

The observable effects of constraints identified in the conditions attending the adaptation of *Othello* by Frantic Assembly, *Macbeth* by The Pantaloons and Twelfth Night by Filter Theatre.

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## **Abstract**

The adaptation of Shakespeare's plays in England continues to be complicated by his canonical status. This has led to the authority and value of productions of Shakespeare's plays being assessed in terms of their fidelity or otherwise to the text, original performance conditions, and even Shakespeare's intentions. The growing influence of performance studies offers a new way to examine adaptations by focusing on adaptation as a creative process as well as a product. This opens up opportunities to examine how such ideological constructions of Shakespeare's textual authority impact on the adaptation process.

Whilst productions of Shakespeare's plays by national, building-based companies such as the RSC and Shakespeare's Globe have received considerable analysis, those created by small, touring companies are less frequently considered. These small, non building-based companies have developed distinctive interdisciplinary artistic practices informed by creating and adapting a wide range of work for touring. This makes how such companies negotiate the dominant ideologies and dramatic conventions associated with performing Shakespeare in England at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century of particular interest.

Employing textual and performance analysis, interviews with the adapters, and reference to reviews, this thesis examines the observable effects of constraints on three adaptations, understood here in both semantic senses as process and product. In doing so, it asks what are the observable effects of constraints on adaptation by the selected English touring companies, and how

do these constraints interact with each company's aesthetic approach to create meaning?

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## List of Accompanying Material on CD

Bown, V., Pollard, N., and Poulatsidou, A., (2010) *Filter's Twelfth Night: Reflections on Performances at Exeter Northcott, October 2010*. Interviewed by Sarah McCourt. Exeter, 27 October.

Dimsdale, O. and Roberts, F. (2010b) *Filter's Adaptation of Twelfth Night*. Interviewed by Sarah McCourt. Bath, 17 June.

Holloway, J. (2009) *Red Shift's Much Ado About Nothing*. Interviewed by Sarah McCourt. London, 16 December.

Purcell, S. (2010) Interviewed by Sarah McCourt. Stratford Upon Avon: 1 August.

Rocha-Allan, J. (2010) *Frantic Assembly's Adaptation of Othello*, Interviewed by Sarah McCourt. London: 11 December.

# Introduction

## *Research Context*

Comparison theories of adaptation, which focus on the fidelity of an adaptation to its source-text, have been criticised for subordinating both the adaptation process and resulting product (Cardwell, 2002, pp.20-25; Corrigan, 2007, pp.31-3; and Stam, 2000, pp.54-62). Such concerns with fidelity also serve to reinforce the authority of the literary text over other modes of production, such as performance, by limiting analysis to what has been lost from the source text<sup>i</sup> (Tanselle, 1976, p.167; Bowers, 1950, p.20). As Thomas M. Leitch, in his study of adaptations to film observes:

By organising themselves around canonical authors, they [studies of adaptation] establish a presumptive criterion for each new adaptation. And by arranging adaptations as spokes around the hub of such a strong authorial figure, they establish literature as a proximate cause of adaptation that makes fidelity to the source text central to the field  
(2007, p.3).

In performance, Shakespeare's canonical status<sup>ii</sup> has engendered concerns with fidelity not only to the text, which is inaccurately represented as a stable source, but also to reconstructed original performance conditions, and even to Shakespeare's intentions. This final position is often justified through references to the spirit of the text. The variation in the nature of such claims to Shakespeare's authorization indicates the extent to which notions of fidelity permeate the cultural politics of Shakespeare production and adaptation (Kidnie, 2008; Pittman, 2011; and Worthen, 1997). These cultural politics have made appropriation of Shakespeare as both playwright and play text of continuing interest to cultural materialists. As Alan Sinfield notes, 'Shakespeare

is one of the places where ideology is made' through multifarious interactions between dominant, oppositional, and emergent cultures (1985a, p.131).

Developing the comparative model through reference to changing historical contexts, cultural materialist approaches consider how adaptations of Shakespeare's plays reflect changing social, political, and cultural attitudes towards both the author and his plays (Dobson, 1992; Marsden, 1995; and Taylor, 1989)<sup>iii</sup>. Barbara Murray's historical account is notable here for its rather different focus on how performance conditions inform adaptation. By combining the comparative model with a detailed consideration of the development of staging techniques in the Restoration period, Murray analyses how the new focus on visual spectacle, increased use of music, and new vocal delivery styles gave rise to a variety of amendments to language, the introduction of stage directions, and new scenes (Murray, 2001, pp.17-37).

A combination of changes in literary theory, and the growing influence of performance studies, has led to increased interest in examining adaptation as a creative process. Bibliographic studies such as Peter Shillingsburg's focus on creative writing as a process that produces multiple drafts from changing authorial intentions (1996, p.35), and Jerome McGann's foregrounding of the editing process as 'meaning-constitutive' (1991, p.12) have served to destabilise the once privileged authoritative "ideal" text. In performance studies, W.B. Worthen's focus on redefining the relationship between dramatic text and performance has moved away from paradigms that positioned performance as an interpretation, or fulfilment, of the text. Drawing on Joseph Roach's theory of surrogation in which 'performance [...] stands in for an elusive entity that it is not but that it must vainly aspire both to embody and replace' (1996, p.3), Worthen suggests that meaning is not pre-determined by the dramatic text, but is

realised as a result of performance (1998, p.1101). As such, performance and the dramatic text exist in a series of interactions, in which each iteration is influenced by the new social and cultural conditions within which it is produced. Worthen takes this further to demonstrate that the text is not interpreted by, but rather used in conjunction with other cultural communication systems such as design and acting, which in turn can be used to create excess meaning through 'signs of fidelity or resistance' to the text (1998, p.1102). In this way, Worthen concludes, 'dramatic performance, far from being authorized by its script, produces the terms of its authorization in performance' (1998, p.1104).

Redefinition of the relationship between dramatic text and performance is also occurring in the rehearsal room. The use of collaborative devising as a means of adapting text-based works is increasingly eroding the separation of playwriting from the production process<sup>iv</sup>. In her discussion of the variety of writing practice that takes place in contemporary theatre, Cathy Turner notes this shift in the work of directors such as Robert Lepage, 'a director who produces texts', and Kneehigh Theatre Company's collaboration with writer-performers such as Carl Grose (2010, p.80). Emma Govan, Helen Nicholson and Katie Normington (2007, pp.87-101), David Lane (2010, pp.171), and Duška Radosavljević (2013, pp.56-84) go further, pointing to the use of devising and collaborative rehearsal processes to adapt existing texts, thus extending beyond writer-led models of adaptation, to performance-based approaches that involve, or are even led by, collaborative work. In this thesis, I focus exclusively on theatrical adaptations that do not involve a writer in the process, since detailed analyses of playwrights' adaptations of Shakespeare have been undertaken elsewhere<sup>v</sup>. Instead, the adaptations that I will discuss have developed from a range of rehearsal practices, from the director-led approach

of The Pantaloon's' adaptation of *Macbeth* (2010), to the collective approach employed by Filter Theatre, who applied techniques drawn from their devised work to *Twelfth Night* (2006-2010). My first aim, then, is to examine the working conditions and practices of the selected companies, reflecting on the observable effects of these on the performed adaptations. Secondly, by concentrating exclusively on theatrical adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, I will extend this into an exploration of how the selected companies negotiate the dominant ideologies and dramatic conventions associated with performing Shakespeare in England at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### ***Research Questions***

In focussing on the application of the working practices of small, non-building based touring companies to adapting a text, this thesis builds on, and augments the work of recent publications documenting contemporary theatre making processes<sup>vi</sup>. Many of these small English touring companies are experienced creators and adapters of a range of work, employing distinctive artistic practices that appeal to their regular audiences. This makes the application, alteration, and reception of these practices of particular interest when applied to adapting Shakespeare, especially in cases where it is the company's first use of a Shakespeare play, such as Frantic Assembly's adaptation of *Othello* (2009), and Filter Theatre's *Twelfth Night* (2006). This research interrogates the observable effects of constraints identified in the conditions attending the adaptation of *Othello* by Frantic Assembly, *Macbeth* by The Pantaloon's and *Twelfth Night* by Filter Theatre.

In the thesis, I will examine the material and ideological constraints that these three non-building based touring companies encountered in the process

of adapting a play by Shakespeare for touring with a small cast. In doing so I will consider how each company's negotiations of such constraints in the process of adaptation have been productive of observable effects on the adaptation product.

The questions that I am concerned with here are:

- What are the relationships between the working practices and distinctive aesthetics developed by selected small, non-building based, English touring theatre companies, and the conditions within which they operate?
- Which constraints identified within each company's process have the greatest observable impact on the adaptation?
- How do these constraints inform representations of the adaptation constructed in public discourses?

Discussing the cultural politics of Shakespeare production, John Russell Brown advocated studying the growth of small-scale, autonomous companies since 'in their small world, these theatres are starkly and boldly opposed to the processes which create expensive and durable productions with recognizable brand images' (1995, p.19). Brown admits to over-simplification in employing this binary opposition. However, I found that the distinction did raise particular questions. Which aspects of dominant conventions of Shakespeare production did small companies feel it necessary to challenge, and why? What were the observable effects of these challenges on their adaptations? Perhaps, equally importantly, what processes did they not challenge? Was this an acceptance of the retained convention, either conscious or unconscious, or was it due to other constraints? Finally, by comparing the processes of several small-scale companies remaking Shakespeare, did any patterns in these challenges

emerge? Whilst the work of large, building-based institutions such as the RSC, the National Theatre, and Shakespeare's Globe still dominate analysis of Shakespeare production, there are a few notable exceptions (Escolme, 2005, pp.57-62; Lopez, 2004, pp.200-211; and Radosavljević 2013, pp.56-84). As Bridget Escolme has observed, there is a disproportionate focus in performance research on these national institutions, which is supported both by the availability of interviews in the national press, and the extensive archives linked to these organisations (2010, p.90). Arguing for greater focus on productions created by smaller companies, Escolme suggests that this would facilitate 'broader debate about the meanings produced in Shakespeare performance' (2010, p.90). Brown's binary model similarly points to the value of researching the processes that small, autonomous companies apply to Shakespeare, and the potential insights provided by reflections from within this sector of the industry into the cultural politics of Shakespeare production in England.

The *Theatre Assessment 2009* prepared by the Arts Council of England (ACE) noted an increase in small, independent companies collaborating with venues and other companies between 2002/3 and 2006/7. The report observed that such collaborations 'enabled the larger organisations to take more artistic risks' (ACE, 2009, p.37). The small companies also gained through access to the resources offered by these larger institutions. However, the report also noted compromises to the independence of these small companies, and the adjustment of working practices as negative characteristics of such collaborations (ACE, 2009, p.38). Analysis in this thesis of the observable effects of the working practices of selected small, non-building based companies on their performance work therefore also has potentially wider

applications for the funding and management of such collaborations within the theatre industry.

### ***Why Constraints?***

In her exploration of Goat Island's collaborative devising process, Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca observes how their employment of arbitrary limitations, what they term 'creative constraints', actively supports creativity by 'imposing a specific framework or set of boundaries within which to act' (2015, p.47). This link between constraints as supportive, even productive, of creative responses demonstrates why analyzing the observable effects of constraints generated by the specific conditions of production can inform our understanding not only of adaptation as a product, but also as a process. In this thesis I have drawn a distinction between material and ideological constraints. Material constraints refer here to limitations generated by the infrastructure used in the production of the adaptation. This includes all quantifiable resources such as finance, labour, transport, buildings, and construction materials. Ideological constraints are based here on Althusser's premise that ideas are continually being remade and renegotiated through social repetition (1998, pp.294-304). Whilst this separation of these two forms of constraint is artificial since, as Althusser observes, human actions give ideology material form (1998, pp.296-7). In this way, access to material resources is restricted or permitted through ideological practice. Despite this, the distinction of ideological constraint remains useful here where the constraint is less visible, and perhaps unconscious on the part of the enactor. This allows consideration of the impact of training for example in constraining otherwise apparently free choices made with regards to use of staging conventions or interpretation of a source text.

## ***Small, non-building based, English Touring Theatre Companies***

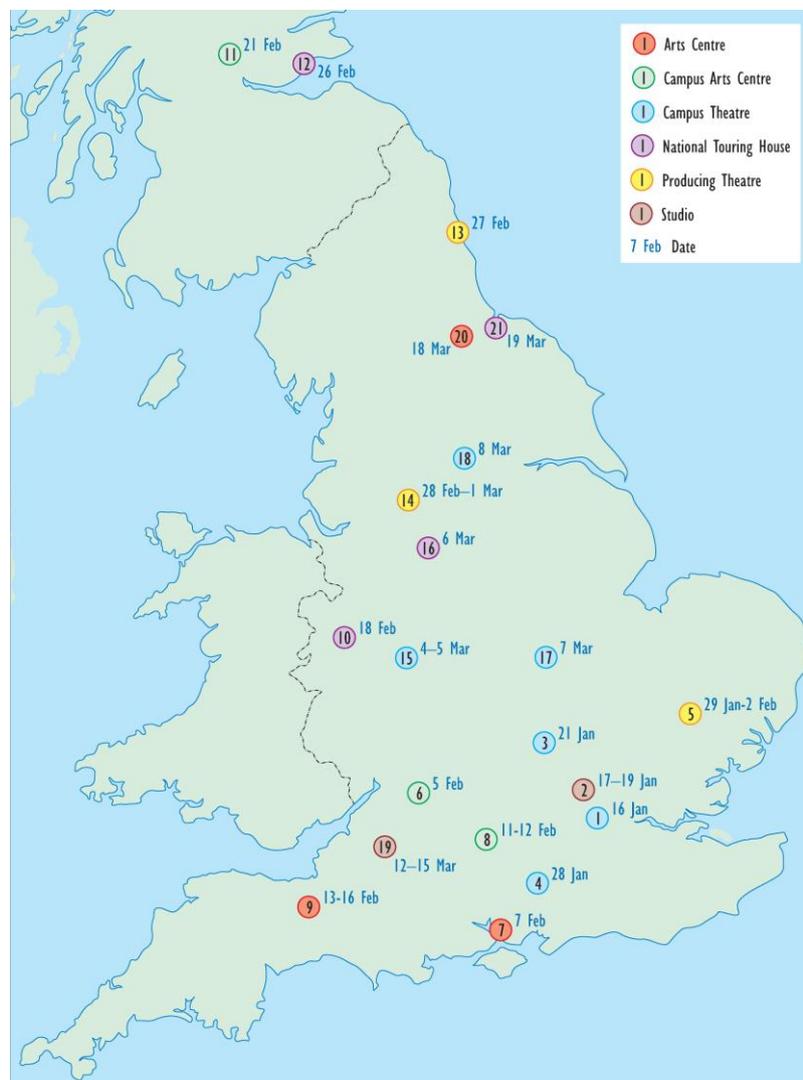
In 1986, The Cork Report recognised small-scale touring as a distinct sector defined by:

... small companies touring to studio theatres and community venues, some adapted to be theatres for a night or two. The same companies also tour to arts centres and college and university venues.

(para. 97)

ACE has since defined the scale of touring companies by the size of the venues that they visit. A small-scale company would therefore be one that toured venues with a capacity of up to 200 seats (Quince, 1998, p.678). However, in practice, such categories are porous. As Jonathan Holloway, Artistic Director of Red Shift explained, on tour 'you can go from small 80 seat art centre studios, right through at the other end of it to a place like the Blackpool Grand, which is nearly 2,000 seats.' (2009, p.20) An established small-scale touring company, Red Shift has been touring since 1982. Their spring 2008 tour of *Much Ado About Nothing*, shown in Figure I.1, clearly demonstrates Holloway's observation. Although two thirds of the twenty-one venues visited reflected those described by The Cork Report, including nine campus venues, four were national touring houses and three producing theatres, including Oldham's 580 seat Coliseum Theatre. As ACE admits, definitions of scale have become 'increasingly meaningless'; in particular, developments such as the 'growth in touring outside traditional venues' have called such classifications into question (2009, p.90). For the purposes of this thesis then, I have decided to focus on the size of the company, rather than the scale of the venues visited, drawing on the British Council's definition of small-scale companies as those that usually tour with '[l]ess than ten company members' (2009, np.). This effectively restricts the selection of adaptations to those with a cast of nine or less. Recent

studies of the casting practice for Shakespeare’s plays in the Elizabethan playhouse vary, but the smallest cast size suggested is fourteen.<sup>vii</sup> These surveys all assume that doubling will require offstage costume changes, however in the 21<sup>st</sup> century such doubling might be achieved, depending on the chosen aesthetic, through onstage role changes, textual alteration, or the use of technology. A cast size of nine or less, by precluding the option of achieving full casting through the expedient of cutting small roles, therefore makes the conventions that each company employs in response to this productive constraint of particular interest as an observable effect on the adaptation.



**Figure I.1**  
Red Shift’s Tour of *Much Ado About Nothing*

Funding is one of the most significant constraints on small, non-building based touring companies. In order to set the case studies within a meaningful economic context, I have therefore chosen to focus on adaptations created and toured nationally by English companies between 2006 and 2010. This brings all the companies and the venues or sites to which they toured, regardless of whether they received public funding or not, under the remit of ACE. The division of the Arts Council of Great Britain in 1994 has led to significant differences in funding strategies between the three new Arts Councils serving Scotland, England, and Wales. By focussing on English companies in this thesis, I am able to explore the impact of the policies pursued by ACE on three distinctly different small-scale organisations. Future development of this research might profitably focus on exploring the impact of different physical and ideological constraints on small-scale adaptations created within the remit of the Welsh and Scottish Arts Councils. The period I have selected, 2006-2010 covers the years between the closure of the Touring Department as part of cutbacks at ACE national office, and the establishment of a new Strategic Touring Programme in 2011. In these intervening years, a lack of unified strategy in assessing funding applications for touring resulted from the division of this responsibility between the nine regional offices (Merkin, 2010, p.96, and Arts Council England, 2009, p.91). The changes that occurred within the touring infrastructure during this period will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

## ***Methodology***

The starting point for this thesis was Linda Hutcheon's observation of the semantic duality inherent in the term adaptation, as both process and product

(2006, p.7). Hutcheon goes on to expand this into a definition of adaptation combining three different, but interlinked positions (2006, p.7). The first concerns adaptation as a product which, declared as an adaptation of one or more works, involves some form of transposition; a change of medium, viewpoint, or context. Secondly, Hutcheon identifies a further duality, characterising the process itself as both '(re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation' (2006, p.8). Here, the emphasis on the prefix highlights adaptation as both an act of repetition and of creation, thus adaptation involves 'repetition, but repetition without replication' (Hutcheon, 2006, p.7). Hutcheon's emphasis on creation challenges the limitations of fidelity-based criticism, which as a means of reinforcing the expressive superiority of one medium over another, focuses on the losses of meaning that can result from such transpositions. However, despite the creative freedom implied in Hutcheon's definition, adaptation also remains constrained by the requirement for some form of recognisable repetition of, or fidelity to, the source narrative. This recognition gives rise to Hutcheon's third position, that of the palimpsest experience of reception, which allows each spectator to make links to other adaptations of the source narrative. What Hutcheon's definition usefully illustrates is how each position, process, product, and reception, potentially influences the other two. As such, in order to analyse the observable effects of material and ideological constraints on an adaptation as a product, it is also necessary to examine not only the process of making the adaptation, but also its reception.

Jen Harvie notes in *Making Contemporary Theatre*, that in practice it is difficult to arrange to observe the full creative process of other practitioners (2010, p.1). In this respect, Harvie concludes, it is as often the practical difficulties of observing a process that might develop incrementally across

multiple locations or extended duration, as it is due to limitations on access to the rehearsal room imposed by the practitioners themselves (2010, pp.1-2). Here then, the material constraints of the creative process also impact on the process of the researcher, who for the same reasons is unlikely to be able to observe the impact of material and ideological constraints on acquiring funding, determining artistic approach, and planning touring schedules that occurs prior to rehearsals beginning. Max Stafford-Clark's account of how the ideas for Out of Joint's African *Macbeth* (2004) came together over a period of four years clearly demonstrates this. Stafford-Clark describes how a site-specific show by Theatre de Complicite in 2000 led him to consider staging *Macbeth* in a disused primary school (2007, p.218). However, material constraints such as the award of Arts Council funding to create new writing work, and the unavailability of actors that Stafford-Clark wanted for the project, led to dismissal of the idea. It was not until 2003, when Stafford-Clark was considering developing a play about the conflict in Africa that a biography, *Emma's War* by Deborah Scroggins, rekindled his interest in *Macbeth* (2007, pp.219-221). Scroggins account of aid worker Emma McCune's attempts to curb the more brutal practices, such as rape and kidnap, of her husband's Sudanese Christian militia, led Stafford-Clark to consider a similar background for Lady Macbeth. Hutcheon suggests that extratextual accounts such as Stafford-Clark's account, can usefully be studied to 'round out our sense of the context of creation' (2006, p.109). In pointing to the potential value of these extratextual accounts, Hutcheon does not advocate a return to limiting the text to a single authored meaning, such as that favoured by E.D. Hirsch Jr. in his influential essay *Validity in Interpretation* (1987, p.345). Instead her interest here is in uncovering the influences on the adapter's choices (2006, p.108). However,

there are considerable problems in drawing on the adapter's account of intention and process<sup>viii</sup>. Not least of these is ascertaining an accurate account, given that these are subject to change not only during the process itself, but also in post-production reflections. Therefore, as Hutcheon notes, it is necessary to compare any such statements of intention with the product produced. A further consideration for referring to such documents is the flow of such information between adapters and their audiences, particularly with the increased use of websites and social networking in addition to print-based marketing materials, newspaper interviews, and programme notes. Such extratextual documents therefore, not only provide information about the conditions of production, but also form part of the reception and interpretation context for the audience.

The purpose of this thesis, then, is not to provide a detailed examination of rehearsal room practice. Nor does it seek to provide a comprehensive overview of small-scale touring Shakespeare adaptations in the first decade of the twenty first century. Rather, through taking a cultural materialist approach to case studies that look at adaptations created in three clearly different conditions of production and reception, it seeks to examine the observable effects of the constraints created by these conditions. In order to undertake this, I have used Ric Knowles' method of performance analysis, materialist semiotics, as a guide (2004, p.12). By analysing theatrical signifying systems through a cultural materialist lens, this method focuses on revealing the ideological influences inherent in the specific conditions of production and reception. Knowles model, represents meaning as constructed by three interdependent points: the performance, and the material conditions at the points of production and reception<sup>ix</sup>.

Knowles paradigm is unusual, constructing the 'raw event – the performance' as an act of communication, but altering Stuart Hall's long established sender-message-receiver model with bi-directional arrows, as well as closing the triangle with bi-directional arrows between the conditions of reception and production (2004, p.3).

This allows readings of the production to reflect changes at any of the three points:

Productions mean differently in different geographical, architectural, historical, and cultural contexts. They change meaning as the world in and through which they are produced and received changes. Similarly (and simultaneously), changes in theatrical formations, relations, delivery systems, and modes of reception are themselves both produced by, and productive of, changes in the social formation itself (2004, p.202).

By viewing productions in this way, with available meanings altering in response to the specific contexts of production and reception, Knowles' paradigm analyses performances as socially constructed cultural events. This is particularly pertinent to adaptations created for touring, since a range of different reception conditions will affect them. It also prompts consideration of how the adaptation has been prepared for, and altered in response to, these continually changing circumstances.

Unlike other recently developed theories of performance as a socio-cultural event such as that expounded by Willmar Sauter, Knowles' methodology is drawn from performance analysis rather than reception studies. His subsequent reliance on reviews, his own reading of a performance, and occasional viewpoints from others where available, has led to criticism for neglecting to use methods to elicit the experiences of other audience members (Sauter, 2005, p.463 and Freshwater, 2009, p.33). Helen Freshwater (2009, p.34) illustrates the problem of relying on published reviews with National

Theatre director, Nicolas Hytner's observation in *The Observer* that 'the first-string critics of all the major daily papers [. . .] are male, white, over 50, and Oxbridge-educated.' (2007, np). Although, as theatre critic Lyn Gardner observes, there are now more women progressing from working as reviewers for listings magazines to writing for National newspapers, 'the profession remains male-dominated' (2007a, np). In addition to this limited demographic, as Freshwater notes, the extensive experience of theatre that critics acquire as a result of their work creates significant differences between their reading of an event, and those of an average theatre-goer (2009, p.35-6). Knowles himself recognises the narrowness of the responses he has chosen to draw upon, and uses them not as a detailed study of how each production was received, but rather to test his premise by providing 'evidence of meanings and responses that specific performances in particular locations made available' (2004, p.21).

The growth of social media has led to significant changes in the amount and type of publicly available responses to theatre productions over the past decade. Tina Mermiri's recent survey on theatre goers who booked online noted that 'one in five write reviews about shows they have seen, 17% of which do so on a regular basis' (2013, p.22). Social media was the most commonly used platform for review comments, with 93% using this format, whilst comments on press websites accounted for 32%, and event websites 31% (Mermiri, 2013, p.22). Many of these reviews and comments are likely to be cursory in nature; however blogs, which were used by 56% of those providing reviews, potentially allow for longer, more detailed reflections (Mermiri, 2013, p.22). Sites such as 'A Younger Theatre', which was set up with the aim of reflecting the viewpoints of people under 26 years old, offer the possibility of examining responses that go beyond the narrow demographic noted by

Freshwater. Similarly, comments left by theatregoers on press and theatre organisation websites offer the possibility of engaging with views from occasional theatre attendees. Whilst I have referred to some online reviews in this thesis, the lack of context about the reviewer and, at times, even the date or place of performance attendance, limits their usefulness. Like Knowles, I have therefore used them, together with newspaper reviews, as evidence of the breadth of commentary in the public domain about the adaptations studied. This evidence then provides both some sense of changes that occurred in performance throughout the tour, and highlighted moments from the performance that attracted most contention, indicating possible ideological struggle.

### ***Rational Choice Model***

My focus in this thesis on the ideological and material constraints that observably affect an adaptation is concerned with the influence of the conditions of both production and reception on choices made during the adaptation process. Following Knowles, I have drawn on my own observations of the adaptation in performance, as well as referring to available reviews and audience comments, in researching the three case studies that form the second part of this thesis. This analysis of the performance, cross-referenced with artefacts from the adaptation process where available, such as scripts and DVD's of earlier performances, is focused on recording the observable effects of ideological and material constraints on the adaptation. However, in order to interrogate my assumptions from this analysis, I departed from Knowles' approach by including interviews with the Artistic Directors, or where unavailable, the Assistant Director, of each company. These interviews are

particularly useful in ascertaining the beliefs and values that informed the adapters choices. Examining the process of decision-making, social science philosopher, Jon Elster, proposes a two stage 'rational-choice model' (1979, p.113). The first stage involves filtering possible actions by identifying constructional constraints, which Elster suggests can be attributed to four categories: 'physical, economic, legal and psychological' (1989, p.13). This results in a smaller number of practical options, which are then filtered a second time by the individual's beliefs and desires, with the intention of choosing the most advantageous option within the given constraints (Elster, 1979, p.113 and 1989, pp.30-1). Red Shift's Artistic Director Jonathan Holloway, discussing his choice to undertake *Much Ado About Nothing* with only six actors, provided a clear example of Elster's two stage filtering process:

Like so many things it's an amalgam of practical constraint and artistic aspiration. [. . .] There are certain peculiar things, like if you are Approved Management<sup>x</sup> you can tour with up to six people in the cast with one stage management, but if you go over six you then have to have two stage management, and so on and so forth. So, six tends to be a sort of magic number; it tends to be the outside edge of what most people can afford.

Then you look at the play, and before you commit to doing it you think: can this thing be made better in the way that I would like it to be by working within the physical constraints of what are available to me; or am I just disabling it by doing it? And I've found over the years that usually you know if it's going to work because you can find, when it comes to doubling, lines that go through it that link the characters that people are going to play. Sometimes they are linked by the absurdity of the way they change from one character to another; sometimes they're linked by a kind of appropriateness . . .

(Holloway, pp.18-19)

In this example, the legal and economic constraints give rise to physical constraints in terms of the size of cast possible for the production. In the second filter stage, Holloway therefore has to consider how to double roles in order to make optimum use of the cast that he has. Holloway's description of how he uses associations between the characters to guide his judgements

indicates that, once he has considered which characters it is physically possible to double, his beliefs, which have led to certain ways of interpreting the play, inform the final choices.

In *Ulysses Unbound*, Elster applies his rational-choice model to various art forms. In doing so, he identifies three conditions under which constraints are applied. External conditions that cannot be altered by the artist are classified as *imposed* constraints, whilst *chosen* constraints arise as a consequence of the artist adopting a particular genre or form. Finally, in the course of a project, the artist might conceive new or *invented* constraints (Elster, 2000, pp.175-6). Whilst imposed constraints might initially appear to deny the artist any control, as Jerrold Levinson notes, 'the artist is still faced with the choice between various attitudes that can be taken to the imposed constraint' (2003, p.236). Given certain constraints, the artist might also choose not to undertake the project.

There is considerable diversity between the companies selected for the case studies in part two, in terms of the allocation of decision-making authority within the adaptation process. However, all are organised along the lines of a core-and-pool structure. This limits the number of permanent staff to a small core, most commonly the artistic director(s) and administrative staff. Freelance creative associates employed on a project-by-project basis form the pool. I have therefore chosen to interview the Artistic or Assistant Director(s) due to their privileged knowledge of company operating constraints, as well as their greater involvement in the adaptation process, including the instigation and organisation of the process. My analysis of the adaptation in performance, together with interrogation of the available extratextual documents, informed the guides for these interviews, which focused on gaining a clear sense of the

constraints the interviewees believed to have had an impact on specific choices within the production. This range of methods enhances the validity of the qualitative research through between-method triangulation<sup>xi</sup>. It also ensures that in-depth study of the adaptation has been realised through analysis of multiple perspectives including those of the adapter(s), audience members and reviewers, as well as my own observations as a researcher.

### ***Structure of the Thesis***

Divided into two parts, the first section of this thesis establishes the research context. Taking as its starting point the dual nature of drama as text and performance, the first chapter examines the articulation of this binary relationship in adaptation studies, and the ideological positions inherent in these approaches. By its nature, adaptation demands an interdisciplinary approach, and therefore I draw here on theories from literature, film, and television studies, as well as theatre and performance studies. Chapter 2 provides a broad overview of the context within which small English companies were adapting Shakespeare's plays between 2006 and 2010. Through reference to cultural and education policy during this period, I examine the development of hegemonic ideological constraints, and by extension, material constraints, in relation to the performing arts and the reproduction of Shakespeare's plays as a multifaceted process.

The case studies that form the second part of this thesis, use the research framework developed in part one to examine three distinctly different touring adaptations: Frantic Assembly's socio-political adaptation of *Othello* (2008), The Pantaloons' popular theatre approach to an outdoor adaptation of *Macbeth* (2010), and Filter Theatre's collectively devised and staged *Twelfth*

*Night* (2006-2010). In the conclusion to this thesis, I discuss how the case studies revealed a creative interaction between constraints and artistic experimentation. This led to productive tensions within all three adaptation processes each of which, by retaining some of Shakespeare's verse, but revising the structure within which it was presented, foregrounded the problem of where we locate Shakespeare's value in contemporary performance.

## Chapter 1: Shakespeare and Theatrical Adaptation

In *Shakespeare and the Problem of Adaptation*, Margaret Jane Kidnie notes the distinct problems involved in considering drama in terms of adaptation since it is 'an art form that exists simultaneously in two media – text and performance' (2008, p.6). Whilst performances based on a dramatic text undeniably suggest a relationship between the text and the performance, the differences of medium prevent direct transference from one to the other. What complicates this position is that unlike, for example, a film adaptation of a novel where there is a change from the author's intended medium to a new one, a dramatic text contains the author's intention for it to be both read *and* performed. However, developing the text into a performance involves a further creative process, which might not include the playwright. Through exploration of the relationship between drama as text and performance, in this chapter I will provide an overview of theories of adaptation that form a basis to the study of adapting Shakespeare's dramatic texts within this thesis, and conclude by observing that far from being 'our contemporary' (Kott, 1974), staging Shakespeare's plays involves complex intercultural negotiations between the twenty-first century and the Renaissance. It is precisely because such intercultural negotiations take place within every reiteration of Shakespeare's plays in performance, that defining where adaptation begins and ends is problematic.

### ***From Comedy in Messina to Tragedy in Sarajevo***

*Much Ado About Nothing* concludes with Benedick's instruction to 'Strike up, pipers!' accompanied by the stage direction, '*Dance*' (5.4: 121). Red Shift's

adaptation, however, denied their audience this happy conclusion. The choice by director, Jonathan Holloway, to transpose the play to war-scarred Sarajevo in the 1990s', served to foreground the civil war against which the romantic comedy occurs. Reinforcing the impact of the civil war in the final moments of this adaptation, a volley of gunfire interrupted the celebratory dance. As Claudio and Benedick rushed to return fire, behind them Hero dropped lifeless to the floor, hit by a stray bullet (*Much Ado About Nothing*, 2007). Sitting in an audience, at least half of which appeared to consist of school groups, I wondered how many of the teachers watching were making a note to remind their pupils that this was Red Shift's, not Shakespeare's, ending that had so suddenly turned the comedy into a tragedy.

### ***Theatrical Adaptation***

Red Shift's transposition of *Much Ado About Nothing* to Sarajevo, together with the non-verbal alterations to the ending, radically altered the source text whilst retaining Shakespeare's language. In his overview of *Contemporary British Drama* at the turn of the millennium, David Lane identifies such alterations through staging practices as a distinct form of adaptation, different to that of the writer-adapter. Discussing Frantic Assembly's approach to *Othello*, which retained a cut version of Shakespeare's dialogue but transposed the action to a twenty-first century pub and created additional scenes through physical theatre, Lane concludes:

[r]econtextualisation of this kind is a method of stage adaptation that signifies a clear difference from literary adaptation: the restaging of a text can maintain fidelity to the spoken word [. . .] but draws on the plastic and three-dimensional nature of performance to alter its meaning  
(2010, p.161).

Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier similarly recognise the adaptive potential of performance techniques. Drawing on translation theories, they posit that the dramatic text is incomplete, and therefore subject to temporal recontextualisation as each staging reflects the context of production. As such, the multiple interpretive choices made in order to bring the text to stage are akin to translation, constrained by culturally specific staging conventions and meanings. Fischlin and Fortier conclude that '[a]daptation is, therefore, only an extreme version of the reworking that takes place in any theatrical production.' (2000, p.7) Linda Hutcheon, goes further, suggesting that 'every live staging of a printed play could theoretically be considered an adaptation in its performance', if viewed as a transfer of the story between media (2006, p.39). This approach, which challenges constructions of performance as interpretations of a text, derives from her classification of media according to their mode of reception. Hutcheon's premise here is that the printed text belongs to the mode of telling, requiring its readers to imagine the characters and narrative situations described. Performance, in contrast, belongs to the mode of showing, thus relying on the spectators to perceive and decode visual and aural systems of representation (Hutcheon, 2006, pp.22-3). However, Hutcheon recognises that the relationship between dramatic text and performance differs from other transfers between media. As such, she notes that only 'radical reinterpretations-in-performance' that provide 'extended critical and creative engagements with a particular text' are recognised as adaptations (2006, p.39).

These three accounts agree that theatrical production is an inherently adaptive process, despite radically different constructions of the relationship between the dramatic text and performance. However, the qualifications in the

latter accounts demonstrate reluctance to define all productions as adaptations. This reluctance implies a split is possible between adaptation as a process and as a product, depending on how different the production appears to be from the source text. As I will discuss later in this chapter, attempts to establish such boundaries are pertinent to this thesis in terms of the ideologies underpinning judgements of what is or is not considered to be Shakespeare in performance. Nonetheless, the degree to which the production differs from the source text neither alters its actual temporal distance from that text, or changes the relationship between dramatic text and theatrical production. Based on this premise, I maintain that all productions of Shakespeare's plays are adaptations.

### ***Dramatic Text and Performance***

The accounts of theatrical adaptation above relied on significantly different constructions of the relationship between dramatic text and performance. Martin Puchner identifies three ways in which this relationship can be categorised. The first views 'the dramatic text as a set of instructions given by a writer to actors', thus subordinating the work of theatrical production to the playwright's intentions (2011, p.293). Nelson Goodman's positioning of the dramatic text as a system of notation similar to a musical score is typical of examples offered in defence of this model (1969, pp.113-4). The focus in this model on accurate repetition of the playwright's instructions underpins constructions of adaptation as being unfaithful or deviant. However, as Howard S. Becker notes in his discussion of the communication of artistic conventions between artists, drama is more open to interpretation than music because 'a typical script specifies much less of what is to be done than a typical music score' (2008, p.61). Nelson Goodman recognises this openness to

interpretation noting that the same setting might be described in a number of ways, and conversely, that a description might give rise to quite different executions of the same setting. Since then, the fidelity of the set to the stage directions is difficult to ascertain, Goodman maintains that directions do not meet 'the semantic requirements for notationality' (1969, p.211). For Goodman then, only the dialogue can therefore be viewed as notation since it is possible both to reproduce the written dialogue in performance but also, crucially, to transcribe the dialogue from the performance (1969, p.211). However, this position does not adequately take into account that unlike a vocal score, the exact pace and pitch of vocal delivery is not included in dramatic text. Building on Goodman's observations, semiotician Marcus de Marinis stresses the importance of this 'total irreversibility of the path between the dramatic text and the performance' (1993, p.28). Because accurate transcription of the written stage directions from the performance is not possible, de Marinis contends that the dramatic text is not an inscription of its performance. Concluding that 'far from "containing" the performance, the dramatic text does not even provide its content', de Marinis exposes the inadequacy of this model of the relationship between dramatic text and performance (1993, p.29).

The interpretative work that takes place in staging a text is recognised in Puchner's second category, which defines the 'dramatic text as incomplete artwork' (2011, p.295). Whilst this model gives equal status to the work of the playwright and that of theatrical production, Puchner finds it unsatisfactory since it fails to account for dramatic texts that refuse to provide gaps for interpretation. Drawing on Gertrude Stein's *Dr. Faustus Lights the Lights*, Puchner examines how a dramatic text can not only refuse to provide instructions, such as designating a speaker to the dialogue, but also resist distinguishing between

directions and dialogue (2011, pp.296-301). Puchner concludes that since such a text leaves no guidance as to interpretation, it must be considered to be 'complete in itself' and therefore staging the text requires transposition and therefore adaptation (2011, p.304). Whilst I agree with Puchner's rejection of the construction of dramatic text as incomplete, I would argue that his assumption that the text precedes the performance fails to consider that adaptation can occur in both directions. This transformation from performance to dramatic text most obviously takes place where a devised production, such as Theatre de Complicite's *Mnemonic* (1999), is subsequently published in print. The stage directions in this dramatic text attempt to render not only the visual and aural aspects of the performance into words, but also the experience of the audience, '[w]e see *the bodies that look almost as if they are suspended in space*' (Theatre de Complicite, 1999, p.58). This invitation to the reader to engage in an act of imagination enables someone who has not seen the performance to engage with the dramatic text as a literary text that is complete in its own right, the stage directions effectively fulfilling a narrative role. Whether then, the dramatic text resists providing instructions, or attempts to describe the staging in detail, it remains a complete literary text. As such, adaptation is required in order to effect movement from one medium to the other, regardless of direction.

### ***Announcing Adaptation***

Regardless of medium, one of the characteristics associated with the recognition of an adaptation is that its status as such is announced (Andrew, 1984, p.97; Bryant, 2013, p.48; and Hutcheon, 2006, p.121). Red Shift acknowledged *Much Ado About Nothing* as 'adapted and directed by Jonathan

Holloway' in their publicity flyer (2007, np). However, theatrical adaptations of Shakespeare's plays are rarely explicitly publicised as adaptations. Platform 4 for example, having advertised their 2009 tour of *The Tempest* as a 'beguiling new adaptation' (2009a, np), altered their marketing strategy for the Spring 2010 tour to describe the production as 'a beautiful stripped down interpretation of the play that cuts to the heart of the work' (2009b, np). When I asked Catherine Church, the Artistic Director of Platform 4, about this change of approach she pointed out the difficulties of selling an adaptation, noting that 'a lot of schools and colleges want straight Shakespeare that is true to the text [. . .] if it's too poned around they get put off' (2011, np). As a practitioner, I have also encountered this concern from schools. Having advertised Restless Theatre's production of *The Merchant of Venice* (2012) as an adaptation, I received this query from Anna Johnson, The Bikeshed Theatre's Press and Marketing Manager:

I have just had an enquiry from a school in Torbay wanting to bring some students to watch it - however she needs to know how adapted it is from the original text as they will be writing about it for an exam.

(2012, np)

I will discuss the relationship between productions of Shakespeare's plays and the curriculum in more detail in Chapter 2. However, the commercial advantages of not announcing theatrical alterations as adaptation are clear. As a result, companies employ a range of means to reference the adaptive qualities of their production obliquely, whilst reinforcing their retention of Shakespeare's language, such as Filter Theatre's marketing of *Twelfth Night* as being 'by William Shakespeare' but 'created by Filter' (Filter Theatre, 2010a, cover)<sup>xii</sup>. Even where adaptation has openly been claimed, as in Bristol Old Vic's *Juliet and Her Romeo*, the marketing material stresses minimal alterations

to the text itself, noting that 'the production uses Shakespeare's text, but casts our lovers in their 80s' (2012, np). Instead, there is a focus on increasing the appeal of Shakespeare's plays through the application of the company's unique aesthetic, such as Filter's use of sound in *Twelfth Night*, or transposition of the text into recognisable modern contexts.

Despite this apparent anxiety to retain Shakespeare's words, contemporary directors frequently cut and revise the source text(s) chosen for their productions (Dessen, 2002, pp.64-7; Sinfield, 1982, pp.22-3; and Worthen, 1997, p.62). Worthen observes that most productions alter the text in some way, whether it is to achieve a given running time, to clarify moments of the plot, remove characters, or modernise the language (1997, p.61). In an interview with Ralph Berry, director Sir Trevor Nunn goes further by suggesting that in the case of plays such as *Hamlet*, 'the cutting virtually is the production. What you decide to leave in is your version of the play' (1989, p.79). Whilst Nunn acknowledges his alterations, he still argues that his work retains fidelity to Shakespeare's intentions. Justifying the inclusion of two speeches constructed from a combination of Elizabethan dramatists and his own writing in his 1972 production of *Titus Andronicus* for the RSC, Nunn claimed that 'they expanded and focused certain things that are intended in the original text but are presented obliquely. (1989, p.80). Nunn's hypothesised authorial intention based on his interpretation of the text, thus borrows both the authority of the playwright and the dramatic text. Whilst allusions to fidelity to Shakespeare's intentions and his writing might seem natural today, they are based on ideologically constructed discourses that, as I will discuss in the next section, would have been unfamiliar to Shakespeare and the Chamberlain's Men.

## ***Unstable Texts***

Reconstructions of early modern playhouse and printing practices necessarily remain incomplete, given the limitations of available evidence and the limitations of reading it from a 21st century perspective. However, such research does suggest the extent to which Elizabethan theatre practices differed from those with which we are familiar, as is clear in Stephen Orgel's account of dramatic text production:

The company commissioned the play, usually stipulated the subject, often provided the plot, and often parcelled it out, scene by scene, to several playwrights. The text thus produced was a working model which the company then revised as seemed appropriate. The author had little or no say in these revisions: the text belonged to the company and the authority represented by the text – I am talking about now about the *performing* text – is that of the company, the owners, not that of the playwright, the author.

(2002, pp.1-2).

Orgel's description is notable for two ideas: that the company revised the text to suit their needs, and that this company owned '*performing*' text had a clearly different status from an authorial text produced for the purposes of reading.

Based on the evidence of three pre-Restoration surviving copies of Shakespeare's performing texts, Orgel posits that it was common practice to cut and revise plays for performance (2002, p.237), and therefore significant differences exist between the dramatic texts we have inherited from the printing houses, and the plays that Elizabethans might have seen.

Andrew Gurr (1996, p.102) and Peter Thomson (1992, p.61) both suggest that economic forces were a significant factor in the organisation of the writing process, allowing for rapid production of new plays. Thomson notes that in addition to commissioning plays, the companies would also employ playwrights to revise an existing text, before remounting a production (1992,

p.62). Since the company owned the text, playwrights could not guarantee that they would revise their own play, thus leading to another form of temporally distanced collaborative practice. Tiffany Stern, citing references in the First Folio's stage directions to songs from Thomas Middleton's *The Witch* (1630), proposes that such revisions continued even after the playwright's death (2004, pp.60-1). Stern's work on rehearsal practices and actors parts, however, reveals the possible extent of the dramatic text's instability in Elizabethan theatre. The cue-script which provided players with only their lines and cues, rather than the whole scene, allowed piecemeal revision and development of the dramatic text during, as well as between, production runs (2000, pp.98-123). Through comparison of Q2 and F1<sup>xiii</sup> versions of *Hamlet*, as examples of publications based on pre- and post- performance texts, Stern demonstrates how alterations could retain cue lines, allowing only the relevant players parts to be changed. Such revisions, combined with the possibility of the players themselves altering their parts to reflect ideas developed in performance (Stern, 2000, pp.111-2), clearly respond to the demands of the theatrical marketplace.<sup>xiv</sup> However, they also made questions of ownership more complex when attempting to determine the boundaries between dramatic texts, particularly with regards to printing rights.

James J. Marino has persuasively demonstrated how stationers treated dramatic texts concerned with the same subject as a single play (2011, pp.116-128)<sup>xv</sup>. Marino's discussion is pertinent here for his consideration of how attributions of plays to William Shakespeare did not constitute recognition of a written text as the intellectual property of the author. As Marino observes publishing was 'a business which required long-term investments in inventory, because a single printing might not sell out for years' (2011, p.127). The

playing companies' practice of substantially revising existing texts could therefore prove detrimental to the stationers business if the newer version was subsequently published. In order to prevent this, stationers defined their rights as extending not to the language of an individual text, but to the plot, title, and in some cases, characters such as Falstaff which might appear in several texts (Marino, 2011, pp.121-127). Where multiple texts existed Marino notes that they:

might be attributed to a single writer, even if he only composed one of them. The writer's authority was not imagined as preceding or originating the work, which is to say that the writer was not imagined as a generative "author" at all. Any principle of "authorship" was applied retroactively, as a sign of shared, coherent identity between divergent texts.

(2011, p.116).

This disjunction between ascription to an author and the act of writing is distinctly at odds with twenty-first century notions of copyright. It also underlines the potential for conflict between the players and the stationers over the ownership rights of substantially revised texts. This appears to be the reason behind Lord Chamberlain's intervention on behalf of the players in 1619, forbidding members of the Stationers' Company from making any further publications of the King's Men's plays (Bristol, 1996, pp.48-9; Kastan, 1999, p.84-5, and Marino, 2011, pp.116-8)<sup>xvi</sup>. Thomas Pavier's attempt to publish a collection of ten plays attributed to Shakespeare was a casualty of this prohibition, leaving the market clear for negotiations over rights for eight of the plays to be included in a folio edited by players, John Heminges and Henry Condell.<sup>xvii</sup>

What was to subsequently become known as F1 has played a significant role in the construction of Shakespeare's authorship. The purpose, and therefore accuracy, of claims about both the author and his dramatic texts,

made in the introduction provided by Heminges and Condell have attracted much scrutiny. In particular, their assertion that Shakespeare's 'mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he vttered with that easinesse, that wee haue scarce receiued from him a blot in his papers' (Heminges and Condell, 1623, p.A3). This statement has variously been read as a form of customary tribute (de Grazia, 1991, pp.43-4), and a myth of 'pure, unmediated authorship' constructed for marketing purposes (Brooks, 2000, p.154). Heminges' and Condell's claims to be presenting a complete collection of Shakespeare's plays 'as he conceued the[m]' (1996, p.7), have also led to conjecture as to the way in which the folio might have been used to reinforce the player's property rights by denying links to earlier revised texts (Bristol, 1996, p.49 and Marino, 2011, p.132-4).

Whereas the intentions of Heminges and Condell in composing their introduction necessarily remain obscure, what emerges from this consideration of playhouse and printing practices is that whilst F1 posthumously collected thirty-six plays together under Shakespeare's name, the words it contains cannot with any confidence be argued to all have been penned by Shakespeare. Nor did Shakespeare during his lifetime possess the authority over these dramatic texts assumed by fidelity discourses. However, despite the overwhelming evidence of revision and collaborative writing practices that now exists, as will become evident in the three case studies that make up the second part of this thesis recourse to the notion of fidelity continues to be used to occlude, or in the case of reviewers, challenge the practice of theatrical adaptation. Discussing critical responses to Shakespeare adaptation, and in particular Red Shift's *Timon of Athens* (1989), Jonathan Holloway opined that:

when it comes to productions of Shakespeare there's a group of critics [. . .] who assume that they're marking the production in a way they wouldn't treat newer plays. They don't ever talk about choices; they talk about things you got wrong, or they imply you got things wrong, or you made mistakes, or you didn't understand the play. [. . .] But I've not experienced that with other authors; I've only experienced that in relation to Shakespeare. Even when, way, way back in 1983 we took apart the *Duchess of Malfi*, and interpolated news material from the newspapers [. . .]. Nobody had a go at it because John Webster obviously isn't as precious as Shakespeare is.

(2009, pp.3-4).

Holloway's remarks highlight the critical prominence given to Shakespeare's plays in England. However, as I have intimated above, it is a prominence that has been constructed. Before, then, I consider how discourses of fidelity inform theories of adapting Shakespeare; I will briefly outline the conditions that contributed to Shakespeare being elevated to his current position as National poet.

### ***Becoming the Bard***

Shakespeare's elevation to National poet, was informed by significant changes in the developing printing and theatre industries. Following the re-opening of the theatres with the return to the throne of Charles II in 1660, the new companies established by Thomas Killigrew and William Davenant inherited three folios of plays by Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Shakespeare (Dobson, 1992, pp.29-32 and Marsden, 1995, p.13). This outdated material was ripe for adaptation, with language updated, and narratives restructured in response to new staging practices, including the introduction of actresses and innovations in scenic design.<sup>xviii</sup> As Lynne Bradley observes in her study of adaptations of *King Lear*, these Restoration adaptations 'are unique because they occupy a unique moment in history before Shakespeare's apotheosis and before the idealization of the author'

(2010, p.53). This historical moment however began to change towards the end of the seventeenth century, with Shakespeare increasingly being staged as an authorizing ghost, notably in John Dryden's *Troilus and Cressida, or, Truth Found Too Late* (1679), and Charles Gildon's *Measure for Measure, or, Beauty the Best Advocate* (1700). In the prologue written by Bevill Higgons for George Granville's *The Jew of Venice* (1701), Shakespeare's ghost not only authorises, but praises the alterations in this adaptation as 'Master-strokes' by which the play is both 'Adorn'd and rescu'd' (Granville, 1965, Prologue: 38 and 40). Jean I. Marsden and W.B. Worthen both observe a change in attitudes towards adaptation during this period, with the aesthetic concerns of performance replaced by a growing focus on conserving the author's words (Marsden, 1995, pp.5-9; and Worthen, 1997, pp.28-30). Marsden attributes this canonisation of Shakespeare's language to the introduction of copyright law and development of printing technology to meet the growing demand for publications from an increasingly literate population (Marsden, 1995, pp.5-9).

The growth of interest in Shakespeare as an author-figure was most clearly marked not on the stage, but in print. In the first volume of his edition of Shakespeare's Works published by Jacob Tonson, Nicholas Rowe establishes Shakespeare as an author worthy of the 'Respect due to the Memory of Excellent Men', namely a biographical account (1709, p.i). Subsequent developments in editing Shakespeare's plays and bibliography in this expensive folio form throughout the eighteenth century have been discussed in depth elsewhere (Murphy, 2003, pp.57-120; Wells and Taylor, 1997, pp.53-62; Walsh, 2012, pp.21-40). However, for fidelity to Shakespeare's written word to become meaningful, large numbers of theatregoers needed access to the printed text. This was to come about as a result of new copyright laws. The Statute of Anne

passed in 1710 was significant for recognising the author as the owner of the copyright to their work for the first time, although in practice the authors would assign these rights to a publisher. The aim of this Statute was to reduce publishing monopolies by limiting the copyright period to fourteen years for new writing, and twenty-one years for works written prior to 1710. Thereafter, unless the writer was still living, the work would revert to the public domain. However, in practice this did not occur until 1774 when the House of Lords ruled against publishers' claims to common law rights to perpetual copyright<sup>xix</sup>. Between 1731 and the house of Lords ruling, Jacob Tonson and his nephew, who had bought copyrights to most of Shakespeare's plays, maintained their monopoly over editions of Shakespeare's collected works through a mixture of threatening and buying out their competitors, as in the case of Lewis Theobald and Edward Cave (Seary, 1990, pp.122-3 and 133-5). However, it was competition between Tonson and Robert Walker that made Shakespeare's plays widely and cheaply available to an increasingly literate public. In 1734 Walker began to publish Shakespeare's plays in penny parts, enabling reader's to collect them weekly with each complete play costing 4d in total. Having exhausted other methods, Tonson resorted to attempting to put Walker out of business by undercutting his prices, selling large quantities of individual plays for 1d each (Dugas, 2006, pp.215-32 and Hume, 1997, p.53). For the first time then, significant numbers of theatre spectators could compare performances to their knowledge of the text. This led to adjustments in the theatre, with judicious cutting more frequently employed than the increasingly critically condemned practice of rewriting Shakespeare. As Marsden summarises, this was ultimately a change in the perception of where Shakespeare's talent existed, 'for where the word is

perceived as the embodiment of genius, adaptation [. . .] is unthinkable.’ (1995, p.150).

However, this does not explain Shakespeare’s elevation to the role of National playwright, rather than Jonson or Beaumont and Fletcher. Robert D. Hume suggests a combination of the English settings for many of his plays, the moral judgements that could be read into them, and the way in which his writing refused to conform to French neoclassical theories that made Shakespeare an ideal national figure (1997, pp.61-3). Michael Dobson’s insightful study similarly notes how growing political and cultural opposition to France, from the Glorious Revolution to the Seven Years War (1756–1763), led to Shakespeare being adopted by the Anti-Gallican Society as a focus for ideals surrounding the redevelopment of English national identity (1992, pp.200-3). Dobson traces the beginning of this process to the 1730’s with the inclusion of a bust of Shakespeare in the Patriot’s Temple of British Worthies in the 1730’s, and its culmination to Garrick’s 1769 Stratford Jubilee in which Shakespeare was idolised as a symbol of English patriotism and values. However, what is most pertinent to this thesis is the continued strength of bardolatry in the twenty-first century, which Dobson attributes to the endurance of:

some of the major assumptions on which our culture is still based – the patriarchal family, constitutionalism, economic individualism, nationalism, the supremacy of the printing press  
(1992, p.230).

These underpinning ideologies continue to inform production, reception, and criticism, of Shakespeare, whether in agreement or as resistance. Dramaturg Andrew James Hartley illustrates this in his discussion of non-verbal adaptation, citing a kiss between Orsino and Cesario in a performance of *Twelfth Night*, to which an audience member objected because the dramatic

text did not specify it. Hartley concludes that this concern with fidelity to the source text here reflected the spectator's own discomfort at an action she felt to be wrong, in this case the validation of a homosexual kiss, by something she saw as right, Shakespeare. In recounting this incident, Hartley exposes the complexities of the reception of Shakespeare noting:

the extent to which the assumption that Shakespeare is an unalterable monolith is predicated not just on untenable theory but on broader matters of personal ideology.

(2001, p.179).

It is this assumption that discourses of fidelity perpetuated through liberal humanist scholarship, which in turn influenced the work of many theatre directors<sup>xx</sup>, journalists and teachers, seek to reinforce. Therefore such discourses are intrinsic to the continued endurance Shakespeare as a representation of the values outlined by Dobson above. However, notions of fidelity are also in continual conflict with the processes of historical change and continual remaking of the text that they seek to disguise.

### ***Remaking Shakespeare: Secondary Adaptation***

Characterised by economic pressures and the messiness of continual revision, the construction and continued recognition of Shakespeare as England's bard is built on the dramatic text as a collection of working documents, rather than a single, static authorial text. '[R]emade "Shakespeare"', a term suggested by Pascale Aebischer, Edward Esche and Nigel Wheale (2003, p.3), usefully encapsulates this ongoing process of change through reiteration with alteration (see p.13). It also directs our attention towards the temporal distances that it encompasses, which must be acknowledged either implicitly or explicitly in any staging of these dramatic

texts. This negotiation of temporal distance, recognising both the antiquity of the text and the twenty-first century performance conditions requires theatre practitioners to employ techniques that are also familiar to theatre translators, particularly where Shakespeare's language or cultural references have fallen out of common usage.<sup>xxi</sup> In his analysis of cross-temporal translation, James S. Holmes identifies three ways in which the antiquity of a text becomes apparent: through the socio-cultural system of the writer, the language used, and wider concerns of style derived from literary conventions (1988, p.36). By balancing alterations in these three areas, a translator, or in this case adapter, can manipulate not only the reader's sense of temporal distance from the text, but also perceptions of how far the text has moved from its source. Hartley provides an apt example of cross-temporal adaptation of language in performance, describing an incident at the Georgia Shakespeare Festival in which Lisa Paulsen playing Luciana misquoted her line, calling Dromio a snot instead of a sot (*Comedy of Errors*, 2.2: 185). The laughter that resulted from the audience led to the retention of this change in subsequent performances. Hartley suggests that the cause of this laughter was due not only to the inherent humour in the word itself, but also to the jarring insertion of a modern word into an historical text, 'confronting the audience with production as adaptation rather than unmediated original' (2001, p.185).

Such small, yet jarring, substitutions can also highlight the distance from Shakespeare's socio-cultural context, as when Dogberry (Simon Spencer-Hyde) instructed Second Watchman (Lucy Cudden) to 'bear you the lantern' as he handed her an electric torch in Red Shift's *Much Ado About Nothing* (3.3: 15-16). Like Red Shift's production, many adaptations go further, transposing the play to a new context and time, which may or may not be the one in which it is

performed. Jonathan Holloway reflected that his choice to relocate the play to 1990's Sarajevo:

was an attempt to re-orientate the audience's appreciation of what the play is and what it's about, and at the same time to put it into a cultural context that just made sense of the narrative threads that went through it [. . .]

(2009: p.11).

The substitution of a contemporary civil war for the conflict in Messina served to give the conflict greater immediacy for the audience, highlighting it's reflection of the conflict between the lovers. Whilst such transpositions might appear to collapse the temporal distance between the source text and its performance by foregrounding its continued relevance to contemporary concerns, the process of finding modern equivalents, such as the torch mentioned above, tends to highlight that distance. Similarly, the retention of Shakespeare's language provides a temporal juxtaposition with the new context. Some adaptations, such as Frantic Assembly's *Othello*, which I will discuss in Chapter 4, attempt to suppress such temporal differences in order to create a comprehensive world for the play. Others, such as The Pantaloon's *Macbeth*, which forms the focus of Chapter 5, actively foreground the tensions that arise from such temporal disjunction as a means of challenging Shakespeare's apparently timeless authority. In Red Shift's adaptation, Holloway similarly played on temporal disjunction by reworking Balthasar's song as a Euro pop version in which the lyrics 'hey nonny, nonny' became a repeated chorus (2.3: 50-62).

Holmes third category, style, is concerned with differences between conventions in use within the historical context in which the text was written, and the new context within which it is received. Graham Ley's distinction between primary and secondary adaptation is pertinent here. The former, Ley

defines as those based on non-theatrical matter, whilst adaptations of pre-existing theatrical works are defined as secondary (2009, p.206). In making this distinction Ley proposes that:

secondary adaptation is a sophisticated aesthetic weapon, registering what we tend to call an interrogation of a text, finding a vehicle for an intervention, or setting out terms for an adjustment to contemporary dramaturgy

(2009, p.207).

