A Book History Study of Michael Radford's Filmic Production
William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice

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ABSTRACT

Falling within the ambit of the Department of English Literature but with interdisciplinary scope and method, the research undertaken in this thesis examines Michael Radford's 2004 film production *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* using the Book History approach to textual study. Previously applied almost exclusively to the study of books, Book History examines the text in terms of both its medium and its content, bringing together bibliographical, literary and historical approaches to the study of books within one theoretical paradigm. My research extends this interdisciplinary approach into the filmic medium by using a modified version of Robert Darnton's "communication circuit" to examine the process of transmission of this Shakespearean film adaptation from creation to reception.

The research is not intended as a complete Book History study and even less as a comprehensive investigation of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*. Rather, it uses a Shakespearean case study to bring together the two previously discrete fields of Book History and filmic investigation. Drawing on film studies, literary concepts, cultural and media studies, modern management theory as well as reception theories and with the use of both quantitative and qualitative data, I show Book History to be an eminently useful and constructive approach to the study of film.

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DECLARATION

This Master of Arts thesis consists entirely of my own work, and acknowledgement is given in the references wherever information is derived from another source. No part of this work has been or is being concurrently submitted for another qualification at another university.

SIGNED..... DATE: 15 March 2008

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INTRODUCTION

> There has never been a major feature film of *The Merchant of Venice* and given the sensitivity of the play's subject matter, it is very unlikely that one will ever be made.
>
> ─ Charles Edelman (2002, 86)

Contrary to Edelman's assertion above, William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice,* written in 1596, has been the subject of several films since the emergence of cinema. The first was a silent film by Lois Weber (1914), and since then there have been at least seven different film adaptations of *The Merchant of Venice,* the most recent being Michael Radford's production (2004).[1] While the mainstream status of the earlier films can be questioned in terms of their intended recipients, this latter production is undoubtedly a major feature film intended for the wider film-viewing public. Radford's film, *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice,* forms the subject for the larger project of this thesis, which involves exploring the possibilities that Book History[2] theory and methodology provide for the study of film and other 'non-book' texts.

It is important to distinguish the mode of investigation used to study Radford's production in this thesis from the multitude of other approaches, commentaries, literary critiques, and filmic interrogations of *The Merchant of Venice*. The different methodologies of these prior studies have raised important questions concerning the translation of the play into film and the presentation of the film itself. Some of the questions raised include the differences between filmed and staged Shakespeare, the benefits which the institutions of both Shakespeare and cinema gain from film and what it means to author a filmic text. Further concerns arise with regards to the extent to which Radford's 2004 film *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* represents Shakespeare's vision of the play on the one hand, and that of the director, actors and other agents involved in its production on the other. Additional issues to be interrogated include the depiction of the main concerns of the film, for example the religious attitudes of the society that produced the film; the bibliographical aspects of *The Merchant of Venice* and its relevance to the study of film; and an evaluation of the cinema audience in terms

[1] A complete table of filmic adaptations of *The Merchant of Venice* can be seen in Chapter 5 of this thesis.
[2] Capitalization of 'Book History' will be used throughout this thesis to indicate that this is a disciplinary approach to textual study.

of the reception of this production. These concerns form the basis of the exploration to be carried out in this thesis, and each chapter will explore a different aspect of the film.
Previous scholarly investigation of these concerns has taken place in different disciplinary backgrounds using various different approaches. Such a variety of questions have never before been tackled within the space of a single study, and thus the literature review is divided amongst different fields.

William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice could be legitimately studied from a number of different perspectives. It could be examined within the field of film studies, as part of the study of Shakespeare in a literature course or within the context of a multi-media investigation into different media used to portray Shakespeare. It is of interest to scholars specialising in adaptations, those concerned with filmic techniques and those wishing to consider the different impacts of staged and filmed productions of a script from the perspective of an audience. The film *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* might equally be seen as an artefact of contemporary culture from an anthropological viewpoint as a mode of transmitting social values – and thus relevant to a sociological study – or even as a case example for religious studies focusing on attitudes towards Judaism or the impact of religious intolerance on society. Each of these disciplines and approaches brings something unique and relevant to the study of the film.

The importance of each of these different approaches to the study of the film is that they are not mutually exclusive questions to be tackled from a single perspective, but that each study may have relevance and value for the others. So too, the materiality of the text, its content, and the social and economic conditions in which it was produced are interdependent. However, it is precisely this variety of question that makes it almost impossible to house a complete study of such a film in a single discipline while still retaining the value imbued by all the disciplinary approaches.

The use of a single approach is inadequate for the comprehensive study of literary texts (as an analysis of their multi-faceted nature will show), and an exciting solution has been developed from within literary studies that allows for a thorough investigation of texts from within a single discipline. The Book History approach, which constitutes the theoretical background of this thesis, is an attempt by scholars to bring together the disparate approaches to the study of books – in the widest possible sense, as material and as social entities – into a single

discipline for more effective investigation. The aim of this thesis is to extend this interdisciplinary approach into the area of film study. Using Book History to approach a filmic text will bring together the disparate work of various film, literary, bibliographic and other scholars into a broader framework for understanding *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* as a social and cultural product, assessing the value of all aspects of the text from its success as a film to the impact of its medium.

This thesis seeks to extend the methodology and insights provided by Book History to Radford's 2004 film version of *The Merchant of Venice*. It does not attempt to provide a complete Book History study of the film, but rather to present examples of what such a Book History study may examine and reveal, and so unveil the possibilities of the application of Book History to filmic texts. The methodology used by Book Historians involves the examination of a text from its conception to its reception, focussing on the context of this process of transmission; its historical setting; and the social, political and economic factors acting upon it. Thus, an exhibition of such inclusivity is one of the goals of this thesis.

Chapter One explores the broader project of Book History, explaining the key concepts and methods it uses to illuminate previously un(der)-examined aspects of the book as both artefact and literary product within a context of production and reception and to explore the effects of social, cultural and economic factors. As a relatively new academic project, Book History is not without internal contradictions and at times lacks clarity about its own underpinnings and direction. To avoid these problems, the roots of the Book History movement will be explored. Chapter One will examine the work of Book History pioneers such as D.F. McKenzie, Robert Darnton and Jerome McGann. This chapter also explores some of the key concepts for Book Historians such as 'text', 'medium' and 'mediation'. Having examined the definitions of the basic 'units' of analysis, the chapter turns to Robert Darnton's "Communication Circuit" (Darnton 2002, 27), which identifies the various stages and participants in the processes of the production and consumption of books as a framework for analysing Radford's filmic production *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice.*

The second chapter shifts the focus of Book History to the medium of film. Just as Book History has extended the possibilities for the study of written texts, so the theory and methodologies involved can enhance the study of filmic texts. By incorporating a variety of different approaches to filmic scholarship, the investigation of filmic texts can be improved by

an interdisciplinary perspective. Chapter Two proceeds to explore how Darnton's Communication Circuit may be applied to film. This application, using a model modified for the study of film, allows the specific complexities of authorship, production, distribution and reception in film to be explored as aspects of the transmission of text.

The third chapter is best read as a response to the gaps in Darnton's framework for Book History investigation. One major criticism of Darnton is that his circuit explores the process of transmission of the book but not its literary content, thus assuming that books are homogenous entities, all capable of being studied in the same way: through the agents involved in their transmission rather than through the content and the objects themselves. The Book History approach to textual investigation pays special attention to the materiality of a text and the effect of the textual medium on its creation, production, transmission and reception. This chapter thus explores part of the history of Shakespeare in film, examining both the conventions that have emerged in filmed Shakespeare, and how these relate to the conventions of staged Shakespeare. In exploring these conventions it is important to unpack some of the content of the text itself: a project that is usually within the realm of traditional film studies and includes the various themes, plot elements, and film techniques that the text uses or explores. In doing so the differences and similarities between filmic and staged interpretations of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* are laid out. Features peculiar to the film version, which are usually only explored within film studies, provide tools for analysis within the broader project of Book History studies. By exploring this textual version of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* within the broader context of the adaptation, this chapter will also examine Radford's production in terms of its medium, including the unique features that film brings to the Shakespearean text. *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* will also be analysed in terms of the modes of communication with the audience that it utilises and the generic conventions that are evidenced in the film.

Authorship is a key concept in both conventional literary studies and traditional film theory, and thus also one of the significant underpinnings of Book History studies. An exploration of authorship in the context of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* forms the basis of Chapter Four. In the case of film, the playwright, screenwriter, director, producer, production company and the leading actors in the film all have claims to authorship: although their claims are not all equal. The nature of authorship is complex and influenced both by

convention and by social, economic and cultural factors, some of which will be examined in this chapter both through traditional understandings of authorship and the use of the *auteur theory*: the predominant model of authorship in film studies. Both these approaches credit a single creative agent as the driving force behind the production of the text. Three different authorial influences on Radford's filmic adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* are examined: that of the original author of the play, William Shakespeare; the film's director, Michael Radford; and actor Al Pacino's authorship-through-dramatic-interpretation of the character of Shylock. The role of each of these authorial acts is explored, as are their positions with regards to the social influences on the text.

The fifth chapter explores the social context and process of production of Radford's *William Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice*. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's discussion of power in the context of production, this chapter examines part of the history of productions of *The Merchant of Venice*, discussing in particular the religious forces that may have affected the production of this film in the twenty-first century. I also consider the tension between economic and political influences on the making of the film and the artistic intentions of the film's creators. The cultural capital constituted by "William Shakespeare" plays a pivotal role in the production of Radford's *The Merchant of Venice*, and the social impact of this will be discussed. This chapter will also compare the production budgets and other production details with those of other films from the same period and other Shakespearean film adaptations to provide a context for the production for the *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*. The films to be used in this comparison can be seen in the Table: Introduction.1 below.

Movie Name	**Director**	**Opening**	**Main Actors**	
William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice	Michael Radford	02 January 2005	Al Pacino	Jeremy Irons
Romeo and Juliet	Baz Luhrmann	01 November 1996	Leonardo DiCaprio	Claire Danes
Hamlet 200	Michael Almereyda	12 May 2000	Kenneth Branagh	Richard Briers
A Midsummer Night's Dream	Michael Hoffman	14 May 1999	Kevin Kline	Michelle Pfeiffer
Much Ado About Nothing	Kenneth Branagh	07 May 1993	Kenneth Branagh	Emma Thompson
Titus	Julie Taymor	25 December 1999	Anthony Hopkins	Jessica Lange
Pride and Prejudice	Joe Wright	11 November 2005	Keira Knightley	Donald Sutherland
Shrek 2	Andrew Adamson	19 May 2004	Mike Myers	Cameron Diaz
The Bourne Supremacy	Paul Greengrass	23 July 2004	Matt Damon	Franka Potente

Table: Introduction.1: Comparative Films

The films listed above are compared to *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* in either genre or period. The five Shakespearean adaptations are used to provide contrasts within

the context of the Shakespearean film production; *Pride and Prejudice* is a modern adaptation of another literary text; while *Shrek 2* and *The Bourne Supremacy* are the best-selling films of the same time of release as *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, according to international Box Office data. These films will be used for comparative purposes in Chapters Six and Seven to provide an understanding of the distribution and reception of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*.

Chapter Six examines the distribution of Radford's *Merchant of Venice*, both screened on the theatre circuit and in video and Digital Video Disk (DVD) format. Using contemporary marketing theory, this chapter will examine the distribution of the film as a product, and examine the process in terms of Philip Kotler's "4 Ps" – price, product, place and promotion – the four strategic marketing areas of product distribution (Kotler 2000). This chapter will analyse a number of different locations and types of distribution: general distribution in the United States of America; the distribution companies that released *The Merchant of Venice*; the release dates of the film; the screenings at the Venice and Toronto Film Festivals; and the distribution of *The Merchant of Venice* for home entertainment on video, DVD and on the internet. Although *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* is a feature film designed for cinema, its most popular mode of distribution is in a format suitable for private viewing. In exploring the modes of distribution of film-as-text, this chapter applies Darnton's Communication Circuit to film. The fact that film has so many different avenues of distribution, and that the traditional forms of filmic distribution such as cinematic release are less popular than newer forms such as internet rental, provides a fertile ground for the application of Book History.

The relationship between a product and its consumer is central to the understanding of any text and in the seventh chapter this relationship is examined. Chapter Seven highlights the relationship between *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* and the viewer: both 'expert' and 'ordinary'. The distinction between the 'expert' film critic and the ordinary viewer provides a useful entry point into a discussion on viewership in which the distinctions in reception between these two groups are highlighted. Chapter Seven is the final chapter of the thesis, which looks at a previously under-examined area of reception studies: the reception of the film by the ordinary viewer as opposed to the critic. An impression of the film's reception by the public is obtained using quantitative data from online polls and qualitative data gathered from viewer-response websites.

In Act 1 Scene 5 of *The Merchant of Venice*, Antonio proclaims: "I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano/A stage, where every man must play a part" (Act 1 Scene 5 Line 4). This statement reflects the philosophy upon which Book History rests: that the film production should be considered holistically like 'the world'; and the processes of its creation, reception and transmission like 'a stage' in which every agent and influential factor in the process plays a role. By acknowledging the various roles played by each agent in the processes of creation, dissemination and reception of the text – the author, director, actors, and even the critics and scholars that investigate the work – Book History shifts the understanding of the text (both written and performed) away from a singular focus on an individual incarnation of a work towards a broader understanding that each version of the text exists within a context, and each version contributes to the history of the whole. In this case *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* exists within the history of Shakespeare's script *The Merchant of Venice* as well as in the context of modern film production. Thus, this thesis involves an exploration in holistic film studies building on the pioneering work done by Book Historians with regards to both the content and the materiality of texts. Book History shows that both aspects are interrelated. Content is directly shaped by the processes involved in the production of the physical artefact of the text, and the physical presentation and materiality of the text is largely dependent on its content. The two aspects are so intertwined that to explore them separately compromises the investigation.

This thesis is not intended to constitute a comprehensive study of either Book History or Michael Radford's *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*. Rather, the niche it fills is in the bringing of these two previously discrete fields of study together, thereby adapting a previously literary-based methodology to film, and simultaneously imaginatively exploring the film in question.

Chapter 1

WHAT IS BOOK HISTORY?

> *'Histoire du livre'* in France, '*Gesichte des Buchwesens*' in Germany, 'history of books' or 'of the book' in English-speaking countries – its name varies from place to place, but everywhere it is being recognized as an important new discipline
>
> ─ Robert Darnton (2002, 9)

Book History is a relatively new field of study that derives from more established disciplines such as bibliography, history, statistics, linguistics, sociology and, of course, the study of literature (Price 2007[3]). It is a mode of textual exploration which seeks to extend the scholarship of textual investigation while drawing on the established foundations that these different disciplines have described. Book Historians ask questions such as: 'What is the impact of a book on society (and vice-versa), and how does that impact manifest itself in society?' (Finkelstein and McCleery 2005, 15). Book History examines the different stages of the book's existence: its creation, distribution, and reception; as well as the various factors and agents involved in these processes. This exploration of the book is premised on an understanding of its multiple identities: a book is a physical object, a treasured artefact, a conveyor of ideas and ideologies, a consumable product and an exchangeable commodity. In undertaking such an investigation, it is important to bear in mind the complexity of the concepts of 'text' and 'medium', 'transmission' and 'mediation'. The processes by which a book is created and consumed as well as the different facets of the physical object itself are steeped in this complexity. Book Historians therefore operate across a number of different disciplines using a variety of methodologies. This chapter will look at the historical pedigree of Book History, examining its roots in the work of the 'new' bibliographers and the French *Annales* School of historians. It will also explore the scope of the field – which is influenced heavily by Jerome McGann and Don McKenzie – and an example of a Book History study in the form of Robert Darnton's "communication circuit".

[3] Throughout this thesis, page numbers of citations will be given where applicable and possible. The absence of a page number denotes an internet source, interview or other such reference, where numbering is not possible.

The interdisciplinary nature of Book History makes it both a remarkable and a challenging new development for literary scholars. By examining aspects of the book beyond its content – its authorship, the reception of the book by the reader, production values and design, and the socio-economic factors surrounding its production – Book History often requires that scholars venture into terrain beyond their immediate competence and necessitates an interdisciplinary understanding (Price 2007, 3). Paradoxically, then, Book History both pushes the boundaries of traditional disciplines by requiring that scholars explore the interconnectedness of these approaches yet also decreases the extent to which these scholars are able to engage in such an analysis. As Price points out "Book Historians need performance in fields where they do not have competence" (2007, 3).

Book History is premised on the understanding that human beings value not only the literary and factual subject material contained within our books, but the materiality of the artefact and the relation between the presentation of the artefact and its content. The fact that a collection of papyrus manuscripts was established in the Royal Library of Alexandria as early as 300BC, for instance, reveals the long history of the appreciation of the physical entity of the text as an item worthy of collection. The book has been valued as an artefact beyond its content possibly for as long as it has been in existence. The nature of the worth placed on books, then, determines how we undertake to study them. Literary critique of the content of books, for example, stems from the value placed on the literary content of books: their style, imagery, form and lyric. Similarly, analytical bibliography evaluates books according to the authenticity of the authorship and integrity of original text, while marketing studies value books as commodities of economic worth and so strive to maximise retail. These approaches differ according to the aspect of the book that is valued. This division between fields, however, ignores their interconnectedness through their engagement with one entity: the book. It is this predicament – interdisciplinary complexity – that Book History seeks to address: to bring within one ambit the various methodologies and theories of study of the different aspects of the book in order to show that, far from being autonomous, these aspects shape one another, making investigation within a single discrete field a limited approach to the study of the book.

The Roots of Book History

Studies encompassing aspects of what is now termed Book History began to emerge in the late nineteenth century, when scholars began to question the relationship between the creation of

literary works and their content, and the role of the author-studies in establishing the authenticity of a text. The debate that arose led to the emergence of the field of analytic bibliography. Finkelstein and McCleery describe this domain of textual criticism as "traditionally deal[ing] with the recession of manuscripts in order to produce the most complete and least corrupted version of the text possible" (Finkelstein and McCleery 2006, 2). Scholars such as McKerrow (1927), Bowers (1949) and Greg (1966) all pioneered the application of bibliographic analysis to the conventional printed book. These scholars – often described as 'New Bibliographers' because of their fresh approach to textual study[4] – viewed the processes of production (that is, printing, proof-reading, formatting, editing, design and so on) as 'corrupting' the original text because each stage altered the original work of the author. The different facets of production were thus submitted to careful scrutiny in an attempt to distinguish the influence of mediating agents – the printers, editors, proof-readers and type-setters - from the original intentions of the author. Thus, the material aspects of a text – ink, paper, type-setting - were scrutinised in an attempt to find the original or 'most authentic' version of the work. By analysing the material embodiment of the text, the followers of New Bibliography attempted to identify and differentiate the most 'authentic' version of a text as possible from the 'corrupted' versions. As Greg describes it, bibliography became "the science of the material succession of literary documents" (1966, 194). In studying this succession, the New Bibliographers documented the manner in which books were produced and presented at different time periods and in different contexts, inciting a scholarly interest in the physical presentation of the book as a means of ascertaining its legitimacy, or at least its originality. Two important elements of bibliographic study have been inherited by Book History: firstly, the recognition that a book is the result of what Finkelstein and McCleery term a 'collaborative process' and secondly, a detailed, generalised system for describing books based on their production attributes in addition to the more usual descriptions relating to their contents (Finkelstein and McCleery 2002, 2).

While New Bibliography provides a valuable contribution to Book History, there are certain limitations to the former approach that need to be overcome in the latter. The Bibliographers' belief that they could access an 'uncorrupted' version of a text by uncovering the

[4] Again, the name of a school of scholarship is capitalized. New Bibliography can be distinguished from previous schools in bibliographical studies by its emphasis on the materiality of texts, and the 'scientific' approach that was taken in this study – particularly the emphasis on cultivating objective criteria for measuring the 'authenticity' of works.

material alterations to its first form fails to acknowledge how the physical factors of production that 'corrupted' the original text are embedded in a social context. Don McKenzie, in his essay 'Printers of the Mind' (1969), argues that the social conditions surrounding a text affect its meaning, and the study of texts must therefore involve issues external to pure textual meaning (McKenzie 1969). McKenzie later contends: "[m]eanings are not...inherent [in texts] but are constructed by successive interpretive acts by those who write, design and print books, and by those who buy and read them" (2002, 261).

One of McKenzie's greatest contributions to the discipline of Book History is the broadening of traditional Anglo-American bibliographical approaches to textual investigation and meaning-making by drawing attention to the revolution in textual interpretation pioneered by the French *Annales* School. The *Annalistes* enhanced the study of books by focusing on the socioeconomic patterns of production and consumption over long stretches of time, and their analysis was applied to literature by Febvre and Martin (1958) and Robert Escarpit (1965). Their methodology was predominantly quantitative, including statistical inquiries into common patterns of consumption. By applying quantitative social history methods to the patterns of literary production and consumption, the *Annalistes* showed that there was no reason to be confined by the boundaries of the literary discipline in the study of texts. Rather, they employed a wide range of methods to produce comprehensive evaluations of patterns in textual production and reception. This led McKenzie to note that a truly historical approach to bibliography must acknowledge a tension between the primacy and the relative stability of the kind of hard physical evidence we are used to calling 'bibliographical' and the unstable nature of texts themselves, whether because of the different media by which they are transmitted, the frequency and indeterminacy of their multiple metamorphoses, or the precise nature of their reception and interpretation (1969, 269).

Drawing on American and British scholarship, continental tradition and disciplines as varied as New Bibliography and the quantitative social history of the *Annalistes*, Book History is as diverse in its historical origins as it is in its modern day applications. The work of Book History, while broad in scope and method, reframes the study of the book in three main ways: it considers the text; the medium and, increasingly, the mediation of the Book; or the manner and means though which the physical artefact is created, produced, distributed and consumed. These

aspects – central to the Book History project, yet nonetheless contested – are discussed in greater detail below.

Text

According to Jerome McGann, "[n]o subject is more fundamental to literary and cultural studies than the subject of 'the text'" (McGann 1983, 3). Yet, textual theory and the debate around the meaning and utility of the concept of a 'text' are fraught with controversy. For example, while some see texts as physical objects, others conceive of only a series of signs and symbols that convey meaning unrelated to the medium that allows them to exist. Finkelstein and McCleery's approach to texts in their *Introduction to Book History*, for example, represents an extreme position:

> A text is a written document which is read. But a text has to have some physical form. That form can be a wide range of media – from print in books, magazines, newspapers, to online web pages. The functions of all such texts... [might be] to communicate information, to narrate and to entertain (Finkelstein and McCleery 2006, 2).

Such an understanding points to three key components in a text – a form, medium (in the limited sense of books, magazines and web-pages) and function – and limits text to printed media. At the opposite extreme, McKenzie provides an inclusive definition of texts, which are seen to include:

> …verbal, visual, oral, and numeric data, in the form of maps, prints, and music, of archives of recorded sound, of films, videos, and any other computer-stored information, everything in fact from epigraphy to the latest forms of discography (McKenzie 1986, 5).

This definition focuses on the form of a text in terms of its physical presentation and the medium in which it is housed. McKenzie's definition suggests that any activity involving 'reading' implies the presence of a text. Taken to an extreme that McKenzie would not necessarily endorse, this would include, among other activities, water divining and the reading of tea-leaves and tracks in the soil. Despite the variety and uncertainty of definitions relating to the term 'text', any serious textual study is underpinned by some conception of what it means for something to be a text, whether this is implicit or overtly stated. The definition provides the basis for the work done in a study as it gives the scholar an understanding of the scope of the material and, to some extent, a prescription for interpretation.

The definition of text that I find to be most appropriate for my purposes is one proposed by Peter Shillingsburg. Shillingsburg sets out what he believes to be the necessary and sufficient conditions for a text in his unpublished document, "Thoughts on the Definition of 'Text'" (Shillingsburg 2004). His definition delineates six necessary features for an object to be considered a text, as follows:[5]

1. **A text consists of a sequence of signs or signals in a conventional (and therefore arbitrary) language or mixture of such languages.**

   Language in Shillingsburg's understanding is not only the spoken word or written text, but any system of symbols, letters, notes or images that can convey meaning. This includes many objects that are commonly considered as texts (such as films, plays, music scripts) but that are excluded from Finkelstein and McCleery's narrower definition. It includes all texts written in any sign system of language, texts produced in code such as musical notation and mathematical symbols, and texts held in any reproducible medium such as computer memory, photographic form or digital medium.

2. **Texts are arranged in any way that is permitted by the syntactical rules of that language.**

   For an object to be considered a text the sequence of signs and signals in the first criterion are arranged to conform to the rules of the semiotic system they belong to. These, 'rules', though often conventional, are nonetheless flexible. In the case of written texts, for example, the creation of new textual understandings sometimes involves the flouting of conventional syntax. In pushing the syntactical boundaries of a language, writers expand the limits of linguistic convention, resulting in a wider scope of syntactical rules and arrangements. This does not limit texts to linguistic entities, however, as musical recordings and films, too, are made up of a series of notes and signs in a particular arrangement, and thus conform to Shillingsburg's second criterion.

3. **Texts are arranged in such a way so as to produce semantic potential.**

   'Semantic potential' is best understood as 'meaning' in its broadest sense. This criterion involves the presentation of a text in such a way that meaning is produced through the arrangement of the signs. This feature excludes potential texts that cannot be said to have

[5] The six points detailing the features of a text are by Peter Shillingsburg. The comments and interpretation ensuing are my own. The intention is to build on Shillingsburg's model so as to provide the foundation for the textual analysis that ensues within this thesis.

meaning - such as a bag containing the contents of a shredding machine. Such a bag meets conditions 1 and 2, but its arrangement prevents meaning from being derived from the arrangement of the signs and symbols. This criterion discriminates between 'material' which could otherwise be considered text and its arrangement that may prevent such classification. If the material lacks coherent arrangement, it cannot be considered a text.

4. **A text is formed by a creator familiar with the rules of the text and decipherable by at least its producer and the most by all of its consumers.**

   Agency and source are essential constituents of a text: textual creation is intentional, and 'accidental' elements such as the by-products of another action are not considered as texts. For example, an ant walking in the sand and by coincidence making markings that resemble Shakespeare's first sonnet cannot be considered to have created a text. So too, natural phenomena such as rain clouds could be seen as 'signifying' that it will rain, or the falling of leaves 'signifying' the coming of winter, are excluded from the category 'text'. This criterion is particularly useful for Book Historians because it highlights the centrality of agency to textual creation and implies that the notions of agency and mediation are important areas of investigation for the holistic study of the text.

5. **Texts are recorded in a physical medium.**

   For something to be considered a text it must be stored in a physical medium. Thus texts include not only printed manuscripts, but also data captured in other forms and using other means. The benefit of a text being stored physically is that its contents are referable – as opposed to oral narrative (an audio recording is text because we can return to it to verify what was said). However, unsaved productions (such as a live play) can also be considered as texts, as the performance is itself a 'recording', even if it cannot be 'played back' or repeated identically.

Common storage media for texts are books, cassettes, compact disks (CDs), videocassettes and DVDs. In the past, rock, parchment, papyrus and bone were used as common storage media. Not all forms of storage media can store all types of text. Many types of storage media use signs that can only be used for certain types of text. Books, for example, cannot store sound, while canvas cannot store moving images. Storage media do not only differ in the material that they are able to store, but also in storage capacity. A CD, for example, can hold much less data than a DVD. Thus, for example, the DVD

version of *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* stores the same text as 37 books housing individual plays, as well as additionally storing sound and moving images. Medium is a key concept for Book Historians because by engaging with all aspects of the book, and focusing on the medium of textual transmission as opposed to merely content, Book Historians open up a new angle of possibility for textual investigation: that of the study of medium. Jerome McGann proposes that what he calls the 'bibliographical codes' (the spatial arrangements of the format of the text, including page layout, font sizes etc) contribute to the social and cultural definition of the work even when the 'linguistic codes' (the words of the text) remain stable (McGann 2006, 283). For example, a copy of The Bible in a leather cover with gilded pages may have a different impact on the reader to a paperback version with plain lettering. The argument here is that although many texts appear in multiple formats, each format can have a different effect. Viewing *The Merchant of Venice* on film, for example, has a different impact to a stage production and opens up different possibilities for study.

6. **Texts involve contexts of generation and of reception, both of which affect meaning and significance.**

   The context of a text is the place and time as well as the recognised locale in which it is created, produced and consumed. All texts begin with intentional acts by their creators and are only recognised as texts when a recipient attempts to extract significance from or attribute significance to a sign sequence. The impacts of the context in which the human agents involved in the process of transmission of a text are situated are fundamental to its nature – the manner in which it created and received.

In this thesis, I shall use 'text' to refer to the fulfilment of Shillingsburg's 6 criteria, while 'book' will be used to mean the printed medium that houses a text. 'Film' is used in a parallel way: it is a medium in which a text can be housed. By setting out the criteria for a text, Shillingsburg's paper highlights a number of contested elements in the textual debate which will now be explored in greater detail.

Medium

In Ray Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451* (1953) a society is presented in which books are prohibited objects that are burnt when discovered. The title of the book refers to the temperature of the ignition-point of paper. In this novel, books are regarded as carriers of social dissent; but

the narrative ends reassuringly with a description of living books: men and women who have committed classic texts to memory and preserve in themselves that cultural heritage. Here, Bradbury distinguishes between texts (composed of words), and books (composed of paper and ink), which act as the vehicle for texts and constitute necessary, but not sole, components thereof. Books can be replaced by memory or oral recitation or, in contemporary media, by digitised and downloadable text (Finkelstein and McCleery 2006, 1). Shillingsburg's fourth criterion for the application of the term 'text' describes medium as an important aspect of the whole, thus raising the question of what constitutes a vehicle for texts.

As noted above, D.F. McKenzie was one of the first scholars to describe the study of texts as involving issues external to those of textual meaning which, in turn, affect that meaning. He argues that "the visual aspect of writing is frequently ignored by readers in their belief that what counts are the word and the word order" (Shillingsburg is it not McKenzie? 2006, 63). McKenzie's work provides the foundation for the investigation into the materiality of texts and the impact of this materiality on textual study. McKenzie's project involves:

> …whether or not the material form of books, the non-verbal elements of the typographic notations within them, the very disposition of the space itself, have an expressive function in conveying meaning (McKenzie 1986, 21).

Jerome McGann builds on the work of McKenzie in his investigation into the importance of the material medium, and the presentation of a written text. He highlights the importance of the bibliographical aspects and linguistic components of a text:

> I have been taking the word 'text' to signify the linguistic text, the verbal outcome at every level (from the most elementary forms of single letters and punctuation marks up to the most complex rhetorical structures that comprise the particular linguistic event). And even if we can agree, for practical purposes, to restrict the term 'text' to this linguistic signification, we cannot fail to see that literary works typically secure their efforts by other than linguistic means. Every literary work that descends to us operates through the deployment of a double helix of perceptual codes: the linguistic codes, on one hand and the bibliographical codes on the other (McGann 1983, 271)

The 'double helix' image discussed by McGann has important implications for the scholarly investigation of texts. In the biological sciences, the double helix is the code to all biological life. It is the 'text' on which cells build living organisms. McGann argues that both the linguistic event and the materiality of the text is the code to textual 'life'. Literary scholars often look only at the linguistic aspects of texts, but McGann stresses not only that the materiality of a text is worthy of study, but that this study must be combined with study of the 'linguistic event',

examined within a specific context. Neither approach is sufficient in isolation for the holistic study of texts. Only by examining all the interrelated aspects of the book – in particular, medium and content – can there be an inclusive understanding of the text.

The conclusions reached by McKenzie and McGann have had a profound impact on the study of the text and will continue to do so as the Book History approach is applied to other media. The understanding that the material nature of a text has an effect on its meaning has important implications for the Book History study of film adaptations of Shakespearean texts. The Book History view opens up a range of possibilities for the continued study of early literary works as the contexts of production, transmission and reception affect their meaning. This is especially significant to the project of this thesis because the text being studied is not the book form or even a stage performance, but the cinematic production. The processes that take place from creation to reception are mediated by agents, and this mediation is a key feature of Book History study.

