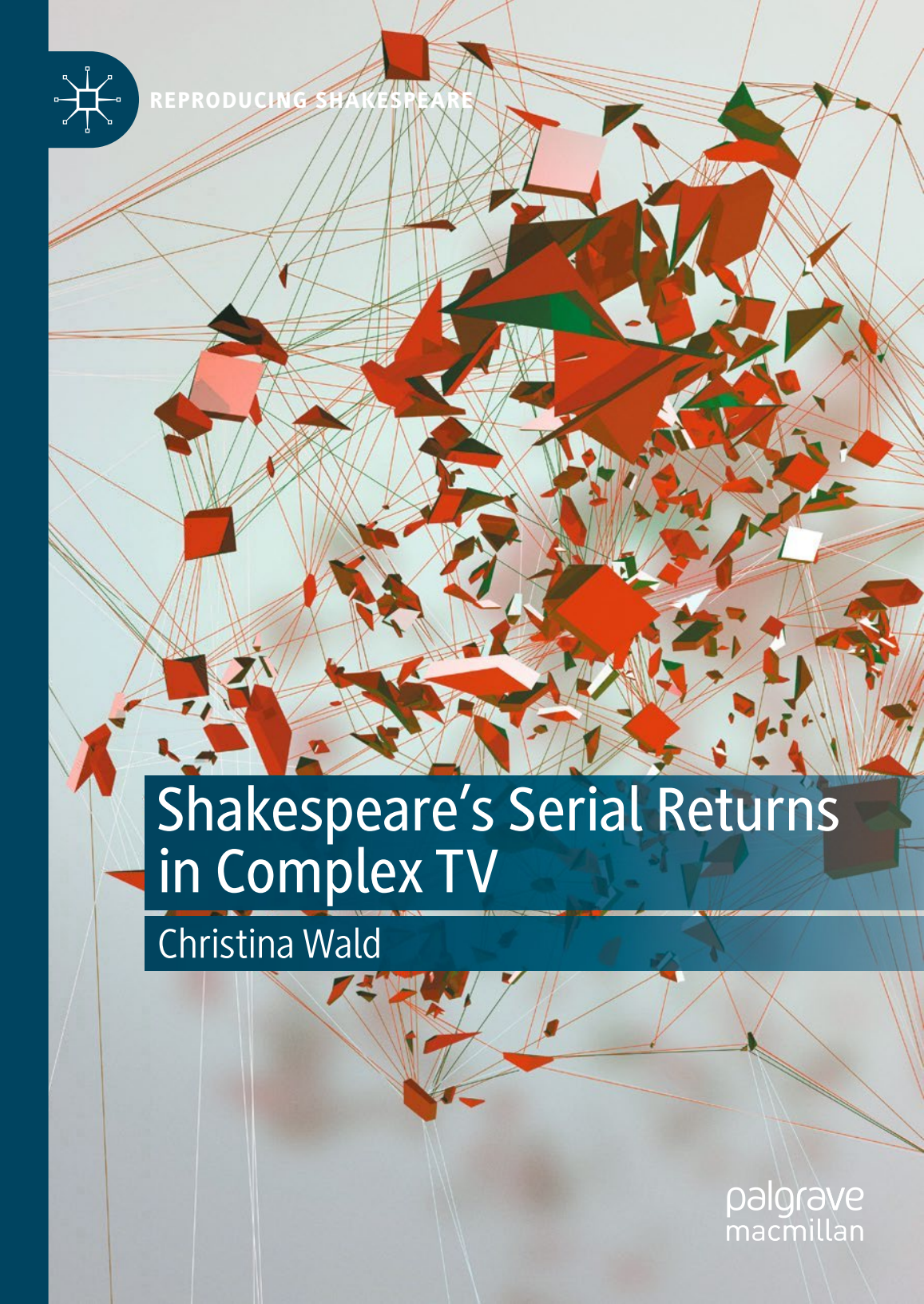
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Für Hans und Heinrich

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Contents

CHAPTER 1

Shakespeare and Complex TV: "Our Old Work Coming Back to Haunt Us"

In the first episode of *Westworld*, the administration of an amusement park peopled with robots faces technical problems with one of the androids, who threatens the technicians with lines like "By most mechanical and dirty hand / I shall have such revenges on you both / The things that I will do / What they are yet I know not, but they will be / The terrors of the earth" (1.1.61). While the team is unsettled by these off-script menaces, wondering "What the hell was that?" and emphasising "We didn't program any of those behaviors" (1.1.62), Dr Robert Ford, the creator of the park, attributes them to "Shakespeare" (1.1.60). He explains to his bewildered colleagues that in a previous role in one of the park's preprogrammed scenarios, the android played a professor of English literature who had such quotations at his command. The memories that the team thought had been deleted have somehow found their way back into the android's program. According to Ford, there is "no cause for alarm […]. Simply our old work coming back to haunt us" (1.1.63).