Whilst Ley's concern is with adaptations that move across cultural boundaries, such as Tara Arts South Asian influenced adaptations of European plays, I suggest that temporal movement gives rise to an equally complex negotiation with the text through the application of new performance conventions. Red Shift's use of doubling provides one such intervention, with Chris Poter physically transforming from Don Pedro into Don John onstage by swapping sunglasses for a neck brace and arm cast, thereby emphasising the similarities between the two brothers, thus precluding a straightforward interpretation of Don John as an archetypal villain. This comparison was further enhanced through an additional opening sequence in which Don Pedro brutally executed one of his brother's men, significantly undermining his subsequent triumphant return from war by questioning the heroic actions of the victor. Although, the use of actors to play multiple roles was possible in Renaissance theatre (see p.20), it is the minimal way in which this was achieved through an onstage transition and its use in service of the director's concept that marks the practise as significantly different to renaissance staging conventions.

### ***Textual Boundaries: Recognising Hamlet***

So far I have discussed only small alterations to the language of the dramatic text. However, Hartley notes that the temporal distance between

Shakespeare's culture and our own 'demands, modification of the textual "original" in order to render that original theatrically communicative in the present' (2001, p.173). Such alterations, as I will discuss in Chapter 3, often involve not only cutting, transposing, and perhaps, updating obscure terms, but also intercutting sections from the various versions that exist. Whilst Gregory Doran used a cut of F1 *Hamlet* in his 2008 production for the RSC, he drew on Q1 to reposition Hamlet's 'To be, or not to be' soliloquy (3.2: 62-96) to Act 2. This, for Doran, like Holloway's choice discussed above, was underpinned by a desire for psychological realism, making better sense of Hamlet's 'slough of despondency' when delivered after his encounter with his Father's ghost, rather than after he has set his plot in action (RSC, 2008, p.5). However, this continual remaking creates particular challenges in the field of adaptation, not least of which is determining the relationship between so many variations. What is, and what is not, *Hamlet*?

In attempting to identify comparative terminology for discussing art across a range of disciplines, Richard Wollheim proposes the terms 'type' and 'token'. Here Wollheim defines type as 'any work of art' that can be considered to be 'a piece of human invention' (1968, p.69), that is something that has been created either by an individual or by several people through collaboration. In Wollheim's paradigm, both a performance of *Hamlet* and an Arden edition of *Hamlet* are tokens, since they are examples of the type, or work of art, that we identify as *Hamlet*. Wollheim posits that the transmission of properties from the type to the token that creates this relationship. He illustrates this using the example of the Union Jack, the identifying properties of which, such as its colours and shape, will be conveyed to all its tokens. However, differences in the various materials that the tokens are made of do not become new

identifying properties of the Union Jack (1968, p.67). Wollheim suggests that this allows for:

an element of *interpretation*, where for these purposes interpretation may be regarded as the production of a token that has properties in excess of those of the type

(1968, p.71).

Therefore, differences between the tokens may exist, but their relationship with the token, by virtue of the identifying properties that they share, does not change since the token remains unaltered.

Whilst Wollheim's model provides a useful way of understanding how a multiplicity of performances and editions can represent a work of art, it relies on the identification of a stable original token. Although we might identify the character Hamlet as a property of *Hamlet*, it becomes more problematic when we attempt this with Polonius. Should we choose Corambus from Q1 or Polonius from Q2 and F1 as the property? Applying this principle to adaptations becomes more difficult still. Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* (1967) might be readily recognisable as a version of *Hamlet* since it contains the same characters as Shakespeare's play and follows the same plot, albeit told from a different perspective. However, can Charlotte Jones' *Humble Boy* (2001) which relies on similarities in situation only; a young man, Felix, disturbed by the relationship between his recently widowed mother, Flora, and another man; claim the same recognition? At what point can we say that there are insufficient properties of the type to identify a token as being of that work of art?

## ***Defining Adaptation as what is not Shakespeare***

The unstable status of tokens furthest away from a type serves to confirm other tokens as being of that type by generating a process of cultural negotiation, which revises perceptions of what constitutes the type or artwork. Margaret Jane Kidnie's examination of the impact of cultural debates on spectators' changing perceptions of what constitutes authentic Shakespeare demonstrates this. Here she suggests that whether a performance departs from or reinforces this perception affects whether it is perceived to be an adaptation (2008, p.30-1). In doing so, she demonstrates the difficulty not only of imposing permanent boundaries between forms of adaptation, but also of defining where one work ends and another begins. Kidnie illustrates this through an analysis of the reviews for two Royal Shakespeare Company productions. Here she notes that Matthew Warchus' production of *Hamlet* (1997) and Gregory Doran's production of *All's Well that End's Well* (1993) both cut lines, speeches and whole scenes that would be familiar to audience members and reviewers who had prior experience of the script. However the productions received quite different responses:

whereas Doran was praised for 'bringing out the treasures that were always there, locked up in the text,' Warchus's textual arrangements became a talking point, a sign of potential adaptation  
(Kidnie, 2008, p.64).

The quote to which Kidnie refers here from John Gross' review for *The Telegraph*, clearly constructs an unchanging dramatic text from which Gregory Doran has apparently recovered Shakespeare's intentions.<sup>xxii</sup> References to these as 'treasure' further reinforce notions of Shakespeare's cultural value, and by extension, that of the RSC. Kidnie's discussion of the casting of Judi Dench in the leading role of this production is particularly interesting, since the actor

herself becomes a visible means of authentication by providing a link to the founding days of the RSC (2008, p.50). The production therefore recovers not just Shakespeare, but authentic RSC Shakespeare.

Conversely, Warchus' production sparked critical debate about its accessibility and appeal to popular culture, such as its opening film of a young boy, presumably Hamlet, playing in the snow with his father. Whilst the production was popular, Kidnie suggests that 'popularity among the *wrong* audiences could be taken as evidence that the production has certainly missed the mark in terms of the work's artistic complexity' (2008, p.44). Here Kidnie recognises the importance of the social and cultural politics inherent in these judgements of whether a performance is an authentic representation of a text. However, she suggests that, although such beliefs will change over time, they can be used in instances of script-based performance to distinguish 'legitimate productions from adaptations or illegitimate productions' (2008, p.65). Thus, adaptations become productions that are perceived to have moved too far, not only from their source work, but also from the dominant ideological construction of Shakespeare<sup>xxiii</sup>. By categorising adaptations as 'illegitimate' productions, Kidnie implies a further value-based judgement, the negative connotations of breaking accepted norms, here placing adaptations outside culturally sanctioned theatrical practices.

Kidnie's theory usefully foregrounds the impact of the historical moment of production and reception as constitutive of the perception of what is recognised as authentic Shakespeare. It provides a rich area of analysis for considering the ideological work that Shakespeare is made to do at a given historical moment, by considering the cultural politics and ideologies revealed by debates about what constitutes Shakespeare. Whilst this instability

continually challenges attempts to develop comparative categorisations of adaptation, these theories provide a useful starting point for analysing the complexity of relationships between texts in production and reception.

### ***Taxonomy of Adaptation***

Concerns with distance from the source text are at the centre of taxonomies of adaptation. Attempting to redefine the process of rewriting Shakespeare's plays, Ruby Cohn uses the metaphor of offshoots, on which to base her categorisation, as a means of considering 'how far the shoots grow from the Shakespearean stem' (1976, p.3). The first category, reduction/emendation, Cohn designates to the realm of 'theatre history', as common practices that routinely occur in the preparation of performance (1976, p.3). She distinguishes this from her second category, adaptation, by insisting the latter must contain substantial '(or scene length) additions' as well as evidence of significant cutting or reallocations of speeches (1976, p.3). Cohn's final offshoot, which moves furthest from Shakespeare's text, is transformation. This encompasses alterations that significantly deviate from Shakespeare's stories, altering the plot of the dramatic text by creating new events or characters. Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier use the example of Marowitz's *Measure for Measure* to show the limitations of Cohn's categories. In this collage, Marowitz relies on our prior knowledge of *Measure for Measure* to question the 'feel-good' ending supplied by Shakespeare. His reworking creates a new context by altering the narrative, thus Isabella surrenders to Angelo's lustful demands, her brother Claudio is executed, and when the Duke returns, rather than punishing Angelo he instead seeks to take Isabella for himself. Despite its lack of additions, Marowitz's cutting and rearranging of

dialogue, together with the creation of new events has the effect of changing the story completely. As such, Fischlin and Fortier argue that the play blends Cohn's categories of reduction and transformation (2000, p.3). Fischlin and Fortier seek to avoid this problem by rejecting specificity of technique in their own definition of adaptation. Here they suggest that adaptation of Shakespeare in their anthology include those 'which, through verbal and theatrical devices, radically alter the shape and significance of another work so as to invoke that work and yet be different from it' (2000, p.4). However, even here the problems of attempting to define adaptation through proximity to a source text remain unsolved. Who decides what constitutes radical alteration? Where do we draw the line?

In her multi-medium study of adaptation, Linda Hutcheon attempts to address this problem by proposing a continuum-based taxonomy. In doing so, she draws on the work of John Bryant who posits a move away from literary theories of a single definitive version of a text, towards a model of multiple versions, what he terms a 'fluid text' (2002, p.2). Attempting to clarify the relationships of versions to one another, he outlines three modes of production, each of which actively produces versions of the text. The first two categories involves revisions by the author themselves in the process of creation, and revisions made in collaboration with editors for the purposes of preparing for publication. As such, Bryant attributes these revisions to the process of production. For Hutcheon, it is the third category which Bryant terms 'cultural revision' (2002, p.93), that is of interest here, echoing as it does her theory of adaptation as '(re-)interpretation and then (re-)creation' (2006, p.8). Bryant is concerned here with versions created in response to reception, in which readers revise a text to 'meet the current needs of a culture' (2002, p.110). This leads

Hutcheon to propose a reception continuum, that moves from a 'production focus to a re-production one', thus measuring the degree of change from the source text (2006, p.171). By focussing on how stories are revised both within and between the modes of telling, showing, and participation, Hutcheon moves beyond the limitations of constructing adaptations in response to literary texts. In this way she is able to extend her system to include adaptations from the showing mode such as films, to the participatory mode of computer games (2006, pp.171-2). Despite this, the categories themselves differ little from Cohn's classification of Shakespeare's offshoots, other than the inclusion of an additional category to recognise products that claim, albeit an impossible, fidelity to their source. Similar to Cohn's reduction/emendation, Hutcheon's second category, condensations and censorings, includes products that result from restrictive alterations made in order to shorten or make the product fit for new circumstances or audiences. Chicago Shakespeare Theatre's Short Shakespeare season (2009-10) which staged a number of Shakespeare's plays in seventy-five minute versions in order to appeal to young audiences and families, is typical of work in this category. Kneehigh Theatre's adaptation of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* (2006) which rewrote and restructured the story, added a character, Joan, who acted as a narrator, and included new songs exemplifies the third category, retellings and revisions of familiar stories. This Hutcheon classifies as 'the realm of adaptation proper' (2006, p.171). Her final group, which includes new products that extend the source narrative such as sequels and prequels, or have a character or some other passing link to the source narrative as in spin-offs, has clear approximations to Cohn's invention category.

In his article, *Wild Adaptation*, Mark Fortier, argues that Hutcheon's categorisation of sequels, prequels and spin-offs outside the realm of adaptation proper creates an artificial boundary between where one story ends and another begins (2007, np). Citing *The Woman's Prize* by John Fletcher, he suggests that there is little difference between continuing the story beyond Katharina's death to have Petruchio remarry, and rewriting the original story to include additional scenes (2007,np). Instead he proposes that 'analysis of adaptation must entail both systems of categorization and an openness to that which doesn't fit these systems.' (2007, np). This recognises that adaptation, by its ability to reinvent itself, resists permanent and stable categorisation. Deborah Cartmell similarly acknowledges the problem that such diversity creates, observing that 'the more we study adaptations, the more it becomes apparent that the categories are limitless.' (1999, p.24).

Whilst defining boundaries in a constantly changing field clearly presents difficulties, I would argue that the greatest problem with such approaches is the way in which they construct adaptations in relation to a single, stable source text. Such constructions ignore differences between the editions of a dramatic text. They also discount other texts, including previous adaptations. Frantic Assembly's adaptation of *Othello* for example, drew on a range of influences in addition to the Arden edition, including film versions by Trevor Nunn (1990) and Orson Welles (1952), as well as Tim Blake Nelson's *O* (2001). Directors Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett also describe how they were inspired by Nick Davies investigative study of street children in Britain, *Dark Heart: The Shocking Truth About Hidden Britain*, to transpose the play to a Yorkshire working class pub (Graham, Hoggett and Rocha Allen, pp.8-9). Bringing such texts into dialogue with one another can have subtle as well as substantial effects on an

adaptation, as I discuss in my analysis of *Othello* in Chapter 3 (see p.123). For this reason, I do not attempt to categorise the adaptations that I discuss in this thesis. Rather, I view adaptations as influenced by a range of conscious and unconscious connections to other texts. In the next section, I will explore theories that seek to connect adaptations with a network of texts.

### ***From Text to Intertextuality***

In her study of adaptations of novels for television, Cardwell points out that theories which privilege a single, central source text lead to dehistoricisation (2002, p.14). This is because they ignore the chronological and cultural development of other adaptations, which would be less distant to a new adaptation than the source text. Cardwell proposes instead a “‘meta-text” of which both source and adaptations are part’ (2002, p.14). In terms of adapting Shakespeare’s plays this has the advantage of recognising links not only with subsequent adaptations, regardless of medium, but also to the sources upon which he drew. Cardwell draws on Dudley Andrew’s theory of a global signifier to characterise the meta-text as ‘a valuable story or myth that is constantly growing and developing, being retold, reinterpreted and reassessed’ (2002, p.25). In order for adaptations to cross mediums, Andrew posits that a global signifier must be assumed that is separate from the specific signifiers produced by the medium in which the artwork has been rendered (1984, p.101). In this instance, Cardwell interprets the global signifier or ur-text as a set of narrative functions that serve to differentiate between different narratives, but which do not have an independent concrete existence. This representation of the ur-text as originating in the oral tradition, and therefore being impossible to recover, argues Cardwell, refocuses analysis of adaptation away from concerns

with approximations between the signifying systems of different mediums and questions of fidelity to a source text, to consider instead the complexity of relationships between adaptations of the same narrative (2005, pp.26-7).

Stephen C. Hutchings and Anat Vernitski, criticise Cardwell's theory for presupposing that narrative is the key element of a work, ignoring that works such as Shakespeare's dramatic texts might be valued for other reasons such as his use of language or development of character (2005, p.6). Instead they suggest that the value in considering the links between adaptations of the same text is in recognising that adaptation is not a straight transposition between the literary text and film, since the 'adaptation mediates the literary original through a secondary text or set of texts.' (2005, p.6). Once again, this criticism returns to a 'literary original', which I have argued is problematic when considering theatrical adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. The notion of secondary texts is also troublesome, given the connotations of chronology and quality associated with it. If Frantic Assembly's Arden source were the 1997 edition, it would chronologically be later than either the Trevor Nunn or Orson Welles adaptations. Given these reservations, I prefer Julie Sanders explanation that 'adaptations perform in dialogue with other adaptations as well as their informing source' (Sanders, 2006, p.24). However, I would argue, that the informing source may be plural in some instances, to allow for examples such as Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* (1998)<sup>xxiv</sup>, which draws equally on both *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*.

Whilst Sanders approach has the benefit of recognising that the informing source can be in any medium, more importantly, she recognises that it can itself be an adaptation. Here Sanders, like Cardwell, rejects the notion of a direct link between a single text and an adaptation, instead representing

adaptations as intricate 'intertextual webs' (2006, p.24). This brings not only adaptations, but by extension, the texts and adaptations that influenced them into the web. Such reference to other adaptations is as prone to influence an adapter to choose a different or opposite interpretation, as it is to initiate the recycling of an idea. Jonathan Holloway observed a deep dissatisfaction with previous adaptations of *Much Ado About Nothing*, noting:

there is a long history of productions that I think miss the point of the play, which is that it's very unsavoury. The play is actually presented as though, in Kenneth Branagh's film and so on, as though it's a sun drenched Tuscan romp; but actually you look at what's going on in the play and you've got Don Pedro sort of hinting that he might quite like to get off with Claudio's young lady, purely in order to kind of win her around, but he is conspicuously predatory. And Claudio is either too frightened or too stupid to realise what's going on. And Don John and Don Pedro are basically brothers; they have the same origins, they have the same life experience, so one of them can't be just entirely evil and one of them entirely nice

(2009, pp.8-9).

Holloway, particularly draws attention to how other productions overlook 'that there's a civil war going on and people are getting killed', as a source of inspiration that drove him to find a contemporary civil war against which to set Red Shift's production (2009, p.9). In practice, Holloway relies on the way that aristocratic settings of other productions, and in particular, Branagh's film haunt, in Marvin Carlson's<sup>xxv</sup> sense of the term, the text to provide a meaningful contrast to his setting. This is clear in his comment that:

in so many productions of *Much Ado About Nothing*, it's quickly forgotten that there's a civil war going on and people are getting killed. I think Shakespeare knows exactly what he's saying because at the beginning almost the first thing that's talked about is that [in] the most recent fight no men of substance have been killed, which is great; but of course loads of soldiers have; but no men of substance has. So, class is playing a role in that thing. And I just don't get that off any of the productions I've seen

(Holloway, 2009: p.9).

In Holloway's setting of an impromptu nightclub built in the ruins of Sarajevo, Don Pedro is recontextualised as a gangster. This allows Claudio and Benedick to become these ordinary soldiers still under arms, responding throughout the performance to occasional bursts of gunfire. The influence of other adaptations can then be indirect, and as such difficult to recover unless the adapter chooses to share the information in paratextual material or through an interview.

Whilst it is clear that adaptations draw on previous adaptations, their relationship with other texts, such as Frantic Assembly's use of *Dark Heart*, is also important. Graham's and Hoggett's title for their adaptation, *Shakespeare's Othello*, precludes the production being considered an adaptation of *Dark Heart*, and yet it was clearly influential on the setting, as well as the interpretation of the characters. Here, we might draw on Sanders suggestion that appropriations are 'productive of new meanings, applications, and resonance' (2006, p.32). Sanders ultimately resists a final definition between adaptation and appropriation, with descriptions of appropriation as involving a 'sustained reworking of the source text' (2006, p.28). This definition seems to overlap with Hutcheon's category for expansions and Cohn's inventions, and indeed Sanders frequently assigns the same characteristic to both adaptation and appropriation throughout her book. However, her conjecture that in appropriation '[t]he gesture towards the source text(s) can be wholly more shadowy' is helpful here. I would argue that whilst a production may not directly announce itself as an adaptation, as I noted above (see p.37), it will clearly signal its relationship to the informing text(s), often in its title. This, after all, is an essential aspect of adaptation. As Hutcheon argues, an adaptation must be received '*as an adaptation*' (2006, p.172, original

emphasis). However, there is no such requirement for appropriation. In the next section, I will consider how the intertextual nature of adaptation complicates the reception of this relationship between the adaptation and its informing source.

### ***Reception and Adaptation***

So far, I have considered how an adaptation reflects the adapter's reception, as well as their reworking of, the informing text(s) within complex webs of intertextuality. In their introduction to the first *Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance*, Richard Hand and Katja Krebs observe that:

Adaptation as a creative process and method denies texts a sense of completeness, forcing them to be challenged continuously on a textual and a generic level. By demonstrating the infinite and boundless nature of all texts, we are continually reminded that there is no stability in meaning and that interpretation is heterogeneous  
(2007, p.3).

This open-endedness of interpretation was theorised by Roland Barthes in his seminal essay *From Work to Text*, in which he identifies an 'epistemological slide' from closed, authorially pre-determined interpretations to an open, intertext (1977, p.155). Here Barthes differentiates between the work and the text, defining the work as an 'object of a consumption' (1977, p.161), which can be legally recognised as belonging to an author. Echoing the language of the market, this definition foregrounds preoccupations with ownership and commercial value. As such, cultural policing protects the work from radical alteration or mis-interpretation. The work then, is a closed object, something that already contains the author's intended meanings, which the reader must discover. Conversely, Barthes conceptualises the text not as an object but 'a methodological field' (1977, p.157) characterised by plurality of meaning. It is

therefore an ever changing field of 'play, activity, production, practice' (1977, p.162), open to multiple 'associations, contiguities, carryings-over' (1977, p.158). This description of the text as a field, a '*social space*', places these activities and associations within the changing framework of society (1977, p.164). As such, changes of historical and cultural setting affect the meanings of the text, which is open to multiple and changing readings.

Despite the multiple readings available, spectators must still be familiar with a version of the informing source(s) if the performance is to read as an adaptation. However, as Hutcheon observes, '[d]ifferently knowing audiences bring different information to their interpretations of adaptations' (2006, p.125). In terms of Shakespeare's plays there is a proliferation of dramatic editions, films, television and performance versions, as well as graphic novels and narrative retellings available in addition to 'the generally circulated cultural memory' of the play which John Ellis notes is typically generated around classic works (1982, p.3). Hutcheon explains how this variety leads to different expectations within the audience. Some may make comparisons with previous performances or films, whilst others might bring strong ideas about how the setting or characterisation should be interpreted from their own reading or practical engagement with the dramatic text. The previous repertoire of a company or a specific actor might also inform a spectator's engagement with the adaptation. Christine Geraghty's metaphor of layering, in her study of adaptations from literature to film, is useful here. Geraghty proposes that:

The layering process involves an accretion of deposits over time, a recognition of ghostly presences, and a shadowing or doubling of what is on the surface by what is glimpsed behind

(2008, p.195).

Geraghty suggests here that the layers can be of different materials, the more transparent layers serving to reveal what is behind them, whilst opaque layers allow for new interpretations to be drawn on top, effectively substituting for, but never erasing, what is underneath. Extending this metaphor to the process of reception, I suggest that each spectator brings their own lens which itself is made up of layers, to the performance, which they place over the top. Such a lens then may occlude some of the adapter's layers, either through lack of knowledge of a particular source reference or by adding knowledge of other sources over the top. At the same time, where there is a good correlation between the spectator's knowledge and that of the adapter, the lens will bring references into sharp focus, creating pleasurable recognition for the spectator.

However, some spectators will not have the prior knowledge to experience a production as an adaptation. Paul Edwards posits that knowledge of the informing text(s) can occur before or many years after reception of an adaptation. This suggests the relationship between the adaptation and the informing text(s) continues to change either through memory or repeated viewings/readings on the part of the spectator (2007, p.372). Reception does not then remain constant, even within the individual spectator who is free to make new links with subsequently received texts. It also allows that the spectator may receive the texts in a different order to the adapter, perhaps reading the dramatic text after seeing the performance. This complicates the relationship between the adaptation and its source(s), opening up the possibility of evaluating a prior text by its adaptation. Such evaluations however, are not limited to spectators with no prior knowledge of the informing text. As Hutcheon observes, 'the adapter's creative and interpretive act' may cause a spectator to reassess their interpretation of a previously known informing text (2006, p.121).

*The Marowitz Hamlet* (1968) for example, relied on the spectator's knowledge of the dramatic text in order to explore 'to what extent one can juggle *those* [language, structure, and narrative] elements and still maintain contact with what is essential in *Hamlet*' (Marowitz, 1970, p.15, original emphasis). In this way, Marowitz hoped to encourage his audience to look at *Hamlet* in a new way. However, aware that audiences contain different levels of knowledge with relation to the informing text(s), many adapters work with two audiences in mind, those with a detailed knowledge, and those who have little or no prior acquaintance with the informing text(s) and therefore for whom the production must be able to stand alone.

## ***Conclusion***

This chapter has suggested that the temporal distance between the source and its performance renders all productions of Shakespeare's plays secondary adaptations. The social and cultural differences between the context in which a dramatic text was written, and in which it is reproduced require productions to engage with this temporal gap, giving rise to approaches which attempt to occlude or foreground these differences. The tensions created by such approaches will reveal the ideological basis of such choices. In the latter half of the chapter, I explored the influence of complex relationships between texts of the same and different types on the adapter's reception and reworking of source text(s). This intertextuality also led to differently knowing audiences for adaptations, in which some audience members might receive the adaptation as a new work, or only experience it as an adaptation retrospectively. The next chapter will consider the effects of ideological and material influences on the reception of adaptations.

## Chapter 2: The Cultural Context of Production

In Chapter 1, I discussed how the cultural and ideological construction of Shakespeare within England has extended beyond his works to constructing the playwright as a symbol of national values and patriotism. Voted by BBC Radio 4 listeners as British Person of the Millennium, the subject of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad World Shakespeare Festival, and the only compulsory author for Literature in the National Curriculum and at GCSE, Shakespeare's pre-eminence as a British cultural symbol has continued unabated into the first decade of the twenty-first century. Cultural materialists have noted how this iconic status has led to the development of a flourishing industry around Shakespeare (Holderness 1988, p.4; Marsden, 1991, p.3; and Sinfield, 2006, p.5). As such, Shakespeare's texts offer potential adapters both cultural and economic benefits. Adapters may seek to borrow Shakespeare's cultural capital as a means of raising the cultural value not only of their production but also, by extension, their company. The existing market for Shakespeare's plays also reduces the financial risks associated with production. Indeed, a report by the British Theatre Consortium for ACE recorded that between 2003-2009 English Theatre programming of traditional plays, although small, was '[d]ominated by Shakespeare', and went on to note that classical productions 'achieved the highest audience figures of any category.' (2009, p.7).

Adaptation, however, is not a purely economic exercise. Rather, as Linda Hutcheon observes, the process of adaptation involves the adapter expressing a viewpoint about the source text (Hutcheon, 2006, p.92). Hutcheon goes on to highlight Shakespeare's position in the canon as having a notable effect on how his plays are reworked, suggesting that '[a]daptations of

Shakespeare, in particular, may be intended as tributes or as a way to supplant canonical cultural authority' (2006, p.93). The cultural values assumed by Hutcheon's phrasing are interesting in considering the work that such adaptations do, especially her use of Shakespeare here to stand for both the playwright and the plays. Indeed, it is because Shakespeare's plays are inseparable from the playwright as cultural icon, that they have attracted both celebratory and critical adaptations. I would extend Hutcheon's premise here to argue that the indivisibility of the plays from Shakespeare's iconic status brings all adaptations, consciously or otherwise, into discourse with the cultural work that Shakespeare and his writing is made to do.

### ***Shakespeare and Cultural Capital***

Lecturer in English in Education, Sarah Olive (2012) described an experiment undertaken at Sheffield Children's Festival in which parents and children voted for whether they would prefer Shakespeare or Lady Gaga in classrooms. Here, using the anecdotal evidence generated in the form of conversations between family members at the voting boxes, Olive observed the influence of older family members, noting that 'a parent would take the lead in establishing a family identity or family values, with the aim that the child would adhere to those in making their choice' (2012,np). In these exchanges, Olive was witnessing the role that the family plays in a child's accumulation of cultural capital. In his essay, *The Forms of Capital*, Pierre Bourdieu establishes the importance of the level of cultural capital existing within a family as an essential 'precondition for the fast, easy accumulation of every kind of useful cultural capital' (2005, p.98). Bourdieu's qualification 'useful', here refers to cultural capital that has a substantial socio-economic benefit for the holder, usually due

to its elite status, or potential for educational recognition. Here economic well-being leads to 'hereditary transmission', as the longer a family member is given to develop their education without the need to work, the greater the cultural capital they acquire (2005, pp.97-8). Thus, economic advantage leads to both useful cultural capital within the family, and prolonged education, giving children in these families a significant advantage in accruing cultural capital and by extension, qualifications that lead to socio-economic well-being. In Olive's experiment, the parent who attributed her young child's vote for Shakespeare to her own professional role as a teacher, provides a clear example of this process in action (2012, np).

Bourdieu's economic sociological model then, highlights the significant advantages conferred from undergoing such cultural acculturation at an early age, whilst those who have not had this culturally rich start are penalized twice, losing not only this formative start but also further time in attempting to make up for the deficit (2005, p.96-7). Outside the family, one of the main sources of acquiring cultural capital, and therefore values, is through the education system. As the responses that Olive collected in her experiment demonstrate, these institutions have significant influence here, particularly with regards to attitudes to Shakespeare, with 'difficult' or 'inspiring' experiences in education being referenced by both adults and children as reasons for their vote (2013, np). These responses suggest that experiences of Shakespeare in education have a lasting impact into adulthood. As such, education is important both as an institutionalized means of assuring the continued cultural status of Shakespeare, and demand for his plays as cultural products.

As cultural products, reproduced either in book or performance form, Shakespeare's plays become an objectified form of cultural capital, requiring a

combination of embodied cultural capital and economic capital in their generation. Here, Bourdieu observes a clear difference in the way in which embodied capital can be profited from, noting that those who make their living from selling their cultural capital as a service, but who do not own the material resources for production, remain in the subjugated class (2005, p.99). It follows therefore, that non-building based theatre companies that are dependent on venues to book their services, will remain in this class. Indeed, as Nicholas Garnham observed in his analysis of the cultural industries, '*[i]t is cultural distribution, not cultural production, that is the key locus of power and profit*' (2009, p.58, original emphasis). As I will discuss in the next section of this chapter, the control of access to venues, and thereby different types and sizes of audience, has created a hierarchy within the publicly funded theatre industry. This in turn leads to differentiation of cultural status, which affects potential economic value, between adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, despite those involved in these productions often having similar levels of institutionally recognised cultural capital acquired through higher education.

Given then, that the perceived cultural status of adaptations of Shakespeare's plays is dependent on both cultural and economic capital, in this chapter I will examine the roles played between 2006 and 2010 by arts funding and compulsory education. I am interested here in the ideological, economic, political, and cultural hegemonic annexation of Shakespeare and his plays during this period. In particular, how this annexation in turn shaped the material and ideological context that set the constraints surrounding the creation of the adaptations discussed in part two of this thesis. This chapter cannot provide an exhaustive overview of such a complex process since multiple institutions were

involved to varying degrees. As John Clarke *et al* note, the dominant culture is not homogeneous, rather:

[i]t is layered, reflecting different interests within the dominant class (e.g. an aristocratic versus a bourgeois outlook), containing different traces from the past (e.g. religious ideas within a largely secular society), as well as emergent elements in the present

(1976, p.12).

I have therefore elected to concentrate here on those institutions, in particular compulsory education and arts funding, that appear to have had the most direct impact on the adaptations discussed in part two. My discussion will employ Raymond Williams' definition of hegemony as a multifaceted process, which has 'continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and modified' (1977, p.112). It is through this process of struggle with counter-hegemonic challenges that an effective dominant culture adapts, integrating some of the emergent values and practices, whilst retaining the structures and principles necessary to sustain it. This allows competing values and practices to exist not only between, but also within institutions, without destabilising dominant hegemonic structures.

### ***Hierarchy and Arts Funding***

There are significant differences in the financial circumstances and funding of the three companies studied in section two. Despite this, each benefitted from public subsidy, either directly as in the case of Frantic Assembly, or indirectly through the commission that Filter received from the RSC. Even The Pantaloons' outdoor tour benefitted indirectly through their use of The Dell performance area provided by the RSC. Given the fierce competition for arts funding, decisions as to which companies receive support to reproduce Shakespeare's plays become potent statements of dominant cultural

values. Reflecting on repeated rejections for funding by ACE, The Pantaloon's

Artistic Director Stephen Purcell noted:

I think when you're doing Shakespeare it's hard to make a really strong case even though we think we're doing something valuable that's worthy of funding. Particularly when we're doing Shakespeare in Brighton, in Stratford and places like that, it's difficult to attract funding for that reason

(2010, p.27).

The Pantaloon's have since expanded their repertoire beyond Shakespeare's plays, a strategy that resulted in support from ACE for their adaptation of *The Canterbury Tales* (2011) and *Sherlock Holmes - A New Mystery* (2013). The link between funding and geographical locations that Purcell raises here is an acknowledgement of the association such locations have with companies such as Shakespeare's Globe on Tour and the RSC, companies that have higher status in the theatre hierarchy than The Pantaloon's. Simon Shepherd and Peter Womack describe this as a concentric hierarchy with the NT and RSC occupying a privileged position at the heart of the structure, with new small-scale touring companies on the edges or 'fringe', whilst regional theatres and well-known touring companies exist in between these two extremes (1996, p.311). Following the opening of Shakespeare's Globe in 1997, it may be argued that the double status of the Globe as both a heritage site and theatre, together with the international reputation it now commands, are powerful reasons for placing it in the innermost circle of Shepherd's and Womack's hierarchy alongside the RSC and NT. Given this status, the Globe Trust, whilst a registered charity, uniquely does not receive Arts Council funding to support its education and theatre work<sup>xxvi</sup>.

Shepherd and Womack suggest that this concentric hierarchy operates 'as a sort of promotion ladder, each group recruiting writers, directors, actors

and occasionally entire companies who have succeeded on the rung below' (1996, p.311)<sup>xxvii</sup>. ACE's distribution of subsidy clearly mirrors this hierarchy. In 2009/10, theatre organisations received a combined total of £117,357,629 in lottery and regular funding (ACE, 2011a, p.28). Of this total, the regular funding received by the NT was £19,220,748 (16.4%), and the RSC £15,589,527 (13.3%), that is a combined allocation of almost one third of the available funding (ACE, 2011b, pp.116-7 and 279-280). To provide some perspective here, in the same year Plymouth Theatre Royal, a large regional theatre, received just £1,238,840 (1.1%) in regular funding, whilst established touring company Frantic Assembly received £174,590 (0.1%) (ACE, 2011b, pp.259 and 74-5). Although based only on RFO funding, Grants for the Arts awards received from the lottery for specific projects would have been far too small to make up the significant gap in funding between the institutions designated as national theatres, and that of the rest of the sector. These figures also do not include capital funding such as the £9.5m received by the RSC towards their Transformation Project (ACE, 2011a, p.27 and RSC, 2009, p.42). However, whilst public funding has contributed to the maintenance of this hierarchical structure, it has also been utilised to drive significant changes at all levels of the subsidised theatre sector.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide an in-depth examination of how government policy influenced arts funding during the period 2006-2010. However, studies of cultural policy in England have observed an ideological shift towards a focus on the economic value of the arts beginning under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher's Conservative government in the late 1980's (Flew, 2012, pp.13-14; O'Brien, 2014, pp.43-48; and Throsby, 2010, pp.5-8). This change in hegemonic values continued under the Labour governments of

Tony Blair (1997-2007) and Gordon Brown (2007-2010), with the reorganisation of the Department for National Heritage into the Department for Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) and the publication of the first *Creative Industries Mapping Document* (Great Britain, DCMS, 1998). This document was significant for its aim to measure the contribution of the creative industries to the British economy for the first time. In the introduction to the second *Creative Industries Mapping Document*, then Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Chris Smith, reflected on the growing impact of this ideological shift noting 'the importance of these industries to national wealth' (Great Britain, DCMS, 2001, p.3). Indeed, creativity, he suggested, would 'make the difference – to businesses seeking a competitive edge, to societies looking for new ways to tackle issues and improve the quality of life' (Great Britain, DCMS, 2001, p.3). Creative industries, Smith seemed to promise, would provide the socio-economic panacea to ensure the UK succeeded in the global knowledge economy.

The worth of the creative industries in Smith's discussion here is notably in their extrinsic, rather than intrinsic value: what they contribute to economic growth and the reduction of social problems. Clive Gray observes that this shift in focus from the 'use-value', for example entertainment or deliberation, to 'exchange-value' in which the arts are viewed as a commodity for consumption, has led to significant changes in cultural policy making (2000, p.6). This commodification of the arts is also apparent in the paper *Government and the Value of Culture*, written by Smith's successor, Tessa Jowell:

So in seeking access, we want to make sure we are supplying access to the best. Access to the substandard is access to disappointment which will translate into an unwillingness to keep paying. It will not inspire or raise levels of aspiration, and in the end is not worthwhile. That is why excellence has to be at the heart of cultural subsidy, and that is what we must insist on

(2004, p.16).

Here Jowell discusses the quality of the arts in terms of economic capital, as an essential contribution to their exchange-value. Underpinning this remains a concern with the instrumental value of widening access to the means of acquiring cultural capital, leading in Jowell's argument to increased socio-economic ambitions for arts consumers. Gray develops this thesis of arts commodification in a later article, in which he argues that this concern with exchange-value in public policy, together with the low priority given to culture in government spending allocations, has led to attachment strategies (2007, pp.210-11). These strategies involve attaching value to the arts through their perceived benefit to another area of government policy. This has resulted in public spending on the arts being justified in terms of their instrumental benefits to the priorities of stronger government departments such as education and urban regeneration. In his report for Demos, *Capturing Cultural Value*, John Holden criticised the impact of this approach on the administration and management of the cultural sector noting that:

Instead of talking about what they do – displaying pictures or putting on dance performances – organisations will need to demonstrate how they have contributed to wider policy agendas such as social inclusion, crime prevention and learning

(2004, p.13).

In the next section, I will examine the transmission of this ideological shift to the commodification of culture through the structures for distributing public funding to the performing arts.

### ***Instrumental Targets:***

A Non-Departmental Public Body (NDPB), since 1998 ACE has been subject to Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets set by the DCMS. Target PSA3 from the 2004 Spending Round clearly illustrates this focus on

instrumental value. This required ACE to increase participation in arts activities by 2% by those aged 16 and over from identified priority groups, as well as attendance at two or more arts events by these groups by 3%. The DCMS defined these groups as '[b]lack and minority ethnic groups, those with a limiting disability, those in lower socio-economic groups' (Great Britain, DCMS, 2008, p.3). In response ACE directly reflected this target in its Agenda for 2006-8, which included six priorities, amongst them 'Taking part in the arts', 'Vibrant communities', and 'Celebrating diversity' (2006a, p.1). ACE's *Theatre Policy*, which followed this in November of the same year, further emphasised this as a priority for funding to ensure that 'a wider range of audiences has access to bold, contemporary and exciting work of the highest quality' (2006b, p.7). Linking the distribution of public funds at both Government and Public Body level to such targets clearly plays a significant role in the transmission of hegemonic values.

The DCMS further reinforced compliance with its policy objectives by allocating funding for particular priorities, such as the £20 million provided between 1998-2002 to broaden the audience base for arts events (Johnson et. al, 2004, p.22). Administered through ACE's *New Audiences Programme* (1998-2003), which identified fourteen separate priorities for audience development covering areas as diverse as transport to arts events, presenting events in non-traditional venues, and research into enabling greater social inclusion, the funding was distributed to organisations through a mixture of invited and open applications (Johnson et. al, 2004, pp.24-6). This targeted funding combined instrumental targets, based on the premise that participation in the arts was of benefit to a range of previously excluded or poorly represented social groups, with an underpinning economic priority to attract new

consumers. In respect of the latter, the language used in the *New Audiences Final Report* is revealing:

Whilst New Audiences funded a great deal of new arts activity for people to experience directly, this was not the exclusive purpose of the programme. A more important consideration was the impact that investment would have for audience development practice in the longer term

(Johnson et. al., 2004, p.26).

The ranking of investment in market development, with its connotations of economic return, over the creation of art is unmistakable. Here, Johnson et.al were keen to highlight the impact of investment in training and research in audience development, and associated changes in the management and administration of arts organisations, including structural changes such as the creation of new audience development posts (2004, p.26).

However, socio-economic outcomes are less easy to evaluate, as John Holden notes, 'cultural engagement is part of a complex mix of factors affecting people's lives [ . . . ] there is no straightforward cause and effect' (2004, p.18). Given this complexity, cultural policy researchers have increasingly questioned the suitability of existing models for measuring instrumental outcomes (Belfiore & Bennett, 2010, pp.121-142; Galloway, 2009, pp.125–148, and Reeves, 2002, pp.30-44). At the current time the long term economic impact of the *New Audiences* initiative remains unexamined with ACE's 2009 *Theatre Assessment* noting that 'there is no published evidence to demonstrate that these audiences have been sustained' (2009, p.61). Whilst such policies led to changes in the organisation of the theatre industry, the direct socio-economic impact of these changes to both the industry and the wider community remained undetermined. This left venues to make judgements based only on the information available to them, their own box office data. As Olivia Turnbull observed in her analysis of

the impact of cultural policies and funding on the structure of regional theatre, between 2000 when the Arts Council introduced the first *National Theatre Policy*, and 2007, venues were increasingly struggling to fulfil conflicting demands (2008, pp.209). Turnbull's research reveals that whilst developing new audiences initially appears to bring social and economic priorities into harmony, in practice some venues that altered their programmes to appeal to a more socially diverse audience, struggled to retain their established audiences. Ultimately, response to the new policy was divided, with some theatres such as Harrogate choosing to retain their established audience, which led ACE to reduce their funding due to a perceived lack of diversity in their programming. Elsewhere, some of the theatres that attempted to implement a 'New Audiences' scheme, such as Leicester Haymarket which retargeted their programming towards the local Asian community, were eventually forced to temporarily close as their established audience deserted them (Turnbull, 2008, pp.208-212). The individual factors surrounding Turnbull's discussion of each case make clear the complexity of developing, implementing, and measuring the impact of national cultural policies on such varying regional conditions. As such, there is evidently a need for further research into the impacts of such policies that goes beyond the remit of my current thesis.

So far, I have discussed how cultural policy and funding linked to targets can be used to transmit hegemonic ideological values directly to funded organisations. The impact of such linking can be noted in the *Five Year Report 2006-2011* of Frantic Assembly, the only company in this study to receive regular funding from ACE. Here figures reported clearly reflect how Frantic Assembly's work reflect ACE's *Theatre Policy*, informed by the PSA3 target set

by DMCS. Working with the Independent Theatre Council (ITC) Frantic

Assembly recorded that amongst the work placements offered, they provided:

a 15-week placement [. . .] addressing the under-representation of black, asian and other minority ethnic (BAME) people working at middle and senior management levels in UK theatre

(2011b, np).

Such policies then, undoubtedly have an effect on the content and language of such reports, particularly when categorising the people that take part in a particular project. This is also observable in Frantic Assembly's recorded figures for their Ignition Project, which was 'targeted at young men aged 16-20' (2011b, np). However, as demonstrated in Turnbull's example of Harrogate Theatre, whilst linking funding to targets is a powerful means of ensuring compliance with hegemonic values, in practice theatre organisations have to balance these against other, established local interests. Whilst this can give rise to the competition between values and practices I noted in the example of Harrogate Theatre above, sometimes a good match arises. Frantic Assembly's Ignition Project is an example of this, growing out of Scott Graham's frustration that whilst boys were enjoying Frantic Assembly's workshops for schools, this was not translating into participation in their professional workshops where young men were under-represented (2015, np). Graham's discussion of influences for the project also suggests a personal interest to 'target [the] kind of areas of low artistic engagement that I came from' (2015, np). However, it is also notable from the report that Frantic Assembly had to collaborate with a number of larger organisations such as the Lyric Hammersmith, Brighton Festival and Theatre Royal Plymouth, and attract funding from organisations outside ACE such as the Esmée Fairbairn Trust, in order to develop the project

(2011b, np). How then, did ACE's *Theatre Policy* affect the working practises of small touring theatre companies during the period between 2006 and 2010?

### ***National Theatre Policy: New Ways of Working***

As I noted above, small, non-building based companies often benefit indirectly from ACE funding. This section considers how the ideologies underpinning cultural policy affect these companies, particularly where such companies engage with publicly funded venues and theatre organisations. ACE's 2009 *Theatre Assessment* noted that relationships between touring and building-based organisations were changing during the first decade of the twenty-first century. Indeed, ACE observed that some organisations suggested that the theatre hierarchy outlined above had been 'demolished' (2009, p.36). One impetus for this perceived structural change was the loss of an overall strategy, created by the removal of the Touring Department in the Arts Council's restructuring in April 2002 (Dorney and Merkin, 2010, p.96; and ACE, 2005, p.26), compounded by an emerging divide between well- and poorly- resourced venues. As part of this restructuring, responsibility for funding touring companies devolved to the nine regional offices created when the Regional Arts Boards (RAB's) merged with the Arts Council. However, other functions of the Touring Department such as developing and maintaining a national overview of the relationships between companies and venues of all scales, encouraging venues to review and expand their programme offer, and ensuring that venues were aware of the touring work available, were not reassigned (ACE, 2009, p.91; McMaster, 2008, p.19; and Myers, 2006, p.9). Without this strategic role, venues with the best resources and greatest economic capital increased their

influence over the distribution and, through collaborations, development of small-scale productions for touring.

ACE noted a significant escalation in the number of collaborations, both between venues, and between venues and touring companies, during the period from 2003 which marked the introduction of a substantial uplift in funding to the sector of £25 billion, and 2008 when the assessment was undertaken (2009, pp.36-7). Underpinning this development was the third priority outlined in the *National Theatre Policy*:

We want to see greater collaborative partnerships between different theatre organisations and less territorialism within the theatre community.

Practitioners must embrace a culture of innovation and a wider range of forms and traditions. Theatre needs to engage with a wider range of artists and other partners

(2000, p.5).

Here ACE went beyond calling for greater cooperation across the industry, to requiring innovation by extending engagement to include new methods of creating work. Festivals covering everything from new writing to Shakespeare, and co-productions proliferated over the next decade, as RFO's sought ways to demonstrate how their work met this priority. New forms of event also emerged such as the scratch nights established by Tom Morris and David Jubb at Battersea Arts Centre in 2000. These events gave artists the opportunity to present new work at various stages of development, and receive audience feedback. This approach proved a popular low cost approach to providing a platform for emerging artists, and spread to other performance venues<sup>xxviii</sup>, including the RSC, which co-produced a collaborative event with Pilot Nights in 2012 as part of the World Shakespeare Festival. Here, companies created twenty-minute pieces in response to notions of 'Shakespeare's relevance today

and his legacy within everyday culture' (RSC, 2012). Whilst the scratch format might be seen as a response to the increasing popularity of devised theatre with a greater emphasis on collaborative work, it also served to minimise the risk of what Nicholas Garnham terms the 'editorial' function of distributors (1990, p.58). Here Garnham refers to the process in which the distributor or venue builds a repertoire of work, matched to particular audiences and, crucially, their spending capacity. This allows them to ensure that the cost of production does not outweigh what the audience can pay for it. As such, scratch nights have become a valuable means of venues testing the work of emerging companies in the market place without incurring the costs of development. They also became an increasingly fundamental part of the theatre hierarchy ladder, which provided opportunities for some emerging and small-scale companies such as Filter Theatre to make links with venues, particularly where well-developed follow up support programmes were in place, as at BAC where Filter's first devised performance, *Faster* (2003) was developed, and subsequently performed at the Lyric Hammersmith.

The process of collaboration with more established small companies through co-productions, as in the case of the co-production of *Othello* between Plymouth Theatre Royal and Frantic Assembly, or commissioning a production as the RSC did with Filter's *Twelfth Night* for their Complete Works Festival, became a similarly popular means of extending repertoire whilst minimising risk. The risk for Plymouth Theatre Royal was whether Frantic Assembly had a large enough established following to fill its main house, a risk that was somewhat offset by relying on Shakespeare's cultural capital rather than using a piece of new writing, thus attempting to blend Frantic Assembly's audience with an established audience for Shakespeare's plays. For the RSC, the risk was

appealing to new audiences without alienating their established main house audience, which they minimised by programming Filter's work in a small studio space as part of a wider festival presenting work by a variety of companies. Whilst then the RSC highlighted their work towards this priority of nurturing collaboration and innovation with small companies in their reports to the DCMS in 2010, what underpins the attractiveness of such collaborations for building-based companies, as with the Scratch nights discussed above, is reducing the risk and cost of creating innovative new work whilst fulfilling ACE's priority. Here, the RSC's statement emphasised the benefits to their collaborators in both cultural and economic terms:

(a) There is clearly a responsibility amongst the larger arts organisations to share skills, expertise and resource with others in their sector. Along with many other performing arts organisations, we put collaboration at the heart of our work.

(b) We regularly co-produce shows with some of the best and most innovative small theatre companies in the UK, for instance, Kneehigh, Filter and Little Angel Theatre, which allows costs to be shared and income guaranteed for our partners

(Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons, 2010, arts 25 para. 3).

Such benefits to small touring companies, not least of which is the cultural capital gained by being associated with the RSC, are undeniable, as I will demonstrate in the case study of Filter's *Twelfth Night* in Chapter 5.

ACE's priority then increased collaboration between national and regional venues with small and mid-scale touring companies. However, this led to increasing homogenisation of the work created, a change reflected in the NT's statement to the DCMS:

The NT engages in relationships with small, mid-scale and regional theatre companies of all kinds. This is enlightened self-interest, since there is a narrowing gap between the NT's repertory and the kind of work and artists that would hitherto have been thought of as fringe

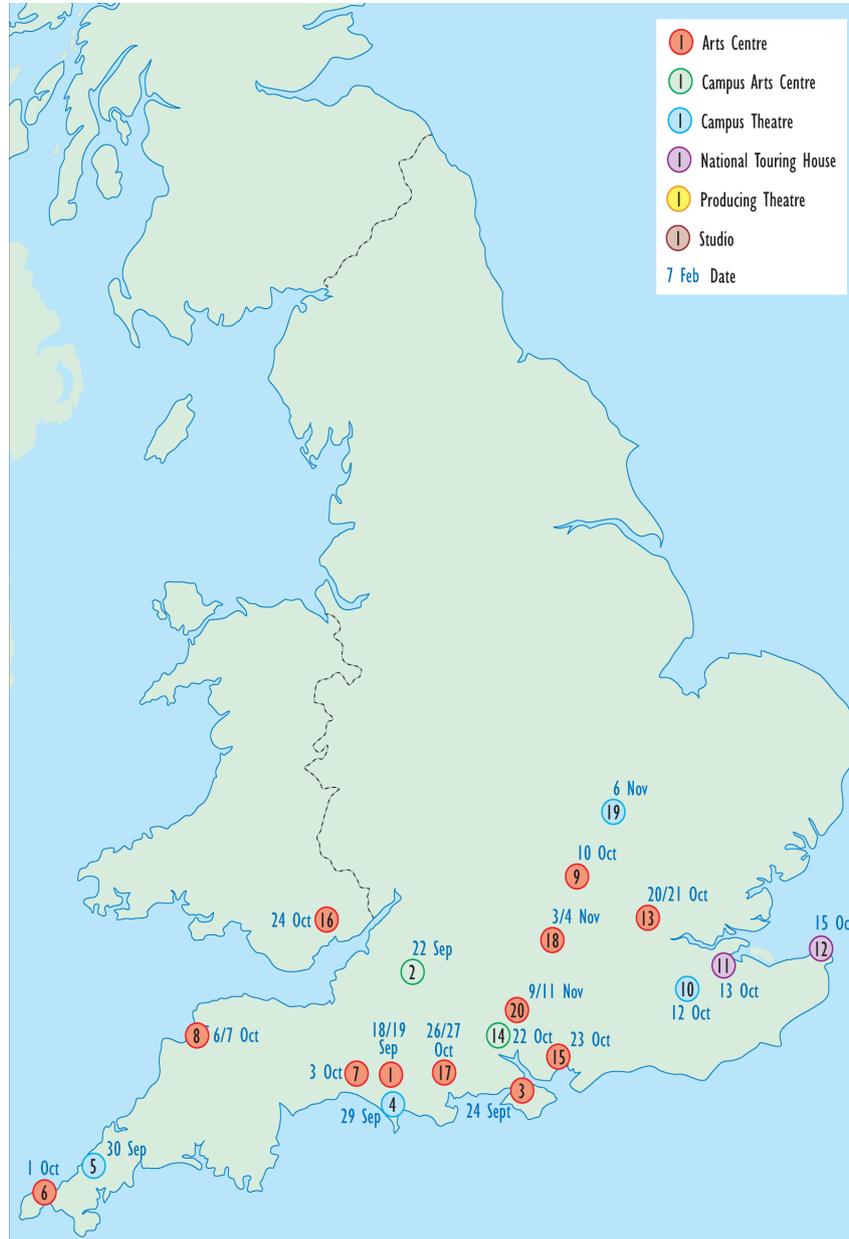
(Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons, 2010, arts 217, para. 4).

This 'narrowing gap' suggests a noticeable hegemonic integration of selected emergent practices and companies from the fringe by institutions higher in the theatre hierarchy. However, this integration left poorly resourced venues that were unable to raise their fees, particularly small venues that had lost their funding during this period, struggling to fill their programmes (ACE, 2009, p.91). Judith Knight also noted this change in her Keynote address at the *Getting it Out There* symposium, referring to a conversation with Kate McGrath from producing organisation Fuel, in which McGrath observed that fringe venues were increasingly unable to offer fees, instead offering companies box office splits (2012, p.9). This increased the risk for touring companies on the small-scale circuit, a risk further compounded by the programming practices of small venues, which usually book each show for only one or two nights.

As Figure's 2.1 and 2.2 below illustrate, the difference in programming practices between small and mid-large scale venues have clear implications for touring companies in terms of the amount of travel required. Figure 2.1 shows Platform 4's tour of *The Tempest* between 18<sup>th</sup> September and 11<sup>th</sup> November 2009. During this period, the company visited twenty venues, the majority of which were small-scale Arts Centres, rarely playing a single venue for more than one night. Whilst their tour was limited to the South, available dates for each venue forced the company to revisit the same county several times. In contrast, Frantic Assembly's main house tour of *Othello* from 20<sup>th</sup> September to 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2008 (Figure 2.2) covered only five venues in a similar playing period, the briefest runs being five days at The Lowry in Manchester and the Nuffield Theatre in Southampton. This made it possible to create a more efficient touring circuit. More significantly, however, it also enabled Frantic

Assembly to derive immediate benefits from reviews and word-of-mouth for *Othello*.

**Figure 2.1**  
*Platform 4 tour The Tempest (18/09 – 11/11/2009)*



**Figure 2.2**  
**Frantic Assembly tour *Othello* (20/09– 22/11/2008)**



Programming practices on the small-scale circuit then, mean that companies must build up an audience for their work over a number of repeat visits which, as Judith Knight noted in her Keynote address at the Getting it Out There symposium, takes patience and perseverance (2012, pp.6). Platform 4 for example revisited seven of the same venues as those visited with *The Tempest*, with their subsequent tour of *Macbeth* in 2011-2012<sup>xxix</sup>. However, with box office splits replacing set fees, this pattern of programming made it increasingly difficult for companies to afford to tour work in this way. ACE noted the impact of these changes in the 2009 Theatre Assessment, observing that 'many established and newer artists and companies' wanted to move away from the 'traditional system of lengthy tours of one night stands' (p.92). The account that emerges from this Assessment is of a financially insecure small-scale touring circuit, struggling to maintain a distinctive programme of theatre that provided a clear alternative to that offered by larger venues. ACE determined that this had contributed to a growing preference for programming dance and music, rather than theatre, at many smaller venues (2009, p.93). This fragmentation and homogenisation then, created an increasingly complex small-scale touring ecology where the best-resourced organisations were now choosing to make work of different scales to exploit the gaps emerging from changes in programming on the small-scale circuit. As the Artistic Director of Shakespeare's Globe, Dominic Dromgoole noted:

Our small-scale tours continue to grow apace. We are now establishing a regular circuit of venues around the United Kingdom, which have come to anticipate, and expect, our arrival each summer. There is a gap in the national culture, where there used to be more regular touring Shakespeare, and we are very happy to fill it

(2009, p.10).

Dromgoole's reference to 'national culture' here obscures these changes in the touring ecology by implying that Shakespeare's Globe is merely resuming, and indeed preserving, established practices that were dying out. This ignores the significant differences, not least in the production values achievable, between a well-resourced, national building-based theatre company with an established brand, and a core-and-pool, non-building based touring company working to establish itself on the same circuit. More fundamentally, in framing this gap as cultural, rather than market based, Dromgoole presents the value of the Globe's touring productions in artistic rather than economic terms, avoiding any suggestion of competing against the regular touring companies presenting Shakespeare's plays, of which he is lamenting the loss.

As I have discussed in the first half of this chapter, the transition of arts into commodities that underpinned cultural policy between 2006 and 2010, contributed to significant changes in the relationships between building-based and touring theatre companies, with the better-resourced venues increasingly controlling the distribution of touring theatre work. This, combined with the loss of the Arts Council's Touring Department, also appreciably altered the ecology of the small-scale touring circuit. At the same time, concerns with the instrumental value of the arts within cultural policy created conflicting demands on venues, particularly where they were attempting to retain established audiences whilst attracting new ones from under-represented groups. Given that productions of Shakespeare's plays are characterised as attracting a core audience of older, middle class followers, often supplemented by groups of students and, depending on the location, cultural tourists (Armstrong, 1989, p.10; Bennett, 2005, p.505; and Dobson, 2005, p.166), this negotiation between the requirements of established and new audiences is particularly pertinent.

## ***Shakespeare's Plays and Audience Development***

The audience segmentation research carried out by ACE in 2011, *Arts Audiences: Insight* notes that the older, highly educated, and affluent group identified in their report as '[t]raditional culture vultures' still 'form the core loyal audience base for several of the more traditional arts including opera, ballet, plays, classical music concerts and art exhibitions' (2011c, p.14). Since this thesis is concerned with adaptations touring to venues primarily outside the capital where access to performance venues is significantly different, I have chosen here to focus on audience research drawn from attendance at an English regional theatre. In their study into attendance patterns at Northern Stage, José María Grisolía et.al noted a similar profile as that described by ACE for those attending plays, particularly productions of Shakespeare's works (2010, p.242). Situated on the University of Newcastle's city centre campus, Northern Stage contains three performance spaces. Although Grisolía et.al were examining the role that occupation plays as a determining factor in theatre attendance, their analysis of box office data revealed that level of education was the most significant factor in attending plays, with those holding a higher education qualification at Level 4 or 5 being substantially more likely to attend (2010, p.235). A similar outcome was noted in attendance for the RSC season at Northern Stage, although Level 3 qualifications became more significant here in addition to higher education (Grisolía et.al., 2010, p.238). Although it is impossible here to determine the extent to which the RSC's reputation contributed to this broadening of education levels, there clearly remains a firm link between choosing to watch a play and educational attainment. Given this correlation, in the second half of this chapter, I will examine how extending access to Shakespeare's plays through the National Curriculum has influenced

not only the popularity of producing a relatively small number of Shakespeare's plays, but also the ways in which those plays have been staged. Through this examination, the ideological negotiations and material constraints that underpinned the extension of studying Shakespeare's plays across all ability groups in schools will demonstrate how the hegemonic annexation of Shakespeare is continually challenged. This has led to multiple adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, the value of which are in turn contested through recourse to competing hegemonic and counter-hegemonic ideologies.

### ***Education, Shakespeare and Theatre Programming***

The National Curriculum, brought in by the Education Reform Act in 1988, for the first time required all students in state schools to study Shakespeare's plays. Before 1988, the divide between O' Levels and CSE's meant that students deemed not sufficiently academically adept to sit an O' Level in English Literature would take the CSE which offered Shakespeare as an optional, rather than a compulsory, writer. The introduction of GCSE's and the National Curriculum in 1988 for the first time required all students, regardless of ability, to study Shakespeare's plays<sup>xxx</sup>. By 2004, it was compulsory for students to study one play by Shakespeare at Key Stage 3 (11-14 year olds), knowledge of which would be tested through the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs at 14, and another at Key Stage 4 (14-16 year olds) in preparation for GCSE English Literature (Great Britain, DfES, 2004, p.48). In her enquiry into the cultural value of publicly funded Shakespeare in England, Emily Linnemann surveyed the range of Shakespeare-based productions at seventy theatres in England between September 2007 and December 2008. Linnemann suggests that the resulting list 'makes a powerful statement about what Shakespeare is in

publicly-funded theatre: he is the canonical, well-known plays, dictated by school syllabi and the national curriculum' (2010, p.83). In order to probe this apparent link between the curriculum and the most popular Shakespeare plays for production, I have built on Linnemann's survey by recording the number of units for GCE and GCSE English and English Literature in 2007-8 against each production (figure 2.3). The three plays from which teachers could choose for the SATS test in 2007 are also noted.

