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Sullivan, Erin

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**“The forms of things unknown”:
Shakespeare and the Rise of the Live Broadcast**

ERIN SULLIVAN

Shakespeare Institute, University of Birmingham

“This has never happened before. The immediacy, the sense of being there, is unlike any experience you have ever known. This is the theatre of the future, taking shape before your eyes today.”

– Richard Burton, promotional trailer for his “Electronovision” *Hamlet*, 1964

What is theater, if not the experience of “being there?” Of sharing the same space as the actors, of merging oneself into an audience, of enacting the rights of ritual? Such performance, Peggy Phelan has famously argued, “occurs over a time which will not be repeated” (146). It is fundamentally about what is happening now, right here, so much so that we might even say that it becomes a verb: theater is an act of doing, and we are part of it. But what happens when the very notion of “being there” starts to shift, when it is possible to stay in one place and yet move from here to the theater and back again with the push of a button or the tap of a screen? Are we *there*, and is what we’re doing still *theater*, or are we experiencing something so different that the form itself begins to rupture, producing what can only be thought of as new performances and “new texts” (Parsons 101)?¹

Such questions have taken on new urgency in recent years with the rapid rise in theater broadcasting worldwide. Since 2009, the National Theatre in London has beamed a selection of its season to cinema audiences across the globe, resulting in what can only be thought of as a paradigm shift in theatergoing practices. Thousands of people still flock to the Southbank every month to see an NT production live and in person, but at least as many head to movie theaters around the world to experience the NT’s offerings closer to home. The very

first NT Live broadcast—a June 2009 performance of Nicholas Hytner’s *Phèdre*, starring Helen Mirren—attracted a global cinema audience of more than fifty thousand people, roughly equivalent to the total in-house audience for the production’s entire three-month run (Bakhshi and Throsby 2).² More recently, Lyndsey Turner’s blockbuster *Hamlet* at the Barbican, starring Benedict Cumberbatch, not only became the fastest-selling theater production in London history but also set a new record for global cinema viewing, with more than 225,000 people in twenty-five countries seeing it broadcast in October 2015 (Hawkes). In the UK alone, it was shown in 87% of cinemas, generating national ticket sales of £2.93m by the end of the year. By way of comparison, Justin Kurzel’s feature film of *Macbeth*, released in the UK in the same month and starring Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard, brought in £2.82m during that time (Gardner, “Benedict Cumberbatch’s *Hamlet*”; Hutchinson, “Benedict Cumberbatch *Hamlet*”).

The picture that is emerging, then, is one of steady and even rapid growth, with the development of live broadcasting affecting not just the surrounding theater ecology but potentially the cinematic landscape, too. From seventy cinemas in the UK in 2009 to two thousand worldwide by 2017, the NT Live franchise has swiftly expanded and inspired further broadcasting programs from other major theaters (Rosenthal 793; “Key Facts”). These include Shakespeare’s Globe in 2010, the Royal Shakespeare Company in 2013, and the Stratford Ontario Shakespeare Festival and the Kenneth Branagh Theatre Company (KBTC) in 2015, not to mention the growing number of smaller companies that are experimenting with online broadcasting, such as Cheek by Jowl, Complicite, and Talawa.³ Such initiatives have provoked spirited debate among theater critics, practitioners, and audience members, many of whom have questioned whether such relays can really count as theater, but sustained academic investigation into the nature and impact of live broadcasting is still in its infancy.⁴ Martin Barker has emphasized the importance of audience research to the field and outlined

key questions for the event cinema industry as a whole, while John Wyver has mapped the early history of theater broadcasting in the UK and offered invaluable insights into the technical craft behind twenty-first-century transmissions. Alison Stone has begun to explore the aesthetics of broadcasting through an analysis of two productions, but many questions remain concerning how this emerging art form translates live theater for the screen and, perhaps most importantly, the new ways of seeing that are being created for audiences as a result.⁵

Such issues are not entirely new, of course: theater has long been captured on film, and not just in studio settings.⁶ Over half a century ago, Richard Burton and his collaborators used “Electronovision” technology to live-record their sell-out production of *Hamlet* on Broadway and then screen it in cinemas across America, resulting in what they called an “epoch-making ... theatre of the future” (“Richard Burton’s *Hamlet*”; “Richard Burton Talks”).⁷ The difference now is that this long-imagined, exotic future is at last becoming a familiar and even routine present, with the nature of theatrical production and reception necessarily adapting in the process. While popular accounts of such production have tended to emphasize the transparency of theater broadcasting, in this article I want to begin to make visible the complex forms of artistry present in a wide range of broadcasts and to consider what this means for our evolving understanding of theatrical spectatorship. Shakespeare provides a particularly rich focus, not least because he has become such a central figure in the rise of live broadcasting. While his plays typically constitute about ten percent of the NT’s annual program, they make up more than a quarter of the theater’s more selective broadcast season. They also dominate filming at the Globe, RSC, and KBTC, all of which produce non-Shakespearean drama, too. While there are many explanations for such prominence—the widespread teaching of Shakespeare, frequent celebrity castings in his plays, a historical reliance on the classics as launch material for new media forms—in this article I am less

preoccupied with the why of Shakespeare broadcasts than with the how and to what end of their creative art.

Looking first at how discussions of broadcasting have tended to downplay the artistry of those involved in interpreting theater for the screen, this article then moves into a detailed analysis of the film grammar at work in more than a dozen Shakespeare transmissions. Here it explores how broadcast teams construct a sense of place at a distance and especially how they use different shot compositions, editing paces, and camera views to produce forms of spectatorship that can vary dramatically in their theatricality. Although my focus throughout is on the visual film work involved in these broadcasts, it's worth noting that their soundscapes are also rich in design and worthy of further study. Here, however, I will concentrate on how broadcast directors visually frame moments of performance for screen and the impact that these aesthetic decisions have on an audience's viewing experience. While the inclusion of more televisual or filmic moments such as a close-up or an aerial shot can significantly enrich a broadcast, I will argue that it is through the steady presentation of movement through space that a transmission can embrace a production's theatrical origins—and, in doing so, produce a visual sense of “being there” that is most cognate with live, in-person spectatorship. In such cases, broadcasts do not constitute entirely “new texts,” fundamentally separate from the productions upon which they are based, but rather an expansion of our current understanding of theatrical spectatorship, which already exists along a spectrum: just as it has long been possible to see the same production from different seats in the house or on different nights, it is now possible to see the same production in person or at a distance. At its best, this new way of seeing enables both extended access to theater and a comprehensive, absorbing experience of it, made possible through the skillful artistry of broadcast filmmaking.

The Art of Storytelling

In one of the first sustained analyses of twenty-first-century theater broadcasting, John Wyver has noted the “near-invisibility” of broadcast directors and their production teams in discussions surrounding this new form and its “creative agency” (““All the Trimmings?”” 109). Such an omission risks perpetuating a long-standing, if antiquated, cultural hierarchy in which theater trumps screen drama as the more preeminent art. “It is almost as if the image sequences, which are considered and scripted and rehearsed responses to a host of factors, appear on screen courtesy of some kind of outside broadcast fairy,” Wyver argues, and indeed he knows better than most. As both producer of the RSC’s Live from Stratford-upon-Avon program and director of Illuminations, a media company that has made films of RSC productions since 2000, he has been intimately involved in the creation of screened theater for years. And he certainly has a point: in much of the publicity materials for recent broadcasts, including the basic programs distributed to cinema audiences at NT Live screenings and the webpages for individual Globe on Screen productions, the name of the broadcast director, or “director for screen,” is consistently absent. (RSC cinema programs do include this information, perhaps due to Wyver’s influence). The result, he suggests, is the perpetuation of the “myth of non-mediation,” or the idea that the broadcast is a more or less neutral copy of the stage production (““All the Trimmings?”” 109). The more similar the two are seen to be, the more a single creative director makes sense, and vice versa.

