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Holding mirrors up to *Hamlet*: what Franco Zeffirelli's and Michael Almereyda's filmic adaptations of the play tell us about it

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Dissertação apresentada, como requisito parcial para a obtenção do título de Mestre, ao Programa de Pós-graduação em Letras, da Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. Área de concentração: Literaturas de Língua Inglesa.

Orientadora: Profª. Dra. Fernanda Teixeira de Medeiros

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DEDICATÓRIA

To my family which provided me the support I needed to make my dream real.

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I thank Fernanda Medeiros, my supervisor, for believing in me in every moment and for being a model of professor that I want to reach some day. Special thanks to my professors Eliane Berutti, Ana Lúcia Henriques, Maria Aparecida Salgueiro, Leila Harris and Lucia De La Rocque who contributed to my literary knowledge and love for literature. Dear Peônia, thank you very much for all your support and kindness in teaching me every lesson since English Culture I in 2004. I owe you this. I am especially indebted to Marlene Soares dos Santos and Barbara Heliodora for several Shakespeare classes which helped me to reflect upon Shakespeare's plays. One more thanks to my friends who supported me and understood my reasons when I had to give up going out with them to spend my weekends with William Shakespeare.

We can tell whether a man is clever by his answers. You can tell whether a man is wise by his questions.

Naguib Mahfouz

RESUMO

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Hamlet (1601), de William Shakespeare, é, desde o Fólio de 1623, circundada por um enorme e variado volume de *leituras*, que abrangem desde textos críticos e teóricos até as mais diversas adaptações teatrais e cinematográficas. Desde o final do século 19, o cinema vem adaptando peças de Shakespeare, fornecendo novos pontos de vista e sugestões para a encenação dessa obra ao levá-la inúmeras vezes para as telas. Dentre uma longa lista de adaptações fílmicas de *Hamlet*, o *Hamlet mainstream* de Franco Zeffirelli (1990) e o *Hamlet 2000* (2000), filme independente de Michael Almereyda, compõem o *corpus* eleito para análise nesta dissertação. Dialogando com noções de críticos e teóricos que desenvolveram estudos sobre o conceito de *adaptação*, tais como André Bazin, Robert Stam e Linda Hutcheon, sugiro uma desierarquização entre a peça shakespeariana e os filmes – logo, entre literatura/teatro e cinema. O objetivo final deste trabalho encontra-se na proposta de uma reflexão sobre esses filmes enquanto potenciais materiais críticos elucidativos para o estudo da peça, úteis na discussão de alguns de seus mais importantes temas e/ou questões.

Palavras chave: Literatura e Cinema. Estudos da Adaptação. *Hamlet*. Shakespeare.

ABSTRACT

Hamlet (1601), by William Shakespeare, has been, since its publication in the First Folio (1623), surrounded by a huge and varied number of *readings*, ranging from critical and theoretical texts up to several different theatrical and cinematographic adaptations. Since the end of the 19th century, cinema has adapted Shakespearean plays, proposing alternative points of view and interpretations when transposing them to the screen. Among a list of several filmic adaptations of *Hamlet*, Franco Zeffirelli's mainstream *Hamlet* (1990) and Michael Almereyda's independent *Hamlet 2000* (2000) make up the *corpus* under analysis in this dissertation. Establishing a dialogue with ideas developed by important critics and theorians such as André Bazin, Robert Stam and Linda Hutcheon about the notion of *adaptation*, I suggest a dismissal of the hierarchy between the Shakespearean play and the films; therefore, a dismissal of the notion of literature/theater's superiority to cinema. The main aim of this dissertation consists in proposing that the chosen films be taken as potential critical material providing access to the Shakespearean play in the discussion of its major issues.

Keywords: Literature and Film. Adaptation Studies. *Hamlet*. Shakespeare.

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SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Three questions need to be asked and answered so that the reader may understand the reason for the choices I made in this work: why, in the 21st century, did I decide to study and write about William Shakespeare if the world has been writing and commenting about him since the publication of the First Folio of his plays in the early 17th century? Why did I choose *Hamlet* as my object of study and analysis? After deciding to study the adaptations of *Hamlet* to the cinema, why did I decide to study films that present opposed characteristics between them – starting by their distinct productions: a Hollywoodian film [in Franco Zeffirelli's case] and an independent production in the case of Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet*?

The first time I read a play by Shakespeare – *Macbeth* – I was taking the English Literature 2 course at Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro in 2004. In that semester, I accidentally found at a video store an adaptation of *Hamlet* by Franco Zeffirelli. That was my first contact with the story of Hamlet, the prince of Denmark, who had his father killed by his uncle and whose mother married her brother-in-law. The plot was as involving as Hamlet's anguishing questions about life and death. I remember that there was no other character that I pitied most – well, I have to admit that I only paid attention to Ophelia's suffering some time later. Mel Gibson's performance definitely impressed me with the anger mixed with anguish that he expressed in his eyes. He also surprised me with the scenes in which sarcasm and irreverence were present. Then, the film awoke in me the desire to read the play.

Linda Hutcheon was accurate when she stated that "in the move from print to performance, in particular, characters and places become incarnate in a way that conditions how we image them in a literary work […] when we return to reread it. Our imaginations are permanently colonized by the visual and aural world of films" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 121-122). I had to give my best in order to detach Mel Gibson's and the other actors and actresses' images in Zeffirelli's adaptation from Shakespeare's characters. Soon, *Hamlet* became my favorite play and Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* my favorite film adaptation.

Some years after experiencing Franco Zeffirelli's, Laurence Olivier's and Kenneth Branagh's *Hamlets*, I had the opportunity of watching Michael Almereyda's adaptation. The first time I watched Almereyda's film I was surprised by his setting *Hamlet* in New York in the 21st century. At the same time that adaptation caused a feeling of rejection in me for its contemporary transposition of the play, I identified myself with a Hamlet who was a melancholy young prince isolated in his technological world sharing the same exile as several of my contemporaries do. Shakespeare, who seemed to be so far from me by setting his plays

in medieval/renaissance worlds, seemed to be nearer with a character who lived in New York in the 21st century and who avoided relating to other people in order to confine himself within his private technological world.

The choice of studying *Hamlet* can be explained by personal matters and also by professional fulfillment. It is fascinating to see a character that has to give up the possibilities of a different life to fight for a revenge that he did not look for. Furthermore, the anguish caused by the uncertainty about what comes after death is still a contemporary feeling among mankind. The professional reasons for studying *Hamlet* can be explained by the challenge of studying one of the most complex plays ever written and commented in the Western hemisphere.

Part of the complexity of *Hamlet* comes from its different text versions: *Q1*, *Q2* and the *Folio*. Philip Edwards, in his introduction to *Hamlet* for the New Cambridge Shakespeare edition, states that although we cannot find any manuscript of the play, it is possible to find three basic printed texts of *Hamlet*. The text published in 1603 – under the title *The Tragicall Historie of HAMLET Prince of Denmarke. By William Shake-speare* – is known as the *First-in-Quarto* (*Q1*), of which, unfortunately, only two copies survived. The play, which has 2,154 lines – that makes *Q1* the shortest version, if compared to *Q2* and the *Folio* –, is also considered as a "'bad' quarto: a corrupt, unauthorized version of an abridged version of Shakespeare's play" (EDWARDS, 2009, p. 9). The second-in-quarto (*Q2*) was published in 1604, but it is also possible in some copies to find the year 1605 as publication date. It is believed that *Q2* was based on William Shakespeare's manuscript (on his 'foul-papers'), "the complete draft as opposed to a fair copy, which he submitted to his company" (EDWARDS, 2009, p.9). *Q2* is considered Shakespeare's fullest text – with its 3,674 lines –, if compared to *Q1* and the *Folio*. In 1623, the First Folio came out: *Comedies, Histories and Tragedies of Shakespeare* – a posthumous publication. The play in the *Folio* has 3,535 lines – 222 lines from *Q2* were omitted, but 83 new ones were added. According to Edwards, "there is no general agreement about the source of this text except that it shows the influence of the theater" (EDWARDS, 2009, p. 9).

Another part of the complexity of the play comes from several approaches and readings attributed to it throughout the centuries. In order to expose how extensively *Hamlet* has been read, I will provide a bird's-eye view of the play's critical history before I finally explain why I decided to study Zeffirelli's and Almereyda's *Hamlets*. In order to glance through the studies dedicated to the play, I will use Susan L. Wofford's compilation of texts, written by her and several other critics, for the volume *Hamlet: Case Studies in*

Contemporary Criticism (1994). According to Wofford, before the *Folio* in 1623 there was enough material written about the play and about Shakespeare himself which was included as introductory items to the volume of that *Folio*. Among those important tributes there was a poem written by Ben Jonson (1572-1637), his sometime critic and admirer, - “To the memory of my beloved, the AUTHOR, Mr. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: and what he hath left us”-- dedicated to the memory of the English writer.

Jonson, who also used to criticize Shakespeare in other writings for lack of “art” – which means the careful practice and technique of artistic method – in his contribution to the first Folio complimented the Bard suggesting that Shakespeare owes his success to the combination of art and genius (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 182). Besides comparing the Bard to the greatest Greek classical dramatists, Ben Jonson also seems to be the first author who suggested that Shakespeare could not be restricted to his time or nation, concluding that “he was not of an age, but for all times” (*apud* WOFFORD, 1994, p. 183).

Ben Jonson’s comments and reflections about William Shakespearean and his production – such as when Jonson suggests that Shakespeare drama depends on a special connection with “Nature” (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 184) and the natural – are just one example of a large *corpus* of criticism built up through the centuries.

Looking quickly at the late seventeenth and throughout the eighteenth century, it is possible to notice different views applied to *Hamlet* and how the play and the protagonist were seen by dramatists, audience and critics. In the late seventeenth century, Tomas Betterton’s performance of Hamlet suggested a vigorous, bold and heroic Danish prince. His performance awoke sympathy in the audience “by providing an exemplary representation of ordinary human emotion intensified by extraordinary circumstances” (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 185). At that time, Hamlet’s delay in taking revenge was not seen as a problem and was explained as a device developed by the author who intended to extend the action. Furthermore, his worries regarding his mother’s hasty marriage were considered “natural” by the audience and critics.

From the middle to the end of the 18th century, the image of a heroic Hamlet disappeared gradually; the plot was not enough to explain Hamlet’s reasons anymore. Authors such as Francis Gentleman (1770) lamented Hamlet's “inconsistency” (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 185) on stage. Boswell comments on Thomas Sheridan’s performance considering Hamlet “irresolute” (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 185). Henry Mackenzie (1780) considered Hamlet’s “extreme sensibility of mind” (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 185) as the unifying principle of the play. In 1795, Goethe’s novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjabre* made the image of the weak

Hamlet famous, anticipating the Hamlet of the Romantics and provoking the shift of focus from the play in performance to the individual's discovery of self and inner truth.

The power of reflecting about human existence was the main element in the play to call the attention of the Romantics. Samuel Taylor Coleridge used to read Hamlet as a character who was not a sensitive but an intellectual man. According to Wofford, Coleridge believed that there should be a balance in human beings between "attention to outward objects" (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 186) and our "meditation on inward thoughts" (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 186), but he considered that that balance did not exist in Hamlet. In Germany, A. W. Schlegel in his Lecture *Dramatic Art and Literature* attributed the prince's impossibility to act to his ability to philosophize and meditate. His delay, for instance, was explained by the Romantics as a consequence of his constant meditations. In other words, Hamlet delays because he is busy thinking and reflecting. Hamlet's ability to reflect upon human existence was considered by the Romantics a characteristic which could inspire other readers to think as carefully as the prince. Actually, the Romantic reading of *Hamlet* is the view that has mostly survived through the centuries and was inherited by us in the 20th century. The stereotype of Hamlet is still one of a man who is constantly thinking, and therefore cannot act. Even adaptations such as Laurence Olivier's to the screen, theatrical productions, photos or any popular allusion to Shakespeare's Danish prince in the 20th and 21st centuries are still charged by a romantic rather than any other reading of the character.

In the 19th century, the idea of explaining Hamlet's motives through the plot was not enough. Then, several questions such as "why does he delay?" were reflected upon by the critics to try to understand Hamlet's reasons. A.C. Bradley, for instance, focused his studies on trying to answer that question in his book *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904).

Bradley is definitely a critic whose comments and essays pictured how Hamlet used to be seen in the 19th century. His lecture on *Hamlet* reads the character as a man who is sick, suffering from melancholy. Bradley approaches Hamlet as if the character was a person, an individual. Bradley displays a melancholy Hamlet, a man whose "morbid" melancholy prevents him from acting and makes him passive. According to Bradley, the prince cannot act due to "the moral shock of the sudden ghastly disclosure of his mother's true nature" (*apud* WOFFORD, 1994, p. 189). To the critic, Hamlet was a complex character who should be studied and analyzed carefully. Bradley states that Hamlet himself could not understand why he delayed and suggests that the reason for such a postponement is in his conscience between what he can do and what he does not want to do. To Bradley, Hamlet delays because he is divided into not doing the action that his conscience secretly condemns, but which is

explicitly possible and acceptable. In other words, he can kill Claudius for being assured by the vengeance code, and he is aware of it but, according to Bradley, the protagonist's consciousness secretly does not allow him to kill the man who killed his father and married his mother. Actually, Bradley exposes a divided Hamlet – "with both a consciousness and a more secret conscience inaccessible to himself" (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 189) – who could be psychologically analyzed. According to Wofford, it did not take long until the protagonist was approached by Freudian reflections (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 189).

Sigmund Freud also brought contributions through his psychoanalytic reading of *Hamlet*. Freud used to read Hamlet as a person who was liable to medical and psychological analysis, taking into consideration the details about the protagonist in the text. *Hamlet* was not the only play whose protagonist was analysed by Freud. Sophocles's *Oedipus the King* also had its protagonist under Freud's analysis. According to Wofford, Freud was a voracious reader and admirer of Shakespeare, mainly of *Hamlet*. Just to exemplify how deep his admiration was, Freud mentioned or quoted the play around twenty times in his publications.

Freud describes his discovery of the unconscious and the value of dream analysis in his book *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). The psychoanalyst approached both plays, *Hamlet* and *Oedipus*, using the protagonists as figures of dreams themselves, "the very medium through which he believes he can gain access to the unconscious" (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 189). Analyzing the plays and their characters, Freud made relevant considerations such as the statements and he also showed differences between them in how repressed each civilization from the play seems to be. To Freud, Oedipus's civilization tended to be seen as less repressive because Oedipus's wish of killing his father and marrying his mother was fulfilled, whereas in *Hamlet*, the son's wishes remained repressed, allowing the audience to access them only through his soliloquies. Freud also argues that the cause of Hamlet's delay is his incapability of killing the man who was able to make real the repressed wishes that Hamlet could never fulfill. In other words, Freud believed that the king did what the prince unconsciously wanted to do. Hamlet cannot kill Claudius because the king was able to kill old Hamlet, the figure of Hamlet's father, and to marry the queen, Hamlet's mother.

According to Elaine Showalter, the 19th century was a time when there was an intense search for literary characters who apparently presented any kind of disorder or eccentricity as models to establish categories or exemplifications of mental illnesses. Hamlet, who was read as the archetypal melancholy by Freud in his essay "Mourning and Melancholia" (1915), was

not the only model extracted from the play. Ophelia's madness contributed for her to be seen by several artists and doctors, such as Dr. John Charles Bucknill – president of the Medico-psychological Association – as a threatening model to adolescent girls. Showalter in her article "Representing Ophelia: women, madness and the responsibility of feminist criticism" in the late 19th century "Ophelia was one that seemed particularly useful as an account of hysteria or mental breakdown in adolescence, a period of sexual instability which the Victorians regarded as risky for women's health" (SHOWALTER, 1994, p. 230).

In the 20th century, one of Freud's disciples – Ernest Jones – extended his professor's ideas exposed in *The Interpretation of Dreams* and soon published his book *Hamlet and Oedipus* (1949). Some of the topics developed by Jones in his book had as a theme the erotic treatment of the relationship between Hamlet and Gertrude. Ernest Jones's speculations about Hamlet influenced several stage and movie directors of the 20th century. Laurence Olivier, for instance, explored the presumed erotic feature in Hamlet and Gertrude's relationship by using a bed and suggesting sensual acts when Hamlet talks to his mother in the "closet scene" (*HAMLET*, III.4). After Olivier, other directors – such as Franco Zeffirelli – also brought a Freudian-Jones reading through the erotic atmosphere between mother and son in that scene, which was the central one for psychoanalytic critics.

In the 20th century, the Anglo-American poet, dramatist and critic T. S. Eliot (1888-1965) also made comments regarding the play. Eliot developed his theory of the "objective correlative" (WOFFORD, 1994, p, 193) stating that it was the only way a poet has to express emotion in art form. The "objective correlative" can be defined as "[…] a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked" (Eliot *apud* WOFFORD, 1994, p. 193).

In an attempt to apply his "objective correlative" theory to *Hamlet*, Eliot was interested in identifying the causes of the emotion of the prince. In the essay "Hamlet" (1932), Eliot states that William Shakespeare does not provide an "objective correlative" that justifies or could be presented as the protagonist's cause of emotion. Analyzing Gertrude, for instance, Eliot neither considers the queen nor her actions as the "objective correlative" of Hamlet's emotion. Therefore "for Eliot, *Hamlet* is an aesthetic failure because it does not provide an adequate objective correlative for Hamlet's emotion. Hamlet's emotional responses seem to Eliot to be in excess of the facts and this is particularly true of his feelings about Gertrude" (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 194).

