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Scenes from *Cymbeline* and the language of the early television studio
John Wyver

Broadcasts of scenes from William Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* in 1937 and 1956 were among the earliest British television productions of Shakespeare.¹ On both occasions the selections included the 'wooing scene' of Act 1 scene 6 and Act 2 scene 2, known as the 'trunk scene.' Transmitted from a television studio with a small number of electronic cameras which were mixed live, the excerpts were taken from contemporary theatrical productions, in 1937 from André van Gyseghem's staging at the Embassy Theatre (London) and in 1956 from the production by Michael Benthall at the Old Vic. Neither broadcast was recorded but, for both of these 'lost' productions, the BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC) at Caversham preserves detailed camera scripts and other documentation. Jason Jacobs has demonstrated convincingly how this written archive of 'studio plans, camera scripts, memos, etc [can be] invaluable in the process of reconstructing the *visual* sense of early television drama. Other primary sources include[d] schedules, reviews, and criticism.'² Uniquely for Shakespeare on British television, the two *Scenes from Cymbeline* camera scripts detail a pre-war and a post-war treatment of the same written texts by studio directors (respectively, Royston Morley and Michael Elliott) nearly twenty years apart. This article considers the 1937 and 1956 camera scripts in order to outline the development of the language of television studio drama. Shot lengths, camera movements and framings – all of which are significantly more complex in the 1956 script – are explored as determinants of the available meanings of Shakespeare's dramatic poetry. An additional comparison is facilitated by the extant studio production of *Cymbeline* in 1983, directed by Elijah Moshinsky for *The BBC Television Shakespeare*.

Televising *Cymbeline* in 1937

Short scenes from Shakespeare's plays were televised on a number of occasions in the months after the start, in November 1936, of BBC Television's regular service from Alexandra Palace. The first presentation was a scene each from *As You Like It* and *Henry V* on 5 February 1937. Margaretta Scott played Rosalind in the former, while in the latter the wooing of Katharine by Henry was acted out by Yvonne Arnaud and Henry Oscar. What might be regarded as the first 'full length' BBC Shakespeare production was a 67-minute adaptation of *Othello*, broadcast in December 1937. In November 1937, after scenes had been televised from eight other Shakespeare plays including *Julius Caesar*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*, *Cymbeline* was perhaps a less obvious choice of play for the television audience. Between Henry Irving's 1896 revival with Ellen Terry and post-World War Two productions at Stratford, there were few distinguished performances of the drama; as Martin Butler notes, 'In the early twentieth century, expectations about the play were at their lowest.'³ What critics have identified as its decentred narrative structure,⁴ however, perhaps made the play more suitable than others by Shakespeare as a source of standalone excerpts.

In November 1937 André van Gyseghem staged *Cymbeline* at London's Embassy Theatre, at the time a successful repertory house run by producer Ronald Adam. Van Gyseghem had

¹ *Cymbeline* had been filmed by the American independent Thanhouser Film Company in 1913; see J. Buchanan, *Shakespeare on Film* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 43–4.

² J. Jacobs, *The Intimate Screen: Early British Television Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 4.

³ M. Butler, *The New Cambridge Shakespeare: Cymbeline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 6.

⁴ In the Introduction to *The New Cambridge Shakespeare: Cymbeline*, Butler identifies the 'remarkably decentred' design of the play, suggesting also that its 'fractures appeal to post-modern tastes for fictions that reveal their engineering and question the terms of their own mimesis (2).

been an actor with the Embassy's company and then a director there for four years until October 1934. His 1937 staging of *Cymbeline* was notable as being the first to use George Bernard Shaw's variation for Act 5, which had been written by the playwright for the Memorial Theatre at Stratford but not been played there; the interest of Shaw's script (which was not to feature in the scenes chosen for television) dominated the anonymous review of the production in *The Times*. The writer commented that the performance as a whole was 'intrinsically interesting' but that it 'left the impression that the actors were saving themselves up for Shaw at the expense of Shakespeare.'⁵ A notice in *The Sunday Times*, however, included a more detailed response to the contributions of the cast:

Mr George Hayes as Iachimo admirably suggested the 'slight thing of Italy' ... Miss Olga Lindo, since she comes of player's stock, had no difficulty in giving flesh and blood to the shadowy Queen ... Miss Joyce Bland began with a composite portrait of Imogen, half by Mary Anderson and half by Sybil Thorndike, the whole being like some Staffordshire potter's notion of a French actress in Racine, all drapery, frontal stare, and tragic nose.⁶

By the time *Cymbeline* took to the Embassy stage, the BBC television service had been on air for just over a year but there was at yet no long-term drama planning. The service was broadcasting for one hour in the afternoon and two each evening (although not on Sundays) and could be seen by perhaps 5,000 viewers within a radius of around ten miles from the north London transmitter. Talks and variety shows sat alongside three or four short dramas each week, many of the latter, like *Scenes from Cymbeline*, being drawn opportunistically from those productions in London's theatre that could be coaxed to the studios. On 29 November 1937, thirteen days after their theatre opening, nine actors from the Embassy company assembled at Alexandra Palace for rehearsals from 10 am. Later in the day they performed scenes from their production for roughly thirty minutes at 3.30 and later, as a live 'repeat' at 9.30 pm. The full television service was broadcast from two identical studios, each 21 metres by 9 metres; for elaborate productions (of which these *Cymbeline* scenes was one) both studios were utilized and linked through a single control room. As with all studio-based television until early 1953, the transmissions were live and no recording was made. Just one trace of a response to the television broadcast has so far been uncovered, in a round-up review of television broadcasts across a week which noted simply that 'a high standard of production was maintained.'⁷

According to the camera script, the presentation began with a music cue from a 78rpm twelve-inch disc of the London Symphony Orchestra playing Rimsky-Korsakov's *Cortege des Nobles*.⁸ The announcer spoke over the simple caption 'Cymbeline': 'Now we are to see scenes from André van Gyseghem's production of *Cymbeline* from the Embassy Theatre (by permission of Ronald Adam).' With the caption still on screen, the minor actors were introduced by name before a mix took the viewer to a shot of one actor accompanied by an explanatory voice-over – 'Iachimo is played by George Hayes' and then another mix to a shot of three characters: 'The Queen by Olga Lindo, Posthumus by Geoffrey Toon and Imogen by Joyce Bland.' The next mix took the shot to a further caption – 'The Palace Garden' – and then the television image returned to the previous three-shot. On a cue from the cameraman, the Queen began to speak. Each of these mixes at this time would have taken approximately four seconds to complete; instantaneous cuts in live drama were not possible until after World

⁵ ANONYMOUS? 'Shakespeare and Mr Shaw', *The Times*, 17 November 1937, 14.

⁶ ANONYMOUS? *The Sunday Times*, 'Cymbeline', 21 November 1937, 6.

⁷ ANONYMOUS? *The Observer*, 'Television', 5 December 1937, 31.

⁸ Both the 28-page camera script and the 4-page 'cue script,' which details the music elements that were included, are preserved in WAC T5/121.

War Two. The first scene was drawn from Act 1 scene 1 and ran from the entry of the Queen, Posthumus and Imogen at line 79 through to the end of the scene – a total of 134 lines. Throughout, the text in the camera script follows almost exactly the First Folio text with no cuts. Act 1 scene 3 was then played in full. Both of these ‘Palace Garden’ scenes were acted in Studio A in front of a minimal setting. The scenes were covered by just two fixed-lens cameras, both of which were mounted on dollies which facilitated movement forward and backward, taking the shot closer or further away from the actors but only on a central axis and not from side to side. In the first of these scenes, which may have lasted perhaps six minutes, there were just four shot changes mixing from one camera to the other; the second scene, which would have run for between two and three minutes, was played in a single shot. As a caption informed the viewer, the scene shifted to ‘Philario’s House in Rome’ for Act 1 scene 4, the 124 lines of which were also given in full. The transmission also changed to Studio B, where cameras No. 3 (fixed in place on an ‘iron man’ mounting and also doing duty for the captions) and No. 4 (on a dolly) covered what was more than five minutes of drama with just two shot changes. Almost the whole of the scene, which involves four speaking parts and two non-speaking, was played to camera No. 4