This perceived union of a stage production and its screen broadcast is understandable and in some ways even accurate—it is, after all, what many of the creative practitioners behind major broadcasting programs profess to do. From the beginning, the producers and directors involved in NT Live have emphasized how little they change for the camera. Lighting, wigs, and makeup are tweaked, and considerable miking is incorporated across the stage, auditorium, and onto the bodies of actors, but the creative direction and pitch of the

acting are supposedly not meant to change. In the first year of the project, Hytner, then artistic director of the National, told the press that he would “be encouraging all the actors, writers and directors who take part in NT Live not to think about the broadcast” (qtd. in Trompeteler 49). The aim, he suggested, was to create “a facsimile of the live performance” and not a separate, standalone film (qtd. in Cavendish). This emphasis on sameness, and on honoring the integrity of the theatrical production, has been adopted in subsequent initiatives. Wyver has noted how RSC Live directors also advise actors not “to change or modulate their performances for the cameras,” and Stephen Quinn of Digital Theatre, a company that creates live theater recordings for online streaming, has similarly stated that his team’s “objective is to be invisible to both audience and performers” (“Screening the RSC” 294; qtd. in Bennett-Hunter).

It perhaps comes as little surprise that the theater directors and producers involved in broadcasting projects have insisted on the transparency of the filming and the primacy of the stage, but it’s notable that the broadcast directors who work alongside them have echoed such sentiments. According to Robin Lough, the UK’s most prominent and prolific director of theater broadcasts, “It’s terribly important from my point of view that the stage director always feels that what I’m doing is collaborating with him and trying to get in my terms what he would want if he was directing the cameras” (qtd. in Wyver, “Screening the RSC” 293). Wyver, who has worked closely on multiple occasions with Lough, has attested to the fact that the broadcast director’s team does “not request any changes to the stage blocking, setting, costuming or performances.” Such an approach, he suggests, is reinforced by Lough and his crew’s “shared and unchallenged view ... that the broadcast process should, as far as [is] feasible, remain invisible and unacknowledged” (“Screening the RSC” 293, 296). While some broadcast directors have experimented more dramatically with the form—such as Barbara Willis Sweete, whose 2008 broadcast of *Tristan und Isolde* for the Metropolitan

Opera featured split-screen collages reminiscent of art house films (Heyer 593), or, more recently, Ben Caron and his 2016 *Romeo and Juliet* for the KBTC, which proudly announced in its program that it would be “presented in BLACK and WHITE CinemaScope within a 16:9 frame”—the emphasis in most large-scale broadcasting projects so far has been on quiet transparency. “Our aim is to film your performance ... not shape your performance for film,” Tim van Someren, another experienced broadcast director, has told his NT Live casts, and producers David Sabel (NT), Wyver (RSC), and Jon Bath (KBTC) have all repeated variations on the theme, “We are not making a movie” (Trueman; “Infusing Theatre”; Wyver, “Screening the RSC” 290; “From Live-to-Digital” 118). Across the sector, practitioners involved in theater broadcasting have preferred a philosophy of convergence to one of deviation.

Beyond the creative team, audience members at broadcasts have also commented on the perceived similarity between the in-person and at-the-cinema experience. In an influential editorial on the value of live recording and broadcasting, *The Guardian*'s Michael Billington encouraged readers to “stop pretending that theatre can't be captured on screen.” Having reviewed Richard Eyre's 2013 production of Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts* at the Almeida, and having then attended a preview of the live recording created by Digital Theatre, Billington succinctly concluded, “I can only say that it offered an experience comparable to that I had in the theatre” (“Let's Stop”). Not everyone, however, has agreed. In the extensive comments section after Billington's article, several readers took strong issue with his view. “Theatre is communication and communication is theatre. And communication can only take place when two people are in the same room together,” one reader remarked, while another added, “what is being presented here is a representation of an experience, not the true experience.”

The question of representation by proxy—or of “second hand theatre experience,” as a further Billington reader put it—has also been raised by scholars. Highlighting what they

call “the rhetoric of minimal difference,” Bernadette Cochrane and Frances Bonner have criticized broadcasting initiatives for emphasizing sameness in the publicity around their productions and then failing to deliver it in practice. In their analysis of NT Live’s broadcast of Nicholas Wright’s *Travelling Light*, they note that although “[t]he actors may have given ‘the exact same performance’” during the live transmission (as Hytner stated in the post-show Q&A), “the cameras do not ‘broadcast to cinemas what [the theatre] audience is seeing’” (125). What *does* get broadcast, they suggest, is something that offers a distinctly different, and indeed inferior, experience to that of in-house spectators. Using the language of “deprivation” and “denial,” they critique the way that broadcasts disrupt “the ability, indeed the right, of each audience member to select and compile his or her own edit of the proceedings” (127). With the imposition of the camera’s gaze, they suggest, comes a forceful move away from the essence of theater and theatrical spectatorship.

Cochrane and Bonner raise some constructive points for broadcasting as a practice, including the possibility that greater adaptation from stage to film might in fact result in a better experience for cinema audiences. Overall, however, their argument is a negative one, highlighting what they see as the failings of the genre. In their focus on what the broadcasts don’t do, they offer a clear illustration of Wyver’s claim that

For those within theatre, the discourse used to describe screen adaptations—and this continues in the developing discussion of live cinema—is one centred on loss. The loss of liveness is deplored, the loss of co-presence of audience and actors, and the loss of reciprocal effect of spectators and cast. (“All the Trimmings?” 117-18)

For such critics, the alleged transparency of broadcasts is misleading and even insidious, since it encourages audiences to assume that such transmissions are acceptable substitutes for

in-person theater experience when in fact they are anything but. In the UK, concerns have been heightened by an exam board decision in 2016 allowing high school drama students to attend digital screenings in lieu of live performances (Hutchinson, “School Theatre Trips”). The anxiety is that broadcasts are threatening the nature of theater by turning it into a more limited, passive, and commodifiable experience.

But rather than a discourse that fixates on what gets lost or supposedly mangled in the broadcast, what about a discussion that starts to think about the unique aesthetics of this form and even what they might add? Initial research into audiences’ experiences of broadcasts suggests a far from negative experience: an early, government-funded study into the impact of NT Live found that cinema audiences for *Phèdre* were about 20% more likely than in-house audiences to report high levels of absorption and emotional engagement in the production, and more recently a survey commissioned by the UK’s Arts Council evidenced similarly strong affective responses among event cinema audiences as a whole (Bakhshi, Mateos-Garcia, and Throsby 5, 9; “From Live-to-Digital” 175). While the significance of such statistics remains a matter of debate, as does their focus on emotion as a defining feature of theatrical engagement, they do begin to tell a different story about the potential of theater broadcasts.⁸ Though attending them will never be exactly the same as being there in person, perhaps they offer their own distinct advantages and pleasures. To recall Linda Hutcheon’s influential work on adaptation, maybe there’s a way they can be “second without being secondary” (9).