Mediation

The interpretation of texts as "'mediated products' within a system of economic, aesthetic, literary and social meaning" (Finkelstein and McCleery 2005, 11) is one of the key features of modern Book History studies. With such a broad scope of themes and concerns, Book Historians increasingly investigate the 'mediation' in the process from originator to recipient of the text. As Joan Shelley Rubin explains, this involves "rejecting the view that a printed artefact is simply the embodiment of an author's words" and that "the term [mediation] denotes the multitude of factors affecting the text's transmission" (Rubin 2003, 562). Texts are mediated both by the conditions of the society in which they are produced and consumed, and by the agents that participate in these processes.

Book History studies this transmission, the mediators of the process, influences on the promotion of particular texts and the role that the text itself has in shaping social discourse. For example, modern Book History studies take into account issues of globalization, opportunities and restrictions posed by digitization and new electronic technologies and the economic, cultural and social effects of transnational publishing (Finkelstein and McCleery 2005, 135). The understanding that cultural alliances and economic influences affect the positioning of the text in society, as well as the successful production and reception of texts, is critical to the Book History approach.

Darnton's "Communication Circuit"

The role of mediation in textual investigation involves several different elements. McKenzie and McGann both discuss the text in terms of the agents and contexts which affect its bibliographical features. One way of visually rendering the complexity discussed by McKenzie and McGann is through Darnton's diagrammatic "communication circuit". Darnton's "communication circuit" was first proposed in his essay, "What is the History of Books?" (1982). This circuit was intended to act as a guide to the Book History study of a text and was originally drawn from models from the sphere of communication studies. At the time, Book Historians needed a framework within which to conduct interdisciplinary textual investigations. Although acknowledging the benefits of the variety of theme and method in the wide scope of Book History, Darnton himself was concerned that Book History studies might degenerate into what he termed "interdisciplinarity run riot" (Darnton 2002, 20). He was worried that Book Historians may:

> …lose sight of the larger dimensions of the enterprise because [they] often stray into esoteric byways and unconnected specializations. Their work can be so fragmented, even within the limits of a literature on a single country, that it may seem hopeless to conceive of Book History as a single subject, to be studied from a comparative perspective across the whole range of historical disciplines.
>
> (Darnton 2002, 22)

The purpose of Darnton's circuit, therefore, is to provide a starting point for a unified view of interdisciplinary approaches to texts and to curb "an interdisciplinary enthusiasm [that] threatened to look too much like a defining lack of methodological and theoretical incoherence" (Longworth 2007, 1433).

Darnton's circuit shows five stages in the life-cycle of a text from author to reader, and three general categories of factors that have a direct bearing on the transmission of the text. These could "vary endlessly" (Darnton 2002, 11), but are reduced to the three below (see Figure 1.1) for the sake of simplicity: intellectual influences and publicity; economic and social conjecture; and political and legal sanctions.

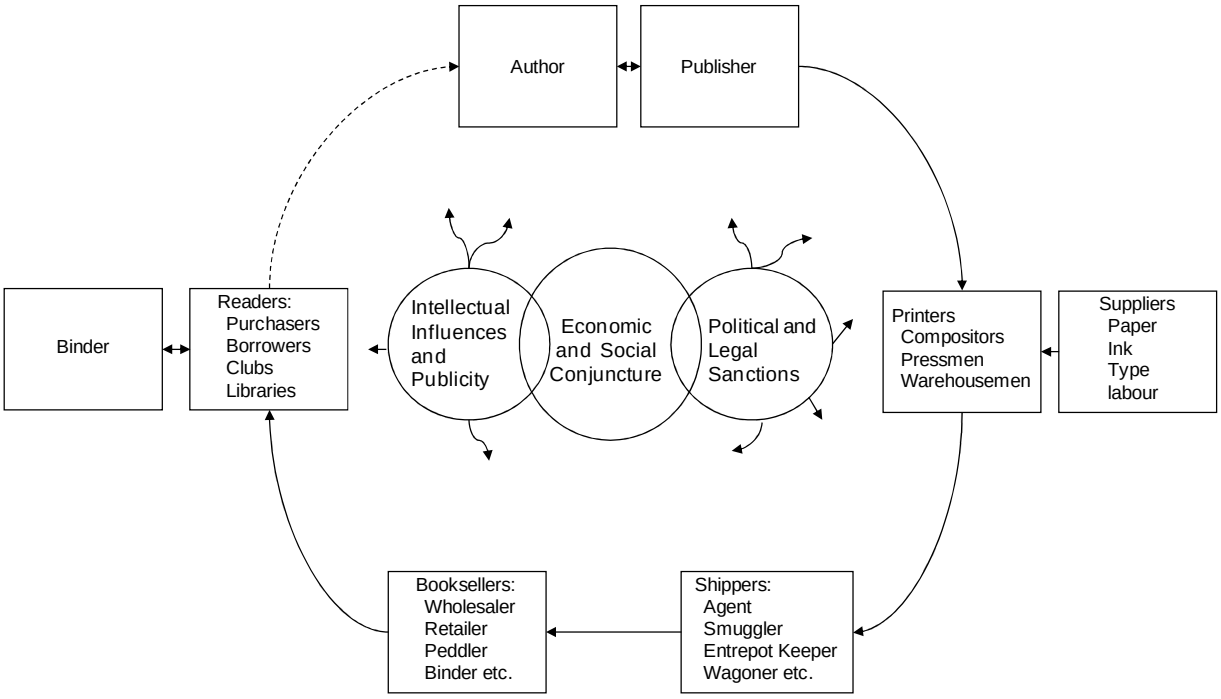

Figure 1.1: Darnton's Communication Circuit

According to Darnton, Book History is concerned with each phase of the process illustrated by the communications circuit as a discrete entity, as well as with the process as a whole. Darnton argues that a comprehensive understanding of the history of a text can only be obtained from a broad vision of the text's progress through this cycle as opposed to a view of each aspect of the text in isolation. The "communication circuit", according to Darnton, is suitable for a Book History investigation of any printed text as:

> …printed books generally pass through roughly the same life-cycle. It could be described as a communication circuit that runs from the author to the publisher (if the bookseller does not assume that role), the printer, he shipper, the bookseller, and the reader. The reader completes the circuit because he influences the author both before and after the act of composition. Authors are readers themselves. By reading and associating with other readers and writers, they form notions of genre and style and a general sense of the literary enterprise, which affects their texts, whether they are composing Shakespearean sonnets or directions for assembling radio kits (Darnton 2002, 11).

The author's role in the creation of the text is the first item in the "communication circuit". Book Historians have examined authorship from a number of perspectives: the concept and nature of authorship, the history of authorship and patronage and the effects of these different agents in the creative process, the relationship between authors and publishers and,

more recently, the relationship between authors and their readers. Authors create texts, but they are also influenced by the reading of other texts, and influenced by other readers' receptions of other texts. As Darnton explains, "Authors are readers themselves" (Darnton 2002, 11). By reading other texts, and associating with other writers, authors form opinions about genre, style and other aspects of textual creation that inform the creation of their own texts.

The role of the author is closely linked with that of the publisher, who also controls literary product. The role of publishers in the textual life-cycle is currently being investigated by Book Historians such as Patten (1978) and Lowry (1979). Patten's *Charles Dickens and his Publishers*, in particular, points to the role of the publisher as a distinct and important, although continuously shifting, position in the life-cycle of a printed text.

After the publisher, the process of textual production continues, in the case of texts in printed media, with the printer. A much-studied area in analytical bibliography, this part of the life-cycle of a text points to the significance of the materiality of books, and takes into account the economic, social and cultural imperatives governing book and textual production (Finkelstein and McCleery 2005, 4). By analysing the nature and structure of printed texts, bibliographers have made important contributions to textual study, both in their conclusions about the social impact of print, but also in the observations gleaned from reverse studies, which follow the structure of the book back to the processes of its printing, and then to the original text. This method has been used in Shakespearean scholarship to theorise about missing manuscripts (Drakakis 2007, 217), and to attempt to gain knowedge about the context of production from the features of the physical artefact and vice versa.

From the printing press, books are distributed to the public. Distribution can be done in numerous ways, legally and illegally, for social influence or for economic gain. The historical, social and economic impact of distribution from the printer to distribution agents is a little-studied feature of Darnton's "communication circuit", but one that plays a pivotal role in the process of textual consumption. In the Renaissance period, this was often done via merchant vessels by legitimate shippers or illegitimate smugglers, and that shipping often contributed significantly to the total cost of the book. In many cases, the shipper distributed the book to a bookseller, who then distributed it to the public, producing a multi-layered distribution system, the intricacies of which are of great interest to scholars. The commoditisation of the book and of printed texts in general has been the focus of much study. Darnton cites H.S. Bennet (1937), L.C.

Roth (1970) and Johann Goldfriedrich (1976) as some of the scholars who have developed country-specific pictures of the evolution of the book as an article of trade (Darnton 2002). Book History studies of this section of the "communication circuit" include this history and economic impact of bookselling and the business strategies of the book sales and the book retail industry.

The final stage in the life-cycle of a text is its reception. Book History studies approach this stage from a number of different angles, noting that "[d]espite a considerable literature on its psychology, phenomenology, textology, and sociology, reading remains mysterious" (Darnton 2002, 20). Book Historians attempt to make sense of questions concerning the nature of reading and the impact thereof on the individual and society, and examine changes in reading practices. Book History attempts to integrate the individual act of reading with the social implications and economic effects of this act, using both personalised accounts of reading and wider statistical evidence (Finkelstein and McCleery 2005).

Although the reader represents the final agent to be studied within Darnton's circuit for an individual text, another less direct relationship is incorporated into his understanding of the process of textual transmission. This is indicated by the dotted line joining reader and author. The reader has an influence on the authorship of as-yet unwritten texts. Authors are readers too, and so are influenced by the texts that they have read and by the general reception of texts that preceded the one that they are writing: both their own and those of other authors. Reception can, for example, manipulate the content of the text in terms of genre or style, or influence the presentation of the text, such as publication in hard or soft cover, or as a novel in one volume or a serialisation in a magazine.

Book History studies stress that textual transmission from author to recipient does not take place in a vacuum, but in a social, cultural and economic context. The need to investigate a text within this context and acknowledge the mediated framework proposed by McKenzie and McGann is taken into account by Darnton's structure. The factors that affect the text within the "communication circuit" are numerous: economic, political, social and cultural systems in the surrounding environment all have an effect on the transmission of the text. Darnton indicates just some of these influences in the centre of the communications circuit. Intellectual influences and publicity, economic and social conceptions, as well as political and legal sanctions, all have an

impact on the author, the production, and distribution. Each stage of the circuit can only be examined taking these factors into account.

The importance of the cyclical representation of the "communication circuit" as depicted in Figure 1.1 above is that it demonstrates that the textual cycle is a continuous process. It highlights the impact of texts on one another, and that no text can be seen in isolation, either from the agents and influences surrounding it, or from the texts that precede and follow it. Thus, the "communication circuit" not only emphasises the multiplicities of Book History investigation in terms of focus, discipline and method, but also emphasises, both visually and practically, that all these dimensions are part of a greater whole. Within Book History,

> … [the] lines of research could lead in many directions, but they all should issue ultimately in a larger understanding of how printing has shaped man's attempts to make sense of the human condition (Darnton 2002, 22).

Darnton's model provides a blueprint for the study of the book: a schematic structure for examining each aspect in the life-cycle of the text and for acknowledging the interplay between each of these aspects and the external forces that act on them. The "communication circuit" model has proved invaluable to the discipline of Book History, as it represents a clear method for grouping together the seemingly disjointed elements of a multi-faceted approach to the study of texts.

This model for the study of the book has had its critics, however. Shortly after Darnton published his model in 1993, two English bibliographers, Thomas R. Adams and Nicolas Barker, illuminated a number of problems with Darnton's circuit. Their central complaint is that, although it presents a sound schematic structure, Darnton's model focuses on the people involved in the book's life-cycle as opposed to the book itself. Adams and Barker argue that the subject of Book History is the physical book as opposed to the people involved in its movements. Thus, it is not a study of the 'book' per se, but rather a study of the human agents involved in its creation, production, distribution and reception. Adams and Barker acknowledge that the "communication circuit" is useful from the perspective of social history analysis; yet they criticize the model as too centered on the communication process, thus moving away from the significance of books as artifacts (2006).

However, despite these criticisms, and because of the structured and comprehensive model provided by the "communication circuit", Darnton's model provides an effective approach to all aspects of a text and avoids generic splintering. It is an approach more suited to a social

history Book History study than a bibliographically-based Book History investigation, but this does not detract from the efficacy of the 'communication circuit' as a structured study investigating all aspects of the book. Adams and Barker argue that in an ideal Book History study, "[t]he cycle of the book becomes the centre: the indirect forces are seen outside it, looking and pressing inwards" (Adams and Barker 2006, 49). This can be incorporated into a study using Darnton's model, as the book can be studied through the agents that create, distribute and consume it, and within a context that influences both it and them.

In summation, therefore, Chapter One has laid a foundation for the remainder of the thesis by providing an introduction to the main aspects of Book History as a discipline and as a methodology for textual investigation: Book History arose from the scholarly pursuit of a common set of problems using different methods. Study today using this approach is distinguished by its "invigorating move to understand textual production as part of human social communication structures" (Finkelstein and McCleery 2005, 4). The benefit of the interdisciplinary nature of Book History is that it provides a multi-faceted investigation in textual study. Thus, while conventional approaches tend to view texts as stable entities capable of monolithic interpretation, and thus as limited models of investigation, the field of Book History operates in the context of unstable texts, with the possibility of multiple interpretations, shifting foci for scholarly investigation and the fluidity of cultural, economic and social influence (Darnton 2002). Thus, "meaning" should not be seen as inherent in a text, but rather as constructed by interpretive acts by those who write, print, design, publish and consume it. According to McKenzie, "current theories of textual criticism, indifferent as they are to the history of the book, its architecture, and the visual language of typography, are quite inadequate" (McDonald and Suarez 2002, 113).

Finkelstein and McCleery argue that "Book History as a field of study marks both an end and a beginning" (Finkelstein and McCleery 2005, 26). The 'new' electronic revolution will mark an end to the predominant use of the book as a communication tool, and yet the field of exploration of Book History marks the beginning of the investigations into the "impact of print on social formations" and the shape of belief systems around the world (Finkelstein and McCleery 2005, 26). The Book History approach to textual investigation, however, is just as relevant to the texts of the 'new' electronic revolution as it is to the printed text. These media, too, have the ability to transmit beliefs, influence the development of legal, cultural, religious

and social ideologies and affect social formations. The chapter to follow will show that Book History provides a valuable style of approach to the investigation of the filmic text in general and of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* in particular.

Chapter 2

THE BOOK HISTORY STUDY OF FILMIC TEXTS

> A map cannot save the traveller from all dangers that may be set his path. It may save him from some; it also offers him the promising opportunity of pointing out its errors when he returns home, safe and sound.
>
> ─ Adams and Barker (2006, 52)

The Book History approach has until recently been applied largely to the investigation of printed texts and specifically to the study of the text in book form, dealing with all aspects of the book as text. This approach, however, is suitable for the study of other texts in non-book form. As discussed in the previous chapter, Book History uses a variety of methods for making sense of texts in ways not available to current literary critical practices. The object of textual criticism, and of the Book History approach to this, does not have to be limited to the book and the text housed in printed matter, but can be extended to texts in a variety of media. McKenzie writes that scholars, whether their particular field is books, maps, prints, oral traditions, theatre, cinematic productions, television, or computer stored databases, "note certain common concerns" as they deal with records that have a "textual function which is subject to bibliographical control, interpretation and historical analysis" (McKenzie 1999, 39). Using Shillingsburg's criteria discussed in Chapter 1, this chapter will argue that a film such as *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* is a text, and that it is both useful and appropriate to investigate a filmic text in a manner that has been shown to be effective in the study of printed texts.

This chapter will deal primarily with three issues: the value in the application of Book History to this film; the methods involved in such an approach; and finally, a practical approach to carrying out a Book History study of a film. To this end, a "Filmic Communication Circuit" constructed for the filmic text (based on Darnton's model) will be used as a blueprint – or 'map'. to use the metaphor adopted by Adams and Barker – to guide the investigation of Radford's *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*.

Justification for the Book History Approach to Film

According to Freeland and Warternberg, "[t]he scholarly study of films is one of the fastest growing areas of research in academia" (Freeland and Wartenberg 1995, 1). Numerous disciplines have appropriated film into their spheres of interest and applied their own methods of study to this growing research discipline. Literary scholars such as Marnie Hughes-Warrington have constructed literary-historical readings of filmic 'texts': in her book *History Goes to the Movies: Studying History on Film*, she notes the "historiographical potential of historical film studies" (Hughes-Warrington 2007, 4). Sociologists and anthropologists, too, view films as fruitful fields for the exploration of social and cultural issues ranging from teenage rebellion to religious taboos. Films are also studied within the discipline of Media Studies, in which Burn and Parker (2003) are two contemporary digital media scholars whose semiotic analyses of systems of understanding are employed in the study of media texts. Freeland and Wartenberg (1995) have applied philosophical approaches to film, and the philosophy of film continues to grow as an area of scholarly investigation around the world. These different approaches have to some extent been amalgamated into the emerging discipline of 'film studies', but as yet this is an ill-defined and incomplete branch of scholarship, with 'traditional' film theory struggling to incorporate the multiple approaches to film employed by scholars in other disciplines (Burn and Parker 2003, 11). As Andrews explains, "the goal...of film theory is only to formulate a schematic notion of the capacity of film" (Andrews 1976, 5). Such a formulation offers but a single approach to film, and expresses only a narrow area of interest that is constantly competing with other the approaches mentioned above: approaches that see film to be of literary, historical, philosophical, cultural and, indeed, stylistic value. Film studies as a discipline can thus house (if somewhat inadequately) a number of these different approaches to film, but do not extend these approaches into a single study, using the insights of many disciplines to reveal a multi-dimensional understanding, which is one of the key features of Book History.

Despite the range of approaches to film, the interdisciplinary mixture of qualitative and quantitative methodology in the framework offered by Book History has yet to be achieved in the case of cinema. Traditional film studies do not analyse film as a cultural artefact, and nor do they take into account any of the sociological, anthropological or historical questions discussed by the specialists mentioned above. Book History can do more than this. The empirically-informed and theoretically-grounded approach to the study of texts described in the previous

chapter is equally applicable to the study of film as it is to that of the printed book. Its application to the world of film is equally valuable for a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the medium.

Radford's *Merchant of Venice* is the twelfth filmic adaptation of this play so far,[6] and with almost 400 years of stage history, the 2004 film is far more than a simple transmission of stage performance to screen. This screen production consists of multiple textual layers, from the original play-script and contemporary productions through to the twenty-first century context of Radford's film *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, raising many questions of interpretation. Some of these questions arise out of the interplay between Shakespearean and modern culture, the prevailing social, economic and religious conditions in both contexts, the use of the filmic medium to host a Shakespearean production and the extent to which this medium adds or detracts from conventional understandings of 'Shakespearean'.

Using Book History to approach the study of this Shakespearean adaptation opens up two particularly interesting avenues of exploration. Firstly, the approach points to the medium of film as a subject for a Book History study. This raises questions concerning the nature of Shakespeare on screen and the particular conventions of style or genre that this medium engenders. The devices available to film, such as freeze frame, close-up shots, multi-layered sound and vision mixing,[7] contribute to the creation of a new text and highlight the dynamism and complexity of Shakespearean adaptation. So, too, can the content of the film be studied because Shakespearean performance can be accessed over and over again. Film can be seen as a record of production, in contrast with a stage production which is performed without recording. Performance in itself then becomes a subject for investigation.

Secondly, scholarly interest in films can be raised by many of the same questions that arouse scholarly interest in books, such as those concerning the processes of transmission from creator to consumer and the other factors impacting on the work. Other issues raised include the effects of economic, social and cultural conditions on a film from its inception to its reception and the role of the filmic media in shaping social discourse. Questions traditionally posed in textual study, such as those relating to authorship, and more recently, questions about the reception of texts, are also valid in the study of film.

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[6] Including those produced for television.

[7] These are devices used in film-making that will be explained in more detail in Chapter 3.

The goal of this thesis is to pursue both of these avenues, as well as other paths of investigation that lead to greater understanding of the film, and the next sections will describe the methods to be employed.

Understanding Film as Text

Although the above discussion describes Book History as a useful method for the investigation of film and is valuable to this investigation of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* in particular, it is important to explain the methods involved. In the previous chapter, Book History was presented as a multi-faceted interdisciplinary approach to *textual* investigation. This section will show that films can be viewed as *texts*, thus casting them in a format that is compatible with the Book History approach.

In *A Rationale of Textual Criticism*, G. Thomas Tanselle writes that "all works of art, all stories, have texts, whether usually called by that name or not" (Tanselle 1989, 18). Stories are told and works experienced in different media. From reading books, to listening to the radio, experiencing them on the computer screen or watching them on film, narratives are stored in a variety of ways. Historically, papyrus and parchment, books and magazines, and of course human memory, were the only available storage media for these stories. New technologies have opened up a world of possibilities in creating and accessing works, not only in the storage of alphanumeric signs and symbols, but also for illustrations, sounds and moving images.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the definition of a text, and the conditions for textuality set out by Peter Shillingsburg. The script of a film is obviously a text, as it fulfills Shillingsburg's criteria in the same way any written text would. Any given performance resulting from such a script is in some sense a text, since performance is itself a sequence of conventional signals. Thus, the staged *Merchant of Venice* can be considered an equally legitimate incarnation of Shakespeare's text as the script of the play. A record of such a performance must be a text too, as it consists of the same sequence of conventional signals, but in a different medium. A film adaptation of a script is a performance *for the purpose* of recording, but can be considered a text in the same way as a performance that *happened to be* recorded. In fact, the recording can give rise to a number of incarnations of the same text, with the presentation media – recording for film, for DVD or internet viewing – all slightly modifying the text in question.

To study film using Book History – an approach to *textual* investigation – it must be shown to be *text*. One way of showing this is to explain how film satisfies the different criteria for

textuality. Radford's film, in all its presentation media, can be shown to satisfy the conditions for textuality set out by Shillingsburg and discussed in the previous chapter.

1. **A text consists of a sequence of signs or signals in a conventional (and therefore arbitrary) language or mixture of such languages.**

   A film is not simply an adaptation of a play; the play is only one element in its intertextuality. Film adds another language to the text. The play's text provides the raw materials of the plot which is creatively reshaped in the film and is interpreted through a number of cinematic and 'extra-cinematic' codes. These codes are the language of film and are the vehicle for communicating the director's vision. Morris Beja writes that "film language" can be understood using many of the same approaches as written language. He writes:

   > [S]emiotics …has sought to describe cinematic language. According to this approach, film is a language in the most general sense – it is a mode of communication …Each visual image is comparable to as full sentence" (1979, 55).

   Film language is, thus, a combination of the spoken word (in any language), sounds and pictures. Visual codes include everything that is selected for viewing including *mise en scene*, costumes, colour, lighting and even the arrangement of the actors in the frame. Cinematic codes involve such elements as angles of shots, flashbacks and editing. Auditory codes may be linguistic and non-linguistic (Cartmell, 2000). These cinematic codes are perceived almost sub-consciously through the senses. They drive the plot, give insights into the characters, intensify the drama and the pathos, and establish the mood, the atmosphere and the context of the film.

   William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice consists of a combination of both conventional filmic language – a series of images and sounds presented on screen - and the English language medium, thus satisfying Shillingsburg's first criterion. The narrative is achieved through a sequence of signs that can be understood both from a cinematic as well as linguistic perspective, as the film conforms to narrative cinematic practice in the sense that it uses its series of images to tell a story and the dialogue follows the rules of the English language.

2. **Texts are arranged in any way that is permitted by the syntactical rules of that language**.

Alexander Astruc wrote that "The filmmaker …writes with his camera as a writer writes with his pen" (Giannetti 1993, 341). Like the writer, the filmmaker arranges the text purposefully, and following a set of guidelines or 'rules'. All aspects of the language of film – verbal, visual and aural – conform to syntactical rules. The different elements that make up a film can be considered as constituting a "conventionalised mix of languages" (Shillingsburg 2004, 7) and work in combination to produce meaning. *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* conforms to the 'rules' of the 'language' (generally referred to as 'practice') of film-making, just as the dialogue conforms to the syntactic rules of the English language.

3. **Texts are arranged in such a way so as to produce semantic potential.**

   Like the example of the bag of shredded paper discussed in the previous chapter, a clutter of shots and scenes collected during the process of filming may fulfil all of Shillingsburg's criteria except this third one. The post-production process assembles this collection of filmic fragments to create a continuous narrative. It is in this way that *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* is arranged in a meaningful manner, with the production of semantic potential fulfilling Shillingsburg's third criterion.

4. **A text is formed by a creator familiar with the rules of the text and decipherable by its producer at the least and at the most by all consumers.**

   Michael Radford, as director of this film and writer of the screenplay, can be considered the creator of this film who is familiar with the rules of adaptation and film production. *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* is both decipherable by Radford himself and by the viewing public. In addition, the filmic text uses the English dialogue of Shakespeare who is readily recognized and deciphered throughout the English-speaking world and thus Shillingsburg's fourth criterion is fulfilled.

5. **Texts are recorded in a physical medium.**

   William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice is recorded in the physical medium of film, and its derivatives such as DVD and video. The relationship between this film and medium is particularly interesting, however, as beneath the film performance lays a dramatic text. *The Merchant of Venice*, in other words, can be captured using a variety of different media. Radford's film production is recorded in physical form on a selection of different media including electronic digital media and filmic images. Shillingsburg

suggests that such texts can only be recognized as texts in their final cinematic form, as humanly-readable media on film roll, DVD or VHS. Furthermore, it is significant that film constitutes a reproducible media format, as opposed to staged performances which cannot be exactly reproduced.

Books, too, are a reproducible format, as they can (and often are) reprinted. Access to the text in book form is immediate, assuming that the consumer can read. This is one way in which filmic texts differ from printed ones. Consumers do not have access to medium of text: it is not possible to view a film by examining the DVD or film reel on which it is stored. In this case, then, the storage medium is not the same as the medium in which the viewer can access the text. Thus, for users to access *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, technical apparatus that makes presentation possible is necessary. In the case of filmic texts, screens, speakers, computer screens and projectors constitute examples of the presentation media needed to access the text. The signs stored in the digital storage medium are retrieved using computers, interpreted by binary encoding software and streamed to the presentation medium in accessible format. Some aspects of the filmic medium that can be most closely paralleled with the bibliographical aspects of the printed one include the filmography and the special cinematic effects that are unique to the medium of film.

6. **Texts involve contexts of generation and of reception, both of which affect meaning and significance**.

The contexts of generation and reception of a Shakespearean adaptation are complex, as each adaptation builds upon a previous one and each text plays a part in an accumulation of contexts. As an adaptation of a play thought to have been written between 1596 and 1598, *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* represents the latest addition to the body of works known as *The Merchant of Venice*, comprised of the original script and all the subsequent productions: both staged and filmic.

The original context of the generation and reception of productions of *The Merchant of Venice* is Shakespeare's own, and this context can be seen throughout Radford's adaptation which strives to be 'authentic' in terms of both the placement and time of its setting. Radford's adaptation, *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, is generated and received in the twenty-first century. The act of creation of this film

> consists of Radford's adaptation of Shakespeare's text and the reception, which involves the viewing of the consumption of the film in the cinema and on DVD and video in the twenty-first century.

It can thus be seen that Shillingsburg's definition incorporates filmic texts, and *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, can be viewed as a text and a valuable subject for a Book History study.

Applying the Book History Approach to Film

After establishing that a film can, indeed, be studied as a text, the next concern in a Book History study of film involves the method through which such a filmic text is approached. A complete Book History examination of a text looks at the text itself, its medium, its transmission from creator to consumer and the multiple factors that influence this process. As D. F. McKenzie puts it,

> …the transmission of texts is not as straightforward a process as people might think. Much can be learned through tracing their progress from creator to consumer, in accounting for production and marketing structures, in studying the effect of print on culture. The cultural and personal effects of books are also not easily accountable: books and print affect 'readers' and consumers differently at different points in life, for example (1999, 32).

The complex transmission of the film as well as the object itself is what a Book History study of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* would attempt to document. A study of transmission involves investigation of the agents involved in the creation of the text, its distribution and reception. The challenge of applying Book History to the study of filmic text is in finding a framework within this methodology that is suitable for a holistic investigation.

Robert Darnton's "communication circuit" discussed in the previous chapter and depicted in Figure 1.1 provides a framework for the Book History study of books. Both books and films are textual media and thus may be seen as analogous for the purposes of such a study methodology. Darnton suggests his model provides "a way of envisaging the entire communications process" (Darnton 2002, 11). Because the communications process of a filmic text can be envisaged in a similar manner to that of a book, a modified "communications circuit" can be applied to a filmic text.

Like the books discussed by Darnton, films are created, produced, distributed and accessed by a series of human agents. A filmic text has the same stages in its life-cycle as does a

printed one, and so can be represented in a similar manner. Figure 2.1 represents the communication circuit for the creation, production, distribution and reception of a filmic text based on Darnton's model for the book.

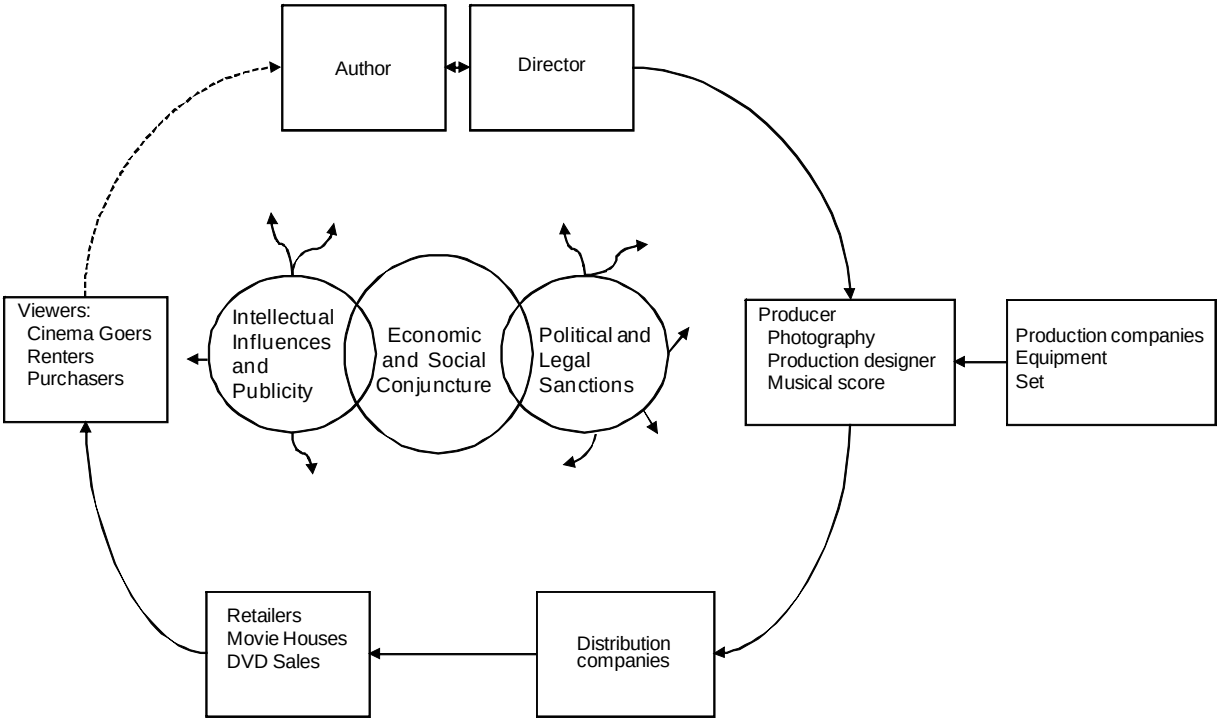

Figure 2.1: Filmic Communication Circuit

Like Darnton's model for books, the focus of the Filmic Communication Circuit is on the transmission process, and the agents involved.

