluidity respects no cultural fringe. What we have today are varied *concentrations* of the "Bard" in different *Art Solutions*. Higher *concentrations* indicate proximity to the content produced during his time. Audiences' access to these higher *concentrations* may happen through random paths. In this section, I provide two possible scenarios to support this point.

Fandoms are interesting phenomena because they can be, at the same time, closed communities and portals to other fandoms and cultural objects. Since they are usually formed by individuals engaged in participation, it is not hard to picture the outcome of this behavior. In a hypothetical scenario, we can imagine a person who is part of the *Harry Potter* fandom. Besides reading all of the books, as a fan, this person also watches the filmic adaptations. Influenced by the cinematic universe of *Harry Potter*, the person becomes a fan of the main actors of the franchise and joins fandoms that follow their careers. One fine day, through a web search, the person finds out that Ralph Fiennes, who plays the role of the villain Voldemort in the *Harry Potter* movies, is in an action film called *Coriolanus*. The person decides to watch this film and, intrigued by the language, decides to look for its source and finds Shakespeare's texts. There it is: from *Harry Potter* to Shakespeare through some media and fandoms. This hypothetical scenario can be expanded to any fandoms in connection to actors Kenneth Branagh, Tom Hiddleston, and David Tennant. "Whovians," for example,

may join David Tennant's fandom and reach Shakespeare through RSC[81] *Hamlet* or *Richard II*, both starring Tennant in the main role, or *Digital theatre* production of *Much Ado about Nothing*. Multiple similar scenarios are possible. Shakespeare gathers people to his own fandom through other fandoms. Mia Gosling's comics and Ian Doescher's books, which play with Shakespearean plots and style, could figure as productions of fan culture.

Besides the possibilities to reach higher *concentrations* of Shakespeare through fandoms, we have metonymic paths. Admirers of the above mentioned works of Doescher and Gosling may reach Shakespeare through these less *concentrated solutions* of his works. Adaptations, appropriations, allusions, quotes, and several types of references to Shakespearean works are metonymic invitations to reach higher *concentrations* of the "Bard." We can describe another hypothetical scenario to support this point. Let's suppose someone is watching the film *Star Trek: Beyond* (2016) and hears the injured Mr. Spock quote Shakespeare's *Measure For Measure*, "The miserable have no other medicine / But only hope" (III. 1. 2-3). The person checks the reference to better understand Mr. Spock's meaning and decides to read the play. From a highly *dissolved concentration* of Shakespeare, a single quote, one moves to the literary pieces. Obviously, in both hypothetical scenarios described in this section, personal volition in the forms of interest and curiosity are the prompting factors to reach higher *concentrations* of Shakespeare. The point is to show the thin line between items classified as mass culture, in which Shakespeare appears in lower *concentrations*, and the highly *concentrated solutions* claimed to be items of high culture.

The outcome of accessing Shakespeare through these cultural roads is the way one may perceive and interpret the Shakespearean content. The roads of popular culture contribute to erase the image of the "old Bard" with a refined speech, distant from our reality, and hard to understand. It is easier to familiarize with Shakespeare through an already

[81] RSC (Royal Shakespeare Company)

familiar content. One does not learn Greek by starting to read the *Odyssey*; it is necessary to be familiar with the language prior to the attempt to enjoy Homer's work. Similarly, lower *concentrations* of Shakespeare in contemporary *Art solutions* prepare audiences to enjoy higher *concentrations*. Instead of seeing a four-century-old text, one may see its thematic connection to contemporary issues. Then, the two-way street of interpretation is open for business, i.e. one can read Shakespeare under contemporary perspective in the same way Shakespearean texts can aid the understanding of contemporary issues. As we have seen in chapters 3 and 4, hypertexts have the potential to introduce layers of interpretation.

### 5.5. The Layman Doth Protest Too Much, Methinks

Cultural producers have already realized the potential of "the familiar" to lure audiences. Broadcast Theater is still in a process of balancing elements – inherited from other media – in order to establish its singularity as a medium. This modeling process also considers the rising *entropy* in reception. Audiences are as varied as their consumption modes. There are different levels of engagement and participation. Consequently, audiences must also adapt to their own differences.