For while broadcast directors such as Lough frequently emphasize the primacy of the stage event in the way they develop the screen version, they also highlight the interpretive skill—and, implicitly, the creative agency—that the process involves. “Story-telling is what it’s all about, not coverage,” Lough has explained; “How to find the story, and break it down in terms of five or six cameras, but actually make clear what the storyline is in each piece.

And I think the best multi-camera directors of this kind of thing are the best story-tellers” (qtd. in Wyver, “Screening the RSC” 296). Bearing in mind the fact that storytelling is an art, which in turn is based on form, in the sections that follow I explore the kinds of artistic techniques that broadcast theater-makers use to create engrossing stories for their audiences. Beginning with an examination of how broadcasts introduce a theatrical place to remote viewers, I then consider how the film work within them shapes spectators’ experiences of space, emotion, dramatic action, and directorial vision. In doing so, I ask, what is the relationship between a theater production and its broadcast? How does the latter creatively interpret the former? And what is the effect on spectatorship and the nature of theatrical experience?

Setting the Scene

One of the first challenges facing every broadcasting team is how to establish a sense of place at a distance. In-house audiences typically produce this knowledge for themselves by travelling to the theater venue and taking in its spatial dynamics before the show, but most remote audiences need this information to be created for them. As a result, broadcasters frequently include extra material before the start of a transmission that helps contextualize the theatrical space and establish a sense of location. External and interior shots of the theater often appear, as do video sequences of the in-house audience chatting, taking their seats, and, in the case of the NT’s 2013 relay of *Othello*, snacking on popcorn just as they might in the cinema.⁹ In many broadcasts, natural sound from the auditorium plays for cinema audiences even when the picture switches to advertisements for upcoming screenings or rehearsal photographs from the production about to begin. In the fifteen minutes or so leading up to the start of the performance, remote audiences are invited to mix visually and sonically with their in-house counterparts, and ideally to merge into one. Perhaps surprisingly, the stage itself is

rarely shown in these sequences, despite the fact that this is where many in-house audience members will be directing their gaze. The focus is instead on the house and its guests as they ready themselves for the show.

Much has been made by scholars of the special features that often frame theater broadcasts once they officially commence. Some transmissions move swiftly into the production itself, such as the NT's 2014 *King Lear*, which featured only a brief introduction from presenter Emma Freud before going straight to the opening scene, but more often they begin with five to ten minutes of introductory interviews, discussions, and documentary footage. Stephen Purcell and Wyver have noted how these commentaries are frequently at pains to signal a broadcast's liveness; Peter Kirwan has gone further in arguing that they demonstrate "an anxiety over reception" and a corresponding "attempt to ensure interpretation is as homogenous as possible" ("The Impact" 215; "*Hamlet*" 261; "*Coriolanus*" 276). While it's true that this sometimes heavy-handed framing is rather like being forced to read the program before the performance begins, these opening materials do occasionally perform useful work—or, at the very least, provide charming overtures—in terms of introducing offsite viewers to the space, place, and story of the venue. Archival footage of 1950s Stratford-upon-Avon played before RSC Live's 2013 inaugural broadcast of *Richard II*, directed by Gregory Doran, while a short documentary before Josie Rourke's 2014 *Coriolanus* explored the history and theatrical intimacy of the Donmar Warehouse, which was once used as a storeroom for unripened bananas on their way to Covent Garden market stalls. The KBTC's 2015 *The Winter's Tale* and 2016 *Romeo and Juliet* presented audiences with a virtual theater tour, which guided remote viewers from the sidewalk outside the Garrick Theatre in London into its welcoming lobby, illuminated by a sparkling chandelier, and finally towards a plush seat in the dress circle. In each case, such framing contributes to what Janice Wardle has called "the creation of a distinctive and performed

public space” (138). It takes what could be a fairly abstracted notion of a distant performance venue and strives to give it a local habitation and a name.

These pre-show sounds, images, and commentaries start to evoke a sense of place and the kind of theatrical space available within it, but they cannot complete this work on their own. Most fundamental to the understanding of the spatial dynamics within a production is the visual mapping that occurs once the performance actually begins. Most high-end transmissions, including those produced by the NT, RSC, and KBTC, involve six or seven cameras stationed throughout the theater auditorium: two or three are usually placed on tracks in the center and side stalls, allowing them to dolly about 1.5m left-to-right while also zooming and pivoting, while another is mounted on a crane stationed in the center stalls, from whence it can extend over and into the stage space and create dramatic panning shots.¹⁰ Other stationary cameras are located in the stalls and sometimes the circle, with the static feed from latter often resembling the fixed, whole-stage view that has been used for decades to create video records for performance archives.¹¹

Together, these cameras offer a range of perspectives that directors for screen mix in real-time as they produce their own version of what Burton’s contemporaries called “instant movies” (Leff 21). The options available for visual storytelling are numerous, especially if time and money allow for detailed storyboarding and camera rehearsals, as they do with most NT, RSC, and KBTC broadcasts. In such contexts, screen directors make careful decisions about how they will present the world of the stage space to remote audiences. In the RSC’s *Richard II*, for instance, Lough established the scenic landscape of Doran’s production with a dramatic opening sequence: starting with a tightly composed aerial shot of the Duchess of Gloucester collapsed over the shrouded coffin of her husband, the crane-mounted camera pulled slowly back into the downstage space of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, until the edges of its thrust stage and the first fringes of the audience’s faces finally came into view

(fig. 1). Pausing here, the broadcast image offered viewers a straight-on picture of the entire stage, including the image of a church nave projected onto its backdrop and the dozen or so actors assembled for this opening funeral, which does not actually occur in Shakespeare's text. Throughout the scene, which soon became Shakespeare's act one, scene one and its debate between Bolingbroke and Mowbray, the broadcast view rotated between more tightly framed one- and two-shots of the characters who were speaking and looser shots of the wider stage space seen from several different camera angles around the auditorium. **[INSERT FIG. 1]**

Such an open and mixed perspective is not always present in Lough's work. His broadcast of Nicholas Hytner's 2013 *Othello* for the NT, for example, began in darkness with the sound of an electric guitar pulsing, before opening on a brief, high-angled shot of the stage. The picture then quickly switched to a camera looking in at the actors sharply from stage left, almost as if it were situated in the wings. From here it gradually zoomed in on the central characters, Iago and Roderigo, as they lambasted Othello's recent promotion of Cassio. Throughout this three-minute exchange, the visuals remained tightly focused. Though the picture moved across several of the broadcast's seven cameras, often providing a slowed-down version of shot-reverse-shot sequencing—that is, a shot of the speaker looking towards the listener, followed by a shot of the listener looking towards the speaker—it typically cropped the two actors at their chests and always kept them centrally in view (fig. 2). The wider stage picture was implied through the windows and pub sign visible behind these actors, but a clear, open shot of the full scene never appeared. **[INSERT FIG. 2]**