This reveals the four largest exam boards, Edexcel, AQA, WJEC, and OCR, covered only eighteen plays between them. However, amongst plays produced three or more times, all except one feature on at least two specifications. *Macbeth* appears to be the exception here. However, coursework options that allow a free choice of Shakespeare text demonstrate the impact of teacher's choices. The Examiner's Report for Edexcel GCSE English Literature notes that "Macbeth" and "Romeo and Juliet" continue to outnumber all other texts put together' (2007a, p.3). By allowing one piece of Shakespeare coursework to be submitted for both Literature and GCSE English (2002, p.6), the same pattern appears in both qualifications for 2007 and 2008 (2007b, p.6 and 2008a, p.2). OCR also reported this trend in GCSE English coursework, noting that '[t]he majority of Centres again chose *Romeo and Juliet* or *Macbeth*' (2008a, p.29). Reasons for the popularity of these two plays were clear in teacher's responses to the National Assessment Agency's (NAA) Shakespeare Consultation for Key Stage 3 English. Once again, *Romeo and Juliet* with 142 supporting statements was the most popular of the proposed plays (2007, p.8), whilst *Macbeth*, with 122 mentions, received the most support for non-listed plays (2007, p.13). The accessibility of the characters and themes to young people, the availability of teaching resources, and teachers

knowledge of the texts all being cited in support of these texts (2007, pp.8-9 and 13). Other popular plays, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Twelfth Night* received similar reasons for support (2007, pp.11 and 13). Underlying these justifications, are the considerable investment of time and money spent on texts, teaching resources, and lesson plans. Indeed, having featured regularly on the Key Stage 3 curriculum from 2003-6, large sets of *Macbeth* play texts would be readily available in many English Department cupboards making it perhaps a pragmatic choice for GCSE coursework in 2007.

**Figure 2.3**  
**Correlation between Exam Board Units and Productions of**  
**Shakespeare's Plays between September 2007 and December 2008**

	No. of Productions	No. of productions not including RSC	No. Of GCE Units Drama and Theatre Studies	No. of GCE Units English/English Literature	No. of GCSE Units English/English Literature	SATS
Romeo and Juliet	16	14	E		7	
A Midsummer Night's Dream	9	8	2, E	1	1	
Macbeth	9	8	E			
Hamlet	6	5		5		
The Tempest	6	5		4		Y
Twelfth Night	5	4	1*, E	2		
Much Ado About Nothing	4	4	E	4	3	Y
Othello	4	4		1	2	
Henry V	3	2	E	2		
King Lear	3	2	E	3		
A Winter's Tale	2	2		4		
As You Like It	2	2		2		
Henry VI.3	2	1				
Merchant of Venice	2	1	E		4	
Merry Wives of Windsor	2	2	2			
Richard III	2	1	2			Y
The Taming of the Shrew	2	1	1			
Two Gentlemen of Verona	2	2	1			
Comedy of Errors	1	0				
Coriolanus	1	1				
Henry IV.1	1	0				
Henry IV.2	1	0		1		
Henry VI.1	1	0				
Henry VI.2	1	0				
Julius Caesar	1	1				
Love's Labour's Lost	1	0				
Measure for Measure	1	1		4		
Richard II	1	0		1		
Troilus and Cressida	1	1				
Antony and Cleopatra	0	0		3		

\**Twelfth Night* was a set text for WJEC Unit 1, which is a practical unit requiring students to perform rather than write about the text. E indicates live productions noted as having been seen by students for Unit 6 in Edexcel Examiner's Report (2008b, pp.57-8).

As Figure 2.3 shows, thirty plays were produced in this period, with the histories being the most neglected, most receiving only one production, whilst some such as *King John* and *Henry VIII* were not produced at all. Within the NAA Consultation, both history plays proposed, *Henry IV part 1* and *Julius Caesar* were opposed as 'too boring' for Key Stage 3 due to the amount of historical knowledge needed to support understanding of such plays (2007, pp.10 and 11). In its conclusion, the NAA also noted the 'relatively low take up of history plays' at Key Stage 3 when they have been set (2007, p.15). Exam Boards appear to echo this pattern by confining such plays to their A' Level specifications<sup>xxxi</sup>. This limits the Education Market for such plays, and if the RSC's productions were removed from the totals, few of the history plays received a performance from another Company. Even the RSC, when choosing productions to tour to Newcastle Theatre Royal and The Lowry, chose plays likely to be popular with GCSE English teacher's in the region, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Merchant of Venice* (Linnemann, 2010, pp.293-4).

Conversely, the availability of a suitable production may affect teacher's choices, particularly where seeing a live performance is a requirement. Edexcel's GCE Drama and Theatre Studies Specification for example, required students to see a live performance of a play written between 1575 and 1720 (2008b, p.57). Responses to plays noted in the Examiner's Report, indicated by an E in figure 3.2, reflect a similar pattern to those observed for English. Here, all three plays at the top of the list (figure 3.2) featured amongst the most commonly seen productions, with Kaos Theatre's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Northern Broadside's *Romeo and Juliet* noted alongside three productions from the RSC: Tim Supple's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Terry Hands' *Macbeth*, and Michael Boyd's *Henry V* (2008b, p.62).

Although, as noted above, school groups supplement, rather than make up the core audience in regional theatres for Shakespeare, the extent of correlation between plays most frequently studied and those programmed by regional theatres suggests that this, nonetheless, is an important section of the audience base. Here, limits on planning and teaching time, in addition to economic and ideological constraints, inform the choice and teaching of texts in schools. How then does the study of Shakespeare's plays observably impact, if at all, the adaptation process, particularly where the play is on a current syllabus?

### ***Shakespeare, Education and Ideology***

Shakespeare's current unique position as the only compulsory author on the English Literature curriculum results from The Cox Report (1989), produced by the National Curriculum English Working Group. Set up to advise on assessment targets, standards, and program content following the introduction of an homogenised National Curriculum for state schools, the Group's recommendations were implemented in 1990. Whilst, on the surface, The Cox Report refrained from specifying a particular approach, a liberal-humanist ideology unmistakably infused the focus on studying Shakespeare's writing:

Many teachers believe that Shakespeare's work conveys universal values, and that his language expresses rich and subtle meanings beyond that of any other English writer. Other teachers point out that evaluations of Shakespeare have varied from one historical period to the next, and they argue that pupils should be encouraged to think critically about his status in the canon. But almost everyone agrees that his work should be represented in a National Curriculum. Shakespeare's plays are so rich that in every age they can produce fresh meanings and even those who deny his universality agree on his cultural importance

(Great Britain, Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office, 1989, Section 7.16, p.97).

This presents Shakespeare's edifying value as an unquestionable truth, recognised even by cultural materialists, despite their refusal to acknowledge his universality. The report then, constructs Shakespeare's cultural value as virtually undisputed, whilst concurrently strengthening the authority of the Working Group to recognise and therefore invest Shakespeare with cultural value.

This attempt to preclude discussion of *why* Shakespeare should be the only set author studied by constructing an apparent consensus, is a powerful example of the mythmaking surrounding Shakespeare that Graham Holderness has argued works:

as an ideological framework for containing consensus and for sustaining myths of unity, integration and harmony in the cultural superstructures of a divided and fractured society

(1988, p.xiii).

The claim as to Shakespeare's importance here, essentially attempts to conceal competing ideological positions on where that significance exists. Based on the premise that the values expressed within texts are universal and unchanging, liberal humanist criticism as exemplified in the work of Harold Bloom (1999, pp.1-17), William Empson (1986, pp.117-8) and F.R. Leavis (1986, p.260), requires that theatrical practice be subordinate to the author's intentions, here perceived as being fully contained within dramatic texts. As such, the purpose of literary criticism and productions is to recover and interpret fixed meanings from texts, which themselves remains unaffected by the conditions of production. It is this construction of Shakespeare's plays as containing 'universal truths, which Alan Sinfield argues 'has led to his being used to underwrite established practices in literary criticism and, consequently, in examinations' (1985b, p.135). In contrast, cultural materialists such as Sinfield

(2006, pp.1-30), Jonathan Dollimore (1985, pp.2-17) and Graham Holderness (1988, pp.2-15), analyse the text with reference to the historical, political, and cultural conditions within which it was produced. The historically situated text then, is represented as being in a continual process of reproduction, thus reflecting the ideologies and values of those involved in its reinterpretation. As Terence Hawkes aptly summarises, 'Shakespeare doesn't mean: *we mean by Shakespeare*' (1992, p.3, original emphasis). Here, Hawkes situates Shakespeare's value in the cultural and ideological negotiations generated by remaking his texts and creating representations of the writer himself.

The exam system has undergone significant change since Sinfield's essay in 1985, with the introduction of GCSE's and subsequent changes to A' Level study brought in by Curriculum 2000, aimed at encouraging a broader choice of four or more subjects at AS' Level, and with a greater emphasis on coursework. However, in attempting to embrace these variant approaches to studying Literature, The Cox Report reflected a continuing debate as to how the subject should be taught in schools<sup>xxxii</sup>. Elsewhere the report was generous in its praise of the active approaches to studying Shakespeare developed by Rex Gibson in his Shakespeare and Schools project begun in 1986. Here the report stressed the value of Gibson's work as making 'Shakespeare accessible, meaningful and enjoyable' by using drama techniques in the English classroom and emphasising the importance of seeing the play performed either on video or at the theatre (DES, 1989, Section 7.6). Gibson's approach centred on using Shakespeare's plays as scripts, rather texts:

Like actors in rehearsal, students work together on the script, helping each other to understand a scene and to find dramatically effective ways of presenting it.

[. . .] A script calls for co-operative actions, a text carries no such requirement (Gibson, 1998, p.12).

This progressive methodology was widely disseminated through Gibson's work as Series Editor of the Cambridge School Shakespeare Series. However, despite recognising the contribution made by this script-based approach to understanding Shakespeare's plays, The Cox Report did not openly advocate one approach over another. It was through the implementation of the National Curriculum that all study of Shakespeare in state schools became linked to assessments through which close reading of Shakespeare's plays as literary texts, rather than scripts, was reinforced. This is clear in the questions set for English SATs at Key Stage 3. The 2008 question for *Much Ado About Nothing* for example asked, '[h]ow do these extracts explore the idea that loving someone is not easy?', with the mark scheme requiring learners' to show an '[a]ppreciation of language and its effects' (QCA, 2008, pp.33-4). Some movement to embrace Gibson's approach might be read in the inclusion of 'the text in performance' as one of the four categories within which questions could be set, with the 2004 paper requiring pupils to advise the actor playing Henry V how to 'convey his different moods before and after battle' (QCA, 2004, p.4). However, the focus on vocal delivery in the mark scheme continues the focus on understanding the effect of Shakespeare's language, rather than considering how the scene might be staged (QCA, 2004, p.24). The irregularity with which questions related to this category were featured in the Key Stage 3 tests, only twice between 2003-9, whilst the other three categories each had six questions related to them, further reinforces the value of Shakespeare's plays as literature, rather than performance (figure 2.4). Perhaps even more noticeable

by its absence at Key Stage 3 is any requirement to teach the plays as products of a specific historical and cultural context.

<b>Plays</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>character and motivation</b>	<b>ideas, themes and issues</b>	<b>the language of the text</b>	<b>the text in performance</b>
<i>Henry V</i>			2003, 2005		2004
<i>Macbeth</i>		2003, 2006	2004	2005	
<i>Twelfth Night</i>		2004		2003	
<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>		2005	2006, 2008	2007	
<i>Richard III</i>		2008		2006	2007
<i>The Tempest</i>		2007	2008	2009	
<i>Romeo and Juliet</i>				2009	
<b>Total questions per category</b>		6	6	6	2

**Figure 2.4**  
**Frequency of Questions to Study Category in SATs Tests 2003-2009**

This literary approach to Shakespeare at Key Stage 3 creates a potential tension with the staging practices noted by Worthen (1997, p.61), in which the text is edited or altered for various production purposes such as running time or to update the comedy. Such approaches are well established<sup>xxxiii</sup>, as Alan Dessen confirms in a similar list that includes alterations to reduce costs through cutting running time or the number of roles, changes to language to aid audience understanding, and alterations to adjust to modern staging practices or to fit with the director's concept (2002, p.3). He goes on to suggest that where these alterations become substantial 'a director or adapter moves closer to the role of the playwright', implying a process of re-building or re-crafting the text with by categorising such changes as 're-wrighting' (2002, p.3). One example Dessen provides of re-wrighting is John Barton's conflation of the three parts of Henry IV into two. The resulting trilogy, created by the addition of

Richard III and entitled *The Wars of the Roses*, was performed by the RSC at Stratford in 1963. Michael Greenwald's study of this trilogy records that in addition to sixty characters being cut or conflated with others, Barton cut over six thousand lines, whilst adding a further one thousand, four hundred and forty of his own to the text (1985, p.43).

Such widespread practice of cutting and altering texts creates a tension with educational requirements to study the whole text, which was demonstrated in my discussion of a query concerning the amount of changes made to the text in Restless Theatre's adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* (see p.38).

However, the study in schools of Shakespeare's plays during the period 2006-2010 was also underpinned by government policy aimed at making such study accessible to all. As the Department for Children, Schools and Families advisory report, *Shakespeare for all ages and all stages*, notes, schools should provide:

[. . .] opportunities and experiences, designed to help children and young people – regardless of their age, their stage of learning or their level of attainment – to make steady progress in their understanding and enjoyment of Shakespeare

(2008, p.1).

This inclusive ideology placed pressure on teachers to ensure that studying Shakespeare's plays was accessible to all pupils, whilst continuing to link measure of pupils' progress to tests and GCSE exams. A range of print, audio, audio-visual, and internet-based resources developed around supporting teaching the plays in accessible ways (Miller, 2003, pp.1-4; Mullin, 2003, pp.119-137; and Hulbert, Wetmore Jr and York, 2006, pp.13-15). In particular, as Christy Desmet notes, advances in technology such as YouTube provided

increasingly easy ways for teachers to provide students with a range of interpretations of a scene that could then be compared (2009, pp.65-70).

Theatre companies also adapted to this inclusive ideology. The all-male touring company Propeller, for example, developed shortened, or what they term 'Pocket', versions of the more popular plays in the curriculum to attract audiences from schools (Wollen, 2011). Theatre-in-Education companies such as Bitesize Theatre, which specialise in productions related to a number of educational themes, also added some of Shakespeare's frequently studied plays such as *Macbeth* to their touring repertoires (Bitesize Theatre Company, no date). In addition, initiatives to offer learners the opportunity to stage their own productions of the plays, such as the Schools Shakespeare Festival (Schools Shakespeare Festival, 2015), became popular annual events. Within this burgeoning market, perhaps the most extensive Education Programme was that developed by the RSC, *Stand Up for Shakespeare* and The Learning and Performance Network (LPN) which comprised of INSET courses, workshops, informative websites, and programmes to engage pupils in doing as well as seeing Shakespeare (Royal Shakespeare Company, 2015). This focus on doing, rather than reading Shakespeare, as a means of making his plays accessible, builds on Rex Gibson's progressive approaches, by treating the plays as scripts, thus challenging the literary construction of the texts as difficult to understand and requiring special knowledge to enjoy. As Gibson observed:

[s]tudents are strongly motivated when they realise that they can make *Macbeth* or *Romeo and Juliet* or any other play, their own, something that belongs them, not a cultural elite

(1998, p.11).

Indeed, the RSC's programme attempted to move even beyond this progressive approach as RSC Practitioner Mary Johnson explained, by using rehearsal

room and, in particular, movement techniques that emphasised 'intuition and imagination' as part of an experiential approach to learning (Johnson in Winston, 2015, p.45)<sup>xxxiv</sup>.

### ***Accessibility and 'Dumbing Down'***

As I discussed above (p.99), Shakespeare's language has been invested with significant cultural capital through the study of his plays as literature. The policy of increasing access to Shakespeare's plays through education therefore threatened to devalue this capital by extending the ability to understand and enjoy Shakespeare's plays to everyone. This ideological tension is evident in attempts to establish a hierarchy in which some remakings of Shakespeare's plays are valued above, and therefore separated from, others. Such differentiation has led to less desirable associations with the term accessible, implying that an accessible production or film is less culturally complex and requires little specialised cultural capital to understand it. This potentially creates a challenging binary for theatre companies to negotiate between maintaining the cultural status of Shakespeare's plays as high art, and making Shakespeare's plays available to a wider audience. Seeking to distance staging choices in their remakings of Shakespeare's plays from accusations of accessibility Edward Hall, Artistic Director of touring ensemble Propeller, claims that '[w]e don't want to make the plays "accessible", as this implies that they need "dumbing down" in order to be understood, which they don't' (Wollen, 2011, p.3). However, whilst Hall's argument challenges perceptions of Shakespeare's plays as difficult to understand, the statement itself, located as it is at the front of Propeller's Education Packs for both its full length and pocket

versions of Shakespeare's plays, points to educational institutions as potential perpetrators of this binary.

Accusations of 'dumbing down' often accompany attempts to radically cut or alter Shakespeare's language, which the field of Literature has heavily invested with cultural capital. Kneehigh's adaptation of the less frequently performed *Cymbeline* provides a clear example of this. Here, to aid their condensation of the complex plot, Emma Rice and Carl Grose introduced an additional character, Joan. Returning from the Cost del Sol, Joan questioned Pisanio about what she had missed, thus elucidating the kidnapping of Cymbeline's twin boys, his Queen's death, and his subsequent remarriage (Rice and Grose, 2007, pp.10-14). The section ended with Joan's self-reflexive comment, 'Bloody complicated, innit? It's like a Shakespeare play!' (Rice and Grose, 2007, p.14). Such extensive rewriting opened up the adaptation to criticism for excessive simplification. In his review for *The Guardian*, Michael Billington described it as a 'coarsely reductive version of Shakespeare's late romance', going on to summarise the production as 'a cop-out in that it ducks the real challenge of making Shakespeare live through his language' (2006, np). Reviewing the production for *The Stage*, Peta David similarly accused Kneehigh of 'blatant dumbing down of the Bard's word' (2006, np). Accusations of "dumbing down" Shakespeare's plays are also attracted by films and productions that are perceived to associate themselves too closely with popular culture, such as *The Animated Tales* series (Colòn Semenza, 2008, p.37-42). Richard Burt in his introduction to *Shakespeare After Mass Media*, provides a useful overview of the growth in use of this binary opposition between high art and popular culture in Shakespeare Studies in the late twentieth century (2002, pp.3-5). As Douglas Lanier (2002b, pp.3-7 and 40-3) notes there are

paradoxical benefits to both those invested in high art and in popular culture in maintaining this divide:

This drive to keep Shakespeare and popular culture apart is shared by both those who lament that popular culture has been displacing our cultural heritage, and by those who champion popular culture as the people's literary canon

(2002b, p.3).

However, such binary oppositions, even where value exists for proponents of both viewpoints, tend to be reductive of complex hegemonic struggles.

As I discussed in the first half of this chapter, between 2006 and 2010 cultural policy was increasingly concerned with the exchange value and the instrumental value of the arts. Kathleen McLuskie has observed how this dual focus in policy 'configured the arts as so-called 'non-rival goods' whose consumption by one group does not diminish the quantum available for others' (2011, p.5). In McLuskie's model, commercial and publicly funded reproductions of Shakespeare and his plays both increase engagement with, and therefore add value to, non-rival Shakespeare, that in turn enhances the value of the full range of reproductions. In this mixed commercial and subsidised market, engagement with Shakespeare reproductions as accessible to everyone, regardless of socio-economic background, challenged the value of accumulated cultural capital associated with exclusive representations of Shakespeare's plays as high art. Given this challenge to the value of cultural capital associated with Shakespeare and his plays, to what extent does Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital remain relevant to this thesis?

Richard Peterson and Roger Kern, examining the musical tastes of Americans in the 1990's, noted a similar broadening of the market for arts through increased distribution by means of the media, widening education, and

a rise in the overall standard of living (1996, p.905). With exclusivity increasingly undermined in this way, Peterson and Kern observed a new form of behaviour developing, that of omnivorous cultural consumption characterised by a broadening of highbrow tastes, in this case in music, to additionally include popular forms (1996, p.900). However, the pattern noted by Peterson and Kern here was more complex than direct annexation, with cultural omnivores retaining scholarly reading and appreciation behaviours, leading to the maintenance of a distinction from these high status forms of appreciation, and that of the established popular audience (1996, p.904). As British Sociologist, Beverley Skeggs explains in her study of how culture underpins the class system:

Omnivorousness is a privilege restricted to the middle-classes and does not work in reverse because of the money, time and knowledge required to know what to access and how to use that that has been accessed  
(2004, p.145).

Despite then the erosion of distinctions between high art and popular culture through omnivorous appropriation, the selection and use of cultural products continues to play an important differentiating factor in the value of accumulated cultural capital.

## ***Conclusion***

The emergence of cultural omnivores in response to changes in the cultural market and educational priorities provides a clear example of hegemonic adaptation, integrating growing practices whilst maintaining established values. However, cultural omnivores have not replaced exclusive approaches to consuming Shakespeare's plays as high art; rather they have become another layer, to use Stuart Hall's term, in the dominant culture (1993, p.6). As this chapter has demonstrated, through examination of cultural and educational

policies between 2006 and 2010, even where policies appear to serve complementary aims, such as broadening the audience base for theatre, in practice, conflicts of interest emerge. It is these differences and incongruities, or 'faultlines', that the multifaceted dominant culture produces, that Alan Sinfield argues create 'the sources of dissidence' (2006, p.10). As Sinfield notes, 'dissidence operates, necessarily, with reference to dominant structures' (1992, p.47). In this way, dominant hegemonic values haunt moments of dissidence in reproductions of Shakespeare's plays. Therefore if, as I discussed in the introduction to this thesis, small companies challenge some of the dominant processes of reproducing Shakespeare's plays (p.16), through this haunting, the case studies in the second half of this thesis should provide insights into both dominant and dissident uses of Shakespeare and his plays between 2006 and 2010.

## Introduction to Part Two

The case studies that form the second part of this thesis use the research framework developed in part one to examine three distinctly different touring adaptations. Frantic Assembly's socio-political adaptation of *Othello* (2008) is the focus of Chapter 3. Founded in 1994, Frantic Assembly is a small-scale RFO with a strong education programme and a well-established audience base, approximately 55% of which was under 26 in the period 2006-11 (Frantic Assembly, 2011, np). Through their collaboration with Theatre Royal Plymouth, and Royal & Derngate Northampton, Frantic Assembly developed this adaptation to tour to middle and large scale venues, making this a much larger project than any they had previously undertaken<sup>xxxv</sup>. Funded by ACE, this production was also the first experience of adapting a Shakespeare text for joint Artistic Director's Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett. This was a significant choice for a company whose focus on contemporary culture and vigorous physical aesthetic, combined with music and design, had previously led to collaborations with writers to create new plays that would appeal to their established audience. Inspired by Nick Davies' investigation into the link between poverty and race riots on a council estate in Leeds, Graham and Hoggett transposed their adaptation to a pub on an estate in Yorkshire in 2001. In this case study, I explore the tensions between this setting, combined with Frantic Assembly's aesthetic approach, and their attempts to extend their appeal to an older audience demographic, in order to meet the challenge of filling the main auditorium at Plymouth Theatre Royal.

Chapter 4 investigates The Pantaloons' popular theatre approach to their outdoor adaptation of *Macbeth* (2010). Founded in 2004 by Artistic Director

Stephen Purcell, the Company's aesthetic was developed from Purcell's research into popular theatre traditions, with particular reference to the use of clowning in Shakespeare's plays. Robert Weimann's research into the adaptation of Medieval staging practices by Elizabethan playwrights is a recurrent feature in Purcell's work. In particular, the Company aesthetic exploits the potential of a split stage, creating separate representational spaces and public spaces. The direct address and invitation for audience participation that is possible from the latter space actively question and destabilise the authority of the characters, the playwright, and even the wider performance context of the play. However, in choosing outdoor performance as a means of appealing to a wider audience than regular theatregoers, The Pantaloon's' donation-based income depends heavily on appealing to spectators of all ages, leading to an emphasis on clowning and comedy in these interventions. In this study, I analyse the tensions created by application of this comic, destabilising discourse to a play that in rehearsal The Pantaloon's concluded to be resistant to such interventions.

In Chapter 5, I examine the relationship between Filter Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC). Founded in 2001, Filter is the only company led by musicians and actors studied in this thesis. Originally created as a work in progress response to *Twelfth Night* for the RSC's Complete Works Festival in 2006, the revised adaptation has retained this link by marketing the production in subsequent tours as presented by 'Filter in association with the Royal Shakespeare Company' (Filter Theatre, 2010a; Exeter Northcott, 2010a). However, Filter's collective approach to staging playscripts, which actively blends drama with music, originated as a devising process. When applied to a classic text this, combined with the financial constraints of project based

funding, creates a stripped down aesthetic that is more evocative of a rock gig than the visual spectacle associated with RSC productions. In response to this, I have additionally carried out an audience survey and focus group in this study to gain a fuller understanding of the impact of such a marketing strategy on audience expectations and the reception of this adaptation. These, combined with reviews, and interviews with Artistic Directors and actors, Ferdy Roberts and Oliver Dimsdale, investigate the tensions engendered by a small-scale company that has developed working practices in direct opposition to those commonly applied in the Shakespeare theatre industry, working in association with an institution that is so central to upholding the conventions of that industry.

## Chapter 3 Frantic Assembly

### 'Franticising' *Shakespeare's Othello*

#### *Introduction: Overview of the Company*

A well-established company, Frantic Assembly's development and previous productions have been recorded in considerable detail, not least by its Co-Artistic Directors Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett<sup>xxxvi</sup>. Rather than set out in detail the operating environment as I have undertaken to do with less well-documented companies such as *The Pantaloons*, my aim here is to provide a sense of how their adaptation of *Othello* fitted within the already established working practices of the Company. At the same time, the particular aspects of the production that made it unique within Frantic Assembly's repertoire in 2008 will also become apparent and, by extension, the alterations that the Company had to make as a result.

Founded in 1994, Frantic Assembly became an Arts Council Regularly Funded Organisation (RFO) in 2002. The Company has the largest permanent core of staff of all the companies in this study, with General Manager, Laura Sutton and Administrator, Fiona Gregory joined by Lisa Maguire in the role of Executive Producer. Perhaps the most unusual aspect of Frantic Assembly's structure is their Co-Artistic Directors, Graham and Hoggett. Reflecting on the process of working with them on *Pool (No Water)* (2006), playwright Mark Ravenhill described how 'they operated as a unit' (2006, np). He went on to explain how their approaches balanced one another, commenting that '[w]hile Steven would often drive meetings or rehearsals along with a breezy energy, Scott was always checking detail, making sure there's a foundation to Steven's

ideas' (2006, np). In *A Guide to Frantic Assembly*, Graham and Hoggett describe their relationship in terms of challenging and supporting one another, noting that:

Over the years we have developed our own particular strengths in the rehearsal room but that does not mean we have fixed artistic roles within the company. It is much more fluid than that. And of course we do not always agree or think the same thing, even if at times it may seem like that. If we always agreed then it would be pointless having two directors

(Frantic Assembly, 2011, p.9).

One of the challenges of working with two directors is that it opens up the potential for contradictions to occur during the rehearsal process. In a Frantic Assembly interview created to publicise their forthcoming production of *Othello*, Hoggett explains that:

One of the things we try and do is we don't split up in the rehearsal room. So I think the challenge of this piece, 'cos it is a much bigger story, it's a bigger project all round [ . . . ] so I think there's a time challenge about that. But I think there's something about that consistency of our vision of it that it's important that the cast are working with the two of us at the same time . . .

(transcribed from Graham and Hoggett, 2008a, 06:38-07:11).

The rehearsal diary kept by Assistant Director, Jamie Rocha Allan, suggests that during most of the process for *Othello*, Hoggett and Graham were able to maintain this practice, noting only two occasions when the rehearsal room was split (2008, pp.7 and 17). The first occurrence was in the second week, to allow for discussions with individual cast members whilst a read through of the text was taking place. The second took place towards the end of the process when, following a full run through, Scott and Graham were working on making some of the movement sequences 'scrappier and dirtier, and more fitting to the world of the pub' (Rocha Allan, 2008, p.17). Notably, these occurrences did not involve the development or setting of new scenes or pieces

of movement, instead focusing on initial discussions or minor adjustments with a pre-agreed purpose.

The advantage of having two directors working closely together on a production in which movement is a central component is the attention to detail that this approach affords. Rocha Allan notes:

. . . the directors are always pushing and keeping an eye on making sure that everything is of the world they are trying to create, it's this kind of cohesion that will make this show really different to other shows with dance/movement

(2008, p.16).

As the Assistant Director on this production, Jamie Rocha Allan provides insight into the development of the adaptation in the rehearsal room from the unique position of being involved in the process, whilst also observing it for the purposes of writing a Rehearsal Diary to publish on the Frantic Assembly website. As such, I have chosen in this case study to interview Rocha Allan, in order to discuss in detail the observations that he made about the process in his diary. Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett have already written extensively about the Company, their adaptation of *Othello* and their working process, as well as providing a number of interviews about their work on *Othello*, which I will also draw upon in the course of this study. Rocha Allan trained in Drama Education at Central School of Speech and Drama before completing an MFA in Theatre Directing at Birkbeck. During this course, he undertook a one-year placement at the Lyric in Hammersmith, which he had just completed when he took up the Assistant Director position for *Othello* (Rocha Allan, 2010, p.1).

## ***Company Aims***

Combining physical theatre<sup>xxxvii</sup> with text, Frantic Assembly has a long history of devising new work with writers such as Abi Morgan (*Tiny Dynamite*, 2001), Michael Wynne (*Dirty Wonderland*, 2005) and Bryony Lavery (*Stockholm*, 2007). As such has does such a significant departure into working with Shakespeare's text fit into their repertoire?

A charitable company, Frantic Theatre Company Limited's aims are clearly set out in their annual trustees report:

The objects of the company are to advance education for the public benefit by the promotion of the arts, in particular but not exclusively the art of drama. Frantic Assembly produces thrilling, energetic and uncompromising theatre. The company is committed to making work that reflects contemporary cultures and attracts new audiences to the theatre.

In collaboration with a wide variety of artists, Frantic Assembly creates new work that places equal emphasis on movement, design, music and text. In addition the Company operates a year-round Education and Training Programme; introducing participants to the company's methods of creating theatre. . .

(2008, p.2)<sup>xxxviii</sup>.

This raises a number of areas where performing a pre-written classical text appears to be at odds with the Company's aims, not least the concern with making new work that focuses on subjects that are relevant to contemporary society. Graham and Hoggett note that:

The word contemporary gets used a lot in reference to our company. This is surely because we make work that reflects topics we are currently talking about, and are of interest to us

(Frantic Assembly, 2011, p.16).

How then, does this affect their adaptation of *Othello*? What are the topics in this play that inspired Graham and Hogget to make such a radical departure from their established repertoire? Graham and Hoggett explain in

*Shakespeare's Othello: A Comprehensive Guide*, that the suggestion to look at *Othello* came from director Tom Morris who noted a thematic similarity between their previous work and Shakespeare's play, which is 'full of sexual jealousy, the destruction of friendships and back stabbing' (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.3). However, they were not interested in staging a production of William Shakespeare's *Othello*. Like their production of *Rabbit* before it, they wanted to 'Franticise' it (Cowell, 2003, p.11). Although their first production, an adaptation of *Look Back in Anger* (1994) used an existing script, Brendan Cowell's *Rabbit* (2003) was the first departure from the practice they had subsequently established of creating new work with writers and through devising. This practice has clearly given rise to a strong sense of what makes a Frantic Assembly show, not least of which is the emphasis on creating a balance between the text, movement, music, and design which is referred to in their trustees report quoted above. As such, their intention was not to perform Brendan Cowell's *Rabbit*, as Graham's reflection makes clear:

Steven met Brendan Cowell in Sydney and informed him of the plans to create a Frantic *Rabbit* [ . . . ] seven drafts and nine months later, our Frantic *Rabbit* is ready...

(2003, p.3).

In many ways although Graham and Hoggett had a pre-existing script to begin with, their work with Cowell, like their previous work with writers, aimed to 'create something new rather than just create a British version of the Australian production' (Graham, 2003, p.9). A similar concern is expressed in Graham's and Hoggett's reaction to Morris' suggestion, '[w]e had to have our reason for doing *Othello* and that was all about having something new to offer' (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.3). Some might argue that if Graham and Hoggett wanted to offer something new and in Frantic Assembly's distinctive

style, they should continue to collaborate with new writers rather than attempting to make a pre-existing script fit their ideas. Such an argument returns us to the very heart of the adaptation process: why adapt?

### ***Financial Incentives***

Whilst, as will become clear in my discussion of Frantic Assembly's audience below, the decision to undertake a play by Shakespeare might appeal to Frantic Assembly's established schools audience and provide the possibility of attracting a new audience, as a charity such a departure from their established repertoire represented a financial challenge in several respects. Firstly, they would need to demonstrate the benefits of this departure from their focus on new writing to the Arts Council, who already funded a number of organisations that provided national touring productions of Shakespeare's plays. What could a small scale touring company that 'specialises in creating contemporary physical theatre' offer that middle scale touring companies such as Northern Broadsides or Red Shift, whose repertoire and expertise already included classical plays, could not? (Arts Council England, 2012, np).

Secondly, *Othello* demanded a much larger cast<sup>xxxix</sup> than Frantic Assembly usually employed. Therefore, unless they resorted to multiple role-playing, a technique that had not previously featured in their work, or substantially altered the text, the Company would need to balance the higher salary and accommodation costs of touring for such a large cast against possible income. This in itself might have made the project untenable if Graham and Hoggett had not been able to convince Theatre Royal Plymouth of the value of a Frantic *Othello*. The Theatre agreed to co-produce the production with additional financial support from Northampton's Royal &

Derngate and a grant of £45,604 from the Arts Council's Grants for the Arts fund completing the necessary financing for the production (Frantic Assembly, 2011, pp.12-13 and Frantic Theatre Company Limited, 2009, p.12). This need to secure such a significant amount of funding led to a long planning phase, with Graham and Hoggett scheduling the production 'at the end of a three-year programme of work so that we would have time to find the right project partners' (2011, p.12).

It was, however, Shakespeare's potential to draw a wider audience than Frantic Assembly alone that had the greatest impact on the scale of this production. The Company had developed a good relationship with the Drum Theatre Plymouth who had co-produced several of their previous shows including *Peepshow* (2002), *Rabbit* (2003), *Pool (No Water)* (2006) and *Stockholm* (2007). When Graham and Hoggett discussed the project with the Plymouth venue, they asked if 'the combined popularity of the title and the company' was likely to attract a large enough audience to stage the adaptation in the 850 seat main house, which would effectively move Frantic Assembly into mid-scale touring for the first time (Frantic Assembly, 2011, p.12). It is clear from Frantic Assembly's *Three Year Report 2006-2009*, that Plymouth Theatre Royal's acceptance of the potential of this combination to generate a sufficiently large audience was well founded, with overall audience numbers for the production tour reaching 86% of capacity with 29,012 attending (Frantic Assembly, 2009, np). This represents a 47% increase in audience numbers compared with their tour of Bryony Lavery's *Stockholm* in 2007/8 and a 59% increase compared to their tour of Mark Ravenhill's *Pool (No Water)* in 2006/7 (Frantic Assembly, 2009, np). Even with a clear upward trend in audience

attendance between 2006/7 – 2007/8, this leap in attendance figures reflects Shakespeare's continuing popularity with theatre audiences.

### ***Shakespeare's Cultural Capital***

As English Literature graduates who began the Company with no formal movement training aside from support from Volcano Theatre (Graham and Hoggett, 2009a, pp.1-2), establishing the physical style of their productions was a priority in the Company's formative years (Frantic Assembly, 2011, pp.3-4). This has led to a sense of separation between their literary training and their theatre work as Graham explained:

. . . we're both English Literature graduates and we do have a love for this and it might seem just because within a lot of our work it's the energy which comes to the front, it's the movement that comes to the front, that we'd actually want to trash any kind of literary approach or literary text. It's not the case at all. We absolutely love it, but we wouldn't have wanted to bring our world into that world any sooner than now

(transcribed from Graham and Hoggett, 2008a, 2:26-2:58).

For Graham and Hoggett, there was a clear incentive to exclude pre-written plays, and particularly Shakespeare's canon with its literary associations, from their repertoire until the reputation that they were building for physical theatre was secure. This would also appear to underpin their consistent focus in their marketing campaign on the production being an adaptation, a Frantic *Othello*. Whereas for The Pantaloons and Filter Theatre which I will discuss in the following chapters, the benefit of Shakespeare's cultural capital in attracting an audience has led to them to only refer to the adaptive qualities of their work obliquely, for Frantic there was a distinct benefit to making a distinction between Shakespeare's play and their staging of it. Due to the reputation that Frantic had built for their physical and contemporary approach to theatre, there was

clearly benefit in emphasising their alteration of this literary text. Why then did Graham and Hoggett feel it was appropriate to include *Othello* in their repertoire in 2008? What had changed?

### ***Arts Council Funding***

The extent to which the Company relies on funding from the Arts Council, £147, 806 in 2007-8, rising to £170, 000 in 2008-9, places an onus on them to ensure that their activities remain within the priorities that the Council has established for distributing its funds (Frantic Theatre Company Limited, 2009, p.13). *Othello* clearly responded to both instrumental and economic funding priorities set out by ACE in the *Theatre Policy* (2000). The choice of text enabled, through their partnership with Plymouth Theatre Royal, an increase in production scale, which led to a significant increase in their audience size, approximately 52% of which was under the age of 25 (Frantic Theatre Company Limited, 2009, p.3). Engagement with the production was encouraged through a variety of methods, both through technology and live interaction. The Company website provided an online forum where people could comment on the show and ask questions, and a free education pack, which 1,683 people downloaded during the period of the tour. Nearly two thousand people took part in post show discussions, tours of the set, and free workshops for students and community groups (Frantic Theatre Company Limited, 2009, p.4). Such an extensive range of activities was possible due to the well-established education work that forms a key part of the Company's work.

## ***Audience Base and Educational Aims***

One of the reasons for Frantic Assembly's youthful audience demographic is their thriving education programme, the development of which is integral to their status and work as a charity (Frantic Theatre Company Limited, 2008, p.2). The development of this programme was as the result of both ideological and pragmatic concerns. The inspiration provided by Volcano Theatre to set up their company, led to Graham and Hoggett wanting to 'share our creative process and demonstrate the accessibility of this way of working' (Frantic Assembly, 2011, p.9). These workshops also provided a welcome source of income and, by offering workshops to schools, built up an audience base of school parties (Frantic Assembly, 2011, p.9).

The strength of the perception that a unique and accessible Frantic Assembly style exists is clear from its increasing inclusion in exam board syllabuses and reports. AQA includes it as an example of a theatre company that 'has made a significant contribution to theatre practice' in its GCE Drama and Theatre Studies specification for 2009 onwards (AQA, 2007, pp.7-9)<sup>xl</sup>. This in turn has ensured that the workshop programme continues to provide a significant contribution to the Company's income, accounting for £71, 093 in 2008-9 (Frantic Theatre Company Limited, 2009, p.12) and has developed to include residencies at universities, and INSET for teachers. A second strand of this work has led to the creation of a programme of workshops based on Frantic Assembly's devising process and use of movement which is aimed at '[y]oung artists and aspiring theatre practitioners' (Frantic Theatre Company limited, 2009, p.4).

## ***Extending their Audience Base***

Graham is insistent that he and Hoggett now want to extend their audience demographic to appeal to a more mature market, noting in an interview about *Othello* with James Jackson for *The Times* that 'Frantic is probably in the opposite position to a lot of companies and theatres in that we're actively courting an older audience' (Graham and Hoggett, 2008c, np). One reason for this, as Graham admitted in an interview with Nina Steiger, is that 'we're getting older and our audiences aren't' (Graham, 2006, p.315). This concern stems from the choice of material for their shows, which Graham suggests corresponds with the tastes of their youthful audience rather than being chosen to specifically appeal to them:

For years we've been called a theatre for young people. And what people fail to realise is that we've been making shows for ourselves all that time and it's a coincidence  
(2006, p.315).

As Graham readily admits, the risk in continuing to pursue this strategy is that if they do not actively extend the demographic of their audience, 'there's going to be a time possibly when we don't quite speak the same language [as our audience]' (Graham, 2006, p.315). However, actively widening their audience demographic is also not without risk, particularly when it is combined with such a departure from their established repertoire as in the case of *Othello*. Although a Shakespeare play was likely to hold appeal for their established school audience, if the adaptation appeared to move too far from their established blend of movement, text, music, and design they risked alienating these customary supporters. At the same time, those with an interest in Shakespeare, a possible new audience for their work, might object to their adaptation, viewing their focus on movement, music and design as a poor

substitute for Shakespeare's text. Acknowledged in their marketing campaign this risk led to the production of two trailers (Frantic Assembly, 2008a and 2008b). A video of the movement developed during their Research and Development process was designed to appeal to the established Frantic Assembly audience and whilst a second, consisting of two scenes involving Othello, Desdemona and Iago, was designed to illustrate to an audience interested in Shakespeare that 'they can handle the text' (Rocha Allan, 2010, p.5). This tension between contemporary production techniques and the text was also evident in their fliers for the adaptation. Juxtaposing an image of Othello lying on top of Desdemona on a pool table with a title that markedly linked the play to its author, *Shakespeare's Othello*, the flier sought to present the contemporary context of the adaptation whilst reassuring the potential audience that it remained recognisably Shakespeare's play (Frantic Assembly, 2008c). The cultural value attached to Shakespeare's text evident in this marketing choice leads to one of the central dilemmas facing Graham and Hogget in creating this adaptation: how to balance text with their focus on movement, music and design. Whilst their trailers might have encouraged people from both groups to attend the production, did the adaptation in performance successfully balance the requirements of these groups that the marketing policy identified?

Whilst comments about the adaptation left on Frantic Assembly's website could not be considered to present a balanced sample, since audience members who either were already followers of the Company or who had an enjoyable experience of the performance might reasonably be expected to be more likely to visit their website, they do reveal an interesting insight into audience expectations of a Frantic Assembly production. One Frantic

Assembly follower, Sally, noted a distinct difference in the way that movement was employed in this production compared with Frantic Assembly's previous productions:

However, [I] did think it was less typically "Frantic" than recent productions (Pool no water and Stockholm in particular), the physical theatre elements seemed like there were long sections of straight acting and then sections of 'dance'. In other productions, the physical movements have been much more naturalistic and interlinked with the script [. . .] whereas this looked much more choreographed. Not necessarily a bad thing, but not what [I] was expecting from Frantic Assembly.

(2008)

This separation of movement and text was also noted by Sez who went on to question the purpose of the dance where the division between it and the text appeared too distinct, commenting that '[I] loved the dancing and the choreography but [I] can't help but feel that a lot of the time the dancing was unrelated' (2008). Whilst the division was a conscious choice by Graham and Hoggett to avoid dissipating the power of each of these media through duplication, a choice I will discuss in greater detail later in this case study, it suggests that some adaptation of their style took place in accommodating working with Shakespeare's text.

### ***Personal and Political Motivations for Adaptation***

Graham's and Hoggett's recognition that '[w]e had to have our reason for doing *Othello* and that was all about having something new to offer' indicates the importance they placed on their personal motivations in choosing to make the adaptation (Graham, Hoggett and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.3). Graham explained in a post on the *Frantic Assembly Forum* that it was Nick Davies' book *Dark Heart: The Shocking Truth About Hidden Britain* that 'inspired our understanding and particular presentation of *Othello*.' (2011) He went on to

note that 'Othello would never have happened without that book.' (2011) A powerful piece of investigative journalism, Section II of Davies book details the effects of unemployment and poverty on a council estate in Leeds (1998, pp.37-128). One of the focuses of his account was a pub, the Jolly Brewer, which the local teenagers burnt down after the landlord allowed the police to install surveillance cameras as a means of tackling crime on the estate. A boy that Davies interviewed described it as:

. . . very dark there, it had all ripped seats and no decorations. It were like an old saloon and you could go in there and do what you wanted. You could smoke a joint. Everybody were on a good vibe. You could relax. There were a pool table and a jukebox [. . .] It were ours  
(1998, p.80).

The experience of being restricted to one area of the set of a pub whilst filming for an advert, opened up the potential of this location for Graham and Hoggett, who observed how the use of space reflected social hierarchies.

It seems that young men enter a pub at a certain age and appear to belong in a certain area of the pub; young guys hanging around the fruit machine; higher status guys strutting around the pool table [. . .] old men sitting in the corner. This is a social structure. You graduate through age and deed  
(Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.4).

A contemporary situation in which their audience would be able to recognize and read the demarcations of status implicit in movements and use of space, Graham and Hoggett saw a parallel with the world of *Othello* with the military ranks transposed into status within the gang. *Dark Heart* also suggested a means to contemporise the wider political context of the play:

During these early stages we also realised that the political framework of the original was neither useful nor interesting for us. Getting rid of this might have been a terrifying prospect had we not already had the Northern pub idea as a result of reading the book 'Dark Heart'. The socio-political content of the book was a vital impulse in creating the

show and so the context of the Venetian military gave way to the fractious racial politics of early twenty first century Yorkshire (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.8).

The pub setting undeniably contributed to the sense that this was a contemporary production, by provoking an immediacy of recognition for the audience that emphasised the relevance of Shakespeare's play, and particularly the relationships between the characters, to life today. Such modernisation presents several challenges for the adapter, not only in terms of the decisions that need to be made concerning anachronistic differences between the setting and the text, but also in terms of the degree to which the historical distance which exists between Shakespeare's text and its performance in 2008 is acknowledged. Given Graham's and Hoggett's concern with creating a contemporary production, to what extent have the decisions they made, in terms of their editing of the text and their direction of it, been used to hide or reveal the play's history? How does this fit with their emphasis on making contemporary work?

In transposing *Othello* geographically as well as temporally to twenty first century Yorkshire, Graham and Hoggett have potentially removed not only the historical distance of the text itself, but also the geographical distance in Shakespeare's narrative. In addition, the racial tension between white and Asian groups in the Harehills community of Leeds in 2001, which formed the social context for Graham's and Hoggett's transposition, offered little that was comparable to the Venetian military context used by Shakespeare (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.10). Perhaps this was why Graham and Hoggett made only fleeting reference to the fight with the Turks, focusing rather on the territorial, rather than the racial conflict inherent in this social context (see p.162). Instead, the parallel that Graham noted from his experience of filming

the advert in the pub, was the relative isolation of the bouncers, '[h]ere in the mock pub was the 'community' at the centre, protected from the 'invaders' by the 'outsider'.' (2011) It is this sense of Othello as an outsider because of his race, but also a protector, that resonates most strongly with Shakespeare's context in which Othello protects Cyprus from invasion by the Turks. In his post on the Frantic Assembly Othello Forum, Graham goes on to note that whilst:

Dark Heart showed us the world [. . .] It is important to stress that Dark Heart was fundamental at the beginning but in many ways you keep it as an inspiration, as a reference and then move on. We get inspired and then disappear into our own world so I don't think there were conscious comments [in the production] on the discussions raised by Dark Heart.  
(2011)

This lack of comment seems at odds with the emphasis placed on *Dark Heart* as the inspiration for their contemporary setting, and their subsequent research into the racial tension in Leeds in 2001, in the Education Pack prepared to accompany the production (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, pp.4, 5, 8 and 10). Within the pack itself Graham and Hoggett seem aware of this discrepancy between their research and the content of the production itself, noting that the chosen socio-political situation for their adaptation 'is abundant in issues and complexities', but that '[m]uch of our discussion as a company will have no place or recognition in the final version' (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.10). This comment is not remarkable for the process it describes since many ideas are discarded as a result of trial and error in rehearsal, but rather for the fact of its inclusion in the education pack. It suggests a tension in the adaptation process between the complexity of socio-political circumstances into which the play has been transposed, and the text itself. In *Dark Heart*, Nick Davies provided a detailed analysis of the economic, political and social factors that led to the rise in crime

and violence on the estate in Leeds (1998, pp.125-8). In attempting to make such a complex present-day context serve an historical text, there is a danger that the context becomes a superficial representation of the décor and behaviours associated with it. How then, did Graham and Hoggett negotiate this tension between the text and their chosen contemporary context? Did the transposition of *Othello* to this context offer something new?

### ***The Adaptation Process and Production***

Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan<sup>xli</sup> have already documented the process of this adaptation in some detail. I will therefore focus my analysis on how their adaptation process and the production in performance was affected by their aim to create contemporary theatre that balances text with movement, music, and design. The discussion of the adaptation will be based upon the performance that I saw at Plymouth Theatre Royal on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2008 (*Othello*, 2008a). This will be supplemented by close analysis of the DVD of the production (*Othello*, 2008b) that was sold by Frantic Assembly, together with a copy of the adapted text (Shakespeare, 2008). In comparing Graham's and Hoggett's adaptation to the text of *Othello*, I will refer to The Arden Shakespeare edition (1997) since this is mentioned as their initial source text (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.8).

### ***Adapting Othello: The Text***

Graham's and Hoggett's description of their process in arriving at a rehearsal draft of the text highlights several areas of focus: transposing the action to the Yorkshire pub, finding sections that could be communicated visually or through movement rather than text, structure, and character

development (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, pp.8-9). The removal of anachronistic phrases from the text, such as most mentions of swords, demonstrates a concern with maintaining the integrity of the new context. This, at times, extends to altering a word, Desdemona's 'Faith, that's with drinking;' recontextualising the military practice of standing watch to an activity more suited to the pub (Shakespeare, 2008, p.57, adapted from Shakespeare, 1997, 3.3: 290). Elsewhere, similar minimal alteration was employed to update outmoded phrases in order to make the story clear, with Cassio's 'betimes in the morning' replaced with 'Tomorrow' (Shakespeare, 1997, 2.3: 324 and Shakespeare, 2008, 47). One such alteration of 'abroad' to 'about' (Shakespeare, 2008, 35), caused some debate between actors and directors. The debate focused on Iago's line expressing his suspicion that Othello has slept with Emilia:

And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets  
He's done my office.

(Shakespeare, 1997, 386-7)

Rocha Allan records in his rehearsal diary that:

In this session it was the word 'abroad' that started a debate about the world that Frantic were trying to create for their version of Othello. The directors were explaining to the actors that for them the play only worked if the world of the characters was connected to the pub that they were in. It was the relationships between those who frequent the pub that drives the narrative, and to the ear of a modern audience, the word abroad, is something other, a place overseas, not something close at hand

(2008, pp.11-12).

Graham and Hoggett then were concerned to ensure that where the meanings of words had changed, they were altered to ensure that the audience understood what was being said. The attention to detail in removing potentially anachronistic phrases also ensured that the language used was complementary to the setting within a pub.

Due to the extensive editing and rearrangement of the text, such alterations were minimal, involving a single word that was usually in keeping with Shakespeare's vocabulary, rather than attempts at constructing new lines or paraphrasing with modern equivalents. Graham's and Hoggett's choice to not update the language was both a reflection of their response to Shakespeare's writing and a concern to avoid criticisms of being reductive. In a reply to a question on the *Othello Forum*, Graham explained:

We knew that by setting it in a modern context we would run the risk of being accused of being reductive. Changing the language would most probably have been guilty of that

(2009).

However, the extent of this careful retention of Shakespeare's language placed greater emphasis on the few moments where an updated vocabulary was employed. Several of these, such as Desdemona's offstage exclamation, 'Fuck, it's me Dad' that followed Brabantio's exit into the toilets to catch Othello with his daughter, were interpolations developed during rehearsal. The most notable scripted example was Othello's announcement that 'The Turks are fucked!' (Shakespeare, 2008, p.39) which replaced the original declaration that 'the Turks are drowned' (*Shakespeare, 1997, 2.1: 210*) whilst retaining the structure of the original line. Such disjunctive additions elicited delighted laughter from the mainly student audience present at Plymouth Theatre Royal on the evening that I viewed the production. However, for some members of the audience, these interpolations were more grating for their infrequency in what was otherwise an edit that had not updated Shakespeare's vocabulary (Philips, 2009, p.293). Elsewhere, the meaning of Shakespeare's words was altered, most notably in Montano's observation that there was 'A Turkish fleet, bearing up to the Cypress!' (Shakespeare, 2008, p.34) Through the simple

addition of an adjective and a change of spelling, the country became the name of a pub, and Shakespeare's Turkish fleet becomes a rival gang. This play on the word Cyprus provides a potential moment of intertextual gratification for an audience that know both the original play and the cultural situation to which it has been transposed, whilst simultaneously creating an accessible cultural reference for audiences less familiar with *Othello* but who understand the contemporary context<sup>xlii</sup>.

Graham's and Hoggett's choice to retain Shakespeare's text whilst removing or recontextualising most of the anachronistic phrases, had clear benefits in appealing both to teachers bringing students who were studying the text, and to the new audience of Shakespeare supporters that they were hoping to attract. However, in order to create a performance that was short enough to run without an interval, and seamlessly patch up the gaps left in the story through removing the Venetian military context, significant editing and collaging of the text was necessary. To these ends, Graham and Hoggett not only intercut speeches, but also scenes. The former technique shortened scenes, as in Cassio's discussion with Iago about his demotion in which Graham and Hoggett condensed two speeches into one (Shakespeare, 2008, p.46 adapted from Shakespeare 1997, 2.3: 298-300, 285-288, 300-303 and 307). The problem with cutting the text to fit the new context was that some scenes needed to be cut more heavily, potentially unbalancing the pace and structure of the play in performance, a factor of which Graham and Hoggett were aware (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.8). Scenes 4.1 and 4.2 were particularly challenging in this respect since there were large amounts of contextual material that needed removal, such as the official nature of Lodovico's arrival from Venice with letters from the Duke (4.1: 213-282), and

Emilia’s status as Desdemona’s lady-in-waiting (4.2: 1-20 and 93-111). This was further compounded by Graham’s and Hoggett’s interpretation of the play: ‘[o]ur response to reading *Othello* was that this, at its heart, was a domestic play’ (transcribed from Graham and Hoggett, 2008b). Their focus on marital relationships led to less editing in scenes between Othello and Desdemona, and between Iago and Othello, the latter forming ‘fixed points around which the rest of the scenes built up to and fell away from.’ (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.8) The table in figure 3.1 demonstrates the potential distortion to the play’s structure caused by these influences on the editing process<sup>xliii</sup>.

Section starts	Characters on stage	Line reference	No. of lines	No. of lines in the adaptation	% of lines cut
<i>Exit Cassio</i>	Othello and Iago	4.1: 167-212	45	37	18%
<i>Enter Lodovico and Desdemona</i>	Othello, Iago, Desdemona, and Lodovico (Desdemona exits 4.1: 260 and Othello exits 4.1: 263)	4.1: 213-282	69	21	70%
<i>Enter Othello and Emilia</i>	Othello and Emilia (Emilia exits 4.2: 19)	4.2: 1-23	23	9	61%
<i>Enter Desdemona</i>	Desdemona and Othello	4.2: 24-92	68	57	16%
<i>Enter Emilia</i>	Othello, Desdemona, Emilia (Othello exits 4.2: 96 and Emilia exits 4.2: 108)	4.2: 93-111	18	3	83%
<i>Enter Iago and Emilia</i>	Desdemona, Iago and Emilia	4.2: 112-173	61	27	56%

**Figure 3.1**  
**Lines edited in Frantic Assembly’s *Othello* (Shakespeare, 2008, pp. 70-77)**  
**compared to the Arden edition (Shakespeare, 1997)**

Simple comparison of the numbers of lines cut is not necessarily a reliable indicator of stage time or impact in performance. In this section, however, since movement sequences were not introduced to augment the plot, the comparison does demonstrate the structural effects of Graham’s and

Hoggett's focus on the domestic narrative. The two largest sections with the least amount of cutting are between Desdemona and Othello, and Iago and Othello, whilst the heaviest cutting occurred in sections referencing Emilia's duties as a lady-in-waiting. The brevity of Emilia's first section (4.2: 1-23) was resolved by including her in the group that enter with Lodovico and Desdemona, from which Othello was able to take her aside to question her about Desdemona's contact with Cassio (Shakespeare, 2008, 72). However, the cuts to 4.2: 93-111 were more problematic, particularly in respect of finding new reasons for both Emilia's and Iago's entrances in this section as a consequence of repositioning Emilia as Desdemona's friend. Rather than attempting to construct text to cover this, Graham and Hoggett effectively created a new scene by intercutting Emilia and Desdemona's conversation with one between Othello and Iago by repositioning 4.1: 201-210.

### **OTHELLO**

I cry you mercy then:

I took you for that cunning whore (of Venice)<sup>1</sup>

That married with Othello (You! Mistress!)

*OTHELLO exits through fire exit*

*EMILIA enters.*

### **EMILIA**

How do you madam? How do you, my good lady?

### **DESDEMONA**

'Faith, half asleep.

I cannot weep; nor answer have I none

*The walls open to reveal OTHELLO outside. IAGO joins him.*

### **OTHELLO**

Get me some poison, Iago; this night: I'll not  
expostulate with her, lest her body and beauty  
unprovide my mind again: this night, Iago.

<sup>1</sup>underlined bracketed words show where the adaptation has cut the end of a line.

(Shakespeare, 2008, pp.75-6

adapted from Shakespeare, 1997, 4.2: 90-92, 4.2:98-99 and 4.1: 201-203).

As the words in brackets demonstrate, Graham and Hoggett were not averse to cutting words from lines in order to ensure compatibility with the contemporary context. However, even here they were not tempted to use constructions to maintain the iambic pentameter of the lines. Repositioning Othello's and Iago's conversation about killing Desdemona, imaginatively extended Emilia's and Desdemona's conversation without the need for creating new text, by intercutting between two simultaneous conversations. It also reinforced the intensity of Othello's jealousy by placing the conversation after he has questioned both Emilia and Desdemona, thereby emphasising his continued, although misplaced, trust in Iago. The stage directions in this section also indicate that rather than relying only on cutting and collaging the text to convey the narrative, Graham and Hoggett were clearly considering how design elements could contribute to telling the story, a small section of the pub wall being removed to indicate Othello and Iago were outside the pub (see figure 3.2 on the next page).

Finalised at the end of the second week of a six-week rehearsal period, the published text of the adaptation in many ways was a rehearsal draft. This was to facilitate selling the combined programme and printed adaptation at the performances. It was during these first two weeks of rehearsals that Graham and Hoggett focused on character details, with the cast suggesting reinstating lines 'that they feel essential to their performance.' (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.9) Rocha Allan recalls that 'Charlie [Aiken] who played Iago was a real kind of strong Shakespeare lover so he talked some bits back in' (2010, p.4).



**Figure 3.2**  
**Iago (Charles Aiken) and Othello (Jimmy Akingbola) confer outside,**  
**whilst inside Emilia (Leila Crerar) comforts Desdemona (Claire-Louise Cordell)**  
**Photo: Manuel Harlan**

In order to bring the actors into the process of textual adaptation at this stage, Graham and Hoggett needed to clearly convey how their approach would also use movement, music, and design to tell parts of the story. Rocha Allan recalls:

...we were basically doing physical stuff in the morning and then the afternoon was spent kind of working on the text. So, it was really a process of kind of preening and paring the text right down to the bare bones

(2010, p.3)

He goes on to note three areas of focus that guided this process: 'awareness of the length of time, so knowing that it had to kind of be cut down', 'looking for what actually needed to be said', and 'finding the bits of it that fitted the world' (2010, p.4). This resulted in a text that highlighted sections of storytelling through movement or the use of design, but the stage directions remained vague since they were yet to be developed. Rocha Allan reflected that 'by the time we'd published the things that people were saying we hadn't finished yet so we were still making discoveries' (2010, p.5). Publishing the text at this point

in the rehearsal process could potentially have become a negative constriction on the process, preventing further alterations. However, Rocha Allan recalls that whilst 'there weren't very many changes' this was 'because we had put the work in prior, rather than saying, "Let's stick to this."' (2010, p.10) Indeed the changes are only noticeable through a close comparison between the DVD and the text. Small alterations in the section quoted above, led to moving Emilia's (Leila Crerar) entrance a few lines earlier to ensure that she overheard Othello calling Desdemona (Claire-Louise Cordwell) a whore. This knowledge is essential to her later explanation to Iago that 'He call'd her whore', thus her entrance made her knowledge of the event explicit for the audience (Shakespeare 2008, p.76 adapted from Shakespeare, 1997, 4.2: 122). Perhaps the most noticeable cut is a large section of text between Iago, Desdemona, and Emilia, which originally marked their arrival in Cyprus (Shakespeare, 2008, pp.36-39 adapted from Shakespeare, 1997, 1.2: 102-119 and 124-162). Re-contextualized as repartee whilst they await Othello's return from fighting the rival gang, the choice to cut these pages, whilst removing Iago's bickering with Emilia and belittling of women, maintains the momentum of the victorious re-entrances after the fight with Othello arriving only twenty-five lines after Cassio.