The dynamics of reception are still under experimentation and negotiation. It is not uncommon to have some tensions. The following account by Rachael Nicholas provides an example of these tensions:

> I enter the cinema, sit down and get out my phone. As I pull out my headphones, another audience member walks past and says something about me to her companion, just loud enough for me to hear. It's about my phone and it isn't complimentary. I open the National Theatre Backstage app and navigate to the *Coriolanus* digital programme, swiping across to find the

> 'audio-commentary' section. Obeying the 'Notes on Use' I switch my phone to flight mode. Before the features begin, the cinema screen displays instructions that app users should start their commentaries. I press play. If I'm honest, I feel a little bit smug.
>
> *Coriolanus*, Encore Screening, Donmar Warehouse/NTLive, 24 September 2015, Personal Account. (79)

Clearly intended to tech-savvy members of the audience who, accustomed to "extra content" of films, look for more information on the production and a more participatory experience, Nicholas informs us about the National Theatre Backstage app:

> As well as production and rehearsal photographs, trailers, and programme notes, the programme contained an 'audio commentary', designed to be listened to through the user's personal devise alongside the Encore screening. The first time such a feature had been made available, the app invited audiences to join in with the 'experiment' and described the commentary as 'a world first for stage and screen'. (79-80)

Aware of the appeal of extra material, National Theatre invested in this app. Unaware of the existence of the app, other members of the audience censured the use of headphones in the cinema. Their "protest" is an attempt to educate another member of the audience, but it reveals their own ignorance. Paraphrasing Gertrude in *Hamlet*, "the layman doth protest too much." After all, "A fool thinks himself to be wise, but a wise man knows himself to be a fool" (*As You Like It* V. 1. 27-8). The point is that these two situations – awareness and unawareness – demonstrate the progression of broadcast theater as a medium concerning reception.

How do we negotiate these tensions among audiences? A possible course of action is to avoid value judgment and support exchange. Different types of audience can benefit from

interaction. Multiple personal backgrounds enrich interpretation in the same way multiple productions of the same play add meaning to Shakespeare's text. All contributions must be welcome; otherwise, audiences exemplify Celia observations in *As You Like It*, " . . . for since the little wit that fools have was silenced, the little foolery that wise men have makes a great show" (I. 2. 70-2). In my view, there is no proper way to appreciate Shakespeare. Likewise, there is no proper way to reach for Shakespeare. It does not matter if one connects to Shakespearean texts by a fandom or a lecture, in lower or higher *concentrations*. For members of the "Shakespearean fandom," what matters is that he continues to be an active *solute*. In Janet H. Murray's point of view:

> As I watch the yearly growth in ingenuity among my students, I find myself anticipating a new kind of storyteller, one who is half hacker, half bard. The spirit of the hacker is one of the great creative wellsprings of our time, causing the inanimate circuits to sing with ever more individualized and quirky voices; the spirit of the bard is eternal and irreplaceable, telling us what we are doing here and what we mean to one another. […] Just as the computer promises to reshape knowledge in ways that sometimes complement and sometimes supersede the work of the book and the lecture hall, so too does it promise to reshape the spectrum of narrative expression, not by replacing the novel or the movie but by continuing their timeless bardic work within another framework. (10)

As producers or consumers, through old or new media, in higher or lower *concentrations*, all contributions are valid. The expert in a field is the layman in another field. Therefore, audiences should embrace *entropy* instead of fighting it.

# Conclusion

O let not virtue seek
Remuneration for the thing it was;
For beauty, wit,
High birth, vigor of bone, desert in service,
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumnating Time.
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin,
That all with one consent praise new-born gawds,
Though they are made and moulded of things past,
And give to dust that is a little gilt
More laud than gilt o'erdusted.
(*Troilus And Cressida* III. 3. 169-79)

The study of intermedial phenomena has been surrounded by controversy since its early years. Currently, the wide scope of intermediality includes contributions from different fields of study, adding to the description of intermedial phenomena. This plurality of theoretical approaches is not free of conflict, which impairs the understanding of concepts. The observation of the intermedial processes in parallel with natural phenomena may clarify our perception. We notice that man-made phenomena are subject to the notions connected to natural phenomena. Human beings have the tendency to stratify knowledge – even attributing levels of importance to different fields. Besides aiding the understanding of intermedial processes, the parallel between natural and man-made manifestations disturbs prejudicial

views regarding different academic areas. After all, philosophy teaches us that human, exact, and biological sciences are branches of the same tree.

Medium has a dualist composition, i.e. form and content, the association between the materiality of the channel and a message that results from volition. Our communication is made through media regardless of our awareness of the fact. Likewise, we interact with several substances under the term "solutions" in our everyday lives. Thus, as my primary objective, this dissertation has demonstrated the practicality of building an analogy connecting media and chemical solutions in order to better understand intermedial processes, for media *dissolve* messages in the same way solvents dissolve solutes. There are more in common between a cup of coffee and an adaptation of *Hamlet* than are dreamt of in our prejudiced categorizations. The dissolution of coffee powder and sugar by water is comparable to the *dissolution* of Shakespeare's words by film, for example. The concentration of the solutes determines the aspect of the solution. High concentrations of coffee powder dissolved in water make a strong beverage. High *concentrations* of Shakespeare in a film make it more authoritative, closer to the original. In both cases, the amount of solute and the type of solvent depend on external factors, that is to say, the agent involved in the production of the solution and possible environmental influences – what I address as extra-compositional features.