The implications of such differences in style are significant, especially if sustained throughout a broadcast production. Although which approach an audience member will prefer is ultimately down to taste, each establishes a distinctive visual mode that moves towards markedly different forms of spectatorship. The closer, more tightly cropped style of *Othello*

follows a screen grammar familiar from film and especially television, in which constant proximity to actors' bodies and faces is the norm. Through this mode the viewer becomes a tacit member of the conversation depicted, with the visual frame of reference approximating someone's natural field of vision were they part of the discussion. It is an intimate, inclusive, and people-centric point of view, offering free access to the nuances of facial expressions and other markers of psychological inwardness. For many, this immediacy is the primary means by which broadcasts can surpass the in-person theater experience. "The advantage is you can really see the actors, the expressions on their faces, acting even with their eyelids ... which you would never see if you went to the National," one spectator commented in the Arts Council's survey of broadcast audiences (qtd. in "From Live-to-Digital" 60). Likewise, in Barker's research into opera broadcasts, one respondent noted that transmissions are "[b]etter because you're practically there on stage with the singers rather than seeing them from some distance in a live theatre" (qtd. in Barker 63). Sequences like the one at the start of *Othello* help create this feeling of immersion by constantly directing the audience's energy and attention towards the central actors speaking. Though the picture frame might pull out slightly at times, it always circles back in again, hovering around this fixed point of focus and producing what we might call a centripetal form of spectatorship.

Such an observation partially echoes Sarah Bay-Cheng's account of screen drama as an "*introverted* (pulling away from us)" kind of art and theater as an "*extroverted* (coming towards us)" sort of one ("Theatre Squared" 42). In these vectors of inward and outward propulsion, the idea of centripetal and, implicitly, centrifugal ways of seeing finds a parallel and precedent. But whereas Bay-Cheng's discussion of these terms is primarily concerned with the material optics of the camera lens and the way they can unintentionally create a distorted view of the playing space—at least in comparison to what is seen with the naked eye—my focus is on the very deliberate composition, movement, and direction of the camera

frame by the broadcast team. Bay-Cheng's prescient study, published two years before the debut of NT Live, considers "why many recorded versions of theatre seem so anemic compared to their live performances" ("Theatre Squared" 43). The main problem, she suggests, is that the camera that provides a largely static, whole-stage view does not "penetrate" the action and usher the viewer in: "With nothing pulling us in and the performance now retreating from us, the screen version can appear lifeless and stale" ("Theatre Squared" 43) Ten years on, the situation has changed considerably: in broadcasts like this *Othello*, the camera is constantly breaking into the playing space. The result is not so much that the optical view of the performance is "retreating" from the camera frame, but rather that those cameras are pushing the audience forcefully into the scene.¹² For those who relish this mode of spectatorship, the result is an enhanced sense of intimacy with the actors and immersion in the action. For those who do not, the effect is more claustrophobic than anemic.

The opening of *Richard II*, in contrast, offers a much more open and outward approach to displaying theatrical space. The RST's radically thrust stage accounts in part for this mode: with actors positioned in front of one another and audience members on three sides, individually framed shots against an empty backdrop can be harder to come by, and the spatial depth of the blocking can also mean that a wider view is needed to capture all its layers. That said, televisual mid-shots do feature prominently in the presentation of the scene's back-and-forth dialogue, though frequent wide shots of the collective stage space—"so necessary for theatrical communication," in the words of Gay McAuley (191)—offset their inward pull. Each visual cut into the stage is counterbalanced by an eventual shift back, producing a more sweeping, if not quite centrifugal, way of seeing. While the broadcast sequence still heavily directs the audience's gaze, the object of its focus is more varied: inward shots of actors' faces give way to outward views of the entire stage, and glimpses of

in-house audience members also appear. The result, I argue, is a more typically theatrical point of view, in which a close focus on individual performers is underpinned by a steady awareness of the space surrounding them. In this approach to filming, actors are tracked and mapped by the camera rather than firmly framed within it, enabling a more mobile form of spectatorship that attends to movement through space as well as physical and psychological proximity. Stage composition retains greater priority and coherence, with the theatrical *mise-en-scène* encompassing, rather than being overridden by, the cropped perspective of the more filmic close-up.

Live recordings from the Globe, which are typically shown in cinemas the year *after* the stage production's run, offer an interesting counterpoint to the two approaches discussed thus far. While their mode of production is arguably more mediated—each show is filmed on multiple nights and a composite edit of the best takes is made for the final release—their style of filming produces what is arguably the most open and theatrical perspective of all. Unlike live broadcasts at the NT and RSC, these recordings rarely involve cameras on cranes, which are not only costly but also require considerable space to operate. Instead, two cameras located in the sides of the yard, two in the back of the lower gallery, and one in the middle gallery allow a variety of stage views that cut across the theatre from different angles and almost always include the audience. The Globe's use of minimal set pieces and shared light in its outdoor productions also means that much less must be done to accommodate staging and lighting designs (at least until 2016, when a lighting rig was introduced). Although the cameras will have to recalibrate as the evening sun goes down and artificial flood lights come on, the stage they film will on the whole be evenly lit and relatively unobstructed by mobile set pieces. The result is a very continuous, and consequently theatrical, approach to displaying performance on screen.

Take, for instance, the opening of Dominic Dromgoole's 2010 *Henry IV, Part 1*—again directed for camera by Lough—which began with a wide shot of not just the Globe stage but in fact the entire house (fig. 3). From here the frame of vision steadily zoomed in on the stage from the right, and then cut in even more deeply from the left, until King Henry dominated the picture. Throughout this sequence, vast sections of the audience remained in sight, meaning that the theatrical context of the performance was always present for remote viewers. Occasionally the most close-up and straight-on shots did frame the actors against the stage's backdrop and thus omit the audience, but such moments were brief and always returned to a wider, audience-oriented perspective. A technically spare filming aesthetic predominated throughout, more akin to long-take capture than to intricately storyboarded cinema or television. This is not to suggest that no art was on show: camera angles were still chosen and cued, and other interpretive techniques appeared elsewhere. But what is significant, particularly in relation to the start of *Richard II* and especially *Othello*, is the stable and open way in which the Globe's performance space unfolded in these opening minutes. Here the presentation of the theater remained continuous rather than broken-up or zoned, meaning that the relationship between different parts of the stage or between the actors and the audience was never seriously in question. The effect on spectatorship is neither particularly centripetal nor centrifugal: with the geography of performance and reception clearly mapped, remote audiences possess a level of spatial awareness that is comparable, if not exactly identical, to that of their in-house counterparts at the Globe. In this sense Lough's *Henry IV* adheres most closely to the "irreducible distinction" that Susan Sontag makes between theater and cinema: "Theatre is confined to a logical or *continuous* use of space," while cinema thrives on its "alogical or *discontinuous*" presentation (29). [INSERT FIG. 3]

Zoning Space, Zoning Emotion

Once live broadcasts are underway and their venues and stages introduced, it is up to the director for screen to decide what sort of filmography will predominate for the rest of the show. The Globe's *Henry IVs* continued much as they began, adopting a filming style that's not dissimilar to the theater's typical approach to playing: clear, measured, technically spare, simple but hopefully not simplistic. With its more or less fixed backdrop, fluid scene changes, few set pieces, and even lighting, the Globe stage offers a stable and rooted *mise-en-scène* that benefits from a similarly even form of camerawork. Broadcast teams at the NT, RSC, and KBTC, in contrast, work to rather different requirements, with more variable stage spaces, more elaborate equipment, and longer preparation periods often generating more conspicuously filmic results. Here the production process usually includes detailed discussions between the broadcast and stage teams, one or two full camera rehearsals, and the opportunity to script around seven hundred to eight hundred shots in advance.¹³ Such conditions allow screen directors to opt for a more intensely edited and visually guided style of filmmaking, should they wish, which often crops the camera frame more closely around key actors and jumps from character to character in order to create an enhanced sense of intimacy and intensity. One potential downside of such an approach, however, is that it can split the stage into a series of visually disconnected zones that can be difficult for remote audiences to imagine back together. The result, I suggest, is a more decisive move away from traditionally theatrical modes of spectatorship and the visual sense of "being there" that they produce.