The following two scenes, taken from Act 1 scene 6 and Act 2 scene 2, are both located by the script in ‘Imogen’s bedroom,’ even though, as Martin Butler notes, the setting for the former ‘is a private room in Innogen’s personal apartments, though the space is less intimate than the bedchamber of 2.2’.⁹ The setting back in Studio A included four flats, arch-pieces to suggest a window and a door, a bed with pilasters, a low pedestal with two candles and a special trunk supplied by the Embassy Theatre. Act 1 scene 6 of *Cymbeline* begins with Imogen, alone, unhappy at the banishment to Rome of her husband Leonatus by ‘A father cruel and a stepdame false’ (1.6.1). Iachimo is announced – in the original text and in the 1937 script – by the servant Pisanio (although, in the 1956 scenes, he is announced by Imogen’s maid). Iachimo brings news from Rome but he has really come to seduce Imogen, having made a bet with Leonatus that he will do so. There follows a lengthy exchange between the two main characters that lasts for 223 lines. Although tempted by Iachimo’s charm, Imogen resists his wiles but, as a kindness to this supposed friend of her husband, she agrees to store his trunk overnight in her bedroom. This ‘wooing scene’ would have taken perhaps twelve minutes to act but it was planned with only two mixes. In the script the shot changes only briefly to camera No. 2 and presumably to a closer shot, as Iachimo attempts to kiss Imogen at line 139, which Imogen resists with a call to her servant Pisanio. After just nine lines, the shot then returns to the main camera, after Imogen has spoken of her absent husband and forcefully rejected Iachimo’s advances; it remains on camera 1 to the close of the scene. Although this is not indicated, it is highly unlikely that the shot from camera 1 would have been static for all of the 214 lines which it was used to cover. It is possible, too, that the studio director improvised on the night and included other shots – but the fact that the camera script features only one change indicates the expectations of studio drama just over a year after the opening of Alexandra Palace.

During the scene transition to 2.2, in addition to the repetition of the caption, the script specifies a brief superimposition of a No. 1 camera shot of the trunk onto a wider shot of the setting from camera No. 2. This establishes the centrality and the mystery of the trunk. The subsequent ‘trunk scene,’ in which Imogen retires to bed and Iachimo emerges from the trunk to stare lasciviously at her sleeping body and to steal her bracelet, plays across just 53 lines and would have lasted for something over three minutes on screen.

⁹ Butler, *Cymbeline*, 104; both Butler and Bate and Rasmussen (*Cymbeline*, ed. J. Bate and E. Rasmussen, *The RSC Shakespeare* [London: Macmillan, 2007]) use the First Folio spelling of Innogen, although the more accepted Imogen is used here.

As scripted the action of the scene begins on camera 2. After twelve lines the script indicates a mix to camera 1 for Iachimo emerging from the trunk. After just two lines the shot mixes to camera 2 for most of Iachimo's speech before returning to camera 1 as he goes back to the trunk at the close. In one quarter of the length of the previous scene, there are four shot changes, two more than in the whole of the wooing exchange, which clearly underlines the greater intimacy and intensity of the action. The final scene played the first 192 lines of Act 2 scene 4, which might have lasted a further six minutes or more. The timings, of course, are approximate but if the presentation did indeed play its total of 790 lines in thirty minutes (recognising that productions at this time very often over-ran) – an average of 26 lines per minute, not allowing for breaks or music – the verse-speaking would have been almost impossibly fast. By contrast, the visual rhythm of the shots and mixes would have seemed, at least as judged by later standards, funereally slow. There are just 25 shot changes specified during the whole half-hour, less than one each minute, and half of these are mixes to and from captions.