### ***Adapting Othello: The Process of Creating Physical Theatre***

Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling note in *Devising Performance* that '[p]hysical devising processes usually need a commitment of time extending far longer than traditional rehearsal periods' (2006, p.188). Whilst, at six weeks, Frantic Assembly has the longest rehearsal period of the companies included in these case studies, they had to compromise due to budgetary limitations by reducing the period from seven weeks to six (Graham and Hoggett, p.12). One

of the challenges of physical theatre is the combination of acting and movement skills it requires. Depending on the requirements of the text, Graham's and Hoggett's casting process is adapted to either 'look for actors who can move' or 'dancers who can act' (2011, p.6). It was clear that *Othello* would require strong acting skills. Only Eddie Kay, who played Montano, had formally trained in dance<sup>xliiv</sup> rather than acting, whilst Jamie Reid-Quarrell, Cassio in this production, was the only other cast member to have significant physical theatre experience (Shakespeare, 2008, pp.8-9). Having worked with Frantic Assembly on two previous productions, *Hymns* (1999), and *Dirty Wonderland* (2005), Rocha Allan observed that during rehearsals Kay 'almost acts as, I suppose if they were a musical, as a kind of dance captain [. . .] he often keeps an eye and offers bits of advice to other people' (2010, p.3). Given a cast with such a mixed ability in movement skills, how did Graham and Scott manage the process of devising the physical sequences that were such an important part of their adaptation?

In addition to movement skills, Heddon and Milling argue that physical theatre requires 'a sense of ensemble', with its complex physical interaction between actors, strengthened by a shared understanding of physical and visual composition' (2006, p.178). Graham's and Hoggett's rehearsal process reflected these demands by including aspects of training which were not only aimed at developing the fitness and physical skills required by the production, but also building this awareness of ensemble. Rocha Allan commented on one of these morning movement sessions, in which a rigorous warm up was:

[f]ollowed by movement exercises designed to get the cast moving together. The exercises are quite simple, but what they begin to create amongst the cast is complex. It teaches them how to move together, but because what they are being asked to do isn't going into the show [. . .]

they can just concentrate on the movement and reacting to what the people around them are doing, helping the cast to move as one (2008, p.7).

The development of this awareness of interacting through movement was essential, since Graham and Hoggett directly involved the actors in collaboratively devising the physical sections. Rocha Allan describes one such session in which the actors were set a series of tasks:

The first thing the actors did was to create movement based on leading from and isolating different parts of their bodies. [ . . .]once they had created a string of six movements, the cast were asked to fit it into two bars of eight, stressing the movements of 2, 4, 6 beats of the first bar, and the 2, 4, 7 on the second bar. After this, they were asked to learn each other's moves to form longer sequences of movement (2008, p.12).

This task-based approach has several benefits, which I noted whilst taking part in a similar exercise during a Frantic Assembly physical theatre workshop run by associate Steve Kirkham (2012). The speed with which a sequence could be built by repeating the movements devised with variations such as size or emphasis was one notable benefit. Additionally, because the initial movements are developed by the person performing them, the devising process allowed the performer to start working within their physical comfort zone, affording greater confidence when later completing the additional tasks which lead to variation in those movements. The final phase, learning each other's movement sequence, in addition to lengthening the sequence, had multiple benefits in terms of extending each individuals physical vocabulary, as well as their ability to closely observe others movements and confidence in communicating physically.

Rather than dance-based choreography, these task built processes created movement based in everyday behaviors that were more appropriate to

the pub setting. By capturing the material generated in this way on video, Graham and Hoggett were then able to select and develop movements from the sequences created (Rocha Allan, 2008, p.11). Whilst then, this process clearly relied on collaboration between the directors and the actors, the directors retained the overall responsibility for the shape of the final sequences, not only through editing but also by setting the parameters of the creative activity through clearly defined tasks. Graham and Hoggett reflect that the benefit of this task-based process is that it 'allow[s] your performers much more creative input' (Frantic Assembly, 2011, p.16). They go on to suggest that:

Shaping theatre and choreography requires the outside eye of a director and this objective influence can liberate the performer to be brave, take risks and try new things. As directors/choreographers we are also liberated, as the performer is now providing a palette so much larger and richer than our own imaginations could provide

(Frantic Assembly, 2011, p.16).

One benefit of retaining an 'outside eye' in this process was that Graham and Hoggett could ensure that the physical skills of the cast were used to the best effect. Rocha Allan commented on the importance of these choices, noting that 'by putting the right people in groups they make amazing work' (2008, p.11). A common grouping that occurred in moments where physical prowess was required included Montano (Kay), and Cassio (Reid-Quarrell). This was used both during the celebration after winning the fight against rival gang, the Turks (Shakespeare, 2008, p.36), and to show Cassio getting drunk (Shakespeare, 2008, p.43). Montano and Cassio opened the celebration sequence with an acrobatic series of jumps, lifts and handstands on and around the pub seating and pool table. Roderigo (Richard James-Neale) then joined them in a slightly less acrobatic series of supports before other members of the cast were introduced. Later in the sequence, Kay's and Reid-Quarrell's experience was

again utilised, in this instance to create a complex series of lifts with Emilia (Leila Crerar) and Bianca (Minnie Crowe). This sequence of lifts occurred downstage, whilst behind simpler celebratory movements, such as Roderigo and Iago lifting Lodovico (Marshall Griffin) onto the pool table, took place. In this way, a sense of physical energy and skill was maintained, whilst ensuring that moments that required the greatest physical technique were supported by the involvement of the two most experienced members of the cast.

### ***Adapting Othello: Use of Movement***

Whilst Graham and Hoggett restricted most of their textual alterations to editing and collaging Shakespeare's text, rather than rewriting it, their use of movement went further, replacing some of the text and creating new scenes that reinforced the transposition to the pub. This approach led to text based and movement based sections in performance, with little overlap between the two. Graham explained that this approach was 'all about balance [ . . . ] If you have this incredible textual moment, leave it alone. And the same with movement, don't try and throw words at it.' (transcribed from Graham and Hoggett, 2009b, 43:39-43:42) He went on to explain how Bryony Lavery's comments on the movement work they created for her to write about during the research and development phase for *Stockholm* (2007) had informed this approach:

. . . she gave us the confidence by saying, "I can't write that. I can't come close to writing that. Why would you want me to write all over that? That's beautiful. That exists in its own form." So I think for different shows and within shows we're always working out what tells the story best, and sometimes it's about taking words out, letting the physicality tell the story, as in *Othello*, a lot of exposition is done physically [ . . . ] we felt that with something like that it would be very awkward to actually deliver that text and have a lot of choreography underneath, so there's very little in that show where the two meet

(transcribed from Graham and Hoggett, 2009b, 44:00-44:56).

However, in replacing text with movement, Graham and Hoggett were undertaking the very transposition of medium that Lavery had refused to undertake on *Stockholm*. Apart from the demands of the established Frantic Assembly aesthetic, what then were the benefits of replacing text with movement? In his description of how Graham and Hoggett experimented in the rehearsal room with whether to transpose one section of text into movement, Rocha Allan observed:

I think right from the beginning they'd [Graham and Hoggett] had an instinct about playing it as a dumb show, but what they did was worked the scene anyway [. . .] and then played it with a piece of music over it and just said, "Talk in a whisper and let's have a look," and we all sat back and were just like, "Yeah, that works much better"

(2010, 7).

The section in question involved two conversations, one between Desdemona and Cassio which directly replaced the text (Shakespeare, 1997, 3.4: 108-140 and 165-8), and one between Iago and Emilia which was an addition to the text, creating an imagined exchange between Iago and Emilia. Some aspects of the text, such as Iago's urging of Cassio to 'go and importune her' (Shakespeare, 1997, 3.4: 109) were easily transposed directly into movement, in this instance by Iago pushing Cassio towards Desdemona as they entered. However, elsewhere most of the detail of the dialogue was lost, although Desdemona's reassuring gestures such as kissing Cassio on the cheek clearly conveyed the general tone of the text. Whilst using movement to simultaneously show two conversations allowed them to be conveyed very quickly, what other benefits might be weighed against the loss of detail that would normally have been provided by dialogue? One benefit, as Rocha Allan noted was that this physical approach allowed for mirroring between the two conversations, most noticeably in the kiss:

It's about reading the physical conversation and in that section you could, really well. You saw exactly what was going on and what it meant was that you could play both scenes at the same time [. . .] one that ends well and one that doesn't end well and there was a kiss at the same [time] . . . so basically you can play mirrors physically by watching stuff on stage and you can play echoes which you can't really with text . . .

(2010, 6-7)

The distance created by the seen, but unheard conversations, therefore invited the audience to reflect on the relationships between the characters, comparing their actions rather than their words. It also allowed Graham and Hoggett the possibility of creating a new scene that extended Iago's and Emilia's relationship through movement rather than newly written dialogue, allowing Emilia to challenge Iago about her suspicions directly after she has observed the argument between Othello and Desdemona about the loss of the handkerchief (Shakespeare, 2008, pp.62-6, adapted from Shakespeare, 1997, 3.4: 23-107 and 158-164). Whilst the detail of this challenge remains unclear, the audience is left with a sense that this Emilia, unlike Shakespeare's Emilia, is both clearly suspicious of Iago's activities and, whilst she stands up to him, is also silenced by him. In contrast, Shakespeare does not explicitly reveal whether Emilia fails to recognise Iago's plotting or refuses to pursue the matter either through her own fear that Iago might be involved, or through fear of retribution. Thus, Emilia's suspicion that there is a plot against Desdemona might variously be interpreted as a general misgiving or, since Iago is present, a veiled accusation:

I will be hanged if some eternal villain [. . .]  
Have not devised this slander, I'll be hanged else!  
(Shakespeare, 1997, 4.2: 132-5)

Responding to my query on the *Frantic Assembly Forum* about the development of this conversation, Graham provided an insight into verbal content behind this physical conversation:

Our little scene with Emilia and Iago is an invitation to the audience to recognise what might be being said between them.

What are you up to?  
Trust me  
This is getting out of hand  
She will see we are talking. Act natural  
I want you to stop this

None of this is made explicit but is certainly implicit in the awkward and aggressive conversation happening in the corner.

As Desdemona greets Cassio with a kiss, both ignorant and innocent of what is happening around them, Iago kisses Emilia firmly to suppress her and keep up appearances. The two kisses were played out in opposition. One is innocence and trust the other is toxic and controlling. The same act but used for very different effects.

(Graham, 2012)

As with alterations to the text discussed above, Graham's and Hoggett's focus here appears to be concerned with the domestic interactions between the characters in the pub and, as such, works because it is an extension of physical exchanges that the audience has read earlier in the adaptation. In an earlier scene between these four characters, Cassio had demonstrated his popularity with Desdemona and Emilia as he celebrated after winning the fight with the rival gang. Whilst he was stood on the pool table with his shirt over his head, Desdemona jokingly pulled his trousers down. Emilia then flirted with him, lifting her top, which ended in the pair engaged in mock coitus. This moment not only visually replaced Iago's brief reference to his suspicion that Emilia had been unfaithful with Cassio (Shakespeare, 1997, 2.1: 305), it also highlighted Iago's jealousy conveyed in his facial reaction to this, which he then covered with a joke at Emilia's expense (Shakespeare, 2008, p.36 adapted from Shakespeare,

1997, 2.1: 100-102). The two different kisses in the later scene then, build on this contrast between the naivety Cassio exhibits in how others might perceive his playful behaviour with the women, and Iago's jealous concern to control or suppress Emilia's behaviour.

From the description above, it will be apparent that the movement was significant in creating the world of the play. Indeed the performance opened with eight minutes of movement, which established the context and the relationships between the characters. Graham and Hoggett explained that:

. . . it wasn't to fill you in on any bits that were necessarily cut from the text, but to create hopefully a vocabulary in your mind where you start to understand nuances, physical nuances, and start to understand the language of the room, of how status shifts in the room . . .

(transcribed from Graham and Hoggett, 2008b)

Accompanied by the energetic beat of Hybrid's *Just for Today* (2006), with its menacing string undertones, the movement consisted of a variety of familiar activities for the location, such as flirting, drinking, or playing pool. Gradually exaggerated, these activities briefly turned into sections of synchronized movements, before dropping back into naturalistic interactions again. The effect was not of placing sections of dance into the action, but of everyday movements becoming a type of dance, which has come to be the defining thrust of Frantic Assembly's physical style.

Opening a Shakespeare adaptation with such a long movement sequence was a bold choice, and one that Graham and Hoggett acknowledged was a break from the way that they had chosen to introduce movement into their past work:

. . . in the past we've made work where we've introduced physical language quite slowly and quite delicately and . . . kind of coerced the audience into trusting the fact that they can sit and watch something

move in front of them and it will communicate in the same way as a textual scene would

(transcribed from Graham and Hoggett, 2008b).

Why, then, with a play that would be strongly associated with text, did they choose to deviate from this established practice? One advantage would be that it would reassure their established audience base that the production would still contain movement. In terms of new audience members who had booked to see the performance on the basis that it was a play by Shakespeare, it quickly established the environment of the transposition and the approach that Frantic Assembly were taking to the adaptation. Whilst in the quote above, Graham and Hoggett suggest that the overture was more concerned with introducing the audience to reading the physical interactions between characters, elsewhere they propose that it was an essential part of condensing the text:

We also tried to be economical with the textual exposition. There are several aspects of the text that are merely about setting the scene and giving a taste of the history. We have aimed to condense them into a physical Overture [. . .]

(Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, 29).

The heaviest cutting occurred at the beginning of the play (Shakespeare, 1997, 1.2 and 1.3) since this established the political background to the tragedy. The removal of Othello's military posting to Cyprus, and significant shortening of Brabantio's accusations against him for stealing his daughter, not only meant that a new way of communicating each character's status needed to be found, but also references to Othello as a cultural outsider in the dialogue were significantly reduced. The overture therefore played an essential role in recontextualising rank in terms of the gang, without the need to alter text. Graham and Hoggett reflected that this overture as a means of exposition was:

. . . a very different approach for us on this show to actually present movement in this way. It's less generous, arguably, but I think the challenge has its rewards in that the audience is suddenly very clear that its already happening, its already taking place, and its not going to be spoken words that are going to get you there, its watching interaction, its watching environment, and starting to train yourself to look for the little coincidences between people and responses to each other  
(transcribed from Graham and Hoggett, 2008b).

The overture attempted to do two complex things: present Othello's rise to leadership of the gang, and establish what Graham and Hoggett termed, 'Iago Vision' (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.30).



**Figure 3.3**  
**Othello (Jimmy Akingbola) reclining on the pool table**  
**Photo: Manuel Harlan**

In establishing Othello's rise to leadership, the 'racial tension in the pub' that Graham and Hoggett reference was clearly developed during this sequence (2008, p.29). A tense moment when, in response to Othello's entrance, Iago, Cassio, and Montano stopped playing pool and stood watching him until Brabantio entered and handed him a drink, emphasised Othello as an outsider. Othello's first interaction at the pool table in which Iago offered him a black cue, was likewise a subtle acknowledgement of difference between Othello and the Caucasian drinkers around him. A clear link was made between physical

prowess and leadership by Othello evicting two thugs from the pub. The culmination of the celebration in response to this, with gang members dancing around Othello as he reclined on the pool table, confirmed his leadership (see figure 3.3 above). However, even whilst confirming his leadership, the sense of separation was continued, albeit with Othello now inside rather than outside the group.

In order to show Iago as 'an opportunist bent on revenge rather than a criminal genius', Graham and Hoggett developed movements throughout the play where the audience was directed not only to look at what Iago was observing, but also his interpretation of those events (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.30). A sequence in the overture established this Iago Vision technique. Sitting on the back of the red, padded corner seat and lit by a spotlight Iago watched Othello and Cassio playing pool together, with a look of intense hatred on his face. As Desdemona joined the game, she took Cassio's cue. Othello offered his own black cue in its place, which she took. He then leaned over her whilst she made the shot, before taking the cue himself and holding it out for her to rub chalk on the end. This rather clichéd exchange seems rather heavy-handed, perhaps purposely so, in order to reflect Iago's obsessive focus on sexually provocative behaviour. The sequence concluded with Emilia making an advance to Iago that he rejected, a reference to the problems between Emilia and Iago caused by his jealousy that were developed later in the production. This concentration on Iago and Othello during the overture clearly echoed the focus that Graham and Hoggett had chosen in terms of cutting the text, using the relationship between them as a central point around which the narratives of the other characters became twisted.

Whilst the concept of Iago Vision provided interesting theatrical opportunities to explore Iago's jealousy and opportunism, in execution it rarely went beyond using a spotlight to highlighting Iago's reactions. One sequence that did attempt further development of this theme was Iago's soliloquy, in which he revealed his suspicion that Emilia had been unfaithful to him (Shakespeare, 2008, pp.35-6, adapted from Shakespeare, 1997, 1.3: 386-393). During the soliloquy, Emilia and Desdemona began a provocative movement sequence that culminated with them both lying on the pool table with their backs arched. This was one of the few moments where Graham and Hoggett combined movement and dialogue. The replication through movement of Iago's vocalized suspicion here served to reinforce his jealousy as the motive for his actions. Denoted by the stylized movements and pink lighting, this brief insight into Iago's mind remained a solitary example of how Iago Vision might have been developed.

### ***The Use of Design Elements in Adaptation***

As my description above of the movement makes clear, the furniture and pool table were used in ways that went beyond a naturalistic interpretation of behaviour in a pub. In many respects, the sparsely decorated back room of the pub with its games machine (see figure 3.2 on p.134) evoked the working class pub environment described in *Dark Heart*. Despite a wall that could be folded back to reveal the car park outside, and a section of wall that could be revolved to reveal the ladies toilet, this set essentially represented a single location. However, hinged walls and a moveable pool table opened up possibilities that went beyond the constraints of a naturalistic setting. Graham and Hoggett recall that designer, Laura Hopkins, gave them strict instructions that these

features 'were NOT to be used merely for scene changes.' (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.27) When the Company moved to the Theatre Royal's TR2 facility in Plymouth for the final two weeks of rehearsal, they were able to experiment with these features, leading to the creation of some of the most memorable visual moments from the production. Amongst these was Othello pushing back against the wall until it became a V-shape, restraining him as he tried to escape the horror of his actions after strangling Desdemona on the pool table (Shakespeare, 2008, p.88 adapted from Shakespeare, 1997, 5.2: 273-279). However, it was the sequence in which Cassio become inebriated (Shakespeare, 2008, pp.42-4) that the importance of design in aiding Graham's and Hoggett's focus on balancing text with other elements of performance, came to the fore. Through extensive collaging, Graham and Hoggett quickly set up Iago's inducement of Cassio to drink:

**[IAGO]**

Lieutenant! A stoup of wine?

**CASSIO**

Not tonight, good Iago.

**IAGO**

A measure to the health of black Othello.

**CASSIO**

I must to the watch.

**IAGO**

One cup . . .

(Shakespeare, 2008, p.42,  
adapted from Shakespeare, 1997, 2.3: 26-7, 30, 28-9, 12, and 36).

As Iago, Cassio, Montano and Lodovico exited, the lights dimmed to an overhead spot on the pool table, transforming it into a bed for Othello and Desdemona. Their slow, entwining movements accompanied by the strings and haunting female vocals of Hybrid's remix of Harry Gregson Williams' *Evacuating London*<sup>xlv</sup>, culminated in Othello's and Desdemona's expression of love and contentment, 'If I were now to die, / 'Twere now to be most happy . . .'  
(Shakespeare, 2008, p.42 adapted from Shakespeare, 1997, 2.1: 187-197).

The lovers remained kissing in an embrace as the general wash was restored, and the gang re-entered to gather around the pool table with shot glasses. Only after these had been drunk, did Othello and Desdemona exit, the two group's lack of acknowledgement of each other clearly maintaining the two separate spaces that the pool table momentarily represented. It is in these transitional moments between scenes that the influence of film on Graham's and Hoggett's work is most noticeable, with this moment in particular echoing a dissolve between shots, with one scene placed over the other.

Many of the film techniques that Graham and Hoggett apply to their work were learnt from a film course with David Hinton in 2004 (2009, p.55). One such technique that Graham and Hoggett employ in structuring their work, is 'when cutting from one shot to another, there should be a difference of approximately 30 percent in terms of the framing of the shot' (2009, p.55). This can be observed in the transition described above between the tight spotlight on the pool table creating the theatrical equivalent of a close up shot, which is juxtaposed with a general wash covering the whole stage, the equivalent of a wide angle shot. Graham's and Hoggett's fascination with developing theatrical equivalents of film techniques clearly had a substantial effect on the structuring, as well as the aesthetic style of the adaptation. The short scene in which Othello and Iago plan Desdemona's murder, discussed on page 132 above, which intercut the conversation between Desdemona and Emilia provides a clear example. Here, lighting was used to create a tight spot on Iago and Othello, emulating a two shot framed by the doorway (see figure 3.2 on p.134). Thus, these short scenes that Graham and Hoggett create to intercut longer scenes, not only mimic the narrative pacing of film by minimising the length of any given section, but also actively encourage the audience to compare actions

or conversations. Returning to the bravado of the drinking scene that is intercut with the gentle love making scene between Othello and Desdemona, Graham noted in a reply on the *Othello Forum* that ‘the intention is that the energetic and the fragile get emphasised by their opposition’ (2009).



**Figure 3.4**  
**Cassio (Jami Reid-Quarrell) being lifted above the spinning pool table**  
**Photo: Manuel Harlan**

In this adaptation, Shakespeare’s drinking scene and subsequent fight (1997, 2.1: 58-158) was cut to a mere twenty five lines. The songs and dialogue were replaced by movement which began with the group slowly swaying to indicate the effect of the alcohol on Cassio, and culminated with Cassio struggling to remain upright as the pool table was spun counter clockwise to his clockwise movements (see figure 3.4 above). Finally he fell against the walls which undulated, slowly rolling him along the length of the stage. In this way not only was Cassio’s drunken behaviour shown, but also his inebriated perception of the room that led to his staggering movements and falls. Where this sequence was less successful was in building sufficient reason for Othello’s intervention, and subsequent demotion of Cassio. Initiated

by Roderigo sabotaging Cassio's shot by jostling his pool cue, the loss of the political context caused by this transposition effectively turned Cassio's fight with Roderigo and Montano into a brawl between members of the same gang. This was not a sufficient replacement for the high political stakes of the source text in which Cassio wounds the ex-governor of Cyprus whom Othello has replaced, resulting in Othello's intervention in this fight appear overly harsh in the adaptation. The cutting in this sequence similarly underplayed Iago's role in Cassio's demotion, with the removal of Iago's intimation to Montano that Cassio is unfit for his role by reason of his drink problem. As such, there was no sense of Iago undermining Cassio's position with other members of the gang in order to put pressure on Othello to take decisive action. The design elements then, clearly played a significant role in the structuring this adaptation, enabling Graham and Hoggett to find theatrical approximations of cinematic techniques. The employment of such visual techniques to replace or enhance some aspects of the text suited an audience well versed in reading the visual nuances of modern media.

### ***Choice of Music***

The music that permeates Frantic Assembly's productions contributes to the reputation they have earned for their work being contemporary (Graham and Hoggett, 2011, p.16). Rather than selecting a genre of music, Graham and Hoggett choose one person or group to create a 'soundtrack' for each show, a choice of term that they note is 'an admitted nod towards its filmic implications' (2010, p.46). Hybrid, the band that provided the soundtrack for *Othello*, creates music that is typical of what Graham and Hoggett term the 'bedroom cinematic' style that inspires them, with 'the throb of a punishing techno track that still has

within it the sense of a heart breaking' (2010, p.46). Noting how this soundtrack fitted their transposition of the play to the pub setting, Rocha Allan explained:

. . . there's this sense of build and crescendo, but still in quite a rough sort of urban way, and actually that's exactly what the play's about, or this version of it is, this epic love story [. . .] played in this really rough setting

(2010, p.8).

In devising the overture for this adaptation, Graham and Hoggett note that they were particularly inspired by the 'savage, tight sound of the drum sample' in *Just for Today*, which they asked the actors to translate into the quality of the movements (2010, p.49). However, their use of music goes beyond inspiration for movement, as they use it to inspire and affect many of the exercises that they set for the actors, including working on the script as Rocha Allan noted in his rehearsal diary:

Picking up from page 6; running the first five pages; working in the other characters. Music left playing continuously underneath the scene seems to give the actors an energy and pace as it becomes part of the background noise

(Rocha Allan, 2008, p.6).

In this way the music became a significant influence on the creation of the environment for the adaptation. Whilst 'most of the big set pieces, the opening, the music on the pool table, what Cassio got drunk to, the fight, had all been decided before', the sound designer, Gareth Fry, had the responsibility for editing the soundtrack which included reordering some sections and altering the length of introductions (Rocha Allan, 2010, p.8). To this, he added ambient noises that reflected the urban environment, such as the police siren that broke into the gentle music accompanying the love scene, discussed on page 148 above, between Othello and Desdemona (Shakespeare, 2008, p.42 adapted from Shakespeare, 1997, 2.1: 187-197). Elsewhere these sound effects worked

with visual design elements, such as the car engines that were combined with lighting to momentarily illuminate sections of the fight with the Turks outside the pub, as if caught in the headlights of passing cars (Shakespeare, 2008, p.36). Whilst this combination of music and sound effects ably captured the contemporary inner city environment in which the adaptation was set, it might be argued that the choice of music with such a strong techno beat appears to be at odds with Frantic's aim of appealing to a wider, and in particular, an older, audience. To what extent then, might this adaptation be considered a youth culture version of the play?

### ***Reception: Contemporary or Youth?***

Frantic Assembly's adaptation polarised reviewers. Whilst some praised its relevance for a twenty first century audience<sup>xlvi</sup>, others argued that the radical cutting and working class pub location limited its appeal. Dominic Cavendish reviewing the production for *The Telegraph*, observed that 'Shakespeare's hacked-to-the-bone text feels perfectly suited to the vicious modern context' suggesting that in this approach 'it's as if, trouncing the new-writing competition at a stroke, the Bard had become Broken Britain's finest contemporary chronicler' (2008, np).<sup>xlvii</sup> It is notable that Cavendish's praise here is reserved for Shakespeare rather than his adapters, by which means he effectively appropriates the Bard in support of Conservative ideology. This reinvention of Shakespeare who even from the grave can outperform twenty-first century playwrights writing about their own society, conveniently ignores that the drug use and gang violence that might be cited as examples of a 'Broken Britain', have been added by the adapters. Lyn Gardner for *The Guardian* is similarly concerned to point out the beneficial effects of the adaptation, concluding that

'Shakespeare hasn't been buried, but honoured and imaginatively reinvented for 21<sup>st</sup>-century audiences' (2008, p.38). Such conflation of the man with his writing, points to an underlying anxiety to reinforce the continued importance and relevance of both the playwright and his works in British Theatre in the twenty first century.

Whilst reviewers who proclaimed the adaptation a success reflected this back onto Shakespeare himself, those who found the adaptation objectionable tended to separate not only the writer, but also the text from the performance. Michael Coveney reviewing the production for *The Independent*, lamented the loss of so much of the text, commenting that:

Music, movement and above all, sexy attitude, create a kind of Shakespearean theatre that you won't find at the Globe or the RSC (not yet, anyway). And for some, many even, that's a bonus (2008, np).

By positioning Frantic Assembly's production style in opposition to that currently provided by the RSC and the Globe, Coveney reminds his readers that it is the performance, rather than Shakespeare's text, which is at fault. But his rather ambiguous final statement goes further, reflecting the division between performance styles back onto the audiences that consume them, implying in the process that such audiences are mutually exclusive. Sarah Hemming in the *Financial Times*, noted a similar divide, suggesting this was '[n]ot for those who like their Shakespeare straight, then, but the auditorium on press night was peppered with young people, who sat absolutely gripped' (2008, np).

Hemming's remark is troubling in the way it equates the youth of the audience with the enjoyment of Shakespeare that is not performed 'straight', a term which in itself is problematic, loaded as it is with connotations of textual fidelity. Was Hemming's observation however, an indication that in seeking to create a

contemporary *Othello*, Graham and Hoggett had misjudged and created instead a youth culture Shakespeare<sup>xlviii</sup>?

Jamie Rocha Allan records that concerns were expressed in rehearsal discussions about 'not making the show contemporary in terms of making it 'youth'.' (2008, 1) Given the pub setting, the fights between gangs, the drug taking<sup>xlix</sup>, and the techno soundtrack by Hybrid, such concerns that it might be perceived as a youth culture Shakespeare were well founded (Shakespeare, 2008, 19). One of the adjustments made in response to this concern was the use of broken bottles rather than knives to avoid the play becoming synonymous with knife crime (Rocha Allan, 2008, 1). Following the murder of Ben Kinsella in June 2008, knife crime and its link to inter-racial tensions in gang culture, had become the centre of media debate. Graham and Hoggett replaced knives with an emphasis on using what would be to hand in a pub, thus Iago stabbed his wife with a broken bottle and Othello committed suicide by stabbing himself with a piece of a broken mirror. Whilst these alterations clearly reduced the possibility of attracting criticism for glorifying the use of knives in gang culture, it might be argued that many of the production choices that I have discussed above enhanced its attractiveness to a youth market. This seems at odds with their claim to be aiming the adaptation at a broader audience:

. . .we felt that our production of *Othello* could be marketed to the traditional Shakespeare audiences who may not have been tempted by a Frantic show previously. Equally, our setting for *Othello* (a pub in Leeds) had relevance to the white working class communities around the areas we toured to and was an opportunity to entice the local community to their theatre – perhaps for the first time.

(Graham and Hoggett, 2011, 14)

Rather than an intention to appeal to a youth market, perhaps this apparent contradiction is due to Graham's and Hoggett's own motivations in creating the adaptation which mirrored those often associated with this market. In their introduction to *Shakespeare and Youth Culture*, Hulbert et. al. note 'two key youth objections to Shakespeare: boredom and inaccessibility' (2010, p.2). Graham and Hoggett, in justifying their choice to use Yorkshire accents to create the Northern context for their adaptation, level both these charges at some productions that employ Received Pronunciation:

. . . the challenge then is how to stay true to the language as written whilst at the same time refusing to use a form that, for many people, renders Shakespeare unwatchable, obsolete, boring, irrelevant, elitist  
(Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.5).

In rejecting this form for their production, Graham and Hoggett turned for inspiration to, amongst other sources, several films that have been linked to youth culture including Baz Luhrmann's film *Romeo + Juliet* (1996), and Tim Blake Nelson's *O* (2001) (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.8). This might in part explain the inclusion of so many elements that may be associated with youth culture. But can these performance choices really be claimed to be exclusively of interest to the youth market? The increased crossover of youth and adult cultural consumption that occurred in the first decade of the twenty first century has blurred these divisions<sup>1</sup>. Whilst Shakespeare combined with techno music and dance might not appeal to everyone, age is no longer necessarily a barrier as Basia Kapp's comment on the Frantic Assembly website suggests:

I studied Othello for my O levels and studied the play again when my [son] took his GCSEs. I have seen Othello in several different productions and yours just took my breath away with the way it held the core of the play and then spun off into now and relevant themes. The

dance, the music, the elastic scenery . . . and of course the acting were superb

(2008, np).

With approximately 48%<sup>ii</sup> of the audience for *Othello* over the age of twenty five, perhaps the real barrier that remains is the polarisation of cultural values towards popular adaptations of Shakespeare's plays (Frantic Theatre Company Limited, 2009, p.3). In responses to Frantic Assembly's *Othello*, nowhere was this more crudely spelt out than in a review by Laura Dale for *this is devon* and the comment it received from Melissa Jordan:

As a company touring schools or sink estates, I imagine it would strike a chord with disengaged youths, but to a paying, largely middle-class audience it felt like it had lost the plot

(Dale, 2008, np).

Thank whatever god you believe in this was not the Royal Shakespeare Company who would have rolled out another perfectly spoken production plumped up with a few "celebrities" in order to try and guarantee ticket sales. Frantic Assembly have made this play accessible to everyone - not just the middle classes - and I challenge anyone not to walk out electrified by the energy the dynamic ensemble generate on that stage. It's about time Shakespeare got rejuvenated . . .

(Jordan, 2008, np).

### ***Representing Status in the Adaptation***

Whilst the youthful casting that included only one middle-aged character, Desdemona's father, Brabantio, might not have been aimed at creating a youth culture adaptation, it did have a significant effect on the play. Jamie Rocha Allan explained that:

[. . .] it's slightly different to the original text because obviously in the text part of it is how much older he [Othello] is than Desdemona as well, whereas I think in this, although you could probably guess that Jimmy was older, he was still kind of part of their generation. So the idea is that Brabantio's lot sat in the main part of the pub and were the older kind of people, who are the generals in the original, and that [. . .] Cassio and Desdemona and Iago and whatnot are [. . .] the ones that are sort of coming up and we decided that the snooker room was their bit

(2010, p.6).

This choice to show only the area of the pub used by the younger members of the community removed an entire tier of leadership from the play, to whom Othello was responsible and by whom his authority was legitimised. With the removal of these legitimising social hierarchies, Othello's actions become subject only to what the gang members themselves deem acceptable. Indeed, in his review of the adaptation, Stephen Philips observes that '[i]f Othello is just beating up and robbing the Turkish Fleet, then he is simply a thug, so it's hardly surprising that he becomes a wife-beater' (2009, p.293). Although I would argue that the problem here is not in portraying Othello as a gang leader per se, Philips' comment is useful here in highlighting the problem created by replacing a military culture with a gang culture. Whilst the codes of behaviour and consequences of breaking in a military context are readily understood by an audience; behaviour codes for a gang rely heavily on the culture of the individual group, and therefore are not readily accessible and must therefore be established. Graham's and Hoggett's editing and staging choices in the final scene downplayed the consequences for Othello in favour of emphasising Iago's punishment. The first part of this punishment was carried out by Othello himself, cutting Iago's mouth with a bottle whilst Montano and Lodovico held him down on the slot machine. This turned the action from an act of revenge, to a calculated punishment delivered by Othello as the gang leader. It was not until Othello had admitted his part in plotting Cassio's death, and Desdemona's innocence had been established, which turned Othello's murder of her into an unjust act, that any action was taken against him:

**LODOVICO**

You must forsake this room.

*LODOVICO and MONTANO push OTHELLO into the women's toilets.*

His power and his command is taken off,  
And Cassio rules The Cypress.  
For this slave,  
If there be any cunning cruelty  
That can torment him much and hold him long,  
It shall be his.

MONTANO attacks IAGO. *There is a smash of glass off. MONTANO and LODOVICO stop the attack. They turn to see OTHELLO. He has returned into the room. He has a shard of glass in [ ]his hand and he is covered in blood*

(Shakespeare, 2008, p.95 adapted from Shakespeare, 1997, 5.2: 328-

333).

Without a higher tier of authority to appeal to, the gang had to decide their course of action internally. Whilst Iago's savage beating, which was continued at the conclusion of the play, easily fitted within the gang context, Othello's treatment was less convincing. Cassio's promotion was not marked in any other way than through Lodovico's words, he was not for example handed the baseball bat that had been the symbol of Othello's leadership, nor was he referred to for any decisions. This reduced it to a token plot device, rather than a significant consequence for Othello. More problematic was the reason for pushing Othello into the ladies toilet. No reason was provided, nor was the door barricaded in any way, which might have gone some way to suggesting that he was being held there until Iago had been punished. Whilst undertones of emasculation might be associated with pushing a man into this room, this would be affording a generous analysis of staging choice that provided a convenient source of glass for Othello's suicide.

### ***The Yorkshire Setting: Delivering Shakespeare in a Regional Accent***

In her analysis of reactions to Barrie Rutter's challenge to the established practice in the late twentieth century of reserving regional accents to deliver the

prose associated with clowns and lower class characters in Shakespeare's plays, Carol Chillingham Rutter claimed that 'Northern BroadSides has normalized the Northern voice to Shakespeare' (2005, p.353). Whilst Northern BroadSides growing reputation might have converted many of its critics to accept its approach, Lyn Gardner's lament in her blog for *The Guardian* that "accent-deaf casting" – speaking Shakespeare with different regional accents – still lags far behind colour-blind casting' (2009) suggests that this normalisation is far from complete. This means the employment of an accent other than Received Pronunciation (RP) to deliver Shakespeare's verse remains a value-laden statement.

Frantic Assembly were not attempting "accent-deaf casting", but the active assumption of an accent in order to create a specific location. In doing so, the accent was employed to reinforce the interpretation of all the characters in this play as working class:

Profound pronouncements on the human condition seemed to sit beautifully and honestly within the sound of the accent. [. . .] The flattening of the vowels suggested an earthiness that we were in desperate search for – a riposte to the idea of Shakespeare being only intelligible to those educated in literature

(Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.6).

Graham's and Hoggett's response to the Yorkshire accent is clearly overlaid with values of honesty and lack of pretention, which they construct in opposition to the elitism of RP.

Research has demonstrated that such associations of accent with status-related traits, whether conscious or not, is strongly embedded into our reception of language (Argyle, 1994, pp.123-148; Wells, 1982, pp.28-31; and Fuertes et.al, 2012, pp.120-133<sup>lii</sup>). Graham's and Hoggett's attitudes to RP reflect those noted by David Crystal in his consideration of changing opinions towards

accents in Britain toward the end of the twentieth century, in which he noted 'two major trends: an increase in positive attitudes towards certain regional accents and an increase in negative attitudes towards RP' (2010, p.32). Similarly, their equation of honesty with the Yorkshire accent is a well-established trait which we might assume the audience would share (Strongman and Woosley, 1967, pp.164-7). This was an interesting connotation to introduce into a play that centres so heavily on deception and the appearance of honesty. However, such a strong regional accent can also carry more negative connotations, not least of these was the risk that poor execution of the accent could 'create a consistently comic 'effect' – a dumbing down of language that rendered each and every character easily written off as simple' (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.6). Despite already having rejected the possibility of using an East End pub because it 'seemed like a well worn idea without either of us ever having seen or heard of such a version', this concern about the effect of the accent led Graham and Hoggett to delay their final decision about the Northern setting. Indeed it was only after the audition process, during which they became convinced that the accent could effectively convey the 'tough, working class people' that they wanted to create (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.6), that the final choice was made.

The challenge that Graham and Hoggett recognised the employment of such an accent represented to those who might expect a more traditional RP delivery of Shakespeare's verse, seems to be at odds with their aim to attract a wider audience including those traditionally attracted to attend performances of Shakespeare's plays. The scope of the tour which included only one Northern venue, The Lowry in Greater Manchester, with the remaining venues, Theatre Royal Plymouth, Royal and Derngate, Nuffield Theatre and the Lyric

Hammersmith all located in the South, further highlights the unusual nature of this choice of setting. Far from making Shakespeare's verse more accessible, there was a risk that a further barrier might be created for listeners not accustomed to the flat vowels of the Yorkshire accent. Reviews posted on the Frantic Assembly website certainly suggested that some audience members struggled with the accent. Colin commented that 'there are passages in the piece that jar – I still find the thick Yorkshire drawl spat out with real venom hard to take' (2008), whilst andre observed that 'the accents chosen in this modern day version restrained me from empathising with the characters instead [I] found myself slightly frustrated' (2008)<sup>liii</sup>. Although these are only two comments amongst many that have not even noted the Northern accent, what is more troubling is that they are also the only two comments that make any reference to the Northern setting. What impact then, if any, did the Northern setting have on the adaptation?

### ***Representing Race in the Adaptation***

Despite Graham's and Hoggett's choice to set the adaptation in a Yorkshire pub, the influence of their research into the race riots that took place in Leeds in 2001 did not go beyond a providing a contemporary domestic context onto which to transpose the source text (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.10). By focusing the fight with 'the Turks', in this adaptation a rival Asian gang, on retaining the Cypress pub, the battle extended Graham's and Hoggett's focus of their adaptation as a domestic tragedy. The descriptions of the sea battle in the source text (Shakespeare, 1997, 2.1: 1-25) were replaced here with a movement sequence representing the fight in the pub carpark, thereby avoiding reworking the text to the new context. Given the limit

in cast size to nine, at this point in the production, six performers were all that could be spared to create this fight. Rather than clearly defining both sides through costume, Graham and Hoggett costumed all six performers in black trousers and black hooded tops. The flexibility of combinations of partners that this allowed, coupled with variations of backward and forward movements, created the sense of an evenly matched fight. The choice of costume further highlighted the similarity between the gangs, giving the impressions that as Rocha Allan suggested 'in those situations who are you fighting but yourself' (Rocha Allan, 2010, p.13). However, as in the source text, the fight remained a plot device, cementing Othello's position as a successful battle leader, rather than providing further insight into the racial conflicts between Caucasian and Asian gangs.

Within Othello's gang however, Graham's and Hoggett's choices sought to expose the contradictions inherent in racist attitudes within a multicultural society. Discussing their representation of Othello, Graham and Hoggett noted that:

. . . a black male in this possibly racist white community might slip under the radar, black not really being enough to suggest Other. When white kids are standing on street corners singing along to rap and hip hop tracks, most of which are fixated with ideas and notions of black experience and identity, the argument goes that a sophisticated form of understanding emerges

(Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.10).

Jimmy Akingbola's description of his character's background further develops this theme of cultural appropriation with a British Othello who 'was born in North London a 20mins walk from Arsenal Football ground. His dad was from Ghana and his mum was born in the UK but her parents were Nigerian' (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.12). By removing references to Othello's

exotic past (Shakespeare, 1997, 1.3: 135-146), and the charmed Egyptian handkerchief which was turned into a bandanna in this adaptation (Shakespeare, 1997, 3.4: 56-67), the sense in the source text of Othello being an outsider who has attempted to assimilate with the Venetian community, was lost.

What impact then, did Graham's and Hoggett's choice have on the representation of Iago's attempts to play on Othello's insecurities about his relationship with Desdemona?

**OTHELLO**

And yet, how nature erring from itself –

**IAGO**

Ay, there's the point: as – to be bold with you-  
Not to affect many proposed matches  
Of her own clime, complexion, and degree,  
Whereto we see in all things nature tends –

(Shakespeare, 2008, p.55 adapted from Shakespeare, 1997, 3.3: 231-235).

The working class environment in which this adaptation is set would seem to invalidate Iago's claims of Desdemona's elevated social class, whilst, the interpretation of Othello as British born, also removes his argument against Othello's birthplace. In this way, it might be argued, Iago's racism was emphasised in the assumptions that he made about Othello's background and social standing. This in turn increased the tragedy that Othello was swayed by Iago's prejudiced viewpoint. However, this reading highlights one of the difficulties of transposing a source text to a new social political context, without significant rewriting. By creating meaning through the absence of references to Othello's background, Graham and Hoggett had to rely on audience fore-knowledge of the source text, or reference to the accompanying education pack. However, given their target audience of school parties and those familiar

with Shakespeare's plays, such knowledge might reasonably be assumed (see p.121).

### ***Othello in a pub***

I have noted above concerns, not only with the removal of the political context of Shakespeare's play, but also with the reduction of the wider social and political potential of the context, into which this production was transposed. In considering the success of the transposition then, was this simply an *Othello* in a pub or did the chosen context contribute something more?

The masculine braggadocio and spatial links to status, which Graham and Hoggett had noted whilst they were filming the pub advert that inspired their adaptation (see p.124), were commented upon by many reviewers (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.4). Sara Hemming for the *Financial Times* observed that 'Graham and Hoggett, who have explored masculinity with such physical eloquence before, do so again, bringing disturbing new life to Shakespeare's play.' (2008, np) Lyn Gardner in *The Guardian* similarly praised the way that:

. . . it excavates the tribal loyalties of young, white, working class men. They swagger around the pool table with a macho grace. There is a terrible animal beauty in their coiled violence and vulgarity, a diseased nobility like lions in a zoo suffering from mange and misdirected aggression

(2008, p.38).

In Gardner's extended description of animalistic behavior betrays more than a hint of the 'voyeuristic cultural tourism' that Aleks Sierz in *Rewriting the Nation* notes is attracted by such representations of underclass in theatre (2011, p.129). Whilst Gardner focused on the way in which the pub environment enhanced the construction of male reputation through violence, or threat of it, Fiona Mountford in the *London Evening Standard* focused on 'the casual,

shocking violence of the men towards the women' (2008, np). She went on to note that the women in the production:

are constantly manhandled throughout the action, pinned up against walls and pushed down onto the pool table. We note with fresh ears how many of the play's lines come from male mouths.

(2008, np)

The threat of violence in Shakespeare's text was thus emphasised by the new social context, and the removal of external legitimising mechanisms of authority. Despite this, tensions remained in this transposition that were not fully resolved in performance. In the Artistic Director's Notes in the published text, Graham and Hoggett reflect that:

The trails of little lives have also been an obsession of ours and the transposing of the action from Venice/Cyprus to a pub on a predominantly white rundown estate in West Yorkshire just made sense to us

(Shakespeare, 2008, p.19).

Whilst the design ably communicated a working class pub, and the accents used located that pub in Yorkshire, the reasoning as to why the pub was located in Leeds, rather than any other city in England, was unclear since the wider racial tensions between Asians and Caucasians in the community remained unexamined. This tension was most notable in the focus on influences such as Nick Davies' book and research into the race riots in the Education Pack accompanying the production, with Hoggett and Graham admitting that:

Our time and setting for Othello is abundant in issues and complexities that have proved to be incredibly invigorating in the rehearsal room. Much of our discussion as a company will have no place or recognition in the final version. However, it has allowed for a rich process and, hopefully, a firm sense of time and place for our eventual audience

(Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, p.10).

Throughout this case study I have found Graham's and Hoggett's lack of reference to the wider 'issues and complexities' of the chosen time and place of

their adaptation problematic. This is because theatrical representation of a specific time and place cannot be ideologically neutral. If it does not challenge perceptions of the situation, then by default it reinforces what is already believed. As I have noted above, it invited from one reviewer a comparison to 'Broken Britain', suggesting that this detailed representation reinforced existing perceptions of Northern poverty. As such this was a conservative transposition, invisibly reinforcing rather than troubling existing perceptions of the new context.

### ***Conclusion: The Impact of Constraints on Shakespeare's Othello***

Throughout this case study, it is clear that Frantic Assembly applied many of the creative constraints that they had developed working on small-scale tours to adapting *Othello*. However, there were two significant changes to the material conditions within which Graham and Hoggett had developed these constraints: the size of venue and working with a pre-written classical text, much of which is in verse.

The increased venue size was matched by a larger budget, opening up opportunities to use a larger cast and set, however Graham and Hoggett still had to make cuts to cast size and the number of rehearsal weeks in order to remain within this. It is difficult to surmise the impact that an extra week of rehearsals might have had without knowing how Graham and Hoggett planned to use it, however the limitation to cast size led to the doubling of Brabantio and Lodovico. By choosing to double these two roles, Graham and Hoggett sought to limit the potential meta-theatrical meanings in what was otherwise a realistic pub setting, to foregrounding the family link between the two roles.

Many of Frantic Assembly's conventions worked effectively on the larger scale, enabling Graham and Hoggett to maintain their interest in domestic situations. The use of set design in non-realistic ways and incorporation of film techniques (see p.Othello 148) created moments of psychological insight such as Othello's horror at his actions, and enabled juxtaposition of small, domestic interactions with the broader action of the play. Despite this, the change of scale clearly had an impact on the adaptation through Graham's and Hoggett's awareness of the need to appeal to a wider audience to ensure that the larger auditoriums were filled. Since it was the Frantic Assembly brand in combination with the attraction of Shakespeare's play that opened up the promotion to a larger scale; that balance had to be reflected in the adaptation in order to ensure it attracted segments of the market only interested in Frantic Assembly's or Shakespeare's work, as well as those that overlapped. It was here that working with a well-known, pre-written text became a significant material and ideological constraint, requiring Graham and Hoggett to invert their process of working with the writer to develop a play that incorporated Frantic Assembly's melding of movement, music and design elements with text.

By choosing to avoid accusations of being reductive by accepting the ideological constraint of keeping Shakespeare's text intact, albeit rearranged and cut, Graham and Hoggett not only had to adapt Shakespeare's text to fit their chosen pub context, but also find places to incorporate their own style into the narrative. This proved most effective where the movement focussed on interactions between characters in the pub, such as during the opening sequence, and around the pool table. Elsewhere, Graham's and Hoggett's established convention of not attempting to communicate an idea with text and movement at the same time highlighted a divide between the retained long

sections of text, and more formally choreographed dances such as fighting the rival gang. The length of the retained passages of verse worked to foreground this divide between text and movement, effectively reinforcing the status of the text in this adaptation. In this way, despite Graham's and Hoggett's intensive work on 'Franticising' the adaptation it remained foremost, as so aptly titled, *Shakespeare's Othello*.

## Chapter 4: The Pantaloons

### *Macbeth* and 'the riotous energy of the clown'

#### *The Formation and Development of the Company*

The Pantaloons, founded in 2004, grew out of Artistic Director Stephen Purcell's research into the use of popular theatre techniques in contemporary Shakespeare productions: 'I wanted to try out in practice some of the things that I was writing about, some of the things that I'd seen other companies do and aim at a sort of synthesis of that.' (2010, p.1). The first production, *As You Like It* (2004), Purcell recalls 'was very different from what now has become the Pantaloon's house style' (2010, p.1). Performed in white dungarees and brightly coloured half-masks by an all male cast of nine undergraduates from the University of Kent, it drew heavily on *commedia dell' arte*.

The Lean and Slipped Pantaloons (The Pantaloons Theatre Company, 2011b), named after Jaques' speech from *As You Like It* (Shakespeare, 2007a, 2.7: 161), gradually refined their name to The Pantaloons by 2006, along with their company structure. Their second production, *A Winter's Tale* (2005) saw their first venture outside Canterbury with performances at the Royal Botanic Garden as part of the Edinburgh Fringe. It also marked the demise of the all-male cast with Caitlin Storey moving from her behind the scenes role to join a now smaller group of actors. Purcell reflected that with some of the actors graduating from Kent University whilst others, including Storey, opting to stay on for a fourth year to complete the MDram, 'it was still very much a student production, but it was moving into something else' (2010, pp.1-2). Following favourable reviews<sup>liv</sup> in the festival press at the Edinburgh Fringe for two further

productions, *Cymbeline* and *Romeo and Juliet*, in 2006 the company developed a mission statement, which is set out on their website. In it they clearly acknowledge the influence of popular theatre techniques and clowning on the development of their style:

The Pantaloons draw from a wide variety of popular theatre traditions, from commedia dell'arte and pantomime to stand-up comedy and silent movies, to bring what we consider to be a vital sense of "play" back to Shakespearean performance. We specialise in open-air, interactive performances, in a bid to recapture an aspect of Shakespeare's drama which the modern naturalistic theatre has lost: the riotous energy of the clown

(The Pantaloons Theatre Company, 2011a).

The statement goes on to expand on the importance of the relationship with the audience in their work as 'participants in a game of make-believe. In our theatre, your imagination is just as important as ours. We ask you to become co-creators of the play-world with us' (The Pantaloons Theatre Company, 2011a). As will become clear in my analysis of *Macbeth* (2010) later in this case study, many of The Pantaloons' techniques heavily rely upon the audience to collaborate, and at times interact, with the performers.

The ideal of working collectively not only with the audience but also as a company is central to Purcell's approach and influenced how the mission statement was developed:

. . . the company as they were then all met up, we all made a list of the priorities we had in creating theatre, what we wanted to do with theatre, with each other and it was all done very mathematically, we got the list, anonymised it and all voted or rather assigned a score to each word or each aim and then the ones that we'd all agreed as either fours or fives went into the mission statement; and actually, surprisingly, something that's pretty cohesive came out of it which is all about creating popular accessible theatre, which is also intelligent, which draws from the popular entertainment of both the past and the present. So commedia dell'arte and stand up comedy and everything in between is sort of fair game  
(2010, pp.2-3).

Despite this collective approach to creating the mission statement, as Purcell continued to discuss their ideas for the future, with plans to move beyond Shakespeare to create an adaptation of *The Canterbury Tales* in 2011, the extent to which his research informed the company ethos became clear. In his book, *Popular Shakespeare: Simulation and Subversion on the Modern Stage*, Purcell outlines his belief in the importance of treating Shakespeare's plays as 'being rooted in their own histories' (2009, p.24). His argument here is that performances should not attempt to conceal the historical distance between the context in which they were written and that in which they are performed, but instead acknowledge 'that the discourses we make Shakespeare speak in performance are never universal, but always, in fact, constructed from our own social, political and cultural concerns' (2009, p.24). The striking similarity between Purcell's argument here and that of cultural materialists such as Terence Hawkes (1992, pp.1-8) and Gary Taylor (1989, pp.5-6) is not accidental since he himself draws from this school, building on Alan Sinfield's essay *Royal Shakespeare: Theatre and the Making of Ideology* (2000, pp.171-193) to argue against a 'theatrical tradition which looks always for the 'universal,' (2009, p.24). This is presumably the tradition represented by the RSC which Purcell notes Sinfield criticises for 'making contradictory gestures towards a purportedly transcendent reality' (Sinfield cited in Purcell, 2009, p.23) which weaken any political or historical purpose in their approach. Purcell's turn to popular theatre techniques in order to foreground this distance between the historical text and modern performance for the interplay that they can open up between 'the world of illusion' and 'the world of the here and now' (2010, p.3), is also represented in terms of opposition to the construction of Shakespeare as 'high' culture' (2009, pp.24 and 64).

Drawing on their performance of *Macbeth* earlier that afternoon to provide an example of negotiating this interplay in the Pantaloon's work, Purcell explained:

. . . there are certain scenes which are sort of sacred which we don't really mess around with, which stay in that fictional world and although with *Macbeth* obviously we cut it heavily, we try to really keep as much of the poetry intact as we can and certainly in our full length shows we generally will do that. But then we'll see other moments as belonging more to the here and now of the audience and so those are the bits we see as fair game for ad-libbing, improvising, adding modern references, anachronistic references, all that sort of thing, which actually has a useful double effect, one of which . . . gives the audience that frisson of rule breaking, "Oh you're being very irreverent here, that's very naughty and I'm quite enjoying it" you know? But on the other hand, actually we think in a way it's respecting the dramaturgical design of the texts . . .

(2010, pp.3-4).

These comments reveal a complex set of values at play in Purcell's approach to Shakespeare's writing. On the one hand, elements of the text that create the fictional world of the play and particularly the construction of the poetry, are considered 'sacred', something to be venerated and therefore not to be sullied by being altered or re-ordered. Conversely, elements identified as directly addressing the audience and referencing the real world are subject to updating through a range of popular theatre techniques. Whilst alterations to the latter are equated with the pleasure of being 'irreverent', the concern to protect scenes that are considered to be 'sacred' from this treatment paradoxically divides the text according to a judgement which reinforces the untouchable and thus elevated status of Shakespeare's poetry. Even the notion of being 'irreverent' in itself ultimately reinforces the extent of Shakespeare's cultural authority.

Purcell's chapter on the use of interpolation and improvisation in modern performances of Shakespeare's plays provides a useful insight into the research and values underpinning this categorical division of the text:

. . . Shakespeare's plays explore the tensions and troubled relationships between [. . .] the poetic and the vernacular, the sacred and the profane. Certainly passages of the plays may be profitably analysed as 'dramatic poetry'. But there are equally many passages which on the page illicit no 'insights', nor contain any inherent 'beauty'; which serve, in other words, only a *theatrical* function. Obscure clown sequences are all but impenetrable today precisely because they were once immediate and topical for their audiences. Privileging a theatrical approach over a literary one, then, it could be argued that in fact the only way such sequences can be 'faithfully' performed is, paradoxically, in a departure from Shakespeare's text

(2009, p.65).

Having noted how Shakespeare's work was posthumously constructed as 'dramatic poetry' (2009, p.64), rather than challenging the construction as a whole, Purcell in a conciliatory gesture appears to reinforce the notion of 'dramatic poetry' before suggesting that there are some passages that are aesthetically uninteresting and difficult for audiences to understand due to outdated topical references<sup>iv</sup>. In this way Purcell appears to minimise the impact of altering these outmoded and apparently purely functional passages. Having dismissed their literary worth, Purcell's interpretation of the main value of these passages as being contained in their *theatrical* function enables him to argue for privileging *functional* fidelity and thus alteration of the text, over *textual* fidelity in the performance of such scenes. By further focusing his argument around the function of the clown, which theatre historians have already identified with improvisation (Kinney, 2003, p.66; Stern, 2000, p.101; and Wiles, 2005, pp.35 and 106), Purcell is subsequently able to bring the weight of this research to support his argument that updating topical references is not only possible, but desirable (2009, pp.65-71).

In arguing for the validity of using improvisation, Purcell reveals an anxiety with the cultural value attributed to the perceived level of faithfulness to the reproduction of Shakespeare's text in performance. Since replacing sections of text with improvisation is an evident breach of textual fidelity, Purcell strives to retain the perceived authority accorded by faithfulness to Shakespeare's work by invoking fidelity to theatrical function. The Pantaloon's programme for *Macbeth* suggests a corresponding concern with textual fidelity. A carefully worded description of their style as 'rough, accessible theatre which interweaves Shakespeare's verse with playfulness and with contemporary references' (2010, p.2) conveys the suggestion of surrounding Shakespeare's verse with additions rather than altering it. Similarly, theatrical function as an ideal replaces textual fidelity in the description of the interactive elements of their shows in the central claim of their mission statement to be restoring 'the riotous energy of the clown' (The Pantaloon's Theatre Company, 2011a). This claim to 'recapture an aspect of Shakespeare's drama' suggests an anxiety that such performance choices are seen to be consistent with Shakespeare's authorial intention (The Pantaloon's Theatre Company, 2011a).

Updating the clown's sequences with topical references is an established feature of The Pantaloon's work. In their 2005 production of *A Winter's Tale*, Purcell noted a sense of 'the frantic ad-libbings of contemporary comedians such as Eddie Izzard or Ross Noble' in Autolycus goading of the Clown and the Shepherd in 4.4 (2009, p.27). Purcell continues:

These influences in mind, I encouraged Dave to improvise a version of this speech anew at every performance, incorporating his surroundings wherever he saw a humorous opportunity

(2009, p.28).

This resulted in the Clown and the Shepherd facing such diverse threats as 'enforced flyering' at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and three-day old sandwiches in Sandwich (2009, p.28). Whilst this surreal, Eddie Izzard inspired list of threats based on local references clearly updates the comedy for a modern audience, how does it address Purcell's claim of 'respecting the dramaturgical design of the texts' (2010, p.4)? Purcell suggests that:

The intention of such moments was not only to develop the elements of direct address and improvisation inherent in the script, but also to make a playful challenge to Shakespeare's cultural authority from outside it.

(2009, p.29).

In using the elements of improvisation and audience address that he observes to be intrinsic to the script, Purcell may be able to claim that the updating of this speech maintains the dramaturgical design of the play. However, as will become clear in my analysis of their adaptation of *Macbeth* later in this case study, the straightforward substitution of one speech for another is not always possible. In *Macbeth*, in particular, with the notable exception of the Porter's speech (2.3), opportunities for updating comic sequences are rare which leads to the question of how much alteration, even if it is using techniques that are already present elsewhere in the text, can be made before the dramaturgical design is judged to be compromised? What is more intriguing in Purcell's reflection is his intention to use these moments of improvisation to challenge the cultural authority afforded Shakespeare's text through a 'flagrant jettisoning of part of it in favour of haphazard improvisation' (2009, p.29). The danger here is that in striving to combine a cultural challenge with such a self-proclaimed 'rough, accessible theatre' style, The Pantaloon's work may be too easily dismissed as "dumbing down" Shakespeare's language and narratives for a young or less educated audience (The Pantaloon's, 2010,

p.2). This returns us to Purcell's concern with retaining Shakespeare's poetry whilst limiting the improvisation and ad-libbing to scenes that he interprets as already having a connection with the 'here and now of the audience' (2010, pp.3-4). Whether in practice this strategy to maintain a delicate balance between Shakespeare's writing and The Pantaloons' additions is sufficient to deflect such criticism will be returned to in my analysis of the reviews received for *Macbeth* at the end of this case study. However, the potential for such critical dismissal is an apt reminder of the difficulty of challenging Shakespeare's cultural authority through the performance of his plays.