The filming of the storm scene in Lough's 2014 *King Lear*, directed by Sam Mendes and starring Simon Russell Beale, offers a helpful illustration. At the close of act two, scene two, just after Cornwall counselled Gloucester to "shut up [his] doors" and "come out o'th' storm," a thunder clap was heard and the lights went almost entirely to black (2.2.481-2).¹⁴ Only Gloucester's back was left in view as he walked upstage and then looked sharply

downstage once again, before running out of frame. From here the camera immediately cut to a distant shot of Kent, also surrounded entirely by black, as he shouted the first line of act three, “Who’s there, besides foul weather?” (3.1.1). The uniformly dark background of the two shots and the almost imperceptible cut between them made it look as if they might in fact be one seamless take, with Gloucester and Kent located in the foreground and background of the same part of the stage. In reality, Kent had entered from a central aisle that cut over the stalls and was now being filmed at a sharp angle from his eventual position stage left. The gentleman to whom he was speaking, who had in turn entered stage right and remained there, was likewise captured solo against a black background that provided little knowledge of where he was positioned on the stage.

This disjointed presentation of space continued in the filming of Lear and the Fool’s dialogue on the heath. As the gentleman narrated the condition of Lear “in his little world of man” (3.1.9), the camera switched to a high-pitched, quasi-aerial shot that showed the king and his fool entering the scene from the central aisle. Slowly the Olivier’s famous drum revolve began to turn and rise, and the two men ascended its slope like a hill. From here the camera steadily zoomed in on Lear and the Fool, until they alone were in view, and this is where it remained for much of Lear’s furious challenge to the heavens that followed. Filmed as a series of two-shots and eventually a waist-up shot of just Lear, the sequence emphasized the imposing presence of the king, whose lines powerfully filled the camera frame (fig. 4). In my experience of watching the production in house at the Olivier, however, I witnessed something less actor-oriented but scenically more spectacular: the sight of Lear and the Fool rising high into the darkness on not just the revolving drum but also a narrow plank attached to it that extended up even further and positioned the men far into the air (some twenty feet, according to the critic Lloyd Evans [“Sam Mendes”]). While in the broadcast it was evident that they were raised, due to the turning of the drum, the close focus meant that it was not

clear just how highly they were elevated or how vulnerable and meagre they looked as they tottered at the far end of their plank. In the Olivier's vast auditorium, Lear's mad rant was shouted almost feebly into a dark, gaping void that seemed poised to consume him. Such moments highlighted the "cosmic scale" and "epic quality" of the set design, which at times aggravated critics (Billington "*King Lear*"; Walker). What was a "huge operatic beast" on stage, however, became a much tamer animal in the broadcast through the drastic tightening of the camera's frame (Lukowski). **[INSERT FIG. 4]**

Briefer instances of such spatial uncertainty can be noted elsewhere in live transmissions. Earlier in this *Lear*, when the enraged king cursed Goneril for her disobedience, shouting, "I am ashamed / That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus..." (1.4.276-77), it wasn't clear until well into the speech whether his daughter had remained on stage. Likewise, in Lough's 2010 *Hamlet* for NT Live, directed by Hytner and starring Rory Kinnear, a close-up on Hamlet for the entire "To be or not to be" speech meant that cinema audiences could not tell at what point Ruth Negga's Ophelia had joined the scene. In Kenneth Branagh's 2013 *Macbeth*, staged in a deconsecrated church in Manchester and filmed by van Someren for NT Live, the introduction of the witches in close-up as they burst through a shuttered frame offered cinema viewers scant information as to where to locate them within this unusual playing space.¹⁵ Individually, such moments proved minor occlusions, but taken together they start to illustrate how more tightly cropped approaches to filming can disrupt forms of spectatorship that attend to space as well as actors. As the geography of performance is increasingly cut up and zoned, audiences' ways of seeing and understanding must change as well. They must either fill in the gaps imaginatively or relinquish the impulse to chart a continuous sense of space.

Ann Martinez has written persuasively on the latter possibility, championing the affordances of a "new mutable digital stage" that the camera "compartmentalizes ... into

various interconnected smaller parts.” For her, this “fluid space” enables a more intense form of spectatorship that is not bound by the fixities of geography. “There is no longer a front, back, or a side to the stage,” she writes, “Instead there are degrees of distance.” The stage from this point of view becomes less rooted and more relational, with geography being calibrated through characters’ emotional arcs rather than through the units of space between them. The camera’s zoning of the stage paradoxically allows for a de-zoning of the auditorium: audiences are released from hierarchical seating plans and instead allowed to experience “the feeling of floating over the stage, in the space of the stage, and through the scene itself.” The result, Martinez argues, is an “omniscient” form of spectatorship that allows audiences to watch not just from different seats in the house, but from parts of the stage that have hitherto been off limits. For her, these perspectives bring with them new understanding, which has the potential to absorb the spectator even more fully than the live, in-person experience.

One of Martinez’s chief examples, the Donmar Warehouse’s 2014 *Coriolanus*, starring Tom Hiddleston and filmed by van Someren for NT Live, offers insight into how the zoning of performance can also occur on an intimate scale. In the cases of *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*, one reason for the camerawork described above was the challenge of filming on vast or unconventional stages. In the Donmar’s 251-seat black box theatre, however, characters were never more than a few meters apart, enabling in principle a more joined-up presentation of the performance space. And yet, the broadcast of this production made heavy use of close-ups and cutting, frequently offering alternating one-shots of a pair of speakers even when they were positioned right next to one another.

In Volumnia and Virgilia’s sewing scene (1.3), for instance, which featured the two women seated side by side, the camera first showed a full, straight-on shot of them together, before moving through a series of tighter, side-long headshots of each individually. The

pair's opening exchange, which in this production ran to about two minutes and included all twenty-five lines of prose from Shakespeare's original text, was presented through eighteen different shots, meaning that on average the camera cut every six to seven seconds or one to two lines. The result was a very mobile and directed form of spectatorship that sculpted new points of access into what was, on the stage, a relatively stationary scene. While such rapidity of cutting is not at all unusual in television or film—in fact, such a pace would likely seem a bit slow—in the theater it marks a major break from how audiences have traditionally watched and apprehended performance (“editing has no true visual parallel in the theatre,” Bay-Cheng has reminded us [“Theatre Squared” 46]). Through frequent editing, characters are not only seen up close, but from a variety of angles that fragment the actor's body into a series of images, often highly emotional, that the viewer collects and mentally layers together. In this *Coriolanus*, the camera frequently jumped between multi-angled close-ups of characters crying, particularly towards the end of the production as Hiddleston's uncommonly tender Caius Martius bid a tearful goodbye to each of his family members.