Such unexpected Shakespearean returns are the focus of this study. Through selected case studies, I am exploring how the "old work" of Shakespeare's topics, plots, dramaturgical devices, characters, and poetry surfaces in current complex TV series. The following chapters will ask how such unforeseen Shakespearean returns impact the TV series. Do they affect the "core code" of the new narratives (1.1.64), as the technical team in *Westworld* suspects? Are these returns intentional or surprising afterlives of a past considered forgotten? How can we account for this haunting

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quality of the Shakespearean legacy? Do the Shakespearean returns help us understand topical concerns negotiated in the series? And what new insights may the twenty-first-century remediations grant us into Shakespeare's texts? Pursuing these questions, the book offers four case studies that read Shakespeare's *The Tempest* with the science fiction-Western *Westworld*, *King Lear* with the satirical dynastic drama of *Succession*, *Hamlet* with the international legal thriller *Black Earth Rising*, and *Coriolanus* with the political thriller *Homeland*. The final chapter will bring the insights together, aiming to distil important characteristics of the emerging adaptational aggregate of 'serial Shakespeare'.

The four series discussed in my study were selected because their engagement with Shakespeare covers a broad spectrum of adaptational strategies that allows for mutually illuminating readings as well as for theoretical insights. *Westworld*, with which I begin, features direct quotations from several Shakespeare plays including *The Tempest*. *Succession* explicitly refers to a number of Shakespeare plays in its diegesis, but does not directly mention *King Lear*. However, the *Lear* legacy has been highlighted in the marketing and journalistic reception of the series. *Black Earth Rising* contains only one direct reference to Shakespeare in a *Hamlet* allusion at the very end of the series and has never been marketed or received as Shakespearean, while *Homeland* does not refer to Shakespeare at all and has not been publicised as related to Shakespeare. In the course of examining the case studies that this study offers, the relation between Shakespeare and the respective series hence becomes increasingly subtle and debatable, which raises pertinent questions that are currently discussed in adaptation studies regarding what is 'Shakespeare' and what is 'not Shakespeare'.[1] In each of the series, I will argue, a particular form of a return is taken over as a topic from Shakespeare, and at the same time, this serialised form of return speaks to the series' adaptational stance: returns of the dead in *Westworld*, returns of the predecessor in *Succession*, returns to the roots in *Black Earth Rising*, and returns to the home in *Homeland*. The four series were also chosen because they negotiate urgent political and social concerns, such as artificial intelligence, the safeguarding of democracy, postgenocidal and postcolonial justice, and terrorism. They all premiered after 2010, and three of them are ongoing as I complete this manuscript, with *Homeland*'s eighth and final season and *Westworld*'s third season being broadcast in 2020 and *Succession*'s third season announced for 2020 or 2021. There are (as yet) no plans for a continuation of the miniseries *Black*

Earth Rising, the most recent of the series discussed in this study, which was first aired in 2018.

My study traces the Shakespearean legacy in an aesthetic phenomenon that has recently gained as much popular as scholarly attention: in TV series that are characterised by long narrative arcs; large budgets; high production standards; a cinematographic look; elaborate scripts written by teams of prestigious authors, many of whom are known for their previous film work; casts that include well-known actors; and, above all, narrative complexity and self-reflexivity. The series are typically developed with multiple seasons in mind, but decisions on their continuation are usually made during or even after the broadcast of each season, so that season finales have to be conclusive enough to be the end of the entire series but open enough to allow for new seasons. As the series can develop their characters over many episodes, they can offer psychological complexity and depth. The scripts are responsive, since the authors, directors, producers, and actors can take into account audience reactions and journalistic criticism in the writing and filming of later episodes and seasons. Scholars have offered competing labels to categorise this new kind of TV series, including 'quality TV' (Thompson 1996), 'prestige TV' (Bignell 2013), 'transgressive television' (Däwes et al. 2015), and, most influential, 'complex TV' (Mittell 2015), Jason Mittell's term that I will be adopting, too.