I personally tend to disagree with Eliot's argument concerning the lack of an "objective correlative" in the play. The apparition of Hamlet's father's Ghost demanding revenge, the murder of his father by his uncle's hand, the incestuous and hasty marriage of his mother to his uncle seem to be enough to raise any protagonists' emotion. Actually, I tend to agree with Dover Wilson who argues with Eliot in the book *What Happens in Hamlet* (1935), stressing that "Hamlet has plenty of good motives and cause for his emotion – nothing lacking to support Hamlet's intense disgust" (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 194).

In the middle of the 20th century – around the 1950s – the mysterious aspects of life in *Hamlet* started to be spotlighted among the critics, opening space to an epistemological and a metaphysical response to the play. This approach did not focus on psychological or intellectual problems presented by Hamlet. Actually, Hamlet's problem was attributed to his human position in the universe. Therefore, what was "wrong" with Hamlet could be attributed to something in the nature of the universe. According to Wofford, the shift in focus suffered by the play also implied a shift in the central scene to be analyzed. Whereas to the psychological perspective the closet scene – in which Hamlet talks to Gertrude – used to be the main focus of analysis, the metaphysical approach aims its darts at the *memento mori* of the play. To the metaphysical criticism, the first act and the graveyard scene are the ones which the analysis would be based on. The first act of the play brings the mystery and, according to Wofford, it "comes to represent the play's fascination with messages brought from beyond the grave" (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 197). Furthermore, "special attention is focused on the graveyard scene itself, with Hamlet's classic *memento mori* gesture as he picks up the skull […] to meditate on life and death" (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 197). Maynard Mack's "The World of *Hamlet*" (1952) and Henry Levin's book *The Question of Hamlet* (1959) are examples of critical productions which offer a more metaphysical view of *Hamlet*.

Wofford in her "Critical history of *Hamlet*" points out "theatricality" (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 199) as one more approach that came up in the 20th century to read *Hamlet*. The possibility of self-consciousness in the play – metatheatricality, which means theater talking about theater – moved the focus of analysis to the play-within-the-play scene presented to Claudius and Gertrudes in III.2 and to the acting instructions given the actors by Hamlet in the first utterances of act III.2.

The focus on the "theatricality" and the self-consciousness of the play came up with the theory of "Alienation effects" – a method of dramaturgy – developed and theorized by the

Marxist critic Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956) in *The Messingkauf Dialogues* (1963). For Brecht, the "alienation effect" required the actor to express the distance he or she felt from his or her role, and thus functioned to allow the audience to maintain its critical judgment and not to sink into passive acceptance of conditions or plots that should, Brecht felt, be resisted (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 199).

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* the touchstone for metatheatrical interpretation is, as I have mentioned previously, the play-within-the play scene in III.2. However, there are other important moments in the play that contribute to its self-consciousness. Wofford points out Hamlet's speech to the actors about how they should play on stage (III.2) along with the pun Shakespeare makes with the word "to act" – Wofford explains that "to act", the movement that is so much expected from Hamlet, is the word also used to name what actors do on stage – as two more pieces of evidence of the play's metatheatricallity.

Jacqueline Rose's contribution to *Hamlet* criticism comes with a feminist perspective. Rose has noticed that several readings of *Hamlet* have pointed out Gertrude, and her femininity, as the main influence on Hamlet's emotion. She ironically declares that if Eliot had seen Gertrude as sexually corrupted, he would have considered the play an aesthetical success and would be one more critic to point out Gertrude as the cause of Hamlet's excess:

> The fact that it is a woman who is seen as a cause of the excess and deficiency in the play and again a woman who symbolizes its aesthetic failure begins to look like a repetition. Firstly, of the play itself – Hamlet and his father united in the reproach they make of Gertrude for her sexual failing…Secondly, a repetition of a more fundamental drama of psychic experience as described by Freud, the drama of sexual difference in which the woman is seen as the cause of just such a failure in representation, as something deficient, lacking or threatening to the system and identities which are the precondition not only of integrated aesthetic form but also of so-called normal adult psychic and sexual life (…) (ROSE *apud* WOFFORD, 1994, p. 194-195).

To Jacqueline Rose, Gertrude's femininity and sexualized maternal body have been considered the "scapegoat" (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 195) of *Hamlet*. Janet Adelman in her text "'Man and Wife is one Flesh': Hamlet and the Confrontation of the Maternal Body" discusses how the feminists see the queen of Denmark. Adelman states that the way the way the feminists see Gertrude – Adelman uses the pronoun "we" to refer to the feminists, including herself – is different from the way Hamlet and the Ghost [they] see her. She says that Gertrude's "uncontrolled sexuality" (ADELMAN, 1994, p. 258) is pointed out by Hamlet and

the Ghost as her chief crime. However, Adelman states that she and the other feminist critics see Gertrude from a different perspective:

> But the Gertrude we see is not quite the Gertrude they see. And when we see her in herself, apart from their characterizations of her, we tend to see a woman more muddled than actively wicked; even her famous sensuality is less apparent than her conflicted solicitude both for her new husband and for her son. (ADELMAN, 1994, p. 258-259)

Ophelia was another character from *Hamlet* that was approached by the feminists in the 20th century. Until the 1970s, Ophelia was not heard, but then she started to be seen as a woman who was a heroine and who had her own story to tell. Elaine Showalter in her text "Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibility of Feminism criticism" tells the history of how Ophelia's character is represented throughout the years, including the feminist approach to her. According to Showalter and several feminist critics, "[…] the madwoman is a heroine, a powerful figure who rebels against the family and the social order; and the hysteric who refuses to speak the language of the patriarchal order, who speaks otherwise, is a sister" (SHOWALTER, 1994, p. 237).

Marxist criticism also has its approach to *Hamlet*. However, before going straight to the point of how *Hamlet* is read by the Marxists, it is important to explore what a Marxist approach aims at and the authors who contributed with their studies to the development of Marxist criticism. According to Ross C. Murfin, the Marxist approach can be seen "as a form of critique, a discourse for interrogating all societies and their texts in terms of certain specific issues" (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 332) which include race, class, and attitudes shared by individuals within a specific culture. Murfin states that to be a Marxist critic means neither to be a communist nor avoid or hate books that stand for a capitalistic worldview. The Marxist critic tends to see the literary work both as a product of work – "and hence in the realm of production and consumption we call economics" (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 333) – and as a text that reinforces the prevailing ideology. The Marxist approach counted on several critics – such as Trotsky, Bakthin, Georg Lukács, Theodor Adorno and Althusser – whose studies developed in the 20th century worked as a fountain which Marxism drank from.

Michael D. Bristol, for instance, in his text "'Funeral Bak'd-Meats': Carnival and the Carnivalesque in *Hamlet*" takes advantage of Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of carnival and polyphony – the assumption that in the play there is a double discourse: one of the official culture and another of the popular and traditional culture – to read the Shakespearean play.

According to Bristol, *Hamlet* is “a play that typifies Shakespeare’s use of carnival as the basis of his dramatic art” (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 343). It is possible to notice that because, according to Bristol, Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* presents the language of festive form “embedded in the structure of action and where the meanings privileged in the culture of carnival are fully actualized” (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 350). Among several carnivalesque examples Bristol provides in his text when referring to the play, he points out the image of Claudius as a character who adopts carnivalesque attitudes in order to conceal his real intentions, rational calculation and aggressiveness “behind a mask of traditional pieties, folk wisdom and festive distraction” (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 350). In comparison to Hamlet, who, according to Bristol, does not pretend or dissimulate in the beginning of the play and who stands for seriousness in the first scenes,

> Claudius can be interpreted as an individual representation of the grotesque body – incomplete, unfinished, deeply implicated in the lower functions of sexuality – and of its appetites, yet the full implications of carnivalesque uncrowning never enter his self understanding. Carnival laughter, acknowledgement of the body in its open and festive manifestations, ambivalence of emotion, and mixed decorum have all been co-opted by power and authority, without the recognition that these strategies necessarily entail a critique of authority that is inimical to the interests of power. (WOFFORD, 1995, p. 357)

Bristol also stresses the importance of the gravediggers’ scene and the social discussion the dialog between the clowns brings to the play regarding class privilege, in which the characters discuss whether Ophelia deserves a Christian funeral or not – in case she were a suicidal, she should be left out of a Christian burial:

> **First Clown:** Will you ha’ the truth an’t? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out a’ Christian burial.
> **Second Clown:** Why, there thou say’st, and the more pity that great folk should have count’nance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even-christen. (*HAMLET*, V.1.20-24)

Bristol explains that the Christian burial is provided to the deceased ones in accordance to their merit. Ophelia should not have gotten a Christian funeral because the suspicion of suicide surrounds the real causes of her death. The fact of getting a Christian burial is attributed by the clowns to her social position, therefore “the social distinction seems to persist into the after life” (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 359). Although Bristol does not consider himself a Marxist critic, to read *Hamlet* in the light of social consciousness and social struggle makes his reading of the play, according to him, a Marxist view on that Shakespearean work. Considering Hamlet, the Marxist approach “saw the prince variously lauded as a

revolutionary ahead of his feudal time and reviled as a vacillatingly uncommitted bourgeois intellectual" (DOBSON & WELLS, 2008, p. 180).

New Historicism has its own way of approaching Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. That school of criticism was considered "one of the most recent developments in contemporary literature" in the 1990s, according to Ross C. Murfin (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 368). New Historicism does not see literary production in isolation but sees poems and novels as they were "caught in a web of historical conditions, relationships and influences" (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 368). For new historicists, it is believed that literature refers to reality and is referred by reality. Therefore, referentiality is the central word in the new historicist's eye.

Karin S. Coddon in her text "'Suche Strange Desygns': Madness, Subjectivity, and Treason in *Hamlet* and Elizabethan Culture" discusses Robert Devereux, the earl of Essex, as a possible model for Hamlet and madness. Devereux courted Queen Elizabeth for some time, but was arrested and executed for being accused of unsuccessfully leading an insurrection against the queen. Coddon explains that for the Elizabethans madness and ambition were closely associated – madness comes from the internalization of disobedience – therefore, Essex's position against authority may be seen as an example of madness which could help to understand Hamlet's position against power.

To investigate madness in the play and in its protagonist means looking at political implications that madness brings to the play. Coddon states that the implication brought by madness in *Hamlet* does not have its main focus on political people, but on political attitudes showing madness's tendency to break ideologies. Therefore, madness for Coddon – applying the Elizabethan model of madman to the play – is political. Both Hamlet's and Essex's madness is the result of political transgression that puts the sovereign in danger. The worry about Hamlet's madness is expressed by Claudius when he utters that "Madness in great ones must not unwatched go" (*HAMLET,* III.1.183). The king is aware that that madness – the combination of madness and ambition – may lead Hamlet to take a treacherous attitude in a similar way that madness led the Earl of Essex to rebel against his queen. According to Coddon, what is wrong with Hamlet is not madness itself, but the insidious method in it. Furthermore, "madness" as speech is also a threat pointed out by Coddon. According to him, it may arouse social and political disorder against authority. He says that obedience and moderation, which are metonymic markers for order, "are undermined throughout the play by the dangerous if impenetrable subjectivity of the hero" (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 391).

To conclude this brief and selective survey on the critical history of *Hamlet*, I once more quote Susanne L. Wofford when she states in her book that any account of *Hamlet* criticism has to be radically selective due to the huge variety of approaches already used to read the play and its protagonist. Besides the unavoidable selection I had to make, I unfortunately left out some approaches – such as the deconstructive reading. Those texts require deeper knowledge about specific studying fields – such as psychology – of the readers in order to understand the points of view shown by them about *Hamlet*. However, all the interpretations and readings emerging throughout the centuries about *Hamlet* seem to testify to Kott's idea about the inexhaustible possibilities of approaching and reading the play (KOTT, 1974, p. 58-59). All that criticism about the play also testifies to Wofford's argument about features which define a classic: "the capacity to require reinterpretation and to be sufficient in its own complexity and subtlety to the changing ideas of different periods is one of the defining features of a classic" (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 181).

Coming back to the explanation of why I decided to work with Franco Zeffirelli's and Michael Almereyda's *Hamlets*, I have to confess that the decision of working with these two films can be divided – like the professional motive previously mentioned – into two reasons: a personal reason and a professional one. My personal reason is based on the ability those films have to reach any public – from an illiterate public up to a highbrow one – supplying entertainment to any spectator of late 20th and early 21st century. Regarding the professional field, the fact that one of the films was made by a Hollywood producer while the other takes Shakespeare to the screen in an independent production is important to see how each production dealt with aspects from the same play. Can we judge and say that one of them gets nearer Shakespeare's *Hamlet* than the other? Can Hollywoodian adaptations be as efficient and satisfying as cult or experimental adaptations? Most of all, what effect is produced on the reader/viewer's mind when the two films are analysed side by side? Do we come closer to the multiplicity of readings *Hamlet* lends itself to? I believe so.

The main objective of this research is to show that both Franco Zeffirelli's Hollywood and mainstream adaptation and Michael Almereyda's independent *Hamlet* can provide important and relevant reflections – as if they were critical material – upon Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and its protagonist. In this sense, they are entitled to take part in the large bulk of discussion and reflection produced on *Hamlet* throughout the centuries, not only by literary critics or Shakespeare scholars, but also by the mass media and performative arts. Moreover, one can always think of these films as useful tools for literature professors in the classroom.

Hamlet has been read by different approaches throughout the centuries. Among those several approaches, the performance perspective came out in the 20th century to treat the play or the film "not as material for interpretation, but as a work of art that has its own separate, powerful, and primary existence on the stage" (WOFFORD, 1994, p. 202) or on the screen. Jay Halio's book *Understanding Shakespeare's Plays in Performance* analyses the plays considering their performance, helping the theatergoer – and also the moviegoer, if Halio's comments are applied to films – to understand what spectators enjoy in the performances and why they do so. In addition, Halio provides a better understanding of the challenges involved in producing a play, and, therefore, a movie based on a Shakespearean text.

In order to develop the investigation about the contributions that the *corpus* brings to better understanding Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, I organized this dissertation in the following way: in the first chapter, I brought a historical account of the development of cinema in the 20th century. I also discussed the theory of adaptation through the works of important theorists such as film the critic André Bazin, and scholars Robert Stam and Linda Hutcheon. In chapter two, in order to analyse both films, I examined a selection of topics, presenting a comparative reading of the two productions. Inspired by the structure of Halio's chapters in his *Understanding Shakespeare's Plays in Performance*, I elected eight elements which I focused my analysis on: theme; protagonist; cast; Ophelia; setting and light design; soliloquies; cuts and additions; language/Shakespeare's text. The theoretical support to the analysis comes from the theorists presented in chapter one. Rather than judge the cinematographic quality of Zefirelli's and Almereyda's films, my intention is to think upon them as important materials to understand *Hamlet* better.

1 DISCUSSING THE NOTION OF ADAPTATION

"With adaptation we seem to desire the repetition as much as the change" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 9)

It is known that the practice of adapting stories was not born with the advent of cinema, although the cinema has popularized it and taken advantage of that practice for its development as art and for credibility – mainly adapting works from canonical authors. Actually, the practice of adapting stories has always been present in Western culture, and if one had to point out an author that could be considered one of the greatest adapters in the Western hemisphere, the name would be William Shakespeare.

The English dramatist used to take advantage of common plots and popular characters of his contemporary culture as well as of Ancient history to tell stories, in his peculiar way, in theatrical performances. According to Bill Bryson, in his *Shakespeare: the World as Stage*, the habit of borrowing plots from folk stories to retell them on stage was considered a common practice in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. Furthermore, Bryson states that the success of Shakespeare's plays lies in his creative role of adapting the old stories into new ones:

> His success was not, it must be said, without its shortcuts. Shakespeare did not scruple to steal plots, dialogues, names, and titles – whatever suited his purpose. To paraphrase George Bernard Shaw, Shakespeare was a wonderful teller of stories so long as someone else told them first. (BRYSON, 2005, p.99)

Considering that Shakespeare was an adapter, we assume that his productions have a source whose existence precedes the plays themselves. Except for plays such as *Love's Labour's Lost* (1593), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1594), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1597) and *The Tempest* (1611), whose plots are believed to be original, the other 35 plays Shakespeare wrote may have been based on previous sources.

Shakespeare died in 1616 and in the year of 1642, the public theaters were closed by the English legislation. Theaters were only able to reopen their doors eighteen years later, with the Restoration of the monarchy. The allegations justifying the prohibition imposed on dramatic art used to vary from the puritans' negative view, in which they considered theater as an evil entertainment, to the plague epidemics. During that period, the plays were not performed on stage, but they existed in printed text dedicated to a reading public. However,

King Charles II, who was fond of the dramatic arts, interested in forming theatrical companies to entertain the court and to make self propaganda of the monarchy, had a crucial role in turning the theaters' situation around, in 1660.

Whereas contemporary tales were some of the raw materials used by Shakespeare to adapt and write his plays in Elizabethan and Jacobean time, in the Restoration period, Shakespeare's plays were part of the material to be retold, readapted and reperformed on stage. In the second half of the 17th century, the Restoration drama brought back Shakespeare's plays to the stage adapting and adding to them characteristics of neoclassical drama. William Davenant, Nahum Tate, Thomas Otway and John Dryden, among other important dramatists, adapted Shakespearean plays and created their own *Macbeth* (1664), *The History* of *King Lear* (1681), *The History and The Fall of Caius Marius (Romeo and Juliet)* (1679) and *All For Love* (1678) [Dryden's adaptation for *Anthony and Cleopatra*] in a simpler language, doing away with ambiguity and allowing actresses to be part of the theatrical cast.