It's interesting to consider how such cutting—and, in other cases, the absence of it—might be affecting the nature of theatrical spectatorship as experienced through broadcasts. For the British film director Steve McQueen, known for his use of extremely long, stationary takes, such an approach produces a very different way of watching and responding to screen drama. In response to an interview question about a seventeen-and-a-half-minute-long shot in his 2008 film *Hunger*, he described how filmed dialogue that is divided into individual close-ups and reverse-angle shots projects the meeting point of the exchange into the minds of the audience, so that “the conversation is not with the two people having the conversation” but rather “with the audience” (“Steve McQueen”) (fig. 5). The more stationary wide-shot, in contrast, locates the dialogue “with the two people” speaking it, meaning that the audience must “lean in more, and listen more carefully”—essentially, that they must project

themselves into the scene, rather than expecting a more centripetal kind of camerawork to build them into it. For McQueen, this approach to filming creates a greater sense of shared presence between action and reception: when a director “obliterate[s] the frame,” the audience is forced to be “present with that image” and to experience its characters as they are, in both space and time (“Obliterating the Frame”). His comments as a practitioner echo those of André Bazin as a critic, who in the mid-twentieth century famously argued that such shots produce a “deliberately abstract mode of storytelling” that compels spectators to look *into*, rather than *at*, a filmic image (36). Instead of “chopping the world up into little fragments” and “dissolv[ing] it into cinema,” longer takes for Bazin mirror the inscrutable and prismatic “*continuum* of reality,” which demands that observers attend nimbly to its multiple sources of meaning (38, 84). Watching in such cases is most certainly a verb, and a very active one at that. **[INSERT FIG. 5]**

Bazin’s and McQueen’s comments focus specifically on cinema, of course, but in their exploration the phenomenology of spectatorship they hold relevance for broadcast theater, which is still in the process of coming to terms with itself as a genre. When the frame of the camera is heavily present in such films, the experience of theater as a spatial art simultaneously recedes. Heavy and continuous cutting between de-localized and similarly close-up shots creates a mode of storytelling that in many ways “aspire[s] to the condition of television,” or at least television in the twentieth century before it became much more like cinema (Wyver, “*Hamlet*” 262). While these closer views allow audiences thrilling access to the details of an actor’s face, so often taken as the locus of cognitive and emotional life, they also downplay the importance of the rest of the body as a site of expression, as well as the wider choreography between multiple bodies within a playing space.

Such reservations about the use of close-ups do not mean that they have no place in the art of theater broadcasts: as we have already seen, they are among the most prized

viewpoints with cinema audiences, and few, I think, would wish to return to the “funereally slow” filming practices of early broadcast history (Wyver, ““All the Trimmings?”” 107). Rather, it is to consider how close-ups can be imbedded within broadcast storytelling without losing sight—literally—of the wider theatrical experience. Martinez’s work on the subject suggests that perhaps the nature, and indeed the limits, of that experience is changing. With the arrival of broadcast filming comes the opportunity to break apart spatial fixity and create new, more intimate relationships between actors and spectators. An alternative proposition that preserves the experience of both space and intimacy might be the steady intercutting of long-shots with swifter close-ups, offering a dual perspective that is not dissimilar to what audiences have come to expect from televised sports—another arena in which movement through space is of utmost concern.

One further possibility are dynamic panning shots that move from closer to more distant perspectives, and vice versa. In my own review of the RSC’s *Richard II*, I noted the effectiveness of “long tracking shots that started with a tight focus on a particular part of the stage and then slowly opened up to move across and through the wider scenic tableau” (274). Purcell and Pascale Aebischer have emphasized the visual power of the opposite technique, in which a wide-shot slowly closes in on a single character, often as he or she delivers a monologue or soliloquy (“It’s All a Bit”; *Shakespeare, Spectatorship*). In Lough’s *Henry IV, Part 2* for the Globe, for instance, the gradual transition from a full-length shot of Roger Allam’s boisterous Falstaff, audience in view, to a quieter, more tightly focused head and shoulders shot of him alone, enabled the unexpectedly touching delivery of his line, “If I had a thousand sons...” (4.3.118), to come across all the more powerfully on screen. Such a sequence illustrates how a single shot can convey the experience of both space and emotion in a production, and how zones of intensification can be created within a broadcast’s film work while still preserving the traditional geography of the stage. In such instances, the

nature of theatrical spectatorship evolves without entirely breaking apart: dramaturgies of both intimacy and scale find expression through looser and more varied approaches to filming.

Bravura Moments and the Director's Cut

One piece of broadcast equipment that is especially adept at conveying the experience of theatrical space, which can itself be highly affective, is the crane-mounted camera. Although a crane is not always available to broadcast teams, as noted previously, it has become a staple of NT and RSC Live transmissions and has been used to create many of their most dramatic sequences. Capable of extending up to forty-four feet, until its camera is well over the stage, and of rising into the upper reaches of the auditorium, the crane produces “expansive and spectacular shots” that are at once theatrical and cinematic in their scope (Stone 633; Wyver, “Screening the RSC” 293). The breadth and mobility of its view means that a wider sense of the stage space is typically present—hence the theatrical—while the virtuosic sweep and meditative power of its aerial sequences create a visual aesthetic that goes beyond that available in house—hence the cinematic. The combination of these qualities, and the fact that screen directors frequently harness them in self-consciously artful ways, connects them with what Barker has characterized as “bravura moments” in live broadcasts (15).

Nearly every broadcast employing a crane has at least one noteworthy bravura moment that enables a new and more poetic way of seeing. In NT Live's *King Lear*, Gloucester's Dover cliff sequence proved one such instance. In-house audiences at the Olivier watched Stephen Boxer's shuffle towards the edge of a barely elevated incline located center stage, bid farewell to the world, and leap one foot down to what he believed would be his death—resulting in a stage effect that critic Michael Coveney described as “a bit trite.” As

is so often the case, the presentation of this climactic sequence ended up highlighting Gloucester's pitiful and even comic impotence during his moment of darkest despair: a man summons the courage to take his own life, and he ends up falling down no more than a step. The absurdity of the scene is one reason why Jan Kott argued that the play belongs more to the grotesque than the sublime: "A philosophical buffoonery has been performed ... Death is only a performance, a parable, a symbol" (117, 119).