The initial stage in the cycle of a filmic text is filled by the screenplay writer and the director, who are analogous to the author and copy-editor in the transmission process of a book. These agents are responsible for the creation of the film in the broadest sense. In a Book History study of a text, this initial stage can be investigated both in terms of the agents of authorship and the relationship between these agents, and in terms of the external factors affecting these agents, the process of creation and the final product of the text itself. The question of authorship is a key one in a filmic text as the 'author' of a filmic text is a controversial position, given the number of agents directly involved in the production of a film. The director of a film is often considered analogous to a literary author. Although convention dictates otherwise, with the director being valorised by critics and scholars, the writer of the screenplay could equally hold this position.

The process of creation – and of creativity – does not end with the author of a filmic text. The producer is responsible for the making and assembling of the final product. This often includes the commercial and administrative aspects of film-making, such as acquiring the rights to the screenplay and hiring the actors and crew to make the film (Philips 1999, 33). The producer also negotiates film funding, filming locations and, in conjunction with the director, the remuneration packages for the cast and crew. Although in film studies the 'producer' is described as a sole agent, the circuit above indicates that this is not the case at all: rather, a number of agents are responsible for the final film. In addition to the individuals involved, production companies play a large role in the creation of a filmic text, and Book History studies of the production of filmic texts need to accommodate the influences of these institutions on the process of film-making.

Distribution in the film industry, too, takes place through corporate institutions, as distribution companies play an essential role in the delivery of the filmic text. The distribution of a film is the process of delivering the film from the producer to the viewer, and occurs in at least two stages: firstly, from the production company to the cinema and secondly, from the cinema to the viewer. With regard to home-viewing distribution, these stages would take place from the production company to the home-viewing distributor, and then from shops or outlets to the viewer. My version of Darnton's circuit distinguishes between these two stages of distribution, as they have different effects on the life-cycle of the filmic text, just as Darnton's original circuit distinguished between book sellers and shipping agents. The film distributor is not merely a middle-man between the production company and the exhibitor, limited only to buying and selling the product. Film distribution involves marketing the film: in addition to formulating and implementing promotional and advertising strategies, the distributor liaises with the media, produces promotional materials (publicity shots, stills, artwork, press kits), provides advice on all aspects of production (such as enhancing the marketability of the film) and provides financing for productions through advances and rights-purchasing (Leong, et al. 1996). Book History studies may focus on the means of distribution, the manner in which the process of distributing the text affects the text and the effects of the textual medium on the processes of distribution. So too, Book Historians are concerned with the social nature of the distribution and the impact of distribution on the audience it reaches.

The final stage in any textual communication circuit is the reception stage, and in the case of a filmic text, the consumer of the product is the viewer. The reception of texts is a neglected area of Book History studies, but one that is vital to a deeper understanding of the process of textual transmission. Viewership could be analysed in terms of the way viewers receive texts and in terms of the different understandings of films in different cultural contexts, or in eras. Comprehensive sales data is often available for films. Box Office ticket sales data can provide another means of analysing the viewership of a film in terms of the number of people that watch it.

The response of viewers to one film may affect the creation of others, as screenplay writers and directors borrow successful plots, techniques and even actors for subsequent films. The relationship between the current text and future authors and texts is indicated by the dotted line in the diagram of the Filmic Communications Circuit above.

The Filmic Communication Circuit will be used as a foundation in this study because it provides a model for investigative research in the field. The circuit illustrates the interconnectedness of each aspect of the life of a text and also indicates some of the influences on the text. The full significance of the Book History enterprise is only realised when each phase is conceived of as part of the larger enterprise. As Darnton puts it, a "holistic view of the book as a means of communication seems necessary if Book History is to avoid being fragmented into esoteric specializations cut off from each other by arcane techniques and mutual misunderstanding" (2002, 11).

One of the central projects of this thesis is to conceptualise each aspect of both Darnton's Communications Circuit and of the Filmic one as an integral part of the whole. Thus, to emphasise the holistic nature of this study, each chapter is headed by a diagrammatic representation of the Filmic Communications Circuit in which the section being discussed in that chapter is highlighted. The circuit focuses largely, and in some detail, on the agents involved in the life-cycle of the filmic text. The previous chapter highlights a number of problems with this approach, as discussed by Adams and Barker in the context of Darnton's Communication Circuit in the case of books. Many of the problems identified are equally applicable to film. In the context of filmic and internet media, Andrew Tudor (1999), a cultural and media scholar, articulates these difficulties in terms of familiar opposition found in sociological studies: those of 'structure' and 'agency'. 'Structure' is the composition of the text itself as a discrete entity

without context. 'Agency' places the text in the realm of human creation, with contexts of both generation and reception. Tudor proposes a shift from emphasis on the text itself to the agency of the people involved in determining textual meaning. The Filmic Communications Circuit deals with the question of agency and with the impact of agency on the text, but it does not accommodate the investigation of textual content. Thus, before examining *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* through the framework of the communication circuit, the key features of the filmic text will be examined in Chapter Three. This chapter is concerned with Radford's mode of communication through the medium of film in his 2004 Shakespearean production. This exploration constitutes an addition to Darnton's approach, but still falls within the ambit of a Book History investigation.

A complete Book History study is a substantial task, as there are many facets of a text that may be examined from numerous different perspectives. As Darnton puts it, Book History approach to textual investigation

> …is a large undertaking. To keep their task within manageable proportions, book historians generally cut into one segment of the communications circuit… But the parts do not take on their full significance unless they are related to the whole, and some holistic view of the book as a means of communication seems necessary if Book History is to avoid being fragmented into esoteric specializations cut off from each other by arcane techniques and mutual misunderstanding (Darnton 2002, 11).

The investigation carried out in this thesis is a nonspecific one in that it will neither look at any particular stage in the production of the film, nor approach it from a single angle. In addition, it is not the intention of this research to provide a comprehensive Book History study. Rather, I aim to demonstrate that Book History offers a valuable approach to the filmic text by carrying out a small study of each section of the Communications Circuit.

Films can be seen as time-bound cultural artefacts: carriers of ideology that are influenced by and have an influence on the context in which they are created and disseminated, including economic and social effects. The socio-historical approach to textual investigation that is the key feature of the field of Book History could thus be used to great benefit in the investigation of texts in the medium of film. As Finkelstein and McCleery argue, "society is based on transactions enabled by communication processes" (2005, 28), and Book History is an approach to investigating those transactions through the communication process of the book.

Films are a significant mode of communication in modern society and thus are fundamental vehicles for societal communication. This thesis will extend the Book History

approach to textual study into the study of this mode of communication. Although a film will be studied instead of a book, the approach will still be referred to as “Book History”. Up until now, the interdisciplinary approach discussed here has been used almost exclusively for the medium of Books, although, in the long term, ‘Textual History’ may be a more appropriate name for this framework, or ‘Film History’ for the particular study to be carried out in this thesis.

Chapter Two has provided the foundation for the Book History investigation of *William Shakespeare’s The Merchant of Venice* that is to follow. It has shown that a film production can be considered a text, and that Book History can provide a valuable framework within which to investigate this text.

Chapter 3

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE: THE FILMIC TEXT

> Digital media do not simply provide a different surface 'look' or aesthetic, but offer ways to redesign elements of text already designed in a previous process… they provide a new physical environment, tools and cultures within which communication acts take place.
>
> ─ Burn and Parker (2003, 8)

Despite the significance of medium to the discipline, one of the flaws of early Book History approaches to texts was to assume that all texts of the same medium could be examined using the same approach. A novel, journal, magazine or textbook were all given the same treatment, despite the differences in content and medium resulting from different generic approaches. Genre has implications for the author and the recipient. The assumptions made when engaging with a particular genre – a novel as opposed to a police crime report, for example – influence the way it is created and consumed. Darnton's approach in particular does not provide any room for a nuanced understanding of genre, and this chapter attempts to rectify this oversight. Textual analysis, both in terms of medium and content, is not only compatible with Book History, but an integral part of it. The content of the text affects its medium, and vice versa, with the creation and reception of the text being understood in vastly different ways depending on the generic presuppositions with which it is approached. Focusing largely on different aspects associated with genre, this chapter will include a discussion of the medium of film and the way this medium is employed in Radford's Shakespearean production. Although it is absent from Darnton's circuit, such a discussion is a vital addition to a Book History study of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice.*

As early as 1929, Virginia Woolf scornfully denigrated the new medium of cinema as a "parasite" with literature its "prey" and "victim" (Woolf 1926, 309). She was reacting against what she saw as the inevitable simplification (and potential oversimplification) of literary work that would occur when complex written texts are translated into the ostensibly simpler visual medium. While the content and nature of textual communication are affected by the medium, the effects of translating literature into film are not necessarily negative, Woolf's derision notwithstanding. This chapter will focus on some of the significant features of *William*

Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice that are peculiar to film. I begin with a brief history of Shakespeare in film, discussing aspects of the evolution of the genre of Shakespeare films up until the production of this text, before examining some of the techniques that heighten the drama and that are unique to the filmic medium.

Filmed Shakespeare is still often compared to staged productions in terms of presentation, and comparison with the latter medium constitutes a frequent starting point for a discussion on the virtues of the respective texts. A discussion of these features may involve an analysis of the entire film: this, however, is not the project of this chapter. Rather, the aim is to highlight the importance of the filmic medium to the text studied. Thus, the medium will be examined through a discussion about two of the most common ways of categorising filmic texts: mode of communication and genre. This will involve analyses of plot, themes, film techniques[8] and iconography:[9] the key elements that contribute to the effects of Radford's *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*.

A History of Shakespeare on Screen

This section provides a brief history of Shakespeare on screen, highlighting the major shifts in filmed Shakespeare to demonstrate the nature of filmic communication and of the film techniques that have led to the specific features of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*.[10] This discussion will look at the history of screened Shakespeare, highlighting the key productions of each decade. Such a discussion is necessarily sparse, and omissions may be plentiful, but the intention is to indicate some of the major trends in Shakespearean cinema that have resulted in Radford's 2004 production.

Filmic versions of Shakespearean texts began to be produced at the end of the nineteenth century as filmed theatrical performances. On 20 September 1899, a production of *King John* opened at Her Majesty's Theatre in London with Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, the theatre's owner and actor-manager, in the title role. Earlier in September, four silent one-minute scenes from the play had been filmed. These four scenes were premiered in cinemas in London, mainland Europe and America on the same night as the official stage opening in 1899. Only one fragment survives

[8] Technical terms used in film criticism will be explained using footnotes.

[9] Iconography is the use of repeated symbols and images to emphasize or foreground a particular point (Hindle 2007).

[10] More comprehensive studies on the history of filmed Shakespeare have been carried out by Henderson, Roswell (2000) and Jackson (2003), amongst others.

from this production, but it does provide insight into the early motives of the Shakespeare film industry. *King John* is limited in terms of filmic innovation, as its primary purpose was to promote Beerbohm Tree's stage play, and thus it conformed to the staged performance as closely as possible. The 1899 screening was shown only four years after the Lumières brothers' pioneering film screening in Paris,[11] showing that Shakespeare has been seen as suitable material for film almost as long as film has been in existence. This is partly because Shakespearean material was used to bring credibility to the fledging film industry. As Judith Buchanan puts it, "one of the attractions of Shakespeare to the emerging industry was his unquestioned place on the cultural (and moral) high ground of British, American and European life" (2005, 22).

Shakespeare was, however, not initially used to advance the film industry as much as film was used as an advertising tool for stage productions. The primary goal in early Shakespearean cinema was to reproduce the stage so as to promote stage versions of the plays. As late as 1908, Gaumont's production of *Romeo and Juliet* was applauded for being "so finely accurate in its leading details, and the scenery, costumes and acting so realistic" that one critic was overheard as saying "we sit and forget for the time that we are looking at kinematograph art, but fancy ourselves seated in a theatre" (Ball 1968, 37).

By the late 1910s and early 1920s there was a shift in the production of Shakespearean film adaptations as directors began to realize the possibilities of the filmic medium, and to experiment with what film could offer Shakespeare, as well as what the material could offer film. Although still silent, films in this era strove to do more than either advertise stage productions or entertain, but sought to make artistically informed and inventive use of the medium. The use of camera technique and lighting ensured that the films became increasingly dramatic. This was enhanced using specifically filmic techniques, with James Keane making the first use of what later came to be known as *mise-en-scene*[12] cinematography in his 1912 production *The Life and Death of Richard III* (Hindle 2007, 6). This altered the reception of the films, as audiences began to appreciate cinematography for its own sake rather than as a replica of staged Shakespeare.

[11] This first filmic screening of any material was *Sortie des Usines Lumière à Lyon* (*Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory*), which the Lumières brothers screened in 1894 (Frères Lumières 2006).

[12] This term refers to the contents of the cinema frame. Literally, it translates as 'put into the scene', and describes the theatrical placement and stylisation of the set before the shooting starts. Elements controlled in this way usually include props, lighting, positioning, colour, facial expressions, and the costuming, hair and make-up of the characters (Hindle 2007, 257).

An even more sophisticated approach to filmed Shakespeare came with Svend Gade's silent *Hamlet: The Drama of Vengeance* (1920). Starring Danish actress Asta Nielsen, this film, as described by Rothwell, serves to strike a "great blow in liberating the Shakespeare movie from the theatrical and textual dependency and moving toward the film" (2000, 21). This adaptation of *Hamlet* marks a number of significant changes in filmed Shakespeare: in its full original format it ran for 134 minutes (as opposed to previous adaptations, which ran for less than half of this time) and was created primarily as a vehicle for the promotion of Nielsen, an internationally popular actress. In 'commercialising' personalities as well as film, director Gade began a trend that continues today – the use of popular film personalities to enhance the sales capacities of the films they start in. The use of Nielsen as a selling factor in the film is emphasized by the use of close[13] and medium[14] shots, focusing on her features and emphasizing her centrality to the action. Gade's *Hamlet* set another cinematic trend. It also drew on German Expressionist film techniques, [15]conforming to popular visual film codes and making the film a box-office success. This was partly due to Nielsen's influence? Performance? and partly a result of its appropriation of "familiar and popular film codes rather than stage performance codes for the cinematic transformation of Shakespeare's material" (Guntner 1995, 54). `

The transition from silent Shakespearean film productions to audio films occurred in the 1930s. Initially, however, sound was seen only as a supplement to the spectacle of the action, as demonstrated by the lavish and much-admired Reinhardt and Dieterle production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As lately as 1999, Kenneth Rothwell still considered this "the best Hollywood Shakespeare movie" (1999, 29) and Hindle praises it as "a most spectacular effort in dramatizing Shakespeare for the screen" (2007, 27). A combination of effective choreography and sumptuous set, costuming and special effects produced a visual extravaganza that set the trend that characterized filmed Shakespeare in the 1930s.

The 1940s brought a more realistic turn to filmed Shakespeare, with Olivier's innovative *Henry V* arguably beginning to "reveal the true potentialities of Shakespeare on screen" (Manvell 1979, 45). He set the play as an 'authentic' Elizabethan performance, constructing the

[13] Shots that focus on the face or head of the character. This technique is often used to reveal inner or emotional states (Hindle 2007, 255).

[14] The scale of object shown to be medium size, in this case the torso of Nielsen filling up the screen (Hindle 2007, 257).

[15] These techniques are ones which make the film seem more realistic, such as the focus on emotion, and realistic setting and costuming. German expressionism moves away from the staged appearance of the first Shakespeare films.

set as if it were to be presented to a live audience. This framework enabled Olivier to play with style and convention while still delivering an authentically 'Shakespearean' production. According to Jorgens, this "inspired" decision allowed Olivier to match "Shakespeare's metadrama[16] with metacinema[17]" (1991, 133). Orson Welles, too, concentrated on original Shakespearean features in his 1948 *Macbeth*. Welles used visually symbolic images to represent Shakespeare's verbal symbolism, thus providing a forerunner for the Kurosawa and Kozintsev productions of the 1950s, which perfected this art of symbolic visual imagery as one substitute for Shakespeare's verbal descriptions.

The Fifties was an era characterised by indulgence in the post-war economies of Europe and America, and Shakespearean film boomed under the economic prosperity. There was a substantial increase in numbers of films produced, with more variety than ever before and thus no single 'highlight' can be easily identified. However, the willingness to experiment with different techniques is evident in the 1957 production *Throne of Blood*, directed by Kurosawa. This film transposes the story of *Macbeth* into the world of 16th Century feudal Japan. Little or no Shakespearean dialogue is used in this production, but the nuanced understanding of Shakespeare's dialogue translates into complex symbolism which led *The Sunday Times* film critic, and famous director, Peter Hall to declare it "perhaps the most successful Shakespeare film ever made" (cited in Manvell 1979, 107). It is undoubtedly successful in showing the power and visual impact of film – impact so great that dialogue becomes unnecessary, or at least not the key feature of Shakespearean production.

The first major Shakespeare film of the 1960s was Grigori Kozintsev's *Hamlet*. There are three important elements this film: the extent to which it was based on Olivier's 1948 production of *Hamlet*, the use of the visual metonymic[18] that was becoming characteristic of the Shakespeare film and the use of voice-over.[19] The last significant film of this time-period was Roman Polanski's *Macbeth* (1971). After this, Shakespearean film became unpopular for a

[16] Theatre using devices that expose it as theatre, or make the audience acutely aware of the fact that the production is a theatrical one, and not a transposition of reality (Hindle 2007, 257).

[17] Film using filmic devices to visually expose the constructed nature of the visions that the film provides (Hindle 2007, 257).

[18] Best glossed by Hindle as "a kind of cinematic short-hand in which details, objects, gestures, colour etc. usually show meanings or ideas" (2007, 257)

[19] When a screen character's voice, or the voice of an unknown narrator, is heard over the image of the screen. In Shakespearean films, this has become a popular mode of showing the characters' thoughts (Hindle 2007, 259).

number of reasons – an investigation into which would constitute an interesting Book History project in itself.

The next major changes in the production of Shakespearean film appeared almost two decades later in the form of Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V* in 1989. Branagh's films returned Shakespeare to mainstream cinema. Striving for "absolute clarity that would enable a modern audience to respond to Shakespeare on film in the same way they would respond to any other movie" (Branagh 1993, viii), Branagh used a combination of innovative film techniques, such as a vibrant musical score and quick-paced short scenes to maintain audience interest. Branagh also modernized the dialogue in his films, cutting the Shakespearean scripts dramatically and removing or changing words that were not in common use. Drawing on contemporary commercial practice, he also used astute marketing to attract a wide audience. His project was a great success and Branagh provided a foundation on which other Shakespearean directors built in the new millennium. In the extra footage on the DVD version of Trevor Nunn's *Twelfth Night* (2006), the director praised Branagh's filmic success saying that *Twelfth Night* would not have been possible without the prior commercial success of Branagh's *Henry V* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice therefore follows in a long tradition of Shakespeare productions rendered in the filmic medium. Branagh's revival of Shakespeare on screen made this film possible, but Radford owes more to the history of filmic Shakespeare than just this. From its composition, use of sound and photographic techniques to the use of an international cast and multiple filming locations, this production of *The Merchant of Venice* is a product of its history, and the history of filmed Shakespeare as a whole. The history of production, however, can only be truly understood in the context of staged Shakespeare and the manner in which *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* in particular, and filmic Shakespeare as a whole, draws on and deviates from the stage tradition.

Performed Shakespeare: Differences in Medium

As noted earlier, film productions of Shakespeare were originally used only to advertise staged ones, and the techniques employed in early films imitated stage techniques. Modern filmic productions are very different. The change in the intention and style of filmic productions highlights the increasing awareness of the differences in the media of production, and the ways

in which both can be used to different effects. Although there are numerous differences between filmed and screened Shakespeare, they can, if even for the sake of this brief discussion, be classified into two areas: performance and reception.

According to Manvell, "in the theatre we accept theatricality; in the cinema we demand actuality" (1979, 266). Although this is not always accurate, it is largely so in the case of filmed Shakespeare in the 21st century. I begin by discussing the effects of medium on performance, focusing on acting styles, and setting.

Acting styles vary greatly between filmed and staged Shakespeare productions, largely as a consequence of the different demands that each medium places on its actors. There are also great differences between US and British theatrical styles, particularly in voice production and voice quality. The art of acting demands that the maximum impact of the performance is felt by the audience. The physical distance between the audience and the action on screen or on stage respectively is just one way in which the different media demand different types of performance. Stage performances are viewed from a consistent distance, while techniques of close-up shots and different camera angles give actors and directors greater scope for control. Different conventions and techniques available to the different media mean that actors deliver a different type of performance, thus radically changing the final production. *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, for example, makes extensive use of medium- and close-up shots of the principal characters, producing an impression of intimacy that is unique to the filmic medium. In this way, the audience are able to identify the emotions of the characters to a greater extent than is the case in stage productions. This is illustrated by the use of close-up shots at pivotal moments of Shylock's distress, such as at the beginning of the film when he is spat upon by Antonio, or when he realises that his daughter Jessica has abandoned him. The representation of the stage arguably produces a less intimate engagement with the drama; while the intense interaction of the audience with the individual characters provided by camera angle and zoom in the filmic medium enables a greater personal audience investment. This is not to imply that the filmic experience is an experience of actuality, but rather that it appears to be more so than stage, thus inducing a more personal response to the action (Hindle 2007).

Another area of 'reality' versus 'theatricality' in film may be found in the setting and location of the performance. The entire performance of a staged Shakespeare takes place in one physical location, although this location may be transformed into multiple settings. A filmed

Shakespeare, on the other hand, can actually be filmed in multiple settings. Maurice Hindle argues that

> unlike the Shakespeare *stage* play, the Shakespeare *screenplay* is liberated from the confines of the theatre's acting space by cinema's photographic technology. This offers the potential of virtually unlimited playing spaces, the range of interior and exterior locations only being constrained perhaps by time and cost (2007,9).

This is case in *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, where filming occurred in both Venice and a studio in Luxembourg. At one point, one half of the Rialto Bridge in Venice was closed to allow for filming: an opportunity for realism that would be impossible to achieve in a stage production (Sony 2004). This can allow the film director greater freedom in terms of visual creation than can be afforded to his stage counterpart. Radford strived for an authenticity in his representation of period: not only in the location, the transportation on the canals, the costumes and the food, but also in the historical, national and religious details that are cultural codes which play an important part in his interpretation of the play. The colours and the lighting of the scenes contribute to their mood and atmosphere. Radford's Venice is a crowded and decadent, violent city teeming with people of all types: a city of religious tension and the ever-present threat of violence. It is depicted as shadowy and hazy, with dark, narrow canals. On its streets and squares, carousing men hide behind masks when they are on their way to perform illicit deeds. At the start of the film we see a masked Bassanio in a gondola, handing over a coin to a laughing prostitute in a passing gondola in the dark shadow under a bridge.

There are few limits to where the camera can go in *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*. Location, colour and lighting provide more than just the setting of the action; they also serve as interpretative devices used to comment on the characters and the society to which they belong. Film settings do, however, have their limitations: not only are there financial and practical constraints, but the set almost entirely governs the audience's understanding of the surroundings. Early modern theatres, for instance, were virtually blank spaces. In this sense, a filmic production is limited rather than liberated by its depiction of reality.

Apart from the way the text is displayed, another significant difference between screened and staged Shakespeare is in the reception of the performances by the audience. Although the sense of intimacy in a cinema is far greater than in a theatre, the film audience is physically detached from the action, precisely because of its mediation through the filmic medium. Filmgoers relate to a product filmed and edited in another time and space, distancing them from

the action physically and contextually. A stage performance takes place in real-time, and as a public experience, the audience interacts with human beings on the stage and fellow viewers. Film reception, meanwhile, is a more private experience in which screen images and sounds are constructed to provide an engaging personal experience for the individual viewer (Hindle 2007, 6). The attention of the audience is held only by what the camera captures, and the audience's viewpoint can be manipulated by the techniques available to the medium.

Both in performance and in reception, verbally and visually, stage and screen versions of Shakespearean scripts present the text in different manners. And even among screened versions, there are different modes of communication different filmic texts, or even within a single filmic text.

Modes of Communication

Modes of communication within a film include the ways in which film makers communicate their narrative to the audience through the filmic medium. Building on a study by Jack Jorgens (1991), Hindle describes four overlapping modes of communication in Shakespearean film, as discussed below: the theatrical, realistic, filmic and periodising.

The theatrical mode has "the look and feel of a performance worked out for a static theatrical space and a live audience" (Jorgens 7), and is the mode of communication used in early Shakespearean films. Characterised by limited locations and setting changes, the aim of this mode is to capture as far as possible the conventions of staged performance. During the era of silent film, this was achieved using exaggerated gestures and stylised acting. In more recent films the theatrical mode is achieved through language, by employing dialogue that is authentically Shakespearean. A modern example of this mode of filming is Trevor Nunn's made-for-television production of *The Merchant of Venice* (Nunn 2001). Nunn uses the Shakespearean pronouns of 'thee' and 'thou', in contrast to Radford, who changes them to 'you'.

The "most popular kind of Shakespeare film" uses the realistic mode of representation (Jorgens 1991, 8), as film-makers are familiar with this method due to its popularity in the film industry and success with audiences. Realist productions are designed to appear lifelike: for example, depicting dramatic events like shipwreck, war and murder as credible, and using natural settings and characters.

The filmic mode is potentially the most difficult to accomplish as well as being the most creative cinematic form, as it aims to translate verbal material into visual material and so portray a type of 'filmic poetry' (Jorgens 1991). Peter Brook has observed that "the reality of the image gives to film its power and its limitation" (Brook 1987, 192). Adaptations in the filmic mode seek to maximise this power and minimise the limitation by going beyond both the theatrical and the realistic by translating the aural intensity of Shakespeare into visual symbols, using images to reinforce emotion or, for example, by using a particular visual image to portray a linguistic motif. The directors Kurosawa and Kozintsev have been hailed as the most successful in the use of this mode (Hindle 2007, 78).

The first three modes of representing Shakespeare on screen were originally conceptualised by Jorgens in the first chapter of his book, *Shakespeare on Film* (1991). Building on the work of Jorgens in his investigation of contemporary Shakespearean adaptations, Hindle (2007) describes a fourth mode.

Contemporary Shakespearean film productions are often removed from the historical and social contexts of the original plays, and the script adapted to the cultural milieu and social dynamic of an alternative historical period (Hindle 2007, 82). The periodising mode of representing Shakespeare on film foregrounds the context of the action, making the context in which the film is set an integral part of the adaptation. Baz Luhrmann's 1996 production of *Romeo and Juliet*, for example, was set in the cityscapes of the southern United States of America. Played out in "a seductively exciting and violent context with which modern audiences can connect" (Hindle 2007, 85), *Romeo and Juliet* was enormously successful, paving the way for another Shakespearean adaptation filmed in the periodising mode: Michael Almereyda's 2000 production of *Hamlet*, set in post-modern Manhattan.

Radford conceived *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* primarily in the realistic mode, the popularity of this mode fulfilling his goal of appealing to a wide audience. There are two key aspects of the realistic mode that Radford particularly exploits. Firstly, the beginning of the film provides a context for the narrative that explains characters' relationships from the beginning, allowing for immediate audience involvement. The explanation in written text of Venice's discrimination against the Jews partly fulfils this, as does the altercation between Shylock and Antonio.

The second use of the realistic mode is in the updating of Shakespeare's language to more contemporary English. Radford perceived his audience as unfamiliar with Shakespeare's text (Radford 2004), and thus many of Shakespeare's lines are cut and the language modernised. This has the effect of increasing the pace of the film and producing a dialogue that is accessible to twenty-first century viewers. Language codes refer not only to the words spoken but also to how they are spoken. The way people speak influences our perception. A mixture of American and British actors, according to Cartmell, has a different effect in a Shakespeare film than a cast composed entirely of British performers (2000, 7). The mixture of actors and accents gives the film a more universal appeal and is possibly more lucrative. However, in this production, the American actors adopted British accents because Radford wished to make an authentic and conservative adaptation of the play. Thus Cartelli and Rowe describe it as a "conventionally realist" film suffering from "residually theatrical conditioning" (2007, 29). Cartelli and Rowe refer to aspects of the film where the realistic approach is sometimes strained – for example, in the portrayal of Belmont as an idyllic light-filled paradise, removing it from reality. This appears more theatrical than realistic.

The theatrical appearance of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* is partly a result of the sixteenth-century setting. Although filmed predominantly in the realistic mode, this text also employs the periodising technique, for Radford locates the action not at the time prescribed by the script, but during the period in which the script was written. Radford describes the film as "set … in [1596] Venice. Very specifically in Venice at that time" (Radford 2004, 23). The setting and costuming reflect the period, and although not situated in its intended time-frame, the detail in the film reveals its context in a manner not available to the Shakespearean stage. The musical score of the film is one way in which Radford reinforces his setting as authentically Elizabethan. The first fifteen minutes of the film locate it in anti-Semitic late sixteenth-century Venice. Radford's opening frames are accompanied by scrolling text giving details of anti-Semitism and the usury and sumptuary laws of Venice at that time. Both textually and visually, Radford describes the oppressive society that forced Jews to wear red caps, interspersing his scenes with episodes of Hebrew texts being burnt, crowds chanting anti-Semitic slogans, a fundamentalist friar delivering his sermon of damnation and a synagogue door and ghetto gate being shut and bolted. The sequence reveals both the major impact of religion in the period in which the production is set, and its significance to Radford's project (Crowl 2006).

The periodising mode meets the realistic in terms of the sound effects used in the film. In the words of Giannetti, "although the function of sound-effects is primarily atmospheric, they can also be precise sources of meaning in film. Akira Kurosawa says that 'cinematic sound is that which does not simply add to, but multiplies, two or three times, the effect of the image'" (Giannetti, 1993, 185). The music of a film's soundtrack, as it accompanies the opening titles, is grasped by the perceptive filmgoer as a foreshadowing of the nature of the film. The music that opens this film informs us that it is to be a period film set in the Elizabethan era. Michael Radford instructed the composer, Jocelyn Pook, to write music that would evoke the Shakespearean period but would have a contemporary feel to it. She combined Medieval, Baroque and Renaissance elements and wrote music to be played on instruments of the period: the sackbut, viol and lute. She wished to imply the music of the period without trying to recreate it. As well as the song "Tell me where is fancy bred" from the play, Pook has set texts from Shakespeare and Milton and Edgar Alan Poe to music. This haunting and gentle music pervades the film and, in Kurosawa's words, multiplies the image that is created by the costumes and the sets of the film. For Bassanio's arrival she composed a solemn piece of ceremonial music, characteristic of royal processions. Bassanio, dressed magnificently, arrives at Belmont with princely reserve and courtly manners, followed by an impressive retinue in a spectacular procession.

She also designed the score to underline the nationality or religion of different characters in the film. The Prince of Morocco's scenes are accompanied by Arabic music played on Middle Eastern instruments and the "musica" that Prince of Aragon orders to be played as he makes his choice of the caskets is Spanish and played on the guitar. In the scene of the "Blessing of the Boat" at the beginning of the film we see the Franciscan Friar followed by a procession of acolytes and we hear a Gregorian chant. A melancholy, poignant Jewish chant, sung by a Sephardic Yemenite singer, is the background to the opening scenes showing the persecution of the Jews of Venice. The Gregorian and the Jewish chants are juxtaposed at the beginning and echo the religious tensions of the film.

The periodising mode, however, is potentially dangerous for the historical inaccuracies that may occur in the details of the setting or props.[20] In *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of*

[20] This is short for 'properties' and is used to refer to any moveable object on the scene of a film set or stage (Hindle 2007, 258).