Cymbeline on screen in 1956

Nearly twenty years later, on 30 October 1956, the BBC televised another half-hour of scenes from *Cymbeline*. Following a wartime hiatus, the television service returned in the summer of 1946 and regularly presented full-length productions of Shakespeare from the studios as well as continuing on occasions to show excerpts. The last scene of Jean Meyer's *Comédie Française* production of *Othello* was broadcast in French in March 1950, at a time when the company was visiting London, and scenes from Anthony Quayle's Stratford 1951 production of *Henry IV Part One* were shown as part of the *For the Children* slot.

After post-war presentations of *Cymbeline* by the Stratford Memorial Theatre in 1946 and 1949, the play was produced in 1956 at London's Old Vic by Michael Benthall, who had taken on the role of artistic director of the theatre company three years before. By the time he came to stage *Cymbeline* he was part-way through a five-year plan to stage all of Shakespeare's plays, an initiative that had been warmly welcomed by audiences and critics. The production opened in the theatre near Waterloo on 11 September 1956, and the following day the anonymous theatre critic for *The Times* contributed an ambivalent notice:

Mr Michael Benthall is probably right ... to assume that when it comes to *Cymbeline* we shall prefer speed to colour and verisimilitude. More or less dispensing with scenery, he sets the action going in a high dark cavern as quickly as the actors can speak their lines ... Mr Derek Godfrey, as Iachimo, alone reaches distinction: he is effective in his encounter with Imogen and the bedroom trick is played with a great sense of the Italian's delight in his own audacious finesse ... Miss Barbara Jefford gives a somewhat hard reading of a woman who has all the gifts.¹⁰

The Old Vic's official record of the season later noted that, 'the response by press and public was sadly disappointing ... *Cymbeline* was withdrawn on December 8th after thirty-two performances, yet of all the season's plays it was the most enchanting and the one in which the company first showed its true quality.'¹¹ The idea of presenting part of the production was discussed at the BBC in August, when Controller of Programmes Cecil Madden wrote to Head of Drama Michael Barry, 'Have we fixed a Sunday night for *Cymbeline*?'¹² Madden initially envisaged an outside broadcast (OB) of the whole or perhaps just part of a Sunday evening performance. Such outside broadcasts of extracts from theatrical productions were

¹⁰ 'Old Vic: *Cymbeline*', *The Times*, 12 September 1956, 3.

¹¹ M. Clarke, *Shakespeare at the Old Vic 1956–7* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1957), n. p.

¹² Cecil Madden, Memo to Michael Barry, 27 August 1956, WAC T5/121.

common at this time and were seen by theatre managements as effective publicity to attract the ticket buying public. But the plan changed, perhaps because of the difficulty of securing an OB camera unit over a weekend when they were often committed to sporting events. Within a fortnight Madden was exploring a weekday slot for a studio presentation.¹³ Head of Drama Michael Barry attended a dress rehearsal of *Cymbeline* on 10 September. On the following day, he sent a memo to senior BBC colleagues noting that he had met with Michael Benthall and the Old Vic's publicity manager Patrick Ide:

They are both anxious for the company to be seen on television. Their new company is young and promising ... My feeling is confirmed that we should take the opportunity of developing a liaison with the Old Vic.