### ***Audience***

The decision to offer free performances in outdoor public spaces has played a considerable role in shaping The Pantaloons audience. Their first foray into offering free performances with *A Winter's Tale* at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2005 came about as a result of Purcell's concern to attract a wider audience than that traditionally associated with those attending performances of Shakespeare's plays at the theatre:

. . . one of the problems with a lot of companies who attempt to do popular theatre is they'll absolutely nail the style then they'll open the doors and the classic theatre audience will step in, you know, middle class, well educated and, nothing wrong with that audience, but obviously it stops really being popular theatre the minute you confine yourself to a traditional theatre audience. So we thought, well the real way of testing this will be to stick it [on] for free in a public space and see whether people stay and watch

(2010, p.4).

Since The Pantaloons, unlike Frantic Assembly and Filter Theatre, had not previously built up an audience for their work prior to undertaking a Shakespeare production, it is reasonable to assume that this middle class audience, supplemented by school students, would form the core of any house

they might expect in a regional theatre. However, whilst free open air theatre might appear to offer opportunities to attract a wider audience demographic, an analysis of the Pantaloon's nineteen tour dates for *Macbeth* suggests that this reach is limited by individual local conditions such as patterns of attendance already established for theatre events at each site.

Many of the tour bookings involved the performance being promoted within a larger collection of arts or other events, whilst a variety of admission policies, and sometimes prices, were applied as a result of differing agreements with the organisations managing the sites. Despite then, a form of casual attendance being promoted by such an open-air format, with people free to leave or join the audience at any point during the performance, the demographic of the passers-by had often already been limited by the nature of the umbrella event or admission policies of the site, as Purcell explains:

Parks you can expect a large portion of children, places like Edinburgh or Brighton . . . you can expect probably quite a large proportion of students or of actors. Obviously we do . . . the heritage circuit as we call it, so you get that sort of National Trust member sort of demographic coming along. So you can sort of predict based on the venue the kind of audience that might show up, but actually we're often surprised and I think we have quite a wide reach

(2010, p.25).

Many of the umbrella events were arts festivals of varying sizes including the well established Brighton Festival Fringe, the London Free Fringe Festival at The Scoop and the smaller Saffron Walden Arts Festival. Other events encompassed a broader range of activities, such as the archery and jousting demonstrations being offered as part of Ufton Court's Medieval Mayhem Event (Bracknell News, 2010). Elsewhere the fit between the performance and the umbrella event appeared somewhat forced, such as Brentwood Health Week which publicized the production alongside a number of fitness and safety

events. The mismatch was further reinforced with an added reminder to 'bring along a healthy picnic' (Brentwood Borough council et. al, 2010, p.4). Although most performances were offered for free, there were some notable exceptions, particularly at sites where an admission charge was already in operation: RHS Garden Hyde Hall retained its admission charge for adults but admitted children free in line with the other family friendly events it was also offering in August 2010 (RHS Garden Hyde Hall, 2010, np)<sup>lvi</sup>.

This proliferation of cultural events and heritage sites on the tour schedule demonstrates the difficulty of attracting bookings even for an outdoor Shakespeare production at events or venues where there is not already an established culture of play attendance or at least a significant proportion of visitors in the upper socio-economic demographic. This appears unlikely to do much to advance Purcell's stated desire to extend the audience demographic beyond the well educated, middle class traditional theatre audience. Certainly the findings in *Taking Part: The National Survey of Culture, Leisure and Sport 2009/10* survey suggests that both visits to heritage sites and engagement with the arts remain significantly more popular amongst upper socio-economic groups (Great Britain. DCMS, 2010a, pp.26 and 39)<sup>lvii</sup>. In what way might Purcell then be suggesting that The Pantaloons have 'quite a wide reach' (2010, p.25)? Based on his comments quoted above this judgment appears to be derived from the range of age groups, rather than social-economic groups, that attend the shows. Purcell goes on to note that:

We certainly get a wider proportion of younger people than you see in most mainstream theatres for obvious reasons: it's cheaper. But also I think the style is more accessible and I think hopefully people come and see us and go, "Oh brilliant I'll bring the kids along next year". Or we get quite a relatively large proportion of students, teenagers, and I think our shows and our style is sort of accessible to that demographic as well

(2010, p.25).

Acknowledgement of this broad appeal in terms of age is clear in the marketing of their productions. In an article advertising their production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, Caitlin Storey told Charles Hutchinson that:

Our style is suitable for everyone: from little children who enjoy the bright colours and puppets to teenagers who discover a fun new way to approach their Shakespeare studies; from people who have never seen a Shakespeare production before to die-hard Shakespeare fans who get all the inter-textual jokes . . .

(2010, np)

A similar approach is clear in their advertising for *Macbeth*, with the online schedule for performances at The Dell billing it as '[f]un for all ages in the open-air with live music, audience interaction and puppetry' (RSC, 2010), whilst The Scoop declares it to be 'a fun-filled twist on Shakespeare's classic tale of madness and murder with live music, audience interaction, puppetry and plenty of fast-paced fun for the whole family' (morelondon, 2010). It is this focus on accessibility for a family audience, a group that the *Arts Audiences: Insight* report categorises as '*Family and community focused*', that enable The Pantaloons to be included within such a variety of umbrella events which, with the exception of the The Dell, are not specifically dedicated to performances of Shakespeare's plays (Arts Council England, 2011c, p.31). Family and community focused audiences are described as infrequent arts attendees who 'engage through occasional visits to family-friendly arts events' and may occasionally visit heritage sites as a family (Arts Council England, 2011c, p.31). The free, 'family friendly' entertainment offered by The Pantaloons is clearly a good fit with this audience segment and suggests why Purcell feels they have a broad appeal in terms of age.

In terms of audience demographic alone then, it is doubtful whether The Pantaloons productions would attract a wide enough socio-economic

demographic to be classified as popular theatre or even popular Shakespeare. However, as Purcell discusses in detail in his book, the classification of popular theatre is complex, going beyond audience demographics to a consideration of 'what it *does*, sociologically and ideologically.' (2009, p.11). It is here that Purcell's interest in using popular theatre techniques to 'make a playful challenge to Shakespeare's cultural authority' (2009, p.29) becomes pertinent. The choice to offer free, outdoor performances then is in itself perhaps more significant for the freedom it affords The Pantaloons to experiment with and offer Shakespeare's plays in ways that would be likely to illicit resistance as well as criticism from a theatre audience that had paid for a classical theatre experience, than it is as a means of widening the audience demographic.

### ***Finance and The Pantaloons' Business Structure***

At the time of interview The Pantaloons did not receive any form of funding from a grant making body, and were, therefore, purely reliant on payment in various forms for their performances. The 'free' shows, such as *Macbeth*, were remunerated either through the payment of a flat fee by the event organizer or from collecting donations from spectators at the end of the performance. As the size of each tour had grown the Company found this unreliable form of income insufficient to support their work:

. . . it's a balancing act between earning enough to pay the actors a decent rate, keeping the company going and remaining accessible and we're sort of managing it, but slowly we're obviously having to kind of negotiate around the free shows, find ways of doing them and every year we have to cut a few venues that previously we'd have liked to have gone to simply because we just lose buckets of money through doing them, Edinburgh being the prime example

(Purcell, 2010, p.28).

One of the consequences of this balancing act has been the addition of a longer, ticketed production to tour alongside the free seventy five minute show and provide a more stable income. This development is responsible for the inclusion of so many National Trust sites on their tours since these have both the capacity to sell tickets and established audiences for open-air Shakespeare performance.

Funding, or lack of it, has a considerable impact on the structure of a theatre company, which, as I discussed on page 29, leads many to adopt a core-and-pool structure. The development of The Pantaloons' touring circuit is due to the work of the producers; Company Director Mark Hayward, and his wife, founding member Caitlin Storey. As the Company's operation has grown the need for a core team to co-ordinate the sizeable tours along with additional activities such as murder mystery events and workshops for schools has emerged. As the Company has no regular funding to support paying a full time ensemble, this has led to a formal development of the Company along the lines of a core-and-pool structure. Since Purcell balanced directing the shows with lecturing at Southampton Solent University, both Storey and Hayward gave up their jobs in 2008 in order to turn The Pantaloons into a full time enterprise. In an interview with Viv Hardwick for The Northern Echo, Mark Hayward reveals that this was a pragmatic decision, '[i]t had just got ridiculous booking time off work and it was either we gave it up completely or tried it fulltime.' (2009, np)

One of the results of Hayward and Storey combining roles as producers and actors is that it allows them to make a considerable contribution to the development of shows. Purcell notes that the 'music is mostly Mark's domain' and it is clear from his comments that as the composer Hayward has considerable autonomy over the music that is finally included in a show:

. . . we tend to leave the music until last. Mark will be playing around with ideas, but privately he and I will have a chat about various things as the process is going on and if there's a set piece of song then he'll compose that early before the rehearsal starts and we'll bring it along and teach it to the cast or whoever's singing it. Although in some cases he'll actually scrap it, and come up with something else in response to what's gone on in the rehearsal room

(Purcell, 2010, p.17).

Hayward's and Storey's influence also at times goes beyond responsibility for specialist roles in the production process to curtailing the Artistic Director's choices. Purcell admits that this creates an interesting dynamic in the rehearsal process:

. . . it's quite a healthy relationship in a way because two of the actors are also producers of the company. So they can tell me "No" because they're producers. So, if I start getting a little bit authoritarian, which isn't in my nature really, but if I do get a bit, you know, 'concepty' as they put it ((laughing)) they can halt me in my tracks

(2010, p.12).

By linking notions of authoritarian directing with the development of a directorial concept, Purcell foregrounds here tension between the director as interpreter of the text, and director as author of the performance. Neither of these positions is ideologically neutral, since one privileges the authority of the playwright, and the other the authority of the director who, in providing an overall concept for the production is seen to overwrite the source text and thus replace the playwright as author<sup>viii</sup>. Purcell's claim noted above (see p.169) to only make alterations and changes where it is in keeping with the dramaturgical construction of the source text, attempts to conceal his directorial choices as serving the source text. However, such recourse both to a source text and current scholarly understanding of Elizabethan staging practices, foregrounds the temporal and cultural fissure between the cited origins and present-day practise. Purcell's change of pronoun here from 'we' to 'I' in his response

suggests another possible reason for his concern to avoid authoritarian constructions of the director. As I will discuss below (see p.194), Purcell describes The Pantaloons' production process as a collaborative one in which concepts emerge, rather than being imposed. Despite this, the extent to which Purcell relinquishes the authority of the director in practise is debateable, particularly given that Hayward and Storey are accorded their authority to challenge Purcell through their role within the business structure of the Company as producers, rather than their artistic role as actors. Indeed, as I discuss below (see p. 193), Purcell retains significant directorial authority through his control of the script editing process, which is a powerful means of imposing personal vision and preferences on the final production.

### ***Artistic Structure***

The cast size of The Pantaloons' shows has varied between nine and five members, with cast sizes at the lower end of this scale becoming the norm as the Company has developed. In the 2010 tour the cast consisted of five: Storey and Hayward were joined by founding member Martin Gibbons, Ross Drury who joined the company in 2009, and new member Helen Taylor. Purcell explained that the policy for recruiting actors is that the cast from the previous year are offered first refusal, then any vacated spaces are filled through an auditioning process (2009, p.12). This arrangement has the benefit of retaining actors who are already familiar with the Company style and working practices whilst also providing some potential for attracting new performers with different skills. It also can prove beneficial in developing the ensemble approach to the work that Purcell favours. I will discuss this approach in detail in terms of The Pantaloons process later in this chapter. However, by committing to re-employ

actors every year, this policy also influences the casting options available to Purcell as the director. The advantages of this policy in terms of familiarity with style and ensemble working practices might appear to outweigh any casting constraints. However, in a process that involves the performers input into the adaptation process, the impact of individual actor's skills and preferences is likely to be a significant factor in adapting the script, and in particular in the choices made around cutting or developing particular characters. In the longer term then, the skills of those actors who have remained with the Company for some time are likely to have a significant influence on the development of the Company's style. Caitlin Storey, for example, specialised in stand-up comedy whilst at Kent University<sup>lix</sup> and Purcell admits that he tends to cast her in roles that allow her to ad-lib such as Aunt Fanny in *Macbeth* (see p.190) and the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* (2009, pp.16-17 and 26-7). She has also developed a marked preference for playing certain roles. In an interview with Ken Russell for *The Times* in 2009 Mark Hayward commenting on their production of *Romeo and Juliet* noted that Storey 'plays two old men in the play – old men are her comfort zone.' (2009, np)

In fact Storey has developed 'Biscuit Henry', an old man caricature defined by a large white beard and stooped posture (see figure 4.1 on p.186<sup>lx</sup>), into a regular in The Pantaloon's shows. So much so that he is featured as a mascot on the Company website, complete with a biography that lists his roles in virtually every Pantaloon's production from the Old Shepherd in *The Winter's Tale* (2005), to the Parson/Gaoler/Pope and January in *The Canterbury Tales* (2011), (The Pantaloon's, 2011c).



**Figure 4.2**  
**Ross buys a train ticket to Scone in *The Pantaloon's Macbeth*.**

This trend was upheld in *Macbeth* with Storey playing the Old Man that Ross encounters in 2.4 as he (she in *The Pantaloon's* production) flees to Scone, an encounter that was turned into a comedy sequence with Purcell clearly writing space for ad-libbing into the stage directions:

**OLD MAN.** 'Tis unnatural,  
 Even like the deed that's done. On Tuesday last,  
 A falcon, towering in her pride of place,  
 Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.  
*[he gives other examples of weird spooky things which prove nature itself  
 has gone all topsy-turvy, perhaps making reference to today's  
 newspaper]*<sup>1</sup>

**ROSS.** And Duncan's horses – a thing most strange and certain –  
 Beauteous and swift, the minions of their race,  
 Turn'd wild in nature, broke their stalls, flung out,  
 Contending 'gainst obedience, as they would make  
 War with mankind.

**OLD MAN.** 'Tis said they eat each other.

**ROSS.** They did so, to the amazement of mine eyes  
 That look'd upon't. <sup>2</sup>

**OLD MAN.** Is't known who did this more than bloody deed?

(Shakespeare, 2010, p.14 adapted from Shakespeare, 2007b, 2.4: 12-23  
 and 26).

<sup>1</sup> and then I saw last week that they'd updated *Sherlock Holmes* on the BBC and I wasn't expecting to enjoy it, but I really did. I did. Earlier on I had a phone call from Angelina Jolie who said 'Will you run away with me?' and I said 'No. I'm happily married to Mrs. Old Man'.

(transcribed from recording of performance, *Macbeth*, 2010, np)

Even with room for improvised comedy written into the script, Storey extended the role with further interpolation, drawing on the train station setting for the scene:

**2 OLD MAN:** Do you have a Young Persons Rail Card?

**ROSS:** No.

**OLD MAN:** A Travel Card?

**ROSS:** No.

**OLD MAN:** A Fictional Shakespearean Character Rail Card?

**ROSS:** No.

**OLD MAN:** Save a third. (*Pause*) Hamlet's got one.

(transcribed from recording of performance, *Macbeth*, 2010, np)

I am not suggesting here that Storey's additional interpolation was unsanctioned. Purcell clearly advocates a trial and error policy with such moments of interpolation<sup>lxi</sup> being 'very much a product of the company in the rehearsal room trying stuff out, and the company on stage in front of an audience trying stuff out' (2010, p.16). However, such an approach gives the actors an enormous amount of freedom and responsibility to develop their roles. This means that the development of such improvised moments depends on the skills of the individual performer. Although Storey is an accomplished stand-up comic, not all members of the 2010 cast had enough experience to develop their roles in this way. Purcell explained that Drury's stand-up drag act complete with song as Margaret in *Much Ado About Nothing* which was touring alongside *Macbeth*, had to be cut because he did not have enough experience to make it work (2010, p.17). Purcell then, retains the directorial authority to cut sections of improvisation that do not achieve the effect on the audience that he wants at a given point in the production. This means that the extent to which such interpolations are developed depends heavily both on the individual performer's skills and their understanding of Purcell's view of the delicate balance between text and ad-libbing that is central to The Pantaloon's' style.

Such a reliance on the performer highlights the complexity of maintaining this perception of balance in developing aspects of the adaptation through an ensemble approach in the rehearsal room. However, Purcell's strategy of identifying moments for improvisation in his editing of the text rather than opening up this decision to the ensemble ensures that the improvisation is channeled in support of his personal vision for the production. The maintenance of a comparatively fixed ensemble and the related focus on performance skills rather than suitability for a particular role when auditioning new members for the ensemble also has clear advantages for an adaptation process that occurs at least in part in the rehearsal room.

### ***Process***

Although The Pantaloons had a relatively short rehearsal period of four weeks, the overall preparation process was much longer as shown in figure 5.2 below. Throughout the following discussion of their process I am concerned only with *Macbeth*, but it should be noted that the Company were developing two shows simultaneously using the same cast. Therefore the workshop day that I will discuss was split between exploring both *Macbeth* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, and when auditioning the Company were looking for someone who could take roles in both productions.

Like Frantic Assembly, the Pantaloons' process of adapting the script began with a research and development phase. This took the form of an open workshop held at Lymington Residents' Association Hall in December which attracted a group of twenty five participants, many of whom were already familiar to the Company either from working on previous productions or

attending their auditions. Purcell explained that the purpose of the workshop was to explore how to:

. . . bring the Pantaloon style to *Macbeth* in a way that respects the dramaturgical design of *Macbeth*, that interacts with it usefully rather than simply co-opting *Macbeth* to the Pantaloon style

(Purcell, 2009, p.10).

October 20, 2009	Choice of plays for Summer 2010 tour publicly announced
November 15	Workshop advertised
December 12	Workshop (London)
January 4, 2010	Auditions advertised
January 30 & 31	Auditions for new female cast member
December – March	Purcell adapts the script
April 5	Tour dates and locations published on website
April	3 weeks of rehearsal
April to May	Break in rehearsal process Set built by Nick Blower
May	1 week rehearsal
15 May – 27 August	Tour

**Figure 4.2**  
Overview of Pantaloon's process for tour of *Macbeth*

For Purcell this meant examining the interplay between audience address and the illusory world of the play, both in terms of what was already in the text and also what could be added to the text. He therefore chose to work on scenes that involved smaller roles such as that between Lennox and another

Lord, and Ross and Old Man (Shakespeare, 2007b, 3.6 and 2.4). At this point no editing had taken place so scenes such as the former were explored even though they were cut from the final production, whilst the latter scene eventually became the ticket office scene discussed above. Purcell's focus on the smaller roles, and in particular the interactions between the servants and the Macbeth's, was a significant factor in shaping the adaptation leading as it did to the creation of Aunt Fanny. He explained:

. . . Aunt Fanny we wanted to be this sort of innocent character the audience would love who was on the wrong side and would slowly work out she was on the wrong side and then let the good guys into the castle at the end . . .

(Purcell, 2010, p.8).

Created with lines reassigned from Ross (3.4), Gentlewoman (5.1), Servant and Seyton (5.3 and 5.5), Siward (5.7) Aunt Fanny was the Macbeth's general servant. To this collection of small roles, the Porter's role in 2.3 (see p.198) was later added when it was reassigned from Mark Hayward. Going beyond a pragmatic conflation of smaller roles that could fulfil a variety of functions within the illusory world of the play, Aunt Fanny's position in the Macbeth's household as servant and porter enabled her to comment critically on her employer's behaviour in improvised speeches that she directly addressed the audience.

One of the potential disadvantages of a relatively fixed ensemble, particularly one that have trained together at the same university, is that the style and practices of the Company might become so fixed as to stagnate. The use of a workshop to generate ideas was a new addition to the Company's process which Purcell characterised as being continually refined and developed, 'as with everything with The Pantaloons, we've lifted things that have worked from past years and jettisoned stuff that didn't' (2010, p.10). The

workshop, therefore, provided an opportunity to invite influences and ideas from beyond the Company into their process. As such Purcell felt that this addition was 'incredibly useful' in generating ideas and discussion which informed his subsequent editing of the script (2010, p.11).

Although Purcell maintained that the focus of the workshop was on looking at the roles rather than the actors, it also provided an opportunity for the Company and the participants to find out more about each other as they worked together. As such Purcell admitted that 'there was a sense that it was perhaps an informal audition' (2010, p.11) and indeed Helen Taylor who was eventually cast as Lady Macbeth was one of those who attended the workshop. The importance of casting someone who would be able to bring something to the ensemble was clearly more important to The Pantaloons as Storey's *Facebook* message makes clear:

We are looking for ONE FEMALE to join our troupe for summer 2010 for both shows. The parts are undecided (as it will depend who we cast) but you will either be playing Lady Macbeth OR Beatrice (so definitely one plumb role!).

The tour begins mid May until end of August.

To qualify for an audition you MUST:

- Be a confident improviser
- Play a musical instrument to some degree
- Be a good team player

In addition to the above it is DESIRABLE to:

- Have experience in Shakespearean verse
- Have experience in outdoor performance
- Have seen a Pantaloon show. have good knowledge of our work

(Storey, 2010b).

This privileging of improvisation skills and the ability to work with the ensemble over physical or vocal fit to a particular role is a pragmatic reflection

of The Pantaloons' ensemble style, which requires not only well-developed improvisation skills, but also the ability for each performer to play a range of roles. In line with the skills required, the audition included improvisation and devised work on scenes as well as the presentation of a prepared Shakespearean monologue chosen by the candidates. As Purcell noted the audition was designed to provide the opportunity for applicants to show 'what they think they can bring to the ensemble rather than playing a defined role or doing a defined task' (2010).

Unlike Frantic Assembly's audition process where Graham and Hoggett focused on looking for actors with movement ability that could be developed through their combined training and rehearsal process, The Pantaloons shorter rehearsal period necessitated looking for actors who could contribute a variety of ready developed skills. By casting actor and musician Helen Taylor, The Pantaloons were able to enhance their incidental music through her collaboration with Mark Hayward in composing the music, without assigning large sections of their limited rehearsal period to the development of skills in, what was for them, a somewhat peripheral area of the production. With composition occurring in 'the last quarter of rehearsals' Purcell observed that:

The incidental music I always think is very important, and that the acting comes first and then the incidental music highlights whatever's come out, whatever we've discovered, whatever we're trying to play  
(2010, p.17).

This approach differs markedly from that employed by Frantic Assembly which used music within the rehearsal process to inform and inflect the fictional environment being created (see p.151). In contrast, The Pantaloons' use of acoustic incidental music created with flute, clarinet and guitar, marked significant changes of tone in the script. Malcolm's comic narration as Duncan

approached Dunsinane which crucially lightened the mood after the Macbeth's plotting of his murder was one such moment, with his comment that '[w]e had no idea of the horrors that were to come' underscored in the style of a spoof horror film by an eerie note from a melodica (Shakespeare, 2010, p.7). This use of music to highlight rather than create changes of tone, is reflected in the point at which music is brought into the rehearsal process of both companies, with The Pantaloon's' reactive rather than interactive approach requiring a later entry point.

The importance of devising skills became clear in Purcell's description of his editing process. Although informed by discussions during the workshop, he undertook this alone but stressed that throughout the draft he tried to 'flag up possibilities which then the company will work on and devise together' (2010, p.11). Whilst this approach appears to give the cast significant input into the development of the adaptation, Purcell's editing provides a clear frame within which this creation takes place. As we have seen from the discussion of Purcell's research above (see p.174), this editing process goes beyond cutting the text, which may of itself involve significant interpretive decisions, to making judgements about the poetic or functional nature of the text. These are the sections of the script that Purcell flags up, resulting in a draft that contains 'a lot of bits in italics where I say something should go here which involves audience interaction or something could go here involving the Porter' (Purcell, 2010, p.11). In this way, Purcell retains control over the structure of the story and the editing of Shakespeare's text, whilst identifying opportunities for devising the metatextual additions that will overlay this.

In order to facilitate the devising process, Purcell began with movement work and games to develop the ensemble such as 'the snitch game', a focus

game based on the Company finding and following an imaginary golden snitch<sup>lxii</sup> (2010, p.13). At this point decisions were made about characterisation:

. . . we spend a lot of time talking. It's trial and error very often in The Pantaloons. I think if someone suggests something you're obliged to try it out before you reject it, if indeed you do. [ . . . ] The idea of playing Duncan as an absolutely morally bankrupt mob boss was something that one of the cast suggested and we thought, "Well why not? Let's give it a go"

(2010, p.14).

Working with such an open approach to ideas in a limited rehearsal period places a lot of responsibility on Purcell to ensure that the final production does not become an incoherent mixture of competing ideas. The trial of this idea and its inclusion in the final adaptation demonstrates the potential drawback of this approach. If Duncan himself is represented as morally corrupt, rather than the ideal ruler demonstrated through rewarding Macbeth for his service in 1.4, his murder could be read as a righteous rather than an evil act. This small change then, by opening the adaptation up to possible resistant readings, undermined representations elsewhere in the production of Macbeth as evil.

Purcell describes his approach as being about 'collaborative creation', viewing his role as a director as one of editing, 'weaving together disparate elements rather than coming up with a concept and imposing it.' (2010, p.15). Despite this, he admits that '[c]oncepts tend to emerge, but actually very often they're accidents' (2010, p.15). One such accident emerged through Martin Gibbon's work on his characterisation of Macbeth:

. . . Martin just started as Macbeth to fidget in his clothes and to play around with his belt as he was losing his grip and initially I think it was just something that Martin found useful to convey or to feel or to explore Macbeth's volatile emotional state

(Purcell, 2010, p.15).

Purcell noticed a connection between this and a line in the text<sup>xiii</sup> that compared Macbeth's poor suitability for his title with wearing ill-fitting clothes (Shakespeare, 2007b, 5.2: 23-5). Purcell recollects, 'it just emerged but then I think when you see those parallels it's worth just teasing them out and exploiting them' (2010, p.15).

Although recalled as accidents or moments of inspiration, as Gay McAuley, in her article *Not Magic but Work* notes, 'the 'accident' occurs in the context of many hours of painstaking work and is only recognized as the brilliant solution that it is due to the work that has gone before.' (2008, p.285) Such insight, drawn from McAuley's research as a participant observer in Brink Productions process for *4:48 Psychosis*, could apply equally strongly to the work of Gibbons and Purcell here. Both Gibbons' exploration of Macbeth's emotional state, and Purcell's consequent connection between Gibbon's actions and the script, built on their analysis and understanding of the text. Whilst then, such accidents appear to support a perceived creative freedom within the production process, they actually result from the application of theatre training approaches to character development and textual analysis. These approaches, Ric Knowles' notes:

[w]ithout otherly-directed and conscious shaping, [. . .] can simply allow the dominant cultural context, in a sense, to speak to the actor, to "naturally" [or commonsensically] reinforce the ideological unconscious of a dominant culture (2004, pp.33-34).

The invisible work of such training here appears to have subverted Purcell's attempt to avoid imposing a directorial concept, by leading to the 'accidental' discovery of a concept thereby returning the process to the culturally dominant concept-led process that Purcell was attempting to resist through inviting collaboration. Rather than a sign of creative freedom then, Purcell's creative

accident suggests that in this instance the process was constrained by learned theatre techniques, leading to the production of an ideologically dominant reading of a psychologically consistent characterisation that was apparently authorised by the text.

Elsewhere concepts emerged in the process that had wide reaching consequences for the whole production, such as the suggestion made in rehearsal 'that *Macbeth* was a little bit like an Alfred Hitchcock thriller' (Purcell, 2010, p.15). This turned the adaptation into a transposition through a change of context that informed not only characterisation, but also costume design, props and, when the play was redrafted, Malcolm's narration to the audience (Purcell, 2010, p.15). Whilst Purcell's willingness to accept and try out such far-reaching conceptual ideas from the actors in lieu of imposing his own directorial concept suggests a level of collaborative openness, the adaptation process is nevertheless constrained by Purcell's vision. This takes the form of an approach to staging the text developed from his research, which involves the use of popular theatre techniques to create a metatext that interacts with Shakespeare's text. However, as noted in the previous case study (see p.168), individual plays do not always respond successfully to some of the staging conventions that have collectively been established as a company's style. Despite the workshop exploration work examining how the Pantaloon's style might interact with, rather than be forced onto, the play during the rehearsal process Purcell notes they discovered that:

. . . the play didn't stand up to too much comic inversion. We've previously done mostly comedies, but we've done *Romeo and Juliet* and we've done *Cymbeline* as well, and we've previously found that adding lots of irreverent bits and pieces, lots of 'here and now' stuff as we call it, [. . .] really aided the play: really helped the storytelling, the pace, the audience's relationship with the actors and helped it feel like a piece of popular theatre [. . .] With *Macbeth* it felt self-indulgent and intrusive, so

at a relatively late stage in rehearsals, it was probably about three weeks in, we were running the show in full and we realised, “No this isn’t working, it’s too intrusive”. So we stripped back the comedy and added all those bits where Malcolm narrates, which hadn’t been there in the original version.

(2010, pp.8-9).

As with the creative accident discussed above (see p.194), Purcell’s feeling that the comic inversion was ‘intrusive’, is culturally laden with dominant modern understandings of tragedy, acquired through his training and research. This feeling then points to the unconscious adoption of an ideological constraint that led to redrafting the adapted script to restrict ad-libbed topical references and improvisation to working class roles such as the Old Man and Aunt Fanny. Elsewhere, Purcell revisited his own assumptions, based in part on his reading of Robert Weimann’s research into Renaissance staging practices (see p.200), about the use and nature of comedy created through popular theatre techniques when addressing the audience. This allowed the development of a new approach to reference the ‘here and now’:

We’d devised it very differently because those little short bits of narration, often directly adapted from lines in the text, not always but often, we felt were addressing the ‘here and now’ in a very different way. We were asking the audience to become co-creators of the imaginative world by imagining [. . .] this squirt of talcum powder is creating a fog and it’s jokey, but it’s not jokey in quite the same way that an overt piece of audience interaction or stand-up is

(2010, p.9).

By implementing this approach, a distinct difference in tone was created between the clowning of Caitlin Storey’s working class characters, Aunt Fanny and the Old Man, and the wit of Mark Hayward’s Malcolm. The retention of Shakespeare’s lines in Malcolm’s narration was responsible for much of this difference, with Shakespeare’s poetry in effect translated into a narrative

paraphrasing prose collage interspersed with self-reflexive comments about The Pantaloon's' rough theatre style.

Despite Purcell's rewriting, the influence of each performer's improvisational style was retained. As the Porter, Hayward had developed a 'very dry stand-up sequence', however the extension of Malcolm's role into the narrator necessitated reassigning the Porter's role from Hayward to Storey. Rather than adopting Hayward's routine, Storey developed a new character-based approach to the scene as an extension of her role as Aunt Fanny (2010, 8). Such a policy of allowing the performers space to develop their own routines therefore can have a significant impact on the tone of these scenes within the adaptation. Nevertheless, Purcell constrains the parameters of the action within his scripted instructions in which his concern with preserving the dramaturgical purpose of the scene is evident, in this instance retaining the premise of Shakespeare's comedy whilst updating the candidates for hell:

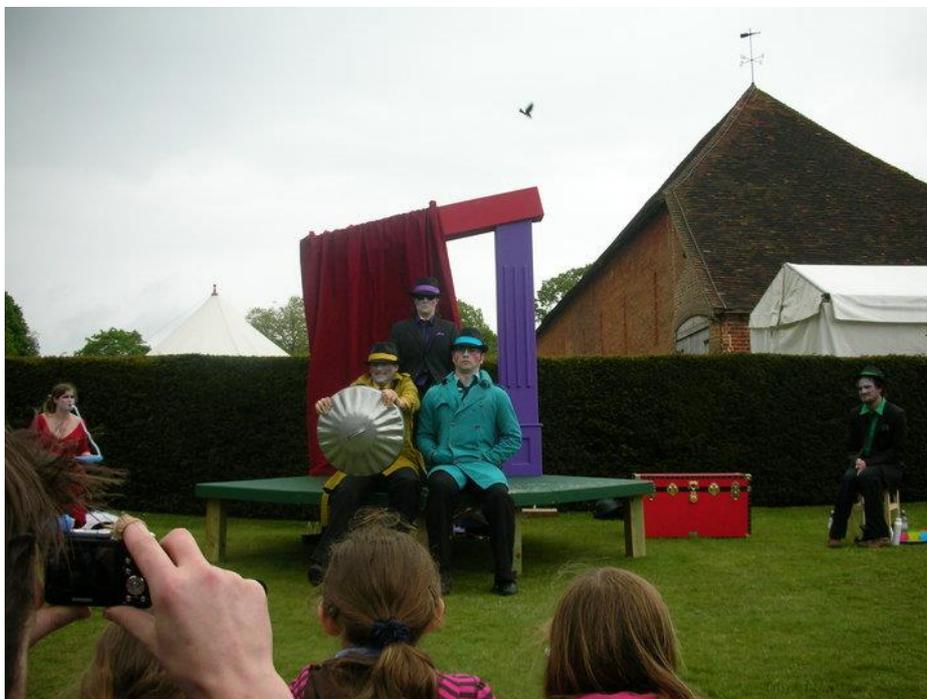
*Enter the PORTER, or, as she appears in our version, AUNT FANNY. She does a semi-improvised stand-up routine about the party, and her own exploitation as an employee. She asks the audience to imagine her as the door-keeper of Hell, asking them which professions she might let in, and ad-libbing in response ('Oh, an Estate Agent? You'll like it here. It's "warm" and "spacious"...)*

(Shakespeare, 2010, p.11).

Purcell's approach to this sequence is not unique. Paul Edmondson describes how Stephen Noonan's Porter made use of improvisation based on audience interaction in Gregory Doran's 1999 production at the Swan, to fulfil the same dramaturgical purpose (2005, p.129). However, as Purcell also goes beyond any pretence at preserving dramaturgical faithfulness to the source text by extending his collaboration with the actors to creating new improvised scenes

(see p.214), his editing skills both on paper and in the rehearsal room are crucial to ensuring the coherence of the performance.

### ***The Adaptation in Performance: Popular Shakespeare***



**Figure 4.3**  
**Malcolm drives Duncan to Dunsinane in *The Pantaloons' Macbeth*. Mark Hayward as 'Malcolm', Caitlin Storey as 'Duncan' and Ross Drury as 'Banquo'.**  
**Photo: Stephen Purcell**

In examining *The Pantaloons' Macbeth*, the extent to which Purcell's research has informed the Company's style becomes apparent. I am, therefore, opening my analysis with a selective overview of those areas of Purcell's research as expressed in his recent book *Popular Shakespeare* that seem to me to have had the greatest observable influence on this adaptation.

The performance that I viewed on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> August 2010, took place at the RSC's outdoor stage, The Dell. Between June and August each year this outdoor site in the Theatre Gardens is programmed with free weekend performances given by groups from schools, youth theatres and universities.

As regulars at this event since 2006 The Pantaloons are familiar with this site, bordered on one side by the river and on the other by a path which provides access through the gardens. Although the RSC provides a rectangular raised staging area in one corner of the site, The Pantaloons preferred instead to establish their own staging area shown in figure 4.3 above. The collapsing theatre arch on a raised green platform effectively established the back of the space, whilst the larger playing area on the grass in front of it was delineated by the audience seated on rugs at the front and with stools set at each side which were used to establish when the performers were not 'on stage'. This effectively provided a means of distinguishing two different staging spaces, a technique that Purcell draws from Robert Weimann's examination of the adaptation of popular medieval theatre techniques by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. In *Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition in the Theater*, Weimann identifies two distinct staging areas in operation in medieval plays: the *locus* a structure such as a platform on a scaffold which would be representative of a specific location, and the *platea* which 'provided an entirely nonrepresentational and unlocalized setting' (1987, p.79). These spaces demanded differing approaches to acting which extended to the relationship between the actor and the audience:

With the *locus*, [. . .] characters would be presented without direct reference to the world of the audience, and would often be of a high social status. As such, the *locus* was the site of heightened language, elevated subject matters, and officially sanctioned historical narratives. The *platea*, [. . .] would be the site of direct address and audience interaction; low status characters such as rustics and clowns would use the vernacular language and provide a profane, satirical, and subversive (and often anachronistic) counter-perspective to the affairs of the *locus* (Purcell, 2009, pp.19-20).

Despite the proliferation of heritage sites and events on their touring schedule, it must be noted here that whilst The Pantaloons clearly delineated

two separate spaces by using a small platform placed at the back of their playing area, this was not designed as an historical replica of earlier stages.

Likewise, their practice is not concerned with attempts to reconstruct

Renaissance playing as Purcell's discussion of their use of this staging reveals:

. . . it's not a religious rule that we adhere to because actually sometimes the actors will be right up close to the audience, but very much contained in the fictional world. Sometimes they'll be on the *locus* space as, for example, Mark when he's squirting the spray and going "It was drizzling", that's a *platea* moment, but it's on the *locus* space. So it's just a helping hand, but we did think it would be useful to have that defined space which belongs to another world . . .

(2010, p.21).

Rather the centrality to The Pantaloons' style of what Robert Weimann calls 'flexible platform dramaturgy' (1978, p.216) lies in the potential for multiple viewpoints to be expressed through the interplay between the *locus* and the *platea*. Weimann's analysis of Shakespeare's use of this interplay reveals the employment of asides and satire by characters on the *platea* to question the authoritative viewpoints presented on the *locus* (1987, pp.224-230). 'Thus the *platea* register serves as a means of destabilising the discourses of the *locus*.' (Purcell, 2009, p.20). Purcell extends the use of these techniques as a means of destabilising not only the viewpoints presented on the *locus* but also Shakespeare's cultural authority.

As Purcell notes above, the potential for dramatic anachronism also lies within this interplay, with the possibility of creating temporal duality between the *locus* and *platea*. Weimann suggests that anachronism is 'characteristic of the popular tradition' and goes on to associate it with the characters, usually the 'clowns and fools', that most often play on the *platea* (1978, p.80). Purcell builds on this plurality of expression to suggest that anachronisms might be used in modern performances as a means of questioning Shakespeare's plays

themselves and, more importantly, our attitudes towards them by investigating 'the split between Shakespeare's time and our own' (2009, p.24). This use of disjunctive anachronism, Purcell describes as taking 'the form of textual interpolation: lines are changed, topical references or contemporary phrases added, and self-reflexive jokes made around the text of the play' (2009, p.49). The Old Man's references to the BBC, *Sherlock Holmes* and Angelina Jolie quoted above are typical of the topical anachronistic interpolations that characterize The Pantaloon's work.

As my analysis of the adaptation will establish, Purcell frequently uses techniques from the *platea* register, and in particular self-reflexive comedy, to challenge notions of Shakespeare's plays as high culture, and 'force the audience into a playful reassessment of their relationship with the text' (2009, p.24). Such interplay between differing modes of performance requires the actors to be able to skillfully move between each mode, a process that Purcell compares to Brecht's description of 'the tussle and tension' created by the actor's negotiation between two disparate registers of performance (Purcell, 2009, p.22 and Brecht, 1978, pp.277-8). Brecht's description of this process is particularly illuminating in conveying the complexity of the requirements that this places on the actor, requiring the 'two mutually hostile processes' to 'fuse', at once combining both registers in their work whilst not losing the tension created by the interplay of the differences between them. (Brecht, 1978, p.278). Purcell turns to Harry Berger's continuum to consider how actors might negotiate this. Berger's continuum, with the idealised points of 'actor' at one end and the 'character' at the other, moves from a 'collaborative' to an 'illusionistic mode' (1988, p.49). As Berger notes that the actor in the dressing room or the character on the page can never exist wholly in performance to the exclusion of

the other, the remaining three points on the continuum represent negotiations between audience aware 'theatrical presentation' (  $\frac{actor}{character}$  ) which requires audience collaboration and 'dramatic presentation' (  $\frac{character}{actor}$  ) which aims to maintain an complete illusion of the world of the play with no recourse to the audience (1988, pp.49-50). Despite the use of this model in understanding negotiations between the actor's self-representation and the representation of a character, Purcell rightly recognises that such negotiations do not occur in linear stages, but rather are often in a constant state of fluctuation:

A good actor can encompass both ends of the spectrum in a single moment with the right combination of body language and audience eye contact, and in any case, the extent and nature of such a transition will always be ambiguous

(2009, p.22).

By conflating the spectrum in this way, Purcell diverges from Weimann's argument in *Author's Pen, Actor's Voice* that at the beginning of the seventeenth century presentational staging conventions associated with the *platea* were being replaced by representational conventions. Weimann's argument here, through reference to the opinions of 'modern actors', is inflected with twentieth century training practises that link the performance of literary texts to naturalistic representation (2000, p.21). In *Talking to the Audience*, Bridget Escolme disputes Weimann's reading of the later Folio and Q2 texts as providing evidence of this shift into wholly representational playing. Rather, Escolme argues, these 'later texts represent a theatrical development of the human figure that talks to the audience, rather than a withdrawal into an increasingly self-contained fictional *locus*' (2005, p.57). In addressing the audience, Escolme's 'human figure' can inhabit both representational and

presentational modes at the same time, allowing them to address the audience from *within* the fictional space. Purcell's sense of a conflated spectrum leads him towards a possibility as that suggested by Escolme, and this conflation was played upon to a limited extent in the construction of Malcolm's narration, allowing him to narrate from within the scene (see p.207).

### ***Narration***

The style of the adaptation was clearly established in the opening scenes with scripted and improvised references to the conditions of the performance. Ross Drury led the audience in an improvised call and response warm up routine to immediately engage them in participation and to grab the attention of others in the vicinity who may be thus have been encouraged to stop and watch the show:

ROSS: Are you ready?	AUDIENCE: Yes
ROSS: Give me a hey.	AUDIENCE: Hey
ROSS: Give me a ho	AUDIENCE: Ho
ROSS: Give me a Hey nonny no	AUDIENCE: Hey nonny no.
ROSS: Thank you, very Shakespearean.	

(*Macbeth*, 2010)

This routine concluded in an introduction to Mark Hayward who accompanied himself on the guitar as he delivered the opening song, 'The Curse of Macbeth' (figure 4.4). We were thus introduced to the actor before the character. From this position Hayward was able, through his opening narration, to exploit the slippage apparent between performer and character:

*[speaks]* Mine is not a story for the faint-hearted. It's the story of how my father, old King Duncan, died. It's a story of murder and betrayal. It's a story of supernatural sorcery. And, since the Arts Council have once again seen fit not to give us any funding, it's a story which is being enacted by a cast of five in *[insert vaguely disparaging reference to performance venue here]*

(Shakespeare, 2010, p.1).



**Figure 4.4**  
**Mark Hayward sings 'The Curse of Macbeth' in The Pantaloon's *Macbeth*.**  
**Photo: Stephen Purcell**

This in-role narration reframed the play as Malcolm's story. However, just at the point that his in-role narration made an exacting call for the representation of supernatural sorcery Hayward disrupted his own creation of the world-of-the-play with a meta-theatrical reference to real world limitations. By foregrounding the limited funding and cast size available to create the illusion he described, a gap between the story as told and the story as performed was established. The localised, improvised comment about the venue, in this instance 'in a garden quite close to the RSC' (*Macbeth*, 2010), further reinforced the 'world of the here and now' (Purcell, 2010, p.3) and took on an additional irony from proximity to this regularly funded institution and the production values that have come to be associated with it.

*Hayward*

At the end of this opening narration *Macolm* <sup>lxiv</sup> invited the audience to collude in the creation of the imaginary world of the play. As he described the heath 'a desolate place, encased in fog' where the witches were to meet, he produced a container of talc which he used to create a small puff of 'fog'

(Shakespeare, 2010, p.1). His subsequent improvised apology for this poor effect referring once again to the lack of funding, fore-grounded not only the means of production - and by implication a plea that the audience imaginatively collude with the performers - but also the real world conditions that limited those means. Through these comically framed criticisms of the Arts Council, the production values that have come to be associated with Shakespeare productions in the 'legitimate' theatre were also questioned.

Hayward's Malcolm was clearly at ease in the *platea* register of the narrator, playing on the relationship between the real world and illusion in theatre with moments of comedy such as a mime lighter that refused to work. The narration had also been scripted to use this slippage between the two modes of representation to enable Malcolm to comment on the construction of the text, 'the host himself was nowhere to be seen – preferring to lurk alone in a darkened corridor, soliloquizing' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.8). However, The Pantaloon's preference for using comic conventions when addressing the audience meant other uses of this register offered by using Malcolm as a first-person narrator were not explored. I am thinking here in particular of Mike Alfreds work on narrative in the seventies with his company Shared Experience; a company in whose storytelling style, which invites imaginative collaboration from its audience, Purcell notes similarities with the interplay between *locus* and *platea* (2009, p.146).

In an interview with Peter Hulton, Alfreds observed that one of the challenges encountered in first person narration was considering the narrator's feelings towards the events that they both participated in and reported upon. Alfreds goes on to suggest that 'he could either relive the emotional state of his past experience or experience the emotional response of observing past

events and his former behaviour from the distance of time' (2004, p.18). The immaturity and weakness Malcolm displays in the first half of Shakespeare's play, having to be rescued from captivity (Shakespeare, 2007b, 1.2: 4-6) and then fleeing to England after his father's murder (Shakespeare, 2007b, 2.3: 152-157), would seem to provide interesting opportunities for the more mature Malcolm, who has led an army against Macbeth, to reflect upon. My problem here is that despite wearing a yellow trimmed fedora and trench coat (see figure 4) and assuming a narrative tone reminiscent of a film noir<sup>lxv</sup> private investigator, Malcolm had no apparent attitude towards, or reason for, recounting his story. In this respect, apart from the complexities of doubling demanded by the small cast size, there was little to be gained from using a first person narration that an outside third person narrator could not have provided.

In terms of the adaptation then, rather than refocusing the narrative from Malcolm's viewpoint the narration, in addition to allowing large sections of text to be cut to meet the required playing time, was employed purely to create a temporal duality by establishing the performance as a retelling of past events. As such, scenes that required Malcolm to both participate and narrate added little additional text, instead making slight alterations to the text:

**Malcolm:** *[to audience]* It was the sergeant  
Who like a good and hardy soldier fought  
'Gainst my captivity. *[to SERGEANT]* Hail, brave friend!

(Shakespeare, 2010, p.2 adapted from Shakespeare, 2007b, 1.2: 4-6).

By the simple expedient of altering Malcolm's first words from, 'This is' to 'It was', the introduction became a past tense narration to the audience from within the scene. Elsewhere the temporal dislocation was emphasised in order to create comedy:

Enter DUNCAN, MALCOLM, and BANQUO, as if in a car.

**MALCOLM.** [to audience] We drove through the night, Banquo, my father and I, towards Dunsinane – Macbeth’s castle. It was the last journey my father would ever make. We had no idea of the horrors that were to come: the castle had a pleasant seat, and the air nimbly and sweetly recommended itself unto our gentle senses.

**BANQUO.** The air is delicate.

**MALCOLM.** [to audience] See what I mean?

(Shakespeare, 2010, p.7 adapted from Shakespeare, 2007b, 1.6: 1-3 and 11).

Whilst the narration foreshadowed Duncan’s murder, Purcell maintained the dramaturgical purpose of the scene upon which it was based by incorporating lines taken from Duncan’s observations about the castle’s pleasant location<sup>lxvi</sup> to lighten the atmosphere, thereby maintaining the contrast with the darker scenes to follow. Although this scene took place on the *locus*, with the illusion of a car created by transforming a dustbin lid by using it as a steering wheel (see figure 5.3), Malcolm narrated from within the scene. Here Purcell’s textual adaptation created comedy that exploited the temporal dislocation of Malcolm addressing narrative comments in the past tense from within a scene played in the present tense. This was highlighted in performance by Hayward combining both presentational and representational modes of address, whilst Storey’s grim-faced Duncan accompanied by Drury’s equally severe Banquo remained in representational mode to maintain the illusion of the journey, apparently unaware of the audience or Malcolm’s narration from within the scene.

Despite in retelling the story Malcolm had knowledge of all the events, ‘Macbeth had sent a letter before him . . . a letter which told of the witches’ prophecies’ (Shakespeare, 2010, 6), as discussed above, his narrative role was limited in its purpose. Therefore, once he fled to England following Duncan’s murder, he did not reappear until after Lady Macbeth’s sleepwalking sequence (Shakespeare, 2007b, 5.1). In a condensed production Malcolm’s extensive

testing of Macduff's loyalty (4.3) would be a luxury and therefore this scene in addition to being repositioned was also extensively cut leaving only Malcolm's news of Siward's support (Shakespeare, 2007b, 4.3: 213-7) and Ross' message concerning the murder of Macduff's family. From this point forward, Malcolm's narrative interventions appeared mainly to aid the textual editing:

**MALCOLM.** [*to audience*] Macbeth was ripe for shaking. Some said he was mad; others that lesser hated him called it valiant fury. Now did he feel his secret murders sticking on his hands; now did he feel his title hang loose about him, like a giant's robe upon a dwarfish thief. The English power was near

(Shakespeare, 2010, p.25 adapted from Shakespeare, 2007b, 4.3: 272-3 and 5.2: 1, 15-16, 19-20, 23-25).

Whilst the above narration briefly established the approach of the English thereby maintaining the pace of the final battle, it also covered the lack of available actors to represent Macbeth's opponents. Instead, the attitudes of the Scottish Thanes towards Macbeth expressed by Angus, Caithness and Menteith in 5.2 were represented through the above collage of their discussion in Malcolm's narration.

Malcolm's acceptance of Scottish crown following Macbeth's death was also removed (Shakespeare, 2007b, 5.7: 74-120), the play concluding instead with Macduff strangling Macbeth. Malcolm then virtually disappeared from participation in the narrative itself, appearing after Macbeth's death only to complete the framing of the production with a reprieve of the last verse of his opening song, *The Curse of Macbeth*. The sense of under-development I noted earlier in this strategy of using Malcolm as a narrator and subsequent lack of fully integrating his role in the narrative with his position as storyteller is possibly explained by the idea originating so late into the four-week rehearsal process. As Purcell's discussion of this late addition of the narration included in my discussion of the rehearsal process above makes clear, his intention was not to

retell the story from Malcolm's perspective. Rather it was to use the narration as a means to foreground the gap between representation and illusion, in the process inviting the audience to collaborate imaginatively with the actors.

### ***Comedy and Improvisation***

Hayward's role as the Porter was reassigned to Storey and became assimilated into her role as Aunt Fanny as a consequence of extending Malcolm's role within the play to include narration. Originally intended as a naive multi-purpose servant who eventually realised she was working for the wrong side in time to let Malcolm and his allies into the castle at the end of the play, the addition of the Porter's sequence turned this into a substantial comedy role within the adaptation (Purcell, 2010, p.8). I use the phrase 'Porter's sequence' rather than 'scene' here advisedly since although the scene retained its comic purpose and in its allusions to tending the door to hell, some of the text's subject matter, the scene was delivered as a '*semi-improvised stand-up routine*' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.11).

With the addition of a purple apron over her base costume and a black wig complete with pink curlers, Storey opened the routine by approaching the audience with a cheerful, "ello my darlings'. From this position on the *platea* she was able to challenge the value of unquestioningly reproducing a four hundred year old text and the social inequalities contained within it through metatextual interpolation:

Now I don't know about you but I think things are getting a little bit serious. Well Shakespeare certainly thought so, so he thought it appropriate to insert a comedy sequence. So I thought I'd come out in a cheap wig and hope that'd suffice, but it's a famous scene now in the history of English Literature as the Porter sequence. This is true I am a porter. I'm also a cook, a cleaner, a haberdasher and anything else you can think of really. And you know what? Shakespeare was so lazy he

didn't even bother to write my name in it. My name is Aunt Fanny, but you never hear that Aunt Fanny headed the R.S.C. banner. That's right, Aunt Fanny's the Porter. Don't write that in any of your essays please.  
(transcribed from recording of performance, *Macbeth*, 2010, np)

By invoking the performative use of the scene as a comic interlude and contrasting this with its status as a historically valued literary text, Storey made transparent The Pantaloons choice to update the comedy and thereby maintain its dramaturgical purpose within the performance rather than faithfully retain the arcane comic references of Shakespeare's text. Such open acknowledgement of this choice, accompanied as it is by a lighthearted questioning of the cultural values that we attach to Shakespeare's writing, is clearly the type of self-reflexive disruption to the audience's expectations that Purcell promotes as a way of changing attitudes towards Shakespeare performance (2009, p.24). Given this focus on changing attitudes, the choice to reinforce rather than challenge stereotypical representations of working class characters, performing Aunt Fanny with a broad accent, might attract criticism. In such a condensed adaptation in which the actors play multiple roles it may be argued that this performance choice as a conventional shorthand for communicating a character's class is expedient. However, the choice nonetheless remains troubling particularly since Aunt Fanny's improvisation here appears to be challenging both Shakespeare's and the RSC's elitism in not naming these lower class characters. A self-reflexive comment drawing attention to this performance choice as a stereotypical working class representation would surely not have been out of place in this ad-libbed scene.

Although Aunt Fanny dominated the *platea* position once Malcolm had fled to England, Storey's relationship with the audience was markedly different to that established by Hayward. Drawing on popular theatre techniques such as

improvisation and pantomime, Storey actively invited audience participation. This began with updating the Porter's sequence by asking for suggestions of people that might knock on the door to hell. In his analysis of the Porter's use of the *platea*, Robert Weimann notes the extensive use of anachronisms referring to the trials of the Gunpowder plotters and recent changes in fashion that reflected 'the time of playing-in-the-world of early Jacobean England (2000, p.201). By updating these anachronisms, The Pantaloons were able to effect a similar reflection of the society in which they were performing in 2010, thus privileging the theatrical purpose of the scene over retaining the dialogue.

Following a few prepared examples, including estate agents and rock stars 'Is this Mick Jagger that I see before me? Textual reference – I made it up myself' (transcribed from recording of performance, *Macbeth*, 2010, np), the initially reticent audience began to make suggestions which Storey then acted out. Encouraging this participation was important since the whole audience would later be involved as guests in the banquet scene (Shakespeare, 2007b, 3.4). In addition to disrupting the world of the play by drawing attention to the means of its production, '[i]magine that these few bits of wood here are the doors to hell', Aunt Fanny's interpolations, like Malcolm's narration, were also used to ensure that the audience could follow the story (transcribed from recording of performance, *Macbeth*, 2010, np). One area where this became necessary was as a result of Drury playing both Banquo and Macduff. On Macduff's first entrance he is greeted by the Porter who addresses him as 'sir' rather than by name, which would not cause a problem if the character is played by an actor that the audience has not yet seen or if the costume change was significant (Shakespeare, 2007b, 2.3: 18 and 21). Despite Drury playing Macduff with open, confident body language and a strong voice to contrast with

his quieter, reflective Banquo, because the costume change took place offstage and was relatively small, the removal of glasses and addition of a hat<sup>lxvii</sup>, there was a danger that the audience might misread this as symbolising outdoor wear rather than a character change. In an email concerning this decision Ross Drury explained that ‘we were concerned that kids wouldn’t be able to tell the difference, so Caitlin decided to just spell it out as cleanly as possible’. He went on to note that it also provided an opportunity to send up the apparent similarities between the two characters (2011, np).

One of the potential problems with Aunt Fanny providing this information is that she had not yet opened the door. Unlike Malcolm’s omniscient narration, Aunt Fanny’s knowledge of narrative events was confined to the same temporal space as that of the play. This constraint could not be broken without rendering implausible her later request for help in working out what was happening necessitating covering the apparent gap in her knowledge as to who was banging on the door:

Now you’ve probably noticed that there’s a very small cast of five, so you may notice a very slight resemblance between Banquo and the bloke at the door. That’s Macduff. I know it’s him because he always turns up late

(transcribed from recording of performance, *Macbeth*, 2010, np).

Throughout this lengthy routine Macduff (Drury) had been banging on a metal dustbin to simulate the knocking on the door referred to in the script. Once Aunt Fanny opened the door, a tussle occurred between the two modes of performance as Aunt Fanny attempted to remain in the theatrical mode of the *platea*<sup>lxviii</sup>. The Pantaloon heightened the tension already in Shakespeare’s text created by Macduff’s clipped iambic pentameter and the Porter’s rambling responses in prose, by Aunt Fanny combining the Porter’s prose with

improvised comments and alternatives. At one point this led the exasperated Macduff to demand that she use Shakespeare's text:

**MACDUFF:** What three things does drink especially provoke?  
Shakespeare please.

**PORTER:** Well, according to Shakespeare the three things that drink especially provokes are nose painting, (*to the audience*) we're all guilty of a bit of cheeky nose painting aren't we . . .

(Shakespeare, 2010, p.11 adapted from Shakespeare, 2007b, 2.3: 20.  
Sections in Times New Roman font are interpolations transcribed from recording of performance, *Macbeth*, 2010, np).

This interplay between Macduff's attempts to re-establish the illusion of the *locus* and Aunt Fanny's apparent resistance to abandoning her interaction with the audience, created a pleasurable momentary sense of chaos, which the audience's laughter showed they clearly appreciated. Whilst this apparent chaos was carefully orchestrated with order being restored by Macbeth's entrance, it demonstrates the effectiveness of Purcell's approach in exploiting moments in Shakespeare's text that use the interplay between *locus* and *platea*.

### ***Audience Participation***

Scenes that include large public events such as balls or banquets test the ingenuity of small-cast productions to the limit. In keeping with the popular theatre genre, The Pantaloon chose to use audience participation to create a sense of scale in their banquet scene. In an ad-libbed scene Storey prepared the audience for their 'role':

*Enter AUNT FANNY, who is preparing for the banquet. She ad-libs with the audience as she speculates about Macbeth's shady deals. She will cast the audience in the role of banquet attendees, and primed to deliver the line 'Thanks to your majesty' every time someone says 'Welcome'*  
(Shakespeare, 2010, p.17).

Storey as Aunt Fanny opened the scene by airing her suspicion that she was on the wrong side and asking for their help. This invited the audience to empathise

with her predicament. In a sequence that would not have been out of place in a pantomime she then asked the children in the audience about what had happened to Banquo and who had killed him, rewarding them with bags of sweets for their help. It took considerable skill to keep this moving, particularly when the first volunteer seemed unsure who had killed Banquo. Adopting a means to provide clues through appropriating tactics from popular quiz show *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, Storey suggested the names of four characters: Hamlet, King Lear, Sherlock Holmes and Macbeth, then offered a '50:50' option. In characteristically Pantaloon style, she then fore-grounded this appropriation by stating 'but you can't phone a friend, as a phone is an anachronistic device' (transcribed from recording of performance, *Macbeth*, 2010, np). Given the multiple anachronisms that had already been created during the performance including a motor car and a train, together with the suits worn by the characters which suggested a twentieth century setting, this nonsensical statement whilst eliciting laughter also reminded us as an audience of the historical gap between Elizabethan performance and the modern version we were watching.

Whilst this rather heavy-handed recap technique might be criticised as evidence of dumbing down, I wondered to what extent it was a practical response to the performance conditions:

. . . we've always felt that it's very important to tell the audience the story very clearly and sometimes almost to spoonfeed it, partly because we cut the text down so much . . . also the cast of five sometimes doesn't aid the clear story telling in the way we'd like it to. I'm not sure we have done that specifically before, just asking the audience what's going on, and you're absolutely right, that was primarily to keep the audience who might have come in halfway through, the audience who's attention might have drifted or the children in the audience for example, just keep them absolutely aware of what's going on in the story and where we are

(Purcell, 2010, p.8).

Although Purcell's response suggests this is not a common strategy used by the Company, it does demonstrate the degree to which consideration of performance conditions and the number of families attending The Pantaloons shows has affected the development of this production.

The recap strategy, with its associations of pantomime<sup>lxix</sup>, also crucially prepared the audience for participation in the banquet scene, since once the children had been involved the adults in the audience, and particularly the parents, were obliged to participate when asked. This was a somewhat risky strategy since it involved asking an audience that was comfortably sitting on rugs and eating picnics to stand up and toast Macbeth three times on a given cue:

AUDIENCE stand. Enter MACBETH and LADY MACBETH.

**MACBETH.** You know your own degrees; sit down:  
At first and last the hearty welcome.

**AUDIENCE.** Thanks to your majesty.

**MACBETH.** Ourself will mingle with society,  
And play the humble host.  
Our hostess keeps her state, but in best time  
We will require her welcome.