The filming of the sequence for broadcast, however, offered a markedly different view, tipping the presentation away from Kottian "pure theatre" and towards a more Romantic way of seeing. As Gloucester kneeled to speak his final prayer—"O you mighty gods! / This world I do renounce, and, in your sights, / Shake patiently my great affliction off" (4.4.34-36)—the visuals switched to a medium-height shot of the stage from the crane-mounted camera, which then floated majestically towards Gloucester as he uttered what he thought would be his final words. When he came to his line about his son—"If Edgar live, O bless him!" (4.4.40)—the camera paused and then gently began to back out once again, creating the space into which the broken earl would soon jump. The effect of this delicately sweeping crane shot was to draw the audience into Gloucester's anguish and the extraordinary psychological state he was now approaching. The initial height and breadth of the view underscored the smallness of this one man in a brutal world, while its narrowing descent evoked a sense of the vertiginous fall, both terrifying and strangely beautiful, that Gloucester believed awaited him. Through this sequence, viewers were invited to identify imaginatively with Gloucester's tragic situation rather than to observe, in outward terms, its practical absurdities. In this way, the broadcast told the story of the earl's attempted suicide in very different terms: the grander and more directed visual aesthetic produced a sense of awe that was distinctly absent from the stage production.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, many screen directors draw on the crane to help imbue significant moments in a production with a pensive, meditative quality. Aebischer has described how Lough's 2016 *Hamlet* at the RSC, directed by Simon Godwin and starring Paapa Essiedu, used the crane camera's aerial view to evoke the presence of the Ghost, not only during the character's scripted scenes but also at other crucial points in the drama (*Shakespeare, Spectatorship*). Likewise, Lough's 2015 *Othello* for the RSC, directed for stage by Iqbal Khan and starring Hugh Quarshie, switched to the crane camera during some of the production's most distressing sequences, including the torture of an enemy prisoner, Othello's rough handling of Emilia, and, in a different vein, the vulnerability of Desdemona's willow song. The effect was to invite a more reflective mode of watching from the audience that attended not just to the action as it happened, but that stepped back and considered its significance within the structure of the drama as a whole.

One broadcast that made especially frequent use of the crane was Turner and Cumberbatch's *Hamlet* for the Barbican, which was again directed for screen by Lough as part of the NT Live series. As in many of his other broadcasts, Lough cut to the crane view during particularly contemplative moments, but he also defaulted to it on a more regular basis as he and his team worked to tell the story of this production: in other words, it became a tool not just for bravura moments, but for the presentation of the performance throughout. Perhaps this was because of the especially high profile of this production, which from its conception was planned for broadcast; or the particularly grand scale of the Barbican mainstage, which is among the widest in the UK; or indeed the monumentality of Es Devlin's set, which according to some critics dwarfed the actors in a design that "succumbed to ... giantism" (Billington, "*Hamlet*") (fig. 6). Most likely it was a combination of all three, with time, money, and artistry coming together to enable a more crane-oriented and spatially expansive approach to filming. **[INSERT FIG. 6]**

Particularly notable was the use of this crane during almost all scene changes. In stark contrast to Lough's broadcast of the National's 2010 *Hamlet*, which "minimized the theatricality of the scene changes" by "featur[ing] a close-up of a character against a dark ground and then reveal[ing] a new configuration of the setting at the start of the next scene," the screen director's 2015 Barbican *Hamlet* consistently presented changeovers from a wide and mobile view (Wyver, "*Hamlet*" 262). With Devlin's decadent and decaying palace as a fixed backdrop, actors and stagehands regularly moved tables, chairs, a piano, a miniature stage, and other set pieces around between scenes. During these transitions, the crane-mounted camera hovered and swooped over the stage, taking in the elaborate choreography of the changeover and attending to the interactions between characters that occurred in the process.

After Hamlet's encounter with his father's ghost, for instance, and his declaration that he would "put an antic disposition on" (1.5.173), the stage was repopulated with domestic objects while Cumberbatch's prince, located at a distance to the left of the camera frame, began rifling through a chest filled with children's costumes. As he did so, Ophelia came to him and laughed at what seemed like a game, before Hamlet frantically whispered in her ear and turned her expression to astonishment: in this production, Hamlet confided in Ophelia about the ghost and his own plan to feign madness, which she then literally helped him "put on" in the form of a toy soldier costume. When in the immediately following scene Ophelia described Hamlet's "unbraced" and "ungartered" appearance to her father, she seemed to be making the encounter up at her lover's behest. By regularly using the crane to film complex sequences like the one described above, Lough managed to capture both the theatrical scale and performative detail of the production's scene changes, which contributed in equal measure to the dramaturgy of this *Hamlet*. Such technique helped move the broadcast from one punctuated by bravura moments to one characterized by bravura filming throughout.

Filming with an eye for detail—especially details of directorial interpretation—is the final point that this article will address in its exploration of the art of theater broadcasting. Of course, all the approaches to filming that have been discussed so far are concerned with performance details, but what particularly interests me here is the way the camera can underscore key moments in a director’s unique reading of a play. In doing so, it can help ensure an intended way of seeing in the theater that, paradoxically, might not always be available in person. Turner’s depiction of a particularly supportive and mutual relationship between Hamlet and Ophelia is case in point: in addition to suggesting that Ophelia (played by Sian Brooke) was possibly in on Hamlet’s act, this production had her attempt to write a note to Hamlet during the nunnery scene that warned him that they were being watched. The camera took care to pause over this moment, emphasizing for remote viewers a brief action that could have easily been missed by audiences in an auditorium the size of the Barbican’s. Such details helped prime cinema viewers for the total and unbeautified devastation of Ophelia in act four, who in her mad scenes appeared with a clump of hair missing, spoke snatches of Hamlet’s lines about her father’s dead body, and walked slowly upstage towards death in an exit that was monumental, harrowing, and deliberate—“the production’s most unexpectedly moving moment,” in the words of the critic Paul Taylor. Lough’s careful attention in showing the small but important details that built towards this scene helped foreground Turner’s unique reading of the tragedy of Ophelia, made all the more significant by the fact that Turner is one of very few female directors to produce this play for a major British stage.

A similar underscoring of directorial vision through filmic technique can be seen in other live broadcasts. In my review of *Richard II*, I noted how the camera emphasized the significance of a furtive kiss between Richard and Aumerle in act three, scene three, thereby establishing a dramatic undercurrent that culminated in the production’s final *coup de*

théâtre: the murder of the king by his would-be lover (274-75). Another RSC project, Khan's 2015 *Othello*, likewise illustrates how a broadcast's approach to filming can enhance a company's vision for a stage production. In this case, the reading originated not just with the director but also with Quarshie, the lead actor, who in years past had famously denounced the play for what he saw as its capitulation to racial prejudice: "Shakespeare did not explode but exploit the convention of the barbarous Moor ... [he] seems to suggest that [Othello's] colour and his race explain his credulity, his jealousy, and his violence" (14, 19-20). For Quarshie, the history of performing Othello was dangerously interwoven with the history of a damaging stereotype, and for this reason he had avoided the role throughout his career. When he at last decided to take it on as part of Khan's production, which also featured another actor of color, Lucian Msamati, in the role of Iago, it was important both to him and his director that this Othello was not presented as a gullible dupe manipulated by passion, but rather as a hardened and intimidating military general who always had his wits about him.

This interpretation of Othello's character was reflected in subtle performance choices that didn't always read within the large space of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, but that signaled very clearly within the filming of the broadcast. One of the most striking insertions in this "superbly ominous" production was a scene of torture at the end of act two that depicted Othello's soldiers brutalizing a shrieking man who was bound and hooded (Kirwan, "*Othello*"). In house at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, the extent to which Othello was complicit in this sequence remained unclear: with the audience's attention consumed so fully and unexpectedly by the graphic violence depicted center stage, it was difficult to observe, let alone interpret, what exactly he was doing as he circled the fringes of the action while reading a dossier, almost as if he were in a different scene. In the live broadcast, an emphatic one-shot of Othello in the middle of the sequence and then another at the end relayed the fact that he was both present and in charge of this ruthless interrogation, which he eventually

called off with a wave of his arm. Such moments revealed Quarshie's Othello as a commander who had an aptitude for violence from the start, rather than a naïve lover who was rashly drawn into murder.