Although any artist could support my analogical construction, I chose Shakespeare because of his importance in the Western canon. His universal and atemporal appeals are controversial, but it is undeniable that he is still a powerful artistic source. Some scholars share Emer O'Toole's view[82] that Shakespeare's long-lasting influence is a result of imperialism, a cultural homogenization promoted by the British Empire. I am not trying to

[82] Emer O'Toole is associate professor at Concordia University, in Canada. Her article, "Shakespeare, Universal? No, It's Cultural Imperialism," published in *The Guardian*, defends British imperialism as the reason of Shakespearean influence. Link: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/may/21/shakespeare-universal-cultural-imperialism

disagree with O'Toole, but I have to question: why Shakespeare? Why not Francis Beaumont or Thomas Middleton? What is special about Shakespeare that made him the "poster playwright" of cultural imperialism? Neema Parvini[83] has a suitable explanation:

> In the way that he wrote characters, Shakespeare seems to have understood, implicitly, what modern psychology has found: that human beings have a habit of making decisions based more on their intuitions and emotions than on their cognitive reasoning. As a corollary, I believe that this aspect of human thinking is broadly speaking transhistorical; that is a universal. ("What Did Shakespeare Understand About the Human Mind?")

Human beings are not flat characters; the roundness of human psychology is not easily framed. Presumably, the set of intuitions and emotions is what we understand as human nature, the core of what is human. Cognitive reasoning may develop with time, but what really governs human decisions is immutable. Consequently, by working with the immutable part of human psyche, Shakespeare remains timeless and universal.

My choice to use Shakespearean material to illustrate my analogy is a two-way road in which Shakespeare exemplifies my model and my study sheds some light on Shakespeare. As an artistic alchemist, the playwright extracted and modified elements from his sources in order to apprehend the complex essence of human beings. The Shakespearean transmutation has invited subsequent experiments, or hypertexts, over time. Each derivative *Art solution* is a particular "transmutation," (re)working Shakespeare's original elements. Additions to the Shakespearean palimpsest are, at the same time, *dissolutions* of the original *concentration* and hypertextual interpretations of hypotexts. Potential *dissolutions* have internal dynamics, a dance of elements with its own level of *entropy*, causing disturbance in the Shakespearean

[83] Parvini's 2015 book, *Shakespeare and Cognition: Thinking Fast and Slow through Character*, elaborates on the psychoanalytical analysis of Shakespeare's characters "with particular reference to the work pioneered by Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky on dual-process theory, cognitive biases and heuristics" (viii). As a result, Parvini delivers some insights regarding Shakespeare's universality. The article I quote here summarizes the ideas presented in the book.

palimpsest, i.e. *palimpsestic entropy*. The introductions of Shakespeare's hypotexts and their hypertexts in the sections of chapters 3 and 4 were descriptions / analyses of possible readings that generate *entropy* by preserving or discarding elements.

The political content of *Coriolanus* and the gender conflict in *Much Ado About Nothing* attest to the relevance of Shakespeare in contemporaneity, fulfilling my secondary aim. The four-century plays supply examples of actions that do not take cognitive reasoning – in the sense of logical thinking – into consideration when making decisions. In *Coriolanus*, the protagonist is pure emotion and no reasoning. The Roman soldier serves his own emotions in a behaviorist cycle mostly controlled by his mother. Martius despises members of his own community because of social hierarchy, an artificial mode of stratification, for there is no natural mark indicating the social class of the citizens. The plebeians, in their turn, elect Coriolanus as consul despite knowing of his aversion to them. The inertia in the play is caused by this lack of cognitive reasoning.

In *Much Ado*, the artificiality of gender roles governs social relations. Based on the beliefs that women and men should have specific conducts, the characters give in to their emotions instead of reasoning about events. The men's anxieties regarding women's conjugal fidelity impair their reasoning and mistakes are made – almost costing the lives of male and female characters. Claudio nearly kills Hero; Benedick nearly kills Claudio.

Unfortunately, in terms of power relations, human behavior in contemporaneity is relatable to the situations and mistakes in both plays. Even in a Latin American country, geographically and culturally far from Britain, we can observe the echo of these Shakespearean situations concerning politics and gender roles. Cognitive reasoning may evolve, but emotions remain the same. This is the formula for Shakespeare's universality and timelessness. As Parvini summarizes:

> In short, he [Shakespeare] understands people: how they think and feel; and how, so frequently in life, they come up short of their social, ideological and religious expectations. Like Kahneman, he can see that our thinking is so often lazy, short-sighted, and illogical. He seems, implicitly, to have understood heuristics, which is the study of how people think, and gives us many examples of these thought processes in action. ("What Did Shakespeare Understand About the Human Mind?")