Historicising the development, Mittell has shown how the new form of TV storytelling has spread since the late 1990s, deliberately offering an alternative to conventional episodic series that require some plot closure at the end of each episode (2015, 17). Instead, complex TV unfolds cumulative narratives with long story arcs. It experimentally merges established genres to create new forms; *Black Earth Rising*'s combination of a legal thriller with a coming-of-age drama or *Westworld*'s blending of science fiction and the Western are typical examples. Mittell notes that serials are a minority phenomenon, with most television shows still working with more conventional narrative patterns, but it is one that has gained considerable public attention and cultural capital in recent decades (cf. 31). Such narrative experiments in the commercial medium of TV became possible because the number of channels and networks rose and audiences for each show shrunk. Therefore, shows which attract a small but dedicated audience have become commercially viable. What is more, the cultural prestige of particular series has helped to make a channel's brand seem more sophisticated (cf. 34). Thus, a commercial for HBO, the channel that has produced a number of award-winning shows including *Succession* and

Westworld, claimed "It's not TV. It's HBO". Like Shakespeare's plays, 'complex' or 'quality' TV is hence situated ambiguously between highbrow and popular culture. References to Shakespeare frequently function as markers of high cultural learning while at the same time self-reflexively raising the question of where the TV show itself belongs in this stratified notion of culture. In this respect, the series participate in a common postmodern trend of Shakespearean appropriations, which self-reflexively negotiate their own status (cf. Lanier 2002). It might be part of this participation in Shakespearean 'high culture' that the prestige series predominantly use Shakespeare's tragedies as references, traditionally the more esteemed form of dramatic art.

The new trend of serial Shakespeare was prepared by TV and film versions of Shakespeare that contributed to the fact that many people today predominantly encounter Shakespeare's oeuvre through filmic adaptations, which frame the experience of reading the plays or seeing them on stage (cf. Ryle 2014, 9). Current TV series keep drawing inspiration from and in turn influence filmic, literary, and theatrical Shakespeare versions in what can be considered a transmedial transformation of Shakespeare's oeuvre. As Douglas Lanier noted ten years ago, "[i]nstead of being particular texts, 'Shakespeare' […] becomes a collection of narratives highly mobile from context to context, verbal style to style, genre to genre, media platform to platform" (2010, 107). According to Lanier, after the peak of Anglophone mass-market Shakespeare films in the 1990s and early 2000s, "the adaptational energy once associated with Shakespeare on film has migrated elsewhere" (105). This study argues that the adaptational energy has partly travelled to complex TV, which offers a new field for fruitful examinations of the Shakespearean legacy and which has taken up characteristics of the earlier films, such as contemporary settings, modern language, revised plots, and a high degree of intertextuality (Cartelli and Rowe 2007, 2).

Several precursors to the recent phenomenon of complex TV's serial Shakespeare can be identified. From 1978 to 1985, all Shakespeare plays were filmed and broadcast by the BBC and PBS with considerable economic success. *BBC Television Shakespeare* popularised the oeuvre but at the same time drew attention to the aesthetic challenges of airing Shakespeare on the small screen while trying to maintain part of the theatrical experience, that is, theatrical sets and shots that allow one to see all interacting characters. Furthermore, the creativity of directors was curtailed by "a strict house style: sets and costumes were to be 'traditional'

and radical or revisionist interpretations were out of the question" (Purcell 2011, 526). In addition to a wealth of TV productions of particular plays, the next serial BBC endeavour more innovatively transformed selected Shakespeare dramas for TV. *ShakespeaRe-Told*, broadcast in 2005, rewrote four plays in contemporary English, with topical settings and adapted plots. The TV project thus participated in a development instigated by filmic Shakespeares of the 1990s, namely, "to bring Shakespeare in line with late twentieth-century visual culture and in the process loosen the equivalence between Shakespeare and text. Through film of this period Shakespeare became definitively post-textual" (Lanier 2010, 106). In contrast to the BBC's earlier project, the aesthetic aim of *ShakespeaRe-Told* was to create works "made for, not translated to, television" (Kidnie 2009, 120) by using techniques that were once regarded as cinematic but which have by now become typical of 'quality' TV, such as "[l]ow lighting, tracking shots, extreme close-ups, camera positions strikingly above or below eye height, digitally enhanced images, and point-of-view shots" (121).