Venice, there are a number of inconsistencies that reveal the dangers of the periodising mode in the form of cultural and historical inaccuracies. These draw attention to the cultural situation of the text, which is inconsistent with its setting. For example, in the front of Portia's house, a black swan is shown: a bird that is native to Australia and was not introduced to Europe until long after 1596. Furthermore, the portrait of Portia in the leaden casket is painted in the style of the Florentine Botticelli, who was active about a century before that date. Lynn Collins may be reminiscent of a Botticellian beauty, but it seems unlikely that a late 16th century Venetian lady would have had herself painted in the manner of late 15th century Florence. Noting these 'mistakes' does not necessarily entail criticism of Radford, but rather highlights the way in which contexts can be simulated within a filmic text, and the errors – or inconsistencies – that can occur. These inconsistencies can be as enlightening to Book Historians as the 'correct' portrayal of the historical context.

Genre Conventions

Hollywood broadly categorises its productions into genre groupings such as romance, western, thriller and horror. Each of these genres is associated with certain plot elements, themes, techniques and iconography, and in some cases, specific actors and actresses, and even directors. As mentioned in previous chapters, the Shakespearean film can be considered a genre of its own. Such classifications in the film arena would have amused the bard who parodied such classifications on the stage when, in *Hamlet* he has Polonius refer to plays of "tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral..." (2.2.379-381).Whatever mirth such classification may have produced in playwrights, it still offers value to viewers. Genre expectations are an important aspect of viewer reception and, to some extent, their satisfaction will depend upon the extent to which these expectations are fulfilled. Bordwell and Thompson have gone as far as to call such expectations the "contract between filmmaker and audience, the promise of something new based on something familiar" (Bordwell and Thompson 2001, 99). 'Something familiar' is experienced within a 'new' production by the presence of recognisable genre devices such as plot elements, themes, filmic techniques and iconography. Thus, another way of examining *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* is to investigate it under these four headings in terms of the genre of Shakespearean film. Such an investigation is not possible within the confines of this

thesis, but an indication of the aspects to examine in a fuller study of this filmic text will now be explained.

Plot Elements

Genre frequently involves certain plot conventions: Westerns, for instance, involve revenge, while the detective or mystery film contains a progressive investigation, and the musicals require song and dance (Hindle 2007). The same is true for Shakespearean adaptations, and audience expectation is such that the plot elements of the filmic production mirror those of Shakespeare's play. The plot elements of the filmic text of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* are almost identical to those of Shakespeare's original play. Although much cutting took place to meet the needs of cinema, Radford removed lines and scenes that did not change the sense or the plot of the text he was adapting.

Themes

Within a Shakespeare adaptation, the status of the themes running through the film is similar to that of the plot elements. They are "big themes, stuff that you recognize... coherent, human, alive" (interview with Radford 2004, 2). The official trailer of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* explicitly points to these features by foregrounding four of its prominent themes: love, hatred, betrayal, and vengeance. Research has shown that modern film audiences respond well to films based on these four themes (Wu 2006). As Hindle explains,

> It is no surprise to lean that the plots of Shakespeare plays which tend to appeal most to audiences will also generate the themes of greatest audience appeal (Hindle 2007, 95).

Radford makes the themes of Shakespeare's original script attractive to a modern audience by highlighting those of contemporary relevance such as religious intolerance and racial alterity. The vengeance portrayed in the film parallels that demonstrated by religious fundamentalists in post 9/11 America. Radford argues that his film connects with contemporary audiences:

> Because of psychology... Shylock is a man who has had a great wrong done to him. He gets into a rage like we all do. And then at the end of that, he goes too far. You might say that on a national level America had a great wrong done to it on 9/11, and then in rage attacked Iraq... that's universal (Radford 2004).

The theme of religious intolerance in the film is one which is prevalent in the lives of the viewers, and thus allows them to connect more strongly with the on-screen action. This will be explored more fully in Chapter Five, where I show how contemporary interest in religious themes makes the modern adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* appear socially relevant.

Film Techniques

Due to the increasingly sophisticated technology available to film, the analysis of technique is becoming an ever-more interesting field of study. Film can be dated by the sophistication of its technique and analysed in terms of filmic presentation style, and different procedures used to identify films with a genre. Sombre lighting is characteristic of horror films, for example, and soft rose lighting is associated with the romance genre.

Benoit Delhomme, the Director of Photography in *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* described the film as visually identifiable with as a thriller: lighting is used to create the shadowy effect characteristic of this genre and Radford makes frequent use of chiaroscuro[21] to create a mysterious and grimy atmosphere, thus drawing out the harshness of the setting. The sun never shines in Venice, and Shylock's house is always presented in the bleak night-time. All the scenes at Shylock's house and many others involving the character are filmed through a blue filter that has a hardening effect, reflecting his bitter experiences.

Iconography

Iconography is the set of images that are symbolically associated with a subject. In the filmic context, these images and symbols are often associated with certain types of films. A film genre can often be identified "by the repeated use of visual elements signifying or symbolising meaning in a conventionally iconographic way" (Hindle 2007, 97). The most iconographic element of the Shakespearean film genre is often the use of the 'icon' of Shakespeare himself:

> Perhaps the most iconographic element of any Shakespeare film adaptation is the frequently bold display of Shakespeare's name itself, given either in or near to the main titles: after all, the name 'William Shakespeare' has for so long maintained 'classic' status, synonymous with 'genius', that no filmmaker at work in the 'designer label' conscious marketplace would not want to attach the peerless 'Shakespeare' brand to their movie (Hindle 2007, 98).

[21] A technique involving the distribution of light and shadow – derived from the history of painting, but now used to describe a shadow effect captured on the screen.

This is clearly the case in *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, in which the appearance of the playwright's name in the title promotes the prestige and material benefit associated with the Shakespeare industry. This will be discussed in Chapter 5 particularly with regard to the effect on the production and reception of the film.

In the film itself, the image of Belmont as an isle symbolizing love and fantasy is one visual icon that is repeated throughout. As Benoit Delhomme puts it,

> When the spare somberness of colour and mood soon give way to the richer and more finely textured colours of Belmont, we are encouraged to feel that fairytale solutions seem possible, such upbeat oversimplification cleverly signified by the fairy-tale like digitally composited images of Belmont Isle often used to introduce us to it. (Hindle 2007)

While Venice is depicted as dark and dank, Belmont is filmed in a blaze of light. Visually, Radford makes the contrast stark. Belmont "is a fairy-tale landscape compared to Venice's seedy commercial grit" (Crowl 2006, 121). The depiction of Belmont as an island is a deviation from the original, for the literal translation of the name is 'beautiful mountain'.

The body of 'Shakespeare on Screen' is distinguished from other filmic fields by the modes of communication and generic conventions discussed above. *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* provides much material for content and technical analysis in its presentation and can be interestingly studied in light of the conventions that are associated with screened Shakespeare in general – both in terms of where Radford's film is conventional, and where it differs from the norm. This chapter has examined some features of the filmic text. This type of analysis is often omitted from Book History investigations based on Darnton's model of process-driven Book History studies, but is important to a thorough investigation of the text. The next chapter will examine the transmission of the Radford's *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* beginning with its creation and the subject of authorship.

Chapter 4

AUTHORSHIP, ADAPTATION AND AUTHORITY IN *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

> Playwrights like to think that they're the sole author of everything that happens on stage. But in this case, I knew I would be sharing the driver's compartment with many others. Like the book-writer of a big musical, or the screen-writer of a film, I would be referring constantly to the designer, the movement director, the composer and every other member of the creative team. I would be working with both the producer and the director, both united in the form of Nick Hytner. And I would be working with Philip Pullman.
>
> ─ Screen-play writer Nicholas Wright, about adapting Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* for the stage (cited in Rothwell 2000, 91).

In the 1998 film *Shakespeare in Love*, one of the main characters asks who William Shakespeare is and receives the reply that he is "Nobody – he's the author" (*Shakespeare in Love*, 1998). This quip provides anecdotal evidence of the fascination with authorship that underpins conceptions of literature and, increasingly, film production. The frivolity of the quoted line masks an important philosophical question that is of great interest to Book Historians: that of the creative agency that results in the production of a text. Book History discussions of authorship include many different aspects: the agent or agents that produce the texts, the forces that affect this agency, the role of the agent(s) in the life-cycle of the text and the forms that the effects of agency take. Book Historians are concerned with the conceptual changes in the nature and understanding of the author-figure from the medieval period to the present (Darnton 2006, 83). To date, however, investigations of authorship have predominantly tracked the notion of authorship in the context of written texts. This chapter, meanwhile, looks at different conceptions of authorship and authority in the case of filmic texts. Three important considerations will be taken into account: the history of authorship and film; the *auteur* theory, which is the most enduring theory of authorship in film; and the effects of adaptation.

In the epigraph cited above, Nicholas Wright identifies the 'driver's compartment' in a stage production as belonging to a number of individuals. In other words, there is no one creative force solely responsible for the production of a film. The script-writer and director both

contribute to the early creation of the film, while casting directors, lighting technicians and set constructors play a role in shaping the final product. Actors are not often acknowledged as having an authorial role in the filmic context, but they play a large part in shaping the characters and in a film where characters contribute significantly, the actor may be largely responsible for much of the creativity of the film. This chapter will examine the nature of filmic authorship and the different ways in which it has been conceived. William Shakespeare (as author of the original script); Michael Radford (as director and adapter); and Al Pacino (for his contribution in playing Shylock) will be examined as three possible author-figures in *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*.

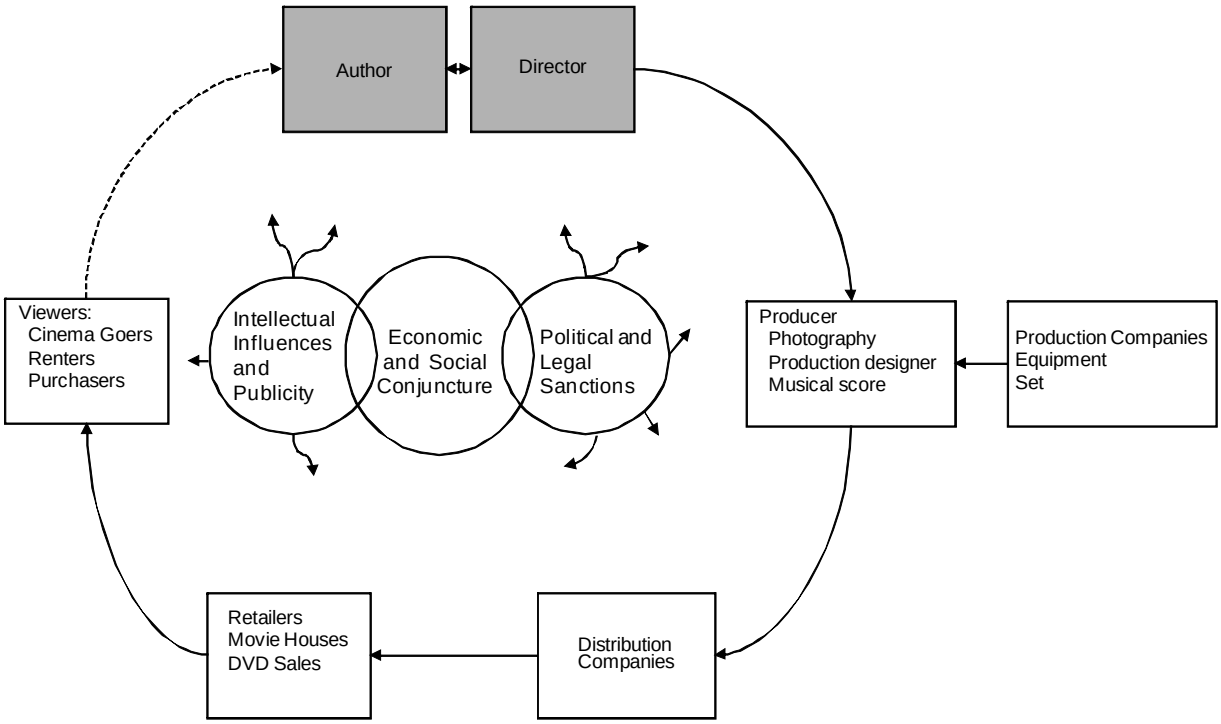

Figure 4.1: Filmic Communication Circuit – Authorship

Within the framework of Darnton's Communication Circuit, Book Historians have explored changing conceptions of authorship, the industrialization and commercialisation of the author-figure, as well as the effect of economic and social conditions on authors. The first stage of the Filmic Communications Circuit shown in Figure 4.1 is complex due to the number of agents involved in producing a film. Because production involves both creation and adaptation, there are many agents responsible for the overall product who can be considered 'authors'. The

multiplicity of ‘authors’ is illustrated through the author-director link in the diagram above, which represents a number of creative forces that are responsible for the creation of the text.

Authorship in Film

The history of filmic authorship has its roots in literary questions of authorship, and Book Historians working on film face many of the same challenges as those working in the realm of printed texts. A general definition of authorship thus provides a foundation for a discussion of its filmic context.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (OED) the word 'author' comes from the Latin verb *augere*: “to make, to grow, originate, promote, increase” (OED 2007). During the Middle Ages the word evolved into *auctor* and *auctoritas*, which both connote authority. There were rapid and sometimes subtle changes in the definition of the word. For example, in the thirteenth century, the Franciscan monk St. Bonaventure argued that the agents involved in the act of creating a manuscript could be separated into four different categories:

> One person writes material composed by other people, adding and changing nothing; and this person is said to be merely the scribe (*scriptor*). Another one writes material composed by others, joining them together but adding nothing of his own; and this person is said to be the compiler (*compilator*). Another one writes both materials composed by others and his own, but the materials composed by others are the most important materials, while his own are added for the purpose of clarifying them; and this person is said to be the commentator (*commentator*), not the author. Another one writes both his own materials and the materials of others are included to confirm his own; and this person must be called the author (*auctor*). (Wogan-Browne, et al. 1999, 3)

Authorship is considered primarily as a process of creation, but as the citation above suggests, understandings of what it means to create can be nuanced and complex. Not only are such understandings complex, but the definitions are fluid depending on the context in which they are used. The concept of ‘author’, thus, is contextually bound. The most common modern usage of the word “author” is someone who “originates or gives existence to anything: a. an inventor or constructor or founder” (OED, 2007). This 'common-sense' definition:

> …involves the idea of an individual (singular) who is responsible for… writes or composes… a product and is thereby considered an inventor or founder… and is thought to have certain ownership rights over the [product] as well as certain authority over its interpretation. (Bennet 2005, 7)

The “author” is thus conceived of as an individual who has a special genius, who “does something utterly new, unprecedented”; who possesses what Derrida called a “sovereign solitude” (Derrida 1981, 226). The author has creative power over the work both before it reaches the consumer and after it is released by virtue of interpretation. The question of authorship, in this light, is a question of power, and the cultural and economic influence that can be attached to this power.

Derrida’s conception of ‘authorship-as-power’, although somewhat contested, can be applied to authorship in film. Indeed, concerns about power and control first led to questions of authorship in the context of film. Early films were rarely considered to be serious art-forms, and were deemed inferior to stage productions and literary texts. The roots of this perceived inferiority are numerous, but one is the lack of an author figure to whom ‘creative genius’ could be attributed. The notion of an author-figure has been tied, traditionally, to the notion of art and the privilege that is associated with the title. The attribution of authorship is significant to ‘art’, which suggests genius and rarity. For example, Michelangelo is acclaimed as the creator of the murals in the Sistine Chapel, J.M. Coetzee is famed for his novels, and Ted Hughes for his poetry. They are considered artists, and the work they produce is considered art: and is celebrated at least partly through the celebration of the artist. Films do not have single author figures, and were, partly for this reason, not considered true ‘art’.

This led to a movement to attribute creative genius within the film industry, stemming from the desire for film to be acknowledged as a respected form. Film scholars, critics and directors, however, struggled to attribute creative genius because of the number of agents involved in the film-making process. In the early eighties, Alexander Astruc argued that film is a means of creative expression. He stated that:

> The cinema is quite simply becoming a means of expression, just as all the arts have been before it, and in particular painting and the novel... it is gradually becoming a language. By language I mean a form in which and by which an artist can express his thoughts... or translates his obsessions (Astruc 1981, 77).

These “obsessions” needed to be attributed to an individual, however; for art to be produced, an artist is required. Thus, someone in the film-making industry had to be credited as the ‘artist’. Filmic authorship became the subject of discussion, using the literary conception of authorship as a starting point. Literary conceptions as discussed above privilege a single figure as

creator. The *auteur* theory of authorship in film was developed partly to satisfy this requirement, attributing authorship to the director of films as had been common practice in the industry.

The *Auteur* Theory

The *auteur* theory, first proposed by French film critics (Bazin, 1962), but adopted and named by the American film critic Andrew Sarris, is primarily a way of appraising films through the effects of an *auteur* or author, usually taken to be the director. In its European context, Andre Bazin, the founder of the French *Cahiers du Cinema*, is often seen as the father of *auteurism* because of his appreciation of the world-view and style of such directors as Charlie Chaplin and Jean Renoir, whom he perceived as 'artists'. As Sarris explains,

> Ultimately, the *auteur* theory is not so much a theory as an attitude, a table of values that converts film history into directorial autobiography. The auteur critic is obsessed with the wholeness of art and the artist. He looks at a film as a whole, and the director as a whole. The parts, however entertaining individually, must cohere meaningfully. This meaningful coherence is more likely when the director dominates the proceedings with skill and purpose (Sarris 1981, 285).

In Sarris's version, the *auteur* theory involves three central tenets: firstly, it assumes that the technical competence of the director is a criterion for judging the accomplishment of the film, for a successful director should have sound technical competence. Secondly, Sarris's theory assumes that the director's personal approach is distinct and consistent throughout his films, and can be used to evaluate their success as "art". 'Directory continuity' is usually assessed in terms of style, but may be distinguished by themes or modes of communication. The *auteur* theory is primarily concerned with the meaning of a film, in the sense of interpretation, and thus the third tenet is that meaning is created out of the tension between the director's personality and his material. For a director to be considered an 'author' there must be a relationship between the construction of the film and the way he thinks and feels. There must be intention behind the handling of the subject-matter, as well as in the subject itself.[22]

Auteur theory usually assumes that the director is the individual who is responsible for the distinctive quality of the film in the same way as the writer of a book or the painter of a portrait are considered "authors" in their fields. In other words, the director is the controlling

[22] A broader explanation of this theory can be found in two critical articles "Notes on the auteur theory in 1962" and "Toward a theory of film history" in which Sarris elucidates auteur theory, its origin and its function.

hand in the creation of a filmic text. However, *auteur* theory does not argue that the director of a film is necessarily the author, but rather that there is a single controlling force comparable to that of a literary author in the case of written texts or of an artist in the realm of fine art. As each book can be discussed in terms of its author, so can each film.

Authorship in *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*

The growing interest in technological advances in textual scholarship has highlighted the fact that the concepts of authorship and authority and the role of the author in the digital era are an increasingly important feature of contemporary Book History studies. Finkelstein and McCleery write that:

> New paradigms of authorial activity and redefinitions of what constitutes 'authorship' are predicted with the onset of digital technology in the twenty-first century. Authorship in the digital era may also be in a process of change….Assessing the role of contemporary and future author functions within such evolving terms is therefore a challenge that future print culture and Book History scholars will need to face and undertake (2006, 84).

This is also the case in the context of filmic texts, in which the position of 'author' is controversial. *Auteur* theory provides a technique for attributing authorship in Radford's *Merchant of Venice*, although the usual conditions of a film are complicated in this production by the fact that the screenplay is an adaptation of a play script. Therefore, the process of adaptation requires further exploration before discussing possible author-figures within this film.

Adaptation

While all Shakespearean film productions are adaptations of dramatic scripts, they are by no means the only or even the most commonly adapted works. For example, the language of classic literary texts is often modernised in newer books, films are adapted into multimedia games, and cartoon heroes are depicted using live actors and so on. Linda Hutcheon, a scholar focusing on textual adaptation, speculates that:

> Given the large number of adaptations in all media today, many artists appear to have taken on this dual responsibility: to adapt another work and to make of it an autonomous creation. (2006, 85)

"Autonomous creation" may involve a recognizable transposition of a work, a creative and interpretive act of appropriation or the salvaging another work or an extended intertextual

engagement with the adapted work (Hutcheon 2006, 8). According to Fischlin and Fortier, adaptation:

> …can expand or contract. Writ large, adaptation includes almost any act of alteration performed upon specific cultural works of the past and dovetails with a general process of cultural recreation (2000, 4).

Radford's film, for example, might be considered an act of homage towards all productions of *The Merchant of Venice*, staged and screened; a reinterpretation and replacement for previous versions of the play; or a combination of these (Cartelli and Rowe 2006, 24). Recent scholarship seems to:

> …gravitate towards the last notion: that… the film presents itself not as a copy of an original but as a reframing of earlier framings, an addition to a larger body of work that by implication includes many [texts of *The Merchant of Venice*]. (Cartelli and Rowe 2006, 26)

Jerome McGann (1983) and Joseph Grigely (1998) have described this kind of additive revisioning of classic works in literary terms. A *work* (in this case *The Merchant of Venice*) is conceived of a series of *texts*. This series may include texts in a variety of media including films, books, tapes, opera, ballet and many others. As Cartelli and Rowe put it, "each of the texts in this series re-presents or re-iterates prior texts in the series" (2006, 27). Each text is as 'legitimate' as the one preceding and following it, and consists of a different facet of the same work. The implicit assumption here is that works can consist of more than one instantiation – in this case linked through the author-figure of Shakespeare.

Defined in this manner, it should be clear that of all the texts that comprise a work, none has precedence. Later texts are not to be seen as a sum of the former, nor given preference as the most recent and thus 'better' texts. So too, earlier versions should not be given the preference of being more 'authentic' either. Each text is a "tissue of quotations" (Barthes 1978, 146) made up of other texts in the work and the even earlier texts that made up Shakespeare's play-text.

In this way, Michael Radford's *The Merchant of Venice* consists of one of a series of texts that plays with variations on a work that is not reducible to a single authorised version, but rather consists of a multifaceted exploration of a single work in numerous forms. *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* is a different entity from the original play, and the screenplay a different form of the play-script: it is a revisioning of the original text, but not a

copy of it. It draws from the play, but does not mirror it. In Hutcheon's words, adaptations are "repetition, but repetition without replication" (2006, 7).

Adaptations, thus, occupy a complex space within the discussion of authorship. They are not 'repetitions', and are too easily considered products of the original author, but neither are they autonomous creations. Filmic texts are particularly complex in this context. Non-theoretical discussions about film do not use the term 'author' for this reason. Paisley Livingstone, a philosopher of film, argues that:

> [A]lthough author studies are still written and published, it is generally held that the work of an individual film maker is best understood as figuring within a larger process, system or structure, be it a discursive, institutional, national or international one. (1997, 299)

The quality and artistry of a film are the product not simply of individual human expression, but of a combination of institutional forces: as Schatz puts it, "in each case the 'style' of a writer, director, star – or even a cinematographer, art director, or costume designer – [is] fused with the studio's production operations and management structure, its resources and talent pool, its narrative traditions and marketing strategy" (2004, 654). Book History investigations into filmic texts take these different facets into account.

The following discussion will use the term "author" to refer to the agent with the most responsibility for the production of the text. While this focus on an individual affirms the categorisations of both the literary tradition which informs Book History and traditional film theory, Jack Stillinger notes that

> the multiple agencies involved in making a film are normally so diverse and the process so intricately organised around a multitude of specialist trades and professions that for all practical purposes authorship remains unassignable. (1991, 47)

Despite Stillinger's claim that authorship as only attributable to individual genius is not a useful concept in the context of film, different conceptions of authorship make it possible to identify an individual as the key creative force in the textual production process. Taking into account different conceptions of authorship, the *auteur* theory discussed in the first part of this chapter and the idea of adaptation in the second, three possible 'authors' for the filmic text of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* would be William Shakespeare, Michael Radford and Al Pacino. While the first two may be obvious candidates – Shakespeare composed the original play-text, and would be conventionally considered author, and Radford as the

director fulfils the authorship criteria of the *auteur* theory – a case might also be made for considering Pacino as author. The conceptions of authorship discussed above all involve understandings of an 'individual genius' who contributes significantly to the final product. I argue that Pacino's portrayal of Shylock fulfils this criterion, as he brings past experience, personal understandings and expertise to a role that draws the film together.

These three possibilities are not exhaustive, but the following discussion will provide a demonstration of the complexity of the creative process involved in filmic adaptation, as well as the impact of multiple agents on the final production of a filmic text.

William Shakespeare

Michael Radford jokingly acknowledged the creative input of William Shakespeare in the film *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* when he quipped that he "wrote the script with [his] collaborator William Shakespeare. [Shakespeare] just contributed the dialogue; the plot, the story, and the characters and [Radford] did all the rest" (Sony Pictures 2004, 7).

Shakespeare, as writer of the original play that was the basis for this 2004 production, must naturally be given some credit for the authorship of the adaptation. William Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice* provides the foundation and the title for Radford's filmic adaptation, cumbersomely named *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice.* The power associated with the name 'Shakespeare' was used to draw audiences to the film; through the title, Shakespeare is granted primary authorship, even if only for social and economic reasons. In addition, the attribution of authorship of the themes of the film to Shakespeare also allows Radford to avoid some of the controversy associated with the content, and to repel potential charges against him such as anti-Semitism – charges that have been levelled against previous directors of *The Merchant of Venice.*

While it is important to acknowledge the dramatic basis of this film, it is restrictive to consider Shakespeare the sole author of this filmic production. Adaptation into the filmic medium does not simply add another set of material resources, but significantly changes the nature of representation in profound ways (Burn and Parker 2003), many of which are discussed in Chapter Three. The language, techniques and expectations resulting from genre associated with the text are altered when it is translated into film. The facilitator(s) of these changes can – and should – be considered "author(s)" of the final text. Although Shakespeare wrote the original

play script, however, his authorship claim is limited to the creation of this *work* as defined above, as opposed to authorship of the 2004 *text*.

Michael Radford

Michael Radford is the agent most often credited with the creation of the 2004 text. He is the main driving force behind the adaptation of Shakespeare's script into *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, and potentially the single creative genius that the *auteur* theory looks to as being responsible for filmic authorship. The filmic medium necessitates authorial criteria that cannot be translated easily from those required by both literary authors and artists in other media. The multiple creative agencies that go into film production mean that no single individual can be solely responsible for the film, but Radford might be considered responsible in terms of his overarching control. His technical competence involves drawing together the different areas of film-making into a composite whole. As director, Radford fulfils this criterion: he orchestrates significant changes to the play-script of *The Merchant of Venice* and fulfils the three criteria that the *auteur* theory posits as necessary for authorship. He is technically competent; has a body of work within which *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* can be investigated in terms of continuity of style and concern; and Radford shows personal involvement in the production of the film: his ideas drove the process of production.

Sarris uses the term *auteur* to distinguish between great directors and mere technicians (Sarris 1981, 27). The problem with the term *auteur*, however, is that it is not purely descriptive, but carries heavy evaluative weight. In Sarris's conception, there cannot be a bad *auteur*: only a bad director.

Radford's central role is acknowledged by filmic convention: the film is marketed as "a Michael Radford production" and the theatrical trailer for the film released to cinemas as well and included on DVD begins with the words "A Michael Radford film" (Radford, 2004). It also refers to him as the 'acclaimed director' of *Il Postino*, thus suggesting connections between his previous work and the filmic text of *The Merchant of Venice*. One such connection can be made in terms of similarity of subject matter. Radford is concerned with the cultural outsider: a preoccupation that may have its roots in Radford's own life, as he was born India and raised in the Middle East, and a child of the last days of British colonialism. *1984* (1984), *White Mischief*

(1987) and *Il Postino* (1994) all deal with outsiders expelled from their communities. In *1984* Winston Smith is exiled from his own society; the 1987 production of *White Mischief* deals with the excesses of colonial life in Kenya; and in *Il Postino* Radford explores the cross-cultural issues which arise when Pablo Neruda, the Chilean poet, plays a complicated role in the romantic drama of an Italian postman (Crowl 2006, 116). This professional experience is brought to bear in *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* where Radford engages with Shylock, a cultural outsider because of his religion, and the tension of religious prejudice which is as apparent in our age as it was in Shakespeare's. A more complete Book History analysis would investigate the connections between these films, as well as the manner in which Radford's work is received based on responses to his previous films.

Not only are there connections between Radford's *Merchant of Venice* and his other work, but links with that of other directors too. Although this is Radford's first Shakespearean adaptation, he draws on previous successful directors of Shakespeare to great effect. He combines Olivier's attention to the spoken word in the 1948 production of *Hamlet*; Zefferelli's emphasis on the visual emotions of his characters highlighted by the focus on hands, torsos and faces in his *Romeo and Juliet* (1968); and Welles's fascination with lighting, camera and editing that is most obvious in the visual contrasts of black and white in his *Othello* (1952). Radford's role in *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* is most obvious in the crucial decisions related to the content, casting and presentation of the film. For example, in his position as screenplay writer, Radford was responsible for the transformation of Shakespeare's play script into a filmic screenplay. This involved transforming a script suitable for a stage production with a verbal focus into one that makes use of the heightened visual aspects of the filmic medium. Radford's attention to detail, and to making 'traditional' Shakespeare accessible to a modern audience, is also reminiscent of Kenneth Branagh's films. This can be observed in Radford's changes in language, as previously addressed: he cuts text not used in contemporary English and changes pronouns from 'thou' to 'you'.

The setting of the film in sixteenth-century Venice is another crucial decision made by Radford. The text-scroll used by Radford at the beginning of the film makes explicit Radford's historical approach to the text:

> Altogether the production was creating a Venice that was real and alive and vibrant, more approachable and comprehensible to an audience in the 21st century while remaining true to the original spirit of Shakespeare's writing. "It's great that we're

> doing it in authentic period," observes actor Mackenzie Cook. "It's fantastic to be doing it in a way that Shakespeare presumably would have envisaged it. I think that Mike's making the film that Shakespeare would have made". (Sony Pictures 2004, 13)

Radford purposefully created a Venice he felt would have been true to the time:

> I tried to make it smelly and dirty. I don't like people appearing in neat, pristine costumes. People didn't wash a lot in those days and the place was smelly and dirty. I tried to make the weather count; I tried to make the fact that people travelled by water all the time count. (Sony Pictures 2004, 12)

Radford also influenced the final production from a technical perspective. Radford approached *The Merchant of Venice* with little experience of Shakespeare and yet an experienced filmmaker's understanding of cutting, pace and rhythm. This can be seen throughout the film in the techniques of cross-cutting.[23] For example, Radford cross-cuts between Portia's handling of Morocco and Aragon in Belmont and Bassanio's preparations for his wooing expedition.

Radford rearranges the text by cutting from Pacino's Shylock shuffling away from the camera into a chilly grey Venetian fog after the scene with Tuba, to Bassanio's galley approaching Belmont and Nerissa's excited report that "a Day in April never came so sweet" (*The Merchant of Venice* II. ix.92). And in the trial scene Radford heightens cinematic tension when Shylock moves to slice Antonio's "pound of flesh". As one film scholar explains,

> These are the touches of the skilled film craftsman not often revealed by Shakespeareans-turned-filmmakers. (Crowl 2006, 124)

Finally, Radford was responsible for casting the lead acting roles in *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, and in this way, too, he influenced the presentation of the characters in the film, as each actor exercises some control over the final production. The extent of this control can present another contender for authorship: the main actor.