Therefore, even though the human mind is an *entropic* mechanism, it is also predictable.

One can say that reasoning constitute the processes of interpretation – that does not exclude emotions of the way one might see the world and read art. My point is that cognitive reasoning stimulates exercises in perception and analysis that change from time to time, according to the cognitive development of a person / social group; the emotional system is more inherent, stationary. The association of logic and emotion constitutes human psyche (subjectivity) and the balance between these parts is directly involved in choices. It is not different in the production of *Art solutions*. Different subjectivities create different *Art solutions*; hypertexts, derivative *Art solutions*, are the results of these varied choices. In the same way, perceptions and interpretations are subjective occurrences. Thus, either in the production or in the analysis of an object, the primary cause of *entropy* is subjectivity.

Each *Art solution* introduced in this dissertation is a variation, an *entropic* movement. In my view, as a *solvent*, broadcast theater is potentially the peak of *entropy*, for it is not a mere remediation; it is a complex hybrid configuration still in development. The cultural baggage of a Shakespearean production in broadcast theater has high *entropic* potential. There are so many choices involved in the production and reception of *Art solutions* of broadcast theater that are nearly impossible to be mapped. I tried to give an idea of the *entropic* journey of Shakespearean *Art solutions* over the centuries, culminating in this

manifestation that, at the same time, resonates Shakespeare's original *solute* and employs contemporary technological advancements. Considering Shakespeare's palimpsest, it is as if broadcast theater follows a spiral movement that returns to the same point (theater) in a different level (screens), linking the beginning and the current stages of the Shakespearean palimpsest. This hybrid manifestation balances old ("original" *Art solutions*) and new (hypertextual *Art solutions*) in terms of culture and technology.

The spiral equilibrium of broadcast theater instigates the expansion of the analogy attempted in this dissertation. Is it possible to reach a state of maximum *entropy* in culture? What would Shakespeare's palimpsest be like in a state of maximum *entropy*? The attempt to answer these questions takes us back to the understanding of entropy in physics and the concept of "heat death." According to Fred C. Adams and Gregory Laughlin:

> The concept of the heat death of the universe has troubled many philosophers and scientists since the mid-nineteenth century when the second law of thermodynamics [entropy] was first understood (e.g., Helmholz, 1854; Clausius, 1865, 1868). Very roughly, classical heat death occurs when the universe as a whole reaches thermodynamic equilibrium; in such a state, the entire universe has a constant temperature at all points in space and hence no heat engine can operate. Without the ability to do physical work, the universe "runs down" and becomes a rather lifeless place. (47)

In other words, energy in the form of heat is what stimulates random movements of the particles of a solution. If we insert an amount of energy in a system, as time passes, this energy is distributed among all its particles and after covering all possible random states, the system reaches equilibrium. Imagine adding hot coffee to a cup of cold milk. As the components interact, the mixture becomes gradually homogenous in terms of molecule interaction and temperature. Ultimately, we have a mixture that is neither coffee nor milk, in

a warm temperature. Without external interference, there are no other possible states to this solution; it reached its maximum entropy, i.e. equilibrium.

Considering the idea that "all mediation is remediation," we find that our current cultural production is "repetition with variation." Theoretically, cultural production would reach maximum *entropy* if all variations were exhausted. Shakespeare would reach all possible forms of diffusion; his palimpsest would suffer a paradoxical "death by abundance." However, despite the theoretical possibility, the probability of Shakespeare's palimpsest reaching maximum *entropy* depends on extra-compositional forces: human beings. The production of *Art solutions* relies on the constitution of *solutes* and *solvents*, which, in turn, result from human volition. Historical, social, and cultural contexts in association to human cognition are the driving forces of cultural production. Time takes care of contextual changes along with the birth of human beings, new cognitions shaped by biological and environmental features, internal and external influences. This "human renewal" assures possible Shakespearean afterlives. Therefore, the Shakespearean palimpsest will reach maximum *entropy* when humans lose interest in Shakespeare, perhaps meaning that we have lost interest in ourselves.

In terms of reception, a state close to maximum *entropy* would mean the equilibrium involving varied audiences and consumption modes. Segregationist classifications such as high and low cultures would no longer be used. Human beings would focus on the production and appreciation of *Art solutions* with a fluid division between producers and consumers, for the cultural role would be a matter of choice. Cultural judgment would give place to cultural exchange. This scenario may seem utopic, but its seeds have already been planted.

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