The Canadian TV series *Slings & Arrows* (2003–2006) dedicated each of its three seasons to one specific Shakespeare play. In every season, an artistic team attempts to stage a Shakespeare tragedy (*Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*) and find themselves haunted by its plot in their everyday lives. As Laurie E. Osborne has noted, *Slings & Arrows* is one of the earliest examples of how Shakespearean dramaturgy can be serialised: "Whereas televising Shakespeare in Britain and the U.S. has most frequently taken the form of full performances or adaptations of individual plays, *Slings & Arrows* embraces the serial nature of television as a medium and deploys both sequencing and seasons to create a more extensive and sustained engagement with the problems of intermedial performance" (2011, 2). The artistic team of *Slings & Arrows* has acknowledged that examples of complex TV, specifically *The Sopranos* and *Six Feet Under*, inspired their aesthetic choices and their writing (7). In 2012, BBC Two aired the international co-production *The Hollow Crown*, featuring Shakespeare's second historical tetralogy as a miniseries, followed in 2016 by *The Hollow Crown: The War of the Roses*, which presents the first tetralogy. While *The Hollow Crown* uses Shakespearean lines and historical settings, its filmic style clearly participates in current complex TV and was meant to draw on the success of historical fiction series such as *The Tudors* (2007–2010) (Wray 2016; Pittman 2015; Mullin 2018).

Looking at Shakespearean motifs in complex TV, this book is an intervention at the intersection of Shakespeare adaptation studies and media/

TV studies, two fields which too rarely speak to each other. Not only have "[a]daptations of Shakespeare's plays to television […] been a relatively neglected field of inquiry, despite the commonplace remark that Shakespeare, were he alive today, would be a cinema or TV scriptwriter" (Ribeiro de Oliveira 2016, 1807), but also recent publications on complex TV have paid little attention to Shakespeare. For instance, the collection *Reading Westworld* briefly acknowledges the Shakespearean quotes and allusions of the series, but does not discuss them in any detail (Goody and Mackay 2019). Therefore, the following chapters seek to initiate a dialogue between Shakespeare studies, adaptation studies, and serial TV studies. For instance, the insights into dramaturgical seriality that have been developed in studies of complex TV such as Mittell's can be utilised for Shakespeare studies. Discussing how Shakespearean constellations resurface in a serialised manner, that is, in repetitions and variations, this study proposes that the evident dramaturgical seriality typical of complex TV allows insights into the less pronounced seriality that Shakespeare employed in structuring his plays. My book thus aims at making a contribution to what Thomas Leitch has projected as 'Adaptation Studies 3.0' (2017, 5–7) and to what Stephen O'Neill has called the "media turn" in Shakespeare studies (2018, 1), which is guided by an awareness "of Shakespeare as always already existing in and reappearing through media, as well as an acute recognition that a medium brings to Shakespeare its own frame effects" (21).

Beyond *Westworld*, *Succession*, *Black Earth Rising*, and *Homeland*, a number of other series can be and have been discussed as Shakespeare revisions, among them *The Wire* (Bronfen 2015b; Pittman 2020), *Lost* (Stockton 2011; Barnes 2015; Hatchuel and Laist 2017), *Person of Interest* (Hatchuel 2019), *Deadwood* (Cosby Ronnenberg 2018), *House of Cards* (Dyson 2019; Bronfen 2020), *Breaking Bad* (Cantor 2019), *Peaky Blinders* (Fernie and Gibbs 2019), and *Game of Thrones* (Rodgers 2015). This list could be extended by taking into account series beyond the Anglophone sphere, such as the Danish *Borgen*, which have become part of the 'complex TV' phenomenon. While the shows that this book discusses are all produced by American and British channels and networks, they are distributed worldwide via national TV channels, international on-demand streaming platforms, as well as DVD and BluRay. These new forms of distribution facilitate complex storytelling as they allow for concentrated, uninterrupted, and multiple viewing strategies. As Mittell has argued, "complex television encourages, and even at times necessitates, a

new mode of viewer engagement" (2015, 52). He calls this active, attentive watching, which sometimes includes online discussions in fan forums and blogs, "forensic fandom" (52).