According to Barbara Murray's introduction to *Shakespeare Adaptation from the Restoration*, the performances of the plays counted on innovations which were part of the Restoration drama such as new scenic devices, a more objective language and the female presence on stage. Among the qualities unfolded by the dramatic art there were the scenic devices employed to explore the scenery to its highest effect in order to impress the public. The possibility of having women on stage changed the usual cross-dressing men who played female roles. According to Murray, the first actress on stage played Desdemona in 1660. Ambiguities and gaps present in the original plays had to be solved. Therefore, figurative language and doubt about possible events in the story had to be clearly solved to the public. As a consequence of it, Shakespeare was now and then criticized for his use of language, especially for his figurative expressions and images.

Cinema, at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, seemed to follow Restoration drama's path taking "Shakespeare as a point of departure" (MURRAY, 2001, p. xv), and literature in general for its productions. The theater stage gave room to the giant screens not only to retell Shakespeare, but also to show his work through images. The meeting between cinema and Shakespeare was relevant and convenient for both of them. The attempt to take literature, mainly William Shakespeare, to the screen aimed at bringing credibility to the new art which was rooted in its own popular characteristics. On the other hand, the popularity of cinema could make the plays widely known and put those who could not go to the theater, which by the beginning of the 20th century had already established itself

as an art restricted to a fancier group in society, in contact with Shakespearean stories, contributing to their popularity.

The first attempts of filming William Shakespeare's stories happened during the silent era of cinema, around 1899. At that time, the aim of showing the plays on screen was neither to praise Shakespeare's poetic language nor make money; incidentally, Shakespeare would never be a blockbuster in the future. Actually those short films aimed at propagating and awakening people's interest in watching the theatrical performances. In other words, cinema in its very beginning worked as advertising for the theater without any intention of being seen or considered as art. According to Liana de Camargo Leão in her text "Shakespeare no Cinema", the very first film based on a Shakespearean play was *King John*, featuring sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree (1853-1917), considered one of the best actors at that moment. The death of the king on screen had the purpose of advertising the play that was being performed at Her Majesty's Theater in London. *King John* was not the only film made in the silent period; in fact, it is believed that there are around 400 to 500 films based on Shakespearean plays made during that time. Those films are considered "filmed theater" and they used to share among themselves similar characteristics such as short length, a fixed camera placed in front of the performance and the absence of speech. The filmed theater also brought innovations, such as showing scenes that did not use to happen on the stage and showing parts of the plays that were restricted to narration at the theater.

The presentation of those silent films counted on sound resources such as live music, with an orchestra – or a piano player – or a specialist on the author's literary work, commenting on the most important scenes. It is also important to mention that although the actors' speeches could not be heard at that time, performers used to speak their speeches during the scenes, so that lip reading could also be done and would help with the meaning of the scene. In addition, captions, explanatory boxes, were used as one more resource for the public's understanding. Captions could also work as a bridge from one scene to another explaining what was not shown, and providing information on what was considered important for the understanding of the following scene.

It was still in the silent era that the first long-motion picture showed up on the screen. *Hamlet* (1920) had been considered the first feature film – based on a Shakespearean play – before the discovery of the lost *Richard III* (1912). The prince of Denmark was performed by a female actress, Asta Nilsen (1881-1972), who was widely acclaimed by her subtle and restrained gestures when performing Gertrude's son.

In the third decade of the 20th century, the talkies, films with speech, took over the screen and pointed to a new challenge to cinema: to deal with "canonical" texts. In terms of William Shakespeare, the challenge seemed to be even harder due to the sophisticated poetry in his dramatic texts. Actually, dealing with the Shakespearean text, which was written for performance in a kind of theater that demanded so much from language to create images and atmospheres, still seems to be a controversial issue nowadays when adaptation of Shakespeare to cinema is at stake. Irving Thalberg brought to the screen the story of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1936. Considering the specificities of the dramatic text, Thalberg hired Professor William Struck as a textual consultant in order to assist him with the play script. Thalberg's enterprise unchained the same practice by the following adapters who proved to be concerned with how to deal with a text which was originally written to be performed on the Elizabethan and Jacobean stages.

The "talkies" were able to change the minds of those who thought that Shakespeare's theater could never be well adapted to cinema. Laurence Olivier, who was a man of the theater, did not believe that the new art would cope with Shakespearean plays. After convincing himself of the opposite, Olivier initiated his list of Shakespearean adaptations not only to the cinema but also to television, thus consolidating his name and his films as the classic example of Shakespearean cinema.

According to Russell Jackson in his introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film*, "Shakespeare, Films and the Marketplace", from the 1960s on the films were responsible for establishing Shakespeare in the context of popular international cinema. Adaptations like *The Taming of the Shrew* (1966) and *Romeo and Juliet* (1968) by Franco Zeffirelli, Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V* (1989), Baz Lurhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996) among some other adaptations and offshoots – films which do not claim to be adaptations but were based on Shakespearean plays – exemplified that "new wave of confidence in the Shakespearean project" (JACKSON, 2000, p. 04), mentioned by Jackson in his text.

The practice of adapting stories crossed centuries and reached the 20th century spreading over to other media – film, opera, ballet, videogame, etc. The young cinematographic art was born one century ago and became one of the most popular performing media nowadays, achieving a similar status to the one attributed to theater in the 16th and 17th centuries in England. In cinema, one of the storytelling possibilities occurs through the phenomenon of adaptation of literature to film. Regarding the importance of film adaptation, the desire of watching it and the prejudice it has gone through in history, this chapter presents three main theorists, André Bazin, Robert Stam and Linda Hutcheon, who

reflect upon adaptation in an attempt of searching for flexibility in the thinking on what concerns the act of adapting and the result of it, the adaptation itself.

1.1 Adaptation studies: André Bazin, Robert Stam and Linda Hutcheon

Before presenting Robert Stam's and Linda Hutcheon's theories about adaptation, written in the first decade of the 21st century, it is relevant to point out to André Bazin's reflection about the topic in the first half of the 20th century. When Bazin started thinking about adaptation from literature to cinema, the young cinematographic art was 60 years old. Bazin was a French critic and theorist who believed that a movie should contain the director's personal point of view. Although some of his ideas may be considered old-fashioned nowadays, mainly after the emergence of the poststructuralist view in the 1970s, Bazin's reflections definitely contributed and still contribute to adaptation studies.

Bazin's text "Por um cinema impuro" sounds like a manifesto, starting from its title, in favor of adaptation. What Bazin means by "impure cinema" is the movie originated from a previous literary source. In other words, Bazin is not talking about original screenplays written to be filmed, but adaptations. The text was written in the early 1950s and it introduces important ideas, such as the difficulty in adapting from theater to cinema. It also points out the youth of the cinematographic art as a reason for prejudice against it and the assumption that there is a "spirit of the work" which the adapter must be faithful to. Bazin exemplifies his argument pointing out to *Madame Bovary* by Jean Renoir as an example of a movie which is more faithful to the "spirit of the work" than to the novel's literary text:

> É o caso de *Madame Bovary*, de Jean Renoir, ou de *Une partie de campagne*. É verdade que esses dois exemplos não são muito bons, não por causa da qualidade dos filmes, mas precisamente porque Renoir é muito mais fiel ao espírito do que ao texto da obra. O que nos toca nela é que seja paradoxalmente compatível com uma independência soberana. E isso porque Renoir tem a justificativa de uma genialidade certamente tão grande quanto à de Flaubert e de Maupassant" (BAZIN, 1991, p. 94)[1].

André Bazin considers that the supposed similarity between theater and cinema may mislead those who try to adapt a play to the screen. It is clear that the theater is a spectacle. However, that characteristic is not enough to assume that by filming the theater the result will be cinema. Bazin emphasizes the experience of filming the theater with a fixed camera and concludes that such attempt does not constitute cinema, but "filmed theater". Considering the practice of adapting from literature to film, which is part of cinema history since its very

[1] The quotations from André Bazin's texts will be all presented in the Portuguese translation.

beginning, Bazin wonders about the capacity of cinema of walking on its own feet without the necessity of the support of other arts. The critic concludes that an adaptation is an ordinary phenomenon which all art forms have to go through along their development.

Among important considerations André Bazin makes concerning adaptation, his belief that an adapter must be faithful to the "spirit of the work" that is being adapted is perhaps one of the most relevant in what concerns Bazin's ideas in this section. In the mid 20th century, Bazin was reflecting upon the relationship the literary work would establish with its movie adaptation assuming that every literary work takes in itself a "spirit" which characterizes and forms its identity. In order to understand Bazin's ideas regarding the faithfulness to the "spirit" of the work, it is important to understand to what extent Bazin considers faithfulness a positive characteristic in an adaptation. According to the French critic, the adapter must be faithful to the "spirit of the work", not to its text. Bazin is completely aware of the differences and demands each medium requires. To him it is a mistake to keep a film adaptation stuck to "aesthetic laws" which do not belong to cinema. When a novel or mainly a play is adapted, the laws in force are those of cinema, which is the medium the text is being transposed to, not those of literature or drama. The insistence in keeping, for example, theatrical rules in the process of adapting a play to cinema implies the failure of the filmic adaptation.

According to Bazin, probably, the fidelity to the text may be pointed out as one of the main reasons why adaptations of canonical works are usually unsuccessful. Bazin says that the pressure cultural values make upon those who are dealing with a text seen as untouchable and almost sacred by its canonicity may be responsible for the failure of adaptations inspired in canonical works. The theorist concludes that the adapter does not have to deny the text completely. However, it is the hardest part of his job to find a balance between "spirit" and text in order to create a successful adaptation.

In the text "Teatro e Cinema", Bazin points out an important notion regarding theater and cinema: "Só há teatro do homem, mas o drama cinematográfico pode dispensar atores" (BAZIN, 1991, p. 145). Bazin believes that it is possible to have dramatic action by filming the space and its components such as a door banging, a leave flying in the wind and the waves moving towards the shore. Therefore, the dramatic action does not come from man – the actor – the same way it happens with the theater. Cinema, according to Bazin, does not need the actor for the dramatic action to exist in the same way theater does; that is a requirement to the stage not of the screen.

Unlike Bazin, Robert Stam – a North-American scholar – belongs to the field of comparative literature, dedicating part of his studies to adaptations from literature to cinema.

From Bazin's concepts and attempts of theorizing adaptation up to Stam's reflections, lies approximately a fifty-year gap which was enough to reshape and reframe the studies concerning adaptation.

Instead of dealing with adaptation from literary works in general, Stam restricts his research to theorizing the adaptation from novel to film. In Stam's introduction "The Theory and Practice of Adaptation" to the book *Literature and Film,* the critic is very interested in trying to break up with hierarchies and ordinary assumptions such as that literature is better than cinema or that cinematographic adaptation is an opportunistic product which vampirizes the vitality of literature, among several others. Robert Stam questions all those myths by introducing them to us and showing that they are based on cultural, religious and class prejudices which contribute to intensify a negative view of adaptation in relation to its literary source text. Stam points out eight arguments which, according to him, may be considered sources of the hostility suffered by cinema in relation to literature's status in different cultures around the world.

The first source of hostility pointed out by Robert Stam is an "*a priori* valorization of historical anteriority and seniority" (STAM, 2007, p. 4) of literature in relation to cinema. According to Stam, the belief that some arts, such as literature, are better than younger ones, such as cinema, contributes to the thought that adaptations are inferior to their previous literary text. The prejudice based on the seniority of arts is extended to the adaptations of novels. In other words, not only literature precedes the cinema, but also the novel – whose birth dates from the 18th century – precedes the film. Even though Stam is not focusing his attention on the transposition from theater to film, the seniority pointed by him could also be applied to Shakespeare's art, which is a lot older than the novel itself. This would also contribute to explain why the adaptations of his plays to cinema are usually heavily judged as "deformations" or "betrayals" in relation to their previous theatrical texts.

The second source of hostility presented by Stam reveals, as he puts it, "a dichotomous thinking" (STAM, 2007, p. 4) that implies a rivalry between film and literature. Stam declares that it is believed that there are two opposing sides in the war between literature and cinema. On one side, literature works hard to prove its superiority over cinema. On the other side, we can see cinema, which, along with its adaptations intends to show that the pictorial art tends to beat linguistic signs. Actually, instead of being portrayed on opposing sides, they should have been placed in order to spotlight the benefits literature and film could bring to one another.

Iconophobia is the third item which, according to Stam, contributes to the prejudice against cinema. Stam suggests that the aversion to images may derive from, among others, the

Judaic-Muslin-Protestant prohibition of “graven images”, the idols, being reinforced by “Platonic and new platonic depreciation of the world of phenomenal appearance” (STAM, 2007, p.5). The prohibition related to images comes from the second commandment forbidding any attempt to make idols. The platonic and new platonic views were based on Plato’s writings narrating Socrates’s ideas, in *The Republic*, condemning the making of images which reflects through an imperfect and illusory way the “world of ideas” where everything, according to Socrates, is considered perfect. Therefore, any attempts to physically represent Socrates’s world of ideas would be doomed to failure. Furthermore, Stam states that the condemnation of the fictive arts, such as the theater, due to their power of awakening lower passions in those who watch or are in contact with them, may be located somehow in our cultural heritance. Stam provides examples of prejudice in Western culture based on iconophobia principles. Baudelaire’s concerns about photography’s corrupting influence on the arts in the 19th century and Frederic Jameson’s view of cinema as “essentially pornographic” – in the 1970s – for making the spectator experience the world as if it was a naked body, showed that in the 19th century and even in the 20th the visual arts still had to face iconophobia.

The valorization and the necessity of written words taken as truth is extremely recurrent mainly in cultures deeply rooted in religious values and whose principles are established in a religious text. *Maktub*, for instance, means “it is written” or “it is written in the stars” in Arabian culture. That Arabian word means more than a simple way of expressing how an Islamic believer resigns himself to Allah’s will, it also shows one culture among several others in which the importance of the written word has a key role to its followers. According to Stam, logophilia, that common valorization of written words among those cultures, adds much to despising media of communication that do not have words as their basis.

Robert Stam elects anti-corporeality as the fifth source of hostility against cinema. According to Stam, the “embodiedness” of the filmic text through “its inescapable materiality, its incarnated, fleshly, enacted characters, its real locales and palpable props […] (STAM, 2007, p. 6) causes rejection in those who seek for the pleasure of – by imagination – picturing and creating in the mind the elements that cinema presents already created on screen. Another important aspect mentioned by Stam regarding the corporeality of cinema is the fact that its appeal is through vision and sound which will arouse other physical sensations, such as passion, compassion and fear, that the readers of a novel would not experience in the same proportion. The filmic mimesis works with cinematographic language, which employs

devices such as close ups, “flicker effects” and camera movements to reach its purpose, to make the spectator to be part of the world he/she is watching.

The myth of facility, as Stam names it, is also suggested by the critic as a point which adds to the prejudice regarding filmic adaptations. Stam declares that the myth of facility may be seen from two perspectives: one related to the adapter, the other to the spectator. When filmic adaptations are at stake in several non academic discussions it is a cliché to consider a film as something easier to produce than a book. For a large number of people, cinema is easy to do because, as Stam puts it, the director has just to film what is already there. The director’s reading of the previous text and the process of creation using cinematographic language and resources which would engender meaning seem to be lost in that superficial view of that art. Then, what is left to cinema is the fun status. Intensifying that argument, the spectator’s role is reduced to a passive activity destitute of any effort of understanding, as opposed the one required by literature, for instance.

Stam also mentions the possibility of cinema being a victim of class prejudice regarding its popular origin. The first cinematographic manifestations were exhibited in fairs and several other “vulgar” spectacles such as sideshows and carnivals. Although its origin is rooted in popular shows, that popularity of the beginning of cinema and still maintained throughout the years has been important to make literary stories known by a larger number of people in society. Moreover, it is ironic to measure cinema as an inferior art due to its origin without recognizing that theater shares a similar origin with movies. In England, for instance, theater had to find its place outside the city walls, neighboring with taverns, brothels and all sorts of activities which were considered to be at the margin of society in the 16th century. After the intensified sponsorship by the Stuart dynasty and the revival of theaters during the Restoration period, theater reached its status of high art. Therefore, the class prejudice that lies behind the popular origin of cinema, according to Stam, is another ingredient fostering the notion of its “inferiority” to literature. However, cinema may have been walking along the same path of development and artistic elevation theater had gone through once.

The last source of hostility pointed out by Stam is the charge of parasitism attributed to the adaptation as if it stole the vitality of the source text. It is very usual to hear from those who have just watched an adaptation, and who know the source text, that the film was not able to catch the life the readers found in the book. It frequently seems to spectators and also to the press that films do not have the same vigor, force or vitality present in the novel.

In his analysis, Robert Stam’s main objective is to subvert the hierarchical view which places cinema in an inferior position to literature. After pointing out the main sources of

prejudice suffered by the cinematographic art, the scholar resorts to structuralist and poststructuralist studies in order to accomplish his objective and ends up by deconstructing the prejudice built up against cinema and, to be more precise, against adaptation itself.

Stam's support comes from the studies developed in the 1960s and 1970 by structuralist semiotics considering "all signifying practice as shared sign systems productive of 'texts' worthy of the same careful scrutiny as literary texts, thus abolishing the hierarchy between novel and films" (STAM, 2007, p. 8). The studies about intertextuality developed by Julia Kristeva, Gerard Genette and Roland Barthes, from the 1960s on, provoked an enormous impact and definitely reshaped adaptation studies in the late '80s and '90s and have been leading that study field up to the present day. Kristeva's contribution comes from her intertextuality theory rooted in Bakhtinian dialogism. Genette's contribution lies in his studies about transtextuality focusing on continuous textual exchange, suggesting that every text always establishes a dialogue with a previous one. Barthes's studies added to adaptation studies the discussion of the concept of what is considered original and copy. Barthes's reflections contributed to see adaptation as a "reading" or a critique of the original. Robert Stam also mentions Jacques Derrida's deconstruction contribution in breaking up with the hierarchy between "original" and "copy" and stating that the highest honor that could be paid to the original is the existence of the copy. Furthermore, Stam points out Derrida's objection to the term "original". According to Derrida, any creation that labels itself "original" is partially copied of a previous something (STAM, 2007, p. 8).

