

are undoubtedly some of the most praiseworthy parts of the book and make the reader wonder why Phillips did not apply this sharpness to a more exhaustive analysis of the films. The very well documented filmography is equally commendable in spite of some omissions (mainly the five versions of *Victory* shot at Joinville in 1930 of which Phillips surprisingly says nothing, the unfinished 1993 *Heart of Darkness* starring Sean Connery, or some minor films such as the Mexican version of *Tomorrow*). The credits of the Spanish *Heart of the Forest* is full of misprints and we also find some repeated misspellings in the name of Terence Young (115, 189, 218) or Jeffrey Meyers (162, 163).

All in all, this book is a more than acceptable introduction to the topic espe-

cially suitable for non-specialists. However, the over-simplification of some issues and the lack of critical analysis could make someone from another field of study think that Literature and Film Studies is a minor almost anecdotal discipline which does not lead anywhere. Although Phillips can feel certainly proud to be the pioneer in collecting such a quantity of information in a book, we cannot help feeling a sense of disappointment about a lost opportunity to approach the relationship between Film and Literature using the rich material which Conrad as a writer and some gifted and not-so-gifted filmmakers have offered us.

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Lynda E. BOOSE; Richard BURT, (eds.). *Shakespeare, the movie: Popularizing the plays on film, TV, and video*. London: Routledge, 1997, x + 277 pages.

Referring to Warren Beatty's Cleopatra-like role in *Bugsy*, Katherine Eggert wittily entitles her contribution to this excellent volume «Age Cannot Wither Him». The phrase can be no less aptly applied to Shakespeare, who, through the global reach of the Hollywood film factories, has in recent years achieved a presence in popular culture more influential and pervasive than ever before. The accelerating production of Shakespearean films in the age of Branagh is being matched by the production of critical studies examining it. *Shakespeare, the film* is the latest, and in many ways the best, collection of essays on the subject. Especially admirable is its variety, both

in the types of popularisations it covers and the critical methodologies it embraces. Included are studies bristling with theory, others intent on locating the bard's shifting place in modern culture, and a welcome number providing detailed explications that will send readers back to the VCR for another viewing.

Two essays on *Othello* define the collection's range of critical interests. Writing from a moment when issues of race and sexuality were focused by the O. J. Simpson trial, and returning repeatedly to the trial and its press coverage, Barbara Hodgdon fruitfully compares the effect of «looking relations» (26) in two films featuring black actors as Othello.

The 1987 South African *Othello* of Janet Suzman «deliberately confronts South African spectators, white as well as black, with their own histories» (31), forcing them, especially when viewing interracial sexual attraction, to consider their complicity in or resistance to the stereotypes and myths the play evokes. Trevor Nunn's film of his 1989 Stratford production uses an «ambiguously colonial locale» and a passionless hero «to smooth over, even erase questions of race» (31), highlighting instead the problem of sexual abuse as something relatively separate from race. «Nunn's film», Hogdon concludes, «reveals how Iago's abuse of Emilia becomes displaced onto and appropriated by Othello, who turns it on Desdemona» (38). In contrast to Hogdon's intense interest in what productions of Shakespeare reveal about their cultural matrix, Lynda Boose considers the formal strategies whereby Jonathan Miller in the BBC *Othello* produced «a noteworthy instance of transferring/transforming Shakespeare to video» (186). Her detailed attention to patterns of costuming, contrasting lighting styles, recurrent imagery, and visual quotations of seventeenth-century paintings results in the finest analysis that I have seen on any of the videos in this series.

Five essays study individual recent films. James Loehlin reads Richard Loncraine's appealing *Richard III* through its engagement with twentieth-century fascism and its creative employment of the «cinematic codes» (71) of the British heritage film and the American gangster movie. His examination of the film's concluding sequence, with its echo of James Cagney's fiery demise in *White Heat*, reveals how complex and meaningful cinematic allusiveness can be. Donald Hedrick relies largely on Lyotard to analyse the politics of complexity and ambiguity in Branagh's *Henry V*, finding in the film «a conservative rather