The way in which the serials introduce their Shakespearean link also inspires forensic viewership. For instance, *Black Earth Rising* places its only intertextual reference to *Hamlet* in the penultimate episode, thus inviting audiences to reconsider, and possibly to rewatch, the action through this lens. The fact that *Succession* was promoted as a version of *King Lear* even though the series itself never explicitly refers to the play encourages audiences to actively look out for reverberations of *King Lear* in the leadership crises of a twenty-first-century media conglomerate. The many riddles of *Westworld* have produced particularly lively viewership communication in several fan forums. Among the concerns discussed are the references to Shakespeare, for example in the *Westworld Wiki* "Literary References" and the *Reddit* thread "Shakespeare References in *Westworld*?". These conversations prove that just as in Jonathan Nolan's earlier TV series *Person of Interest* (2011–2016), Shakespeare here functions as "a narrative clue, an Easter egg with high cultural value, calling for the spectators' literary knowledge to understand the series' subtleties and decode its mysteries" (Hatchuel 2019, 6–7). The interactive engagement with the Shakespearean legacy of *Westworld* also demonstrates that we may have to speak of the 'Shakespeare user' rather than the 'Shakespeare reader', as Valerie M. Fazel and Louise Geddes have proposed: "the value of Shakespeare lies in its usability, in that the texts […] can be broken down and reassembled by a body of users whose valuation of Shakespeare is unpredictable and often resistant to pre-conceived notions of cultural hegemony" (2017, 3–4). The "dialogic opportunities" (4) created by these uses of Shakespeare include the creators of the series, who adapt their responsive scripts to the reactions of viewers and who can assess the knowledgeability of their audience when it comes to the intertextual references. As Frank Kelleter puts it, complex TV shows are "evolving narratives: they can register their reception and involve it in the act of (dispersed) storytelling itself. Series observe their own effects—they watch their audiences watching them—and react accordingly" (2017, 14). Viewers frequently not only watch the series itself but also explainer videos and read discussions in fan forums, thus pursuing a hyper-watching or hyper-reading of *Westworld* that may include its Shakespearean sources.

Homeland includes a particularly striking case of responsiveness. Its reception was marked not only by speculations about plot twists but also

by intense debates about its political stance. In a spectacular intervention in this debate, viewers of *Homeland* managed to 'hack' the aesthetic code of the series, smuggling in their own message. For the filming of the second episode of the fifth season, when protagonist Carrie Mathison visits a refugee camp on the Syrian-Lebanese border, the producers asked graffiti artists able to write in Arabic to give the set "visual authenticity" (Amin), despite it being filmed in Berlin. The artists Heba Amin, Caram Kapp, and Don Karl a.k.a. Stone used the opportunity as a "moment of intervention" to write sentences like "*Homeland* is racist", "*Homeland* is a joke, and it didn't make us laugh", and "This show does not represent the views of the artists" on the walls of the refugee camp set (Amin). No one in the artistic team noticed this, and the episode was broadcast including these statements by defiant viewers, in whose eyes *Homeland* offers "thinly veiled propaganda" that "has maintained the dichotomy of the photogenetic, mainly white, mostly American protector versus the evil and backwards Muslim threat" (Amin). Showrunner Alex Gansa in turn tried to present this intervention as part of the dialogue between the artistic team and viewers that has become characteristic of complex TV: "as *Homeland* always strives to be subversive in its own right and a stimulus for conversation, we can't help but admire this act of artistic sabotage" (Phipps 2015).

As explained above, the following chapters discuss a variety of adaptational constellations, proceeding from explicit to more uncertain relations between Shakespeare and the respective series. These constellations help to explore the foundational question for the study of Shakespearean afterlives of how we measure Shakespeare's influence on other artists. Do we need direct intertextual references, comments by writers themselves, or other material that proves their knowledge of Shakespeare's plays? Or can we assume a more indirect cultural influence of his plays on modern culture? Should we avoid the risk of obsessive readings that detect Shakespearean traces in later works simply because we as early modern scholars are so familiar with his oeuvre, or should we acknowledge that intertextual relations are created by readers as much as by authors? Christy Desmet has proposed just this, arguing that "[i]n Shakespeare sightings of all kinds, what matters is less what the author intended than how a connection to Shakespeare is recognized" (2014, 55). The problematic question of influence is further complicated by the fact that it can be hard to pin down intentions in artistic processes that are not always self-reflexive and rational. As *Homeland*'s graffiti has demonstrated, this difficulty is enhanced by the collaborative writing and production process that

characterises complex TV serials, where auteurism is "an overlapping phenomenon, one that allows for more than one creative approach to be entertained" (Wray 2016, 471).