**AUDIENCE.** Thanks to your majesty.

**LADY MACBETH.** Pronounce it for me, sir, to all our friends;  
For my heart speaks they are welcome.

**AUDIENCE.** Thanks to your majesty

(Shakespeare, 2010, p.17 adapted from Shakespeare, 2007b, 3.4: 1-9).

The success of this participation was enhanced by the interplay between the *locus* and *platea*. Here, Aunt Fanny's instructions acted as a threshold, allowing the audience and *platea* to momentarily be encompassed by the *locus* as the audience members assumed roles within the fiction by standing with Aunt Fanny and raising their picnic or imaginary drinks. In this combined space, the platform transformed into a divide of status rather than playing modes, reflecting Macbeth's elevated status. As an audience member I found that this

enhanced my enjoyment of the scene, as having been cast as a banquet guest I found myself more keenly aware of how strange Macbeth's reaction to Banquo's ghost<sup>lxx</sup> would appear. The awkwardness of this situation also appeared to have been felt by other audience members as many of us uncertainly half bobbed up from our rugs when asked to rise later in the scene:

**MACBETH.** Thou canst not say I did it: never shake  
Thy gory locks at me.

**AUNT FANNY.** Gentlemen, rise: his highness is not well.

*AUDIENCE start to stand.*

**LADY MACBETH.** Sit, worthy friends: my lord is often thus,

(Shakespeare, 2010, p.18 adapted from Shakespeare, 2007b, 3.4: 58-

61).

Such willing collaboration with Aunt Fanny's instructions was due in no small part to the relationship that Storey had built up with the audience.

### ***Role Doubling with the aid of Puppets***

To create the three witches The Pantaloons drew on the popular theatre tradition of puppetry. Consisting of a papier mache hand and face joined by a strip of black cloth and operated with rods (see figure 4.5 below), each puppet was sculpted as a grotesque caricature of an old crone with the employment of variously exaggerated curved noses, bulging eyes and pointed chins<sup>lxxi</sup>. The operator's delivery of the dialogue in high-pitched, nasal voices reinforced these caricatures. This interpretation of the three witches as old crones was undermined with self-reflexive interpolations such as Witch 1 (Storey) ironically criticising the extended cackles that Witch 3 (Mellors) indulged in for 'stereotyping us' (transcribed from recording of performance, *Macbeth*, 2010, np).



**Figure 4.5**  
**The Three Witches**  
**(Operators: Caitlin Storey, Helen Taylor**  
**and Mark Hayward) in The Pantaloons**  
***Macbeth* at The Scoop, London.**  
**Photo: Tina Hagger**

The choice to create these roles using puppets provided two clear advantages in this production. The first was a practical way to signify such supernatural powers as disappearing into air. In this instance, the illusion of vanishing was signified by bringing the hand rod over the face rod causing the face to become covered by the black cloth, then lifting both rods upwards so that the puppet is clearly removed from the sphere of performance before the operator turned to exit. Secondly, it enabled five performers to play eight characters in 4.1 when the witches conjure up apparitions for Macbeth, by allowing three of the actors to play multiple roles simultaneously. Steve Tills' article, *The Actor Occluded: Puppet Theatre and Acting Theory*, provides a useful insight into how such multiplication is possible by highlighting the split between the operator as the 'producer of signs of dramatic character' and the puppet as the site of that signification (1996, p.112). Although, as can be seen

in figure 4.5, in *Macbeth* the operators were fully visible to the audience and wearing the costumes of their previous role, they focussed the audience's attention on their puppets through their own focus on, and movement of, each puppet. This '[f]igurative occlusion' in which the operator although seen remained overshadowed by the puppet as the site of signification, enabled the puppet to be perceived by the audience as an autonomous character (Tills, 1996, p.113). Despite this illusion of separation from its operator, a tension remained which Tills notes:

. . . is a reflection of the tension that exists between the operator who produces the signs and the material object upon which he sites them. The puppet invariably exposes the presence of the operator behind it, even as it occludes that presence by taking focus as the site of the operator's performance: the ontological paradox of the puppet is, in this sense, the result of the simultaneous occlusion and exposure of the producer of signification

(1996, p.115).

It is this tension between overshadowing and revealing the producer of the performance that invites interplay between illusion and reality, *locus* and *platea*. Therefore the audience could enjoy the comedy created by the witches' improvised comments and asides, including Witch 2 confiding that she didn't like Macbeth, whilst through Gibbons and Drury addressing their questions and comments to the puppets rather than their operators, the illusion of Macbeth and Banquo encountering witches on the heath was also created. The extent to which this interplay between illusion and reality worked was evident in the laughter elicited by Banquo's subsequent questioning of his own perception of the encounter:

**BANQUO.** Were such things here as we do speak about?  
Or have we eaten on the insane root  
That takes the reason prisoner?

(Shakespeare, 2010, p.3 adapted from Shakespeare, 2007b, 1.3: 85-7).

Tills' theory of occlusion and exposure clearly has much in common with Berger's continuum which I outlined above, allowing as it does for varying levels of intensity to be played upon between two polar positions in performance but denying the total exclusion of the either. Indeed, Tills extends his argument to consider the work of acting, outlining a similar split between the actor who is creating the performance and the site of signification which in this instant is the body of the actor rather than a puppet. Thus, Tills suggests that the actor cannot be totally replaced by the character since 'the site of signification implicitly exposes, even as it occludes, the presence of the living person who produces its signification' (1996, p.116). This ability to shift the site of signification from performing body to puppet also provides performers with the possibility of multiplying the sites of signification. In *The Pantaloon's* performance this multiplication enabled the operators to play the apparitions that the witches conjured up. As each apparition appeared the performer would lean the head of their puppet back and down so that it appeared to be looking directly up at them. Combined with the other two puppets being turned to look at them this created the suggestion of the apparition appearing above the witches. The solemn vocal delivery adopted for each apparition further distinguished the split between the apparitions and the witches.

This staging demanded significant collaboration from the audience, given that no items of costume were added to aid the transition to apparition. Instead the allocation of the apparitions had clearly been considered with Hayward costumed as Malcolm warning Macbeth to be wary of Macduff. Taylor who as Lady Macbeth and Ross, the latter whom she played as female, was the only Pantaloon to play female roles throughout, delivered the prophecy that 'none of woman born | Shall harm Macbeth' (Shakespeare, 2010, p.21 adapted from

Shakespeare, 2007b, 4.1: 86-7). However, the strongest symbolic doubling was in Storey, in the black woolly hat she wore as Fleance, reminding the audience of the prophecy that Banquo's heirs would be kings (Shakespeare, 2010, p.3 adapted from Shakespeare, 2007b, 1.3: 69). This visual reference effectively replaced the '*show of eight kings and Banquo last*' (Shakespeare 2007b, 4.1) which in this production had to be limited to a reappearance of Banquo as a ghost. Whilst this doubling might have been achieved in a number of ways, including also representing the apparitions as puppets, the expediency of using the actors as both puppeteers and characters created an opportunity to play on the parallel between the puppets and the witches being controlled by a 'hidden' being:

**WITCH 1.** Say, if thou'dst rather hear it from our mouths,  
Or from our masters?

**MACBETH.** Call 'em; let me see 'em.

**WITCHES.** Come, high or low;  
Thyself and office deftly show!

*The WITCHES suddenly turn the audience's focus onto the puppeteer of WITCH 2, who becomes the first APPARITION*

(Shakespeare, 2010, p.20 adapted from Shakespeare, 2007b, 4.1: 65-7 and 72-3).

The momentary inversion of focus from the puppet back onto its operator, the witches back onto their masters, emphasised the apparitions' appearances as something unnatural by disturbing the previously established theatrical convention. The doubling of the operators as the apparitions further played upon their practical role as manipulators of puppets as a parallel for the manipulation of Macbeth in this scene through the misleadingly worded revelations provided by the apparitions.

## ***Costume and Make-up***

In keeping with Purcell's editing of the text to highlight the interplay between the real world and the world of the play, the visual aesthetic of the performance, which drew on ideas from popular culture, referenced both modes. Nowhere was this more evident than in the use of costume and make-up. Whilst the individual items of clothing supported the representation of different characters, by assigning each performer a different colour that all their costumes contained regardless of the character, the audience was reminded of the conditions of the performance by highlighting the system of role doubling. Macbeth was the only role in this adaptation not to be doubled with at least one other. Where there was a need for Gibbons to create the additional role of Murderer 3, it was instead played as an extension of the role as Macbeth in disguise. This choice reinforced the sense of Macbeth being the character around which the action of the play revolved, the character which all the other roles interacted with, reflected upon, and reacted to.

Purcell reflected that in most cases the choice of each colour symbolically related to at least one of roles that each performer played:

. . . for example Macbeth was green because we felt it's the colour of envy and he wants things he can't have. Lady Macbeth and Ross were red because we felt it's the colour of danger, we liked the idea that Ross also plays with fire a little bit and switches her allegiance [. . .] depending on which way the wind's blowing . .

(2010, p.22).

Storey, who had the most costume changes, wore a purple trimmed fedora and tie as Duncan, the purple here symbolic of his royal position (2010, p.23). She then continued this colour theme wearing a purple shirt as Fleance and the Old Man, a purple apron as Aunt Fanny and a purple dress as Lady Macduff.

Whereas the items of costume themselves worked to establish the different characters that Storey was playing, the association of a single colour with her simultaneously foregrounded Storey as a performer creating each of these roles. Echoing the use of colour by pop groups and children's television programmes, a link that Purcell was quick to point out drawing on examples from *JLS* to the *Teletubbies* (2010, p.9), the costume also identified the performers as a group by using bright block colours for shirts, dresses and overcoats that clearly separated them from members of the public<sup>lxxii</sup>.

Introduced for the 2008 tour of *Taming of the Shrew* during which the actors wore individually colour co-ordinated shirts and knee-high socks as their base costumes, this use of colour has become a regular feature of The Pantaloons style (The Pantaloons, 2008)<sup>lxxiii</sup>.

Storey frequently refers to this aspect of the Company's style as a means of making their work accessible to a broad audience when publicising the shows, stressing the appeal that the bright colours hold for younger children (Saffron Walden Reporter 24, 2010, np and Skegness Standard, 2010, np). For Purcell however, the employment of strongly coloured costumes went beyond the practical demands of outdoor performance:

It also kind of removes it, it heightens it just a little bit, makes it look quite cartoonish,[ . . . ] so we're not asking the audience to believe these people are real, that this is really Macbeth that you're seeing before you, we're asking you to see him [Gibbons] as someone who's shown you in immense detail what Macbeth does, what Macbeth did

(2010, p.19).

Therefore, although Gibbons did not step outside his role as Macbeth, it was important to Purcell that at no point the audience forgot that they were watching a performer playing a character. Cajoled by his wife into murdering Duncan, Gibbons showed us a Macbeth that slowly fell apart. As he willed Duncan to

wake at MacDuff's knocking (Shakespeare, 2010, p.11 adapted from Shakespeare, 2007b, 2.3: 85), his voice broke and in subsequent appearances he became increasingly hunched over, fiddling with his clothes as if he was uncomfortable in his new position.

Clown faces further enhanced the cartoonish qualities of the costumes. Taking as their aesthetic theme, 'Pantaloon gone wrong' (2010, p.20), an idea also reflected in the collapsing arch of the set design, grey replaced the more familiar white face of the clown and was further distorted with asymmetrical splotches of red on each cheek. Although in past productions *The Pantaloon* have experimented with white-faced clown make-up (*Taming of the Shrew* 2008) and exaggerated eye make-up to match the colour of their costumes (*Romeo and Juliet* 2009), this has not become a set feature of their style. The grey face paint was therefore a design choice unique to this production, as was its use to show Macbeth's mental disintegration. During the banquet scene, Lady Macbeth threw a glass of water in his face in order to shock him out of his reaction to Banquo's apparition. Consequently, the face paint began to run, revealing parts of Gibbons face underneath. Purcell explained that the idea:

. . . was inspired by the Joker from *The Dark Knight*, . . . his make-up's all smeared and quite nightmarish. You know he's a clown but it's nightmarish because there's the human under the clown who's coming through . . .

(2010, p.20)

In performance, this idea proved to be less shocking, since distance muted the effect. Additionally, the revelation of the disfigurement of his face underneath the make-up created much of the horror in the Joker's unmasking. With this removed it was the literal 'loss of face' that resonated most strongly with the disintegration of the clown face visually mirroring Macbeth's increasing

dishevelment effected through Gibbon's physical interpretation of his mental discomfort.

### ***Transposition***

The intention stated in The Pantaloon's' programme for this production of attempting 'to reclaim Macbeth as a contemporary thriller' (2010, p.2) seemed at odds with the both the stylistic emphasis on comedy and clowning, and the concerns of accessibility for the youngest members of the audience that informed many of the decisions made in this adaptation. Having acknowledged that the play is 'about a social system [. . .] underpinned by brutal violence' and highlighted the 'images of night and darkness' so suggestive of 'film noir', the programme note went on to add a disclaimer:

Of course, a Pantaloon's *Macbeth* was never going to be an entirely straight *Macbeth*: our company style is all about rough, accessible theatre which interweaves Shakespeare's verse with playfulness and with contemporary references. But while we hope you find our production enormous fun, we also hope you feel it responds to Shakespeare's extraordinary drama of suspicion, obsession, and evil

(2010, p.2).

This highlights a central tension in that adaptation that remained unresolved. Although Purcell made the decision to remove much of the comedy that the Company had devised and replace it with Malcolm's narration (2010, pp.8-9), a significant amount of improvised comedy and audience interaction was still instigated through Storey's roles as Aunt Fanny and the Old Man. This in itself was not problematic, but the references to film noir most evident in the style of Malcolm's opening narration and the costumes of fedoras and trench coats, served to highlight the lack of threat and violence in this adaptation rather than enhance it. Purcell admitted that '[v]iolence generally is something we have to

be careful with for a family audience' (2010, pp.25-6). By staging Banquo's murder in a train carriage on the *locus*, the violence could be hidden by the simple expedient of pulling down the blind on the door of the carriage.

BANQUO and FLEANCE enter the carriage. The train starts to 'move' again.

**BANQUO.** [making conversation] It will be rain to-night.

**MURDERER 1.** Let it come down.

MURDERER 1 pulls down the Venetian blind as the others set upon BANQUO. FLEANCE leans out of the train, his tie flapping in the 'wind'.

**BANQUO.** O, treachery! Fly, good Fleance, fly, fly, fly!

Thou mayst revenge. O slave!

Dies. FLEANCE jumps from the train and escapes

(Shakespeare, 2010, p.17 adapted from Shakespeare, 2007b, 3.4: 21-26).



**Figure 4.6**  
Fleance (Caitlin Storey) escapes in *The Pantaloons' Macbeth*.  
Photo: Stephen Purcell

As Figure 4.6 above illustrates, when Fleance (Storey) pulled up the blind her body hid the violence behind and Banquo was dead by the time that she had jumped from the train. Elsewhere deaths occurred offstage. Purcell explained:

We had real problems with murder of Lady Macduff and her baby because we wanted to do it in a way that was shocking, but also in a way that wouldn't give the five year olds in the audience nightmares. So I think we came up with a solution to that, she's murdered by symbolic

gunshot and you can see the clapping of the board so you know it's not a real gun and the actual death happens off stage, but Macbeth is visible (2010, p.25).

By combining Macbeth with Murderer 3 he was afforded a more personal role in the murders that he instigated, in this case 'firing' the shot onstage that we assumed killed the fleeing Lady MacDuff. The guns used in the production were brightly coloured toy pistols that matched each actor's personal colour, which additionally served to tone down the violence shown. This choice of weapon negatively impacted on the final duel between Macbeth and Macduff, which proved to be the least effective staging of violence in the production.

Macduff issued his challenge, 'Turn, hell-hound, turn!' from behind the audience whilst pointing a blue toy gun at Macbeth (Shakespeare, 2010, p.28 adapted from Shakespeare, 2007b, 5.7: 37). Whilst the interchange was shortened, references to swords were not altered or removed. This in itself was not as problematic as the effect that fighting this duel with fire arms had on the sense of the text. In *Rescripting Shakespeare*, Alan C. Dessen notes that 'transpositions to later periods inevitably have an impact on battle scenes' (2002, p.138). He goes on to analyse examples from Shakespeare's tragedies and histories in which he found the substitution of modern weapons raised problems in representing 'individual prowess' in battle and tended to 'diminish the sense of personal danger in the violence' (2002, p.138). Essentially, for our purposes, a duel with firearms in which a single shot can determine the outcome cannot replicate the display of skill and danger it is possible to demonstrate in a duel with swords. Nowhere was this more obvious than in the unsatisfactory attempt to create a momentary falter in the duel that convinced Macbeth he was invincible:

**MACDUFF.** I have no words:  
My voice is in my sword: thou bloodier villain  
Than terms can give thee out!

*MACDUFF attempts to shoot MACBETH. Shots ring out – no damage appears to have been done.*

**MACBETH.** Thou lovest labour:  
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air  
With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed:  
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;  
I bear a charmed life, which must not yield,  
To one of woman born

(Shakespeare, 2010, p.28 adapted from Shakespeare, 2007b, 5.7: 42-50).

Not only did the bright blue toy pistol and visible creation of the crack of the shots with a slap stick compound the diminished sense of personal danger, the apparent lack of effect on Macbeth was hard to read since he did not appear to make any attempt to avoid the bullets. Was Macbeth really charmed or was Macduff a poor shot? In either case Macbeth appeared to be in no real danger, whilst if the latter held true the dire level of skill Macduff demonstrated in missing his target at such close range with two shots must surely bring his suitability as an opponent into question. The subsequent brief hand to hand struggle which culminated on the ground with Macduff strangling Macbeth was equally problematic, not least in the sense of anti-climax it created by Macbeth being so easily defeated. Given the comic narration and Aunt Fanny's comic interpolations, this sudden change of tone to violence and tragedy needed a means to provide the audience with a greater investment in the outcome of the fight if it was to overcome the jokey references to theatrical illusion that had dominated the first two thirds of the performance. Instead, the sense of climax was further diminished by Malcolm immediately concluding the scene and the production with a reprise of *The Curse of Macbeth*.

This abrupt conclusion, whilst affording symmetry of framing, denied the audience an opportunity to reflect on the consequences of Macbeth's defeat. Given the unresolved discrepancies in this transposition, notably in Storey's decision to interpret Duncan as a mob boss whilst Hayward's Malcolm seemed to have borrowed the private investigator as a role model, it is difficult to imagine how the restoration of social order after Macbeth's defeat might have been successfully represented. Ultimately it was these discrepancies in terms of depicting the violence and the interpretation of the society that existed prior to Macbeth's tyranny, which contributed to the sense that this genre reference was more decorative than a fully developed concept<sup>lxxiv</sup>.

### ***Conclusion***

In the course of this performance analysis it has become clear that the adaptation was significantly influenced by the need to balance the potentially conflicting demands of retaining The Pantaloons' clowning style whilst framing the tragedy as a thriller<sup>lxxv</sup> that was also suitable for a family audience. It is perhaps not surprising then that in her review<sup>lxxvi</sup> Barbara Lewis suggests that 'the foolery wins out.' (2010, np) She goes on to note that:

It's a fine thing for the younger members of an open-air, family audience getting their first taste of Shakespeare, but could be a disappointment for anyone wanting cathartic high art or high politics for that matter. . .  
(2010, np)

Whilst these comments are critical of the production, if considered in terms of The Pantaloons aims, they demonstrate that at least two – accessibility and introducing a sense of playfulness into their productions of Shakespeare's plays – have indeed been met. Where the Company clearly had trouble was in applying The Pantaloons style, which relies so heavily on comedy and clowning,

to a tragedy. By resorting to colourful toy pistols in deference to their family audience, the Company lost any power that the violence might have held to balance the comedy that they had added to the play. This would seem to be a potentially limiting factor in the scope of their work. Indeed, the only other tragedy that the Company has previously undertaken is *Romeo and Juliet* (2006 and 2009), which provides far more opportunities for moments of comic invention than most of Shakespeare's tragedies because the first two acts essentially follow the pattern of a Romantic Comedy.

Lewis' comment concerning disappointing the expectations of more experienced audience members unwittingly touches on a theme central to Purcell's research and practice, namely to disturb notions of Shakespeare's plays as high art. Purcell observes that:

It is an impulse which can be seen in much popular Shakespeare. In the Shakespearean performances of the small-scale open air company Illyria, for example, anachronistic intrusions from pop culture – a rapping Stefano in *The Tempest*, or the inclusion of the *Teletubbies* theme in *Twelfth Night* – disrupt the patterns of spectatorship commonly associated with Shakespearean performance and force the audience into a playful reassessment of their relationship with the text

(2009, p.24).

It is this potential to question the sublimation of Shakespeare's texts to the values of high art that leads to Purcell's focus on popular theatre techniques and in particular 'keeping one foot in the world of illusion and one foot in the world of the here and now' in The Pantaloon's' productions (2010, p.3). Thus the 'foolery' and 'repeated reminders the action is not for real' which Lewis fears 'risk obscuring any real acting' form part of a critical metatext that questions the very expectations that Lewis draws upon to support her criticism of the production (2010, np). Lewis' reference to the appeal of the production to younger members of the audience is not in itself misplaced here since both the

marketing of the production and Purcell's reflections on the production process reveal a clear concern that the performance is suitable for children. However, the wider implication that in being readily accessible to a young audience the production thereby has been dumbed down, thus losing any appeal for a more sophisticated spectator evokes rather readily the oft repeated characterisation of high art as difficult in binary opposition to the simplicity and immediately accessibility of popular cultural forms.

Rather than reinforcing the reductive impact of this binary between high art and popular cultural on what is a complex struggle for cultural capital (see p.105), I would argue that The Pantaloon's' adaptation is the product of an omnivorous approach, in which the use of accumulated knowledge of both popular culture and scholarly understanding of Shakespeare's plays is observable. Despite the concessions that have been made to ensure accessibility for all ages and casual observers who might join the production part way through as exemplified by Aunt Fanny's recap of the action by quizzing the audience regarding Macbeth's activities, many of the metatextual additions reference an understanding of the structure of the play that might only be achieved through studying the text. From Malcolm's foregrounding of devices such as the use of soliloquy (see p.206) to Aunt Fanny's deconstruction and subsequent contemporary reconstruction of the Porter's sequence discussed above (see p.210), The Pantaloon's' clowning created a complex critical reinterpretation of the social and cultural values in and surrounding the source text. Paradoxically, this criticism depended itself upon the audience's recognition of this self-same binary opposition between high art and popular culture. In fact Aunt Fanny's complaint about Shakespeare referring to the Porter by job role went further to align these two positions with social class

through her observation that 'you never hear that Aunt Fanny headed the R.S.C. banner' (transcribed from recording of performance, *Macbeth*, 2010, np). This challenge to the unquestioned replication of this early modern social value clearly relied on the audience understanding the RSC as being representative not only of high art but also of the social values that maintain divides between the privileged audiences for high art and the mass audiences of popular culture.

Rhonda Deal in her review of the production for local newspaper *Eastern Daily Press* also evoked the binary opposition between high art and popular culture, albeit from the opposite angle to that provided by Lewis:

. . . the whole outdoor theatre experience had more the feeling of a Gig in the Park rather than Shakespeare and with the injection of comic interludes weaving seamlessly though the plot *The Pantaloons* certainly made the Bard more appealing and enjoyable to a wider audience

(2010, p.25).

Whilst Lewis' comments in *The Stage* were intended for a readership that was knowledgeable about theatre, here Deal attempts to appeal to a varied local audience by distancing the performance from high art, represented by Shakespeare and the theatre, by describing it as being like a gig. Deal's final comment proposes that it was *The Pantaloons'* comedy that made the Shakespeare's text engaging. This attempt to create a distinction between Shakespeare's play and *The Pantaloons'* performance I would argue, results from an observable excess of meaning created by this iteration of *Macbeth*. Returning here to Worthen's theory of the interaction between performance and text (see p.14), I would further suggest that the comic interludes that in recourse to the hegemonic binary of high art/popular culture Lewis dismisses as 'foolery', and Deal values as an 'injection of comic', are the means by which the performance signifies its resistance to the source text. The satirical humour of

Malcolm's narration challenged cultural values attached to Shakespeare's texts, and the employment of popular performance techniques such as the use of audience participation in the banquet scene, questioned recourse to dominant theatrical conventions in modern assumptions about how Shakespeare's plays should be performed. In this instance, by overlaying the source text with a comic metatext, *Macbeth* was effectively re-rendered as a comedy in the modern understanding of that genre. Perhaps then, it was this contrast with my twenty-first century expectations of tragic conventions that consequently failed to incite my investment as an audience member in the outcome of the fight against Macbeth's tyranny.

## Chapter 5 Filter Theatre

### Filtered Shakespeare: Musicians and Actors as Collaborative Adapters

#### *Will the Adapter please stand up?*

In the two previous case studies, the directors could clearly be identified as the primary adapters. Responsible for not only editing and altering the script, but also imposing the style of performance and leading the performers through developing their roles, these directors influenced every aspect of the adaptation. Even where collaborative input was invited, Graham and Hoggett, and Purcell, through differing methods retained control over how the collaborative material was developed and above all, over its placement and purpose within the adaptation. However, in this case study, the primary adapter is less easily identified. Advertised as '[c]reated by Filter' and '[d]irected by Sean Holmes' responsibility is apparently shared between the Company and the director who, in being the only named individual, is presented as a distinct other, seemingly outside the group that is credited with the creation of the production (Filter Theatre, 2010, cover, and Exeter Northcott, 2010, p.4). This complexity is compounded by Filter's choice to begin with a pre-cut script by Steve Gooch (Shakespeare, 2006), which Roberts explained they then made further cuts to in order to fit it to their small cast:

We just had to chop it down again because we only had six actors, no originally we had five. And then we called Gemma in after a couple of days and said we need somebody to come and do Maria and the Fool, so we ended up with six actors and the two musicians

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.9).

In this instance then, it might be argued that Filter were not altering Shakespeare's text, but Gooch's cut of Shakespeare's text. Already then, we have a number of potential adapters: Steve Gooch on whose cut of the text the production was based, Sean Holmes the director, and Filter, the six actors and two musicians who created the production.

This search for the adapter is further complicated when we consider that the production was originally commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company for their Complete Works Season in 2006. It has subsequently been altered and revived for a number of tours across England and Europe between 2007 and 2010, with eighteen actors and musicians having, at various points, taken part in the production (Filter Theatre, 2012a). Filter, the collective credited with creating *Twelfth Night*, cannot then in itself be considered to have remained a consistent group. Despite this, throughout the process there existed a smaller core of performers and musicians, whom, I would argue, have had a significant impact on the process to the extent that the adaptation cannot be clearly identified as being attributable to the leadership or vision of an individual<sup>lxxvii</sup>. How then, does Filter's rehearsal process differ from those already examined? How do the material and ideological constraints that arise from these observed differences affect adaptation as process and product?

### ***Filter Theatre's Development***

Oliver Dimsdale and Ferdy Roberts, the co-Artistic Directors of Filter, trained at Guildhall with musician Tim Phillips, with whom they co-founded Filter. However, as Roberts explained:

the music and the drama never really came together to work together, they do now, but they didn't when we were there and we thought it was a bit of a waste really so we decided that we wanted to work with

musicians and wanted music and sound to be as important in the creation of the story as much as the spoken word is and the physical relationships of the actors . . .

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.1).

This desire to remove a perceived hierarchy in theatre of spoken word and physicality over the use of music and sound, led to the development of an approach that included musicians and sound designers as equal creators within the rehearsal process. Where their work has involved the use of video as in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (2007), the video designer was similarly included in the rehearsal process (Freestone, 2007, pp.5 and 18). Elizabeth Freestone, Associate Director for *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* summarised Filter's approach as 'inclusive and democratic: everyone in the room is asked to contribute their skills and imagination' (2007, p.5). Whilst this inclusive approach clearly has implications in terms of how the rehearsal process is organised, I will firstly examine the development of the Company, and in particular, the way in which it is funded, since this has had a significant impact on the projects that the Company has undertaken. Dimsdale, Roberts and Phillips set up Filter in 2001 with money from the Deutsche Bank's Pyramid Award<sup>lxxviii</sup>. Their first devised performance, *Faster* (2003), was developed as part of the Battersea Arts Centre's (BAC) scratch programme, which not only offered the opportunity to test work in progress, but also, through producer Emma Stenning, supported the development of their audience. This led to a National tour, followed by an appearance at the Brits Off Broadway Festival in New York (*Faster*, 2005, pp.2-3). BAC's programme clearly opened up contacts and opportunities for Filter, not least of which was the support provided by Stenning and Tom Morris, whose company Schtanhaus would later produce Filter's *Twelfth Night* (Schtanhaus, 2008, p.4). However, it was Filter's

collaboration with director Sean Holmes that proved to be pivotal, both in extending the Company's work into scripted productions, and in developing links with the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre, and David Farr at the Lyric Hammersmith.

### ***Sean Holmes and Filter***

Dimsdale and Roberts both continue to work as actors in addition to their involvement with developing productions as part of Filter. It was through this work that Roberts met Holmes, who cast him as Holocaust in *The Sea* (1999) at Chichester Minerva Theatre (Eamonn Bedford Agency, 2012)<sup>lxxix</sup>. Holmes' collaboration with Filter began after a chance conversation in which Roberts invited him to a development workshop for a devised production, *Body Stories*.

[“]They asked me if I'd maybe come in and throw an eye over something they were doing,” says Holmes, “and I said ‘Well I'd really like to learn through working in a different way, so why don't we try and do a workshop together.’ So I went down to the National Studio and they very kindly gave us three weeks in one of their rooms. What was brilliant for me during that time, as a director who tended to work in a traditional way, was there was a whole different approach. Particularly the whole way they use sound and music and all of that being in the room and the idea that everybody has a say and everybody's ideas being equal. For me it was that thing about being a ‘skill’ in the room, as opposed to having to run the whole thing, as a director normally does.”

(Holmes quoted in Marshall, 2010)

Holmes clearly found the experience of sharing responsibility for the creative process, rather than the director leading the process, an appealing change to his established way of working. The exploration of applying this approach to a script arose from feedback on a work in progress showing of *Body Stories*, which Nick Hytner and Nick Starr from the National Theatre attended. Roberts recalls that:

. . . they loved the process but the material hadn't been fleshed out properly, you know, it was three weeks of work and Nick Hytner said that he would love to see whether we could apply the way we work as a devising company with the sound and music, could we apply it to a text?

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.4)<sup>lxxx</sup>.

Holmes' response was to bring two texts, *Twelfth Night* and *Three*

*Sisters*, into the rehearsal the next day for the Company to experiment with. As Roberts noted 'because there was no pressure on us to do anything we just sort of messed about with it [*Twelfth Night*] really and it inspired' (Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.5). Whilst Roberts suggested that there was some debate as to the amount of chance that Holmes claimed to have gone into this selection (Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.5), both these choices clearly appealed to Filter. As Dimsdale reflected, there was a recognition of corresponding interests and intentions that led to their ensuing collaboration:

One thing that wasn't an accident definitely was that several years after working with Sean for the first time we've done three plays from three of the greatest ever playwrights and I know that Sean had a design or an intention to do that and in fact we also had a design because being classically trained actors as well we are introduced to great writing and want to be able to serve it and re-imagine it and reinterpret it

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, pp.4-5).

Holmes has gone on to direct all Filters' scripted work. *Twelfth Night* and *Caucasian Chalk Circle* were followed by *Three Sisters* (2010), which Holmes included in his first programme after taking over from David Farr as the Artistic Director of the Lyric Hammersmith where Roberts is now an Artistic Associate. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2010), a co-production with Lyric Hammersmith that toured the UK in 2011, followed this.

Such links have ensured that all Filter's work has benefitted from endorsement by nationally recognised theatre institutions. This endorsement has also extended to their devised work directed by David Farr, including *Water*

(2007) for the Lyric and *Silence* (2011) for the RSC. Despite this, the Company does not receive any form of regular public funding, although more recently it has received two grants from the Arts Council in 2010 and 2011<sup>lxxxix</sup> to support revivals for tours of *Twelfth Night* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Therefore, commissions from institutions such as the Lyric and the RSC, in addition to the marketing value provided by their involvement, provide the main source of financing for Filter's work.

As we have seen in the case of Frantic Assembly, such relationships can be beneficial in enabling a company to extend the scope of its work. However, reliance on the commissioning agendas of various large theatre institutions can be counterproductive as Dimsdale explained:

we look at these bigger institutions as a means by which to do some genuinely interesting collaboration; sometimes they work out incredibly well and sometimes you find out various things have got to be compromised on, because you have a theatre company and you have a big institution and you have to find the middle ground of exactly what the production's going to be.

(Dimsdale and Holmes, 2010, np)

It is beyond the scope of this study to provide a detailed examination of how these compromises have affected the development of Filter's work, both in terms of process and repertoire. However, it is clear that Filter's adaptation of *Twelfth Night* must be considered not only in relation to the values of the company itself, but also the values of the larger institution that commissioned it, which in this instance was the RSC.

### ***Filter Theatre's Aims***

Filter's aims encompass not only a stylistic approach, blending drama with music to such an extent that the creation of the sounds are visually

incorporated into the performance, but also a collaborative way of working that it is envisioned will have a direct impact on the dynamics between the performers onstage which will be communicated to their audience. Describing Filter's approach for *Whats On Stage*, Oliver Dimsdale observed:

We aim to nurture a strong group dynamic to create a devising language – an artistic short hand – that is truly creative. Filter was created out of a desire to make theatre that truly awakens the imaginative senses of the audience. We combine strong narrative with live music that very often exposes the workings of a production. That's to say, sound and video is mixed live onstage by musicians and performers to create a unique 'live chemistry' experience for audiences.

(Dimsdale, 2008)

This approach clearly has implications for how the rehearsal room is managed. Unlike Frantic Assembly where the directors actively selected the elements of the story that would be told through movement, the collaborative Filter process meant that a staging solution might be provided by any of the people in the rehearsal room, drawing on any combination of performance elements. As Dimsdale pointed out, this departure from director-led theatre means that the rehearsal process benefits from the combined creative inspiration of everyone in the room:

We've definitely worked in rehearsal rooms where you feel that there is a grand design that the director is eking out his or her vision and that's brilliant, all well and good, there are some theatrical geniuses, but the process has so much potential to flourish when you harness the brilliance that you have inside the room instead of necessarily wanting to build it all yourself. You can use others to do it for you.

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.2).

Such an open process is heavily reliant on the responses of the individuals involved. Combined with the commissioning process described above, this results in considerable variation between the rehearsal process and conditions for each production. Annette Vieusseux's rehearsal diary (2007) for

Filter's production of *Caucasian Chalk Circle* provides an apt example here, describing as it does a seven week process that is markedly different in the amount of time and attention paid to close examination of the text than that undertaken for *Twelfth Night*. In a more recent collaboration with the RSC on *Silence*, director David Farr noted that '[t]he challenge was to get Filter and the RSC actors to feel like one group of performers' (Farr, 2011). He goes on to note that in the final piece 'I don't think you feel that there are different performance styles going on, which is great' (Farr, 2011). Given such varying conditions, it is perhaps unsurprising that Sean Holmes remarked that:

basically you have to invent a new language for each show and, you know, the input of other people coming in, it's not that they have to learn the Filter method, it's that these tools are in the room and your response and excitement at those ideas or resistance to them will all be part of the chemistry of what we do.

(transcribed from Holmes, 2006)

Interestingly, he suggests that where resistance is encountered, that too becomes accepted as part of the process for that production. However, this also points to a potential weakness of working in such a collaborative way, particularly where the conditions of production are subject, at least in part, to the values of the commissioning institution. With so many influences on the outcome of each production, there is a danger that not only Filter's process, but also the style that Dimsdale outlined above, will be compromised. Dimsdale admitted that at times the process could become burdened by competing voices:

. . . sometimes the process is a bit haphazard and fraught with difficulties and we argue. There's a healthy antagonism that exists inside the room but more or less we feel that when we come down to a show, when we come to performing a show night after night every single one of the people who is inside that, be it sound designer, be it actor, be it stage manager, feels like they own the show and that's quite exciting for an audience to see . . .

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.2-3).

Whilst, as Dimsdale argues, one benefit for contributors is the sense of ownership that such a process can engender, there is a danger within such a haphazard approach that the democratic process might be compromised, leading to only the most vociferous being heeded. Given that some performers have only joined a revival of the production for a tour, opportunities to engender this sense of ownership in these newcomers may also be limited, since so much of the performance would already have been established. For the audience too, there is a real risk that the resulting product becomes a patchwork of competing ideas and moments of inspiration, none of which has been fully explored, resulting in an uneven or even incoherent performance. How then, does the director's role fit into such a collaborative process? Why have Filter chosen to include what is traditionally a leadership role in their collective process?

### ***The Director as 'another skill in the room'***

In an interview about their production of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, Roberts explained that:

[w]hat we're trying to do in this collaboration with Sean Holmes is make the director another skill in the room so that he responds to what we give him, as opposed to just being director's puppets.

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010a)

Robert's rejection here of a hierarchy that provides the director with sole authority for the overall interpretation of the script, echoes a principle more commonly expressed and explored by companies that create their work through devising (Heddon and Milling, 2006; pp.105 – 109; Mermikides and Smart, 2010, pp.11-13; Oddey, 1994, pp.8-11). Although Filter's work spans devised projects with writers, *Faster*, and devised work without writers, *Water* and *Silence*, as well as collective approaches to classic texts, their collaborative

approach has always included working with a director. Clearly then, Dimsdale and Roberts see some value in retaining the director's role, albeit with a reduced function. However, this desire to reduce the directorial role to 'another skill in the room', seems at odds with Filter's continued insistence on acknowledging the director's input separately to that of the creative work of the other artists who, as observed above, are collectively referred to as Filter (Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010a). How then does this separation reflect the director's role in Filter's process?

Whilst acknowledging that Filter adapts its approach to meet the needs of each project, in an interview about *Three Sisters* with Josh Boyd-Rochford for *Fourth Wall Magazine* Dimsdale remarked that:

Initial decisions are taken by the Filter artistic directors – often alongside established Filter actors, directors, designers and sound designers<sup>lxxxii</sup>. The process is then inspired by all the collaborators inside the rehearsal room.

(Dimsdale, 2010)

Outside the rehearsal room then, a hierarchy is beginning to emerge which includes the director. However, Dimsdale and Roberts claim that it is inside Filter's rehearsal room that the director's role is most noticeably altered.

Discussing *Twelfth Night*, their first scripted collaboration with Holmes, Roberts noted that:

As Sean said after the first showing up in Stratford, he felt that only after seeing it that he understood what his role was as the director in the room was. And he suddenly realised that when he tries to direct it, it doesn't work. When he let's us go with it and create it and be as mad as we want to be and then we show it, perform it, then he can respond to that and tweak it. And he's brilliant at doing that with us because we now have a relationship hopefully where we can go, "Sean, no stop now, you are trying to direct this too much so you've got to stop, just leave it, let us get on with it and leave us to it and then we'll show you and you can respond"

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.8).

In this respect then, the director is used as an outside eye. Rather than leading the performers through tasks and suggested moments for improvisation within the script, as we have seen in the work of Graham and Hoggett, and Purcell, the director is used to reflect upon and polish the work resulting from the collaborative experimentation between actors, musicians, and technicians. However, Holmes' reflection on the process for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which he noted as being 'very much the same process as *Twelfth Night*' (2012), prepared as it was in an equally brief rehearsal period, indicates that his role goes much further than that of an outside eye. Holmes' assertion that 'I intervene quite late and quite rigorously; I'll cut 15 minutes here, change a bit here – I do what you'd normally do in a month in a day' (2012), suggests that it is rather a matter of timing the director's input into the process differently rather than reducing it to merely feeding back on the collaborators ideas. Elsewhere Dimsdale's reflections on Holmes contribution to *Twelfth Night* reveal that he also inputs into the planning process:

It turns out that a couple of the suggested doublings from Sean were actually brilliant. The Fool and Maria both have huge vendettas against Malvolio and have good reasons to want to exact a revenge so at the point at which you see the Fool putting the nose on Malvolio at the end there are echoes of Maria's revenge as well in laying the letter down, and Andrew Aguecheek and Orsino are both in love with the same woman, so there were many echoes which was the point.

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, pp.9-10).

However, this also reveals the problem of attempting to treat the director as simply 'another skill'. Whilst actors, musicians, and designers create a product with their bodies, instruments, and materials, the director's sphere of creativity is in ideas. Whether providing ideas directly or guiding another's search towards a moment of inspiration, the director must rely on others to follow their instructions. As such, the director's skill can only be practiced by

the consent of others. What is different in Filter's process is that the three Artistic Directors of the Company are also the core performers. This alters the balance of power between them and the director as Dimsdale explains:

There is a healthy antagonism that exists between Filter and Sean that is a sort of a challenge, we challenge each other, we question decisions constantly. At times it can be very frustrating and it can stop the flow, but it's a necessary antagonism. Antagonism is probably the wrong word because it seems to align itself with conflict. Conflict is a better word! A healthy, complicit conflict. Without that you serve up something that hasn't really been explored, hasn't been looked at.

(quoted in Marshall, 2010)

Thus, in the scenario that Roberts described above, by telling Holmes to stop directing he is momentarily denied the practice of his skill as a director. Whilst Holmes clearly sees advantages to working collaboratively, he realises that in order to exercise his skill as a director there are times when he cannot be viewed as an equal collaborator in the process. Discussing his collaboration with Filter on *Caucasian Chalk Circle* he observes:

. . . what it seems to me is that if you release everyone's imagination and make everyone's imagination equal in the room; so director, designer, all the actors, the singer, musicians, composers, video artists, stage manager; it leads to lots of argument, it leads to lots of endless discussion, it leads to lots of frustration but it also leads to potentially a stronger, more vivid language. And your job as the director is to know when to say 'no, I've got to speak now'.

(transcribed from Holmes, 2006)

In order to exercise the director's skill effectively then, Homes has to remain outside the collective collaborative process to some degree. In this respect, the separate crediting of Holmes<sup>lxxxiii</sup> in the publicity material might be seen to indicate a demarcation between the director's role and the collective.

## ***Values in resource allocations for Twelfth Night***

As highlighted above, one of the ways in which Filter's Artistic Directors influence the process and, hence the final product, is through decisions that are made prior to the beginning of rehearsals. As with most productions, money was a finite resource, and nowhere are the values of a company more clear than in their choices of how to expend this resource.

Whilst the choice to employ only six actors to perform Steve Gooch's cut of *Twelfth Night* which requires sixteen named roles might, on the surface, appear to be purely due to financial expediency, it must be remembered that Filter's equal focus on sound and music led to the inclusion of two musicians in the rehearsal and performance process. Similarly, their stylistic choice to reveal the means of production might be considered not only an effect of their financial constraints, but also a choice made within these constraints to invest in actors and musicians rather than set and costume.

Elsewhere the decisions are not so transparent. Roberts claims that:

We then got invited to go and be part of the RSC's Complete Works [. . .] and they offered us a full rehearsal period [. . .] [w]hich we declined at the time and said, "We'd like to try and approach *Twelfth Night* in ten days if we can"

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.6).

The choice to add an unnecessarily tight time constraint to the realisation of such a huge text might appear to be ridiculous. However, this timeframe could be considered comparable to The Pantaloons' four week rehearsal period for the staging of two plays (see p.188). It might also be considered indicative of a different approach to preparing the play for performance. As Tiffany Stern notes 'before the twentieth century, before the rise of the director and the interest in ensemble production, performances were readied in another way'

(2000, p.10). This alternative approach placed an emphasis on actors preparing their role alone (2000, p.10). Roberts' explanation of the choice for such a condensed rehearsal period reveals much about Filter's values:

. . . because there was no pressure on us, we were only going to do three performances up in Stratford for their Complete Works Festival and it was a tiny little footnote in the big, grand programme of the RSC and that lack of pressure allowed us to rid ourselves of the shackles of the RSC really

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.7).

In representing the RSC as an institution capable of exercising unacceptable restraint on their creative process, Roberts is setting up Filter's approach as being in opposition to the creative values and processes of the RSC. What influenced such direct opposition to the institution that was commissioning them to undertake *Twelfth Night*?

### ***Filter and the Royal Shakespeare Company***

Within the Company, Holmes experiences of directing work for the RSC appear to have had a direct impact on how the practices of this institution were perceived. Reflecting on the events that led Dimsdale and Roberts to invite Holmes to their workshop at the National Theatre they recall:

**Roberts:** [. . . ] I'd worked with Sean Holmes outside of Filter, I'd worked with Sean Holmes before<sup>lxxxiv</sup>. Tim and I met Sean for a beer in town somewhere just after he'd finished working with the RSC, and Sean, I've never seen Sean so lost. He'd had a nightmare basically at the RSC.

. . .  
**Dimsdale:** He felt part of factory didn't he?

**Roberts:** Absolutely and he felt that he couldn't be as creative as he wanted to be

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.4).

As a second hand report, the accuracy of Roberts' recall of Holmes contribution to this conversation may be disputed. However, what is pertinent here is the impression of the RSC that Dimsdale and Roberts have formed from that, and

probably subsequent conversations since Dimsdale<sup>lxxxv</sup> was not mentioned as being present at the initial meeting, namely its restriction of creativity through an approach that resembled the production methods of a factory. This view of the RSC's tightly scheduled production process as stifling creativity has been noted elsewhere<sup>lxxxvi</sup>, not least by Colin Chambers in his examination of balancing the business and creative demands of such a large cultural institution. Chambers concluded that a number of creative compromises were being made in response to the production system, not least of which was the effect of casting all productions from a shared ensemble of actors, which led to:

. . . directors' pressing actors into a uniform approach to meet the deadlines of the complex schedule because that was the expedient way to cope in the allotted time with the different styles of acting and levels of experience they faced

(2004, p.181).

Director Katie Mitchell reflecting on her work for the RSC similarly noted the pressure to 'adjust my rehearsal techniques to RSC rules' (quoted in Adler, 2001, p.210). Once again the limits placed on available time in the rehearsal room and the demands on the actors to divide their focus between several productions at the same time was noted as curtailing the director's preferred creative process:

(m)y process was too much for the cast, given their split attention and focus due to other rehearsals, and didn't yield what I initially expected. I kept running into brick walls, so I adapted

(quoted in Adler, 2001, p.210).

As I have noted, one of the factors contributing to this view of the RSC as a production factory was that insufficient time was available for creative exploration of Shakespeare's texts. Filter's rejection therefore of a full rehearsal period might appear to be merely compounding the problem. However, the ten-day constraint, rather than increasing pressure, conversely provided the

freedom to produce a work in progress<sup>lxxxvii</sup>, rather than a finished production. In this way, they were able to focus their work on experimentation without the pressure of having to produce a finalised product. Given that Filter's experimental process with its focus on blending music and drama is so clearly at odds with the RSC's tightly scheduled text centred production process, what was the benefit to RSC of including Filter in the Complete Works Festival?

### ***The Complete Works Festival***

The Cube Studio Theatre in which Filter performed was a temporary 100 seat venue that had been built inside the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. Throughout November 2006 it provided a mini-festival of work within the larger, year long Complete Works Festival. The Cube programme consisted of experimental performances of Shakespeare's plays, such as *Tiny Ninja Hamlet* which, as the name suggests used small plastic ninja figures to relate the play; and new writing, including Rona Monroe's *The Indian Boy*, which was inspired by *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. What this mini-festival in a small, temporary venue offered Filter, was the opportunity to experiment with Shakespeare's text in a way that actively opposed the very tradition of Shakespeare production with which the RSC had become synonymous. However, as Emily Linnemann's research into the cultural value of publicly-funded Shakespeare reveals, one of the functions of the Cube programme was to bring the innovation from such challenges to the RSC's approach to Shakespeare performance under the RSC's own corporate banner, in order to 'engineer a rebranding and re-creation for the company and for the Shakespeare they produce' (2011, p.267).

A significant influence on the RSC's search for ways to rejuvenate its corporate identity was a focus in the Arts Council on extending the appeal of the

arts. This appeal was not only aimed at developing a wider, more diverse demographic, but also extending engagement beyond spectatorship to include active participation (Arts Council England, 2006b, p.7). Described in the RSC's *2005/6 Annual Report and Accounts* as both a 'key funder' and 'principal partner' (2006, pp.9 and 44), the importance of maintaining the Arts Council's ongoing support, is outlined most clearly in the accounts. Providing a grant of £14.1 million in 2005/6, the Arts Council of England was not only the largest source of public funding provided to the RSC, but also the main source of income overall, with the box office the second largest at £11.8 million (Royal Shakespeare Company, 2006, p.13). In *Our Agenda for the arts 2006-8*, the Arts Council set out their aim to develop 'a more confident, diverse and innovative arts sector which is valued by and in tune with the communities it serves' (2006a, p.1). As Linnemann points out, bringing a range of approaches to performing Shakespeare under its banner through links to company's such as Forkbeard Fantasy, and Kneehigh, the RSC has been able to 'reshape their brand image' without the risk of losing its established audience for their own brand of Shakespeare performance (2011, p.239).

As a small contribution to a much larger event then, the RSC clearly benefitted from Filter's experimental style, enabling it to offer a more varied approach to Shakespeare production in order to widen its appeal and align itself more closely to the Arts Council's agenda. Despite this peripheral position of Filter's production in the RSC's programme, marketing materials for subsequent tours of their adaptation fore-grounded the RSC's involvement: 'Filter in association with the Royal Shakespeare Company presents *Twelfth Night*' (Filter Theatre, 2010; Exeter Northcott, 2010a). These marketing materials all bear the RSC's logo as well as Filter's, and go on to note that the production

was 'originally commissioned for the Royal Shakespeare Company's Complete Works Festival.' (Filter Theatre, 2010; Exeter Northcott, 2010) The potential marketing power of such a well-known brand's endorsement is clear from Mary Butlin's and Amy Clarke's presentation, *Marketing the RSC*. Butlin and Clarke, both from the RSC Marketing Department, claim that '82% of the UK population are aware of the RSC' and '44% [. . .] recognise the RSC logo', (2010, p.3). The RSC's continued association with the production, particularly in regional theatres Filter was visiting for the first time, offered the possibility of attracting spectators who might not otherwise book a production of *Twelfth Night* by an unfamiliar company. As Ginnie Bown noted in a focus group discussion about Filter's production at Exeter Northcott, 'I didn't know before what Filter was, but RSC obviously made you think it would be quite prestigious' (Bown, V., Pollard, N., and Poulatsidou, A., 2010, p.1). Another contributor, Nicola Pollard, also commented on the expectations that the RSC's association with the production engendered:

I looked at the leaflet and thought, "Well I don't know who Filter is" and then it said it's in association with the RSC and guiltily I did think, "Ah it should be good then" not because I think everything in the RSC is good, but it should at least have a quality to it

(Bown, V., Pollard, N., and Poulatsidou, A., 2010, pp.1-2).

It is clear from Pollard's comments that she associated the RSC with high quality production standards, a viewpoint, that according to Butlin's and Clarke's presentation, she shares with '[t]he majority of the UK population' (2010, p.4). Both Pollard and Bown had noted the design of the poster, a monochrome image of a man with multicoloured wiring protruding from his head, and sound hole covers in place of his eyes. However, whilst this conflicted with their perceptions of the RSC's brand, Bown admitted that the extent to which the production departed from these surprised her, 'I thought it

would be quirky, but not as much as it was' (Bown, V., Pollard, N., and Poulatsidou, A., 2010, p.3). With such divergent messages springing from the combination of the RSC brand with Filter's idiosyncratic imagery, it is perhaps unsurprising that one respondent to my survey of students and staff from Exeter University who had attended Filter's *Twelfth Night* at Exeter Northcott between 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> October 2010, noted that their enjoyment of the production was spoilt by:

. . . audience members next to me who kept complaining that they wanted a 'traditional' shakespeare production and were appalled that the RSC had anything to do with this one.

(McCourt, 2010, Respondent 1182161607)

Such audience reactions underline the extent to which the experimental approach to Shakespeare's text employed by Filter was a departure from the style of Shakespeare production that the RSC had come to be associated with by 2010.

### **Flexibility and Touring**

Considering the origins of this adaptation as a small-scale work-in-progress performance, the subsequent tours between 2007 and 2010 suggest that the production had an unusually high level of flexibility, covering as it did schools (Alcester Grammar School), small-scale (Tricycle Theatre, London), mid-scale (Theatre Royal Bath) and large-scale (The Courtyard Theatre, Stratford-upon Avon) venues. In addition, participation in the British Council's Showcase at the Edinburgh Festival in 2007 led to *Twelfth Night* touring the Netherlands in October 2008. Part of this flexibility was, once more, due to how RSC Artistic Director, Michael Boyd, saw Filter's production fitting into the RSC's programme:

This year they have explored Twelfth Night with the RSC as part of our Complete Works of Shakespeare Festival and that production will form our Young Persons Shakespeare production, playing schools and the Courtyard next year.

(2007)

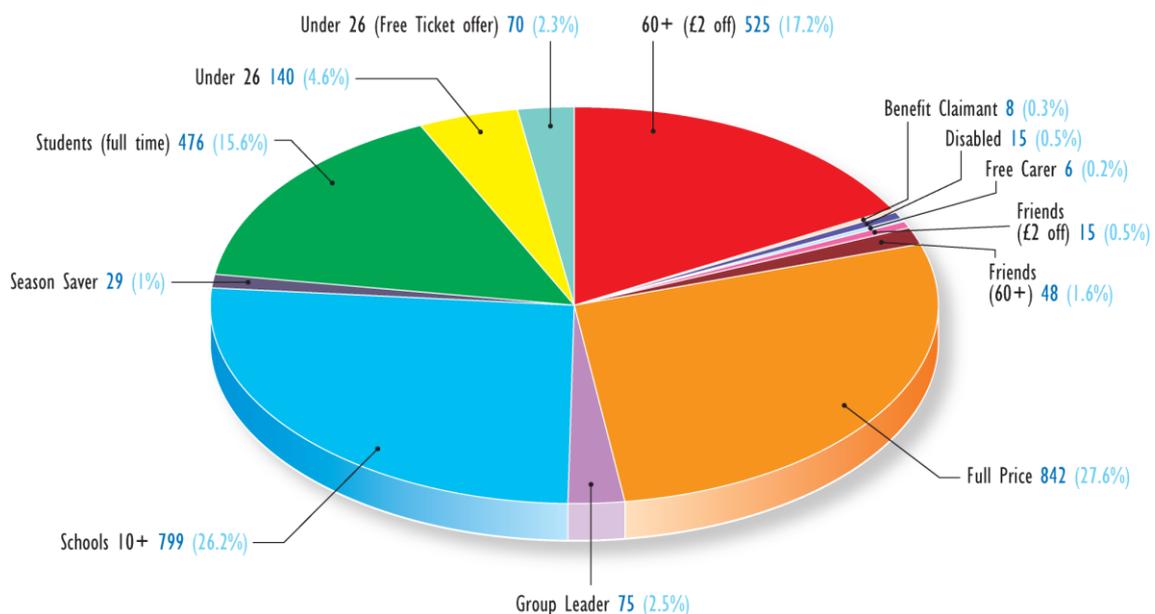
Boyd's endorsement of Filter's production, was therefore, linked to the RSC's *Stand up for Shakespeare* manifesto (2008), which led to the launch of a range of new education initiatives including the Young Person's Shakespeare productions. A significant proportion of Filter's 2008 tour then, involved performances in schools around London and the Midlands. Yet, Dimsdale maintained that Filter had not initially developed the production to be aimed at a schools audience: '[w]e didn't create it with a single child in mind' (2010b, p.22). Rather, he claimed '[i]t all came out of our love of text and our puerile sense of humour and our desire to bring out the story and do it in a different, irreverent way' (2010b, p.22). Once again then, Filter's production was slotted into a larger RSC programme designed to engage with the prevailing Arts Council policies by extending access opportunities to live performance events for young people (Arts Council England, 2006, p.7; Royal Shakespeare Company, 2008, p.4 2008). The promised performance at the RSC's 1048 seat Courtyard Theatre was unusually programmed to start at 11pm following the RSC's own performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In his review for the *Shakespeare* journal, Peter Kirwan noted that, 'this translated into a half-empty theatre that emphasized just how sidelined this event was in the main programme.' (2009, p.114) However, given that the production had only played in schools and the small capacity Cube theatre for the RSC, such a late slot, it might be argued, minimised the programming risk for the RSC that Filter would fail to attract a large audience. In the circumstances then, a half-full auditorium might be considered a good outcome.

The variety of tour bookings for this production raises a number of questions. What qualities enabled the adaptation to transfer to such a range of venue conditions? Was this adaptation really as flexible as it appears or did such variety lead to the integrity of the production being sacrificed in some venues? To what extent did different venues affect the 'live chemistry between actors, audience, text and sound' (Schtanhaus, 2008, p.1) that is at the centre of Filter's approach? I will return to these questions in my analysis of the adaptation. However, it will be useful at this point to consider the audience demographic for Filter's production. Does it, despite Dimsdale's claim above, appeal mainly to a youth audience, or have a wider appeal?

### ***Audience***

The Marketing Pack produced by Rena Shagan Associates for their 2010 tour suggests five target markets for Filter's production. These include theatre-goers with a record of attending classical and contemporary drama, those who belong to "middle England' groups such as National Trust', those who attend other arts events such as galleries, and student groups (2010, p.12). The pack also emphasised that because the production was 'boisterous, full of music and fun, whilst staying true to the original story', it was suitable for younger audiences over the age of twelve (2010, pp.10 and 12). As I have established in the previous case studies, this combination of middle class arts supporters, and teenagers who are studying the play, is widely recognised as the core audience for regional tours of Shakespeare's plays. In his interview Josh Boyd-Rochford, Oliver Dimsdale confirmed that Filter attracted a young demographic, however he went on stress that '[we] want audiences with people of all ages.' (2010) How successful then, were Filter in achieving this varied demographic?

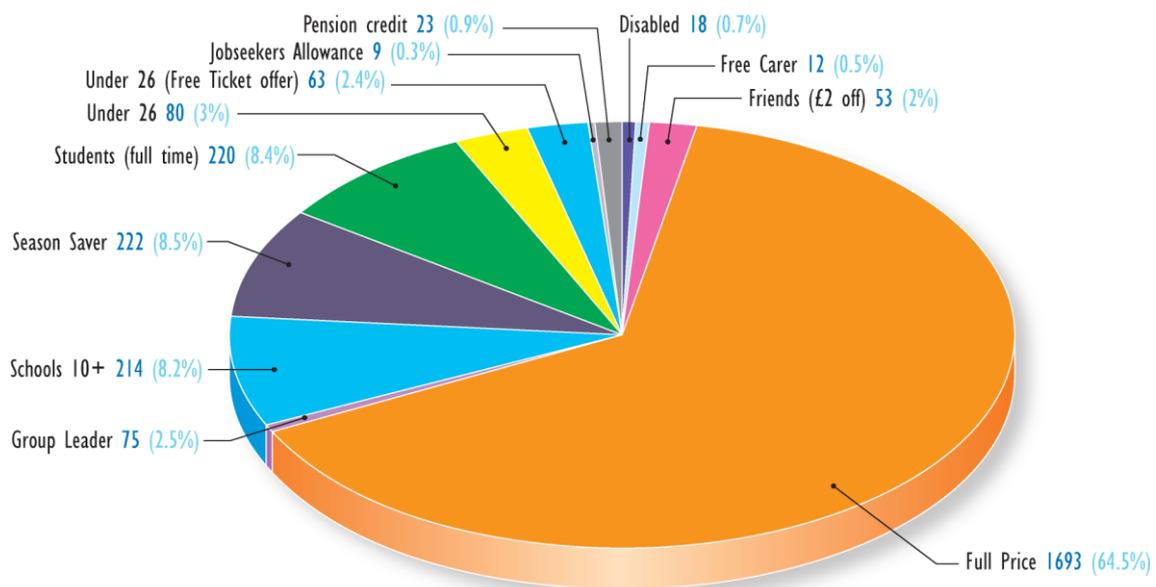
In order to gain a more accurate sense of the audience demographic for Filter’s adaptation I will be referring to the box office breakdown for their performances of *Twelfth Night* at Exeter Northcott from Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> October 2010 (figure 5.1). My analysis here will be limited to age range, since the *Count by Price Type* provided by Exeter Northcott (2012a) does not include information about categories such as social class or ethnicity. Although, these figures cannot provide a comprehensive overview of Filter’s audience, subject as they are to variations such as regional demographic and the established audience for this venue, this breakdown does provide a useful starting point for considering how the relationship between Filter and their audience may have affected this adaptation.