Not all of Quarshie's performance choices dealt in violent aggression, however; for much of the production, his Othello was a noticeably subdued and stoical presence, inclined more to cerebral deliberation than passionate eruptions. In his desire to move away from an understanding of Othello as an excessively emotional man, Quarshie presented his character as "a calm, unflappable elder statesman" who very cautiously chose how to carry out his vengeance (Cowie). Within such a large auditorium, however, a few of Quarshie's more nuanced choices failed to carry, particularly in a final death sequence that some critics characterized as "sluggish" and "flat" (Cowie; Shuttleworth). The night I saw the production in person, Quarshie's Othello came off as strangely wooden and even affectless in this climactic scene, to the extent that when Desdemona finally realized the gravity of her situation, pleading, "not yet to die," his coolly sardonic delivery of Othello's response, "Ay, presently," was met with nervous laughter from the audience (5.2.56-57). In the broadcast, however, Quarshie's quiet and contained performance became much more intelligible (fig. 7). Here, small movements in his eyes and strain in his brows registered clearly and painfully, relaying the depth of thought that underpinned this final, violent act, and the anguish that came with it. Quarshie's skill in acting for the camera, honed for many years through his work on British television and in film, served him well in such moments: while the nuances of his interpretation were not always legible at a distance for in-house audiences at the RSC, on screen these details gave life to his revisionist reading of Othello and contributed powerfully to the complex treatment of both character and race in Khan's production.

[INSERT FIG. 7]

In such instances we can see how the theatrical vision of the stage director is not just honored but in fact emphasized by the skill of the screen director, who carefully plots the production's key moments into a film produced in real-time. It is important that we avoid taking for granted the creative and technical artistry involved in such a process: as we have seen through the examples discussed in this article, what ends up in or out of a broadcast is by no means inevitable. Just as directors, actors, and designers on stage make a series of deliberate choices about how the story of their drama will be told, broadcast directors and their teams work hard to convey on screen the essential components of a production and, at times, to interpret them. Such interpretations may be taken as improvements or diminutions, according to individual preference, but either way they represent distinctive interventions worthy of note and analysis. While it's understandable that theaters might want to emphasize the similarity between a stage production and its broadcast, the latter is less a "facsimile" of the in-person performance than a dynamic version of it. It offers an experience of a production that encompasses many points of view while inevitably excluding others: it is at once theatrical, televisual, and filmic, and while it can never stand as the sole and definitive account of a production, no single performance ever really can.

For as all of us who go to the theater know, there is always more than one way of seeing a complex, collaborative, and changeable artistic event. As this article has attempted to illustrate, certain approaches to filming can better enable the kinds of spectatorship typically practiced within the theater. Attending carefully to dramaturgies of space alongside those of psychology and emotion is perhaps the most powerful way in which a broadcast can produce a visual sense of "being there" akin to that experienced in the theater. Though audiences are not present in the flesh inside the auditorium, they still apprehend the performance in a spatially comprehensive and emotionally involving manner—or, to put it another way, in addition to being able to discuss in detail the tears in a performer's eyes, they could also draw

a map of the stage and roughly outline the actor's blocking within it. This isn't to suggest, however, that broadcasts do not possess their own unique potential to do something markedly different from the live performance, either in going beyond it or in failing to capture all its glories. Much can be missed, but pleasures are also to be gained: we can peer into the eyes of a masterful actor, step back and appreciate the impact of a beautifully designed stage, or find texture in a performance that in person might fall flat. Some audience members will no doubt prefer different views and techniques above others, but one important point can be generalized: broadcasts offer audiences artful, varied, engrossing, and affective ways of seeing theater—and, indeed, of “being there.” Over the past decade, they have radically redefined who can see a stage production and how. They are rarely perfect, but few nights at the theater ever are.

Notes

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² This figure and those that follow include takings for both live and “as live” broadcasts, sometimes known as “encore” performances. Regions in time zones distant from the UK rarely if ever get simultaneous broadcasts from the NT or elsewhere. Instead, transmissions are shown at a delay that can be as little as a few hours and as many as several months depending on local cinema schedules, distribution arrangements, and audience demand. In the

interest of brevity I will use the term “live broadcast” to refer both to temporally live and delayed screenings, though I recognize that each can result in different kinds of audience experience.

³ Research into the wide spectrum of theater broadcasting is forthcoming in a collection edited by Aebischer, Greenhalgh, and Osborne.

⁴ See, for instance, Battersby; Billington, “Let’s Stop”; Cornford; Freestone; and Gardner, “Benedict Cumberbatch’s *Hamlet*,” “Live Screenings,” “To Beam,” and “Why Digital,” as well as the comments sections following them.

⁵ See also Cochrane and Bonner and Wardle in *Adaptation*’s 2014 special issue on live broadcasting and the reviews in *Shakespeare Bulletin*’s 2015 special section on the subject, guest-edited by Greenhalgh. In addition to Aebischer, Greenhalgh, and Osborne’s edited collection, extensive research into the subject is forthcoming in Aebischer, *Shakespeare, Spectatorship* and a co-authored book by Buchanan and Wyver.

⁶ See, for instance, Aebischer *Screening* 179-84; Auslander 10-24; Bay-Cheng, “Theatre Squared,” “Unseen”; McAuley; and Wyver ““All the Trimmings?”” 108-10.

⁷ See Buchanan and Leff for more on Electrovision and *Hamlet*.

⁸ For one discussion of these statistics, see Stone 636-37.

⁹ All the broadcasts discussed in this article were either seen in the cinema (live or as live), viewed on DVD (RSC, Globe) or in the archives (NT), or a combination of both. In some cases I was also able to see the productions live on stage and to consult archived shooting scripts (NT).

¹⁰ These premium broadcasts come at a price: reports on their total cost range from £150,000-£500,000 (Trueman; “From Live-to-Digital” 40, 117).

¹¹ More detailed accounts of the positioning of RSC Live cameras and the process used to film with them can be found in Wyver “Screening the RSC Stage” and Aebischer, *Shakespeare, Spectatorship*.

¹² As Aebischer has noted in *Shakespeare, Spectatorship*, the variety of camera lenses used in recent live broadcasts can create visual optics different from those described by Bay-Cheng.

¹³ In the archived shooting scripts for NT Live Shakespeare broadcasts through 2015, the number of camera cues range from 645 (*All’s Well That Ends Well* in 2009) to 877 (*Hamlet* in 2010). Wyver has indicated through personal communication that this is broadly comparable to the number of shots in RSC broadcasts (“Re: No Subject”).

¹⁴ “References to Shakespeare’s text are transcriptions from the productions themselves. Corresponding line references are included from the *Oxford Shakespeare*, 2nd ed.

¹⁵ As one would expect, the NT Live series is mostly made up of productions from the National Theatre itself, but occasionally it also includes high-profile productions from other UK theaters.

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