While such a 'liaison' might have been important for the Old Vic, there is no mention of the television presentation of the scenes in the Old Vic's book that documented this year of the Shakespeare cycle.¹⁴ The BBC had previously presented Act 1 of an Old Vic production of *Two Gentlemen of Verona* from the theatre in July 1952 as well as a studio re-staging of scenes from the theatre's 1955 *Julius Caesar*, another production in Michael Benthall's five-year presentation of all of the plays. In his memo, Barry further suggested, seemingly without any recognition of the 1937 studio production, that it would be possible to present an excerpt from *Cymbeline* of about 30 minutes of two two-handed scenes between Iachimo and Imogen. These scenes, he suggested, 'are comprehensible in themselves with the briefest introduction, and are strongly acted and exciting to watch.'¹⁵ After some discussions about a date, which had to be on an evening when the Old Vic company were playing *Timon of Athens*, so freeing up actor Barbara Jefford, it was decided that the scenes from *Cymbeline* would be broadcast live from Studio D at Lime Grove studios at 10.15 pm on Tuesday 30 October. Derek Godfrey, however, had to come to the studio for the broadcast after he had finished playing in *Timon*, arriving only at 9.30 pm. Costumes, wigs and the required chest were hired from the Old Vic at a total cost of £25, and television producer Michael Elliott was attached to the broadcast. It was also agreed that Dame Sybil Thorndike, who had famously played Imogen at the Old Vic in 1918, should provide an introduction.

In contrast to the minimal preparations in 1937, these televised scenes from *Cymbeline* were rehearsed on days prior to the broadcast. Michael Elliott worked with the actors for three half-days at the Old Vic from 25 October. Just before this, the script for Dame Sybil's introduction was written by Michael Barry after he had spoken with her.¹⁶ From a total budget of 250 pounds and six shillings (not including the studio time and crew), Dame Sybil took home a fee of 52 pounds and ten shillings – over ten pounds more than each of the two stars. Having been only lukewarm in *The Manchester Guardian* about the Old Vic production on stage,¹⁷ the critic Philip Hope-Wallace also wrote – this time for *The Listener* – about the television presentation:

The voice of Dame Sybil Thorndike declaiming the threnody from *Cymbeline* lingers in memory ... It was the sort of introduction which mishandled could have ruined the ensuing scenes, which in the event came up, I thought, a lot better than they had when I saw them on the stage. For this, credit must go to Michael Elliott who kept Imogen and

¹³ Cecil Madden, Memo, 10 September 1956, WAC T5/121.

¹⁴ Clarke, *Shakespeare at the Old Vic*.

¹⁵ M. Barry, Memo, 'The Old Vic', 11 September 1956, WAC T5/121.

¹⁶ M. Elliott, Letter to Sybil Thorndike, 22 October 1956, WAC T5/121.

¹⁷ 'The Old Vic last night put on *Cymbeline* – not well, but not without merit here and there.' P. Hope-Wallace, 'The misfortunes of Imogen', *The Manchester Guardian*, 12 September 1956, 5.

Iachimo just near enough to engage our attention fully without thrusting them down our throats.¹⁸

As with all other pre-war programmes, there is no record of the audience's response to the 1937 broadcast. But for 1956 there is a detailed Audience Research Report, which recorded a Reaction Index figure of 61.

[This was] close to the figure (63) for a performance of Act I of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (which was, however, televised direct from the stage of the Old Vic theatre) in Week 29, 1952 ... [The excerpt] made a strong appeal to well over half of the sample. These viewers enjoyed the acting (and particularly Derek Godfrey's performance as Iachimo) very much, and thought the presentation of the bedchamber scene 'entrancingly done', with the action made very dramatic by close-up camerawork and an 'effectively simple set'. Criticism from this group consisted mainly of regret that the play could not be broadcast in full.¹⁹

By October 1956, studio drama had developed significantly from 1937 and the main base of operations had shifted to BBC at Lime Grove, with the *Cymbeline* extracts being broadcast from Studio D. The BBC had purchased a former film studio in west London in 1949, opening the new studio complex in 1950. The spaces were significantly larger than at Alexandra Palace, with Studio D, which was located on the fourth floor, measuring approximately 27 metres by 21 metres. Through the late 1950s, this was the BBC's main studio for drama transmissions and was to be the stage from which the first episode of *Doctor Who* was transmitted in November 1963. At the time of the *Cymbeline* transmission, the four cameras in the studio had recently been upgraded to CPS Emitron Mk3s and now had turret lenses, with a choice of three shot sizes from each position. They were also significantly more mobile than the pre-war cameras. For *Cymbeline*, one was mounted on a Mole Richardson crane, permitting the camera to be raised above head-height and to be manoeuvred above the actors. Two other cameras were on motorized 'Vintens,' which facilitated rapid movement around the studio floor in all directions.²⁰