**Figure 5.1**  
**Box office Analysis for Filter’s *Twelfth Night*, Exeter Northcott, 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> October 2010**

There is a marked balance between the two largest categories of Filter’s audience: school groups of ten or more (26.2%) and full price ticket holders (27.6%). Given that discounts<sup>lxxxviii</sup> were available for those over sixty and those under twenty-six, we can further assume that the latter category comprises of people between those two age categories. Those over sixty make up the next

largest segment (17.2%) and students the fourth (15.6%). In order to provide some context for these figures I have looked at the box office breakdowns for other Shakespeare productions at Exeter Northcott between 2009 and 2011. Headlong's production of *The Winter's Tale*, which was presented over five evenings and one matinee from Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> November 2009 provides the closest comparison to *Twelfth Night* in terms of length of run and positioning within the Autumn programme (figure 5. 2). However, Exeter Northcott changed its pricing policy for the 2010 season, for the first time providing discounts for all audience members over the age of sixty (2010a, p.2). It is therefore impossible to provide an accurate comparison with Headlong's full price category (64.5%) since it presumably includes people over sixty (Exeter Northcott, 2010b).

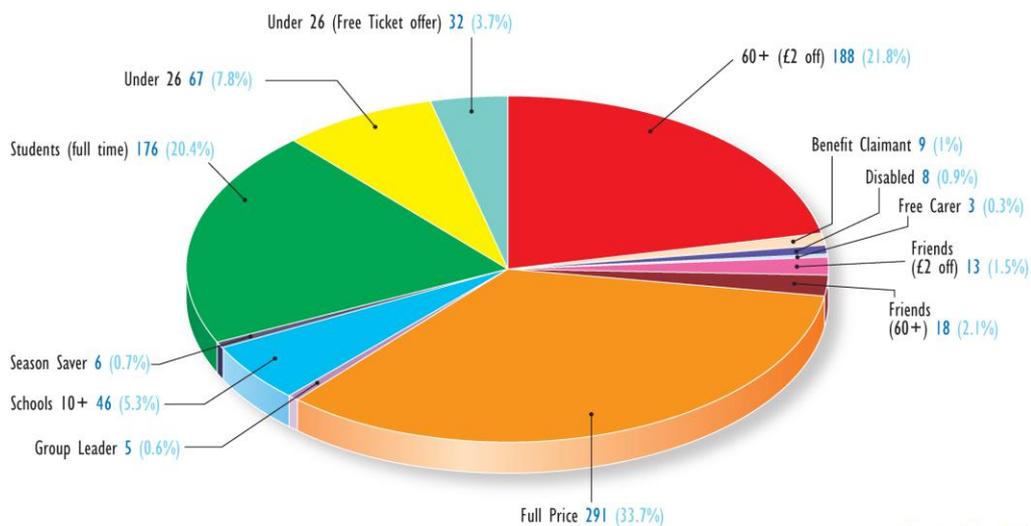


**Figure 5.2**  
**Box Office Analysis for Headlong Theatre Company's *The Winter's Tale*,**  
**Exeter Northcott, 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

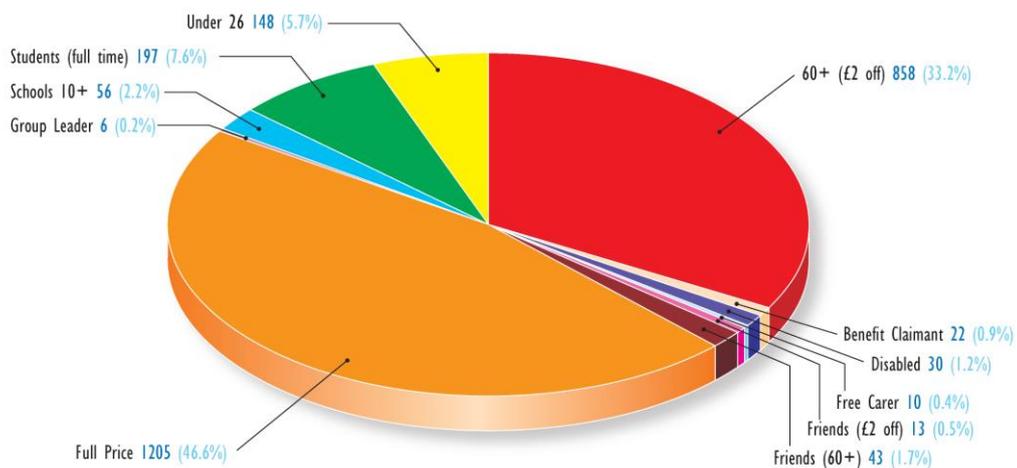
Exeter Northcott's Autumn programme for 2011 did not include a Shakespeare performance against which a further comparison could be made (2011a), I have therefore looked at the two Shakespeare productions from the Spring/Summer 2011 season (2011b) (figure 5.3). Icarus Theatre provided two

evening performances and one Saturday matinee of *Hamlet*, 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> March at Exeter Northcott (2012b), whilst the Tobacco Factory presented nine evening performances and two Saturday matinees of *A Comedy of Errors*, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> May (2012c).

**Figure 5.3**  
**Box Office Analysis for Icarus Theatre Company's *Hamlet*,  
 Exeter Northcott, 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> March 2011**



Icarus Theatre "Hamlet"



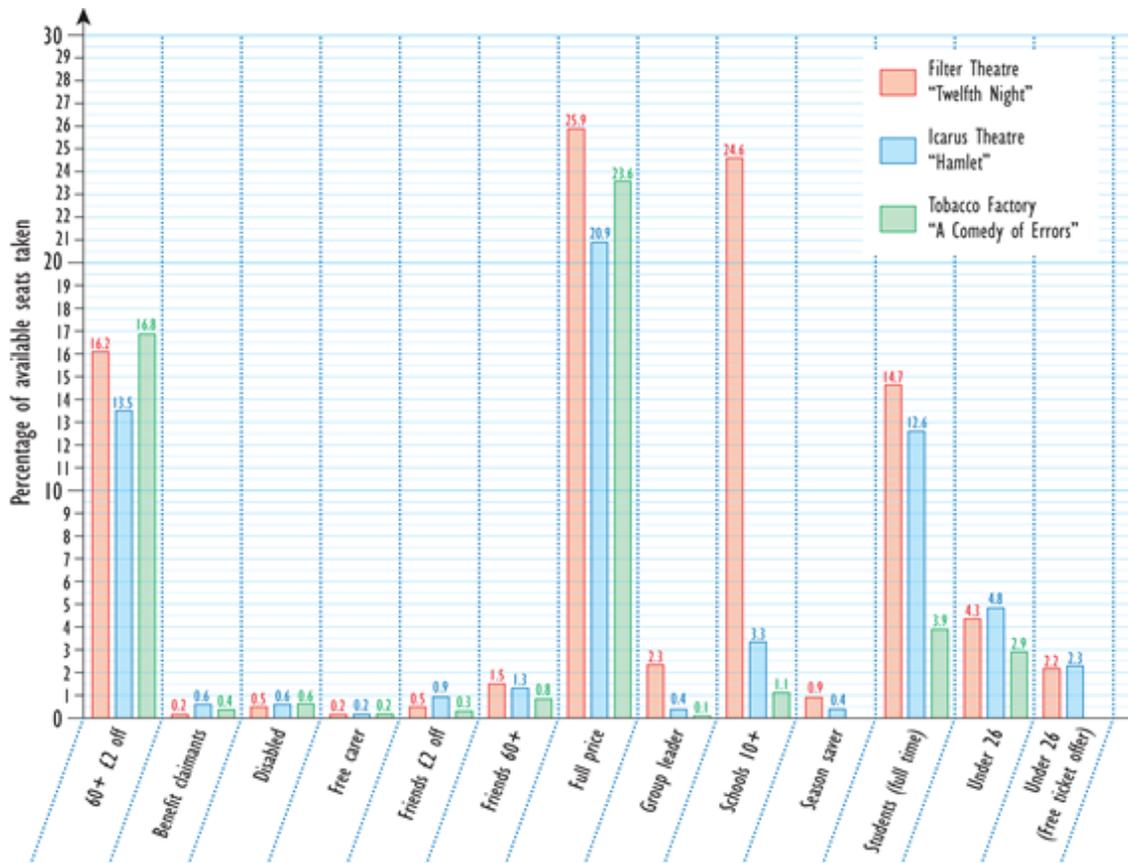
Tobacco Factory "A Comedy of Errors"

**Box Office Analysis for the Tobacco Factory's *A Comedy of Errors*,  
 Exeter Northcott, 3<sup>rd</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> May**

The proportion of school groups in Filter's audience is unusually high (26.2%) when compared to these other productions. School groups made up just 8.2% of the audience for Headlong's *The Winter's Tale*, whilst Icarus

Theatre and the Tobacco Factory attracted 5.3% and 2.2% respectively. This is less surprising when it is noted that *Twelfth Night* was a set text for GCSE English Literature for AQA (2009, p.14) and GCE English Literature for OCR (2008, p.16)<sup>lxxxix</sup>. *The Winter's Tale*, the only other play to feature as a set text during the performance period, nonetheless would have appealed only to the smaller A' Level audience for the OCR GCE English Literature syllabus (2008b, p.16). Filter and Headlong also catered to their school's audience in quite different ways. Whilst Headlong produced a detailed Education Pack (Reilly, 2009) to accompany their production, Filter offered a schools matinee. The schools matinee that I attended on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> October appeared to be very popular with teachers bringing large groups of younger pupils, thus successfully meeting the needs of teachers who were delivering the GCSE syllabus. Despite this, unlike Headlong, Filter did not produce an Education Pack. However, recognition of the appeal that this production has for a schools audience was evident in the pricing policies and inclusion of midweek matinees at a number of venues including the Tricycle Theatre and Theatre Royal Bath (Filter Theatre, 2010a, p.4). Whilst school groups clearly made up a larger proportion of Filter's audience, was this at the expense of other age groups? If so, there might be an argument for classifying it as 'youth' Shakespeare, a classification that, as we have seen, was a concern for Frantic Assembly with 52% of its audience for *Othello* being under the age of 25 (Frantic Theatre Company Limited, 2009, p.3). Whilst 33.1% of Filter's audience at Exeter Northcott was made up of those of school age or under the age of 26, if we consider that it might reasonably be assumed that many of the student audience attracted would also be under 26, this figure rises to 48.7%, nearly half of their total audience. Figure 5.4 below presents a comparison of

audience attendance figures, shown as a percentage of the total number of seats available for each show in order to adjust for the varying lengths of runs and total attendance figures.



**Figure 5.4**  
Bar chart comparison of audience attendance figures for Filter Theatre, Icarus and Tobacco Factory, shown as a percentage of the total number of seats

From this comparison, it can be noted that Filter's larger audience figures, whilst mainly made up of school groups, have also led to smaller increases in the full price and student categories when compared to those attracted for Icarus Theatre and the Tobacco Factory. Whilst there is a small decrease in the 60+ category when compared to the Tobacco Factory, this is too small to represent a significant trend. The emerging pattern then suggests that whilst Filter's *Twelfth Night* certainly has a strong appeal to schools and those under 26, this was not noticeably at the expense of attracting other age categories<sup>xc</sup>. However, such a broad appeal across age range can lead to great

variations in audience mix at individual performances. How then, did this varied audience affect the production in performance? I will return to this question in my analysis of the performance later in this chapter.

### ***Adapting the Text***

As discussed above, Filter began their process with Steve Gooch's pre-cut version of the script. In the introduction to *Comedies I*, which contains *Twelfth Night*, Gooch claims that 'the aim is to bring professional, script-editing skills to the aid of directors and teachers at all levels, but without prejudicing their final choices' (Shakespeare, 2006, p.5). Gooch achieves this by presenting a version of Shakespeare's play in full with proposed cuts represented by un-emboldened text, which has been further separated from the remaining text by square brackets. The result is a suggested cut that invites the user to reinstate cut sections as they require. Filter's adaptation process then, involved reinstating sections of text, in particular the songs that Gooch had cut or shortened, as well as further cutting to adjust the text to meet the casting constraints of using six actors. Whilst Dimsdale maintains that 'mostly it's his [Gooch's] version with a few lines here and there reintroduced', Filter's additional cutting to meet the requirements of the cast size are extensive (Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.9). Why then did they choose to begin with this version? Dimsdale explained that:

What Steve Gooch did so well was managed to cut out a lot of the lines, shall we say, that might be extraneous to a streamlined telling of the story. [. . .] So it really helped to start off with a pre-cut script and it gave us a licence not to be too textually obsessed and just to get on with telling the story in an interesting way

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.9).

Dimsdale's reference to Gooch giving Filter 'licence' to focus on the story rather than being preoccupied with the text is interesting. There is a sense here of Gooch being used as an intermediary between Filter and Shakespeare, with Gooch's own cutting process becoming a means of authorising Filter's further cutting and re-organisation of Shakespeare's play. As I observed in the previous two case studies, editing the text allowed the director(s) to make significant choices about the thematic focus of the production and alter the balance between roles. During this process, some directors go beyond simply cutting and rearranging the text to sketching in initial ideas about the shape of the performance such as Graham's and Hoggett's highlighting of possible movement sections, and Purcell's noting of opportunities for devising. The use of a pre-cut script then might be seen as a way to reduce the director's interpretative influence over this stage of the process, whilst providing a manageable way to work within the time constraint of such a brief rehearsal period. Indeed, this would seem to support Robert's claim that 'we didn't want to go into the rehearsal room with any ideas as such about how we were going to do it' (Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.7). However, editing is an interpretative and value laden process regardless of who undertakes it, the choice of pre-script must therefore be seen as an acceptance of Gooch's focus on 'playability' and story-telling', retaining the lines that he deemed necessary to tell the story or 'too famous or beautifully turned ever to be cut by anyone' (Shakespeare, 2006, p.9). To what extent then, have Filter's alterations to Gooch's edit maintained this focus on storytelling?

## ***Playability and Storytelling: Cutting Gooch's Cut***

Filter's initial work-in-progress performance was significantly different in several respects to that used for subsequent tours. My analysis will therefore focus on the Victoria and Albert Museum's recording of the matinee performance on 25<sup>th</sup> September at the Tricycle Theatre, as an example of the completed adaptation (*Twelfth Night*, 2008a). I will then discuss this in relation to the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's recording of the work-in-progress performance at The Cube (*Twelfth Night*, 2006a), and subsequent live performances that I have attended.

Filter's primary concern in editing Gooch's version was to make the text suitable for playing by six actors. Whilst this involved some doubling including Orsino with Sir Andrew, Viola with Sebastian, and Feste with Maria, elsewhere cutting was preferred, which led to the loss of Fabian, Antonio, and the Priest. The effects of these doubling choices and removed roles had a significant impact on the structure of several scenes, and indeed, the whole play. The removal of Antonio, not only saw the loss of that plotline, but also delayed Sebastian's first entrance until 4.1. The addition of two lines at the opening of the scene served as a brief introduction to this new character:

FESTE            Cesario. Cesario.  
SEBASTIAN    My name is Sebastian.

(*Twelfth Night*, 2008a)

There was no attempt made here to incorporate any of Sebastian's back story with regards to the shipwreck and loss of his sister as set out in 2.1. Instead, this was replaced with a repeat of the same sound effect used to introduce Viola, that of a tea cup rattling and crashing waves. This economic approach to Sebastian's introduction removed any foreshadowing of Sebastian

being mistaken for Viola, and thus denied the audience the comfort of knowing more than the characters. Whilst this, in effect, allowed us to share the confusion created by Sebastian's arrival in Illyria, how successful this was for an audience with varying prior knowledge of the play will be returned to in the final section of this case study.

Filter's subsequent editing of the scene continues this concern with economy of dialogue, removing extraneous or repetitive phrases.

**SEBASTIAN** I prithee, foolish Greek, depart from me. ~~There's money for thee.~~ [If you tarry longer, I shall give worse payment.]

**FESTE** ~~By my troth, thou hast an open hand.~~ [These wise men that give fools money get themselves a good report — after fourteen years' purchase.]

*Enter SIR ANDREW, SIR TOBY and FABIAN*

**ANDREW** Now, sir, have I met you again? *(Strikes him)* ~~There's for you.~~

**SEBASTIAN** *(Striking him)* ~~Why there's for thee, and there, and there!~~ **Are all the people mad?**

**SIR TOBY** Hold, sir, ~~or I'll throw your dagger o'er the house.~~

(Shakespeare: 2006a, 4.1: 53)

The passage above is set out as in Gooch's version, with his suggested cuts shown in normal text within square brackets. Struck through text indicates Filter's subsequent edit (*Twelfth Night*, 2008a). It is clear from this section, that Filter's cuts have removed all information that is extraneous to the plot such as the exchange of money between Sebastian (Poppy Miller) and Feste (Gemma Saunders). In performance, this cut enabled Miller to present a less generous Sebastian, squeezing Feste's red nose threateningly as she told her to depart. Similar economy is presented in the ensuing fight, Miller giving Sir Andrew (Jonathan Broadbent) a single blow to the head with an electronic keyboard that she grabbed from a nearby stand. Whilst it could be argued that the change of weapon to a keyboard necessitated the cut to Sir Toby's subsequent line, the removal of repeated blows can only be explained by Filter's economy of



By the simple expedient of Orsino (Jonathan Broadbent) sitting on a chair downstage left as he completed his final line and Malvolio (Ferdy Roberts) delivering his first line to the audience whilst seated on the downstage right chair, a clear change of focus was accomplished. Establishing hiding in the box tree (Shakespeare, 2007c, 3.1: 12) became unnecessary since Sir Toby and Sir Andrew could deliver their interjections from their seats. Similarly, Sir Toby took the letter from Maria and placed it for Malvolio to find in a simple piece of movement that replaced the dialogue (Shakespeare, 2007c, 3.1: 14-5). Removal of many of the comic interjections from Malvolio's observers further contributed to a greater focus on his reaction to the letter. However, it was the end of this scene where the greatest alteration occurred, with the result of the letter's instructions played out immediately. Having stripped to reveal yellow shorts and socks whilst reading the letter, Roberts noticed the postscript instructing him to smile. Syreeta Kumar delivered this as a voice over through an upstage microphone before entering the scene as Olivia: 'Smilest thou? I sent for thee upon a sad occasion' (Shakespeare, 2006, 3.4, p.44). Although the echo of the instruction in the letter to smile in Olivia's question aided the link between these two scenes, some might argue, that the tension created by the anticipation of this outcome later in the narrative was sacrificed. What then, were the benefits of choosing to rearrange the narrative in this way?

Having cut the roles of Fabian and Antonio, the duel between Sir Andrew and Cesario that Fabian is instrumental in initiating might reasonably be removed, since it furthers Antonio's storyline with his breakup of the duel leading to his arrest. Indeed, this was the approach taken by Filter in their initial work in progress performance at The Cube (*Twelfth Night*, 2006a). In this instance, a short scene constructed by combining lines from 3.2 and 3.4 set up

Sir Andrew's challenge to Cesario, which he then mistakenly issued to

Sebastian in 4.1:

**ANDREW** No, faith, I'll not stay a jot longer.  
**SIR TOBY** Thy reason, dear venom, give thy reason.  
**ANDREW** Marry, I saw your niece do more favours to the  
Count's serving-man than ever she bestowed upon me.  
**SIR TOBY** She did show favour to the youth in your sight only to  
exasperate you, to awake your dormouse valour, to put fire in  
your heart and brimstone in your liver. Challenge me the count's  
youth to fight with him-you[.]  
**ANDREW** *I [w]ill either of you bear me a challenge to him?*  
**SIR TOBY** A very dishonest paltry boy, and more a coward than a  
hare. A coward, a most devout coward, religious in it.  
**ANDREW** 'S lid, I'll after him again and beat him.  
**SIR TOBY** Do. Cuff him soundly[.]  
**ANDREW** *Cesario, Cesario!*

*(Twelfth Night, 2006, adapted from Shakespeare, 2006, 3.2, pp.41-2 and  
3.4, pp.52-3).*

Once again, Filter's characteristically economical use of dialogue is in evidence here, with Sir Andrew's complaint and Sir Toby's proposed solution established in just over a dozen lines. Fabian's absence necessitated Sir Toby driving this plot alone, which Filter achieved by reassigning some of his lines to Sir Toby, indicated by underlined text in the quotation above. Struck through text indicates small cuts, whilst additions, necessary to recontextualise these lines, are shown in italic. What becomes clear from this conflation is that the removal of Sir Andrew's initial request for Sir Toby to take a written challenge to Cesario, instead cutting straight to his final challenge, leaves no possible space in which to retain Malvolio's meeting with Olivia. Filter's choice to reassign Fabian's role in plotting Malvolio's incarceration to Sir Andrew and Maria (Shakespeare, 2007c, 3.4: 97-8 and 101), further mitigated against inserting his yellow clad audience with Olivia between Olivia's meeting with Cesario in 3.1 and this conflated scene, since it would have interrupted the link between this and Sir Andrew's desire to leave<sup>xci</sup>. By editing the text so extensively to make it possible for six actors to perform the play, Filter clearly had to sacrifice some of

Shakespeare's storytelling techniques, such as the pleasure of anticipation more usually created through postponing Malvolio's meeting with Olivia. However, it will be clear from my analysis above, how tightly the editing works with the performance to avoid duplication of communication.

### ***Fidelity to Shakespeare's 'sentiment'***

This economic approach to editing led Fiona Mountford to suggest in the *London Evening Standard*, that the play had been 'pared down to worthlessness' (2008). In placing greater value on Shakespeare's script than on Filter's performance, there was a clear disparity between the reviewer's expectations of the production, and Filter's aim to redress the hierarchy between text and other performance elements, such as the use of music. Mountford's criticism of Filter for replacing these cuts with 'a jam session', and party games that 'one could just as easily go to Tumble Tots for such larks', sought to devalue these aspects of the performance by drawing upon negative perceptions of accessibility in relation to Filter's reworking (2008). What is of interest here is how Filter's Tim Phillips, in an online reply, seeks to counter this accusation of 'dumbing down':

If you truly have passion for this writer you need to logically recognise that his sentiment was infinite; his medium transient. [. . .] Filter's aim with this production was to rip down these barriers and show that one of the greatest artists of all time is accessible in a modern artistic context.  
(2008)

In seeking to justify Filter's production choices, Phillips' has both invoked fidelity to Shakespeare's apparently unchanging sentiment, whilst highlighting the necessity of adapting to changing performance conditions. Here, the choice of 'sentiment' rather than text, seeks to extend this authorisation to textual alterations in much the same way as Trevor Nunn's reference to Shakespeare's

intention sought to do in the example I discussed in Chapter 1 (p.39). Here however, by suggesting that the text itself is transitory, Phillips extends this authorisation to translation into other mediums such as music.

As demonstrated above in the use of the phrase '[c]reated by Filter', the marketing of this *Twelfth Night* has maintained an ambiguity that seeks to both highlight its difference from Shakespeare's text, whilst refusing categorisation as an adaptation (Filter Theatre, 2010, cover). This ambiguity is clear in Dimsdale's explanation:

The first version was a response to *Twelfth Night* so in many ways that's what it is still, but we are actually incredibly faithful to the linear structure that Shakespeare's written. So, there's a little bit of interpretation and there's a little bit of adaption there

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.25).

Whilst it might be argued that the alterations described above in relation to the duelling plot, compromise the degree of faithfulness to the play's structure claimed here, Dimsdale clearly feels there are aspects of adaptation in their approach. Roberts however, refutes this, viewing their work as interpretation because:

. . . everything has come from the text. I mean obviously of course there are no pizzas in the play, but there is this character that is trying to stir up a storm within this world and trying to shake Malvolio's grip

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.25).

Roberts' justification of this viewpoint sounds very much like a super-objective<sup>xciii</sup>. Given the British context of Roberts' training and most of his work as actor, it is not surprising that his discussion throughout my interview with him revealed the influence of a Stanislavski-based approach<sup>xciv</sup>. It is perhaps then, this perception of a psychological continuity in his performance, that enables Roberts to link performance choices directly to the text. As I will discuss later in

this chapter, this may even be extended to include additions such as his striptease and air drum solo, which aided substantial textual rearrangement and cutting.

Such discrepancy of views between the three founders over the categorisation of their production probably explains the ambiguity noted in their marketing. However, there is a clear concern in all three comments with maintaining some form of fidelity to Shakespeare's work, albeit that there is no clear agreement to which aspect, sentiment, structure or text, this should be<sup>xcv</sup>. What this variance of viewpoint highlights is the difference between Filter's collaborative approach to adaptation, and that of the director-led approaches examined in the previous case studies. Here, Filter's collaborative approach appears to have replaced the director's concept with a focus on exploring the possibilities of integrating the live creation of music and sound into the storytelling. Yet Dimsdale's categorisation of the original version as 'a response to *Twelfth Night*', suggests Filter's creative work was intended as a reply or reaction to the script (Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.25). Given that the aim of the project was to apply their devising process to *Twelfth Night*, were Filter perhaps too faithful to the script? To what extent did sound and music contribute to the retelling of Shakespeare's story?

### ***Playing with Sound: Innovative and Pragmatic Design***

In their introduction to *Theatre Noise*, Lynne Kendrick and David Roesner observe that:

Theatre provides a unique habitat for noise. It is a place where friction can be thematised, explored playfully, even indulged in: friction between signal and receiver, between sound and meaning, between eye and ear, between silence and utterance, between listening and hearing

(2011, p.xv).

It is this friction, I would argue, that Filter play with throughout their sound design for *Twelfth Night*. Surrounding the performance area with a semi-circle of musicians, instruments, and sound equipment, enabled Filter to explore the friction between the actual source and the apparent source of the sounds created. On the surface, conveying Valentine's message to Orsino in 1.2 through a mobile phone was simply a modernisation of the messenger's function, which happily also removed the need for physical doubling. However, closer analysis reveals two further functions. The first was to interrupt Orsino's reverie, the ring tone cutting across the recording of a woman singing, which signified his infatuation with Olivia. Secondly, Filter exploited the friction between hearing and listening, to establish a performance convention by provoking the audience to search for the likely source of the sound. In this instance, the auditory icon of the phone ringing served to prompt a change to conscious listening, prompting the audience to look for an object as its source. In *The Frequency of the Imagination*, Pieter Verstraete argues that there is an:

[. . .] instable relation between (unconscious) hearing and (conscious) listening, which are often entangled. It is only when a particular sound reaches out of the acoustic horizon of the ambience and appeals to our ears that we feel tempted to find temporary coherence in it through causal or indexical listening

(2009, p.107).

The apparent identification of the source as Roberts' mobile rewarded the audience search for a cause, his apology that he had thought it was on vibrate mode, eliciting laughter at recognition of his predicament. Having established the link between sound and object, Broadbent reinforced this by holding the phone to a microphone, apparently amplifying Valentine's report. However, a careful observer would note that Gemma Saunders was actually controlling the timing of the playback.

Having established this convention, Filter pushed the illusion to its limits in the following scene. The sound of china rattling drew the attention of those onstage to a cup and saucer, which Broadbent had used in scene one. Followed by the sound of a wave, this brief effect was the only signifier of the shipwreck since, Viola (Poppy Miller), entered wearing a brown jacket and black trousers that provided no reference to her means of arrival. Extending the audio creation of minor roles, the Captain's replies to Viola's queries were interspersed into a shipping forecast, apparently originating from a radio. Not only does this play on the spectator's desire to make a causal link between the sound and an apparent source, but in appearing to answer Viola, a moment of doubt was introduced as the machine appears to assume the cognitive conversational abilities of a human. This experience of the technological uncanny, here experienced as a 'ghost in the machine'<sup>xcvii</sup>, encouraged the spectator to question the initial causal connection made between ear and eye. The obvious lack of a playback system on the radio contributed to this sense of the uncanny by creating a moment of logical incomprehension, thus necessitating relocating the perceived source of the mediated voice, in this case to the sound desk.

A playful sequence built around Sir Toby attempting to enter quietly at the beginning of 2.3 fore-grounded this displacement between the actual and apparent sound source to comic effect. Hindered in his attempt to cross quietly to the microphone centre stage by a musician who, in the manner of a Foley artist<sup>xcviii</sup>, created amplified footsteps in real time to match Sir Toby's walk, Dimsdale paused to shush the musician. By briefly breaking the illusion by acknowledging the actual sound source, Dimsdale highlighted the question of who is in control in a mediated performance. In this instance, by disregarding

Dimsdale's signal, the musician apparently asserted his control over Dimsdale's performance. However, in so doing, the musician's actions became a performance in their own right, emphasising his skill in matching Dimsdale's movements. Filter is not alone in experimenting with the performance of sound in this way. John Collins' discussion of the Wooster Group's *Brace Up* (1990), and his own work on Target Margin Theatre's *Titus Andronicus* (1991) and the Wooster Group's *The Hairy Ape* (1994), emphasises the degree of focus upon, and knowledge of, the actor's performance needed to create such illusions (2011, pp.23-29). This, Collins argues, requires an interplay between the actor and sound designer that involves both in an act of performance (2011, p.25). As such, Filter's choice to create and control the sounds from the stage emphasised the double performance occurring in this collaboration of skills. By exposing the means of production in this way, Filter foregrounded the chemistry created between musicians and actors by working so closely together to create a single effect. This double performance in turn invites the audience into the collaboration through the demand that it makes on their imagination to make the effect work (see Filter's aims above, p.240).

We combine strong narrative with live music that very often exposes the workings of a production. That's to say, sound and video is mixed live onstage by musicians and performers to create a unique 'live chemistry' experience for audiences.

### ***Narrative Functions of the Sound Design***

I have previously discussed how Gareth Fry's design for Frantic Assembly's *Othello* used ambient sounds such as a police car siren to extend the inner city location of the set design beyond what the audience could

immediately observe (see p.152). Filter, however, chose to forego creating the illusion of Illyria being in another place or time. In an interview with Debesh Banerjee, Dimsdale explained that this choice derived from the original development conditions for The Complete Works Festival for which Filter only had 'a limited amount of money. This limited us to a smaller number of actors and meant that we didn't have the budget for an expensive set' (2015, np). Although Filter have since received funding from ACE to mount further tours of the production, they have retained this format, in effect dissolving distinctions between space and time in the play and reality. As Dimsdale told me, '[i]t's not a painted set behind you, it's that night, it's that afternoon, it's wherever we are' (Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.21). It is possible that the choice to retain this staging, despite further funding, is that despite being surrounded by sound equipment, this staging effectively creates an empty space for the actors to inhabit that recalls the open spaces that the play was originally written for, including performances at Middle Temple as well as, probably, The Globe (Gurr and Ichikawa, 2000, p.62; Thomson, 1992, p.103).

Filter's extensive use of the auditorium as part of their performance space, and their invitations at several points in the production for audience members to join them onstage, served to reinforce their interpretation of Illyria being here and now. This also served to extending the illusion of the world of the play into the auditorium in much the same way as The Pantaloon's use of their audiences as guests during the banquet scene created a moment where the *locus* encompassed the *platea* (see p.216). The sound design complimented this effect by rarely indicating a specific location, with the notable exception of signifying Malvolio's incarceration in a small space in 4.2, signified by distorting his voice with an echo.

As I noted above, Filter's simple staging, with the actors onstage throughout, enabled scenes to flow into one another. However, combined with the choice to play the production in their own clothes, with only occasional additions such as a red clown nose to distinguish Feste from Maria, this risked the audience not following the changes of location and character. Dimsdale as Sir Toby was the notable exception here. Dressed in full Elizabethan costume, can of Special Brew in hand, his entrances signalled not only disruption to Olivia's household, but often to the play itself. His first appearance at the end of 1.1 highlighted this function, when he briefly appeared at the back of the staging quoting snatches from other Shakespeare plays<sup>xcviii</sup>. Since the other performers remained onstage throughout, to aid understanding of the narrative progression the sound design indicated transitions from one scene to the next, in much the same way as a soundtrack for a film.

Whilst some recurring themes were used, such as the two-line fugue created from Miller singing the same melody in a high and low pitch to indicate her disguise as Cesario, most of these transitions relied on juxtaposing contrasting musical styles as in the transition between 3.1 and 3.2. Here, Olivia concluded Cesario's visit by returning to creating a low-pitched, drawn out note with a bow on a bass guitar (*Twelfth Night*, 2008a)<sup>xcix</sup>. A rise in pitch cued the transition to a slow Latin pop dance tune, whilst Sir Toby's entrance with a bottle of tequila reinforced this change to a party atmosphere. Elsewhere, Filter contrasted music with silence. This convention was effectively used to create a sudden, marked transition from Sir Andrew's and Sir Toby's revelries at Olivia's house in 1.3, to the more melancholy tone of Orsino's court. Having opened 1.1 with experimental jazz, Orsino cueing the actors to play a variety of electronic sounds from the sound desk, a keyboard, and two games controllers, over a

constant rhythm created by the musicians with percussion and a bass guitar, this would seem to be the obvious choice to use to identify Orsino's court in 1.4. However, whilst this musical genre, rather than a repetition of the music itself, indicated a return to the court in 2.4, Filter eschewed developing even this variation of genre as a means of indicating location change. Rather, the focus in these transitions was on atmosphere, as the transition between 1.3 and 1.4 demonstrates. A party atmosphere concluded 1.3, with the cast surrounding Broadbent as Sir Andrew dancing and performing back flips whilst they contributed to the party music with maracas and whistles. Having completed a back flip, Broadbent cued the change with a count of four. The resulting silence established a more formal atmosphere, whilst Broadbent's next line: 'Cesario, / Thou know'st no less but all', (Shakespeare, 2006, 1.4, p.16), was all that conveyed his transition from Sir Andrew to Orsino, and that Cesario was now in service at Orsino's court. Once again, Filter's economic use of text was in evidence, with the exposition removed from the beginning of the scene that established that Cesario was now in Orsino's service. This economy reinforced the importance of the remaining text, Broadbent's clear delivery here being crucial to the audience following such a sudden change. The sense of pace created by these scene transitions, jumping from one atmosphere to another, coupled with such extensive cutting, was essential in this production given Filter's indulgence elsewhere, significantly extending several of the scenes through music and audience participation. However, before I consider these additions, I want to consider how the performance of music contributed to the emphasis of two themes central to this adaptation.

## ***Losing Control***

In their marketing information for venues, Filter set out the themes of their production:

Two worlds collide in Filter's explosive new take on Shakespeare's lyrical *Twelfth Night*. Olivia's melancholic, puritanical household clashes head on with Sir Toby's insatiable appetite for drunken debauchery. Orsino's relentless pursuit of Olivia and Malvolio's extraordinary transformation typify the madness of love in Illyria: land of make-believe and illusion [. . .] Experience the madness of love in this heady world where riotous gig meets Shakespeare.

(Schtanhaus, 2008, p.1).

The control of sound as a source of conflict became central to developing both of these themes. To establish Malvolio as central to the maintenance of Olivia's puritanical household, Roberts opened scene 1.5 by initiating the effect of clocks ticking by using a games controller. He then pointed to a musician who matched this with a soft, repeated scale. This linked Malvolio, rather than Olivia's house, to the audio signification of quiet order. Lively, repetitive theme music, initiated by Saunder's cueing the musicians with a count of four, bracketed Feste's subsequent mocking of Olivia's mourning. This interruption of Malvolio's quiet order created an aural conflict between the two characters, which culminated with Malvolio reasserting his authority through the reinstatement of the hushed order with a repetition of the actions and instructions that opened the scene. This both prefigured Malvolio's argument with Sir Toby over late night revelling in 2.3, and provided a point of contrast for his transformation in 2.5.

Throughout the production, the sound design empathetically echoed a range of states of love and infatuation, which the characters appeared to control with varying degrees of success. Olivia's review of Cesario's first visit in 1.5

aurally reinforced her struggle to control her emotions. Olivia's dismissal of her servants (Shakespeare, 2007c, 1.5: 158) so that she could meet with Cesario alone, led to the only point in the production where only the two people involved in the scene remained on stage. As Olivia began her reflection (Shakespeare, 2007b, 1.5: 223) a tremulous electronic note began. Musicians and actors returning to the stage layered percussion, a drawn out note from an accordion, and a dissonant electronic crescendo on top of this. The resulting increase in volume forced Kumar to raise her voice as her excitement built. Thus, Olivia's attempt to control her desire: 'Not too fast. Soft, soft!' became, in addition, an instruction to the musicians (Shakespeare 2007c, 1.5: 227). As she resumed her soliloquy, the soundscape built once more, with Kumar's voice rising in volume until she finally surrendered to her desire by grabbing a microphone into which she shouted 'Well, let it be.' (Shakespeare 2007c, 1.5: 232). In this way, the music became more than an accompaniment to Olivia's emotions, with the increase in volume directly affecting Kumar's delivery. In both these examples then, not only the sound itself, but also its control, or in Kumar's case the surrender of control, contributed to the development of the themes noted above. However, as in the use of the clocks, which signified Malvolio's obsessive maintenance of order, the choice of sound also had a significant impact on the interpretation of the characters.

### ***Malvolio's Smirnoff Moment***

Malvolio's fantasy of becoming Count Malvolio during the gulling scene continued this convention of characters cueing changes of sound, with Roberts using curt gestures, as he had in 1.5, to indicate when he required a change of volume in the music. Set to loud grunge rock, Roberts transformed Malvolio

into a frenzied air-drum playing exhibitionist in tight yellow shorts and long socks. The choice of music here was integral to this unusual interpretation of Malvolio. How then, in a collective skills-based rehearsal process, was the development of this interpretation negotiated?

Holmes suggestion above (p.241) that there isn't a set Filter method is shared by Roberts, who opened a workshop on *Filter's Method* at Bristol's Tobacco Factory by maintaining that 'there is not a Filter method' (Broadbent and Roberts, 2011). Despite this, he admitted that in the rehearsal process for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2011) there was a sense of 'dragging new members of the company along' (Broadbent and Roberts, 2011) as they adjusted to Filter's approach to combining music and drama. This contrasted markedly with his description of Victoria Moseley's approach to joining the 2010 tour of *Twelfth Night* for which she had three days to rehearse before the first performance:

. . . because we knew her and we'd worked with Victoria before, she knew she was going to be able to come into a room with a bunch of people who know it really well and bounce off us  
(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, pp.12-13).

Such reflections suggest that whilst there might not be a fixed systematic process that can be identified as Filter's method, there are nevertheless exercises that have contributed to the rehearsal process of more than one production. As Roberts explained, Malvolio's transformation:

[. . .] came about through the game that we've played on various occasions in shows that we've done, or certainly in rehearsals, which is that if Tom or Ross or anybody came up with a microphone and put it to my head what would be going on? What would the song be playing? And I said I think it would be something like Iggy Pop  
(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.15).

In this way, the actor suggests a musical equivalent to represent their character's inner monologue. As such, the actor's character interpretation led the choice of musical genre. Roberts' foremost concern in interpreting Malvolio was to explore the possibilities offered by the opportunity to play this role in his thirties. Aware that such a youthful Malvolio would be a significant departure from currently accepted casting conventions, Roberts explained that 'I don't want to play old, I just want to go with what's written, and weirdly in that there is in Malvolio this burning, passionate desire to be released' (Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.15). The music echoed this desire by overlaying the grunge rock with seductive female voices tauntingly repeating the initials from the letter, 'M. O. A. I' (*Twelfth Night*, 2008a). However, whilst as Roberts notes, Malvolio's desire is evident in the text, Filter's economy led to much of this scene being cut, including the moment that Malvolio's fantasy tips into reality, 'I do not now fool myself, to let imagination jade me; for every reason excites to this, that my lady loves me' (Shakespeare, 2006, 2.5, p.36). Roberts' striptease and ecstatic air drum solo replaced both this, and the repetition of the instruction in the letter to wear yellow stockings, the former action effectively bridging the rearrangement of scenes to link 2.5 and 3.4 as discussed above (Shakespeare 2007c, 2.5: 122-4). The resulting representation of a bare-chested Malvolio playing air drums as he imagined himself as a rock star, retrospectively increased the bitterness behind his earlier break up of Sir Toby's revelling in 2.3, a party to which he was not invited. It also reinforced the removal of the age difference between Malvolio and Olivia in this production. This made Malvolio's belief that Olivia might have a secret desire for him more believable, whilst the choice to represent Illyria in the present day offered the possibility that class differences might be set aside.

Given these changes, it was disappointing that Filter's innovations did not extend to exploring the potential comedy created by the plotters' anticipation of the effect Malvolio's changed behaviour would have on Olivia (Shakespeare, 2007c, 2.5: 131-152). Here perhaps Filter's pragmatic rearrangement of the script overshadowed the potential offered by this section. Such missed opportunities, it might be argued, could be indicative of a weakness in Filter's time-constrained ensemble problem-solving approach. Indeed, as Roberts observed:

[ . . . ] we didn't sit around the table and work out what this meant, or what's the theme, and we didn't do any actioning, we just had to respond to what the play is and what we think the play is about

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.8).

Conversely it might be argued that these edits, combined with the removal of Sir Toby from involvement with Feste's deception of Malvolio in 4.2, and Fabian's explanation of Sir Toby's part in the plot (Shakespeare, 2007c, 5.1: 340-353), effectively emphasised the function of instigating revenge on Malvolio in Saunder's doubling of Feste and Maria. A revenge that was completed by Saunder's placing her own red clown nose on Malvolio as she observes, 'And thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges' (Shakespeare, 2006, 5.1, p.67).

The amount of ego Malvolio demonstrated in his striptease and rock star performance accentuated the extent of Feste's revenge. In bringing this costume change onstage, Roberts drew both on the music and on ideas from Filter's previous devised shows to create an imagined alternative side to the character:

We've always had this thing which we call the Smirnoff<sup>c</sup> moments in our plays where, you know, at a certain point in the play every character has a Smirnoff moment, so the bottle goes past you and just for a split second we see a totally different side. We didn't want to do it as a shock, we wanted it to be as truthful as possible and if you push the boundaries

a little bit further than you normally would you can go wherever you like really and so it has evolved. I remember the first time we did it in Stratford I didn't strip off fully, I think I just had a pair of long yellow shorts on and a t-shirt. And then we did it in Edinburgh and I decided, and I didn't tell anybody that I was going to go full pelt for it and it stuck and the air guitar moments and that just came out of actually Ferdy going, "I love this, this is fucking great," there's a band behind me and I can play air guitar and bang the drums in my own head, it's brilliant

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.15).

The influence of his Stanislavski-based training is evident here, not only in Roberts' concern that his interpretation be 'truthful', but also in his approach to developing the scene, and his selection of Iggy Pop, '[i]f he was in his bedroom on his own knowing that there's nobody around, what does Malvolio do in his bedroom?'<sup>ci</sup> (Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.15) Yet, there is also an apparent tension involved in developing his performance beyond his own perceived limitations of what would be considered acceptable in creating a 'truthful' or realistic representation. Roberts' description reveals that his own reaction to performing in front of a band influenced the development of this Smirnoff moment, as much as his interpretation of Malvolio. In *Talking to the Audience*, Bridget Escolme proposes that in addition to the through-line of objectives within a play that Stanislavski advocates, Shakespeare's characters also have a 'performance objective' that they share with their actors:

They want the audience to listen to them, notice them, approve their performance, ignore others on stage for their sake. The objectives of these figures are bound up with the fact that they know you're there

(2005, p.16).

In playing this performance objective, Roberts' Malvolio used the audience as the shadow to which he rehearsed his fantasy of being a Count (Shakespeare, 2007c, 2.5: 13), using us as his confidants to whom he turned for confirmation that 'every one of these letters are in my name. You agree?' (*Twelfth Night*,

2008a). The laughter mixed with moans of disgust elicited by his subsequent half naked antics, suggested any compassion this apparent vulnerability had engendered, was rapidly quashed. This left the audience laughing at Malvolio, a laughter in which the newly re-entered Sir Toby and Sir Andrew joined, thus realigning us with the plotters. Clearly then, Filter actively played on the relationship between performer and audience. To what extent did this affect their adaptation of *Twelfth Night*?

### ***Audience Participation***

In order to establish the play was set 'wherever we are' (Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.21), Filter sought to establish the auditorium and stage spaces as one from the outset. Performers entered from both backstage and the auditorium, interacting with one another and the arriving audience as they waited to begin. As Broadbent walked up the steps from the auditorium, one of the spectators sent out a loud shush, which led to an expectant silence. In response Broadbent playfully put his finger to his lips, turned his back to speak to the musicians, then turned once more to the audience to say, 'we haven't started yet, so don't worry' (*Twelfth Night*, 2008a). These casual interactions varied at each performance. However, at the three performances that I attended (*Twelfth Night*, 2008b, 2010a, and 2010b) the focus appeared to be on acknowledging the ways in which the pre-set more closely resembled that of a gig, than a Shakespeare play. Indeed, at Bath Theatre Royal, Broadbent addressed the lack of scenery directly:

You might be wondering where our set is. The truth is it's on a lorry that's broken down. But if I were to describe it, it looked exactly like this.  
(*Twelfth Night*, 2010a)

The stripped down staging offered numerous opportunities for Filter to invite the audience to collude with them in imaginatively creating the scenes, not only through sound as we have seen above, but also through various forms of participation. Miller asked the audience for a man's jacket and hat with which to disguise herself as Cesario, Kumar as Olivia concealed herself amongst the audience to receive Cesario's first visit (1.5), and Broadbent drew on our knowledge of the text to complete his opening line as Orsino. These latter two examples were added after The Complete Works Festival performances (*Twelfth Night*, 2006a)<sup>ci</sup>. However, the most notable development of this type following these work-in-progress performances, was Filter's reworking of 2.3 as a party in which the audience were invited to participate. Here the singing and drunken exchanges prior to Malvolio's entrance were cut to a single repeated verse of 'What is love?' which was instigated by Sir Toby, and four lines (Shakespeare, 2007c, 2.3: 34-41 and 55-6). As Sir Andrew, Maria, and then the musicians contributed to building the volume of the song, the repetition allowed members of the audience to become involved, first by clapping in time, then throwing foam balls at St Andrew's Velcro hat, eating slices of pizza, and finally being invited onstage to join in with the dancing. In this way, the drunken revelry of Shakespeare's scene was re-contextualised with modern party games and food.

At fifteen minutes this was a noticeably prolonged sequence in a ninety minute reworking, a factor which attracted some criticism, with one respondent to my Audience Survey suggesting that 'the "party" involving the audience and Malvolio's "air guitar" bit before finding the letter [. . .] could make their points with less than half their duration' (McCourt, 2010, Respondent 1183166608). Conversely, others felt that drawing the audience into the conflict between Sir

Toby and Malvolio by extending Malvolio's reprimand to their participation in the partying was effective, noting that 'the party atmosphere they created made Malvolio's entrance much more dramatic' (McCourt, 2010, Respondent 1181262381). Michael Billington also noted the strength of this scene in his review for *The Guardian*:

Where it succeeds best, however, is in a mood of carnival riot epitomised by the nocturnal drinking scene [. . .] In this manic fun it comes as a shock when Ferdy Roberts' thunderous Malvolio fixes us with a baleful stare and enquires, "My masters, are you mad?" The truth is that, for a while, that is what we are.

(2008)

However, it was the nature of audience participation that drew the greatest criticism, with one Audience Survey respondent dismissing it as 'stereotypical audience interaction gags' (McCourt, 2010, Respondent 1180884641). Silvia Milano, in response to Mountford's review discussed above (p.267), went further, denouncing the sequence as '15 minutes of cheap tricks', with any apparent enjoyment being attributed to bribery: 'some in the audience were engaged and amused by the rather childish antics, but I suspect it had something to do with the cast serving them beer and tequila.' (2008)

Here, Milano's comments, like Mountford's, reveal a perceived mismatch between the cultural worth of these popular theatre techniques and Shakespeare's play. Although Milano seeks to devalue the sequence by dismissing it as immature, she fails to consider the demographic of the audience for the production, and how this might have affected the responses she observed.

Whilst Filter claim they did not specifically create their adaptation for young people, nevertheless, as I established above, school parties made up a large proportion of their audience. In her Theatre Blog for *The Guardian*,

Natasha Tripney described Filter's show as 'for the most part, a masterclass in audience control', noting how after sections of lively audience participation Filter 'managed to pull the (predominantly) teenage audience back down again, successfully lowering the noise levels if not quite achieving rapt silence.' (2008)

In response to Tripney's invitation for comments considering the behaviour of young people at the theatre, dejan94 observed that 'the teenage audience largely added to the [Filter's] show' (2008). Matt Trueman's response went further, actively comparing two performances:

I saw Filter's Twelfth Night twice – one weekday matinee complete with school group and one Saturday night without – and much preferred the first, on the basis of the livelier audience.

(2008)

These comments are clearly defending the behaviour of school groups at the theatre. However, they also highlight how watching the younger audience members engagement with the performance, not only in the participation but also, as both Tripney and dejan94 note, reacting to the action such as 'hid[ing] their faces' and 'squirm[ing] aloud' at Malvolio's striptease, significantly enhanced their own personal enjoyment (Tripney, 2008; dejan94, 2008).

Bruce McConachie's cognitive study of audience behaviour demonstrates how the reactions of groups in the audience can affect those around them, in this instance enhancing their pleasure. He draws on the conclusions of neuroscientific research into mirror neurons with animals, which has demonstrated that doing and watching an action led to similar neurological reactions. He then, goes on to consider how in humans the mirror systems 'link neurological response directly to the motor system, which, in turn, is mostly hardwired to our emotions' (2008, p.71). This enables humans to work towards an understanding of others' intentions. It is through this empathetic process,

McConachie explains, that humans pass emotions to one another (2008, p.95). It follows then, that the greater the number of people expressing an emotion, the more likely that those around them will experience an empathetic response. This leads to the conclusion that whilst the school party may have initiated the livelier behaviour that Trueman noted, this will also have led to empathetic responses in some of the spectators around them, thus producing an overall impression of a 'livelier audience.' (2008) My reader might also have noted above references to the physical behaviour of these teenage audiences, observations made possible by Filter's choice to leave the auditorium lit throughout their performances. McConachie notes that this practice which allows not only the audible but also the physical and facial reactions of other audience members to be observed, leads to a 'more uniform response among spectators' as it increases their empathetic responses to one another (2008, p.97). Given Filter's emphasis on encouraging the audience to interact with one another and the actors, how did different venues affect audience responses?

### ***Audiences and Venues: A comparison of differing responses at The Tricycle and Bath Theatre Royal***

Having attended a lively evening performance of Filter's *Twelfth Night* at The Tricycle on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2008, I noticed a clear difference in tone at the matinee performance I attended at Bath Theatre Royal on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2010. From observation, The Tricycle audience embraced a wide age demographic from children through to pensioners, although the majority appeared to be those in their twenties and thirties. The enthusiastic participation of this latter group made a notable contribution to Sir Toby's party, thus heightening the effect of Malvolio's entrance on the revels. This contrasted noticeably with the reactions

of the audience at Bath. Here, the majority of the audience seated around me in the stalls<sup>ciii</sup> appeared to be around retirement age, although a small school party filled one row. The reactions of this somewhat older audience suggested that they most appreciated the comedy in Shakespeare's writing rather than the elements of comedy created through Filter's performance. Although several did join in with throwing soft balls onto Sir Andrew's hat, the overall tone remained reserved, despite Filter choosing members of the school party to join Sir Toby's revels onstage. In this instance, Malvolio's entrance and subsequent inclusion of the audience in his chastisement lost much of its impact; the few members of the audience who had joined in with the revels stopping as soon as he entered. Here then, despite Filter's efforts, and the auditorium remaining lit throughout the performance, a clear sense of the divide between the audience and the performers remained. Roberts' remark that at Bath Theatre Royal they found it 'quite tricky [...] because it's so huge, you can't see what it feels like' suggests that this divide was also noted by the performers (Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.20).

The differing age demographic of the audience alone may have been a significant factor in these two contrasting responses. Whilst Filter clearly invited participation from the audience, McConachie's cognitive approach suggests that the tentative response of older members of the audience to embracing a convention not commonly associated with regional touring performances of Shakespeare's plays, is likely to have influenced the behaviour of the smaller group of teenagers in the audience. This is borne out by Matthew Reason's study of the responses of teenage school students attending a production of *Othello* at Edinburgh's Royal Lyceum Theatre. Here Reason noted a general perception amongst the students that they were being judged and disapproved

of by the older patrons who made up a large proportion of the audience (2006, pp.224-6). Reason concluded that due to this the 'auditorium is a fairly exposed space' for these students, which 'prevented them from relaxing – or, in their own words, from being themselves.' (2006, p.227) Filter's practice of lighting the auditorium, rather than encouraging a sense of a shared time and space with the performance at Bath Theatre Royal, may then have highlighted the divide between audience members, leaving the students in the stalls feeling exposed and self-conscious. This perhaps explains the subdued responses that I observed.

However, the difference in architecture between The Tricycle and Bath Theatre Royal may also have contributed to this difference of response. At The Tricycle the performers more frequently ventured into the audience, facilitated by steps to the stage. The whole audience was also able to participate when prompted, the proximity of the balcony to the stage aiding distribution of balls and pizza to be every level of the audience. However, at Bath Theatre Royal the grandly decorated auditorium was more rigidly divided, not only from the performers through a lack of steps, which meant using the rail of the pit to get onto or off the stage, but also in terms of ticket price. Unlike The Tricycle where unallocated seating encouraged audience members to mix, at Bath the most expensive seats were in the stalls and boxes on either side of the stage. Those in the cheaper dress and grand circle seats were too far away to join in with the physical aspects of the participation. This led Roberts to observe:

they've got it wrong here for this sort of show with the seating prices because at the top are the cheap seats and right down here are the 30 quid seats. [. . .] We'd rather have those lot come down here because those lot are going to go, "Brilliant, all right, I'll have a pizza, I'll chuck a ball." So I would say we've noticed it more here that in the stalls, you do get the feeling that they are sitting there going, "Hang about this isn't Shakespeare," you know, "Where's the set, where are the costumes?"

and then after about ten minutes they go, “Oh right.” And they get into it .

.. (Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, pp.21-2).

Roberts comment suggests a divide existed in audience expectations and behaviour, roughly demarcated by ticket price. The established pricing policy at the theatre of offering heavily discounted seats in the grand circle for student groups, effectively created a division by age. This double divide between stage and auditorium, stalls and circle, worked against Filter’s aim of creating ‘live chemistry between actors, audience, text and sound’ (Schtanhaus, 2008, p.1).

Here there was a clear mismatch between the values of the Company and those of the venue. The venue’s pricing policy which reinforced not only age but also economic divides within the audience, combined with the sale of full colour programmes, where at other venues a one page black and white programme had been freely distributed, framed the performance as a mainstream Shakespeare production. By programming the performance in the main house, rather than the more intimate Ustinov Studio in which a more experimental performance might be expected, the adaptation lost the context of Filter’s original commission to provide an alternative approach to Shakespeare’s text that was clearly different to mainstream practice. Nowhere was the importance of this context clearer than in Filter’s simple staging. Although the semi-circle of musical equipment could be set out to meet differing stage dimensions, the grandly decorated white and gold proscenium arch in the main house served to highlight the absence of set and costumes as a lack. However, in its original context at the RSC’s temporary Cube theatre, this same absence had served to reinforce the informal atmosphere of the production (*Twelfth Night*, 2006a). Given this mismatch between the original context and Bath

Theatre Royal, it is perhaps unsurprising that those patrons who had paid £28 for a seat in the stalls were reserved in their response to the production.

### ***Conclusion: Filtered Shakespeare***

Included in Filter's flyer for *Twelfth Night*, a quote from John Peter's review for *The Sunday Times* suggested that the production should appeal to a wide audience:

The most hardhearted purists would melt at Filter's 90-minute reworking [ . . . ] For newcomers to Shakespeare, I can't think of a better introduction  
(Peter, 2008 quoted in Filter Theatre, 2010a, p.2).

Few reviewers agreed. In online reviews, Lucy Ribchester for the *British Theatre Guide* suggested that 'Shakespeare purists might have their hackles raised by the fact that for the most part the script is drastically cut' (2008), whilst Helen Reid for *This is Bristol* claimed 'PURISTS will probably loathe this version of Shakespeare's best-loved comedy' (2010). Charles Spencer likewise opened his review for *The Telegraph* with a warning that Filter's production 'could reduce the Bard's more puritanical followers to a state of terminal apoplexy.' (2008) The strength of feeling that these reviewers imagine such traditionalists exhibiting, Spencer in particular seeking to align such spectators with Malvolio as puritanical spoilsports, goes further than establishing a simple rejection of these viewpoints, by hinting at a level of pleasure at the inability of such purists to appreciate this production. Spencer, like many of his fellow reviewers, celebrated the innovative employment of popular music forms, pointing out that this enhanced the music already inherent in Shakespeare's play (Spencer 2008, Gardner, 2007b, and Trennery, 2008). However, having overruled concerns about textual fidelity, Spencer went on to observe 'a great

deal of the spirit of the original remains' (Spencer, 2008). National and local newspaper reviews, as well as blogs, echoed this sense that Filter's approach resonated with current interpretations of the play. Many of these noted how it was Filter's additions in their use of music, development of the revelry, and inclusion of the audience that contributed most to creating a modern equivalent of the celebration and anarchy associated with the Elizabethan feast of fools as it is currently understood<sup>civ</sup> (Coveney 2010, Gillinson 2010, p.v, and Kirwan, 2008). Rather than dumbing down or endangering Shakespeare's text then, by reviewing these potential signs of infidelity through a nostalgic lens, such departures could be applauded for rejuvenating it (Billington, 2008, Marmion, 2008; Kirwan, 2008). Indeed, Lyn Gardner in her review for *The Guardian*, went as far as to observe that 'the company make this oft-revived play seem almost newly minted.' (2007) These reviews clearly suggest that Filter had some success in fulfilling their aim as it was explained by Roberts 'to approach it as if the play was only written yesterday and that's informed all the decisions that are in *Twelfth Night*' (Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.11). However, it was precisely because the play was not new, because the play was haunted by previous interpretations, that Filter's approach was appreciated as being innovative.

Conversely, it was precisely because of this haunting, that Filter's attempts to extend their interpretation of Illyria as being wherever they were performing, by including the audience in the confusion resulting from Sebastian's sudden appearance, were less successful. As Roberts observed, 'the play is confusing at the end anyway, and we've embraced that confusion' (Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, p.10). This choice to play on the confusion created by mistaken identity had come from a pragmatic solution to the cast

size, leading to Poppy Miller playing both Viola and her brother Sebastian. However, several reviewers were critical of this doubling, particularly in the final scene where Miller was required to address herself. (Gardner, 2007; Gillinson 2010, p.v, and Ribchester, 2008). This doubling created an interesting ménage à trois as she kissed first Olivia then Orsino, underlining that they had both essentially fallen in love with the same person. However, many of the responses to my audience survey suggested that the confusion outweighed the effect, with one respondent noting that ‘the choice of using the same person to play the twins made it too confusing at the point when it was meant to become obvious about the mix up.’ (McCourt, 2010, Respondent 1180884641) As Dimsdale explained, in attempting to find a way to stage this difficult meeting, Filter had resorted to music:

We tried so many different ways of doing it and arrived at a very simple solution with the music. We’d pre-recorded her [Poppy] singing [. . .] as Viola and Poppy singing as Sebastian, so the higher one and the lower one, and both of them are in a kind of simple two line fugue so while she's doing the conversation you hear the two tones, the brother and sister

(Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010b, pp.10-11).

However, none of the responses to my audience survey noted this fugue, although some commented on the lack of inventiveness shown in staging this final meeting, compared with that shown in the rest of the performance (McCourt, 2010, Respondents 1181535826 and 1187690365). This suggests that as a means of resolving the confusion in the concluding scene, such an understated musical solution lacked impact. Filter’s choice to also use this tune earlier in the play, Viola humming it in a higher then a lower tone whilst she was disguising herself as Cesario, further detracted from the effectiveness of this musical solution, as it became linked to Viola’s masculine disguise as well as to her brother.

However, I would argue that the real weakness here stemmed from attempting to echo the onstage confusion caused by Sebastian's sudden appearance, by restricting the information provided to the audience about him at his first entrance, which I discussed above (p.262). As one survey respondent observed:

when Vio[ ]la came back as Sebastian, it wasn't clear. .The reasonings and motivations were lost, what was occu[r]ring may have been clear, but why not so much.