Al Pacino

As another dominant controlling force in the production, Pacino may also claim some of credit control of the final product of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, and be considered 'author'. The performers in filmic texts embody and give material existence to the adaptation. This is pivotal to the production as a whole, and so actors who play leading roles can be said to

[23] An editorial technique that alternates shots of two or more lines of action occurring in different places, usually simultaneously (Hindle 2007, 255).

have strong creative control over the final text, and to a certain extent, this makes the actors themselves adapters:

> Although clearly having to follow the screenplay, some actors admit that they seek background and inspiration from the adapted text, especially if the characters they play are well known literary ones. (Hutcheon 2006, 81)

Films are often marketed using the main actors as a selling tool, and it is not uncommon for the film to be dubbed "Al Pacino's *The Merchant of Venice*".

Pacino, like Radford, can be considered as an author-figure using the three criteria of the *auteur* theory. The technical competence of a film's actors has long been used as a criterion for filmic evaluation. Al Pacino has a distinguished acting career, and has been nominated for an Academy Award eight times. He received Best Actor nominations for *And Justice for All*, *The Godfather Part II*, *Dog Day Afternoon* and *Serpico* and Best Supporting Actor nominations for *The Godfather*, *Dick Tracy* and *Glengarry Glen Ross*; and won an Oscar for Best Actor in *Scent of a Woman* (Sony Pictures 2004, 18). Pacino's interest in Shakespeare did not begin with *The Merchant of Venice*. In 2000, he directed and starred in a loose adaptation of *Richard III*, *Looking for Richard* (Sony Pictures 2004, 18). Such a career provides an ample body of work within which to situate *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*.

It is difficult to evaluate acting according to the second *auteur* criterion because a good actor can convincingly play many different sorts of roles in a distinctive style. Pacino, however, has a distinguishable personality throughout his films. Crowl comments that "there are touches of some of Pacino's famed screen portrayals – from Serpico[24] to Sonny Wortzik[25] to Roy Cohn[26] – in his Shylock, but most importantly, there are strong traces of Michael Corleone[27] buried deep beneath his beard and behind his eyes" (Crowl 2006, 118).

Pacino's interpretation of his character – the character that arguably has maximum impact on the production as a whole – is a compelling reason to see him as an overall creative influence in *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*:

> Pacino displays a remarkable technical mastery of the crisp, taut, repetitive invective (and sly irony) of Shylock's language and conspicuously avoids bending his portrayal to catch at modern sensibilities. (Crowl 2006, 115)

[24] Pacino played Frank Serpico in the film *Serpico* (1973).
[25] In *Dog Day Afternoon* (1975).
[26] In the television series *Angels in America* (2003).
[27] *The Godfather I (*1972), *II* (1974) and *III (*1990).

Pacino's main claim to authorship is through his influence as (controversially) the main character in the film.

Pacino has more of an effect on the final product of *The Merchant of Venice* than just his acting role as Shylock. His presence influenced the setting of the film too, as through Pacino, the film crew was granted access to many of Venice's most treasured attractions:

> "He's kind of a god in Italy," laughs Navidi. "I mean, the Mayor said, 'you want to close the Rialto Bridge? We'll close it for you for 6 or 7 hours. This has never been done before. You want to shoot in the Doge Palace, we'll give you a section of it, which has never been done before. We'll even close the Grand Canal once in a while…" (Sony Pictures 2004, 16)

Despite Pacino's dominating performance and the use of Shakespeare's original text, the most probable candidate for the label 'author', both in legal and conventional terms, is Michael Radford. As director, he is the driving authorial force behind this filmic adaptation. However, as William Goldman described the film-making process, the finished film is the studio's adaptation of the director's adaptation of the actor's adaptation of the play that might itself (and in the case of *The Merchant of Venice* was) an adaptation itself, either of another work or of narrative or generic conventions (Hutcheon 2006, 91). The 'genius'of individuals needs to be viewed in the context of group creativity within a corporate system rooted in social and economic structures.

Authorship in the scope of a film production is, at most, an acknowledgement of pivotal roles played within this process, and, at least, a redundant concept. However, the way authorship is conceived, measured and understood, and the changes in this conception and the effect of this on the filmic text, is of great interest to Book Historians. While this chapter has discussed the difficulty of assigning authorsip, and the complexity of authorship in film, as well as the historical reasons for attribution of authorship, it has not investigated the need for an author in the modern context, or if it is practical at all to identify one. This, in itself, is another discussion well worthy of further investigation within a Book History framework.

Chapter 5

THE PRODUCTION OF *WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*

> Ideas are the motors of history. They take many forms and have many sources, and often assume a life of their own, and prove bigger than the epochs they influence.
>
> ─ Grayling, (2006, 143)

The assemblage of parties responsible for the final production of the filmic text of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* consisted of one playwright, one director, two major production companies, four producers, six executive producers, five key funders, 26 actors, one casting director, three cutting and editing specialists, and a crew of over 40 cameramen, sound and lighting technicians, make-up artists and costume designers[28]. Each of these agents is situated within the social, cultural, economic and legal milieu from which the film emerges – being influenced by the "motors of history" described by Grayling in the rubric introducing this chapter. Pierre Bourdieu described this social context and this system of networks as the 'artistic field of production' – or the 'literary field' in the case of printed texts (Bourdieu 1993, 11), and, like Grayling, understands such forces as "bigger than the epochs they influence"(2006, 143). According to Bourdieu, the production of texts is not so much a consequence of the actions of agents in isolation, but rather related to the structural relations and institutions that allow them to act. It is these relations that provide the conditions that allow for production. Bourdieu thus examines the relationship between systems of thought, social institutions, different forms of material and symbolic power and the resources or 'capital' associated with such power (Johnson 1993, 1): a project similar to that of Book History in terms of the diversity of fields that are involved. In Chapter 5 I show the profitability of the application of Bourdieu's work to a Book History study. I use one aspect of Bourdieu's framework – his understanding of capital as the interests and resources available within the context of production – to analyse some of the social and economic factors impacting on, and allowing for, the production of *William Shakespeare's*

[28] A complete list of the agents responsible for the production of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* is included as Appendix A at the end of this thesis.

The Merchant of Venice. The figure below highlights the stage of the Filmic Communication Circuit to be examined in this chapter, that of the agents responsible for Radford's 2004 Shakespearean adaptation.

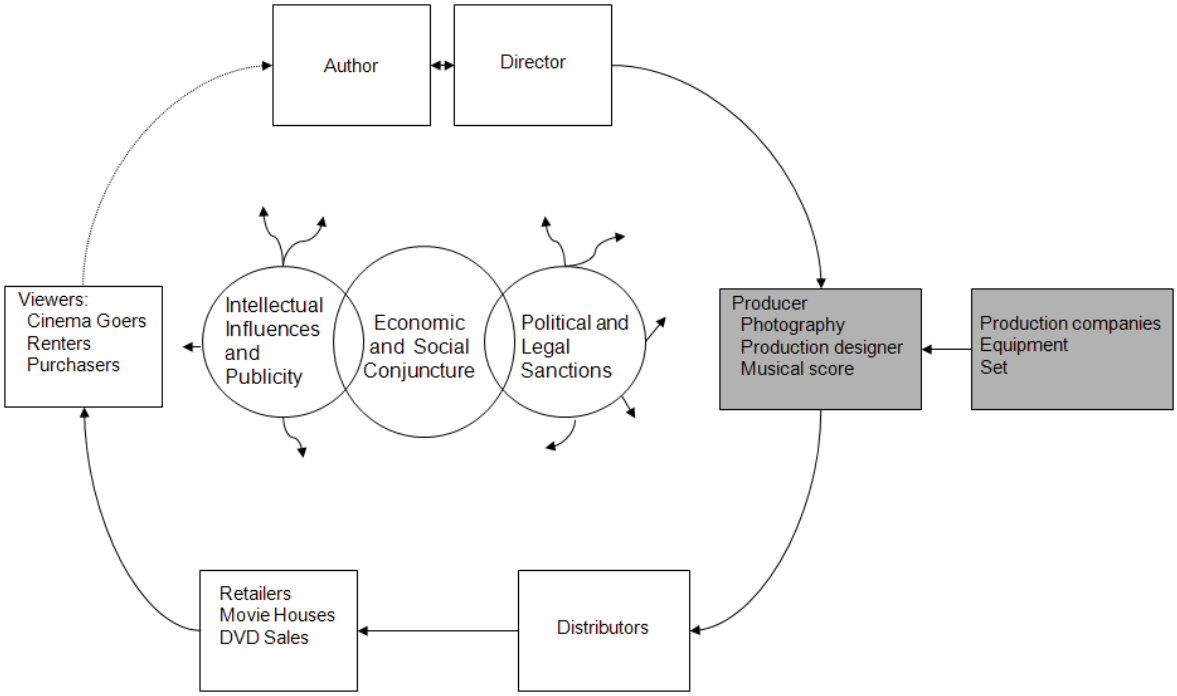

Figure 5.1: Communication Circuit - Production

The Merchant of Venice on Film

An analysis of any film, especially a filmic adaptation, can benefit from an understanding of the historical trajectory of earlier productions or adaptations. Analyses of both staged and filmic adaptations of *The Merchant of Venice* may thus benefit a comprehensive Book History investigation of Radford's film. One critic of historical studies of this nature has commented

> I suppose I have seen about eleven Shakespearean films and I find that if I put them in the right order, about as little emerges in the way of profitable conclusion as would emerge from a row of historically juxtaposed beans. (Dehn 1954, 14)

Although not necessarily conclusive, investigation into each film and staged production could open up avenues of exploration for the 2004 production in terms of tracing similarities and differences in style, character-portrayal or foci on thematic concerns – all of which can be seen to be content-related. A complete analysis of neither the staged nor filmic history is possible in

the limited examination here, but the following discussion will give an indication of some the possibilities of historical investigation open to Book Historians. While Chapter 3 looked primarily with the history of Shakespeare on film in general, this section will look more specifically at a short history of filmic productions of *The Merchant of Venice.*

The complete list of all film productions of this script are shown in Table 5.1 below. The year of production, director and production companies are highlighted for each production. The table also specifies whether the film was made primarily for the cinema or for television (TV) viewing

Year	Director	Production Company	Medium	Country	Audio	Visual	hylock	Portia	Antonio	Bassanio	Nerissa
1908	J. Stuart Blackton	Vitagraph Company of America	Cinema	USA	Silent	Black and White	William V. Ranous	Julia Swayne Gordon			
1916	Walter West	Broadwest	Made for TV	UK	Silent	Black and White	Matheson Lang	Nellie Hutin Britton	George Skillan	Joseph R. Tozer	Marguerite Westlake
1922	Challis Sanderson	Master	Made for TV	UK	Silent	Black and White	Ivan Berlyn	Sybil Thorndike		R. McLeod	
1924	Phillips Smalley, Lois Weber	Universal Film Manufacturing Company	Cinema	USA	Silent	Black and White	Phillips Smalley	Lois Weber	Rupert Julian	Douglas Gerrard	Jeanie Macpherson
1927	Widgey R. Newman	Widgey R. Newman Productions	Cinema	UK	English	Black and White	Lewis Casson				
1941	J.J. Madan		Cinema	India	Hindi						
1947	George More O'Ferrall	British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)	Live recording for TV	UK	English	Black and White	Abraham Sofaer	Margaretta Scott	Austin Trevor	André Morell	
1953	Pierre Billon	Venturini Film	Cinema	France/ Italy	French	Black and White	Michel Simon	Andrée Debar		Armando Francioli	
1955	Hal Burton	BBC Television Centre	Made for TV	UK	English	Black and White	Michael Hordern	Rachel Gurney	Raymond Westwell	Denis Quilley	Jane Wenham
1969	Orson Welles		Made for TV	USA/ Canada	English	Colour	Orson Welles		Charles Gray		
1975	John Sichel	Associated Television (ATV)	Stage to TV	UK	English	Colour	Laurence Olivier	Joan Plowright	Anthony Nicholls	Jeremy Brett	Anna Carteret
1980	Jack Gold	British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)	Made for TV	UK	English	Colour	Warren Mitchell	Gemma Jones	John Franklyn-Robbins	John Nettles	Susan Jameson
1996	Alan Horrox	Channel 4	Made for TV	UK	English	Colour	Bob Peck	Haydn Gwynne	Benjamin Whitrow	Paul McGann	Victoria Hamilton
2001	Chris Hunt; Trevor Nunn	The Performance Company	Made for TV	UK/ Sweden	English	Colour	Henry Goodman	Derbhle Crotty	David Bamber	Alexander Hanson	Alex Kelly
2002	Don Selwyn	He Taonga Films	Cinema	New Zealand	Maori	Colour	Waihoroi Shortland	Ngarimu Daniels	Scott Morrison	Te Rangihau Gilbert	Veeshayne Armstrong
2004	Michael Radford		Cinema	UK/ Luxemburg / Italy	English	Colour	Al Pacino	Lynn Collins	Jeremy Irons	Joseph Fiennes	Heather Goldenhersh

Table 5.1: Filmic Productions of *The Merchant of Venice*

Compared with other Shakespearean plays, there have been relatively few film productions of *The Merchant of Venice*. Only three adaptations were produced for the cinema before Michael Radford's film, compared with the 61 filmic adaptations of *Hamlet* in the same period. There has not been American filmic adaptation of this Shakespearean script since the first black and white silent production in 1908, and there have been no other cinematic productions in English since 1927. In fact, Radford's adaptation is the first major cinematic production of *The Merchant of Venice* in English since the silent era (Hindle 2004, 63**)**.

Generally, *The Merchant of Venice* has been unpopular on film – witnessed both in terms of the number of times it has been produced, and the audience reception of these productions. Audiences have tended to be unresponsive, with filmic productions performing poorly at the Box Office (Buchanan 2005, 9). In more extreme cases, audiences have been repelled by what is sometimes seen as the anti-Semitic content of the narrative.

The wariness to produce the script may be the result of several factors, including the complexity of the play and the perceived lack of structure in the narrative (Buchanan 2005, 7). Cultural factors – such as the sensitive religious and racial concerns within the narrative – are also thought to have played a large role in making *The Merchant of Venice* an unpopular Shakespearean script to produce. The combination of these factors could have resulted in funding for films being difficult to acquire. The reaction to filmed versions of *The Merchant of Venice* in that past draws particular attention to the rationale for filming Radford's one. Using Pierre Bourdieu's understandings of cultural, symbolic and economic capital, I will analyse some of the factors that resulted in the possibility of bringing *The Merchant of Venice* script to film in 2004.

Pierre Bourdieu and "The Field of Cultural Production"

Bourdieu's interpretation of social systems has been described as "revolutionary" and "the most appropriate manner in which to study the impact of context on text" (Pittman 2007, 14), as it situates texts in the context of their own origins, and allows for analysis of factors impacting on the text as well as of the text itself. In this way, Bourdieu's framework is particularly useful to Book Historians. Peter MacDonald's first chapter in *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice, 1880-1914* shows particularly how Bourdieu can be used to great effect in understanding the cultural environment within which texts are produced. Unlike MacDonald, however, I will isolate Bourdieu's understanding of 'capital' or 'assets' acquired or exploited in

textual production to show some of the contextual features that allowed for the production of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*.

Bourdieu's work on 'capital', the different forms this resource takes, and the way it impacts on production cannot be separated entirely from his broader concerns. Even the type of limited use of Bourdieu that will take place in this section thus requires a certain contextualization within the general thrust of his work as a whole.

The world of the text, in Bourdieu's conception, is described as the literary or artistic field. The term 'field' is used to indicate common social, intellectual, and ideological arenas linking producers (publishers, editors and authors) and products (books, periodical publications, and literary works). These fields have been described as perpetuating literary hierarchies, strengthening dominant cultural groups, or creating networks of particular types of cultural production (Finkelstein and McCleery 2006, 139). Traditional approaches to literary criticism often separate texts from the social conditions of their production, circulation and consumption. Such approaches occlude the social nature of the agent as producer, ignore the objective social relations in which production occurs, and avoid questions concerning the nature and value of art to the culture in which it arises. The complex framework of power and capital that affect a work and allows either for the continued production of such works or for such production to cease is also ignored. Bourdieu's understanding of all social interactions and all productions to occur within 'fields' allows for what Johnson describes as "radical contextualisation" (1993, 9). Such contextualisation takes into consideration works themselves, seen in relation to other works, and in relation to the possibilities for their own futures. Bourdieu contends that there are historical factors affecting the producers of texts and this can be seen in regard to their approaches to their work, their hopes for it, and the manner in which they execute production. These are affected by individual, class and gender habits, as well as beliefs about art and the nature of the work. Bourdieu's theory views agents as acting, not in a vacuum, but rather in concrete social situations governed by a set of objective social relations. He sees the value of an artwork as taking into account the multiple mediators – both individual and societal - which contribute to the meaning of the work and sustain the artistic field.

According to Bourdieu, each field – including the artistic one – is relatively autonomous, and its "structure" – which elements within the field are dominant or subordinate – at any given moment is determined by the actions, whether considered or not, of the agents within the field.

As Johnson put is, "[a] field is a dynamic concept in that a change in agents' positions necessarily entails a change in the field's structure" (1993, 6). For example, the sudden popularity of a particular artist will result in a hierarchical shift within the artistic field in which this artist operates, making his position a more dominant one. Dominance within a field often results in greater access to the resources available. Agents compete in the field for resources which are specific to the field in question. These resources may be physical, economic, or symbolic. The more resources an agent has, the more power he has within the field, and the greater the attendant opportunity for ascendancy within the field. This, according to Bourdieu, often has a cyclical effect whereby the agents with the most capital are the agents with the most potential to gain capital.

Bourdieu is concerned with the acquisition and loss of cultural status (1991, 11). He also focuses on the manner in which "individuals operate within [the field of artistic production], struggling to gain cultural capital that can be translated into more material rewards, whether it be recognition of artistic merit, financial gain or advance in social status" (Finkelstein and McCleery, 2006). In Bourdieu's scheme, such rewards are derived from resources described as "capital", which constitute a system of exchange within a social relation. Capital includes "all the goods material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation" (Bourdieu 1993, 73). In 'The Forms of Capital' (1986), Bourdieu highlights three forms of capital –symbolic, cultural and economic. Symbolic capital is the degree of prestige, celebrity or honour available to a person, or bestowed upon an artwork; cultural capital refers to the education, skills, attitude or knowledge possessed by a person that enable them to gain social mobility, or features of an artwork that engender popularity; while economic capital consists of the material resources that allow for its production in fiscal terms. These forms of capital are unequally distributed among social classes and groupings. Each of these bodies of resources, and the manner in which they are distributed, impacts production within the artistic field.

For this theory to be useful to Book History, it must be emphasized that the application must be rooted in the production experiences of specific texts. The next section will give an indication of how such application can be approached for *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*.

Symbolic Capital

Shakespeare has been described as “the West's most recognizable high-art literary icon” (Pittman 2007), and thus his works, and subsequent adaptations, are imbued with status derived from this popularity as well as the popularity being a manifestation of the status. The implications of these terms for the production a filmic text are major. They must not be taken for granted, and they need to be interrogated, since they carry a great deal of freight.

> Given the perceived hierarchy of the arts and therefore the media…, one way to gain respectability or to increase…capital is for an adaptation to be upwardly mobile. Film historians argue that this motivation explains many cinematic interpretations of Dante and Shakespeare. (Hutcheon 2004, 91)

Upward mobility in the field of cultural or artistic production is a result of the status and popularity discussed above. Shakespeare is part of the “universe” of high art in which, according to Bourdieu, the name ‘Shakespeare’ “invests his prestige” (Bourdieu 1993, 77) in his works, giving them a certain type of artistic legitimacy. Film adaptations of Shakespearean plays draw on this prestige for cultural consecration. Film directors also long to ‘conquer’ Shakespeare and from the beginning of the film industry, Shakespearean texts have been seen to add cultural prestige to the film-making industry (Lehmann 2002). Indeed, Anthony Guneratne suggests that “Shakespeare's single great contribution to American cinema was the role "he" played in the establishment of the feature length film” (Guneratne 2008, 3). The name “Shakespeare” is thus a symbol of status, of education, of dignity. Such symbolic status allows the name used as a symbol of prestige – giving status to anything that bears it. As noted, the full title of Radford’s film – *William Shakespeare’s The Merchant of Venice* – purposefully draws on this symbolism and the capital associated with it. *William Shakespeare’s The Merchant of Venice* does not, however, benefit from the symbolic capital of Shakespeare as much as the early Shakespearean productions. Pittmann argues that:

> Although the rich history of filmed Shakespeare reaches back to the turn of the nineteenth century, film-makers still appear to doubt their own legitimacy and seek to validate their strategies for story-telling in opposition to both the page and the stage. While Shakespeare as book enjoys centuries of institutionalized validity, and theatrical performance earns status as intended artistic mode, film can access neither academic legitimacy nor performative accuracy as it is an artistic expression unimagined by Shakespeare's world (Pittman 2007, 3).

Radford's promotional interviews and commentary track accompanying the DVD release of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* reflect anxiety surrounding legitimacy while at the same time emphasising the film's association with Shakespeare. In his commentary, Radford repeatedly identifies the ways in which film techniques enhance Shakespeare's text and improve upon the conditions of theatrical performance (Pittman 2007), both associating the film with Shakespeare's prestige and pre-emptively acknowledging the criticism that may come from the film being insufficiently "Shakespearean", and thus not deserving the capital imbued by the name.

It is not, however, the case that the significance of Shakespeare as an icon is responsible for all of the capital associated with *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*. The relationship between Shakespeare and the film industry is reciprocal. While 'Shakespeare' can give artistic legitimacy to film, so film provides a medium for the mass distribution of Shakespeare. Lehmann argues that:

> [G]iven the historical reciprocity that has existed between cinema and Shakespeare since the dawn of the motion picture industry, it seems likely that the destinies of both are intertwined. Whereas cinema once relied on Shakespeare for cultural legitimation, Shakespeare now needs cinema for cultural longevity in a world that increasingly privileges images over words as well as visual literacy over more traditional reading practices. (Lehmann 2002, 235)

In the field of artistic production film can thus be seen as a large-scale production, while Shakespearean texts constitute 'high art'. By using the mass appeal of film, directors of Shakespeare can use the capital of the medium to sustain the symbolic capital of Shakespeare's canonic artworks. Holderness argues:

> Shakespeare films exist on that important but peripheral fringe of cinematic production, where the values of high art can be held to justify or compensate for any lack of commercial success, and they can scarcely be regarded as central to the mainstream practice and development of the cinema. (Holderness 2002, 51)

Cinematic adaptations of Shakespearean plays do benefit, however, from the symbolic capital that is associated with the 500-year-long literary, academic and, indeed, commercial traditions that are associated with the icon William Shakespeare.

Cultural Capital

The 500-year history of prestige and commercial tradition adds to another form of capital available to Shakespearean adaptations – cultural capital. The cultural capital accruing to

William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice derives both from its read heritage and its stage and filmic one, from the value of film to modern audiences, and from the value of Shakespeare as an icon of historical prestige. Where symbolic capital in this case is the prestige available to the film because of its links with Shakespeare as author, cultural capital is defined as the education, skills, attitude that allow upward social mobility. This would include knowledge of the social, economic and cultural conditions and the ability to act in such a way so as to capitalise on such knowledge. Cultural impoverishment or bankruptcy can be considered the opposite of cultural capital: the lack of knowledge negatively impacting the production of the text (Bourdieu 1984, 76). The most striking embodiment of cultural capital in terms of the knowledge of social conditions involves additional understanding of the way in which such conditions can be manipulated to the greatest effect. Some of the cultural capital available to *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* is due to the way in which the themes of the script – especially the racial and religious concerns – dovetail with those of contemporary interest. This makes the film more attractive to a modern audience, and more likely to gain status within the film industry and amongst the film watching public.

As discussed previously, this status has not always been enjoyed by *The Merchant of Venice*. One of the more interesting explanations for the seeming lack of interest, or modest interest, from film directors, particularly English-speaking ones, in producing the script of *The Merchant of Venice* to date is that religious objections - both the representation of Jews and the representation of a cruel Christianity - restricted the filmic production of this text. Seen as anti-Semitic, *The Merchant of Venice* was largely spurned by British and American film and stage directors during World War II. Such a production would have been seen as tacit support for the anti-Semitism espoused by German Nazism. Charles Edelman comments that, before 1947, "New York had not seen a professional production of the *Merchant* since 1930" (2000, 54). In England too, professional directors and actors avoided this thought-to-be contentious play during and after the Holocaust. The prevailing understanding of the religious and social conditions of the time made *The Merchant of Venice* difficult, uninteresting or unprofitable to produce. It can be argued that a change in such conditions, or in the way directors respond to them, made the 2004 production of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* possible.

One reason that critics have suggested for the production of the film at this time is the prevalence of racial and religious intolerance in the developed world. Such intolerance has been

highlighted by the reactions of Western governments to the perceived Islamic attack of September 11, and America's subsequent invasion of Iraq. The burgeoning importance of a critique of such intolerance has been taken seriously by the film directors of our time. Contemporary films such as *God's Army* (2000), *The Da Vinci Code* (2006) and most recently the adaptation of Philip Pullman's children's novel *The Golden Compass* (2007) – which all critique the dogma and hypocrisy of Christianity – can be read as reactions to recent conflicts caused partially by religious fundamentalism and intolerance. As Goodale explains, these films:

> …appeal to what is being touted as a new, undertapped market for Christian-themed, or religious themed, entertainment, or "Godsploitation" (Goodale 2001).

William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice can be seen as another such film, drawing on its thematic relevance for cultural capital, at least in terms of the capital of appealing to popular concerns in contemporary discourse. Audiences are more attuned to religious themes in films as religious conflict has become a theme of modern life. The outcry at Islamic fundamentalism after the terrorist attack of September 11th has led American directors to question the religious hypocrisy and fundamentalism not only in government policy and practice, but also within their own societies. Such questioning opens up a space for a filmic adaptation of William Shakespeare's play. Radford himself notes:

> The whole thing [*Merchant*] is a rail against fundamentalism. And I'll tell you why: because what this play is about is about human complexity. And fundamentalism doesn't allow for human complexity. It says the world is sortable-outable [sic] in five sentences. (Cited in Pittman 2007).

By setting the film in 15th century Venice, Radford was able to engage with contemporary concerns, and explore complex and controversial religious and cultural questions without placing them in the somewhat polarized environment of the modern western world. It allows viewers "to appreciate that bigotry and vindictiveness are age-old, universal problems" (Sony Pictures 2004, 17). The key aspect here is the manner in which *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* points to awareness of varieties of fundamentalism, and also to how the film represents the frustration of fundamentalism through complexity, what complexity is, and what this requires of an audience. One way in which that is achieved is through Radford's direction of the portrayal of the character of Shylock.

Utilising his own knowledge of cultural stereotypes, and the way in which they are received on screen, Radford strives to make Shylock a sympathetic character. In his review of

the film in *The Guardian* (December 9, 2004), Jonathan Freedland notes that the medium of the cinema can intensify the problem of anti-Semitism in *The Merchant of Venice*: when viewing a Shakespearean play on the stage, it is obvious that it belongs to a different historical era and was written several centuries ago. This means that the attitudes expressed belong to another time. The realism of the cinema and the emotive nature of the medium – despite the historic setting and period costuming – can manipulate responses through lighting and music give a different and greater power to the sound of the words "dog Jew", or the sight of Shylock fallen on his knees and forced to convert to Christianity, than they have on the stage.

The fundamentalism that Radford tackles is not only limited to the religious sphere. *The Merchant of Venice* takes on race, class and gender issues. Maurice Hindle speculates that

> perhaps by 2004, in a post-Cold War world in which race, class and gender are firmly and openly established as serious issues both in educational practice and social policies, it has become slightly easier to tackle on film a play like *The Merchant of Venice*. (Hindle 2004, 63)

However, Radford is sensitive to the cultural and social spirit of the present day, in particular with regard to racial issues that reflect the attitudes of Shakespeare's time and are thought to be less acceptable in a modern climate. In the play's script, slurs on the black-skinned Prince of Morocco's "complexion" are uttered by Portia, which Radford eliminates from his screenplay. He goes even further by making the Prince's character so attractive and witty that even Portia is charmed by him.

Many critics believe "modern audiences have been so sensitized by the Holocaust that they are all but inoculated against anti-Semitism" and that this film should be seen as "a parable for racism or intolerance in general" (Freedland 2004, 4). Although possessing the traditional symbolic status of "Shakespeare", *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* derives some of its cultural capital from tapping into and exploring contemporary concerns.

Economic Capital

Despite often being associated with 'high art', Shakespeare's work has never been without commercial interests. The following conversation is taken from the film *Shakespeare in Love*, between Ned Alleyn, the main actor in Shakespeare's new play (played by Ben Affleck), and Hugh Fennyman, the producer of the play (played by Tom Wilkinson), and highlights the

commercial factors involved in Shakespearean performances, supposedly even at the time of their initial production.

> Ned Alleyn: Who are you?
> Hugh Fennyman: I am the money.
> Ned Alleyn: Then you may remain, as long as you remain silent
> (Shakespeare in Love, 1998).

One of the key factors in the production of a play or film, as the dialogue cited above suggests, is 'the money'. The necessity of financial backing for commercial film production means that those with this form of 'capital' have the ability to influence production. Applying Bourdieu's schema to film-making, 'economic capital' describes the financial and material wealth needed to produce the film. The economic capital – and use thereof – in the production of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* will be discussed firstly in terms of the challenges of raising the capital, and then the challenges of how it is utilised.

As a multi-billion dollar enterprise, filmmaking can be seen as much as an industry as an art form. Data on the production costs of films is rarely released, with costs being sensitive information for production companies working within a competitive industry. Production costs are generally retained as confidential for a number of reasons. Distribution houses may be inclined to demand a better price if they knew the movie was produced cheaply, even if it were likely to generate good revenues on its own merits, so as such it is in the production houses' best interest to keep this confidential. The estimated production costs of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* are compared with those of the eight films presented in Figure 1 in the introduction to this thesis.

Movie Name	**Director**	**Opening**	**Main Actors**	
Merchant of Venice	Michael Radford	02 January 2005	Al Pacino	Jeremy Irons
Romeo and Juliet	Baz Lurhmann	01 November 1996	Leonardo DiCaprio	Claire Danes
Hamlet 2000	Michael Almereyda	12 May 2000	Kenneth Branagh	Richard Briers
A Midsummer Night's Dream	Michael Hoffman	14 May 1999	Kevin Kline	Michelle Pfeiffer
Much ado about nothing	Kenneth Branagh	07 May 1993	Kenneth Branagh	Emma Thompson
Titus	Julie Taymor	25 December 1999	Anthony Hopkins	Jessica Lange
Pride and Prejudice	Joe Wright	11 November 2005	Keira Knightley	Donald Sutherland
Shrek 2	Andrew Adamson	19 May 2004	Mike Myers	Cameron Diaz
Bourne Supremacy	Paul Greengrass	23 July 2004	Matt Damon	Franka Potente

Table 5.2: Comparative films

These films are six Shakespearean adaptations, a recent adaptation of a Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Shrek 2* and *The Bourne Supremacy*, two feature films released at the same period as *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*. The estimated production costs are compared in Figure 5.3 below[29].