The existing models which account for uncertain Shakespearean returns can generally be divided into models that assume cultural influence (which scholars uncover and explicate) and models that instead emphasise the scholar's own work of bringing historically distant texts together irrespective of their marked intertextual relation. A prominent example of the first approach is Marjorie Garber's work, which accounts for Shakespeare's 'uncanny modernity' by arguing that "the plays, and the high regard for Shakespeare in the centuries following his death, have *created* […] 'modern' types as much as they have paralleled or predicted them" (2004, 776). Garber argues that in modern culture, Shakespeare's plots have gained a cultural pervasiveness comparable to myths. Her argument that "Shakespeare has become the 'other scene' (the unconscious) of modern life" (2008, xxix) can be well applied to *Westworld*'s above-quoted pilot, where unconscious, repressed Shakespearean traces of an earlier script, of a different scenario, return unexpectedly. It also aptly describes the resurfacing of *Hamlet* in *Black Earth Rising*, where someone suggests to the protagonist that she is performing a Hamletian scene even though she is not aware of this reenactment. The creative team of *Succession* have proposed *King Lear* as 'the other scene' of their series, whereas the showrunners of *Homeland* seem to have returned to the plot and concerns of *Coriolanus* unintentionally. Judith Buchanan, in a discussion of the film *Forbidden Planet* as an unintentional *Tempest* adaptation, has argued that Shakespeare's plays have taken up and reformed what Carl Gustav Jung has described as narrative archetypes, which can be transmitted unknowingly: "An individual tale may […] endure through constant recycling even when a particular telling of it demonstrates no conscious awareness of its affinity with and contribution to a wider tradition" (2001, 153). Eric S. Mallin's study of unmarked revisions of Shakespeare's plays in current movies has recently reaffirmed that the "vastness of Shakespeare's cultural influence cannot be overstated, because few screenwriters, directors, actors could possibly be unfamiliar with his best-known works. The thought of Shakespeare is already present, nearly unavoidable in part or in whole when certain themes or ideas are entertained" (2019, 237). In their introduction to the collection *Shakespeare/Not Shakespeare*, Christy Desmet, Natalie Loper, and Jim Casey have likewise acknowledged that

"adaptation sometimes works not as a conscious process but as an embedded element within the cultural (un)conscious" (2017, 13).

Lanier has shown how such assumptions can be brought together with his rhizomatic notion of adaptation, which was inspired by the theory of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. It understands each play as a network of Shakespearean text(s), theatrical productions, film versions, adaptations, allusions, and interpretations. Rather than claiming a stable archetypical or universal validity of Shakespeare's plays, the rhizomatic perspective assumes that 'myths' or 'archetypes' can be transformed by their adaptations: "a rhizomatic conception of Shakespeare stresses the power of those ever-differentiating particulars—specific adaptations, allusions, performances—to transform and restructure the aggregated Shakespearean field into something forever new" (Lanier 2014, 31). The cover image of this study visualises this understanding of 'Shakespeare' as a network of mirrors, which connects forms whose shapes and colours change according to the perspective taken. It is not always easy to tell whether two particular forms are similar or identical to each other nor whether and how they are connected in the intricate network created by Shakespearean performances and texts and the long history of their intermedial adaptations. That parts of this network are hidden from view, stretching out beyond the frame of the cover, highlights that there are ample research opportunities to detect particular relations in the constantly growing adaptational network.

Stanley Cavell, Elisabeth Bronfen, and Graham Holderness, among many others, have offered models to compare Shakespearean texts to later, non-Shakespearean ones. Cavell sees Shakespeare's plays as a "subtext" of Hollywood movies of the 1930s and 1940s coming together in a cultural conversation (2003, 144). Bronfen has modified Cavell's method by connecting it to Stephen Greenblatt's new historicist concept of the circulation of social energies. In comparative readings that she calls "crossmappings", she explores figures of thought shared by the texts as a heuristic practice that assumes the survival of Shakespearean energies, but does not seek intertextual evidence (2018a, 2). She argues that:

> What a transhistorical crossmapping uncovers are not just the lines of connection and correspondences between early and late modern texts, but that Shakespeare's meaning returns to us inscribed by and intensified by the history of his rearticulations. The aesthetic energies emanating from his poetic refiguration of the cultural anxieties and crises of his own times are both

> prior to our contemporary concerns and the product of rethinking our historical moment in light of his plays. (2015a, 255)