The text of the two scenes played both in 1937 and in 1956 is much the same, although ten lines in Act 1 scene 6 have been cut from the later production. But the visual language on screen is far more complex. In the wooing exchange there are now 31 scripted shot changes, while in the shorter trunk scene there are 18. Almost all of these are now hard cuts. The change can be recognized in the treatment of Iachimo's introduction to Imogen, all of which in 1937 was presented as just part of the lengthy first shot from camera 1. Imogen's maid Helen says that Iachimo has come from Rome, after which there is a shot without dialogue described in the script in this way [abbreviations are explained in added square brackets]:

Deep 3-sh [shot with three people in frame] across IACHIMO LFG [left foreground] to HELEN/IMOGEN
Hold as IMOGEN walks twds cam [towards camera]
HELEN crosses out of frame r [right]
2-sh IACHIMO/IMOGEN.²¹

¹⁸ P. Hope-Wallace, 'Drama: The heat of the sun', *The Listener*, 8 November 1956, 768.

¹⁹ Audience Research Report, *Cymbeline*, VR/56/571, WAC T5/121.

²⁰ Floor plans and images of Lime Grove Studio D can be found at www.tvstudiohistory.co.uk/old%20bbc%20studios.htm#lime (accessed 10 February 2014).

²¹ The 12-page camera script together with production memos and other documentation is preserved in WAC T5/121.

Before Iachimo speaks, the screen cuts to a medium-shot of him and, as he presents the letter from Leonatus, the script reads ‘Pan him right to IMOGEN. 2-sh IACHIMO/IMOGEN.’ As Imogen responds, there is a cut to a third camera, which presents a medium close-up of her. There is then another dialogue-free shot:

2-sh IACHIMO/IMOGEN

Hold 2-sh as IMOGEN walks into RFG [*right foreground*]

IACHIMO crosses to r of frame

Hold 2-sh

There have been four changes of shot so far for just five lines of dialogue and it is clear that, rather than the scene being simply played out in front of the lens, the shots and the cuts between them are actively contributing to the construction of the narrative and to the revelation of the relationships between the characters.

The instructions in the 1956 camera script are sufficiently detailed to allow a visual reconstruction of the scenes. For the most part it is clear that shots presented the person who is speaking or very often both the speaker and the person being addressed in a two shot. But occasionally there were variations. Midway through the wooing, Iachimo declares his passion for Imogen, with the following words:

Had I this cheek

To bathe my lips upon; this hand, whose touch,

Whose every touch, would force the feeler’s soul

To th’oath of loyalty; this object which

Takes prisoner the wild motion of my eye... (1.6.99–103)

At ‘object’, the shot, which has been a close two shot of both figures, cuts to a close-up of Imogen and remains focused solely on her and her reactions for the remaining ten lines of Iachimo’s speech. This approach appears to have echoed the effect that stage director Michael Benthall sought in the theatre, as is detailed by Mary Clarke’s description that it

was played by the two characters alone in the small area of the lighted stage. The method was a revealing one: the reaction of each character to the other’s every word was almost spotlit for the audience.²²

A hand-written note in the archive file indicates that the scene played for 11 minutes and 5 seconds, with 31 changes of camera shot, compared to just 2 shot changes in 1937. As a consequence, the average shot length (ASL) in 1956 was just over 20 seconds, which was a significantly slower visual pace than contemporary feature films. David Bordwell has estimated that, between 1930 and 1960, the ASL in Hollywood films ‘hovered between 8 and 11 seconds.’²³ The capabilities of technology, the expectations of audiences, and the importance attached by producers to the spoken word rather than the image – and perhaps especially so in presentations of Shakespeare – are among the factors that may account for this significance difference.