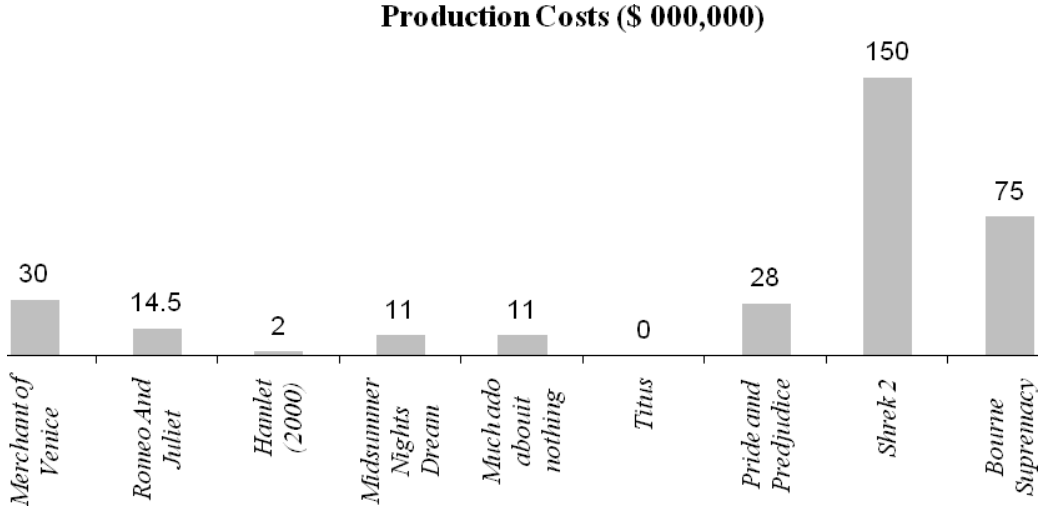

Figure 5.2: Production Costs

William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice was the most expensive Shakespearean adaptation to produce, with the US$ 30,000,000 budget being almost double that of Baz Lurhmann's *Romeo and Juliet*. The feature films *Shrek 2* and *The Bourne Supremacy* were, respectively, five times (US$ 150 000 000), and more than double (US$ 75,000,000) that cost.

Sales are the predominant way to recoup the production costs of a film, and thus one aim of filmmaking is to produce the most profitable film possible. Hutcheon notes that:

> from another economic angle, expensive collaborative art forms like operas, musicals, and films are going to look for safe bets with a ready audience – and that usually means adaptations (Hutcheon 2006, 87).

Adaptations of Shakespearean scripts date nearly from the start of commercial film, and in the earliest screen adaptations from Shakespeare, there were palpable tensions at work between both aesthetic and financial objectives, and with developing notions of the function and

[29] The same films will be compared in terms of distribution costs and reception data, thus providing constant data for discussion.

nature of film (Buhler 2002, 1). Radford's *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* can also be seen as a site of such tensions.

In several interviews, Radford discussed the difficulties of funding Shakespeare productions; especially feature films – due largely to the nature of the market, where Shakespearean adaptations tend to fare worse than feature films appealing to a wider audience. The target market for Shakespeare films is perceived to be small – consisting of mainly students – and accessing funding is consequently rendered more difficult.

As a result, funding is less likely to come from a single source. A number of funders were responsible for raising the capital for *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*. The motivation of different production companies is largely financially driven. The table below shows the production companies and funders involved in producing the 2004 film of *The Merchant of Venice*.

Production Companies	Country
Spice Factory (as Spice Factory Production)	UK
UK Film Council and the Movision Partnerships	UK
Film Fund Luxembourg	Luxembourg
Delux Productions	Luxembourg
Immagine e Cinema	Luxembourg
Istituto Luce	Luxembourg
Avenue Pictures Productions (as Cary Brokaw/Avenue Pictures)	UK
Navidi-Wilde Productions Ltd.(as Navidi-Wilde)	Italy
39 McLaren St. Sydney	UK
Dania Film	Italy

Table 5.3: *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* Production Companies

Multiple funders and production companies are not unusual in Shakespearean film production. It is unusual for a single funder to take on the risk of producing a film that is not guaranteed to recoup initial investment at the Box Office, and Shakespearean films are medium to high risk for investors. Each funder and producer in the table above plays a unique role in facilitating the production of the final film.

I will briefly explore the roles of two: the Movision Partnerships and the Luxembourg Film Fund. The Movision Partnerships will be examined in terms of their contribution to the initial funding of the film, and the Luxembourg Film Fund with regards to its role in the production details of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*.

The Movision Partnerships, situated in England, are the main funder of Radford's film. They are a series of general partnerships established to produce, co-produce and exploit a broad portfolio of British feature film productions with an international appeal. The Partnerships are structured to provide both Income Tax and Capital Gains Tax benefits to individual partners and Corporation Tax benefits to corporate partners. Partners' funds are used to produce and co-produce a wide variety of films, with an emphasis on long-term exploitation of film rights to maximize profitability. In the year 2002/3, Movision raised almost £17 million from private and corporate investors, resulting in some US$100 million of film production[30], making it the UK's largest film production tax shelter (Movision 2003). Such tax benefits encourage the growth of the UK film industry, by allowing private individuals and corporations to invest in film production with their revenues being taxed at a lower rate. They are also allowed to write off this investment as an 'expense', as opposed to profit, which makes it a tax free investment. Taxes are only accrued on profits. Tax reductions have the benefit of being mutually beneficial; it allows investors to generate tax free revenues and in doing so produces a pot of finances for UK film producers to apply to finance their British films, hence furthering the UK film industry.

Economic capital is not only difficult to source, but the scarcity of financial resources puts pressure on almost every aspect of production. In its official press publication, Sony Picture Classics – the official distributor of Radford's film in America – acknowledges such financial constraints. For example, filming and shooting costs influenced the location and setting of the film: "[d]ue to budget and time constraints, the locations were split between exterior shots in a studio in Luxembourg and, most unusually, in Venice itself" (Sony Pictures 2004, 16). Although for aesthetic integrity all outdoor filming was preferable, financially this was impossible. Outdoor shooting is much more time and labour intensive, as well as more costly than studio filming (Hindle 2007, 17). And the studio where the remainder of the filming of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* was undertaken was situated in Luxembourg because of economic pressures: the Luxembourg Film Fund offers financial incentives for film production in that country. Its website states:

[30] In addition to *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, the Movision Partnerships were responsible for the production of *Bailey's Billion$; The River King; Guy X* and *The Perfect Creature* in the 2003/2004 tax year.

> The Film Fund subsidy is granted in the form of a tax certificate. When the film is completed, the Film Fund awards the tax certificate which can be sold to a bank, allowing the latter to lower its corporate tax liability. (Luxembourg Film Fund 2007).

In essence, the Luxembourg government is offering a cash incentive for films to be produced in Luxembourg. This could be for a multitude of reasons: raising the tourist profile of Luxembourg, or trying to grow Luxembourg into a beneficial filming destination for the film industry for future long-term benefits. However, the tax certificate is only provided when the film is complete, which provides some form of assurance to the government that the film will be aired. The tax certificate is then sold to a bank which benefits from a lower taxes, and the production house benefits from the cash received from this which lowers the production costs. This strategy appears to have some success, as in 2003, 23 productions received the tax certificates, implying that at least 23 films were produced in Luxembourg, growing the film industry there (Luxembourg Film Fund 2007).

By financially situating the film equally in the United Kingdom and Luxembourg, the producers of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* enabled tax benefits and filming subsidies in both countries. Italian production companies also provided funding, as well as the benefits of permission to access authentic Venetian filming locations such as the Rialto Bridge. All the production companies benefited from the production in more than merely Box Office profit. They gained advertising exposure, opened up a market for film production in specific countries or began to establish their names, and thus were willing to contribute financially towards a film that was not guaranteed to be a Box Office success.

Finkelstein and McCleery note that Bourdieu's description of the field of artistic production is most appropriate to a nineteenth or twentieth century setting (Finkelstein and McCleey 2006, 62). Much of Bourdieu's work on art, literature and culture is concerned with the ways in which the different forms of capital contribute to the domination of the field of cultural production and to the process of social reproduction. One instantiation of this social reproduction is the production of art – in this case of film – that reflects the social hierarchies of the time.

> In short, Bourdieu's theory of the field of cultural production and his extremely demanding academic model encompass the set of social conditions of the production, circulation and consumption of symbolic goods. (Johnson 1993, 12)

Such an analysis is particularly apt because Bourdieu's conception takes into account the different forces impacting on the production of the text (1984, 89). Chapter 5 has examined the

production stage in the life-cycle of the filmic text of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* in terms of the highlighting some of the resources that made such a film possible – the symbolic, cultural and economic capital enjoyed by Radford's production. It has been noted that "Bourdieusian book history discloses the complex interplay of persons, practices, moments, and structures of reward" (MacDonald 1997, 73) that affect the production of a text. Chapter 5 has provided an introduction to this aspect of the Book History project for *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, showing it to be as relevant to the filmic text as it is to the printed one.

Chapter 6

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

> And Shakespeare was a businessman. He got people into his theatre. He got bums on seats, basically.
>
> ─ Michael Radford (2004, p11).

Michael Radford speculated that business interests were Shakespeare's main objective when writing *The Merchant of Venice*. Undoubtedly, they were among Radford's concerns when directing the film adaptation and preparing for its distribution. Book Historians traditionally envisage distribution as the process of transmission of the text from creator to reader – or to the viewer, in the case of the filmic text. The distribution of films is largely a commercial operation, aiming for maximum exposure to the target market to maximise sales. The process of dissemination to the public includes the physical delivery: its launch and screening, advertising and pricing. Although this process has been studied in terms of book distribution, the scope of Book History investigation has the potential to expand, not only in terms of medium studied, but also in terms of the frameworks offered for these studies. Filmic distribution is a marketing enterprise and should be examined as such. This chapter will draw on modern marketing theory to examine the penultimate stage in the Filmic Communication Circuit for *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*. Using the framework of Kotler's "4P's Marketing Mix Model" for product delivery, the distribution process will be discussed in terms of the procedures, locations and rationale for distribution. Kotler's model categorises the factors involved in marketing as "product, place, promotion, and price".

In Darnton's original Communications Circuit, distribution was examined in two separate stages: from the printer to the bookseller, and from the bookseller to the reader. This chapter will focus on the filmic equivalents of both of these stages: distribution from distribution companies to the theatres and then from the theatres to the viewers in the cinema and in the home. The area of the Filmic Communication Circuit to be investigated is highlighted in Figure 6.1 below.

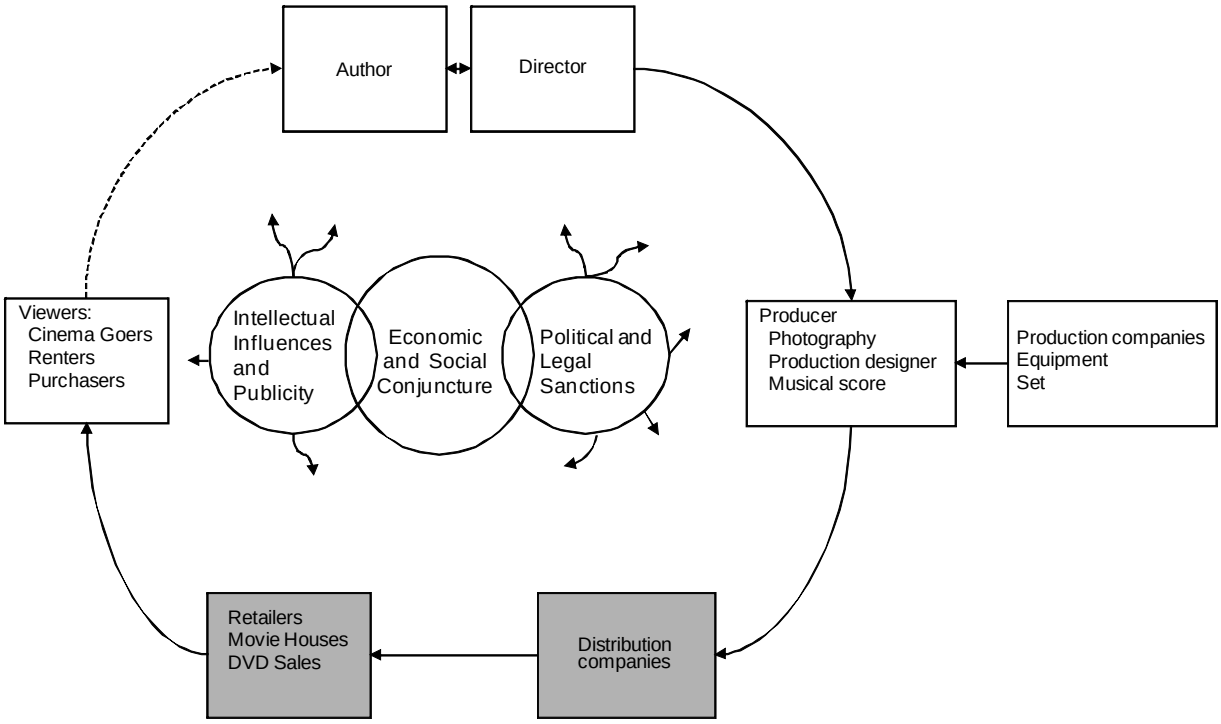

Figure 6.1: Filmic Communication Circuit - Distribution

The Components of Marketing

Within the film industry, distribution is understood as the marketing and circulation of movies in theatres, and for home viewing via DVD, video, download or television. A film distributor is an independent company, a subsidiary company or occasionally an individual that acts as the final agent between a film production company or intermediary agent, and a film exhibitor, with the intention of securing placement of the producer's film on the exhibitor's screen (Tyson 2007). A key element of film distribution is that films are seen as products, and are distributed to the public as such. Part of the distribution process of the filmic text of *The Merchant of Venice* is the manner in which it is delivered to the viewer, or in economic terms, the consumer. This delivery is understood in the commercial environment as the marketing of the film. The American Marketing Association defines marketing as:

> The process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives. (Berkowitz, et al. 2000, 8)

The term "marketing", therefore, encompasses more than the contemporary understanding of advertising for the film, as it includes all aspects of distribution. The time and place of the film's release, the promotional activities such as advertising, and the pricing of the film are all integral to the final marketing strategy and thus to the understanding of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* as a consumable product.

The diversity of considerations to be taken into account has led to a number of approaches to marketing, both theoretically and practically. Philip Kotler, a leading scholar in marketing theory, adopts a segmented approach, where the key considerations are divided into four groups: the four components of what is known as Kotler's "Marketing Mix". Rafiq and Ahmed describe "the marketing mix concept" as "one of the core concepts of marketing theory" (1995: 9), as it accommodates the controllable aspects of marketing. This model was introduced into mainstream marketing theory by Kotler in 1972 (Brown 2002), and is a generally-accepted theory of marketing. The "marketing mix" consists of four controllable factors known as the "4Ps" (Kotler 1994) and is considered to be the tactical marketing tool-kit employed by most marketing practitioners (Simkin 2000). The "4Ps" of the marketing mix – product, place, promotion and price – provide a framework for discussion, and thus constitute the model through which the distribution of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* will be investigated.

Product

In Kotler's framework, *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* is the manufactured good that is to be sold, and so may be seen as the product. A product is a good, service, or idea consisting of tangible and intangible attributes[31] that satisfies consumers and is received in exchange for a unit of value (Berkowitz, et al. 2000). It is the basic resource involved in the exchange process between distributor and consumer (Hakansson and Waluszewski 2005). Products are classified in two main ways: they are grouped as product lines with other products satisfying closely related customer needs; or they are classified by type of user, or degree of tangibility. *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, as a product, is grouped with other films, fulfilling the customer's need for entertainment, or even more specifically, with other films in the Shakespearean genre. It could also be grouped with other products that hold certain

[31] Tangible products are those that can be physically touched, like toothpaste or mugs. They are commodities. Intangible products are services. Films can be both, but are most often classified as services because they provide an entertainment service.

cultural capital, or are important for educational purposes. For some consumers, enjoyment is not a primary concern. It could also be grouped according to user: in other words, viewers who enjoy Shakespearean films, or viewers who watch films featuring Al Pacino, for example. The degree of tangibility is low, as the film is not a product that can be physically touched, but rather one that provides a service in the form of entertainment. Thus it might be grouped with other intangible products offering a similar service, such as bowling alleys or video games.

Products vie for consumer attention, and thus need to be understood in the context of other products in the same line. Feature films *Shrek 2* and *The Bourne Supremacy* were competing products with *The Merchant of Venice* at the time of its cinematic release. The other films in the table below can be considered to occupy the same product line, but are not necessarily operating in competition, as the time of their release differs.

Movie Name	**Director**	**Opening**	**Main Actors**	
Merchant of Venice	Michael Radford	02 January 2005	Al Pacino	Jeremy Irons
Romeo and Juliet	Baz Lurhmann	01 November 1996	Leonardo DiCaprio	Claire Danes
Hamlet 2000	Michael Almereyda	12 May 2000	Kenneth Branagh	Richard Briers
A Midsummer Night's Dream	Michael Hoffman	14 May 1999	Kevin Kline	Michelle Pfeiffer
Much ado about nothing	Kenneth Branagh	07 May 1993	Kenneth Branagh	Emma Thompson
Titus	Julie Taymor	25 December 1999	Anthony Hopkins	Jessica Lange
Pride and Prejudice	Joe Wright	11 November 2005	Keira Knightley	Donald Sutherland
Shrek 2	Andrew Adamson	19 May 2004	Mike Myers	Cameron Diaz
Bourne Supremacy	Paul Greengrass	23 July 2004	Matt Damon	Franka Potente

Table 6.1: Comparative films

The distribution of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* will be discussed in comparison with the films in Table 6.1.

A number of distributors were involved in the distribution and marketing of Radford's *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*. The main distributor is Sony Pictures, who own the distribution rights to the film in the United States. Distributors are representatives of the producers who have distribution rights to the film based on a licensing agreement between the production company and the distribution company. The distribution company determines the probable success of the film and how many copies of it are required for consumption, and is also responsible for screening the movie to the potential buyers represented by movie theatres. The buyers negotiate with the distributors concerning the films they wish to rent and the terms of lease. Copies of the movie are delivered to the theatre a few days before the opening day, when the movie is screened to the public. At the end of the loan period the copy of the movie is sent

back to the distributor (Tyson 2007). A distributor, in other words, is purely a facilitator for the rent and purchase of films, and acts as a middle-man between the producer and the consumer.

The 2004 production of *The Merchant of Venice* employed 19 different distribution companies: a common practice in the film industry, as it minimizes risk to a single distributor. By using more than one film distributor, film producers are

> proactive in their distribution strategy. Rather than aim for a conventional distribution deal whatever the terms, producers are focusing on distribution strategies that maximize their opportunities to earn revenue from their film – and that usually means hanging on to as many rights as possible, and getting into a position where they can negotiate from a more favorable position. (Broderick 2005, 2)

Different deals can be negotiated for each distributor, thus allowing maximum control for the producers. *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* employed Sony Picture Classics as the main distributor in the United States. As the US is traditionally the largest market for film releases, Sony is considered to be the main distributor of the film. However, there were also a number of country-specific distribution companies, as shown in Table 6.2 below:

Distribution Agency	Country
Sony Pictures Classics	USA
Movision	Worldwide
Arclight Films	Worldwide
Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM)	USA
Art Port	Japan
Ascot Elite Entertainment Group	Switzerland
Benelux Film Distribution	Netherlands
Blue Sky Film Distribution	Czech Republic
CDI Films	Argentina
Califórnia Home Vídeo	Brazil
Istituto Luce	Italy
Manga Films	Spain
Mongrel Media	Canada
New Films International	Non-USA
Optimum Releasing	UK
Scanbox Entertainment	Finland
Transeuropa Video Entertainment	Argentina
Zima Entertainment	Mexico

Table 6.2: Distribution Companies for *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*

Distribution negotiations are private, and so although no empirical evidence is available, it is possible that distribution conditions very according to country. Local distributors are more familiar with these conditions than their international counterparts, and thus can prove more

successful at attracting film sales: therefore, where possible, producers negotiate deals with local distributors (Parks 2007).

Figure 6.2 below indicates that although the use of multiple distribution companies is common, the number used to transmit *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* from producer to consumer was substantially greater than the other films mentioned in this thesis.

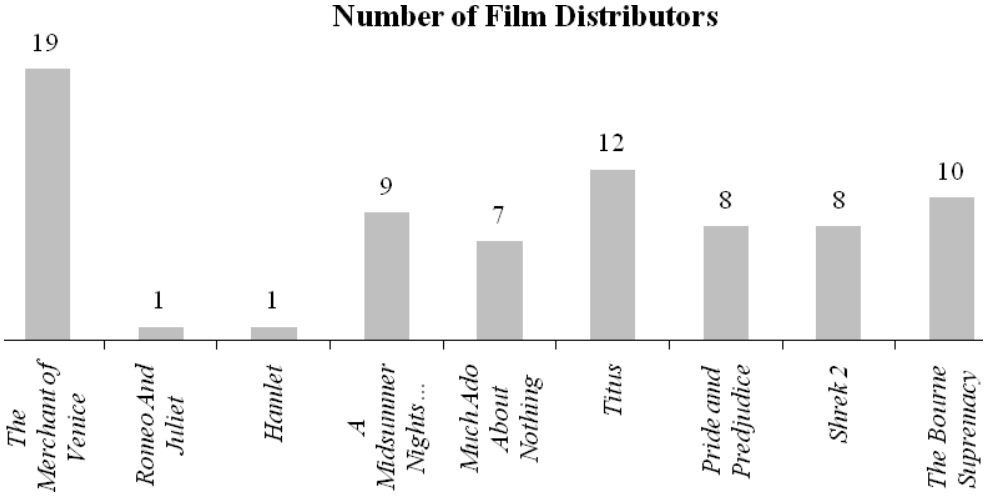

Figure 6.2: Number of film distributors according to IMDB (2007)

The use of such a large number of distribution companies might be explained by the large international interest in this film: particularly in Europe, the film was widely received. The Italian setting and the filming in Luxembourg sponsored by British financiers and starring American and British actors meant that *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* was popular on both sides of the Atlantic. Indeed, the film was made with an international audience in mind (Hindle 2007, 43). Book Historians strive to show how distribution might influence the nature of the final product, as is the case with regard to the 2004 film adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice*. The more countries the film is distributed to, the more keen producers become for good distribution within these countries. The number of country-specific distribution companies in the table above supports this hypothesis. By contrast, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* earned most of their popularity in the Unites States, and thus had only one international distributor. Kotler's second consideration, "place", is concerned with the location and time of distribution.

Place

"Place" involves a variety of activities controlled by the product distributors, most significantly the establishment of the most appropriate location or outlet(s) for sales. The number of such locations is also a key concern for distributors (Berkowitz, et al. 2000). Within the life-cycle of a filmic text, there are two places of initial distribution: public cinematic showing, and home viewing. The distribution patterns of a film require carefully considered marketing plans. The times and dates of film release and screening locations are critical components in its distribution. It is important to bear in mind that one of the basic intentions of production is an economic one, and that financial concerns are never far from any decision made with reference to a film.

Movie theatres were the primary place of distribution for *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*. Although the film was distributed internationally, this section will discuss distribution data for the United States to provide greater detail on this one section of the film's distribution. A more comprehensive Book History investigation of this filmic text would extend this study to an international scope.

William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice was released to movie theatres in the United States on December 29, 2004 at four movie theatres, where the opening weekend took place during the Christmas holiday period. This is a common distribution technique, in which films are released to capitalise on the increased entertainment capacity during the vacation. Both the number of screens and the placement are part of a marketing strategy for the film that fall under Kotler's description of "place" within his "Marketing Mix". Hindle notes that

> the more common marketing strategy adopted by distributors uneasy about the hard-to-anticipate audience take up for a Shakespeare film is to 'open narrow', in the hope that a movie's popularity will grow over a longer period, and then to build up the distribution to more and more cinemas so that good returns can be achieved over a longer period. (2007, 243)

A 'narrow opening' involves releasing the film to a small number of movie theatres initially, expanding the release cinemas as popularity grows. At the height of its popularity, *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* was screened on 107 screens throughout the United States. Figure 6.3 compares this screen number with other films:

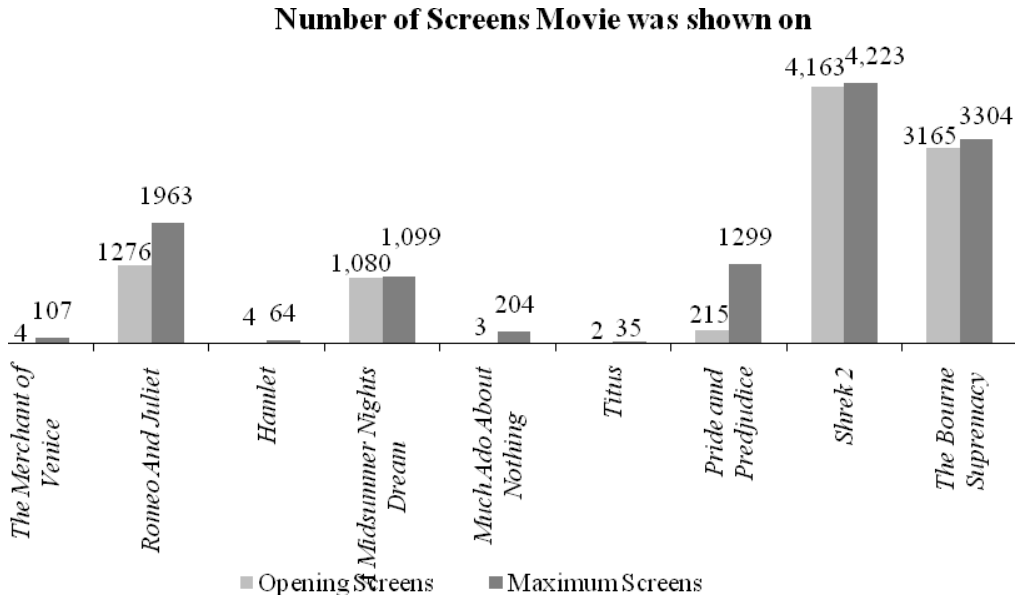

Figure 6.3: Number of Screens

Mainstream films such as *Shrek 2* and *The Bourne Supremacy* are much more widely shown, both on initial screenings and on the maximum screens showing per film. Shakespearean adaptations have a much smaller target audience, and thus are screened much less frequently and in fewer theatres. The two notable exceptions to this are the most recent versions of *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Both of these films are set against modern backdrops, in this way attracting the modern audience.

The data in Figure 6.3 suggests that most of the negotiations between distributors and theatres for mainstream films occur before release, as theatres purchase a film almost immediately, and there are limited changes in the number of screenings shown from the day of release to the maximum number of screens utilised. In the Shakespearean films this is not the case, as there is a significant change from the date of release to the maximum number of screens. This is similar to the case of *Pride and Prejudice*, another adaptation from a widely-read classic text. In other words, theatres may be wary of screening films that are not guaranteed to be popular: showing up, again, the commercial nature of film distribution. Although popular and successful compared to other Shakespearean adaptations, this wariness extended to *Romeo and Juliet.* The number of screenings of *Romeo and Juliet* increased by 54% from the date of release to its eventual maximum, suggesting that theatres are tentative in their delivery of Shakespearean film.

The profit-maximising strategies used by distributors in the United States draw large numbers of movie-goers over relatively short periods before interest wanes (Hindle 2007, 243). Usually, films are screened for between 100 and 200 days, depending on interest from theatres and public demand. *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* was screened for 140 days: the second longest screening time for a Shakespearean adaptation. This leads to a number of possible conclusions: one is that the distributors hoped to obtain a greater audience viewing of the film through a longer screening period; another could be that the number of viewers for this film was steady throughout the screening time, thus making it undesirable to remove the film from theatres earlier. The number of days the films were screened for is presented in Figure 6.4:

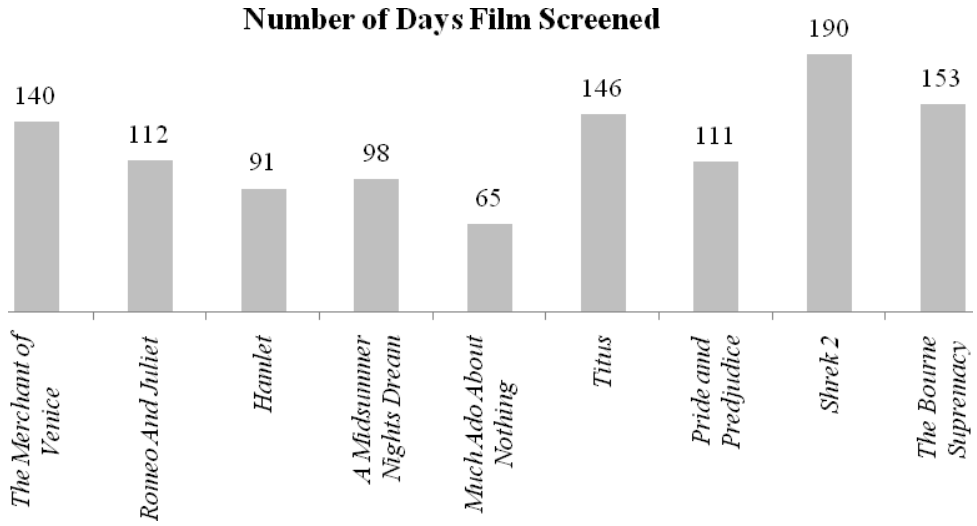

Figure 6.4: Length of screening period

The most financially successful films, *Shrek 2* and *The Bourne Supremacy*, had the longest running times of 190 days and 153 days respectively. Popularity does not always guarantee a long running period, however, as *Romeo and Juliet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Much Ado About Nothing* – the most successful of the Shakespearean adaptations in the figure above – ran for much shorter periods than *Titus* and *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, both of which performed comparatively poorly at the box office. Despite the relatively long running time, the returns on Radford's film were very low, barely making a profit on the estimated US $35 million spent (IMDB, 2007) on production. As Hindle says,

> In such a situation, the hope must be that longer term DVD sales will help to recoup the original investment. (2007, 243)

Home entertainment, including internet channels and film or DVD rentals, is another mode of distribution for film distributors. Home media are also distributed through agreements with distributors via television. The term "home media" is often associated with viewing for purely entertainment purposes. Even although statistics concerning home-viewing are not obtainable, it is imperative to note that *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* is neither solely an entertainment product, nor would it be exclusively watched recreationally by families, but rather by school and university students, and often not in the home.

The distributors of home-viewing material for *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* are the same as those who distributed the cinematic version of the movie, depending on country specific distribution capabilities. Sony Picture Classics distributed the film for home-viewing in the United States. It was reported that $7,050,000 dollars were generated in revenue in the first eight weeks that DVD rentals were released in the United States. DVD and rental sales data are unavailable; however, as the main interest in the movie had waned by the time this became relevant. Furthermore, DVD sales are not recorded publicly, as companies do not record line item profits. Finally, DVD rental revenues are unknown due to confidential licensing agreements between rental companies and distributors.

Although not accounted for by Kotler, illegal distribution is another manner in which products are transmitted from producer to consumer. Piracy involves the illegal distribution of a film through unofficial distribution channels (usually individuals), without the revenue paid to official distributors or producers. Piracy of films occurs primarily in two media: illegal DVD or video copies, and in compressed form on the internet.[32] Pirated films are obtained through home video recording in the cinema during a screening of the film known as 'bootlegging' or 'cams' (About.com 2004) or through a copy of the original DVD. According to an investigation conducted by AT&T and the University of Pennsylvania, up to 80% of pirated movies are 'leaked' by industry insiders (Callahan 2005). This is possible through pre-release versions of the movie used for research, audience testing, or awards. This allows for early digital copies of high quality DVD piracy versions to be produced.

Piracy of Radford's *Merchant of Venice* is difficult to estimate: the MPAA estimates that over US$ 3 billion has been lost due to piracy of illegal DVDs and VHS, excluding internet

[32] Digital encryption of the film is altered so as to require less digital memory and so allowing it to be transferred easily across the internet and to be screened on home computers.

losses. As slightly more than 44 million full length feature films were shared online via peer-to-peer networks in October 2004, commercial losses are extensive (Poddar, 2005). Using two popular illegal-download sites, "The Piratebay" and "Mininova", *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* has been downloaded 10 235 and 20 440 times respectively between June 2004 and June 2007 (The Pirate Bay 2007; Mininova 2007).This indicates the effectiveness of such internet sites in the illegal distribution of films. Download data for the piracy of mainstream films shows that the comparative popularity of films is consistent with that at the movie theatres: *Shrek 2*, for example, has been downloaded over 6 times more than *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* (The Pirate Bay 2007), while over a four day period in November 2007, *The Bourne Supremacy* was downloaded 2 783 times (Mininova 2007).