Holderness proposes a term that he takes from particle physics, "collision", and uses it to describe his comparison of Shakespearean and non-Shakespearean cultural products, which "in their mutual impact generate an observable and meaningful pattern" (2014, 18). The rewards of these alternative methods are remarkably similar. Just as conversations, cross-mappings, and collisions produce insightful comparative readings, so too have post-fidelity adaptation studies long demonstrated that Shakespearean plays and their reworkings are mutually transformative when read in relation to one another. This is also true for what adaptation scholars have called 'found adaptations' (Cartmell and Whelehan 2010, 18), 'unmarked adaptations' (Lanier 2017, 300), or 'non-adaptations' (Mallin 2019), that is, works that do not signal their adaptational status, as with *Homeland*.

My readings will make a case for the influence, sometimes unacknowledged and unintentional, of the Shakespearean legacy on the selected TV series. In all of them, Shakespeare's plays are a source of dramaturgical, psychological, and political complexity. Based on new scripts, they only briefly, if at all, draw on the linguistic richness of the plays. While the shows are indebted to television naturalism and not interested in non-realistic early modern theatre practices,[2] they partly translate the metatheatrical comments of Shakespeare's plays into metafilmic and metaserial reflections. By pairing each serial with one particular play in comparative reading, this study does not try to do justice to the wealth of pretexts—literary works, films, visual art, political discourse—that most of the TV series refer to. Adaptation studies have pointed out that adaptations in general have more than one source (Cartmell and Whelehan 2010, 7), and for the series selected, this is sometimes also more than one Shakespearean play. In particular, a late play like *The Tempest* works like an echo chamber, recycling and transforming many of the concerns, characters, and formal devices from Shakespeare's earlier works. As Richard P. Wheeler has put it:

> The development of Shakespeare's art is repetitive […]. There is nothing like a clear, linear progression from one work to another or from early work to late. As in the development of the human psyche, nothing is ever just left behind in Shakespeare's art. From the *Comedy of Errors* and the early history plays to *The Tempest* and beyond, characteristic themes, conflicts, relationships, configurations of desire and frustration and fear, are repeated over and

> over again. But nothing is ever just repeated either. Instead we can watch his art finding new possibilities in old configurations, and renewing the basis on which the old configurations exist. […] *The Tempest*, as very late play, apparently written with a keen self-consciousness of coming near the end of a long and extraordinary career, is, for all its brevity, remarkably comprehensive in its reworking of major Shakespearean preoccupations. (2001, 296–297; see also Bronfen 2018b)

Thus, when reading *Westworld* through *The Tempest*, we indirectly engage with earlier Shakespearean plays interested in similar topics. Fittingly, the android's threat quoted above combines a line from *Henry IV* with a *King Lear* citation to express a desire for retribution. The assembled citation signals that revenge is one of the topics that recur throughout Shakespeare's oeuvre and that underpins large parts of the action of *The Tempest*, too. Acknowledging the series' rich intertextual and intermedial engagement with Shakespeare's plays and far beyond, I am nonetheless interested in reading each series from the perspective of one specific Shakespearean play that, as I will argue, offers a particularly productive foil for interpretation.

The way in which we understand Shakespeare's plays today encompasses not only the original scripts and Shakespeare's own sources but also the ways in which they have been staged, interpreted, adapted, and remediated over the centuries. It is a case in point when, in *Westworld*'s pilot, the android remembers Shakespearean lines that he was fed as part of one of Ford's narratives. Claiming that it is '*our* old work' that returns in these citations, Ford emphasises that it is not the Shakespearean 'original', but Ford's adaptational repurposing that resurfaces. As visualised on the cover of this book, each of the following chapters traces one strand in the rhizomatic network between a particular series, a particular Shakespearean text, and the literary, filmic, and artistic adaptations that are connected to them and that connect them. As Mark Thornton Burnett and Ramona Wray have emphasised, "it is precisely because of Shakespeare's prior and continuing absorption in popular culture that, in filmic guise, his plays are enabled to broach a spectrum of local and global twenty-first-century concerns" (2006, 8). The link to the rich history of Shakespeare adaptations is signalled in the breakdown of the android in *Westworld*'s first episode, a scenario that raises the concerns of my study in a nutshell: the android answers Ford's question, "What is your name?" (1.1.59) with "Rose is a rose is a rose" (1.1.60), a line taken from Gertrude Stein's poem "Sacred

Emily" that refers to the moment in *Romeo and Juliet* when Juliet ponders the nature of referentiality, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose / By any other word would smell as sweet" (2.2.43–44). Taking up Juliet's concern, Stein's poem deliberately subverts the difference between proper names and common nouns (see Rabaté 2007, 106). As this quote indicates, *Westworld* refers not only to Shakespeare's plays themselves but also to the many reimaginations that have been inspired by them.