‘To th’trunk again...’ (2.2.47)

At the end of the wooing scene, after Imogen has agreed to look after Iachimo’s trunk, the action was enhanced by the use of the studio crane. In a two shot (on camera 2), Imogen said to Iachimo, ‘You’re very welcome’ (1.6.210) and walked away from the camera as the shot

²² Clarke, *Shakespeare at the Old Vic*.

²³ D. Bordwell, *The Way Hollywood Tells It: Story and Style in the Movies* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 121.

was held. Cut then to a dialogue-free medium close-up (camera 3) of Iachimo, quickly followed by another cut to camera 1. This is how the script then describes the screen image:

Very high long shot of floor pattern
IACHIMO left of frame
Hold shot as he moves away from cam.
Two servants enter left of frame with trunk. 3-sh
Crane down fast and track in to let trunk pass in bottom foreground of frame.
Hold Iachimo centre
Servants and trunk leave frame r.
As soon as they leave frame
TRACK IN fast to CU [close-up] IACHIMO
LOSE FOCUS

The focus on the trunk which was rendered in 1937 with a simple superimposition was achieved here with a more elaborate sequence of crane and tracking moves. These were followed by further comments from Dame Sybil, who spoke both of the unfolding narrative of the play and the Old Vic staging:

Now several hours pass, so you must imagine the servants with the heavy trunk making their way through the tall columned corridors echoing in the flickering lamplight to Imogen's bedroom. Michael Benthall, the producer of the production at the Old Vic, as at the production at Shakespeare's Globe, uses no scenery because he deliberately wants you to give all your attention to the players.

Following this 'interval,' the transmission returned to an out-of-focus shot of the trunk which came into focus before the camera tracked past to a medium close-up (MCU) of Imogen. Iachimo's subsequent soliloquy in the text spoken over the sleeping Imogen (2.2.11–51) has been described as an 'astonishing, voyeuristic episode ... which can be both gripping and unsettling to participate in'.²⁴ Mary Clarke recorded a description of the scene on the stage:

After Imogen had fallen asleep there was a moment of complete stillness and then, without a sound, a panel in the front of the trunk slipped down and a hand emerged from inside. Very slowly and cautiously Iachimo released the catch and then raised the lid of the trunk, his lively dark eyes quickly surveying the chamber before he stepped out and stretched his cramped limbs. He then approached the bed and as he moved round it, breathing softly his incomparable description of the sleeping Imogen, she stirred in her sleep and let fall her right arm over the side of the bed.²⁵

Television producer Michael Elliott used the resources of his studio set-up to bring additional drama to the scene. The script describes the elaborate shot in which Iachimo slips the bolt from the inside and emerges from the trunk (which was pictured in a production still reproduced in *The Listener*):

High MCU [medium close-up] IMOGEN craned left.
Pan right to trunk
Crane r and down and pan l to
pivot round trunk.
End shot with trunk bottom RFG [right foreground] and
IMOGEN LBG [left background]. Crane up as IACHIMO
comes out of trunk to hold 2-sh.

²⁴ T. Tanner, *Prefaces to Shakespeare* (London: Belknap Press, 2010), 740.

²⁵ Clarke, *Shakespeare at the Old Vic*.