Before and during the screening of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, distribution companies used a number of promotional strategies to entice audiences, which affect the overall marketing and distribution of the product and are accounted for by Kotler's "Marketing Mix".

Promotion

"Promotion", the third element in the Marketing Mix, serves to inform the targeted consumers about the existence of the relevant product. Keller (1998) describes promotion as the short-term incentive to encourage trial or usage of a product or service. Usually, promotion educates prospective buyers about the benefits of the product and persuades them to purchase items (Berkowitz et al., 2000). There are a number of different forms of promotion, including advertising both before and during distribution, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing. The promotion of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* employed all of these means.

Multimedia pre-advertising is the first promotional strategy used by film distributors. Printed posters and film trailers advertised the cinematic release of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, as is typically the case in the film industry. Furthermore, trailers promoting the DVD release were advertised on other DVD copies of films of similar genre, while sales were also encouraged by additional offerings such as DVD subtitles in various languages; historical background on both the play, *The Merchant of Venice*, the history of Venice, where the

film is set, and anti-Semitism, one of its major themes. The audio track of the film is included in the DVD, as well as interviews with Michael Radford and Lynn Collins.

Film sales included tours by director Michael Radford and by Lynn Collins; while promotional activities featuring key actors created enthusiasm among potential customers. The presence of the Prince of Wales at the premiere screening of the film in London constituted another promotional tactic. *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* was released in the United Kingdom on December 3, 2004. The holiday release is another common marketing strategy for films – and for Shakespearean adaptations in particular.

The distribution potential of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* was enhanced by its renowned cast – a device used to increase the marketing potential of the film. The three main roles are played by Al Pacino, Jeremy Irons and Joesph Fiennes: three highly respected and well-known actors. The film was advertised on cinema posters and trailers as follows:

> [S]tarring Oscar© winners Al Pacino and Jeremy Irons, with BAFTA© nominee Joseph Fiennes, comes this enthralling tale of greed, corruption, love and betrayal (Sony Picture Classics 2004, 34).

Thus it was promoted by drawing on the reputation of its cast. As Radford remarked in response to a question about the process of selecting a cast,

> [T]hese days whatever film it is [financiers] will try and get you to put major names in the dayplayers. [[33]] It's just above movie stars today. (Radford, 2004)

Similar sentiments are clear in the *Oceans* series, in which all-star casts feature 11 and 12 of the top Hollywood actors in *Ocean's* episodes 11 and 12 respectively. At the opposite end of the scale, small-scale film producer, Sandra Katz, laments the fact that she has "tried for three years to raise money for *Nothing Men*, a film by first-time director John Serpe… You can't get all your financing until you get a name actor" (Goodman, 1999).

In essence, then, much energy was expended by the director and producers of this film to attract renowned stars to the cast in an effort to raise the profile of the film. Despite Radford's protestations, he is complicit in this practice that he seems to blame the financiers for. Lynn Collins (who played Portia) is the only main cast member of the film who does not have an Oscar nomination. Michael Radford admitted that, "[i]t was a little difficult really to persuade the

[33] Main acting roles.

studios to go ahead with it but, in the end, they did" (Radford 2004). The pressure from studios to have a big-name cast highlights the importance of star actors to the money-making potential of the film, and confirms their importance to the promotional strategies of the distributors. The film takes the form it does partly because of the financial and promotional needs of the financiers and director.

The nationality, as well as the fame, of the cast also plays a role in the promotional potential of the film. Buchanan notes that "in the sound era, the selective use of British Shakespearean actors to enhance American Shakespeare films has become almost habitual" (2005, 184). In the case of this film, the selection of American film stars has been used to enhance a British Shakespearean film and increase its potential viewership. American actors provide the 'big name' and 'star quality' that British cinema has traditionally lacked. An American cast also makes it more likely for the film to be a success in America, which constitutes the largest market for most feature films. This technique was used by Kenneth Branagh in his films *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993), *Hamlet* (1996) and *Love's Labour's Lost* (2000), where he attracted box-office American stars – Alicia Silverstone, Keanu Reeves and Denzel Washington, for example – to add commercial weight and screen glamour to his British Shakespearean productions (Buchanan 2005).

Films are typically first screened at festivals where there is much media coverage and the hope of favourable reviews or awards. The release of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* at important film events was thus also part of the promotional strategy for the film. The film premiered internationally at the prestigious Venice Film Festival in 2004, emphasizing the Venetian setting and filming of the work (Sony Pictures 2004). In North America, the premiere took place at the Toronto Film Festival in September 2004. The screening of the film in Toronto appealed to the American audience since, as an English film set in Italy, it lacks the "Hollywood" appeal for the American market. *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* was screened at two different film festivals to maximize public reception, as well as to acknowledge the international market and the American market as two separate distribution areas.

As much as screening films in different arenas is a promotional tactic, not screening them can also be part of the marketing strategy. *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* was notably absent from the Cannes Film festival, an important showcase of European films, which is

extremely important for European critical and commercial interests in film sales based on their artistic cinema quality (Forbes and Street 2001). European film is stereotyped as art cinema, while Shakespearean cinema is considered specialized art film. By not screening Radford's *Merchant of Venice* at this Festival, the distributors deliberately avoided labeling the film an 'art movie' and thus attempted to cement *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice's* reputation as a feature film, for mass consumption as opposed to a niche viewership.

Price

"Price", in Kotler's terms, is the currency required to facilitate an exchange, and the only component in the "Marketing Mix" to generate revenue (Shipley and Jobber, 2001). It represents the customer's "economic outlay that must be sacrificed to engage in a given purchase transaction" (Lichtenstein el al., 1993, 234). Marketing literature is generally in consensus on the importance of price on the consumer buying process (Monroe, 1973). Thus, film distributors wishing to maximise revenue would balance the price against the number of units sold, as revenue is equal to the quantity sold multiplied by the price (Jolson and Hise, 1973). Ideally, the distributor should maximise both price and quantity to maximise total revenue, but this is rarely practical, as quantity is affected by price (Ferrell and Hartline, 2005). This is often the case in the film industry, as film-viewing is a recreational activity and viewers are willing to pay only a certain price for entertainment.

In the initial stages of film distribution, "price" has two elements: the price paid by film theatres to distributors and the cost of theatre tickets for patrons. More interesting film-specific price analysis can be carried out on the former than on the latter. The pricing strategies involved in distributor deals tend to be negotiable for each film, while the pricing of tickets to the public is generic to specific theatres as opposed to particular films.

Although pricing data from distributor to theatre is confidential, some observations can be made in this regard. *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* was screened at only four theatres during its opening weekend: perhaps because theatres found the asking price from the distributors too high and could not justify the risk of buying the film without viewer feedback. After some publicity, the number of theatres screening the film grew to 107, when the price could be justified by the popularity of and profit earned from the film. Ticket pricing to the public is largely unaffected by the film shown. Viewers watching *William Shakespeare's The*

Merchant of Venice were charged the same price as those viewing any other film at the same theatre at the same time.

However, price is a factor in DVD and video sales, where popular films tend to be more expensive. On its release, *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* was retailed at $14.95, while *Shrek* sold for $19.99: 25% more than the less popular Shakespearean adaptation (Amazon.com 2007). The amount of time since release also affects the pricing of films, as more recent productions are sold at a higher price. Since its release, *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* has dropped in price to $7.99 and *Shrek 2* has dropped to $12.87 at some retailers (Walmart.com 2007).

Piracy is often thought to be a result of the cost of films, as distributors are criticised for over-pricing and thus lose potential revenue. Copied DVDs are sold at a substantially reduced price and advertised as "half the price of a Manhattan movie ticket", although often sold for much less than this (Callahan 2005). Online piracy is free. Studies have shown that reduced cost-pricing has no effect on the piracy of films (Poddar 2005): in other words, the film-pirate objects to paying at all, rather than to the high cost of a film. This would seem to suggest that lowering the price of tickets at the film theatre would have little effect in increasing the distribution of the film via this channel. Of all the factors in the Kotler's "Marketing Mix", "price" is the least influential in the distribution of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*: a result of the fact that pricing affects the film entertainment industry as a whole, as opposed to individual films.

This chapter has shown that Kotler's "Marketing Mix" provides an effective framework within which to investigate the distribution of filmic text, and so highlights another approach for further Book History investigations. The distributors of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* used both "place" and "promotion" to increase the success of the film's distribution, while "price" did not play a major role in their strategies. Book History encourages the use of many disciplines to gain a comprehensive understanding of the processes of transmission of texts and the factors that influence this transmission. By examining *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* through a marketing theory lens, this objective is achieved.

Chapter 7

RECEPTION: THE MERCHANT OF VENICE AND THE VIEWER

> BIRDBOOT: The groundwork has been well and truly laid, and the author has taken the trouble to learn from the masters of the genre. He has created a real situation, and few will doubt the ability to resolve it with a startling denouement. Certainly that is what it so far lacks, but it has a beginning, a middle and I have no doubt it will prove to have an end…
>
> MOON: Faced as we are with such ubiquitous obliquity, it is hard, it is hard indeed, and therefore I will not attempt, to refrain from invoking the names of Kafka, Sartre, Shakespeare, St. Paul, Beckett, Birkett, Pinero, Pirandello, Dante and Dorothy L. Sayers.
>
> ─ from Tom Stoppard's *The Real Inspector Hound* (1968, 15).

Recent Book History studies have tended to neglect the reception of texts: a vital component of the Communication Circuit. Finkelstein and McCleery suggest that this is partly due to a "comparative lack of empirical evidence" regarding the reception of printed texts, seeking data "that is neither incomplete nor partisan" (Finkelstein and McCleery 2005, 100). Reception data for filmic texts, on the other hand, is more widely available. Such data has been collected by production companies in an attempt to predict audience behaviour and to foresee the most profitable films. This data provides the empirical material for the detailed reception studies that Book Historians have lacked in the realm of printed texts. Using this material for a discussion of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, the final chapter of this thesis will use data long available to scholars of film to address this gap in Book History studies.

Film viewing, like reading, can be considered both a social phenomenon and an individual experience, and can be studied in a number of different ways. For example, it is possible to investigate the social impact of film (in a study akin to Roger Chartier's study of the social impact of the book in 1994[34]). One could also examine the processes of filmic

[34] Chartier explored the social impact of the book in Europe in *The Order of the Books: Readers, Authors and Libraries in Europe between the Fourteenth and Eighteenth Centuries* translated by L. G. Cochrane (1994).

interpretation (as Iser did when he examined the nature of reading and interpretation in 1980[35]) or even to study the text as did Stanley Fish[36] (1976) in an attempt to discover the extent to which meaning in a film is constrained by the viewer's individual values, experiences and cultural references. Because of the data available, reception of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* will be analysed in terms of audience response. Using quantitative data derived from a poll on The Internet Movie Database, qualitative commentary on the film gathered gathered largely from internet film records (primarily The Internet Movie Database, Box Office Mojo and public film review sites), and sales data from theatre screenings, this chapter will discuss three different indicators of public response to a film.

The satirical conversation between the critic-characters Moon and Birdboot in Tom Stoppard's *The Real Inspector Hound* cited in the epigraph of this chapter draws attention to the tradition of 'expert' criticism as an indicator of the success or failure of plays. The film industry, too, judges its products partly by their reception by critics, whose opinions are noted in written reviews or through film awards. While observing some expert responses, this chapter will review the reception of Radford's 2004 production focusing almost exclusively on the reception of the film by a section of the audience that is little-studied in either film studies: the ordinary viewer.

The table below highlights the final stage in the Communication Circuit for the filmic text.

[35] In "Interaction between Text and Reader" in Suleiman and Crosman's *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation* (1980).

[36] In his article "Is there a text in this class?" reprinted in Finkelstein and McCleery's *The Book History Reader* (2005).

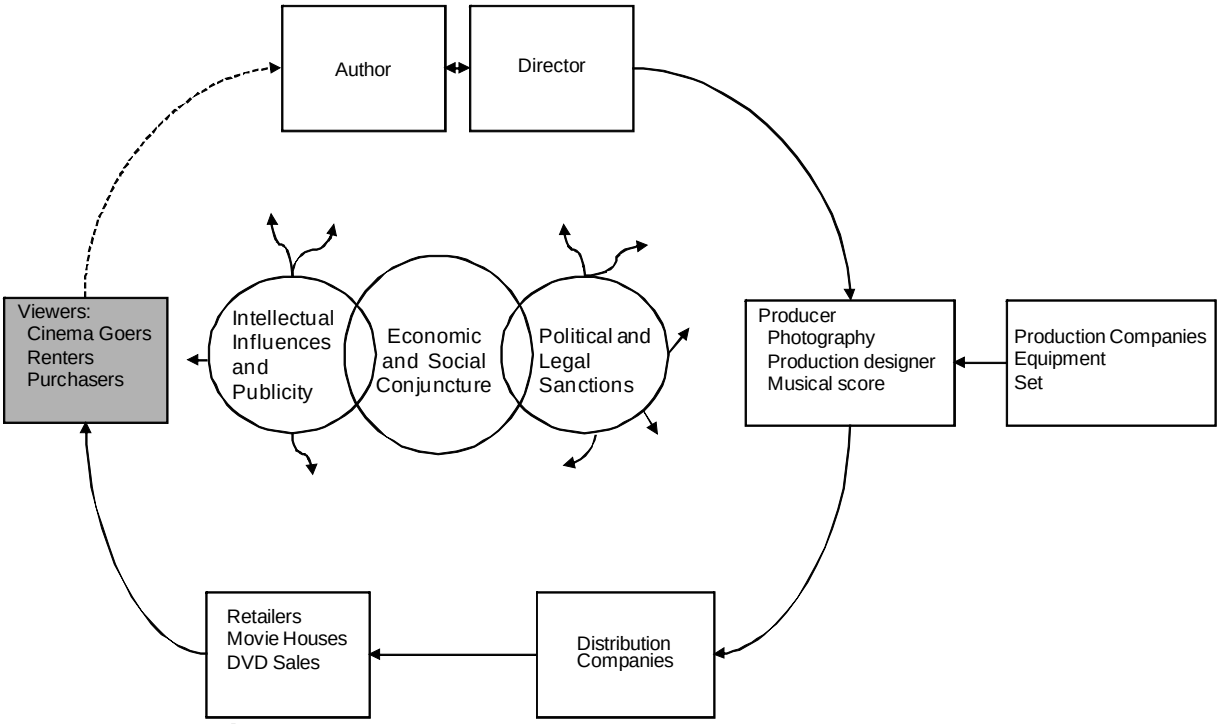

Figure 7.1: Filmic Communication Circuit - Reception

The agents identified in the circuit above are the ordinary film watchers: those who frequent the movie theatre, rent films or who purchase them on video, DVD or on the internet. It is these 'lay' viewers who make up the bulk of the movie watching public, and yet it is these viewers who have been largely excluded from reception studies.

The distinction between the professional critic and the ordinary consumer was made by Rose (2006) with regard to studies on written texts, but it is equally applicable to the study of filmic ones. Rose distinguishes between the history of critics and what he calls the "history of audiences" (Rose 2006, 424). Rose's study refers to book readership; in the case of film, this is analogous to the history of the lay viewer. Although the usual reception histories of texts trace the responses of critics and intellectuals, it is equally important to focus on reception by "the common reader – defined as any reader who [does] not read books for a living" (Rose 2006, 424). This is a particularly appropriate distinction in the case of a filmic text that is the subject of much critical attention, yet has been produced for mass consumption – as is the case in *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*. While the following section of this thesis will briefly examine the response to the filmic text by professional film reviewers, the focus of the chapter is

on the reception of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* by the common viewer: defined, in Rose's terms, as anyone who does not watch films for a living (2006, 424).

Reception by Professional Critics

Samuel Crowl describes *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* as "Michael Radford's well-reviewed film" (2006, 116): and indeed it was positively received by those who are considered 'experts' in film. Almost unanimously, scholars and film critics alike praised the production, the director and the actors for a fine adaptation of what James Scott in *The New York Times* referred to as "Shakespeare's most problematic play – at least with respect to modern sensitivities". Despite this challenge, Scott goes on to note, Shakespeare's script "receives an intelligent interpretation from Michael Radford and from a superb cast" (Scott 2004). Peter Bradshaw, the film critic at *The Guardian* in the United Kingdom, commented that:

> Michael Radford's fresh, lucid and unpretentious screen revival of *The Merchant of Venice* is raised above the commonplace by a brilliant performance from Al Pacino as Shylock. (Bradshaw 2004, 1)

Bradshaw gave the film a four-out-of-five-star evaluation, rating it to be a "must-see" film, and choosing it as his film of the week. Ray Bennett, director and critic, similarly endorsed Pacino's performance, but extended his praise, saying that Pacino is not the only reason to watch *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*: "Irons' line readings are as seemingly effortless as always, such is his mastery of his voice. And Collins makes Portia not only a calculating beauty but also a warm and winning one" (Bennet 2004, 1).

Despite the general praise, one critic felt that *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* was a "long and slightly draining" production that could be accused of "every now and again lacking flow" (Smith 2004). Another critic expressed reservations that although "intriguing", there is doubt that Radford's production would "have much crossover[37] appeal" (Berardinelli 2004). Although considered good for an adaptation of a difficult play, there was concern among critics that Radford's production would not be as popular with the general public as it was with 'the experts'. Such an opinion is justified by an examination of Box Office performance of previous Shakespearean adaptations, which reveals that well-reviewed films and performances do not always translate into financial success.

[37] This is crossover from those interested in Shakespearean or 'art' films and the mass film market.

Material success for the 2004 film was limited, even from critics, as written reviews largely failed to be translated into material acknowledgement through film awards. Film awards constitute another indicator of the reception of a film by professional critics. *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* did, however, succeed in winning or being nominated for the awards shown in Table 7.1 :

Awards	Award	Winner	Status	Year
BAFTAFilm Awards	Best Costume design	Sammy Sheldon	Nominated	2005
Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists	Best Production Design	Michael Radford	Won	2005
Golden Satellite Award	Best Actor in a supporting role, comedy or musical	Joseph Fiennes	Nominated	2005
Golden Satellite Award	Best Actress in a supporting role, comedy or musical	Lynn Collins	Nominated	2005
Golden Satellite Award	Best motion picture		Nominated	2005

Table 7.1: Table of awards won by *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*

The British Academy Film Awards (BAFTA) are presented annually for outstanding achievement in feature films released in the United Kingdom. The Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists give awards to films that received positive critical reviews in Italy, and the Golden Satellite Awards are annual awards given to the film industry by the International Press Academy: the largest entertainment press agency in the world.

The awards tally for this production amounts to just one: Best Production Design to Michael Radford from The Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists. The award won at the Italian National Syndicate of film journalists is indicative of the strong support that the Italian public have both for lead actor Pacino and for the Venetian setting – an assertion corroborated by the fact that *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* performed comparatively well at the Italian Box Office, earning more revenue in Italy than anywhere else in the world (Box Office Mojo, 2007). Despite this, the film failed to win any other awards in Italy, and was absent from nominations for awards at the Venice Film Festival, where it premièred in Europe.

Apart from the BAFTA nomination, this film was neither nominated for, nor won, any 'mainstream' or prestigious film awards. The Academy Awards (or Oscars) are the most prestigious film awards and *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* failed to receive a nomination in any of the 36 categories. This suggests that although the film was reviewed positively, such reviews do not entail material success. In addition, although it was aimed at being a feature film for popular consumption, *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*

was in fact a minor production: or, at least, failed to convince mainstream awards critics of its potential.

This may have had an adverse effect on the viewing public. 'Experts' show their appreciation for a text with awards, while the number of awards won encourages 'ordinary viewers' to watch a film. Thus, awards can be an influential factor in increasing the viewership of the film by the ordinary viewing public. Studies have shown that there is indeed a relationship – although not necessarily a causal one – between awards won, positive reviews and box office success (Hindle 2007, 467).

Both written reviews and film awards show one side of the reception of a filmic text: a perspective that has become problematic because it is often interpreted as the only, or the most highly regarded form of reception. Although analysis of reception by the 'experts' of the film community sheds some light on the filmic text, it provides a limited impression. A fuller, and possibly more interesting, understanding of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* can be gained from an investigation into the reception of the text by the ordinary viewer.

The Ordinary Viewer

One of the practical problems with the application of Book History to older texts, especially performed texts, is the lack of raw data about the majority audience response. The advantage of researching modern filmic texts is that reviews on the internet provide some – albeit limited – access to the responses of viewers, in ways not possible for earlier texts.

It is such data, gathered from the internet, that provides the basis for the following discussion on the reception of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* by the ordinary viewing public. The data analysed in this study may be distorted by the fact that it relies upon viewers who have internet access, which in turn is biased by the average ages, class groupings, nationalities, and possibly gender of the internet-using population. However, this data does provide one assessment of the views of one section of the viewership of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, and also gives an indication of the possibilities open to Book Historians studying film when more comprehensive data is available.

The first interrogation into audience response to Radford's film comes in the form of an analysis of quantitative data derived from an online poll on the Internet Movie Database website.

This analysis will be reinforced by the use of accompanying qualitative analysis of on-line reviews from ordinary film viewers.

The IMDB poll asked viewers to rate *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* on a scale between 1 and 10. 8 443 individuals voted – a sufficiently large sample size to assume that it follows a statistically normal distribution,[38] and thus can be confidently used to highlight some observations about the reception of the film. The IMDB use a weighted average rating for greater accuracy.[39] The IMDB's interest in presenting an accurate rating system suggests that measures have been taken to attempt to ensure that voters constitute a fair representation of the viewership of the film as a whole. The number of voters in the poll was substantially less than a similar one concerning the viewership of *Shrek 2*, and less than half of that in the case of *The Bourne Supremacy*. This may be an indication that *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* enjoyed less popular appeal than the other two films. One viewer commented that "the only caveat that I feel that I should make is that this is probably not a movie for everyone. This is a period piece and very much a work of literature as much as it is a movie" (Cullin 2004). The perception of the film as a period piece, or art film, may account for a less enthusiastic public response to the film. Despite the fact that fewer viewers voted in this poll than in the others, the results do provide an understanding of how ordinary viewers received the film.

Figure 7.2 is constructed out of the raw data found online and represents the number of viewers per age group who voted in the IMDB poll. The viewers are separated into age in four categories: under 18 years, 18-29 years, 30-44 years and 45 years and above. The viewers are further distinguished by gender within these four categories.

[38] According to the central limit theorem, as the sample size increases in size towards infinity the average becomes closer to the true average, thus large sample sizes are considered to be good approximations of the true value of the population. A sample of greater than 30 is often considered sufficient. (Freud, 1999).

[39] To explain its representation of data, the IMDB website explains that "IMDB publishes weighted vote averages rather than raw data averages". This means that various filters are applied to the raw data in order to eliminate or reduce attempts at 'vote stuffing' by individuals interested in changing the current rating of a movie than giving their true opinion of it. The exact methods used were not disclosed to ensure that the policy remained effective. The result, however, is a more accurate vote average. It must be noted that relying on data from an external source is always problematic, as there is no certainty of its accuracy.

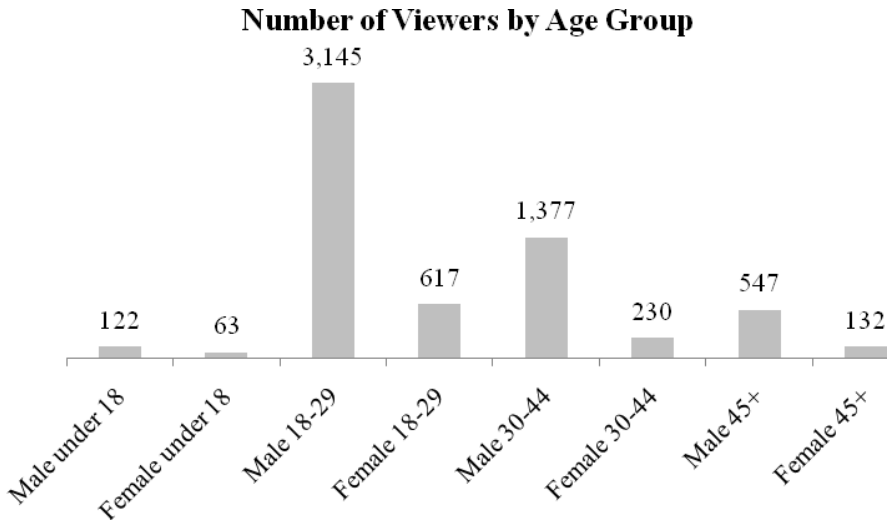

Figure 7.2: Number of viewers by age on IMDB.com

Figure 7.2 suggests that the main audience age-group for this film is between the ages of 18 and 29,[40] with more male viewers in all age-groups. Even taking into account that this is the largest population of internet users in terms of age profiles – and so the data is subject to an age bias produced by its method of collection – the data does seem to suggest that the film appealed largely to young men and women. This production was targeted at the mass-viewing audience, the majority of which falls into this age group. This is not unique for modern Shakespearean adaptations, with Baz Lurhmann's *Romeo and Juliet* and Trevor Nunn's *Twelfth Night* also targeting this market.

According to the IMDB data, the viewership of the film was largely male, with almost 33% more men participating in the poll than women. Although more men may have watched the film than women, the rankings graphically represented in Figure 7.3 indicate that women enjoyed the film more, with all the female adult age-groups rating the production more highly than their male counterparts.

[40] This data is largely influenced by the profiles of internet users, and the age and gender statistics may be skewed by this.

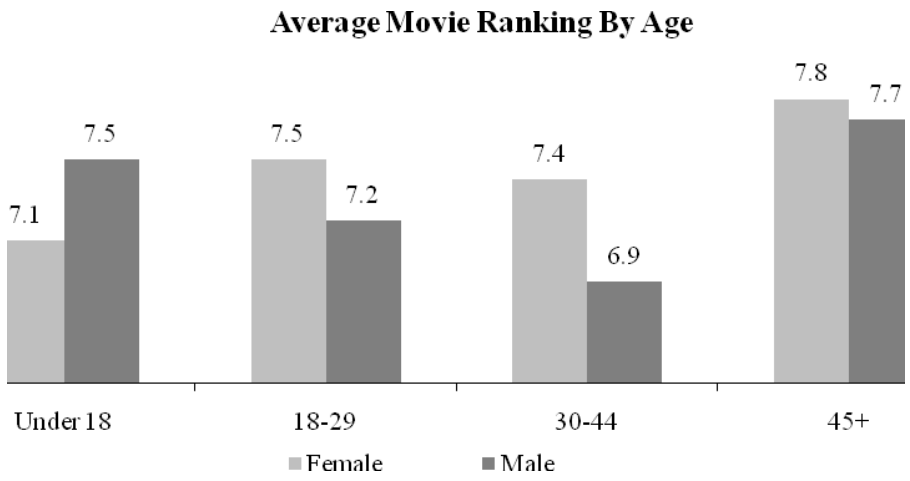

Figure 7.3: Merchant of Venice viewer rankings by age on IMDB.com

The results in Figure 7.3 are categorised by age group and gender: viewers were asked to rate the film from 1 to 10. The ratings were almost all between 7 and 8, indicating a small difference in the opinions of the viewers. There is insufficient evidence to suggest a difference in the ratings given by people of different age groups, although it seems that, if this scale equates to enjoyment, middle-aged men enjoyed the film least of all featured demographics.

The same data may be more usefully analysed when represented on a horizontal axis with the number of rating viewers on the vertical axis. Figure 7.4 represents the opinions of all viewers, not restricted by age or sex.

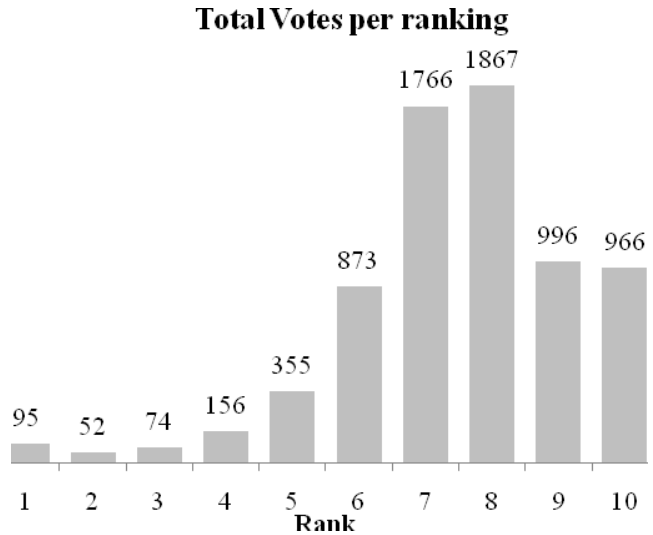

Figure 7.4: Total votes per ranking on IMBD.com

When asked to rank items on such a scale, respondents tend to gravitate towards the mean, which in the case of the scale used in this poll for films in general, is 5. The most frequent rating for Radford's production is substantially higher than the average of the ratings, with 1667 viewers rating *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* at 8/10 whilst the average rating is 6.7. It is striking to note that very few viewers rated the film at 5 or less and many gave it the maximum of 10/10. This data suggests that ordinary film viewers, like the expert critics, believe Michael Radford to have directed an excellent production.

While this analysis is valid from one perspective, it is important to contextualise viewers' rankings. The figure below does this by comparing the viewers' rankings of Radford's production of *The Merchant of Venice* with the comparative rankings of other films, which were compared with Radford's production in terms of production and distribution data.

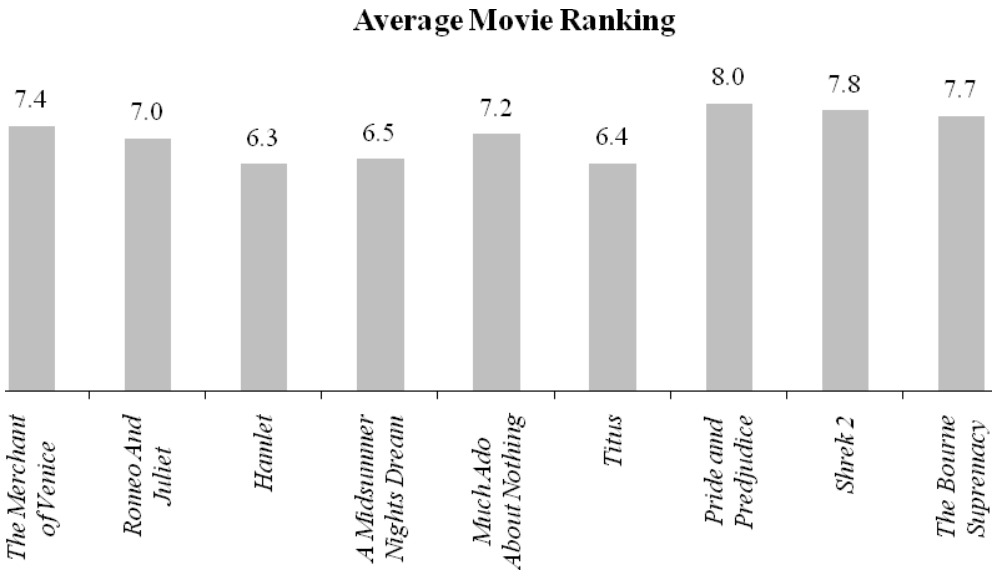

Figure 7.5: Average movie ranking of compared films

All the films rated here were similarly rated by the viewers. The scores occupy a small range, with figures ranging from 6.3/10 to 8/10, with 5 of the 9 films presented scoring in the 7-8/10 range. Out of all the Shakespearean adaptations, *The Merchant of Venice* was given the highest viewer rating. It was rated lower than the 2 'blockbuster' films of the same period, and also lower than the adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, which scored the highest out of the films surveyed, at 8/10.

Both the quantitative data collected from the IMDB poll, and the qualitative analysis of the comments left by viewers online, indicate a positive response to *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*. However, another way of assessing the reception of a film is through its financial success, and these records tell a different story. In other words, different indicators can give different assessments of popularity. I will examine the sales figures for Radford's production and assess viewer response in economic terms.