Stam could also count on the studies of Mikhail Bakhtin and Michel Foucault. Bakhtinian notions, such as the proto-poststructuralist argument developing the idea of "the author as the orchestrator of pre-existing discourses", and Foucault's "pervasive anonymity of discourse" gave room, according to Stam, to a freer and non-originary approach of the arts. Also, Bakhtin's concept that every artistic utterance is built from the artist's own words along with other artists', constituting a hybrid construction, helped to see adaptation "as an orchestration of discourses, talents and tracks, a 'hybrid' construction mingling different media and discourses and collaboration" (STAM, 2007, p. 9).

The contribution of poststructuralist thinkers regarding the text and its dialogue and co-existence with other texts changed the way of seeing what a text is and the notion of "original". Therefore, if we consider a filmic adaptation as a signifying sign system as any other text is, we may distance ourselves from the burden of fidelity, which, not long ago, was the main argument to judge, and in most cases, if not in all of them, condemn an adaptation of

a literary text. For a few decades now, adaptation has tended to be studied as an intertextual exercise which may bring along a reading, a critique or homage to its source text.

It is from the field of intertextual studies that Linda Hutcheon also departs to theorize adaptation. Hutcheon is a Canadian academic who dedicates her studies to literary theory, literary criticism and Canadian studies. Unlike Robert Stam, who restricted his research to analyzing the adaptations from novel to film, Hutcheon opens up her umbrella of possibilities by studying the notion of adaptation in its broadest scope, no matter what media are involved: film, ballet, video games or opera.

Hutcheon's theory of adaptation brings up important notions which contribute to the understanding of the adaptation phenomenon. Hutcheon assumes that her focus is the "adaptation as adaptation". When an adaptation is acknowledged as an adaptation, the product – a film, a game, an opera or any other – establishes a relationship with its prior work or works. In fact, the adaptation is persecuted by its source text, making those who experience it go through a palimpsestuous experience.

Adaptation, for Hutcheon, does not mean copy, much less demands any obligation to fidelity. Hutcheon defines adaptation as "repetition with variation" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 4), a (re)telling of the known story surprising the spectator. It is important to point out that storytelling is the notion that pervades the whole of Hutcheon's theory. Adapters tell existing stories in their own way – transposing them to different media, highlighting and selecting points to be shown and hidden. According to Hutcheon,

> All these adapters relate stories in their different way. They use the same tools that storytellers have always used: they actualize or concretize ideas; they make simplifying selections, but also amplify and extrapolate; they make analogies; they critique or show their respect, and so on. But the stories they relate are taken from elsewhere, not invented anew (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 3).

Unlike Robert Stam, who attributes the prejudice against cinematographic adaptation to eight sources of hostility, Hutcheon, despite acknowledging and quoting some of Stam's arguments, states that part of the hostility suffered by adaptations may come from the Romantics. The theorist suggests that the value attributed by the Romantics to the original creation and their search for creative genius contributed somehow as one more "source of denigration of adapters and adaptations" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 4).

Several theorists have dedicated themselves to trying to define what an adaptation is. However, the difficulty that the meaning of the word involves made those attempts hardly

ever reach a consensus. Linda Hutcheon is aware of the complexity of the concept of adaptation and attributes its intricacy to the double view the word expresses. According to Hutcheon, the whole complexity comes from the possibility of using a word that defines at the same time the product – a film, a play, a videogame, etc – and the process of adapting. Hutcheon suggests, then, seeing the word adaptation as a product *and* a process.

According to Huctheon, if adaptation is defined as a product, it is possible to provide a formal definition to it, and Hutcheon makes two analogies: the theorist compares adaptation to translation and to paraphrasis. When she compares adaptation to translation, Hutcheon sees adaptation as a text originated from another text. Furthermore, an adaptation would never be a literal transposition of its source text, or as Hutcheon puts it: "Just as there is no such thing as a literal translation, there can be no literal adaptation" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 16). Therefore, it would also be impossible to have two identical adaptations. Each transposition, even if it derives from the same prior text, would have its own specificities and readings of the same text, exposing its gains and losses. Actually, transposition within the same medium or between different media unavoidably implies changes. When Hutcheon compares an adaptation to a paraphrasis, she also means the production of a text from a prior one which, as an adaptation, tells the same story but not word by word. By defining paraphrasis in comparison to translation, Hutcheon quotes John Dryden's words when he states that each paraphrasis is a "translation with latitude, where the author is kept in view…, but his words are not so strictly followed as his sense; and that too is admitted to be amplified" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 17). In other words, the meaning is kept even though it is not told in the same verbal system.

Looking at adaptation through the process perspective means focusing on how it is developed. Hutcheon says that "what is involved in adapting can be a process of appropriation, of taking possession of another's story, and filtering it, in a sense, through one's own sensibility, interests and talents" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 18). Following the path Hutcheon describes, adapters would be, according to her, first *interpreters*, who would add to their adaptations their point of view of the source text, and then creators.

Approaching adaptation as a process implies placing the adapters' role in a key position. The adapter who appropriates the story which would be adapted and created out of it is, according to Porter H. Abbot, realizing a "surgical art" (*apud* HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 19) in which he is in charge of framing, subtracting or contracting, in order to fit the requirements of the new medium. Hutcheon points as an example the short stories which demand to be filled in with more detail, such as *The Company of Wolves* by Angela Carter, when they are

transposed to the screen. To transpose a literary work, or any other kind of text to another medium, changes and creation make their existence unavoidable and necessary.

Unlike Bazin, who points out the fidelity to the "spirit" of the source text as the recipe to a successful adaptation, Hutcheon would declare the belief in a "spirit" or "essence" highly subjective to define important elements in an adaptation. Hutcheon spotlights creativity and intertextuality as the main elements which would determine the success of an adaptation. Lack of creativity would be a fundamental characteristic which contributes to the failure of an adaptation. Failure would not lie on infidelity, as several critics insist on stating, but on nothing new to show or to cause surprise to spectators.

Hutcheon also acknowledges that an adaptation to be defined as such depends on reception, that is, on the recognition by readers or viewers of the dialogue established with a prior text or texts. According to Hutcheon, when that familiarity is established between the adaptation and its source text, the spectator experiences a "palimpsestuous intertextuality" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 21). Hutcheon appropriates the image of a palimpsest in order to describe the intertextual relationship between the adapted work and its source text. Before going into detail about the process of reception theorized by Hutcheon, it is important to understand how the image of a palimpsest may apply as an important analogy to Hutcheon's theory of adaptation. The word "palimpsest" comes from the Greek meaning *palin* ("again") and *psao* ("I scrape")[2]. A palimpsest is a previously manuscripted page which was used for writing new texts. In the Middle Ages, the practice of erasing those texts on the scroll in order to write new ones on it was very usual. Although a new text used to be written over the previous one, it was still possible to notice the signs of the previous text shadowing the newer one. Bearing in mind the analogy of the palimpsest, Hutcheon believes that when a spectator experiences an adaptation he/she experiences that reception coming from a text which has a double nature. On the other hand, it will only be possible to experience the palimpsestuous intertextuality if the spectator is aware of the text that inspired or originated the new one he/she is being introduced to. To quote Hutcheon's words: "we experience adaptation [as adaptation] as palimpsests through our memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 8).

Hutcheon is not the first theorist to consider reception as an important point in understanding adaptation as a process. As mentioned before, André Bazin had already considered reception as a key point to establish the film as an adaptation, even though he was

[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palimpsest, accessed on August 4th, 2011.

not familiar with intertextual studies. Obviously, even if a spectator does not recognize the presence of other texts echoing through the new one, the film would keep on being considered an adaptation. However, this classification would restrict the movie or anything else that results from adapting to being seen as a product, according to Hutcheon's theory. To see adaptation as a process it is important to recognize a continuous dialogue with the previous source.

In her book, Linda Hutcheon goes on investigating adaptation as process by entitling her following chapters as "What? [forms]", "Who? Why? [Adapters]", "How [audience]" and "Where? When? [Contexts]". Hutcheon's second chapter is dedicated to discussing the forms and the possibilities of change brought during the process of adaptation when it implies a change of form: from telling to showing, from showing to showing and from telling and showing to interacting. According to Huctheon, most of what is considered adaptation happens from the telling to showing mode, it usually happens from the print text to the performance. Focusing on the specificities present in these modes, Hutcheon says that any live performance of a print text – at this moment she is referring to the live performance of a play – is also considered an adaptation because it requires choices made by directors and actors. The aura created by the sound track, for instance, denounces the stories read by the adapter.

The importance of the condensation of the text as an unavoidable consequence in the process of adapting is also pointed out by Hutcheon. In a movie, for instance, the text has to be shortened in order to fit two hours, as pointed out by Russell Jackson about mainstream films[3], and also to avoid semantic overload – it is important to bear in mind that films are "multitrack" objects, as Stam names them: they are composed of images, music, text, editing, acting etc (STAM, 2007, p. 21-22).

In the "from showing to showing mode" of adaptation, Hutcheon reflects upon the specificities involved in the process of adapting from one live performance to another live performance. In this category is possible to find adaptations from movies to stage musicals.

The third mode of engagement pointed out by Hutcheon is "from telling and showing to interacting". In this section, Hutcheon is reflecting upon the transposition from printed text or live performance to videogame. The theorist states that the heterocosm created in the game is the most important challenge for the adapter because the main aim is to make the player

[3] JACKSON, Russell. "From play-script to screenplay". In _____ (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 15 – 34.

feel part of the game. Huctheon also calls the readers' attention to the fact that a game presents its own logic. Furthermore, it presents fewer gaps to be filled by the player, if compared to the film or the text.

Besides the modes of engagements, Hutcheon also includes the clichés which express prejudice concerning adaptation. The clichés are listed in the box below:

Cliché #1	Only the telling mode (especially from prose fiction) has the flexibility to render both intimacy and distance in point of view.
Cliché #2	Interiority is the terrain of the telling mode; exteriority is best handled by showing and especially by interactive modes.
Cliché #3	The showing and interacting modes have only one tense: the present; the mode of telling alone can show relations among past, present and future.
Cliché #4	Only telling (in language) can do justice to such elements as ambiguity, irony, symbols, metaphors, silences, and absences; these remain "untranslatable" in the showing or interacting modes.

Chart 1 - Linda Hutcheon's list of clichés which express prejudice against adaptation. Source: HUTCHEON, Linda. *A Theory of Adaptation*. London: Routledge, 2006.

Hutcheon's third chapter is divided into two categories: "who?" and "why?". The first part of the chapter is dedicated to a reflection on who adapts. Hutcheon states that an adaptation is a collective process: "Obviously, the move to a performance or a interactive mode entails a shift from solo model of creation to a collaborative one" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 80). Hutcheon adds to the list of the collaborative adapters professional such as the composer, the actors and the editors. However, she says that those professionals work from the screenplay already written by the director, who she considers the main adapter who is not subordinated to anyone and who goes to the source text to create.

Hutcheon opens her section "why?" questioning why people want to adapt or work as adapters if they are aware of how adapters and their creations are misjudged. For Hutcheon, there are several motives that would make professionals to work as adapters, such as economic lures, cultural capital and personal and political motives. An adaptation of a previous famous work may be quite profitable for those who adapt it. Paying tribute to an author may also be taken into consideration as a reason to adapt it as well as the possibility it offers to express political matters.

Hutcheon's "How?" shows the motives that lead the audience to experience an adaptation. Considering adaptations to the screen, the theorist states that to follow the

narrative and to find innovations may be considered the first motive. If the adaptation to videogame is the focus of analysis, then the plot would not be the main focus of the audience, but the special effects. But the pleasure of playing the game would be redirected according to the age of the player and the gender. For example, young women would rather play games that "overlap somewhat with their own lives and their personal issues with parents and siblings and with being accepted at school" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 115). Boys would choose to play superhero and violent games. Futhermore, Hutcheon also reinforces the idea that one of the main pleasures in watching an adaptation is to try a palimpsest experience which enriches and expands the the audience's interpretative skill. On the other hand, the theorist also says that that pleasure is considered "elitist", for it demands a deeper knowledge from the spectator.

In the "Knowing" and "Unknowing" topic, Hutcheon talks about the audience acquainted with the source text and the audience who is not familiar to what is being shown. By calling people as "Knowing" she means that "they are savvy and smart, as well as knowledgeable" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 120) and they are viewers who have expectations and demands. Hutcheon calls "Unknowing" viewers who experience the adaptation but are not familiarized with the source text. Therefore, when experiencing an adaptation, the "unknowing" audience takes that experience as if they were watching any other film.

In her last chapter, Hutcheon discusses how the context in which the adaptation is created and the context of reception can bring changes to it. According to her, an adaptation is always framed in a context of time, place, society and culture. The adaptation usually has a theme – which is kept by the adapter – and the changes may come according to the demands of forms [What?], the individual adapter [Who?], the particular audience [How?] and the context of reception and creation [Where? When?]. Hutcheon calls the readers' attention to the fact that the context is vast and involves the materiality in the adaptation's medium – such as the kind of print in the book and the TV screen –, elements of representation and reception – such as the advertisement or the reviews that the adaptation gets –, and the time the adaptation was created – which can change "the context even within the same place and culture" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 144).

The final question of this chapter could not be different: in what sense do the theory of adaptation and its theorists contribute to the position the audience should have towards adaptations? I would say that all the theorists of adaptation help people to look at and

understand the process of adaption and its product with different eyes. The theory makes us reflect better upon the adaptation, helping us get rid of the prejudices that surround it and its practice.

Each of the authors brought important contributions to the understanding of adaptation. Bazin, in his manifesto for adaptation entitled “Por um cinema impuro”, from the early 1950s – one of the first theorists to reflect upon the phenomenon of adaptation – presents relevant notions, such as the false idea of “easiness” in adaptation from stage to screen. Showing the sources of hostility suffered by the adaptation, Stam makes the reader reflect upon the prejudice that may exist even unconsciously in the audience. His return to the post-structuralist theories of the 1960s to support his theory contributes to rethinking the term “original” and also to taking from the adaptation the burden of fidelity, to cover it with the pleasurable and lighter mantle of intertextuality. Linda Hutcheon – and her wide umbrella of adaptation to different media – opens up the reader’s mind, making him/her see that the practice of adaptation is not restricted to the stage or to screen, but also to ballet, opera, videogames, etc. Hutcheon seems to be the theorist who better makes the reader see the process of adaptation by investigating it in great detail and categorizing it – “What? [forms]”, “Who? Why? [adapters]”, “Where? When? [context]” – showing where the “variation” may occur during that process.

Another important aspect that the theory of adaptation brings is the possibility of seeing adaptations as a critical material about the source text. Adaptations can be seen as texts that approach the previous one and show their point of view, taking sides in the plot, making choices by repeating it and at the same time varying it, causing pleasure for those who experience them. The reading presented in the adaptation may even influence the way a character or the story is going to be read by the audience. Furthermore, adaptations suggest an alternative reading to their source texts highlighting some points and hiding others, exploring the possibilities that the literary work offers.

Therefore, when the audience goes to the cinema to watch an adaptation, the event must not be seen or faced as a bear baiting [a very usual entertainment in Shakespeare’s time] or a fight between literature and cinema in which the one that best tells the story would take the prize. What matters most is to experience the palimpsestuous intertextuality and feel the pleasure of identifying elements, to enjoy the changes that surround it and see how they contribute to the whole – if it is a “knowing” audience. If the audience is “unknowning”, they would experience the adaptation as any other work; those people may not even know that the film derives from a previous source. As Jay Halio states in *Understanding Shakespeare’s*

Plays in Performance, the audience must be open to at the same time seeing the same in order to experience the changes that will unfold in front of them.

But when it comes to adapting William Shakespeare's plays to the screen, what are the specific questions that should be posed? What are the challenges? Russell Jackson, in his "From Play-Script to Screenplay", helps us to figure out some of the main issues involved in transposing a Shakespearean play to the screen. Having in the background of our thoughts the theoretical reflections on adaptation developed by the authors presented above, we should now turn to the specificities of filming Shakespeare. Some of the challenges mentioned by Jackson are the challenge of reducing the number of words in order to keep the dialogues to a minimum so as to make the film fit in an ideal running time and avoid the overload of meaning – considering that the text to be transposed is Shakespearean poetry, which is highly visual. Jackson also points out the challenge of filming the soliloquies. Cinema has a different way of accessing and showing the characters' interiority, if compared to theater. Filming soliloquies means, according to Jackson, to deal with "another point of coincidence or collision between spoken word and the shown image in Shakespeare's film […]" (JACKSON, 2000, p. 25). The use of additional scenes written by the screenwriters to represent on the screen what is not represented in action is another challenge posed by Jackson to the adapter who transposes from the play-script to the screenplay one of Shakespeare's plays. These are just some of the challenges posed by Jackson. However, when we have a play on the one hand, and a film on the other, and we try to analyze the dialogue established between them, not only the challenges proposed by Jackson come out, but also several others. In the following chapter, I develop my analysis with the aim of showing what kind of dialogue Franco Zeffirelli's and Michael Almereyda's *Hamlets* establish with William Shakespeare's play and the specificities involved in their transpositions from stage to screen.