than a critical ambivalence» (49) toward its hero and in the embattled film-maker «a subliminal identification with war-making» (62). Rounding up another of the usual suspects, Peter Donaldson offers the most substantial discussion to date of Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's Books*. Donaldson ably relates the filmed Prospero's highly controlled sexuality and digital creation of his environment to the play's imagery of female-less generativity and notes that an important female character of «spontaneous and unruly sexuality» (182) featured in the published film script remained unrealised in the film itself. Ranging further afield from the subject of filmed drama, Susan Wiseman explores the complex role played by the Henriard, via Welles's *Chimes at Midnight*, in Gus Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho*. She shrewdly traces the film's systematic opposition between a Shakespearean, heterosexual family romance storyline and a Freudian, homosexual one. Wiseman concludes that «the film has a metarelationship to Shakespeare» (235): «even as it thematizes the struggles between fathers and sons... *Idaho* could be figured as in an oedipal relationship» to the Shakespearean text. Perhaps the most unexpected essay comes from Katherine Eggert, who writes on «Warren Beatty's Bugsy as Hollywood Cleopatra». Eggert explains the «unusual parallelism» (200) between the plots of *Antony and Cleopatra* and Beatty's gangster movie as the return of the repressed. After observing that «both the Cleopatra story and specifically Shakespeare's version of the Cleopatra story saturate Hollywood history» (198), she concludes that «Hollywood can be charged with repressing the disquieting elements of a text whose broad outlines its projects nevertheless find indispensable» (201).

Several older productions neglected by modern criticism also receive scrutiny in *Shakespeare, the film*. Valerie

Wayne takes up, a bit cursorily I think, the creatively confused delineations of «oppressor and oppressed, colonizer and colonized» (99) in the 1965 Merchant Ivory *Shakespeare Wallah*, which recounts the fate of a British acting troupe in India after independence. Tony Howard gives us a fascinating description of the 1953 CBS *King Lear*, an astonishingly surreal live production bringing together the talents of Orson Welles in the leading role and Peter Brook as director to produce a «Wellesian left-Democrat text from the 1930s» that also reflects «Brook's growing concern with extreme irrational states» (132). A no less visionary and revisionary project, the silent blockbuster *Hamlet* of 1920 starring the great Danish actress Asta Nielsen, is the focus of Ann Thompson's largely historical essay, which covers the film's reception and its development of the Victorian obsession with Hamlet, the woman.

Larger views —of groups of films and of issues resonating today in the critical literature— characterise the remaining essays. Laurie Osborne's discussion of the joint British-Soviet series of half-hour animations includes interesting remarks on the cartoons' echoes of feature films and on the way they «bring to the forefront film techniques which operate less visibly in the "realistic cinema" of other Shakespearean films» (106). The absence of an essay on Olivier in *Shakespeare, the film* suggests how quickly his former staples of the Shakespearean classroom have faded into oblivion; «they have for some time», Robert Hapgood discloses, «been virtually intolerable —even laughable— to my college students» (80). The same fate has not beset Franco Zeffirelli, whose success as a populariser is Hapgood's subject. He locates the formula for Zeffirelli's success in the combination of commercially savvy decisions —an accent on youth, the casting of major

stars— with an artistic vision that substitutes a profusion of images and a «kinetic appeal» (86) for the richness of the Shakespearean word, especially in the 1966 *Taming of the Shrew* and his 1968 masterpiece, *Romeo and Juliet*. Diana Henderson considers the history of *Shrew* films, of which she counts eighteen. Her historical approach illuminates the responses the makers of films and videos made to women's suffrage, post-war ideas of gender difference, and the sixties' sexual revolution. Kenneth Rothwell's study of filmed *Lears* matches Henderson in historical comprehensiveness, but focuses more tightly on a single image: the map over which Lear's kingdom is divided. Richard Burt's concluding essay on the «new Shakespeare cinema» looks in detail at the current «convergence of a mainstreaming of Shakespeare into popular film and of a gayed Shakespeare» (241). Openly asking far more questions than he attempts to answer, Burt distinguishes «between gay as legible and queer as illegible» (248) and turns through this distinction to problems of identity and identification in a wide variety of films, from *Porkys 2* to *Dead Poets Society*, that associate Shakespeare with homosexuality.

A brief review can only hint at the riches available in this scholarly cornucopia. Because of its range of critical approaches and of film-texts examined, *Shakespeare, the film* will prove informative not only to readers interested in the Shakespearean dramatic and cinematic canon, but as well to those curious about the dynamics of popular culture. The book will, moreover, inevitably enhance any teacher's ability to engage today's media-conditioned students in the classroom.

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