Film scholars have shown that the domestic movie market in the United States is "a crude but reliable index of the financial fortunes of English-language films" (Jackson 2000, 4). The exploration of sales data allows us to evaluate the reception of films on the assumption that high sales mean a positive reception from the public. This data may require further exploration, for example to ascertain the success or failure of marketing and distribution.

Financial Indicators of Reception

Radford's *The Merchant of Venice* was released in the United States during the holiday period of 2004 on December 29, 2004, after making its US and Canada premiere at the Toronto Film Festival. It made US$69 868 in its opening weekend, with only four open theatres, each generating an average revenue of $17 467. Throughout the period of cinema screening, the widest release was 107 theatres (Box Office Mojo 2007).

Figure 7.6 tracks the sales during the first 15 weeks after the release of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* in terms of weekly earnings and popularity rankings. The rankings are compiled from an on-line IMDB survey, while the weekly earnings are derived from box office data. The discrepancy between opening dates is a result of the United Kingdom premiere on 3 December 2004.

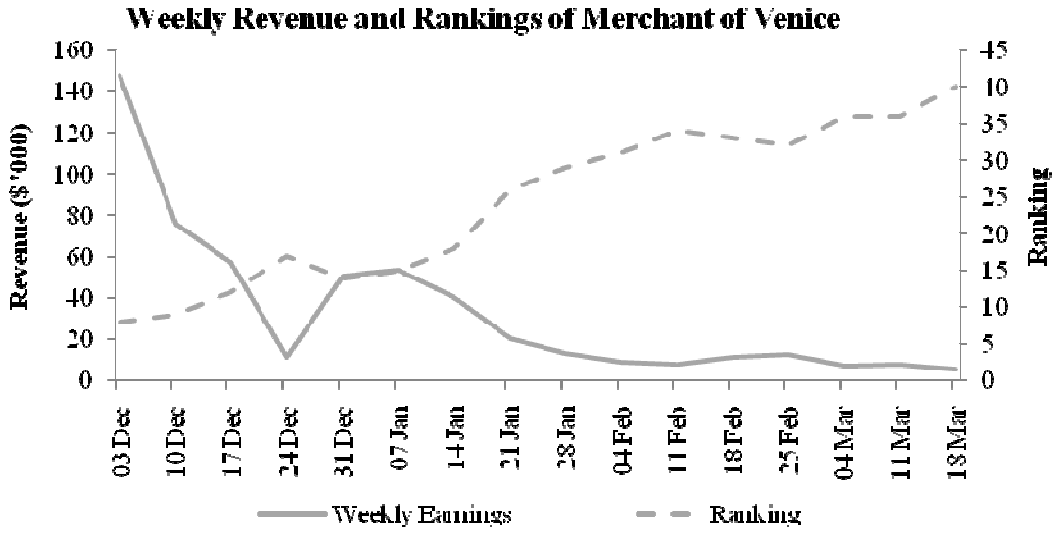

Figure 7.6: Weekly Revenue and ranking of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*

The data tabulated above provides empirical evidence for assumptions which might otherwise be made on the basis of anecdotal evidence and intuition. Firstly, the revenue generated by *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* decreased per week as the ranking of the film fell, suggesting that the popularity of a film can be gauged from the amount of money that it is making at the Box Office. This graph also indicates the viewing behavior of the public, with weekly revenue falling over the post-Christmas period and then increasingly rapidly during the New Year Holiday. This suggests that viewers avoid the cinema on Christmas day, but that film watching is popular in the New Year. The New Year peak also coincided with the opening of the film in the US, although poor ticket sales in the first weekend in America mean that the increased sales overall cannot be attributed solely to the opening of this additional (and usually lucrative) market.

After the 15 weeks depicted in the figure above, the sales continued to decrease. On its closing date of 26 May 2005, *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* had been in circulation for 149 days, or 21.3 weeks. It made a total lifetime gross sum of $20 182 140 worldwide, with $3 765 585 from sales within the US and $16 417 140 from sales in the rest of the world. 18.7% of total revenue came from US sales. (Box Office Mojo 2007)

The overall income generation from theatres only of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* is compared to the films discussed previously and shown in Figure 7.7.

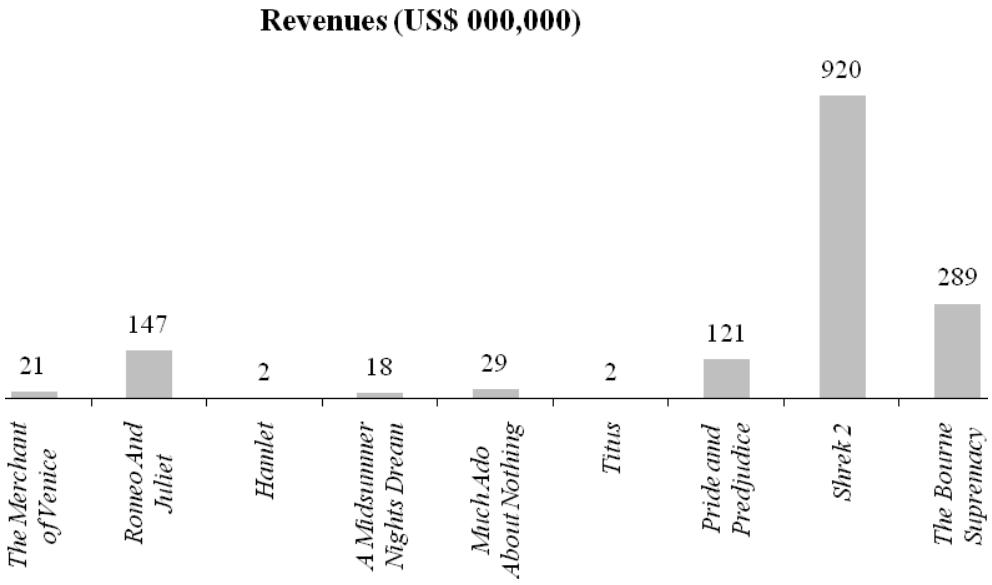

Figure 7.7: Revenues obtained at the Box Office

This figure highlights the fact that although *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* was considered a feature film, it was not on the same scale as the top revenue generators of the same time. It reinforces the conclusion drawn in Chapter 5 that Shakespearean film adaptations occupy the margins of the film industry. The revenues gained from *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice, Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado About Nothing* and *Titus* combined do not equal two thirds of that earned by *The Bourne Supremacy*. Popular culture dictates revenue generation, and Shakespeare does not appeal to the majority of viewers. The one Shakespearean film to earn a considerable amount at the box office was the 1996 production of *Romeo and Juliet*, which was designed to appeal to the tastes of an audience accustomed to the prevailing modes of filmic entertainment within popular culture.

This data may be compared with that contained in Figure 7.5, depicting viewer rankings for various films. Although ranked similarly to *Shrek 2* and *The Bourne Supremacy, William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* generated less than 3% and 10% of their revenues respectively. Thus, more people watched *Shrek 2* and *The Bourne Supremacy*, but those who did, did not necessarily enjoy it more. There can therefore be seen to be no correlation between viewer rating and income generated. This suggests that audience perception does not necessarily influence the popularity of the film and the revenue that it generates, but rather it is the genre or

style of production, and the way the film is perceived, which influence popularity and ticket sales.

There also seems to be a correlation between the number of screens on which a film is shown and the amount of money it earns. The greater the number of screens, the higher the revenue gathered. It may, however, be that already popular films are screened at a larger number of cinemas. The number of screens can be seen in Figure 6.3 in the previous chapter. Only the number of theatres that screen the movie increases with revenue generated, while the number of days during which the film is open is standard, regardless of popularity.

A final comparison to be made between the films discussed in terms of reception concerns that of the audience they found in the US compared to reception by viewers in the rest of the world (mainly in the UK and Europe). Figure 7.8 depicts the earnings of each film as percentages of US earnings and earnings from the rest of the world.

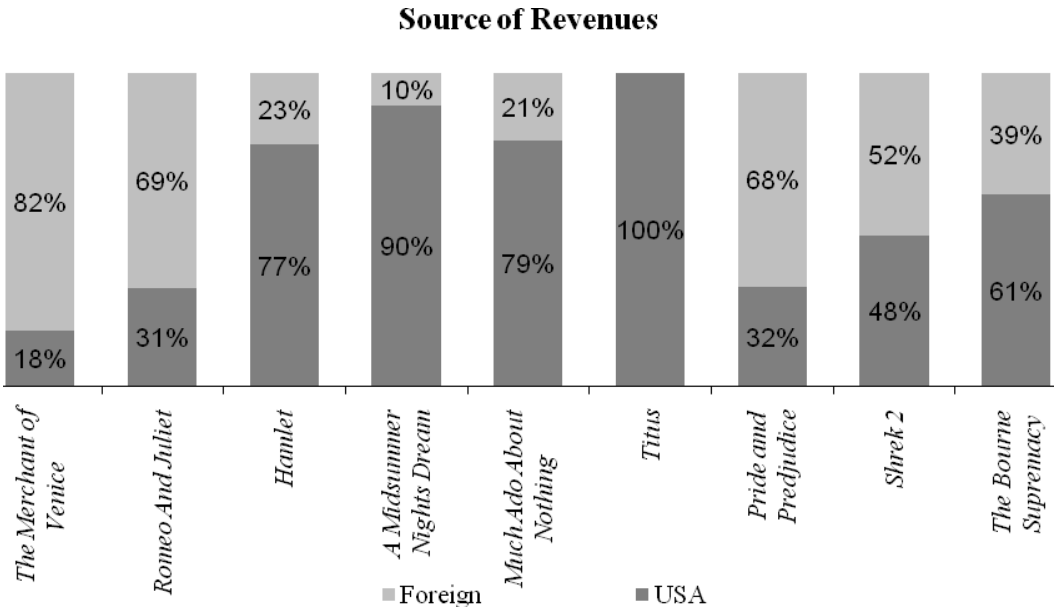

Figure 7.8: Source of the Merchant of Venice's film revenues

William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice generated a very small percentage of its revenue in the US, thus substantiating Jackson's claim that earnings at the American box-office are "a crude but reliable index of the financial fortunes of English-language films" (2000, 4). The large percentage of foreign earnings may be partially accounted for by the film's great popularity in Italy, grossing $4,806,042 - over US $1 million more than any other country it was screened

in, including the United States, which is usually the top grossing market for feature films (Box Office Mojo 2007).

It is notable, however, that non-Hollywood productions are less profitable in the US than films produced in the United States. In the case of *Titus*, almost 100% of its revenue was generated in the US. Although screened in Europe, the film did so poorly, and the revenue was so negligible, that data was not included in overall revenue on the IMBD (IMDB, 2007).

William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice costs $14.95 (Amazon 2007) to buy from amazon.com, $6 to rent from Blockbusters (Blockbusters 2007) and $10 (AMC Empire 2007) to watch at a theatre in New York. The earlier discussion on piracy showed that 30,675 copies were pirated from two illegal sites. Ignoring the facts that these may be exchanged between individuals, that there are numerous other illegal sites, and that many copies are sold illegally on the street, this still indicates the scale of financial losses incurred by Radford's *Merchant of Venice*, especially since the box office takings in America were only $3,765,585.

If all 30,675 pirated downloads from two sites were downloaded in America and screened theatres, approximately 9% more revenue would have been generated at the American Box office for *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*: which is a substantial difference from actual sales. In similar fashion, if the 30,675 downloads were bought as DVD's, an additional $458,284 would have been generated. Hollywood estimates that the cost of lost revenues is approximately $3.5 billion dollars a year (Bennet 2004).

The data explored in this chapter seems contradictory: the ranking data suggests that viewers felt the production to be high quality and that they enjoyed it. Yet *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* performed poorly at the Box Office in terms of expected income generation and in comparison to other films. This could be the result of a number of factors: most significantly, that an art film or a Shakespearean adaptation is of high quality in terms of filmmaking but does not appeal to the mass market, and thus performs poorly at the box office. This supports the views of both critics and ordinary viewers that the film, although directed at the greater public, did not succeed in crossing over from the Shakespearean genre to popular film.

CONCLUSION

> You will never age for me, nor fade, nor die
>
> ─ Joseph Fiennes playing Will Shakespeare in *Shakespeare in Love* (1998)

Texts have multiple identities: they occupy physical forms and also constitute sets of ideas that are consumed and interpreted by the viewer. A text is both time-bound and timeless: each incarnation of a work is contextually situated and determined, yet exists on a continuum of texts which allows for its timeless presence through continual reincarnation – whether in new forms or in the continued consumption of existing versions. Texts exemplify the comment made by the character of Will Shakespeare in the movie *Shakespeare in Love*: once in existence, a text can never fade, nor die, but is continually revived through its various incarnations and through its relationship with other texts. Once the text is born it occupies a relationship with all other texts, with its own production and future productions, and with its viewers in the present and future. To understand a text in this way requires a radical shift in the way texts are studied, for literary criticism, bibliography, or film studies cannot alone accommodate the complexities of this time-bound yet timeless entity that can be studied both in itself and in terms of its relationships with the various processes that make up its existence.

Book History has opened up this space in the literary field by providing a space where the political, economic, sociological, literary and other aspects of a text are brought together and housed under a single broad project. Such an approach has proved especially valuable in traditional investigations into printed texts, but has yet to extend its reach beyond the field of books as text. By adapting Robert Darnton's Communication Circuit – created to explain the various stages that books undergo in their creation, production and consumption – to the processes of film, Book History methods may be applied to filmic analysis.

By exploring the process of transmission of a text through the various stages of the circuit, we are able to examine the significant contextual factors that give the text life beyond its content. In its attempt to encompass such a large number of aspects of study, however, the project of Book History carries with it a number of pitfalls. Darnton notes that

> One can easily lose sight of the larger dimensions of the enterprise because Book Historians often stray into esoteric byways and unconnected specializations. Their work can be so fragmented, even within the limits of a literature on a single country, that it may seem hopeless to conceive of book history as a single subject, to be studied from a comparative perspective across the whole range of historical disciplines. But books themselves do not respect limits, either linguistic or national… Books also refuse to be contained within the confines of a single discipline when treated as objects of study. Neither history nor literature nor economics nor sociology nor bibliography can do justice to all the aspects of a life of a book. By its very nature, therefore, the history of books must be international in its scale and interdisciplinary in method. But it need not lack conceptual coherence, because books belong to circuits of communication that operate in consistent patterns, however complex they may be. (2002, 22)

By examining film through the adapted Filmic Communication Circuit, these obstacles can be overcome. Through exploring the various stages of the circuit in the chapters of this thesis – the conventions of filmic texts in Chapter Three, authorship in Chapter Four, production in Chapter Five, distribution in Chapter Six and viewership in Chapter Seven – I have attempted to demonstrate the possibilities for investigating film through the methodology of Book History. By following the various stages of *William Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice* through the "communication circuit", I hope to show that that in opening up new avenues of investigation, a conceptually coherent Book/Film History study is both possible and valuable.

The project of this thesis indicates both the importance of Book History as a methodological approach and its application to film. The major theoretical influences on Book History – that of the new Bibliographers and the *Annales* School of historians – provide insight into how such a field of study emerged. By exploring the concept of a text through Shillingsburg's six criteria, the possibilities for using Book History to study forms other than the written text are demonstrated. Robert Darnton's Communication Circuit provides a tool for the analysis of the various stages that books undergo, thus opening the doorway to the creation of similar "communication circuits" for different types of text. The Filmic Communication Circuit is one such example which takes from Darnton the methodological process of a "communication circuit" and applying it to the study of films as text.

Darnton's model, however, has been criticised for its lack of engagement with the actual content of the artefacts studied. In his work the physical object of the book has the greatest significance, and traditional literary critique involving the content of the work is neglected. By not engaging critically with the content, a Book Historian may lose sight of the impact that the

content, both apparent and implied, has on the existence of the book. The creation of a film version of *The Merchant of Venice* in 2004, for instance, relies heavily on the cultural meaning derived from the screenplay's origin as a Shakespearean script, as well as the content of the script itself. To ignore content – just as to ignore the various conventions, filmic techniques, iconography, themes and the plot – is to overlook essential aspects of the text's existence.

The question of authorship has particular significance in the case of a filmic text: and a Book History study of a film such as *The Merchant of Venice* tackles this question through the lens of established film theory: in this case, the *auteur* theory. *Auteur* theory, which concentrates on the role of the director-as-controller, is based on three assumptions: that the technical competence of the director is a valuable criterion upon which to make judgments about a film, that there is continuity in the work of a director that gives it a distinguishable personality which can then be analysed and assessed, and finally that the understanding of the director as author of a film relies on the assumption that the meaning of the film is of crucial importance, and can be extrapolated from the tension between the director's own personality and the material he is producing. While this theory provides a solid base for exploring the role of the director-as-author, the director is never the sole author of a filmic text. In the case of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, it is important also to examine the influence of the writer-as-author (William Shakespeare) and the actor-as-author (Al Pacino) to understand the processes of authorship that occur in the creation of the film. In doing so, a complex definition of authorship is created, drawing on the nuances through which each of these different 'authors' affect the film.

Furthermore, in a Book History analysis of authorship, it is important to understand the commercial aspects of film. For instance, the choice of Al Pacino as the lead character is not based solely on his ability to 'author' the character of Shylock in a particular way, but also for the possibilities for commoditisation that he as actor-author provides. More generally, the approach of Book History gives access to artefacts as more than simple objects: they are constituted by the conduct of human beings.

The processes involved in the production of the filmic text also provide an important aspect of analysis. Pierre Bourdieu's method of situating texts in fields of cultural production, in relation not only to the cultural and socio-economic context in which they exist, but also in relation to the surrounding texts, provides a valuable theoretical underpinning for Book History

analyses. Such studies situate texts within fields of power, and therefore the various stages in their life-cycles, and the various incarnations they undergo, are seen to occur within the contexts of power-relationships. Book History analysis extends the study of the production of text beyond the 'facts of production' – the production companies, production expenses, processes employed – towards a holistic understanding of how and why the decisions and processes of production play out in particular ways.

Similarly, the distribution of texts forms a critical part of their life-cycle, and can be explored in much the same way as their production. In examining distribution, context plays a crucial role in explaining the various patterns that emerge. The relative failure of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*'s at the box office can only be properly understood in the context of the modes of its distribution. Radford's *The Merchant of Venice* was shown on few mainstream film screens, and this accounts, albeit somewhat uneasily, for its financial 'failure': and its better success through other forms of distribution such as DVD purchase and rental.

The final stage in the Book History analysis of this film is that of the reception of a filmic text. In the case of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice* the response of film critics compared to those of the movie-watching public is particularly interesting. The approach of the film critic is very different to that of a lay-person watching the film as a means of entertainment. Both quantitative and qualitative data were examined in the context of the reception of this film – allowing for a comparative analysis with other films. The fact that individuals respond differently to the same text points to the importance of further investigation into the relationship between the text and the consumer. It also, however, creates a dilemma for the analyst when the data available is aggregated by group response. In seeking to engage with the viewer response, then, an analyst must carefully balance his insight into individual responses with an understanding of the implications of aggregated group response. Such complexity is further highlighted by the different ways of analyzing such responses as online polls and comments about the film are far more positive than the sales figures would suggest.

Throughout this thesis, I have emphasized the interdisciplinary nature of Book History: its ability to encompass literary and film theory, history, sociology, bibliography and other disciplines; its use of both quantitative and qualitative methods; and its ability to bring these varied and often discrete fields and methods of study together coherently. That the Book History project can accommodate all these varied approaches does not necessarily imply that every Book

History study should do so. As I have attempted to show, by explicitly adopting different methodological approaches to each aspect of the filmic Book History study of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, there are many ways in which the various aspects of the Communication Circuit can be tackled. By identifying a number of methodologies, this thesis aims to show the possibilities that Book History can open for the study of texts. Each chapter of this thesis, then, could be read as an introduction to a more comprehensive Book History study of the subject presented.

My thesis opens the way for further research. The possible avenues that each chapter begins to explore could become fully-fledged research projects through extended analysis, expanded research, and more comprehensive data collection. As examples of possible ways to examine particular aspects of a film, or as investigations of *William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice*, my chapters are by no means comprehensive. They each explore one possible approach as a presentation of the possibilities of a Book History study of film. It is this application of Book History to film that I see as my most valuable contribution – as a prototype for a system of analysis that could prove valuable to the future of film studies. The ability of Book History to accommodate the complexities of the various processes that make up the "communication circuit" within a single approach makes it more than simply *another* way of approaching textual study: it is, perhaps, through its understanding and interrogation of complexity, the *only* viable way to date that text can be *fully* explored. The amplitude and openness of Book History seems to me to make thorough textual investigation possible. As film should legitimately be understood as text, so the Book History approach, as adapted to the processes and stages in the life-cycle of a film, should, I argue, be adopted as the primary means of filmic study.

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APPENDIX A

Function	Name	Role
Directed by	Michael Radford	
Writing credits	William Shakespeare	play
	Michael Radford	screenplay
Cast	Al Pacino	Shylock
	Jeremy Irons	Antonio
	Lynn Collins	Portia
	Zuleikha Robinson	Jessica
	Kris Marshall	Gratiano
	Charlie Cox	Lorenzo
	Heather Goldenhersh	Nerissa
	Mackenzie Crook	Launcelot Gobbo
	John Sessions	Salerio
	Gregor Fisher	Solanio
	Ron Cook	Old Gobbo
	Allan Corduner	Tubal
	Anton Rodgers	The Duke
	David Harewood	Prince of Morocco
	Antonio Gil	Aragon (as Antonio Gil-Martinez)
	Al Weaver	Stephano
	Norbert Konne	Doctor Bellario
	Marc Maes	Cush (as Marc Maas)
	Jean-François Wolff	German Count
	Pieter Riemens	English Baron
	Stéphan Koziak	Soldier
	Tom Leick	French Nobleman
	Jules Werner	Franciscan Friar
	Tony Schiena	Leonardo
	Julian Nest	Clerk
	Stéphane Fragili	Venetian Nobleman (uncredited)
	Paul Rockenbrod	Venetian Nobleman
	Ben Whishaw	Servant to Portia

Function	Name	Role
Producers	Cary Brokaw	producer
	Michael Cowan	producer
	Jimmy de Brabant	co-producer
	Edwige Fenech	co-producer
	Nigel Goldsack	co-producer
	Gary Hamilton	co-executive producer
	Michael Hammer	executive producer
	Peter James	executive producer
	Robert Jones	executive producer
	Pete Maggi	co-executive producer
	Alex Marshall	executive producer
	Luciano Martino	co-producer
	Barry Navidi	producer
	Jason Piette	producer
	Jean-Claude Schlim	line producer: Luxembourg
	James Simpson	executive producer
	Julia Verdin	co-executive producer
	Clive Waldron	associate producer
	Clive Waldron	line producer
	Manfred Wilde	executive producer
	Federico Demontis	assistant executive producer
Original Music	Jocelyn Pook	
Cinematography	Benoît Delhomme	
Film Editing	Lucia Zucchetti	
Casting	Sharon Howard-Field	
Production Design	Bruno Rubeo	
Art Direction	Jon Bunker	
	Tamara Marini	
Set Decoration	Gillie Delap	
Costume Design	Sammy Sheldon	

Function	Name	Role
Makeup Department	Anna Brangaitis	hair stylist: Luxembourg
	Anna Brangaitis	makeup artist: Luxembourg
	Ann Buchanan	hair designer
	Ann Buchanan	makeup designer
	Nuala Conway	hair stylist: Italy
	Nuala Conway	makeup artist: Itlay
	Aurélie Elich	makeup artist
	Lorraine Hill	hair stylist
	Lorraine Hill	makeup artist
	Josy Howard	hair stylist
	Josy Howard	makeup artist
	Claudine Moureaud	hair stylist: Luxembourg
	Claudine Moureaud	makeup artist: Luxembourg
	Helen Speyer	hair stylist
	Helen Speyer	makeup artist
	Xanthia White	hair stylist
	Xanthia White	makeup artist
Production Management	Andreas Bajohra	post-production producer
	Tommaso Dabala	unit manager
	Ragna Arny Larusdottir	production manager: Luxembourg
	Philip James Morgan	unit manager: Luxembourg
	Bob Portal	post-production producer
	Rosanna Roditi	production manager: Italy
	Elena Zokas	production manager
Second Unit Director or Assistant Director	Emilie Cherpitel	second assistant director
	John Dodds	first assistant director
	Stefan Magnusson	third assistant director
	Carlo Paramidani	second second assistant director: Italy
	Jim Probyn	third assistant director: Luxembourg
	Christopher Rose	first assistant director
	Jordan Stone	first assistant director: Italy
	Andrei von Kamarowsky	trainee assistant director: Luxembourg

Function	Name	Role
Art Department	Benoît Bechet	draftsman
	Matteo Bertelli	painter
	Klaus Bienen	carpenter
	Tracey Curtis	modeller
	Paolo Cusin	buyer
	Paolo Cusin	property assistant
	Paolo Cusin	props
	Manuel Demoulling	assistant set decorator
	Ron Downing	property master
	Tomislav Findrik	storyboard artist
	Nicola Gomiero	property assistant
	Toby Hawkes	modeller
	Neil Hearfield	painter
	Malin Lindholm	stand-by art director
	John Maher	construction manager
	Tamara Marini	art director: Italy
	David Orlandelli	storyboard artist
	Edouard Pallardy	painter decorator
	Julie Philpott	draughtsman
	Yair Popritkin	props
	Manu Poupard	chargehand stand-by props
	Barbara Prati	painter
	Lorenzo Sartor	carpenter
	Fabrice Spelta	draughtsperson
	Otfried Suppin	art department assistant
Sound Department	Tim Alban	dubbing mixer
	Tim Alban	foley supervisor
	Antonia Bates	dialogue editor
	Richard Davey	dubbing mixer
	Richard Davey	second re-recording engineer
	Paul Davies	supervising sound editor
	Anthony Faust	adr mixer
	Jack Gillies	assistant sound editor
	Alain Goniva	boom operator
	Christian Koefoed	sound effects editor
	Richard Kondal	assistant dialogue editor
	Haresh Patel	foley editor
	Andre Schmidt	supervising dialogue editor
	Brian Simmons	sound mixer

Function	Name	Role
Special Effects	Tiberio Angeloni	special effects
	Alain Couty	special effects coordinator
	Franco Galiano	special effects
	Clive R. Kay	special effects contact lenses
	Lawrence Michael	special effects technician
Visual Effects by	Neil Culley	digital artist
	Sean Farrow	visual effects supervisor
	David Gibbons	digital artist
	Mick Harper	digital artist
	Barrie Hemsley	visual effects producer
	Sarah Hemsley	production and operations
	Richard Higham	digital artist
	Robin Huffer	digital artist
	Tim Jones	digital artist
	Simon Leech	digital artist
	Warren J. Mills	digital I/O
	Alberto Montañés	digital artist
	Nick New	digital artist
	Jeff North	digital artist
	Anna Panton	visual effects coordinator
	Dylan Penhale	digital systems manager
	Rupert Smith	production and operations
	Paul Tuersley	digital artist
Stunts	Andy Bennett	stunt arranger
	Andy Bennett	stunts
	Steve Griffin	stunt coordinator
	Rob Hunt	stunts

Function	Name	Role
Camera and Electrical Department	Werner Bacciu	key grip: Italy
	Etienne Braun	still photographer
	Sonny Burdis	best boy
	Hélène Coker	video assist operator
	Guillaume De Esteban	film loader
	Gilbert Degrand	electrician
	Kevin Dresse	electrician
	Cristiano Giavedoni	co-gaffer
	Max Jacoby	clapper loader: "b" camera
	Max Jacoby	clapper loader: second unit
	Graham Johnston	first assistant camera: "b" camera
	Graham Johnston	first assistant camera: second unit
	Oliver Krupke	electrician
	Martin Neuse	electrician
	Elvis Pasqual	electrician
	Thierry Ramanana	grip
	Jako Raybaut	camera operator: "b" camera
	Jako Raybaut	cinematographer: second unit
	Jean-François Roqueplo	head key grip
	David Smith	gaffer
	Théodore Theodorides	clapper loader: "a" camera
	Stéphane Thiry	grip
	Dean Thompson	first assistant camera: "a" camera
Casting Department	Abigail Barbier	adr voice casting
	Louis Elman	adr voice casting
	Tiziana Kinkela	casting assistant
Costume and Wardrobe Department	Frieda Basso Boccabella	wardrobe trainee
	Catherine Buyse Dian	wardrobe supervisor
	Charlotte-Rose Kay	assistant costume designer
	Anna Kovacevic	key costumer
	David Otzen	costume assistant
	Katia Scarpa	wardrobe assistant
Editorial Department	Perry Gibbs	colorist: mastering
	Alec Gibson	color timer
	Eddy Kolkiewicz	negative cutter
	Alexandra Kosevic	post-production coordinator
	Andrew Robinson	negative cutter

Function	Name	Role
Music Department	Harvey Brough	additional score arranger
	Harvey Brough	associate music producer
	Jake Jackson	assistant score mixing engineer
	Jake Jackson	score recordist
	Haresh Patel	music editor
	Jocelyn Pook	music producer
	Robert Prizeman	choir director
	John Sachs	music supervisor
	Hilary Skewes	musician contractor
	Nick Wollage	score mixing engineer
	Nick Wollage	score recordist
Transportation Department	Luca Fortunato Asquini	transportation manager: Italy
	Alessandra Asta	transportation assistant
	Svet Hrouchoff	additional driver
	Simon Jones	driver: Al Pacino, UK
	Gaby Meyers	facility/truck driver
	Francois Muller	truck driver
	Kevan Willis	transportation coordinator
Other crew	Denver Beattie	assistant: Mr. Pacino, Italy
	Bob Bellion	financial manager
	Nicky Bell	assistant: Mr. Radford
	Shirine Best	development assistant
	Corrina Bonicelli	technical advisor
	Alexandre Brown	production assistant
	Deborah Cesana	set runner
	Erasmo Colucci	co-accountant
	Veronica Coppola	assistant production coordinator
	Lou Crisa	special assistant and security: Mr. Pacino
	Warren Demer	assistant accountant
	Bernardo Galli	assistant accountant: Italy
	Judy Geletko	administrator: Avenue Pictures
	Geoffrey Goodman	assistant: Mr. Brokaw
	Matteo Gottardis	unit manager assistant: Italy
	Nicole Gregory	unit publicist
	Monica Hayford	assistant to producer: UK
	Mel Hider	assistant: Mr. Cowan and Mr. Piette
	Patrick Hoffmann	production assistant
	Polly Hope	assistant production coordinator
	Brittany Hymore	assistant: Mr. Pacino, Italy
	Tim Judge	executive assistant: Mr. Pacino

	Patricia Kretschmer	assistant: Mr. De Brabant, Luxembourg

Function	Name	Role
Other Crew	Antonella Longato	production assistant
	Roberto Longobardi	production accountant
	Nadia Mattera	assistant: Mr. Navidi
	Jack Murphy	movement coach
	Pascale Noël	location assistant
	Alessandro Palestro	set production assistant
	Jessica Reavis	stand-in
	Laurence Rexter-Baker	assistant: Mr. Pacino, Luxembourg
	David Morais Rocas	location assistant
	Debbie Rothstein	legal assistant
	Andrea Santuari	production assistant
	Adelaide Scardino	assistant: Mr. Brokaw
	R. Shalom Shabazi	poet
	Emma Short	assistant production accountant
	Lucy Shuttleworth	development executive
	Mannes Steve	location trainee
	Anita Tomaselli	production coordinator: Italy
	Sophie Treacher	production coordinator: Luxembourg
	Emma Tweed	assistant: Mr. Radford
	Tim Van Rellim	production executive
	Stephane Wasila	location manager
	Beverly Winston	script supervisor
	Federico Demontis	assistant to co-executive producer
	Pietro Dioni	assistant to co-executive producer