2 FRANCO ZEFFIRELLI'S AND MICHAEL ALMEREYDA'S *HAMLETS* ON THE SCREEN

2.1 Who are the adapters?

The decision of watching a Shakespearean adaptation – it does not matter whether or not the adaptation is to the stage or to the screen – is usually taken along with much expectation by the spectator. Questions such as "who will play the main roles?", "will the character utter those famous utterances?", "what will the setting be like?", "will the director and the cast match my expectations?" or "will I find my *Hamlet*?" are normal expectations mainly when the audience is familiar with the source text. The "unknowing" audience – those who Linda Hutcheon classifies as the viewers who are not acquainted with Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, but are aware of the importance that the name Shakespeare takes along – would get curious to watch the adaptation because it carries, in its title, the responsibility of being adapted from a Shakespearean text. The "unknowing" viewers who are neither acquainted with the Shakespearean text nor with the important place the acclaimed dramatist occupies in Western culture would experience the presentation without noticing that that play or film is an adaptation. Therefore, their experience would be of watching just one more performance, among several other theatrical or filmic productions (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 122). However, this does not mean that that play or film would not move them or talk to that audience.

"Knowing" viewers – those who look forward to finding *their* Shakespeare on screen or on stage –, usually experience an adaptation throwing at it their expectations. What does experiencing Shakespeare in the 20th and 21st centuries mean? Jay Halio, in his epilogue to the book *Understanding Shakespeare's Plays in Performance*, "The enjoyment of Shakespeare", states that the spectators who take a chance in experiencing Shakespeare nowadays should present open-mindedness as a basic requirement to accept new ways of showing Shakespeare:

> (…) To enjoy Shakespeare today we require an open mind and a receptive sensibility. Fixed ideas about how a play should be performed can be and usually are self-defeating. Inevitably they lead to disappointment and disapproval. This does not mean that when we enter the theater we must leave our critical intelligence behind. Not at all.
> (HALIO, 1988, p. 83)

Halio's position is clear and cannot be misunderstood. The author does not mean that any productions that claim to be Shakespearean adaptations are valid in terms of quality. According to him, there must be a co-existence of open-mindedness and a critical eye in order

to be receptive to the performances that will be presented and get what those performances add to our better understanding of the play.

Focusing on my main object, which is the two adaptations of *Hamlet* to the screen directed by Zeffirellli and Michael Almereyda I propose to carry out my analysis by highlighting important points, such as the theme, the protagonist, the soliloquies, the setting and light design, the language, the cast, the additions and cuts they both carry out. If being an open-minded and a critical viewer is important to approach a Shakespearean adaptation to the stage, it would also be mandatory to approach a Shakespearean adaptation to the screen due to the transposition to a different medium and the endless possibilities that the cinema may offer. Franco Zeffirelli's and Michael Almereyda's *Hamlets* seem to test the spectators' ability to exercise their open-mindedness and critical eyes. They may sometimes demand a break with the conservative and standard way of perceiving Shakespeare. In addition, these films suggest ways that contribute to the understanding of the play and talk more effectively with an audience acquainted with a more entertaining and commercial cinema, without failing to dialogue with essential questions raised in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. If, as seen above, every adaptation is a creative and interpretative piece of work [Hutcheon] and may function as a critique of its source text [Barthes], these two films offer plenty of interesting material for the *Hamlet* critic to think upon.

2.2 Franco Zeffirelli and Michael Almereyda

Gian Franco Zeffirelli was born in Florence, Italy. He was an illegitimate son of a mercer, Ottorino Corsi, with a dressmaker, Adelaide Garosi, who died when he was at the age of six. During his youth, Zeffirelli was in contact with a group of English actresses, so called "Scorpioni", which introduced young Zeffirelli to literature, theater and William Shakespeare. Although he was graduated by Accademia di Belle Arti Firenzze in 1941, he entered the University of Florence to study architecture. However, after watching a performance of *Henry V* in 1945, Zeffirelli changed his mind and decided to dedicate his life to theater. Zeffirelli's first contact with cinema came from his work with Luchino Visconti as an assistant director for the movie *La Terra Trema* in 1948.

Before being acknowledged as a great film director, Franco Zeffirelli dedicated his life to directing operas. In 1959, he directed *La Traviata*, five years later he directed and produced *Tosca* and created several productions such as *La Bohème* and *Turandot* for the Metropolitan Opera in New York. Zeffirelli's operas were very well known by their visual and exuberant

art which frequently seduces the audiences. His filmic production inherited the characteristics he explored in the plays and in the operas. According to Deborah Cartmell "Opera, for Zeffirelli is the complete form: it combines dance, drama, poetry, music and the visual art. His films of Shakespeare, similarly, unashamedly aim to appeal to all the senses". (CARTMELL, 2005, p. 212)

Actually, it was his films which were responsible for his fame and wide acknowledgement as a renowned director. Among his productions, it is possible to find three adaptations of Shakespearean plays: *The Taming of the Shrew* (1967), *Romeo and Juliet* (1968) and *Hamlet* (1990). Those three adaptations directed by Zeffirelli were enough to show to what extend the visual extravagance in Zeffirelli's adaptations is meant not only to involve the audience but also to produce meaning.

Zeffirelli's version of *The Taming of the Shrew* was his first film as a director. He cast to that adaptation Hollywood stars – Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton – to play the protagonists. The film was shot in 1966 and introduced the viewers to Zeffirelli's ability to unite Shakespeare and the Italian culture expressed in his movie settings. The movie was produced by Royal Films International and Columbia Pictures, presenting beautiful settings and rich clothing. However, it has been estimated that only 30 per cent of the original text remained in Zeffirelli's screenplay.[4] Furthermore, the movie got some negative reviews regarding both the brutality expressed by the male character Petruchio in trying to tame Catherina and the elimination of the subplot regarding Bianca and Lucentio.

In the following year, he made his second attempt of taking Shakespeare to the screen, adapting *Romeo and Juliet.* Once more, the "Italianization" of this film characterized a peculiar way of showing Shakespeare, classified by critics as "Shakespirelli"[5]. *Romeo and Juliet* had a great impact on the movie world. It reached popular status, becoming the main reference of an adaptation of the play to the screen. In addition, Zeffirelli was the first director who dared to use real teenage performers to play Romeo and Juliet. The director dared to put on screen a sixteen-year-old boy, Leonard Whiting, and a fifteen-year-old girl, Olivia Hussey, to fit the ages of those young protagonists. The result obtained by Zeffirelli was a positive criticism for reaching the young audience's empathy with the young couple. On the other hand, the young actor and actress were criticized for their inexperienced way of declaiming

[4] According to Russel Jackson in "From play-script to screenplay", for an "ideal" running time in the mainstream film industry an adaptation usually has no more than 25-30 percent of the original text in order to fit it into a two-hour movie. (JACKSON, 2005, p. 17).

[5] Deborah Cartmell says that the union of Shakespeare and the Italian Renaissance culture earned Franco Zeffirelli the nickname "Shakespirelli" (in: JACKSON, 1995, p. 212).

the verses. The film had an investment of 800 thousand dollars, making a 45-million- dollar profit. *Romeo and Juliet* definitely made Franco Zeffirelli famous and was responsible for his nomination for an Academy Award.

After directing *Romeo and Juliet*, Zeffirelli spent twenty-three years directing and adapting Shakespeare's plays to opera and theater before bringing them back to the screen. In 1990, Zeffirelli adapted *Hamlet*, which became his most controversial film based on a Shakespearean play. In *Hamlet*, the surprises regarding Zeffirelli's adaptation refer to the casting of Mel Gibson as Hamlet and his co-star Glenn Close as Gertrude. The controversy point goes beyond the casting, though. Zeffirelli also eliminated the presence of Fortinbras and thus reduced the political aspect of the play. His "italianisation" in *Hamlet* was something out of possibility, as the story is set in Denmark. On the other hand, his "Shakespirellianism" was displayed through the movie's visual exuberance and the attempt to simplify the Shakespearean text with the aim of reaching the masses.

Almereyda was born in Overland Park, Kansas, in 1960. During his childhood he showed much interest in artistic activities such as painting and drawing. His family's moving to Orange County, California, brought Almereyda into proximity to Los Angeles and to the whole movie culture that the city could offer. Although young Almereyda used to read several books on films and attended classes and lectures by great academic names from the cinema area such, as Howard Hawks and John Juston at community colleges, he decided to take art history at Harvard. Amereyda soon quit his university course, moved to New York and dedicated his life to screenwriting.

Starting his career as a Hollywood screenwriter, he also developed works as a producer and director, creating his own style of filming. Almereyda had few experiences in adapting literary texts to the screen. As an adapter and director, however, he joined a project based on Nathaniel Hawthorne's stories and dedicated himself to adapting William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* into a movie in the first year of the 21st century. Almereyda was also renowned for using the Fisher-Price PixelVision camera, mainly in his 1992-film *Another Girl, Another Planet*, which got a prize for "expanding the possibilities of experimental film".[6] That style of filming contributed to an abstract atmosphere and to a "dreamy shot of

[6] Available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Almereyda>. Accessed on 08th/11/2011.

faces and objects that drift in and out of sharpness".[7] It is not by chance that in his *Hamlet 2000* his protagonist keeps a similar camera to film objects and faces, in an attempt to see beyond the external image.

Both directors are responsible for controversial adaptations of *Hamlet*. Zeffirelli takes the English dramatist to the screen through a mainstream and commercial way of making films: linear narrative, classical editing and Hollywoodian protagonists. Almereyda, in his turn, creates a contemporary *Hamlet*, moving Denmark to New York City in the year 2000. In addition, they cast actors who are not experienced in playing Shakespeare – neither on the stage nor on screen – to play the Danish prince. Therefore, their films test the viewers' capacity of being exposed to new bets of adapting Shakespeare. The films also test the harshness of the critics in analyzing those adaptations. Liana de Camargo Leão, for example, when referring to positive and negative aspects of Franco Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, points out the casting of Mel Gibson as *Hamlet* as a problematic point: "Mas, nem as belas locações, a fotografia estupenda ou o elenco de atores experientes – Alan Bates, Paul Scofield, Iam Holm – conseguiram esconder os problemas dessa adaptação, a começar pela escolha de Mel Gibson como ator principal" (In: LEÃO; SANTOS, 2008, p. 287). According to Ace Pilkington, the purists, for instance, have criticized Zeffirelli's cultivation of scenic design – in reference to the Italian setting in *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Taming of the Shrew* – and the pruning of the Shakespearean text both in the films previously mentioned and in *Hamlet* (PILKINGTON, 1995, p. 165).

In Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet 2000* there are no actors or actresses that have a long experienced career in performing Shakespeare on stage. Except for Diane Verona [Gertrude], Julia Stiles [Ophelia], who were part of Shakespearean adaptations to the screen, such as *Romeo + Juliet* and *10 Things I Hate About You* [an adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*] and Liev Schreiber [Laertes], Ethan Hawke and his companions were known for their large experience in Hollywodian movies. In addition, the contemporary setting with a protagonist who is quite acquainted with technology and filming gadgets may have scared the more traditional audience, who looks for a Shakespeare held back in his 16th and 17th centuries.

Although both films present their controversial characteristics to critics and audience, I believe they raise important points and discussions, and establish an intense dialogue with the source play. Looking into the two productions side by side helps us also to testify to the

[7] Available at <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/2003/great-directors/almereyda/>. Accessed on 08th /11/2011.

creative aspect of adaptations. The same play yielded completely different films – and this is part of the richness not only of the play's text but of cinema.

2.3 Focusing on the theme: family drama and lonely youth saga

Jan Kott points out the variety of themes offered by the *Hamlet*. In his article "Hamlet of the Mid-Century", Kott raises important considerations about the play that I would like to expose here. Firstly, he mentions the importance Western society gives to the play, instigating a wide production of comments, critical texts and theories throughout the years. Then Kott mentions that *Hamlet* itself imposes choices to those who intend to adapt it either to theater or to cinema. According to him, the play was written by William Shakespeare to be performed in six hours. Therefore, if anyone intended to adapt the play nowadays, probably it would not last that long. A reduction of the length of time would be unavoidable to fit a three-hour play or movie. Therefore, selections and cuts would be necessary to make that adaptation possible. As a result, the text would always be a poorer *Hamlet* if compared to the original. In the critic's point of view,

> There are many subjects in *Hamlet*. There is politics, force opposed to morality; there is discussion of the divergence between theory and practice, of the ultimate purpose of life; there is tragedy of love, as well as family drama, political, eschatological and metaphysical problems are considered. There is everything you want, including deep psychological analysis, a bloody story, a duel, and general slaughter. One can select at will. But one must know what one selects, and why. (KOTT, 1974, p. 59)

To adapt *Hamlet* it is mandatory, according to Kott, to select and "perform one of several *Hamlets* potentially existing in this arch-play" (KOTT, 1974, p. 59).

The possibilities exposed by Jan Kott are evidenced when Franco Zeffirelli and Michael Almereyda adapt *Hamlet*: family drama and lonely youth saga. Cartmell calls the attention of the viewers to an analysis of Franco Zeffirelli's first scene, which gives a clue to the spectator of which perspective that play was read by: "An analysis of the opening of the three adaptations – *The Taming of the Shrew* (1966), *Romeo and Juliet* (1968) and *Hamlet* (1990) – will demonstrate the way in which Zeffirelli visually 'reads' the play" (in: JACKSON, 1995, p. 217). Indeed, the opening of his *Hamlet* is emblematic. Zeffirelli presents us the focus of his adaptation in the first five minutes of his movie. His opening scene introduces the crisis in Denmark, the mournful and claustrophobic atmosphere that surrounds the main characters. In addition, it seems to establish that a family drama is one of

the main points to be developed in the film's plot. The film opens with an outdoor shot in which soldiers and vassals are all in black in a kind of sullen mourning procession. The indoor setting is a dark royal mausoleum in the Royal Castle of Elsinore where old Hamlet is being buried. Gertrude, Polonius, Claudius and Hamlet are the main characters in the scene.

Picture 1 - Old Hamlet's funeral at Elsinore Castle. Source: HAMLET. Screenplay by Franco Zeffirelli. Mel Gibson as Hamlet, Glenn Close as Gertrude. USA: Icon Production, 1990. 1 DVD (115 min).

The queen is the first one to be filmed in close up when she approaches the coffin; the camera then shifts to Claudius, to Gertrude again, then to Old Hamlet's corpse.

Claudius

Gertrude *Old Hamlet*

Picture 2 - A sequence to show the possible link between Claudius and Gertrude. Source: HAMLET. Screenplay by Franco Zeffirelli. Mel Gibson as Hamlet, Glenn Close as Gertrude. USA: Icon Production, 1990. 1 DVD (115 min).

The shifts made by the camera form a triangle which suggests that those characters were interlinked and probably had an affair even before the old king's death. The queen seems to

be moved and cries. Next, Hamlet is for the first time filmed, while he sprinkles earth on his father's body. Although the burial scene is not part of the original text, Claudius's utterance is. Zeffirelli and his co-writer, Christopher DeVore, displace part of the speech from scene two act one to this opening scene. In the funeral, Claudius tells Hamlet:

> **Claudius:** Hamlet, think of us as of a father
> For let the world take note
> You are the most immediate to our throne,
> And with no less nobility of love
> Than that which dearest father bears his son,
> Do I impart toward you. (*HAMLET,* I.2.108-112)

That speech is part of Claudius's long utterance condemning Hamlet's constant mourning and assuring him that he will be the next in succession to the throne. In the opening scene, Claudius is shot in *contra-plongée*[8], suggesting his powerful position from the very beginning.

Zeffirelli's first scene does not only work as a tool to make the viewers aware of that family crisis, but also suggests some mystery around Claudius and Gertrude's relationship. If in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* it may be difficult to confirm that Gertrude and Claudius were lovers before Old Hamlet's death, although the ghost calls her "incestuous" and asks Hamlet to "leave her to heaven and to those thorns that in her bosom lodge to pick and stir her" (*HAMLET*, I.5.86 – 88), it is not that hard to notice that Zeffirelli's movie suggests that Claudius and Gertrude had an affair. Actually, in the burial scene the suspicion of a previous relationship seems to be in the air to the spectators from the very beginning. After bidding the old king goodbye and placing a flower on his dead body, Gertrude cries and desperately throws herself onto the king's corpse. At that moment, the queen and Claudius make eye contact suspiciously enough to provoke every spectator's imagination about a possible love relationship between them even before her husband's death.

[8] Marcel Martin in *A Linguagem Cinematográfica* defines the *contra-plongée* as a shooting angle that shoots the character from bottom to top in order to make the espectator see that character as superior, magnificent and triumphant. (MARTIN, 1990, p. 41)

Picture 3 - Gertrude and Claudius looking at each other. Source: HAMLET. Screenplay by Franco Zeffirelli. Mel Gibson as Hamlet, Glenn Close as Gertrude. USA: Icon Production, 1990. 1 DVD (115 min).