As the scene unfolds in the script, on several occasions the camera pans down from Iachimo's face to the prone Imogen and then backs up to him. There is the strong suggestion here of his symbolic violation, as there is in the frequent use of high two shots of the pair (from camera 1 on the crane). The script also indicates that a technique of shooting in to a mirror and then inverting the picture electronically was also employed so as to achieve a greater distance above the two characters. Imogen's prone body is also fragmented by the camera as, at two moments, the script indicates that only her arm is featured in the left of frame which otherwise shows first the kneeling Iachimo and then him lying beside the bed. There is also a brief close-up of the bracelet on Imogen's arm. At the close of the scene, the opening crane shot is repeated as Iachimo returns to the trunk and slides the bolt to lock himself in. This section of the script ends with the instruction, 'LOSE FOCUS'. As noted, there are 18 scripted shot changes in perhaps 11 minutes and 25 seconds of screen time, giving an ASL of 38 seconds, again underlining the intimacy and intensity of the scene. Yet one camera shot remains focused on Iachimo, with a single pan down to Imogen and back up, for the eleven lines (and more than a minute of playing time) from 'On her left breast/ A mole cinque-spotted...' (2.2.37-8) to 'To th' trunk again, and shut the spring of it' (2.2.47). To a significantly greater extent than in the 1937 version, it would seem that the cameras contribute to the way in which 'the audience ... is forced to confront its own complicity in Iachimo's deed. His gaze is ours.'²⁶ Certainly Philip Hope-Wallace was impressed, as he wrote that 'The trunk scene is unfailling: Derek Godfrey in his ruminations and Barbara Jefford in her slumber filled imagination fully. It was among the most successful brief screenings of Shakespeare that I can recall.'²⁷ And at least one member of the television audience described the bedchamber scene as 'entrancingly done'.²⁸

When Elijah Moshinsky came in 1983 to direct *Cymbeline* in the studio for *The BBC Television Shakespeare* he reverted to a less complex visual language for the wooing and trunk scenes. The former, which is cut short by nine lines at the close of the scene, is played with just nine changes of camera shot and the trunk scene has only seven. There is no special focus on the trunk before Imogen (played by Helen Mirren) gets into bed while Iachimo (Robert Lindsay) appears naked at least to the waist, enhancing the threateningly invasive and fetishistic quality of the encounter.

For the first shot of Iachimo's appearance, Imogen is brightly lit in the background while he is a dark silhouette nearer to the camera. His leering closeness to Imogen as he clambers onto the bed, together with his play with the bracelet, caressing it off Imogen's arm before sliding his own hand slowly into it, leaves little doubt about the meaning of the scene. Yet there is perhaps not the same sense as there would appear to have been in 1956 of aligning the camera's (and thus the viewer's) gaze with Iachimo's. And his final line, spoken as he listens to a clock striking, 'One, two, three: time, time!' (2.2.51) is delivered while he is still on the bed and we do not see him returning to the trunk.

The analysis of the screen grammar of early studio drama is still very much in its infancy, especially when compared with the rich work of scholars working on early film such as David Bordwell, Janet Staiger and Kristin Thompson,²⁹ Barry Salt, Ben Brewster and Lea Jacobs, and many others. But questions can begin to be asked here as a focus for further research. Expressed crudely, in the study of early film, a key shift has been identified in the years

²⁶ Bate and Rasmussen (eds.), *Cymbeline*, 2240

²⁷ Hope-Wallace, 'The heat of the sun', 768

²⁸ Audience Research Report, *Cymbeline*, VR/56/571, WAC T5/121.

²⁹ D. Bordwell, J. Staiger and K. Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985); B. Salt, *Film Style and Technology: History and Analysis* (London: Starword, 1983); B. Brewster and L. Jacobs, *Theatre to Cinema: Stage Pictorialism and the Early Feature Film* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). For a pioneering approach to shot analysis in television, see J. G. Butler, *Television Style* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

around 1910 from a 'tableau' style dominated by lengthy long-shots to one in which editing, close-ups, cross-cutting and scene dissection were developed to construct a film's narrative. This initial study of the camera scripts of the 1937 and 1956 television scenes from *Cymbeline* would seem to suggest that between these two dates a comparable shift can be identified in the development of the screen language of multi-camera studio recording. The simplicity of the camera plot for the 1983 production should, however, warn against any simple sense of a teleological progression of this visual language. Clearly, too, television developed in social and cultural contexts from the cinema of the early twentieth century, with quite different production technologies and a completely different relationship with audiences. The similarities and differences suggest excitingly productive paths for future research, especially since the techniques and visual grammar of multi-camera studio production of drama are being developed again in live cinema broadcasts of theatre stagings by *NT Live*, *RSC Live from Stratford-upon-Avon* and others.

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