Focusing on four constellations of one Shakespearean play with one current TV series, I aim at mutual illumination, at a reconsideration of the current TV shows from the Shakespearean perspective and, vice versa, at a re-examination of Shakespeare's dramas through the lens of their twenty-first-century adaptations. The Gertrude Stein quote, which is anachronistic for the Western world recreated in the amusement park, points out that we always perceive the past with an awareness of the present. Readers who are familiar with Stein's modernist interest in fragmentation, repetition, and seriality will read *Romeo and Juliet* differently, just as viewers of *Westworld* will read *The Tempest* in a particular light. Ford himself comments on such 'preposterous' reading strategies when he acknowledges that the Stein quote is "a bit of an anachronism, but I couldn't resist" (1.1.62).[3] Similarly, he later dismisses the iterative brutal killing and reawakening of an android with the (abbreviated) line from *Julius Caesar*, "The coward dies a thousand deaths / The valiant taste of death but once" (1.3.20) before wistfully acknowledging, "Of course Shakespeare never met a man quite like you, Teddy. You died at least a thousand times. And yet it doesn't dull your courage" (1.3.20). Ford here circumspectly argues that while Shakespeare remains a foil for understanding the present, his plays have to be seen differently from a twenty-first-century perspective.

Each chapter of this study focuses on a particular mode of return that connects the early modern play to current concerns. The second chapter discusses how *Westworld* takes up the concern of the return from the dead that underpins Shakespeare's romance *The Tempest*, transforming Prospero's magic and his interaction with spirits into experiments with artificial intelligence. The third chapter investigates how recurrent returns of the predecessor heighten the succession crisis in *King Lear* and its reimagination in the business world of *Succession*. Focusing on a politically influential family that owns a global media conglomerate, *Succession* turns Shakespeare's crisis of royal sovereignty into a crisis of democracy. The fourth chapter discusses the return to roots, exploring how *Black Earth Rising* translocates the Hamletian search for its concern with the Rwandan

genocide and its international entanglement. The fifth chapter examines the serial return of the soldier from war, whose homecoming raises anxieties about the very concept of 'home' and the 'homeland' in *Coriolanus* and *Homeland*. Shakespeare's early modern depiction of Roman warfare and intelligence work here returns for an exploration of the psychological and political complexities of the US 'War on Terror'. Each thematic focus also has meta-adaptational relevance, as the return of the dead, the comeback of the predecessor who interferes in the activities of the successor, the search for roots, and the return of a dubious figure with unclear affiliations all speak to pertinent questions of adaptation theory. In each of the discussed series, the return of the Shakespearean material marks and furthers a crisis, and they all redeploy Shakespearean figures of return for issues that are of direct political and social relevance today. This study seeks to show that Shakespearean comebacks transform the twenty-first-century narratives in which they intervene and at the same time afford a new perspective on the early modern material. The well-known 'old work' appears fresh and estranged in the brave new worlds to which it returns.

Notes

1. I will discuss this question in more detail below. For an exemplary account of this question, see the substantial introduction and the contributions to the collection *Shakespeare/Not Shakespeare* edited by Christy Desmet, Natalie Loper, and Jim Casey (Desmet et al. 2017).
2. As Simon Ryle notes in his study of Shakespearean film versions, the 'thisness' of film, its mostly realistic visuality, "is in direct contrast to the 'radically synecdochic' quality of English Renaissance theatre" (2014, 10).
3. Patricia Parker introduced the term 'pre-post-erous' as an analytical category for reading early modern plays: "*Preposterous*—from *posterus* (after or behind) and *prae* (in front or before)—connotes a reversal of 'post' for 'pre', behind for before, back for front, second for first, end or sequel for beginning" (1996, 21). Mieke Bal employs the concept of 'preposterous history' to describe a "reversal, which puts what came chronologically first ('pre-') as an aftereffect behind ('post') its later recycling" (1999, 6–7). Bronfen uses Bal's concept for her method of crossmapping (2004, 18).

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