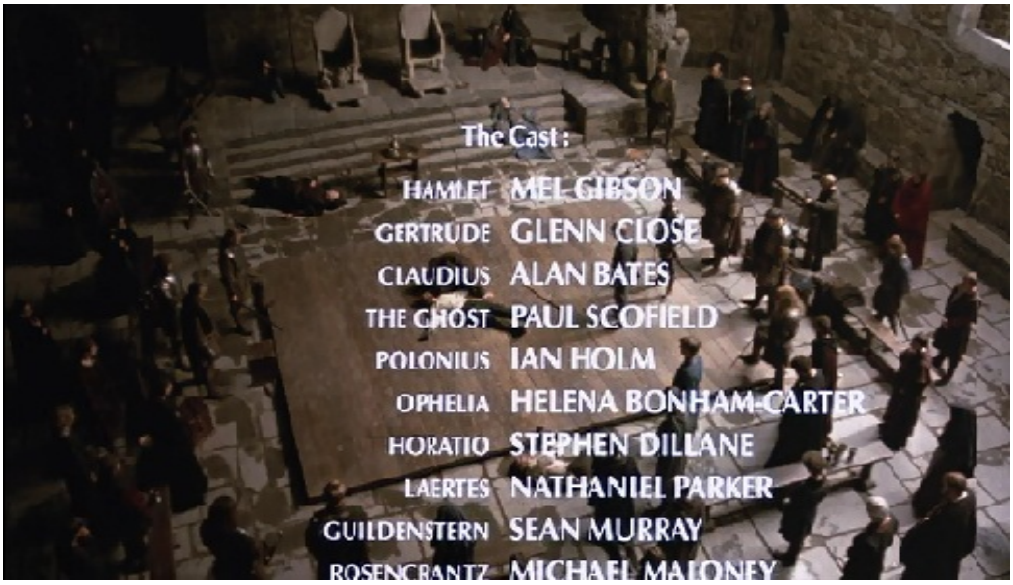
Considering that in Zeffirelli's adaptation they already kept a secret affair before, what would be the possibilities of their being together in conspiring and killing the king? In A. C. Bradley's opinion, expressed in one of his conferences about Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Gertrude was not Claudius's accomplice in Old Hamlet's murder. He considers her calm action at the play-within-the play's performance and her surprised reaction when Hamlet, in her chamber, mentions an action "as bloody as killing a king" (*HAMLET*, III.4. 28 and 29) as evidences which contribute to prove her innocence of Claudius's criminal action:

> (2) On the other hand, she was not privy to the murder of her husband, either before the deed or after it. There is no sign of her being so, and there are clear signs that she was not. The representation of the murder in the play-scene does not move her; and when her husband starts from his throne, she innocently asks him, "How fares my lord?" In the interview with Hamlet, when her son says of his slaughter of Polonius,
>
> > "A bloody deed!" Almost as bad, good mother,
> > As kill a king and marry his brother,
>
> The astonishment of her repetition "As kill a king!" is evidently genuine; and if it had not been so, she would never have had the hardihood to explain:
>
> > What have I done, that thou darest wag thy tongue
> > In noise so rude against me? (BRADLEY, 1991, p. 159)

Bradley's view of Shakespeare's Gertrude seems to be in accordance with Zeffirelli's queen. In the movie she does not seem to be a reckless and cold-hearted widow and mother. Actually, she cries in the funeral and her reaction towards *The Mousetrap* and Polonius's murder are also evidences in the film that contribute to the image of an innocent Gertrude, except for her looking at Claudius in the funeral scene. In fact, the way she looks at him does not mean that she is aware of Claudius's plot against king Hamlet, not even that she helped him to kill her ex-husband, but it invites the spectator to consider a probable relationship out of her marriage. Those evidences regarding family bonds and relationships suggest that the family drama – as the theme spotlighted in Zeffirelli's adaptation – superimposes itself in relation to the political aspects in the play.

Still thinking about the family drama as the central theme in Zeffirelli's adaptation, it is important to state that the theme is not only present in the opening scene – actually it can be

noticed throughout the movie –, but it is also strongly present in its closing scene. Unlike the first scene, which was created by Zeffirelli, the closing scene – or the final battle scene – exists in the original play-script. Except for Laertes, who does not belong to Hamlet's family, there is a final confrontation among son/nephew, mother/wife, and uncle/husband. The consequences are the death of all family members: Gertrude is poisoned by Claudius's wine, Claudius is killed by Hamlet and Hamlet dies poisoned by Laertes's sword. Unlike Shakespeare's play, in which Fortinbras comes to get Denmark's throne, there is no Fortinbras after that final battle scene in Zeffirelli's movie. Zeffirelli opts for ending up his film when there is no more family to be screened. Thus, Zeffirelli frames his movie by starting it screening a family and ending the film showing their dead bodies in one of the castle's halls transformed into a battle field.



Picture 4 - Zeffirelli's final scene: The cast. Source: HAMLET. Screenplay by Franco Zeffirelli. Mel Gibson as Hamlet, Glenn Close as Gertrude. USA: Icon Production, 1990. 1 DVD (115 min).

Keeping in mind Cartmell's comments regarding the importance of Zeffirelli's first scene to set the themes that will be approached in his adaptation, it is also possible to apply Cartmell's concerns to analyze how Michael Almereyda establishes the themes that will be dealt with in his *Hamlet 2000*. Unlike Zeffirelli, Almereyda writes the plot on his screen, making the spectator aware of the facts that precede the start of the film: "New York City, 2000. The King and the C.E.O of Denmark Corporation is dead. The King's widow has hastily remarried his younger brother. The King's son, Hamlet, returns from school suspecting foul play […]" (HAMLET, 2000).

Almereyda's opening scene does not only make the unfamiliarized Shakespearean spectators aware of the plot, but also informs the familiarized ones that his adaptation brings

innovations, such as the different place and time – New York, 2000 – in which the story takes place. In addition, it also informs the spectator that the film does not only deal with a family conflict but also with a corporative one. After all, the dead king, Hamlet's father, was the C.E.O, or the president, of Denmark Corporation; the position which was taken over by Old Hamlet's brother Claudius.

Almereyda's first scene lasts for nearly three minutes and only one character, Hamlet, is shot before the title *Hamlet 2000* appears on screen and marks the starting point of the story. Actually, Hamlet was shot from his back crossing the street and entering the Elsinore Hotel. Then, there is a cut and another sequence starts. From that moment on, we – spectators – watch scenes shot by Hamlet of himself. Those scenes are displayed on his camera screen in which he says the following words:

> I have of late wherefore I know not […] lost all my mirth. What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculties…in form and moving, how express and admirable! In action, how like an angel! In apprehension, how like a God! The beauty of the world…the paragon of animals. Yet to me, what is this quintessence of dust?
> (ALMEREYDA, 2000)

This speech is clearly said by Hamlet on the video we watch on his camera screen. While he speaks, images such as the skull of a dinosaur along with a man and a modern airplane flying show how admirable the human being is for his capacity of studying, creating, developing technology and evolving as a whole. However, Hamlet shows that his position towards human nature means the opposite. To him, human nature represents disappointment, frustration and lack of hope. Hamlet's loneliness, melancholy and disappointment with mankind are clear since the very first scene of the film. Almereyda displaced part of the utterance from II.2 in the play to open his film and show the audience that the disappointment with mankind contributes to the isolation and alienation of the protagonist from the rest of the world.

Theater or theatricality is another relevant theme in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* that was brought to the screen by Almereyda in an innovative and peculiar way. In William Shakespeare's play, the theater company and its actors have a crucial role in the drama because it is through the play-within-the-play that Hamlet intends to "catch the conscience of the king" (*HAMLET*, 3.I.558). In other words, the play-within-the play has a key position in William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* because the play would bring important evidence about Old Hamlet's death and would, therefore, confirm the ghost's claim that Claudius was the murderer. The importance of that moment goes beyond just uncovering a crime, actually it

causes a kind of counter reaction because at the same time the crime is uncovered by Hamlet, it also tells Claudius that Hamlet is aware of his sin. Obviously it was determinant for the king's decision of sending Hamlet to England in order to have him killed. Those characteristics make that moment in *Hamlet* one of the most expected scenes to be watched by the audience.

The moment the play is performed by the actors in *Hamlet* is the solid result of a plan devised by the protagonist. When the players get to Elsinore, Hamlet asks them if they could play *The Murder of Gonzago* and if he could include sixteen lines in the play script written by him. In the third scene of the third act, Hamlet patiently talks to the actors and gives them instructions about how they should speak the utterances in order to get an effective response:

> **Hamlet**: Speak the speech I pray you as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue; but if you mouth it as many of our players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand thus, but use all gently; for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness. Oh, it offends me to the soul to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to totters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings, who for the most part are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb-shows and noise. I would have such a fellow whipped for o'erdoing Termagant – it out-Herods Herod. Pray you avoid it.
> (*HAMLET*, III.2.1-12)

At that moment, Hamlet speaks as if he was a theater director who is aware that the way the utterances are spoken by the actor would influence the audience's understanding in the final performance. Pedro Sussekind, in his introduction to the book *Shakespeare o gênio original*, states that Shakespeare did not write theoretical texts about his art. However, Sussekind declares that some of his characters, in this case Hamlet, make important considerations regarding drama. Therefore, in order to understand Shakespeare's thoughts about the theater, the critic suggests paying attention to what Shakespeare's characters have to say in performance. Sussekind also points out that the metatheatrical language in the play denounces theoretical topics regarding the theater such as the "mirror game" between the actor and the character played by the actor. In order words, Sussekind attributes that game to the two plans formed by Shakespeare when he puts a play-within-a-play (Cf. SUSSEKIND, 2008, p. 19-20).

Metatheatricality – Susane L. Wofford points it out as the third focus of twentieth-century *Hamlet* criticism[9] – is a recurrent device in William Shakespeare's plays, mainly in *Hamlet*, and may constitute a challenge to those who adapt the play to the screen. I mean that when a play talks about a play we have theater exercising its own conscience about itself. However, when that play is transposed to a different medium, such as cinema, the theater is not talking about itself any longer, but cinema talks about theater. Therefore, the metatheatrical effect is weakened. Then, how can an adapter deal with one of the most important themes in Shakespeare – theater itself – without missing it during the process of adaptation?

Unlike Laurence Olivier, Kenneth Branagh and even Franco Zeffirelli, among several other adapters, Michael Almereyda does not present *The Mousetrap* as a play, but as a movie directed by Hamlet himself and shown to the spectators in a projection room. As Almereyda sets his film in the 21st century, he is able to bring to his adaptation the film-within-the-film and, as a result, get closer to Shakespeare for allowing the cinema medium to show itself through its resources and its own language. Almereyda's Hamlet lives in the 21st century and is quite used to the technology that surrounds him, mainly the image machines. In the same proportion Shakespeare's Hamlet is acquainted with drama and its theatrical language, Almereyda's Hamlet is familiar with cinema and its cinematographic language. Shakespeare's Danish prince takes the theater to Claudius; Almereyda's New Yorker prince takes Claudius to the cinema and shows him a *montage* made by him that presents several shots taken from other movies. The sequence of images selected by Hamlet shows a happy family, a bottle of poison, the death and the coronation of a person, probably referring to the position as a C.E.O taken by Claudius in the company. As it happens in the source text, the truth is brought by the medium which was supposed to present fiction, in this case, cinema.

Part of the metatheatrical language attributed to Shakespeare in *Hamlet* also comes from the talk and the hints about performing on stage that the prince gives to the actors. How does Michael Almereyda express that specificity in his adaptation? While in William Shakespeare's play the prince provides the actors with careful considerations about performing on stage, Almereyda's Hamlet selects nine VHS tapes, in a video club, and uses them to select the scenes and build his *Mousetrap*. The play that would be presented in a hall in the castle is taken by Almereyda's protagonist to a cinema room.

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[9] WOFFORD, Susanne L. (ed). *Hamlet: Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism*. Boston: Macmillan Press LTD, 1994, p. 199.

Marcel Martin, in his book *A Linguagem Cinematografica*, points out "the *montage*" as the basis of cinematographic language. According to him, it is not possible to define cinema without the concept of "*montage*". Martin exposes the concept of *montage* stating that it is the organization of film shots in a certain kind of order and duration. Martin establishes distinctions between the narrative *montage* and the expressive one. The narrative *montage* aims at telling a story through joining scenes in a logical and chronological sequence. The expressive *montage* has in its basis the juxtaposition of two plans in order to cause a surprising effect on the audience (MARTIN, 1990, p. 132-133). The movie shown by Hamlet seems to present characteristics of both *montages*: at the same time it shows a story chronologically – actually his family history is on the screen – it also aims at shocking psychologically the audience, mainly Claudius, in a straightforward way. The same way that in Shakespeare's play Hamlet uses actors to form a play, Almereyda's prince uses twenty-three different image shots to build his *montage*. We, as audience, are exposed in Almereyda's *Hamlet* to a similar situation we go through when watching Shakespeare's *Hamlet*; in other words, we become the spectators who watch the spectators in the movie. Therefore, when Almereyda seems to get far from one of the most important of Shakespeare's themes by creating a film-within-a film, actually he gets closer to one of the 17th-century dramatist's themes.

To conclude the reflections upon the themes each film takes to the screen, I would say that Franco Zeffirelli gives room to show a *Hamlet* whose family matters are the main focus selected from the original play. Among several *Hamlets* that exist in the play, as Kott points out, the door that Zeffirelli chose to open and come in to the story to build his film is what concerns family bonds and relationships. Considering that he opted for showing a family drama and internal politics regarding the succession to the throne, Fortinbras figure is totally irrelevant to the development of the story Zeffirelli shows on the screen. Therefore, to consider the movie apolitical because of the absence of Fortinbras means demanding an element of the play that does not fit the proposal – or the selection – of the film. Michael Almereyda bets on focusing on a lonely young man who lives surrounded by image-making gadgets whose introspection is his tool to deal with the world and its challenges.

It is unavoidable to select a theme – among several ones that the play provides – before transposing the play to screen. Linda Hutcheon talks about the necessity of keeping a theme – which constitutes the repetition – as much as the necessity of presenting changes and innovations – which constitutes the variation – in each adaptation. Zeffirelli opts for the family drama and the internal politics from his first scene: who should take the succession to

the throne. Almereyda chooses to picture on screen Hamlet's melancholy, theatricality, disappointment and loneliness. All the themes are present in the source text; the variation in both directors comes in the way those themes are present on screen with the help of cinematographic resources.

2.4 Focusing on the protagonist: action hero and speculative youth

Jay Halio dedicates one of the chapters, in his *Understanding Shakespeare's Plays in Performance*, to speculating which elements contribute to the actor building his character. I do not aim at discussing in detail Halio's beliefs regarding the construction of a character, I would rather point out to his opening consideration about the high level of difficulty an actor must face to form a character and get it ready for the performance. Halio states that "finding a character is the most difficult problem an actor has to solve in approaching any important role" (HALIO, 1988, p. 31). In addition, the critic declares that the difficulty gets even harder when the character to be performed has been performed several times before and has been consecrated by celebrated performances: "Complicating everything, of course, is that the roles have been played before – in the major plays, very often over the years, stretching back for centuries in sometimes well-documented and celebrated productions" (HALIO, 1988, p. 32). To exemplify his statement, Halio tells the case of Antony Sher, who had to give his best in his performance in order to find a different Richard III from the celebrated version of the Laurence Olivier played for the screen in 1955.

The example provided by Halio is just one among several of Shakespeare's characters who bring to actors not only the challenge of being at the same time the character from the source play, but also different and unique in their performance. In a top five list of the most frequently played Shakespearean characters, Hamlet may run for the first position in the rank not only for theatrical adaptations but also for adaptations to the screen. Actors such as Laurence Olivier, Innokenti Smoktunovsky, Nicol Williamson and Kenneth Branagh are just some of the celebrated names who played Hamlet in movies. Playing the Danish prince after those actors' performances means establishing unavoidable comparisons among them and with the following performances. Definitely the task of building Hamlet in order to take the Danish prince once more to the screen is a challenge for any actor. Therefore, it could not be different for Mel Gibson and Ethan Hawke.

The difficulty in dealing with a character such as Hamlet is not only restricted to the several times the prince was taken to the stage or to the screen, but also to the historical account of studies, research, texts, theories, speculations and possibilities that the character has given rise to throughout the centuries. Jan Kott states how complex an object of study Hamlet is. The critic compares the protagonist to Mona Lisa and her meaningful smile in the sense that dealing with both of them does not only mean dealing with their creators' creature, but also with all material produced and all commentary already existing. In other words, what Kott means by stating that Hamlet has an "independent life" (KOTT, 1974, p.58), living apart from his text, is the different possibilities of approaching the character.

Kott, in his "Hamlet of the mid-century", describes a political adaptation of the play to the stage, which he watched in 1959. If that play were compared to Zeffirelli's proposal, it would probably be the opposite of that film. Kott spotlights the strong political aspect of the play and the prince who pretended to be mad, but who could be seen as a mad person if we considered that politics is madness. The Polish critic does not reject seeing *Hamlet* as a play about a political crime and seeing the protagonist as someone who pretends to be mad because politics is madness (KOTT, 1974, p.62). However, Kott expresses his opinion about which Hamlet would please him:

> I have nothing against such an interpretation. And I do not regret any other Hamlets: the moralist unable to draw a clear-cut line between good and evil; the intellectual, unable to find a sufficient reason for action, the philosopher, to whom the world's existence is a matter of doubt.
>
> I prefer the youth deeply involved in politics, rid of illusions, sarcastic, passionate and brutal. A young rebel who has about him something of the charm of James Dean. His passion sometimes seems childish. No doubt he is more primitive than all previous Hamlets. Action, not reflection is his forte. He is wild and drunk with indignation.
>
> (KOTT, 1974, p. 62)

Zeffirelli's Hamlet, played by Mel Gibson, partially matches Kott's definition of what a Hamlet on stage or on screen should be like. Except for the aspect of being "deeply involved with politics", Gibson's performance shows a prince who is young and charming and who is extremely indignant with his mother's hasty marriage. He also shows a high level of sarcasm and acts like a man who seems to have been spoiled by his mother and feels extremely jealous in seeing her with another man – an Oedipal Hamlet.