(McCourt, 2010, Respondent 1182126379)

Drawing on Linda Hutcheon's discussion of audiences in Chapter 1 (p.65), I discussed how varying degrees of knowledge about the adapted work can effect reception. The problem for Filter then, was that many of the audience would already be knowledgeable about *Twelfth Night*, either through study, or by having attended previous productions. Indeed, out of forty-eight respondents to my survey, only two identified themselves as having no prior knowledge of the play. In this instance then, spectators familiar with the play could resolve their confusion by resorting to their prior knowledge. In so doing, they would experience this restriction of information as a gap, something lacking in Filter's retelling. Whilst this might lead to a sense of intellectual pleasure in having filled the gap, it would also make it very difficult for these spectators to share the onstage confusion. It is not possible to draw conclusions about the effect of Filter's choices here on spectators who identified themselves as having no prior knowledge of the play, due to the limited sample. The two respondents in this category had widely contrasting opinions, with one noting 'I was able to follow the story line through the smart use of music technology' (McCourt, 2010, Respondent 1181544599), whilst the other observed that it was '[h]ardly clear at all' (McCourt, 2010, Respondent 1183166608). However, amongst the other

forty-six respondents to my survey, a concern for the understanding of audience members who had little or no prior knowledge of the play was repeatedly expressed (McCourt, 2010, Respondents 1181234138, 1181535826, and 1181561057)<sup>cv</sup>. A concern that was echoed by reviewers, with Gardner noting that 'enjoying this production to its fullest requires prior acquaintance with the play' (2007), whilst Patrick Marmion for the *Mail Online* suggested that '[f]amiliarity with the action may help' (2008). This proliferation of concern, I would suggest, may be a result of this experience of having to fill an apparent gap in Filter's retelling. Whilst the fugue that Filter provided as a staging solution lacked the required impact in resolving the staging challenge of the final scene, it was their choice to withhold so much information about Sebastian from a knowledgeable audience that led to the sense that Filter's adaptation was unable to stand alone successfully as a retelling of *Twelfth Night*.

### ***Coda: Haunting the RSC***

I noted above that Filter's adaptation was haunted by previous productions. However, the innovation and success of Filter's *Twelfth Night* in turn has haunted subsequent productions, none more so than those of the RSC. Michael Coveney's review for *The Stage* of David Farr's subsequent production of *Twelfth Night* for the RSC clearly drew on their association with Filter's production:

Farr's staging has that loose, baggy feel of the recent (much better) Filter revival, and you do start to wonder when the RSC might start doing these plays as, well, RSC plays rather than as everyone else's version of them.  
(Coveney, 2012)

In so doing, Coveney highlighted one of the problems created by the RSC attempting to alter their brand image without losing their established audience,

by forming associations with more experimental companies such as Filter. Although Filter's apparent influence on Farr's aesthetic is not surprising given that he has worked so extensively with the company on devised projects, there is a clear criticism here of attempting to trade on the popularity of Filter's style. Inherent in this criticism is a desire for a clear RSC style, not one that has been tentatively constructed from the most popular elements of others work. It remains to be seen if, under Gregory Doran, the RSC can meet this challenge.

## Conclusion

The three case studies demonstrated that constraints identified in the conditions attending the remaking of *Othello* by Frantic Assembly, *Macbeth* by The Pantaloons and *Twelfth Night* by Filter Theatre, had significant observable effects on these adaptations as both process and product. In exploring the constraints surrounding adaptation, this thesis opened by considering how the temporal distance between a source text and its performance exposes differences between the contexts of creation and remaking. Adapter's choices to conceal or reveal this distance, I suggested, were based in ideological positions that either supported or challenged constructions of the text and values contained within it as stable and unalterable. However, this divide was not demonstrated in the three case studies in this thesis. Rather, in all three studies, adapters expressed ambivalent approaches towards altering Shakespeare's text.

The focus on dialectical tensions within the adapter's accounts of their process echoed this ambivalence, which in turn had observable effects on the adaptations, such as Graham's and Hoggett's division between text and movement as expressive systems in *Othello*. Purcell's focus on interplay between representational and presentational modes of performance in *Macbeth*, similarly provided opportunities to adopt two different approaches to adapting the source, one preserving the textual fidelity of the verse, whilst the other sanctioned a variety of devised approaches to changing the text through reference to dramaturgical fidelity. Filter Theatre's collaboration between musicians and actors, like that of Frantic Assembly, used a dialectical tension between expressive systems, with music being used to support economic use

of the text through conveying changes of location, whilst elsewhere initiating playfully devised extensions of scenes.

In providing a broad contextual basis for the case studies in part two of this thesis, examination of cultural and educational policies between 2006 and 2010 revealed complex ideological negotiations within and between institutions. By linking targets and funding to policies, this multifaceted hegemonic structure created conflicting values in the distribution and consumption of adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. Whilst it was clear in Chapter 2 that material constraints were underpinned by ideological interests, the three case studies in part two revealed that ideological constraints also observably affected the use of available material resources in the adaptations created by Frantic Assembly, Filter Theatre, and The Pantaloons. In this way, the construction as well as the management or alteration of material constraints, rather than being separate from ideological constraints, are expressions of them. Despite differences between the conditions of production and reception, patterns common to all three case studies have emerged, which highlight the need for further research in this area.

### ***Impact of Cast Size***

The cast size of ten or less, set at the beginning of this study as a selection parameter, ensured that this material constraint would affect all the adaptations studied. There was a clear financial implication linked to the number of performers engaged for the companies here, not only in terms of wages, but also of overall touring costs. Despite this, only Frantic Assembly's Artistic Director's Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett noted making any changes as the result of their budget, reducing their cast size from ten to nine (Frantic

Assembly, 2011, p.12). Describing the initial budget as their 'dream budget', Graham and Hoggett's language suggests that they had been prepared to make compromises such as this if it was deemed necessary (Frantic Assembly Resource Pack, p.12). As Jonathan Holloways' example discussed in the Introduction to this thesis demonstrates (p.28), if a material constraint such as cast size is deemed to be substantially at odds with the chosen approach to an adaptation, it is more likely to lead the adapter to postpone the work or choose a project which is better suited to the existing constraints. In this instance, Frantic Assembly had already taken an extended three-year planning phase for *Othello* in order to ensure that Graham and Hoggett had appropriate co-producers and enough funding in place to achieve their ideas (see p.117). The doubling then, of one character, in this instance Desdemona's father Brabantio with her cousin Lodovico, was not a sufficiently significant departure from Frantic Assembly's aesthetic to prevent the project going forward without additional funding.

The Pantaloons were not constrained, as Frantic Assembly was, by funding stipulations to adhere to Equity's pay agreement for artists. However, by relying on a mixture of donation only performances for *Macbeth*, together with contracts from venues, (many of which were contingent on ticket sales for *Much Ado About Nothing*), the income for the tour, and hence the budget, would have been much harder to accurately predict. The size of cast therefore had a direct impact on how much the company could afford to pay the performers, thereby favouring an approach that kept the cast size small. In this respect, the convention of openly doubling characters in The Pantaloons' performances appears to be a pragmatic response to material constraints. As Artistic Director Stephen Purcell explained:

[. . .] to be honest when you've got a cast of five it's mostly logistical about who doubles with who. I do a spreadsheet, I work out who can't possibly double with who and you end up with the only possibility left like *Much Ado About Nothing*, Leonato can virtually double with nobody, I discovered, without some serious cutting. So it had to be Don John that he doubled with just because I couldn't find another way of doing it without cutting the play in a way that I didn't want to do

(2010, p.22).

As Purcell's comments reveal, logistical decisions arising from material constraints are also informed by what the adapter wishes to achieve. In this instance, Purcell's approach to adapting the script additionally informed the doubling choices, whilst remaining within the material constraints. This process echoes Jon Elster's rational thought model that I outlined in the Introduction to this thesis (see p.28) in which an individual's beliefs and values inform choices within the imposed, chosen, and invented constraints (Elster, 1989, pp.30-1 and 2000, pp.175-6). In this way, as I noted in the Introduction to this thesis, all constraints can be thought of as productive of creative responses, rather than leading only to logistical solutions (see p.18). Elster's classification of the conditions under which constraints are applied as imposed, chosen, and invented, provides a useful means here of comparing patterns that emerged from the conditions of production and reception, as well as from working with Shakespeare's texts (Elster, 2000, pp.175-6).

### ***Imposed Constraints***

In the chosen sample, there was significant difference in the financial resources available to the three companies. This led to observable variances in the quality and employment of material resources in the individual adaptations which was most readily observable in the use and realisation of set and costume design. Despite individual economic constraints, it was clear that each

company's aesthetic values underpinned the choices that informed each design. The Pantaloons use of a small platform with a delineated performance space in front for direct address drew directly on Purcell's focus on exploring the interplay between *locus* and *platea* in Shakespeare's plays. Similarly, Laura Hopkins' detailed set design for Frantic Assembly's adaptation, complete with moving pool table and undulating walls, complemented Scott Graham's and Steven Hoggett's work on creating the pub environment. By setting the stage for a gig, rather than choosing to allocate some resources to a set, Filter's choice also reflected their aesthetic aim of blending music and theatre. By revealing the means of production in this way, not only were musicians and performers blended, but also the temporal and physical space of the play and the performance. In this way, Illyria and the world of *Twelfth Night* became synonymous with the conditions of each performance.

The use of Knowles' material semiotic model of analysis however, revealed ideological pressures related to production values. Mark Hayward directly linked these to control of economic capital in The Pantaloons' adaptation, with his improvised apology for the lack of better quality effects blamed on their rejection for ACE funding. Whilst The Pantaloons' had built this reference into their adaptation as a recurring joke, Filter acknowledged their lack of set at only one of the performances that I attended. In this singular instance, Jonathan Broadbent's opening comment at the Bath Theatre Royal foregrounded expectations related to production values for main house productions in regional theatres (see p.282). In contrast, no reference was made to the detailed set in Frantic Assembly's adaptation. As such, whilst production designs reflected the aesthetics of each company, they also became

a measure of the quality, and hence the cultural and commercial value, of the adaptation within the theatre hierarchy.

### ***Chosen Constraints***

As I have demonstrated through the case studies, the chosen aesthetic approach of all three companies had an observable impact on the adaptations, both in terms of the performance techniques employed, and approaches to adapting the source text. Whilst the case studies have covered individual influences on the development of each company's distinctive aesthetic, in the course of this research some broader patterns have also emerged.

By combining Knowles' materialist semiotic approach to performance analysis with interviews with the adapters, I observed that all three companies discussed their work as deviating from current theatrical approaches to remaking Shakespeare's plays in some form. The Pantaloons' concern with restoring playfulness through incorporating popular theatre techniques drew heavily on meta-theatrical techniques to question the authority of the text. Filter Theatre's aim to produce a collaborative response to *Twelfth Night* was presented as resisting the working methods of their commissioning organisation, and Frantic Assembly's focus on creating a domestic retelling of *Othello* openly resisted the use of RP, choosing instead to deliver the text in a Yorkshire accent that was appropriate to the Northern setting. An integral part of this divergence was the organisation of the rehearsal processes. Although the companies differed here in practice, not least in the choice of media incorporated within the aesthetic of each, which thus demanded quite different skills and processes, each company incorporated devising in some form. This correlation is perhaps unsurprising given that two of the companies, Frantic

Assembly and Filter Theatre, specialised in devised work. More exceptional is why companies that specialised in devising should choose during this period to adapt a classic text. Here the encouragement and support these companies received from building-based organisations to apply their aesthetic approach to Shakespeare's plays becomes pertinent, and with it the policy and funding conditions set out in Chapter 2 that provided the incentive for such support. Equally, education has had a significant impact on an increased acceptance of devising practices within all areas of the not-for-profit theatre industry. As Dee Heddon and Jane Milling conclude in their study of the history of devising, from a few universities offering devising as a subject in the 1960's, the practice has spread to drama schools and is now taught throughout Britain (2009, p.227). This academic institutionalisation has increased the cultural capital associated with devising. In addition to the taught curriculum, it has also ensured through campus venues access to the performances as well as the processes of a range of devising practitioners. The direct influence of this educational context is clear in the impact of Volcano Theatre's production of *Savages* on Scott Graham and Steven Hoggett at Swansea University.

As Duška Radosavljević concluded in her study of the interplay between text and performance, these changes in university training have 'produced multi-skilled, thinking artists capable of an integrated authorial practice which combines writing, acting, composing, directing and design' (2013, p.194). The three touring companies I have studied in this thesis have demonstrated that such integration has had an observable impact on adaptation as both process and product. In terms of process, an emphasis on collaborative creation was evident in the work of all three companies, despite notable differences in the ways this was realised. Frantic Assembly's director/choreographer-led process,

although combining these two roles, most closely resembled the skill-based organisation of larger building-based theatre companies. Their extensive use of facilities for set building and rehearsal provided by their co-producer, Plymouth Theatre Royal, underpinned this approach. Here collaborative input was closely controlled through Graham's and Hoggett's task-based approach to choreography, which they suggest enables 'performers to offer much creative input into the devising of choreography without burdening them with the responsibility of creating the whole show' (2009, p.7). This approach led to an adaptation in which the director-choreographers had clear authorial control over the dramaturgical choices and media used throughout the process.

Departing from a director-led model, Filter Theatre claimed collective creation of their adaptation. However, they chose to retain a separate credit for the director, despite describing Sean Holmes' contribution as being 'another skill in the room' (Dimsdale and Roberts, 2010a). Without an ethnographic study of Filter's process, it is impossible to ascertain the accuracy of this claim. What the evidence collected for the current study does demonstrate is that Filter's organisation of their rehearsal process successfully fulfilled their aim of blending music and drama, with both contributing to the structural development of the adaptation in terms of editing as well as extending scenes.

Although *The Pantaloon*s also used a director-led approach, with Purcell retaining control of the structure of the adaptation through editing Shakespeare's text, collective experiment created many of the meta-textual elements such as the interpolations introduced by the three witches. This emphasis on devising skills led to concepts emerging in the rehearsal room that affected the whole world of the production, such as the film noir references that arose from Caitlin Storey's idea of playing King Duncan as a gangster. It also

allowed experiments during the rehearsal process to affect both the application of The Pantaloons' aesthetic and the textual adaptation, leading to a re-edit at a late stage in the process. This reciprocal authorial approach enabled the deviser-performers to affect the structure of the overall adaptation, as well as allowing them significant control over developing their role(s) and areas of artistic responsibility, such as Mark Hayward's composition.

Purcell's approach to privileging *functional* fidelity and thus alteration of the text, over *textual* fidelity in some scenes, provided clear opportunities for collaborative devising. Concerned with recapturing the popular traditions of clowning, Purcell identified moments for improvisation based on the function of a scene, such as the comedy provided by the Porter's monologue. However, as Purcell noted, the application of this chosen constraint had to be altered during rehearsals in response to its impact on the text. This led to the creation of a narrator using paraphrased text to continue the meta-textual approach that was central to The Pantaloons' style. Although The Pantaloons were the only company in this study to highlight the impact of research into Elizabethan staging techniques as an influence on their style, as I noted in Chapter 5, similarities could be observed in the techniques employed by Filter Theatre (see p.273).

Bridget Escolme posits, this focus on meta-theatrical performance in early twenty-first century productions of Shakespeare's plays is the result of a convergence between original staging practices research, and contemporary physical theatre forms derived from Jacques Lecoq's work (2010, p.167). As such, whilst The Pantaloons represent their work as recapturing the tradition of clowning in Shakespeare's plays, contemporary training methods, techniques and contextual references inevitably influence their practice. This convergence

may also account for the similarities I observed between The Pantaloons' staging conventions and those used by Filter. Without observing the rehearsals or having access to the script before it was changed, it is not possible to draw an informed conclusion as to the impact of contemporary performance influences on the first version Purcell produced. However, by introducing Malcolm as a narrator and Aunt Fanny to provide a plot recap, the restructured narrative nevertheless demonstrated observable links to contemporary devising and scripting methods. As I discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, significant ideological pressures surround the adaptation of the text of Shakespeare's plays. However, the ways in which the companies negotiated these pressures in relation to their own established performance practice also suggested a shared enjoyment of engaging with Shakespeare's language, albeit in markedly different ways.

### ***Invented Constraints***

As I observed above, The Pantaloons' process demonstrated the influence of selected contemporary scripting techniques and conventions adopted from Purcell's research into Elizabethan staging practices. Conversely, Graham and Hoggett restricted most of their textual alterations to editing and collaging Shakespeare's text, rather than rewriting it, to prevent their adaptation being criticised for being reductive. However, their use of movement went further, replacing some of the text and creating new scenes that reinforced the transposition to the pub. Here the movement was significant not only in creating the world of the pub, but also became an active component of conveying the plot. In performance, there was little overlap between the movement and text due to Graham's and Hoggett's invented constraint that

prevented layering of these expressive systems. This separation created a tension within the production that highlighted the distance between the historical text and contemporary performance additions. As such, in performance the recontextualisation appeared to rely heavily on Frantic Assembly's unique aesthetic in restructuring the narrative. However, close analysis of the text of the adaptation revealed that collage had also played a significant part in this process, with scenes shortened and re-ordered to allow intercutting, thus reflecting the influence of film techniques that infused the other elements of Frantic Assembly's style. By using twenty-first century scripting techniques in this way, Graham and Hoggett effectively gave the source text a contemporary structure whilst retaining Shakespeare's language.

In contrast, a variety of notions of fidelity to the source text informed Filter's collective approach to *Twelfth Night*. Whilst Tim Phillips' concern with translating the sentiment of the source text into the musical medium informed the composition, Oliver Dimsdale was concerned with structural fidelity, whilst Ferdie Roberts viewed the production as an interpretation rather than an adaptation of the text. The resulting adaptation made less use of textual rearrangement, relying mainly on cuts and some reordering of scenes. Here, the constraint of devising through a blend of music and drama led to a focus on creating the fictional world through sound. This allowed substantial editing of the text, with the text, in effect, treated as a stimulus for extended devised sequences such as the party, and Sir Toby's attempts to walk quietly across the floor.

## ***Adapting Shakespeare's plays for touring with small casts***

The retention of Shakespeare's language by all three companies suggests that there was considerable ideological pressure to retain some recognisable form of fidelity to Shakespeare's writing. Possibly, this was due as much to the need to appeal to school groups, as it was to do with concerns with perceptions of the cultural status of the production. Even Purcell's intentionally popular theatre approach to *Macbeth* retained Shakespeare's verse, creating an adaptation that effectively played on contemporary cultural consumers' breadth of knowledge. This continued focus on fidelity to Shakespeare's text, I suggest, has led to the emergence of an interesting pattern within the work of all three companies. Although the case studies have revealed that the integration of text, design, music, and movement practices within contemporary performance have led to some instances of the text being replaced by other mediums, it is not the text, but the structure of the plays that has undergone the greatest change in these adaptations. Influenced by contemporary media practices, as well as techniques drawn from contemporary storytelling and devising, all three companies significantly altered the structure of the source plays through cutting, intercutting, rearranging, and extending scenes. Rather than directly replacing the text with other performance techniques, these contemporary performance-based adapters transformed the narrative shape of the stories, and in doing so highlighted the temporal distance between the staging techniques inferred from Shakespeare's texts and contemporary interdisciplinary performance practices. In this way, by presenting Shakespeare's verse within a revised structure, within which it is also brought into dialogue with other performance disciplines, these adaptations foreground the problem of where we locate Shakespeare's value in contemporary performance.

Through analysis of the effects of constraints created by the context of production and performance, and how these have been negotiated by three small non-building based touring companies, this thesis contributes to the current growth of research focusing on the work of small touring companies in the first decade of the twenty-first century (Duggan, 2013; Radosavljević, 2013; and Tomlin, 2015). The economic recession and austerity measures imposed by the coalition government since 2010 have led to significant changes in the working contexts of small touring theatre companies; the establishment of a record of the work produced in the first decade of the twenty-first century is essential to allow future research to ascertain the effects of these changes. By restricting my application of Knowles' materialist semiotics to three performance-based adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, I have demonstrated not only how the context of the adaptations in performance affected the meanings and reception of the adaptations, but also how constraints arising from the contexts surrounding the adaptation processes observably affected the resulting products. This returns to the starting point for this thesis of Hutcheon's definition of adaptation combining three different, but interlinked positions, based on the duality of adaptation as a process and a product which crucially must also be received as a palimpsest experience, allowing the receiver to make links with other texts (2006, p.7).

By combining this materialist semiotic approach with close readings of the theatrical aesthetics employed by each company, and introducing interviews with the adapters to the model being followed, the case studies revealed a creative interaction between constraints arising from the conditions of production and artistic experimentation. This led to productive tensions within

all three adaptation processes that informed the employment of aesthetic approaches in creating meaning in a range of reception contexts.

There remains considerable work to be undertaken into the impact of collaborations between small, non building-based touring and larger organisations during this period, particularly with respect to how these collaborations informed developments in adapting Shakespeare's plays for performance across the theatre hierarchy. However, given that the working contexts were, to a greater or lesser extent, inculcated by the values of the large building-based companies that were instrumental in providing resources to these touring companies, it is refreshing that these arrangements do not appear, from this limited sample, to be leading to homogenisation of their performance processes or products.

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<sup>i</sup>Throughout this thesis, I will refer to source text to indicate that Shakespeare's plays exist in numerous, often contradictory, editions, rather than a single, stable definitive authorial text. As such, the selection of one or more editions as a starting point for a theatrical production or adaptation is already subject to the cultural processes, including editorial and design choices, involved in the preparation of that publication. For further discussion of editing Shakespeare as a cultural process see Graham Holderness (2003, pp.33-55), David Scott Kastan (1999, pp.59-70), and Stephen Orgel (2002, pp.1-5).

<sup>ii</sup> In his study of Western literature, Harold Bloom posits that 'Shakespeare is the Canon. He sets the standard and the limits of literature.' (1995, p.47). The English National Curriculum reinforces this privileged position by naming Shakespeare as the only compulsory writer set for Literature at Key Stage 3 and GCSE.

<sup>iii</sup> Michael Dobson (1992), beginning with the reopening of the theatres in 1660 and concluding in 1769 with the Shakespeare Jubilee, focuses on the development of Shakespeare and his works as a symbol of national identity. Dobson explores the shift from open adaptation of Shakespeare's plays to reflect the political concerns of the period, to later preoccupations with the more covert practice of correcting or rewriting obscure passages of the plays, which grew up alongside Shakespeare's new authority as a national symbol. Jean I. Marsden's study of Shakespeare adaptations, which likewise focuses on the eighteenth century, traces how the published texts reflect changing social and cultural attitudes towards the adaptation of dramatic texts (1995, pp.5-9). Gary Taylor (1989) also begins his historical account in 1660, but chooses a broader field, considering how Shakespeare and his plays have been continually reinvented to suit the changing social and cultural conditions of four centuries of performance.

<sup>iv</sup> This artificial separation of the two processes was formally created through the Dramatic Literary Property Act of 1833 (3 & 4 Will. IV, c.15) which, in addition to the rights to the reproduction of the dramatic text in print already contained within the Copyright Act of 1814, also conferred the right to benefit financially from staged productions of the text. As Jane Moody points out in *Illusions of Authorship*, as a result of this Act 'dramatic authorship now became vested in a written text' with the playwright as sole owner (1999, p.100). The consequence of such investment in the written word was to remove other forms of dramatic authorship; that is recognition of the various contributions made by other theatre practitioners such as directors and actors; to the development of a new play-text during readings, workshops or its initial production.

<sup>v</sup> Sarah Anderson makes a comprehensive study of the process of the dramatic adaptation of Shakespeare's plays by British playwrights writing between 1956 and 1980 (1980). Elsewhere, playwright's adaptations have been represented in anthologies such as Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier's *Adaptations of Shakespeare* (2000) which brings together twelve scripts by playwrights spanning the seventeenth to the twentieth century.

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<sup>vi</sup>Recent books exploring devising and collaborative working processes in contemporary theatre include *Theatre-Making* by Duška Radosavljević (2013), *Making Contemporary Theatre* edited by Jen Harvie and Andy Lavender (2010), *Devising in Process* edited by Alex Mermikides and Jackie Smart (2010), and *Making a Performance* by Emma Govan, Helen Nicholson and Katie Normington (2007).

<sup>vii</sup>T.J. King in his systematic survey of thirty-eight Shakespeare plays, suggests that there is a consistency in the number of principal roles required in Shakespeare's plays. Defining principal adult roles as those of twenty-five lines or more, and principal roles for boys as those allocated ten or more lines, King's analysis of known plays by Shakespeare concludes that an average of fourteen actors, ten men and four boys, were needed (1992: 1). Elsewhere, larger cast sizes were suggested by David Bradley, whose study of 344 plays performed between 1580 and 1642 led him to conclude an average of sixteen actor's were needed, based on the number required for the performance of 56 per cent of the plays analysed (1992: 47).

<sup>viii</sup> For further discussion of the main theories concerning the use of statements of artistic intention see Gary Iseminger's collection of essays *Intention and Interpretation* (1992). Other positions not discussed here include value-maximising which is defended by Stephen Davies in his article *Authors' Intentions, Literary Interpretation, and Literary Value* (2006), and partial intentionalism which is discussed by Paisley Livingston in *Art and Intention: A Philosophical Study* (2005).

<sup>ix</sup> This model builds on Stuart Hall's paradigm's of encoding and decoding signs (1993, pp.90-103). Hall suggests that not only the technology and conditions of production, but also the wider social and political context have a significant influence on how the message, in Hall's example a television programme, is encoded. The reception, Hall's point of decoding, whilst similarly affected by the immediate and wider context within which the message is received, does not exactly replicate the conditions of encoding, thus preventing readings being pre-determined, allowing the possibility of the message being read against the grain.

<sup>x</sup> Red Shift is a member of the Independent Theatre Council (ITC), who offer an Approved Manager Membership. This is available to companies who have 'been approved by ITC and Equity as having a track record of good management' (<http://www.itc-arts.org/page141.aspx> Approved manager accessed 22/02/2013) This approval is granted to companies who fulfil a number of requirements including using contracts that comply with terms and conditions that have been negotiated by ITC.

<sup>xi</sup> Sociologist, Norman Denzin outlined four possible types of triangulation, that of data, investigator, theory, and methodology. In order to overcome the limitations of individual methods and enhance the validity of field research methods, Denzin advocated using one or more forms of triangulation in order to explore the research problem from multiple perspectives and thus produce 'fully grounded and verified theories' (2009, p.297).

<sup>xii</sup>In her analysis of Punchdrunk Theatre's *The Masque of the Red Death*, which adapted several of Edgar Allan Poe's tales, Frances Babbage notes a similar reticence to announce the

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production as an adaptation. Babbage concludes that the 'dynamic fusion of two complementary artistic forces (albeit with only one party's consent)' suggested by the equal emphasis on Punchdunk and Poe in the programme, itself infers adaptation (2009, p.17).

<sup>xiii</sup> The instability of Shakespeare's dramatic texts in print has been thoroughly documented (Hodgdon, 2003, pp.97-102; Irace, 1994, pp.11-19; and Jowett, 2007, pp.160-2). Differences arise not only between quartos and the folio, but also between copies of the same publication as the result of errors and corrections made during the printing process (Hinman, 1996, p.xxii).

<sup>xiv</sup> Building on Stern's work, James J. Marino observes how competition for audience between the Admiral's and the Chamberlain's Men led to each company copying and adapting techniques developed by the other, requiring rapid and multiple revisions to be made to plays in performance (2011, pp.103-6). Using this model of multiple revisions, rather than a single extensive rewriting, Marino suggests that '*Hamlet* is contaminated with all manner of verbal traces from the works of other people' (2011, p.104).

<sup>xv</sup> Printers had to either be a member of the Stationer's Company or possess a royal patent. Mark Rose, in his examination of the development of printing rights from the 1557 Royal Charter, through to the Statue of Anne in 1710, observes a change thinking moving away from considering texts in terms of what they could do, with the guild granting permission to publish communally shared texts. This was increasingly replaced by notions of the text as property that could be owned by individuals (1993, pp.10-14).

<sup>xvi</sup> The Chamberlain's Men was renamed The King's Men in 1603 when James I became their patron. For a detailed history of the Company see Andrew Gurr's *The Shakespeare Company 1594-1642* (2004).

<sup>xvii</sup> David Scott Kastan notes that Pavier's planned collection contained two plays that were incorrectly accredited to Shakespeare, *The Yorkshire Tragedy* and *Sir John Oldcastle* (1999, p.82-84). Discussing Pavier's collection, Margreta de Grazia and Peter Stallybrass note the extent to which F1 is relied upon to define the plays that constitute Shakespeare's canon. In so doing they speculate that had Pavier's collection been published the plays considered to define Shakespeare's canon might be significantly different today (1993, p.261).

<sup>xviii</sup> Jean I. Marsden examines the updating and rewriting of Shakespeare's language (1995, pp.16-29). For a detailed analysis of the influence of scenic innovation in seventeen adaptations of Shakespeare's plays during this period see Barbara Murray, *Restoration Shakespeare: Viewing the Voice* (2001). Examples of developing roles for actresses may be found in *The Tempest or the Enchanted Island* adapted by John Dryden in which he both extends Miranda's role and adds a sister, Dorinda, and Colley Cibber's extension of Lady Ann's role in his adaptation of *Richard III*. Both Jean I. Marsden (1995, pp.30-40) and Michael Dobson (1992, pp.43-53) observe the restriction of these new roles to the domestic sphere, although Dobson goes on to note the potentially disruptive inclusion of cross casting in Dryden's *The Enchanted Island*, in which Dorinda's mate, Hippolito was written to be played by an actress (1992, pp.53-56).

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<sup>xix</sup> For further details about what has been termed the Battle of the Booksellers see Ronan Deazley *Rethinking Copyright: History, Theory, Language* (2006, pp.13-25) and Mark Rose *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright* (1993, pp.67-91).

<sup>xx</sup> At Cambridge, liberal humanist scholar F.R. Leavis advocated close readings of the text, advising that when reading aloud, the reader should focus on 'reproducing faithfully what he divines his composer essentially conceived' (Leavis, 1986, p.260). Despite his dislike of the actor's craft, openly declaring that '[t]he reason for my loathing of the actor is that [. . .] he will, in his accomplished and trained conceit, ignore the poetry, having decided on his own interpretation' (1986, p.263), Leavis' is cited as influencing the work of RSC director's Peter Hall and Trevor Nunn (Storer, 2009, p.118).

<sup>xxi</sup> Examination of shared practices, particularly with regards to dramaturgical approaches, is currently leading to a rich dialogue between adaptation and translation studies (Minier, 2014, pp.13-35; Krebs, 2012, pp.42-53; and Radosavljević, 2013, pp.26-37).

<sup>xxii</sup> Gross, J. (2004) 'New-minted Moor', *Sunday Telegraph*, 22 February.

<sup>xxiii</sup> Neil Taylor's notes on the text in the programme for the Plymouth Season (1997, p.14) actively deconstruct the myth of a single fixed text. Whilst the discussion of the two quartos and the First Folio versions of *Hamlet* would be expected in any such note about the history of the text, Taylor's discussion then turns to the work of editors declaring that '[a]lmost all select passages from more than one [version] and create their own *Hamlet* – a fourth text if you like.' (2007, np) The purpose it seems is to discredit whichever edition a director has chosen to use as a starting point, thus justifying any alterations, rearrangements or additions he might make with reference to the Quarto's or Folio. Taylor then goes on to defend the cutting of Fortinbras in this production by establishing a long history of this choice beginning with Robert Wilke's 1793 performance and culminating with Laurence Olivier's 1948 film. The extent to which Taylor has gone to intercept arguments about lack of fidelity to Shakespeare's script or excessive departure from acceptable editing by borrowing the authority of past theatrical legends such as Olivier, seems to suggest that there is an anxiety within the RSC about how Warchus' cuts, additions and rearrangements will be received.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Mark Fortier in his article *Wild Adaptation* classifies this play as a subgenre of Shakespeare adaptation "apocryphal biography" since it brings Shakespeare the writer into the play and creates an imaginary narrative around him. (Fortier, p.6)

<sup>xxv</sup> See *The Haunted Stage* in which Marvin Carlson examines the effects of memory on the process of reception, leading to roles, texts, and even whole performances being haunted by previous productions (2003, p.96-7).

<sup>xxvi</sup> For a detailed comparison of the RSC and Shakespeare's Globe see Emily Linnemann's PhD thesis, *The Cultural Value of Shakespeare in Twenty-First-Century Publicly Funded Theatre in England* (2010).

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<sup>xxvii</sup> See also Kate Dorney's chapter on regional touring in *The Glory of the Garden: English Regional Theatre and the Arts Council 1984-2009* (2010, pp.103-124).

<sup>xxviii</sup> For further discussion of the growth of this concept see Teresa A. Fisher *Post-Show Discussions in New Play Development* (2014, pp.8-9) and Andrew Haydon 'Theatre in the 2000s' in *Modern British Playwriting: 2000-2009: Voices, Documents, New Interpretations* edited by Dan Rebellato (2013, p.63).

<sup>xxix</sup> Arc Theatre, Trowbridge; EM Forster Theatre, Tonbridge; Theatre Royal Margate; University of Winchester; Riverfront Theatre & Arts Centre, Newport; South Street, Reading; and Lighthouse, Pool's Centre for the Arts.

<sup>xxx</sup> For further discussion of Shakespeare in the curriculum of state schools prior to 1988 see Alan Sinfield's comparison of exam board approaches to assessing students understanding of English Literature at O' Level and CSE standard (1985b, pp.134-157).

<sup>xxxi</sup> In its 2010 GCSE English Literature Specification, AQA included *Julius Caesar* as a set text. Despite this, the Examiner's Report revealed that *Julius Caesar* received no responses, with *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet* receiving the majority (2011, pp.3-4). The latter two plays were also reported as the most popular selections for Unit 3 where an open choice of text was permitted. The Examiner's Report concluded that such texts 'were familiar and probably reflected the book store of English departments across the country' (AQA, June 2011, p.4).

<sup>xxxii</sup> For a concise overview of the rivalry between liberal humanism and critical theory in English Literature see Peter Barry (2002, pp.30-36). For a detailed reflection on how the change in focus from close reading to context has impacted on the teaching and assessment of GCE English Literature, see Adrian Barlow (2009, pp.16-35).

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Kathleen O. Irace in her study of the "bad" quartos points out that William Davenant's 1676 script, *The Player's Quarto of Hamlet*, cut over eight hundred lines which Davenant claimed was for the purpose of reducing playing length (1994, p.24). Irace's study goes on to suggest that the cutting evident in her study of six "bad" quartos, *Henry V*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet* and two re-titled quartos based on *2 Henry VI* and *3 Henry VI* (the *Contention and Richard Duke of York*) seemed 'designed to shorten the plays in order to speed performances, simplify staging, or eliminate characters for casting or other practical reasons' (1994, p.25). In concluding her comparison of these "bad" quartos to the good quartos and the Folio, Irace (199, p.165) suggests that the evidence upholds W. W. Greg's theory (1910, p.xxxvii-xliv) that the "bad" quartos were constructed by actors from memory, but unlike Greg she postulates that this construction was not an act of theft but undertaken by the Lord Chamberlain's Men in 'response to special requests whilst on tour' (1994, p.169). Thus Irace combines the hitherto opposing theories of memorial construction and revision by linking textual adaptation to the historical conditions and therein constraints of production. For a detailed discussion of the debate between memorial reconstruction and revision theories see Barbara Kreps (2000, pp. 154-80) and Gary Taylor (Wells and Taylor, 1987, pp.285-304).

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<sup>xxxiv</sup> Johnson's approach to experiential based learning is informed by David Kolb's experiential learning cycle, in which learning begins with participants' own experience, the second phase requires making observations about this experience from number of viewpoints, this is followed by synthesizing what has been learnt into a model or idea which can be tested in the final stage (1984, p.33).

<sup>xxxv</sup> Frantic Assembly has since returned to touring small-scale venues with their subsequent production, *Lovesong* by Abi Morgan (*Lovesong*, 2011).

<sup>xxxvi</sup> In *The Frantic Assembly Book of Devising* Graham and Hoggett not only provide a brief account of how *Frantic Theatre Company* was inspired by working on a production with *Volcano Theatre* whilst they were English Literature students at Swansea University (2009a: 1-3), but goes on to discuss their devising process in detail with reference to past productions. The *Guide to Frantic Assembly*, also written by Graham and Hoggett, provides a more detailed account of the founding and development of the Company (2011: pp.3-7) as well as details about funding, the Company structure, and marketing (2011: pp.11-15).

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Influenced by genres that include dance, mime, clowning, and circus, the term 'physical theatre' has been applied to a broad range of movement-based work in British Theatre. Although not formally trained as dancers, Graham's and Hoggett's physical style is heavily influenced by dance through their interest in companies such as Volcano Theatre, DV8, V-TOL, and Featherstonehaughs (Graham and Hoggett, 2009a, p.30). The influences of mime, dance and other theatre forms on the development of physical theatre have been discussed in relation to both devised and movement work in contemporary theatre practice (Heddon and Milling, 2006, pp.176-189; Murray and Keefe, 2007, pp.34-72; Govan et al., 2007, pp.158- 163; and Callery, 2001, pp.8-13).

<sup>xxxviii</sup> I have quoted from the annual report for the year ending 31 March 2008 in order to reflect as accurately as possible the context within which *Othello* was produced.

<sup>xxxix</sup> With the exception of *Dirty Wonderland* (2005) which had involved nine performers and an additional group of twenty student performers, Frantic Assembly's previous productions had consisted of small casts of between three and seven performers (Graham and Hoggett, 2009, pp.9-17).

<sup>xl</sup> 'Candidates' interpretation of the chosen extract should evidently be influenced, in terms of theatrical aims, rehearsal methods and/or production/performance style, by the work of an influential company or other practitioner who has made a significant contribution to theatre practice (past or present).' (AQA, 2007, 7) Theatre Companies listed on page 9 suggested examples in addition to Frantic Assembly include Complicité, Kneehigh and Shared Experience. *The Report on the Examination: 2009 examination – June series* noted that '*Othello* by Frantic Assembly was a popular choice' on the *Live Theatre Production Seen* paper (AQA, 2009, 7).

<sup>xli</sup> Jamie Rocha Allan's rehearsal diary, although published on the Frantic Assembly website during the tour of *Othello* in 2008-9, is no longer available online. However, an extract from it is

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included in *Shakespeare's Othello: A Comprehensive Guide* (Graham, Hoggett, and Rocha Allan, 2008, 17)

<sup>xiii</sup> Hutcheon describes this complexity of reception in *A Theory of Adaptation*, suggesting that adapters must 'satisfy the expectations and demands of both the knowing and the unknowing audience' (Hutcheon, 2006, p.128).

<sup>xiii</sup> I have chosen to use character entrances as division markers since these initiate new actions. The exception is the first section that is marked by Cassio's exit. However, this also marks Othello's emergence from hiding which Iago uses to initiate his reflection on the conversation that Othello has just witnessed.

<sup>xiv</sup> Eddie Kay trained in dance at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance, and the London Contemporary Dance School (Shakespeare, 2008, p.8).

<sup>xv</sup> Scott Graham named this as the track that accompanied the love scene on the pool table in a reply on the *Othello Forum* (2008a). Hybrid's remix of William's track, was completed in 2005 for Walt Disney Picture's film, *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe*.

<sup>xvi</sup> Aleks Sierz, in his survey of new writing for the British theatre, *Rewriting the Nation: British Theatre Today*, noted that in the first decade of the twenty first century two areas of anxiety emerged in what was, and still is, a divided society. These were fear of a social underclass that came to be identified as 'chavs', and the growing segregation between racial and religious groups (2011, p.127). The transposition of Graham's and Hoggett's adaptation to a working class pub, coupled with the racism already explored in Shakespeare's play, clearly resonates with these concerns.

<sup>xvii</sup> The development of policies whilst in opposition by the Conservative party in response to 'Breakdown Britain', an interim report produced by the Social Justice Policy Group chaired by Iain Duncan Smith, focused on the identification of five causes of poverty, '[f]amily breakdown, educational failure, economic dependence, indebtedness and addictions' (2006, p.15). Thus, references to 'Broken Britain' reflect an ideological position that effectively blames the poor for their poverty.

<sup>xviii</sup> A distinct category, related to but distinct from Popular Shakespeare, the study of Youth-culture Shakespeare was invigorated by the release of Baz Luhrmann's *William Shakespeare's Romeo + Juliet* (1996) and the teen films that followed it such as Gil Junger's *10 Things I Hate About You* (1999) and Tim Blake Nelson's *O* (2001). Whilst these films have focussed the debate about youth-culture adaptations of Shakespeare more strongly within the media industries (Cartelli and Rowe, 2007, 25-6; Hodgdon, 2004, 247-262; and Lanier, 200a2, 157-180), concerns as to the influence of such adaptations on theatre productions have also been noted. Margaret Jane Kidnie's analysis of the link between Luhrmann's film and the criticism

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received by Matthew Warchus' production of *Hamlet* for the Royal Shakespeare Company provides a detailed example of this (2009, 43-44). Jennifer Hulbert et.al. provide a wide-ranging study of youth-culture Shakespeare in America in their book, *Shakespeare and Youth Culture* (2006) which considers adaptations and appropriations across a wider range of mediums including theatre and novels.

<sup>xix</sup> Desdemona and Emilia shared a joint in the ladies toilet whilst discussing adultery (Shakespeare, 2008, pp.79-81 adapted from 1997, 4.3: 16, 34-8 and 58-102).

<sup>i</sup> Rachel Falconer in *The Crossover Novel: Contemporary Children's Fiction and It's Adult Readership*, provides an overview of the political, economic, scientific and technological changes that combined to give rise to the 'kiddult' in the first decade of the twenty-first century (2009, pp.31-42).

<sup>ii</sup> One way in which Frantic Assembly actively attempts to balance the audience for its productions is through a policy of capping the number of seats available to school parties for each performance in order to ensure that 'people who are in couples or small parties don't feel overwhelmed by large groups' (Graham, 2008b).

<sup>iii</sup> This article by Fuertes et.al (2012, pp.120-133), *A meta-analysis of the effects of speakers' accents on interpersonal evaluations*, provides a useful overview of research undertaken between 1972-2002 into the reception of accents in English speaking countries and the effect of the listeners perceptions across a range of subject areas including counselling, education, employment and sales.

<sup>iii</sup> Only two journalists mentioned the use of accent in their reviews of *Othello*. Susannah Clapp writing for *The Observer* felt that the accent enhanced the transposition to the rough, gang culture, noting that the '[n]orthern-inflected' delivery made 'the most pungent expressions sound like something spat from the streets.' (2008, np) Given the subsequent comments about the use of accent in her blog (2009), it is perhaps unsurprising that Lyn Gardner's comment seems to both anticipate and defend against potential criticism for this choice of accent: '[y]es the flat northern vowels scrape the verse, but it is robust enough to survive.' (2008, p.38)

<sup>liv</sup>Details from Pete Shaw's five star review of *Cymbeline* for the Fringe Paper Broadway Baby indicate that many of the features of The Pantaloons style are already in place at this stage including the use of song, role doubling, puppetry, improvisation, and highlighting movement between illusion and reality throughout the performance. (2006, np).

<sup>lv</sup> Purcell's argument here appears to be a direct response to the contention by J.A. Bryant Jr. that Shakespeare's plays are best analyzed as dramatic poetry on the page rather than in performance (1986, p.9 cited in Purcell, 2009, p.64). Bryant's reading of Hamlet's advice to the players (3.2: 38-40) as an 'aesthetically sensitive author's pained awareness of what it means to hand over an intricately wrought contrivance to minds that may only partially comprehend it' and subsequent accusation that these players 'may be only too ready to sacrifice complexity of insight for the immediate effects that gesture and a skilled voice can achieve' (1986, p.9) seem

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to be directly addressed by Purcell's assertion that some sections of his plays 'illicit no 'insights', nor contain any inherent 'beauty'" (2009, p.65). This is not the space for an extended consideration of the debates surrounding aesthetic value and Shakespeare, which have been discussed in detail elsewhere (Bloom, 1994; Grady, 2009; and Kruger, 1992). However I would suggest that in this instance Michael D. Bristol's conclusion to his examination of aesthetic judgment that 'literary works are always received against the resistances and the grievances of their actual and unforeseen addressees' seems apt (1996, p.138).

<sup>lvi</sup> Even where charges were made there was no noticeable consistency with the National Trust's East Riddlesden Hall (Keighley News, 2010, np) charging £5 for the performance and an additional £4 for a Pantaloons workshop, whilst the Trust's Bodiam Castle (seven wonders of the weald, 2010, np) offered both the performance and workshop free of charge whilst retaining the overall admission charge to the site itself.

<sup>lvii</sup> The figures recorded for heritage sites were 77.9% for upper socio-economic groups and 57.3% for lower socio-economic groups whilst for engagement for the arts these figures were 81.9% and 64.8% respectively (Great Britain. DCMS, 2010a, pp.39 and 26). I have chosen to confine my discussion to socio-economic groups here, since this is the demographic that Purcell was specifically concerned with. However, it may be noted that there was no clear policy expressed, either in my interview with Purcell or in The Pantaloons publicity material, in terms of appealing to any of the demographic groups that are less well represented in arts engagement such as Black or ethnic minorities (65.8%), those with disabilities (68.6%) or those over the age of 75 (57.2%) (Great Britain. DCMS, 2010b, Table 3).

<sup>lviii</sup> Refer to Simon Shepherd's discussion of the multiple ways in which director's construct their authority in *Direction: Readings in Theatre Practice* (2012, pp.153-170).

<sup>lix</sup> Hall, J. (2011) 'University of Kent's comedy module celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary' *The Independent* 13 May [Online]. Available at <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/comedy/features/university-of-kents-comedy-module-celebrates-its-10th-anniversary-2283013.html> (Accessed: 15 August 2011).

<sup>lx</sup> All the photographs taken by Stephen Purcell in this Case Study were shot at The Pantaloons first performance of *Macbeth* at Ufton Court on 15 May. By the point that I viewed the performance on 1 August at The Dell due to ill health Helen Taylor (Lady Macbeth/Ross/Murderer 2) had been replaced by Lucy Mellors.

<sup>lxi</sup> Indeed, the Company's Mission Statement endorses the interpolations associated with the clown's role: 'Hamlet tells us that the clowns in Shakespeare's day spoke "more than is set down for them", and we have found that tapping into this rich vein of anarchic humour can have a strangely moving and uplifting effect.' (Pantaloons Theatre Company: 2011a)

<sup>lxii</sup> This game is based on following a small flying ball, the golden snitch, used in the Quidditch matches in the Harry Potter films.

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lxiii ANGUS                      now does he feel his title

Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe  
Upon a dwarfish thief.

(Shakespeare, 2007b, 5.2: 23-5)

lxiv Adapted from Harry Berger's diagrammatic representation of the relationship between actor and character (1988, p.49).

lxv Sarah Kozloff in her study, *Invisible Storytellers: Voice-Over Narration in American Fiction Film* provides a detailed analysis of the use of first-person and witness-narrators in film noir (1988, pp.62-71).

lxvi In this instance the real world garden location worked with the world-of-the-play to exaggerate the irony inherent in Shakespeare's juxtaposition of the pleasant position of the castle against the evil that would take place inside.

lxvii You may have noticed in figure 3 that Banquo is wearing a hat for the journey to Glamis. Ross Drury assured me that this was due to a memory lapse in performance rather than a change in artistic choice during the tour (2011, np).

lxviii Robert Weimann provides a detailed analysis of Shakespeare's adaptation of conventions associated with the *platea* in the Porter's scene and the ways in which the Porter's riddling involved the audience, privileging the authority of the audience over that of the *locus* (2000, pp.201-208).

lxix In her study of *British Pantomime Performance*, Millie Taylor suggests that audience participation at a pantomime entails meeting a number of prerequisites including 'empathy with a grotesque character', 'involvement with the events of the plot' and 'most fundamentally, it requires audience members to involve . . . to act as a community to transgress the behavioural patterns associated with certain types of theatre going, but to conform to the expectations of this genre and the authority of the performers' (2007, pp.125-6). In terms of the Pantaloon's production then, it required the audience members not only to recognise, but also accept and actively participate in the pantomime techniques being employed within the performance.

lxx Whilst the interpretation of Banquo's ghost has been the subject of much theatrical experimentation in past productions, the Pantaloon's used the simple but effective expedient of Banquo (Drury) silently walking onto the platform and sitting on the blue trunk which had previously been designated as Macbeth's chair. This choice both suited the style of the production, in a way that having a non-present ghost would not since this would have required a more naturalistic style focussing on Macbeth's psychological responses, and in practical terms since Drury's role doubling mitigated against gory make-up and costume effects. For other interpretations of Banquo's ghost please see Stuart Hampton-Reeves comparison of Jack Gold's use of an empty chair in his 1982 production for the BBC Shakespeare series with Rupert Goold's 2007 production in which the banquet scene was staged twice, once with and once without the ghost (2009, pp.122-127). See also Alan C. Dessen's discussion of

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representations of the supernatural in this scene for comparison of a range of theatrical effects ranging from the use of shadows and walking corpses to productions that favour the absence of a physical ghost in order to foreground Macbeth's state of mind (2002, pp.154-6).

<sup>lxxi</sup> The exaggeration of eyes, nose and mouth in the features of these puppets, focusing attention on orifices with their capacity to admit and expel the world evoke associations with Bakhtin's discussion of the role played by the 'grotesque body' in folk humour (1984, pp.18-29). Given Purcell's familiarity with Bakhtin's theories concerning the grotesque body and the carnivalesque it would not be unrealistic to suggest that the design choices here may have been influenced to some degree by his research (Purcell, 2009, pp.17 and 22)

<sup>lxxii</sup> In his book on *Street Theatre and other outdoor performance*, Bim Mason emphasises the importance of make-up and costume not only as a means of identifying performers as belonging to a company but also as a means of making them eye-catching regardless of surroundings in which they perform (1992, pp.104-5).

<sup>lxxiii</sup> Although in my interview with him, Stephen Purcell stated that 'the Pantaloon colour is something we discovered last year and decided to keep' (2010, p.19), evidence drawn from videos of their production highlights posted on youtube by the Company (The Pantaloons, 2008 and 2009) suggests that the practice of using personal colours began with *The Taming of the Shrew* in 2008.

<sup>lxxiv</sup> I am borrowing here from Ralph Berry's spectrum for describing approaches to using historical settings other than those that the play was written, performed, or set in. In *On Directing Shakespeare* he suggests that such settings can either be chosen as décor for 'visual elegance' or as a critical concept in which 'the director marks close and striking affinities with the realities of the text' (1989, p.16).

<sup>lxxv</sup> Whilst, as Mark Hayward pointed out in an email to me (2011, np), Lewis misquoted The Pantaloons programme which stated that 'In its time, *Macbeth* was an intensely political thriller' (2010, p.1) the programme does go on to say that, 'Our production is an attempt to reclaim *Macbeth* as a contemporary thriller' (2010, p.2).

<sup>lxxvi</sup> Despite the large number of previews and interviews available in the local press surrounding this production, only two reviews were available.

<sup>lxxvii</sup> Of the original cast for the work-in-progress performance at The Cube, Stratford-upon-Avon (2006) three actors were to remain with the production throughout its subsequent alteration and tours: Ferdie Roberts (Malvolio), Oliver Dimsdale (Sir Toby Belch), Gemma Saunders (Feste/Maria) (*Twelfth Night*, 2006b). Two new actors joined the Company when play was revised for the British Council Showcase in Edinburgh in 2007. These were Jonathan Broadbent took over from Paul Brennan as Orsino and Sir Andrew Augecheek, and Poppy Miller who took on Viola and Sebastian which had previously been played by Polly Frame. Kirsty Bushell who played Olivia remained with the show throughout this revision stage (Gardner, 2007b). I include here only those involved in developing the initial work-in-progress

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production and those who were involved in the significant alterations that took place when the show was revived in 2007 in this core group. Therefore, whilst for example, Olivia was later played by two further actors, Kumar Streeter (2008) and Victoria Moseley (2010), to which they brought small alterations, these did not alter the structure of the story being retold. In terms of the music composition, the situation is markedly clearer, with Tom Haines and Ross Hughes credited with music and sound design in Filter's programmes (Filter Theatre, 2010b).

lxxviii The Deutsche Bank runs a competitive award scheme to support a new business or project. The award of financial and business mentoring is made annually to thirteen graduates from partner art colleges including Guildhall School of Music and Drama. Tim Phillips received the award in 2000. (Deutsche Bank United Kingdom, 2011).

lxxix Roberts worked with Holmes again on *The Contractor* (2002) for Oxford Stage Company in which he played Glendenning.

lxxx In a Theatre Blog for *The Guardian* Brian Logan quotes Sean Holmes recollection of the event, in which Holmes stated that ' "Hytner had come to see them and said 'I really like the devised work, but I'd like to see it applied to a text." '(2007).

lxxxi Filter received £47,684 from the Arts Council for a UK tour of *Twelfth Night* in 2010 (Arts Council England, 2011) and £48,505 for a UK tour of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in 2011 (Arts Council England, 2012).

lxxxii Alongside the three Artistic Directors, the Filter website lists Gemma Saunders and Tom Haines as Artistic Associates (Filter Theatre, 2012b).

lxxxiii This credit also highlights Sean Holmes involvement with the production, his recognition within the theatre industry being one of the selling points listed in the Marketing Pack for the 2010 tour of *Twelfth Night* (Rena Shagan Associates, 2010, p.10).

lxxxv Dimsdale had himself also worked for the RSC, playing Ferdinand in *The Tempest*, directed by James MacDonald (*The Tempest*, 2000).

lxxxvi Leon Rubin's observation at the beginning of his account of the RSC's adaptation of *Nicholas Nickleby* that the 'conditions of rehearsal are geared too much to production' would seem to echo this product focused approach (1981, p.19). Elsewhere, in an interview with Steven Adler, designer Robert Jones described the RSC as a 'machine, doing fifteen or more productions a year', the consequences of which led to a design schedule that resembled a 'conveyor belt'. (quoted in Adler, 2001, p.174).

lxxxvii The preview of *Twelfth Night* at the Complete Works Festival was described as 'work in progress' in the 2008 Marketing Pack for the production (Schtanhaus, 2008, p.1).

lxxxviii In addition to age related discounts for those over sixty and under twenty-six, the Northcott offers loyalty related savings. These include Season Savers, which allow those booking to see multiple plays either see the third play for half price, or the fourth free, and an annual

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membership scheme, Friends of the Northcott, which provides discounts of £2 on top of other concessions (Northcott Theatre, 2010, pp.3 and 32).

<sup>lxxxix</sup> In addition to being a set text for AQA and OCR exam boards, Edexcel's GCSE in English Literature allowed a free choice of Shakespeare play to allow students to compare the text with a contemporary production of that text (2009, p.4).

<sup>xc</sup> The pattern is somewhat different if we compare Filter's production with Headlong's *The Winter's Tale*. One factor here may be that both productions achieved a similar audience capacity: Filter achieved a capacity of 93.9% and Headlong 94.2%. In this instance then the larger proportion of school audience would have necessitated a drop in other categories. Unfortunately, due to the pricing policy in 2009 it is impossible to ascertain whether this drop was evenly spread between full price and 60+ categories, or whether one of these categories in particular was less attracted to Filter's production.

<sup>xc<sup>i</sup></sup> Since Gooch's edit does not provide the possibility of referencing line numbers (Shakespeare, 2006) where I wish to direct the reader to a particular line I will refer to 'Twelfth Night' in *Complete Works* edited by Jonathan Bate, and Eric Rasmussen, (2007c, pp.650-697).

<sup>xc<sup>ii</sup></sup> Although Filter reinstated the duel between Sir Andrew and Cesario (Shakespeare, 2007c, 3.4: 167-227) in their reworking of the production after the Complete Works performance, the structure was not reconfigured. This was due to Sir Andrew's letter of challenge, which Sir Toby fails to deliver in Shakespeare's plot, remaining cut as extraneous to the needs of the narrative. Antonio's interruption of the duel was replaced by a section of comic business that culminated in both parties running away.

<sup>xc<sup>iii</sup></sup> In *An Actor Prepares* Stanislavski sets out the importance of the super-objective, as a means of unifying the actors actions via a cohesive, agreed meaning of the play (1980, p.276). In his more recent translation of Stanislavski's book, Jean Benedetti favours the term Supertask rather than super-objective (2008, pp.316-7).

<sup>xc<sup>iv</sup></sup> Despite a range of criticisms of his work and the interpretation of his system, Konstantin Stanislavski's principles are still widely recognised as the basis for most actor training in Western drama schools and conservatoires at the current time. For an overview of the main arguments surrounding the translation and interpretation of his work, see Sharon Marie Carnicke (2002, pp.28-39). Both cultural materialists and feminists have questioned the ideologies inherent in such training, criticising the ways in which it supports the reproduction of dominant hegemonies within the theatre (Sue-Ellen Case, 1988; 122; Ric Knowles, 2004, pp.32-53; Lauren Love, 1995, pp.277-290; W.B.Worthen, 1997, pp.96-112).

<sup>xc<sup>v</sup></sup> My own choice to include this production as an adaptation is based as much on the significant additions created through music and popular theatre techniques, as it is to the alterations made to Gooch's edit of Shakespeare's text.

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<sup>xcvi</sup> For further discussion with regards to how the uncanny is perceived through and constructed by technology, see Laura Mulvey (2003, pp.93-102), Nicholas Till (2012, pp.183-200), and Isabella van Elferen, (2009, pp.121-134).

<sup>xcvii</sup> David Lewis Yewdall provides a detailed discussion of Jack Foley's development of the process of creating sound effects to match the action in films at Universal Studios in *Practical Art of Motion Picture Sound* (2012, pp.425-464).

<sup>xcviii</sup> These snatches varied, sometimes the choices ironically reflecting the larger context, as Peter Kirwan noted in this review: 'Dimsdale's Sir Toby [. . .] staggered across the back of the stage holding a skull, declaiming lines from *Hamlet* in a deliberate and obvious jibe at the RSC's current high-profile production'(2009,p.116). At the production I attended at Bath Theatre Royal however the selection was taken from *Romeo and Juliet* and *Henry V (Twelfth Night, 2010a)*.

<sup>xcix</sup> Victoria Moseley who played Olivia at Bath Theatre Royal, chose to use a double-bass here instead (*Twelfth Night, 2010a*).

<sup>c</sup> *Life through the bottle: freaking out*, directed by Vaughan/Anthea was a British advertising campaign for Smirnoff launched in 1995. Whilst at a wedding reception a man picks up a bottle of Smirnoff which he holds up to view various guests through. As the bottle distorts their reflection their alto ego is revealed, for example the bride kissing the groom becomes a vampire sucking his blood.

<sup>ci</sup> Stanislavski introduces the use of '*if*' as a stimulus for the actors imagination in *An Actor Prepares* (1980, p.59). Later in the book he dedicates a whole chapter to truth in performance as a means of engendering the belief of the actor, his colleagues, and the spectators in his or her actions (1980, pp.127-162).

<sup>cii</sup> In the initial performance at The Complete Works Festival Kirsty Bushell's Olivia remained onstage with Maria to receive Cesario, whilst a mobile phone provided the opening line for Paul Brennan's Orsino (*Twelfth Night, 2006a*). The subsequent message from Valentine was read out by a member of the audience. This moment proved somewhat awkward, relying as it did on the audience member's ability to sight read these lines, so the message was relayed via mobile phone in later revivals.

<sup>ciii</sup> From my seat in the stalls, it was not possible to get a clear sense of the age demographic of those in the Royal, Dress and Grand circles.

<sup>civ</sup> Keir Elam provides an overview of the development of interpretations of this Elizabethan feast and notions of carnival in relation to *Twelfth Night* in his introduction to the Arden Shakespeare edition (2008, p.18-24).

<sup>cv</sup> Respondent 1181234138 felt that '[i]f I did not know the story I would have had no idea what was going on', whilst Respondent 1181535826 thought 'it was helpful to know the play beforehand, as the final scenes may have been confusing to a members' of the audience who

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may be less familiar with the script.' Respondent 118156057 also considered that 'it would have been difficult for a first timer' to follow the story. (McCourt, 2010)