Gibson also seems to be very successful in dealing with, and expressing, the instability inside Hamlet. Shakespearean tragedies have as one of their main characteristics the co-existing presence of the sublime and the comic. Eric Auerbach, in his text "O Príncipe

Cansado", emphasizes this aspect, saying that tragic plots in Shakespeare usually alternate with comic popular scenes which are linked to the main plot. In addition, Auerbach[10] states that the mix of those elements is not restricted to the plays, but also may co-exist inside some characters, such as Lear and Hamlet:

> A loucura, meio verdadeira, meio fingida de Hamlet delira às vezes, até dentro de uma mesma cena, ou até de uma mesma fala, através de todos os níveis estilísticos; ele pula, por exemplo, do gracejo indecente para o lírico ou para o sublime, da ironia absurda pra a obscura e profunda meditação, do humilhante escarnecimento dos outros e de si mesmo para a patética função judiciária e a orgulhosa auto-afirmação. (AUERBACH, 1987, p. 281)

The ability to change or mix tones such as the sublime and the comic, the ironical and the meditative, the suffering and the sarcastic is what holds one's attention in Mel Gibson's performance. Gibson performing Hamlet on the screen goes from the deepest sadness to the most sarcastic moments. His eyes and looks express all the anguish inside the Danish prince. Gibson's interpretation seems to be much more rooted in emotion than any kind of philosophical wondering. Gibson's Hamlet expresses his fear and indignation not only through language, but also through voice intonation, screams, facial and body expressions which remind us, very often, of a spoilt child. Gibson's prince cannot keep sitting on a chair with his head on his hand thinking and talking about the human condition like Laurence Olivier's. The character walks around, and throws his piece of clothing on the floor when saying "Fie! Foh! About my brains" (*HAMLET*, II.2.541).

At that moment, when character construction depends on decisions made by the actor, Gibson may be also considered an adapter. According to Hutcheon, the subject of whether or not an actor can be considered an adapter demands some reflection. Hutcheon says that

> 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 are to play are well-known literary ones. But does this make them conscious adapters? Certainly in interviews, novelists often comment on their surprise when actors – through gesture, tone of voice, or facial expression – interpret through incarnation characters in ways the initial creator never envisage: actors can bring their individual sense and senses to the characters and give them those glances and gestures that come from their own imaginations (Ondaatje 1997: ix). But in a more literal sense, what actors actually adapt in this sense is the screenplay.
> (HUTCHEON *apud* STAM, 2006, p. 81 and 82)

[10] The quotations taken from Auerbach's text "O Príncipe Cansado" are presented in their Portuguese translation.

In an interview to the DVD extras, Mel Gibson admits that it was Zeffirelli's idea to make a Hamlet involved in a dark and evil atmosphere, avoiding making something tragic and complex, and aiming rather at something simpler. However, Gibson confesses that he intensified the lethargy walking around with a pale face and groaning. Gibson follows what is expected from an actor who plays Hamlet, according to Bradley: "The actor who plays the part of Hamlet must make up his mind as to the interpretation of every word and deed of the character. Even if at some point he feels no certainty as to which of two interpretations is right, he must still choose one or the other" (BRADLEY, 1991, p.147).

Casting an actor specialized in playing action heroes such as Mel Gibson to play the Shakespearean Danish prince was definitely a target which the darts of criticism were thrown at. Several critics and scholars would agree that an actor selected for playing the protagonist of action movies such as *Lethal Weapon* (1989) and *Tequila Sunrise* (1988) could not play a deeper thinker and reflexive Hamlet whose inaction is one of his main characteristics. Therefore, an actor who has his image linked to action tends not to be the best choice to incarnate Hamlet because the actor's background may guide the way he would be seen on the screen. Hutcheon declares that the previous public knowledge about the actor or the director would influence the spectators' interpretation:

> There are still other aspects to this knowingness to be considered in theorizing about the product and the process of adaptation. If the audience knows that a certain director or actor has made other films of a particular kind, that intertextual knowledge too might well impinge on their interpretation of the adaptation they are watching.
> (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 126)

Following Hutcheon's words and applying them to Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* we see that Gibson's image as an action hero inherited from the characters he has previously played may contribute to the way the viewers see his Hamlet. Obviously, Hamlet's lack of action exists in an outward plan. A good example of his static state is the convenient possibility of killing Claudius when the king is praying and confessing his sins helplessly after watching his crime performed by the actors on stage. On the other hand, the soliloquies, mainly the famous "to be or not to be", testify to Hamlet's intense inner action. When the prince soliloquizes, a war of conflicting thoughts seems to be installed, forming a kind of inner setting in the protagonist's mind which may be shown to the spectators through images or just through the flow of words. At that point, the image of Gibson's heroes would match Hamlet. The prince fights hard and intensely in his deep thinking against the external facts in the world such as his mother's incestuous marriage and his father's murder. The image of an action hero printed on Gibson

would help to denounce the voracious warrior the Danish prince is when he is rebelling himself mentally against his imposed "sea of troubles" – that intertextual relationship between actor and character would be clear to a less naïve viewer and would contribute to see Hamlet the way Zeffirelli intends to show him.

The intertext between character and actor, or on-screen and off-screen roles, is quite possible and may work successfully. Graham Allen, in his book *Intertextuality*, quotes Keith A. Reader in order to explain the Hollywood star system and the intertextual relationships existing in it:

> The very concept of the film star is a very intertextual one, relying as it does on correspondences of similarity and difference from one film to the next, and sometimes too on supposed resemblances between on and off-screen personae. Thus Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in the West* ironically inverts Henry Fonda's normal heroic role to make of him a sadistic villain; Mike Nichols's *Who's afraid of Virginia Wolf?* exploits paralles between the stormy domestic life of George and Martha on screen and that of Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor off it.
> (ALLEN, 2000, p. 175)

Probably Franco Zeffirelli was aware of that possible intertextual relation when he selected Mel Gibson to play Hamlet. The Italian director knew the risky decision of inviting Gibson to play the prince because Gibson's star mark as an action hero would contribute not only to his Hamlet and the possible intertextual reading with the actor's career, but also for economic lures. In the documentary "Mel Gibson: to be or not to be Hamlet" – a bonus material in the *Hamlet* DVD directed by Zeffirelli – the first information given is that Zeffirelli wanted an actor whose image could stand for action and intelligence. In addition, casting a Hollywood star for a movie would attract the audience, mainly the young ones, to go and see it.

Definitely, the casting of Mel Gibson to play the protagonist has to do with the context of reception of the adaptation, as developed theoretically by Linda Hutcheon in her chapter "Where? When? [Context]". According to Hutcheon, "the celebrity status of the director or star is also an important element of its reception context" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 143). We cannot forget that Zeffirelli is recognized as one of the most important directors in Hollywood; therefore, he makes commercial films. To have a big star such as Mel Gibson – at the beginning of the 1990s – was an attempt of making success and money.

Before performing Hamlet, Gibson performed Martin Riggs in *Lethal Weapon*, the nearest character preceding the Danish prince on screen. Riggs is a cop who lives along with his dog in a trailer in the middle of nowhere. Riggs has a good degree of violence required for

a cop. However, his violence seems to be intensified by the loss of his wife, Victoria Lynn, making him have outbursts of fury, such as throwing a bottle of beer at the TV set. Since his wife's death, Riggs's life has seemed to become meaningless, making him put himself in dangerous situations in a search for his own death. Committing suicide is an act that although Riggs wishes to do he is not courageous enough to materialize. In one of the scenes, the policeman is alone in front of his TV, holding his gun and looking at his wife's picture. At the moment Martin takes the gun and points it at his head, the gun is shot in close up. After pointing at his head, Riggs points the gun at his mouth in an attempt to kill himself. However, his attempt at committing suicide fails, his lack of courage to kill himself "puzzles his will".

Gibson's Martin Riggs, Gibson's Hamlet and Shakespeare's Hamlet seem to share some characteristics, such as how violent they can be. Auerbach, in "O Principe Cansado", puts into question Goethe's interpretation of Hamlet in his *Wilhem Meisters Lehrjabre*. Auerbach states that the German author's interpretation was commonly shared among his contemporaries in Germany. Hamlet was read, during the *Goethezeit*, through the perspective of a pure, sensitive young man who was able to produce an interior force. Auerbach cannot understand how come the latent violence and the progressive force in Hamlet has gone unnoticed by Goethe and the romantics:

> Será que Goethe não sentiu a força original e crescente durante a peça de Hamlet, o seu humor cortante, diante do qual recuam todos os que o circundam, a astúcia e a temeridade dos seus ataques, a sua selvagem dureza com Ofélia, a violência com a qual enfrenta sua mãe, a fria calma com que tira do seu caminho os cortesãos que se lhe atravessam, a elástica audácia de todas as suas palavras e de todos os seus pensamentos? (AUERBACH, 1987, p. 294)

The violence and strength pointed out by Auerbach when describing Hamlet is found in Zeffirelli's protagonist. Hamlet may be read through Goethe's view, but may also be seen as a violent and cruel man who is aggressive and sarcastic. Those characteristics are not only present to the ones who watch Gibson on screen remembering his previous violent, strong and active characters, but they are also present in the way Zeffirelli and Gibson take Hamlet to the screen, and, let us admit, in the original text of Shakespeare's play itself.

Michael Almereyda and Ethan Hawke introduce us to a different Hamlet if compared to Zeffirelli's and Gibson's Danish prince. Definitely the contemporary setting built by Almereyda helps spotlight characteristics, such as an alienation from the world and escape to an unreal virtual world, that other adaptations which choose the medieval setting would not provide. Compared to Gibson's way of taking Hamlet to the screen, Hawke presents a

protagonist that prefers to confine himself in his mind and in the filming gadgets' world rather than screaming his heart out and acting like a spoilt child.

Hawke's Hamlet's way of complaining, thinking and behaving towards the problems around him gets closer to a romantic image of the character developed in the 18th century that has survived across time, to be inherited by us in the 21st century. In the 18th century, William Shakespeare's plays were adopted by the pre-romantic German authors as a model to be followed in order to break with the classical rules of French drama that dictated how a play should be made in Germany. According to Sussekind, in the second half of 18th century, Shakespeare's plays became the reference the Germans based themselves to rebuild their national theater. In England, the romantics, mainly Samuel Taylor Coleridge, adopted *Hamlet*, and its main character, as the play whose focus was to lead the spectators into their own selves and inner truth. According to Wofford:

> Coleridge emphasizes in Hamlet not "sensitivity" of mind, but intellectual power and he gives us the Hamlet still found today on many stages and in many classrooms, the Hamlet who thinks too much and cannot bring himself to act. Coleridge argued that there ought normally to be a balance between "our attention to outward objects" and our "meditation on inward objects", but that this balance does not exist in Hamlet. (WOFFORD, 2004, p.186)

Hawke's Hamlet does not only fit Bradley's description of the prince as a melancholy character, but also gets closer to Coleridge's expectations of a person whose "sensitivity of mind" gave place to intellectual power. Ethan Hawke created a Hamlet who is extremely introspective and whose thoughts and plans are hardly ever verbalized by the protagonist to the audience. In fact, Almereyda frequently introduces the voice-over resource to allow the audience to access the protagonist's mind as if the viewers were hearing his thoughts. Not only are the plans Hamlet makes in voice-over, but also the whole soliloquies or long parts of them, such as the "to be or not to be" one.

Hawke's Hamlet does not present a physical aggressiveness in his behavior; the conflicts and contrasting considerations are inside his mind as a result of his constant activity of thinking. Coleridge, in one of his lectures about *Hamlet*, stated that Hamlet could not be seen as a coward for delaying to kill Claudius; actually he should be considered brave for delaying the action and intensifying his speculative thinking regarding human existence. Introspection and inner speculation are strongly present in Hawke's Hamlet and are intensified by the voice-over while Hamlet is surrounded by elements of the setting – such as

a plaque in the video club, wide TV sets showing action film images among other setting props – which claim for his action.

The detachment from the external world and the exile he found in using filming gadgets are the main characteristics that describe Almereyda's protagonist. Hamlet's wish of getting rid of his life and finding a place where the "sea of troubles" could not reach him gets clearer and clearer by the middle of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy. Almereyda's Hamlet finds his own exile in technological pieces of equipment which record, reproduce and edit images. If Almereyda had set his film in the middle ages, his protagonist would not obviously be able to be so deeply involved with the technology of filming and with the cinematographic language. But Hawke's Hamlet is a young man who is very similar to 21st –century men who are fascinated by, and dependent on, the development of technology. His fascination and obsession for filming and editing images brings the protagonist closer to a dependence on technology that stops human interrelationships and replaces them and the real world with virtual and technological experiences. People who deny the opportunity of getting physically in touch with other people, confine themselves in front of the computer or the TV screen. Almereyda aims more than at establishing a relation of coherence with the setting. Actually he aims at establishing an intertext with William Shakespeare and making his contemporary audience identify with a kind of isolation that is very similar to the one the audience is familiar with in the 21st century.

This section aimed at showing that when Franco Zeffirelli and Michael Almereyda chose who would play Hamlet, they already had in mind which characteristics of Shakespeare's Danish prince they would spotlight on each actor. Zeffirelli takes advantage of Gibson's fame as an action hero to show a Hamlet who is similar to the one pointed out by Auerbach – violent and cruel – but who can also be sarcastic, funny and act as a spoilt child screaming and throwing his clothes on the floor. Almereyda opts for the lonely and melancholy youth who seeks ideas, reflections and exile by isolating himself with the technological image gadgets. Both directors' selections of characteristics in Hamlet's personality match the Shakespearean Danish prince establishing a strong and successful dialogue with the character of the play.

2.5 Focusing on Ophelia: the mad Danish girl and the lonely and melancholy American girl

Helena Bonhan Carter is the actress who plays Ophelia in Franco Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*. Bonham Carter was born in London in 1966. Her acting career started very early when she was at the age of thirteen; after some important works – such as *Lady Jane* (1986) – she was recognized as a great actress and considered the "corset queen" or "English rose". Franco Zeffirelli's Ophelia was not the only chance of performing William Shakespeare in Bonham Carter's career. The English actress also played Olivia when she took part in Trevor Nunn's *Twelfth Night: Or What You Will* (1996). On stage, Bonham Carter was in *The Tempest* (1987) performing at the Oxford Playhouse. In 2000, she was Rosalind in *As You Like It*, performing on BBC Radio 4. An interesting fact in her life that may explain why she performed Ophelia so well is that her mother was a psychotherapist and Bonham Carter used to pay her to read her scripts and give her professional opinion about her characters' psychological motivations.[11]

Bonham Carter's Ophelia can be described by the following terms: innocence, submission and madness. Certainly those words can also be used to describe the Shakespearean Ophelia. In Zeffirelli's adaptation, the innocence of Ophelia is not only expressed in her scared behavior towards the world, but also in her clothes. Bonham Carter's character is dressed in a white dress and wears a white cap covering part of her hair. She is the picture of the virgin who – throughout the film – makes the spectators believe that she did not have sexual intercourse with Hamlet.

It is impossible not to pity the Ophelia performed by the English actress; but the best is yet to come. Bonham Carter reaches her apex when she performs the mad Ophelia. After Hamlet's departure to England and before the first apparition of the mad Ophelia, Elsinore Castle is shot and it is raining. Then, she appears. Mad Ophelia's physical appearance contrasts strongly with the naïve and clean girl's image from the beginning of the film. However, if her innocence could be also expressed by the way she was dressed, her madness is also reflected on what she is dressed like. The white dress is the same from her first apparition, but after her mental breakdown the dress is dirty, creased and torn. Her hair is loose and messy and she walks barefoot. She drowns in the same stream where she threw her flowers minutes before.

[11] http://www.en.wikipedia.org/Helena_Bonham_Carter accessed on December 23rd, 2011.

Ophelia *Mad Ophelia*

Picture 5 - Zeffirelli's mad Ophelia. Source: HAMLET. Screenplay by Franco Zeffirelli. Mel Gibson as Hamlet, Glenn Close as Gertrude. USA: Icon Production, 1990. 1 DVD (115 min).

Bonham Carter gives Ophelia a lost gaze and action making the audience gets moved with the mad young girl.

Julia Stiles was the actress chosen by Michael Almereyda to enliven his Ophelia. Stiles was born in New York City in 1981, therefore the actress was just nineteen years old when she played Ophelia. In the 2000 – the year when Almereyda's *Hamlet* was released – Julia Stiles enrolled in Columbia University to study English. In 2005, she graduated in English language and literature. Stiles's biography briefly told in this section shows that the actress who played Ophelia on screen was also acquainted with literature and, more specifically, with William Shakespeare. Ophelia was not the only opportunity the actress had to perform Shakespeare on screen. Stiles also joined in the cast in *Ten Things I Hate About You* (1999) – an adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew* playing Kat Stratford – and in Tim Blake Nelson's *O* (2001) she played Desi Brable [Desdemona], who was in love with an African-American man in that adaptation of *Othello*. Playing Shakespeare on stage is also a plus in Stiles curriculum vitae. In the summer of 2002, the actress played Viola in a Shakespeare-in-the-Park Production, in an adaptation of *Twelfth Night.*

The Ophelia that Almereyda puts on screen is clearly – to the audience and to other characters – Hamlet's love affair. If in Shakespeare's play it is not clear enough whether Ophelia is Hamlet's girlfriend, Almereyda filled that gap in his film. In addition, it is also crystal clear – as it is also in Shakespeare's play – that Laertes and Polonius do not see with good eyes the proximity that Hamlet keeps with Ophelia. Both aspects – Ophelia as Hamlet's affair and the father and brother's disapproval about the proximity between them – are shown in the first scenes Ophelia shows up in. In Claudius's announcement scene (Act I.2) Laertes [Liev Schreiber] refuses to give Hamlet the envelope on which Ophelia wrote the numbers "3:30?", probably the time in which the lovers would meet. Right after the announcement scene, Claudius, Gertrude, Polonius and Laertes are in a room talking while Hamlet and

Ophelia are talking aside. When they are noticed alone, Laertes separates them and brings Ophelia to his group of talk. Hamlet takes Ophelia by her arm to go on talking aside. Then, Polonius approaches the prince, separates them and takes his daughter to the other group. Hamlet approaches the girl and kisses her lips – in the movie they kiss in the mouth at least twice. All the movements of taking Ophelia from one side to the other suggest reading the character as a girl who is treated like a toy at the hands of men. It suggests seeing a character who must follow her father and brother's wish, but never her own.

Julia Stiles's Ophelia is a young woman [almost still a teenager] who is obsessed with photography and presents similar characteristics if compared to Hamlet. Almereyda presents a different Ophelia if compared to the others already seen on screen in previous adaptations of the play. This time, Hamlet's girlfriend has a profession – or at least an occupation –, she is a photographer who has her own studio where she develops the photos taken by her. Maybe the activity she develops is the only trace of self wish that the girl is allowed to have.

Stiles's Ophelia shares similar characteristics with Hamlet. For instance, both are strongly linked and obsessed with images. Hamlet films; Ophelia photographs; Hamlet constantly watches the shootings he made of Ophelia, Ophelia very often sees the pictures she took of Hamlet and even burns one of them. She also does not present traces of madness, not even when her father is dead, but despair and a feeling of being in shock for her father's murder. Mick LaSalle in his review "Fresh Look Too Staid to Succeed", criticizes the lack of mad traces in Almereyda's Ophelia, saying that "Julia Stiles, a young actress with an impressive and intelligent presence, is constrained by an Ophelia who is too modern to go mad. She just gets really, really upset." Personally, I see no problem with the lack of mad traces in Almereyda's Ophelia. Hamlet does not present them in the film either. They share the feeling of melancholy that seems to affect youth in the movie, forbidding them even of smiling at one another.

In fact, Almereyda builds his Ophelia dialoguing with the symbolic meanings – such as the iconic importance of water and drowning – attributed to the character throughout the years. Furthermore, the scene sequences of water involving Ophelia throughout the movie also foreshadow how the character is going to die. Elaine Showalter, in "Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibility of Feminist Criticism", presents several symbols Ophelia has been linked to since the critics started seriously studying the character. Among the symbolic icons attributed to Ophelia, Showalter mentions the importance of drowning and water:

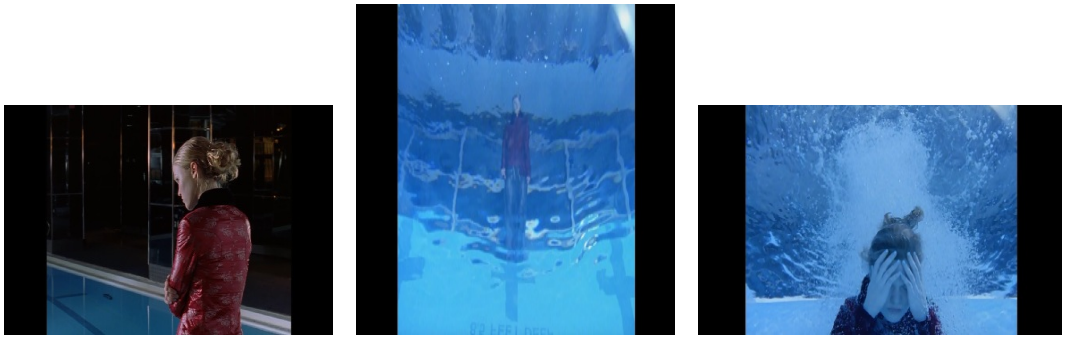
> Drowning too was associated with the feminine, with female fluidity as opposed to masculine aridity. In his discussion[12] of the "Ophelia complex", the phenomenologist Gaston Bachelard traces the symbolic connections between women, water and death. Drowning, he suggests, becomes the truly feminine death in the dramas of literature and life, one which is beautiful immersion and submersion in the female element. Water is the profound and organic symbol of the liquid woman whose eyes are so easily drowned in tears, as her body is the repository of blood, amniotic fluid, and milk. A man contemplating this feminine suicide understands it by reaching for what is feminine in himself, like Laertes, by a temporary surrender to his own fluidity – that is his tears; and he becomes a man again in becoming once more dry – when his tears are stopped.
> (SHOWALTER, 1994, p.225)

Almereyda associates Ophelia with the symbolic elements – water and drowning – suggested by Bachelard. In almost every scene Ophelia shows up on the screen, water is part of the setting. In the first nine minutes of the film, Ophelia is shot sitting down in a public place and there is an enormous fountain showing its beautiful waterfall behind her. Probably she is waiting for Hamlet, who does not go to meet her.

Picture 6 - Ophelia at a public fountain. Source: HAMLET 2000. Screenplay by Michael Almereyda. Ethan Hawke as Hamlet, Diane Verona as Gertrude. USA: Double A Films, 2000. 1 DVD (134 min).

Other two very iconic scenes in the movie take place thirty-eight minutes after the beginning of the film and then forty-eight minutes later. Polonius takes his daughter along to show Claudius and Gertrude Hamlet's love letter as a proof of his strange behavior. While Polonius shows the letter and talks to Claudius and Gertrude, saying that Hamlet is out of his daughter's reach, Ophelia gets near the swimming pool and sees her image on the water. Suddenly, she fancies herself jumping in the swimming pool and drowning – as shown in the following images:

[12] Elaine Showalter refers to the development of the "Ophelia Complex" made by Gaston Bachelard in his book *L'Eau et les rêves: Essai sur l'imagination*, Paris, 1942.



Picture 7 - Ophelia looking at the swimming pool. Source: HAMLET 2000. Screenplay by Michael Almereyda. Ethan Hawke as Hamlet, Diane Verona as Gertrude. USA: Double A Films, 2000. 1 DVD (134 min).

Forty-eight minutes later, there is a scene in which Polonius is hiding in his daughter's clothes a microphone in order to listen and spy Hamlet and Ophelia's conversation. At that moment Ophelia cries. After that scene, comes the moment in which Ophelia talks to Hamlet. However, before Ophelia is shot at Hamlet's door, another public waterfall is shot. It is clear that Almereyda reaches two goals by using the same symbols. The water and drowning do not only allude to the studies regarding Ophelia and symbolic meanings attributed to her, but also foreshadows one of the most expected moments by the spectators.

Both Ophelias seem to still follow the romantic description of the character pointed by Elaine Showalter as "a girl who feels too much, who drowns in feeling" (SHOWALTER, 1994, p. 228); but they are presented in different ways. Even though they tend to follow the romantic perspective because they are guided by feeling and because that is the view we inherited in our culture, each of them is different in their own way. This leads us to consider that the same way that there is not a "true" Hamlet, there is no "true" Ophelia. (Cf. SHOWALTER, 1994, p. 238)

2.6 Focusing on the cast: Zeffirelli's and Almereyda's Movie Stars

Mel Gibson is not the only movie star present in Zeffirelli's adaptation. Other renowned actors and actresses such as Alan Bates as Claudius, Paul Scofield as the ghost, Ian Holm as Polonius, Nathaniel Parker as Laertes and Helena Bonham-Carter as Ophelia, are part of that motion picture. However, Glenn Close deserves to be spotlighted for her youth, beauty and sensuality in playing Gertrude. Shakespeare's Gertrude got married quite young to Old Hamlet, became the queen of Denmark and Hamlet's mother. She became a widow still young and had an opportunity to get married again with her brother-in-law, Claudius.

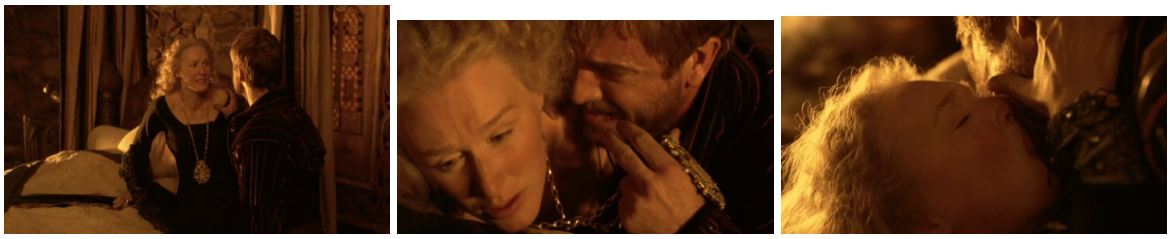
In "Gertrude" – in his book *Hamlet Poem Unlimited* – Harold Bloom states that it is impossible not to feel and get fascinated by that queen's lustiness. Bloom attributes to the

queen and Claudius the status of the happiest couple in Shakespearean drama, just behind Macbeth and Lady Macbeth because Gertrude and Claudius's happiness gets irrelevant when the murder suspicion is shown (BLOOM, 2003, p. 59). That happiness attributed by Bloom to Gertrude and Claudius seems to have been captured by Zeffirelli and largely expressed in his adaptation. Glenn Close and Alan Bates are very successful in sensual scenes – when they kiss or meet each other their complicity and attraction are clear to the spectators –, their happiness is quite clear to any character inside the film and to spectators outside it. When A. C. Bradley stated that an actor must make decisions in order to play Hamlet, his statement could also be extended to Gertrude. Probably, the queen is one of, if not the most, mysterious characters in Shakespeare's plays. In the first in-quarto published in 1603, the queen could be better read by the spectators. Gertrude very often placed herself clearly for her son and shared with him the same opinion regarding Claudius's corrupted nature. In the folio, nothing seems to be clear enough about her, no one knows, in the play, if Gertrude and Claudius were lovers before, although Zeffirelli's adaptation may suggest it to the audience. When Glenn Close played Gertrude, she felt the necessity of supplying the character with her personal characteristics because the Shakespearean queen does not speak enough to support a solid creation by any actress. Close declares: "I think she's always been considered a problematic part because she is so underwritten. She is the only major Shakespearean character that has 76 lines. So, any actress who takes Gertrude has to supply a lot on her own story to fill out and make it real and consistent. And that's fascinating!" (ZEFFIRELLI, 1990)

Zeffirelli's reasons for casting Close to perform Gertrude may be read from the same path which led the director to cast Gibson: her image from previous works. Beautiful, sensual and sexually active are adjectives to describe Close's role in *Fatal Attraction* (1988), just two years before her being cast to play Gertrude. The characters played by Close were linked to sensual women who lived their sexuality intensely and whose image would establish an important intertextual relation in the construction of Zeffirelli's queen. In *Fatal Attraction,* Close is Alex Forrest, a businesswoman who gets sexually involved with a married man, Dan Gallangher (Michael Douglas), performing several sensual and sexual scenes along the movie.

Taking to the screen a sensual and sexualized Gertrude who had around her three men – Old Hamlet, Claudius and Hamlet, – allowed Zeffirelli to present one movie that seems to be based on a psychoanalytic approach. Freud had already pointed out in the 19th century the sexualized relationship between Gertrude and Hamlet. The psychoanalyst believed that Hamlet's sexual wishes had been repressed and attributed the character's delay in killing Claudius to the king working as a model to him. In other words, Claudius killed Hamlet's

image of the father and married his mother – exactly what the prince's Oedipal character wanted to perform. Ernest Jones's publication, in the 20th century, regarding the Oedipus complex in *Hamlet* was responsible for influencing several theatrical productions and filmic adaptations, such as Laurence Olivier's and Franco Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, to take to the screen a sexualized view of Gertrude. As suggested in the source text, in Zeffirelli's movie the scene in which Gertrude talks to Hamlet takes place in her bedroom, and part of the scene on her bed. Unlike Olivier's movie, which also sexualized that scene using the bedroom as a setting, Zeffirelli raises the level of sensuality, and also brutality, by insinuating a sexual intercourse, a rape, between Gibson's Hamlet and Close's Gertrude.



Picture 8 - A sequence to show Zeffirelli's Hamlet and Gertrude on Gertrude's bed. Source: HAMLET. Screenplay by Franco Zeffirelli. Mel Gibson as Hamlet, Glenn Close as Gertrude. USA: Icon Production, 1990. 1 DVD (115 min).

Certainly, the union between a strong, handsome and violent Gibson and Close's sensuality and vitality intensified the sexual atmosphere between the characters.

Apart from Hollywood stars, Zeffirelli also brought to his film important actors acknowledged for their long experience in performing Shakespeare both on stage and on screen. Alan Bates, for example, after taking part in John Osborne's *Look Back In Anger* in 1956, became a star and started performing plays from both modern and canonic playwrights, such as Shakespeare. Bates, who plays Claudius in Zeffirelli's adaptation, was a member of the Royal Shakespeare Company and played in *Anthony and Cleopatra* and *Timon of Athens*, both in 1999. Before that, Bates had already recorded audio books based on Shakespeare's plays, such as *A Winter's Tale* and *Othello*. In theater, Bates also played in *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Hamlet*, *Richard III*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Ian Holmes and Paul Scoffied were also representing the Shakespearean tradition in Zeffirelli's adaptation. Ian Holmes, who played Polonius, has a long list of Shakespearean productions in his career. Before being known from TV productions such as *Richard III* from BBC, Holmes was considered a star of the Royal Shakespeare Company, performing several Shakespearean roles. In the cinema, Holmes appeared in many Shakespearean adaptations, such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Kenneth Branagh's *Henry V*. Furthermore, Holmes received three awards for best actor for his interpretation in *King Lear*. Paul Scoffield's

professional relation to Shakespeare is similar to Holmes's. In 1966, Scoffield performed with the Royal Shakespeare Company. In cinema, he was part of the cast of *King Lear* and *Henry V*. In short, Zeffirelli knew how to manage the Hollywood presence in his film as well as put a strong pillar of Shakespearean tradition into the ground as a basis to build his Shakespearean film.

In Almereyda's cast, few actors stand out for their previous experience in playing Shakespearean roles before *Hamlet 2000*. Even Ethan Hawke, who played the protagonist, seems to present no evidences of being in Shakespearean roles either on stage or on the screen. However, Julia Stiles – whose career is explored in the section "Focusing on Ophelia" –, Diane Verona [Gertrude] and Liev Schreiber [Laertes] have at least appeared in a Shakespearean play or in an adaptation of Shakespeare's text to the screen. Diane Verona, an American actress born in Connecticut, was known for her incredible career in theatrical performances, mainly in Shakespearean adaptations to the stage. She was part of Joseph Papp's production of *Hamlet* at the New York Shakespeare Festival in 1983. In 1990 she once more took part in a *Hamlet* adaptation to the stage playing Ophelia in Kevin Kline's production. In 1996, Verona joined the cast of *Romeo + Juliet*, playing Juliet's mother, in Braz Luhrmann's adaptation to the screen.

Liev Schreiber, who plays Laertes in Almereyda's film, also had experience performing Shakespearean characters before being part of *Hamlet* on the screen. Schreiber was born in San Francisco, California, in 1967. In the beginning of his career, Schreiber frequently appeared in independent productions, but at present he is more involved in projects for mainstream cinema. Schreiber is respected for his experience in Shakespearean roles, though. In 1998, the actor received compliments of the *New York Times* for his performance considered "revelatory" in *Cymbeline*. In 1999, Schreiber played Hamlet at the Public Theater. In 2000, he was Laertes in Almereyda's film and three years later the actor played Henry V in one of the Central Park productions. In 2006, he played Macbeth at the Delacorte Theater. Although Almereyda's cast does not present several actors whose experience in playing Shakespeare comes from the Royal Shakespeare Company, the director can count on his actor's and actresses' experiences to contribute to a satisfactory result in his film.

2.7 Focusing on setting and light design: a medieval Denmark and a contemporary New York

Questions about what the setting will be like and what place and time the plot will be placed in are recurrent issues that contemporary adapters and spectators of Shakespearean adaptation think about. However, the daring decision of placing a story far from its original time and nation started in the 20th century. Hutcheon reflects upon the importance of considering the context of creation of an adaptation and also the context of its reception.

Halio's first paragraphs from his chapter "Finding the set design" provide the reader with an interesting historical account regarding the development of the setting in theatrical production throughout the centuries. He states that in Shakespeare's time a spare set predominated in theater, whereas the focus was on costume and action. In the 18th century the set tended to be more sophisticated, whereas in the 19th century important research was done in order to create a set design compatible with the original period in which the action was set. At the end of the 19th century, there was a movement aiming at bringing back the simplicity that characterized the Elizabethan scenery. In the 20th century, the Royal Shakespeare Company, among other theatrical companies, dared to place the adaptations far from their original period. Certainly placing the story in the time and place suggested by the author or surprising the spectator by suggesting a new look to the same story were devices quite often explored and very well used by cinema.

Franco Zeffirelli's choice was to place his *Hamlet* in 12th-century Denmark. The film was shot in a Scottish castle, under a clear daylight which is not supposed to be found in Shakespeare's Denmark, though. However, Zeffirelli knew how to manage the excess of sunlight to produce meaningful effects to his adaptation. All that sunlight outdoors may be seen as a point of contrast to the light in the interior of Elsinore. The scenes inside the castle are usually dark or with little light and may suggest a cold feeling and solitary sensation, differently from the scenes outdoors. One of several examples is when Rosencrantz and Guildestern arrive in the city on a bright and sunny day and find the prince lying down on the hill. Rosencrantz and Guildestern's arrival coincides with the players' arrival to Elsinore. At the moment when people receive the actors the weather is still bright. The scene contrasts with the lighting of the film's previous scene, when Hamlet, inside the dark and cold mausoleum, soliloquizes his "to be or not to be".

Zeffirelli's Denmark is partly light and clear maybe because in his film the country is not facing an external political problem which would put the population in a dangerous

situation. In the film, Fortinbras does not exist; therefore, the nation's future and the change of dynasty do not seem to be eminent threats. The darkness and the conflicts lie in Hamlet's family inside Elsinore castle. The somber, dark and cold castle contributes to form that claustrophobic atmosphere that surrounds the characters inside it. The weather seems to get darker and somberer when the same feeling of pity and loneliness is shared by the community such as in Old Hamlet's burial and when Ophelia's madness reaches its apex and she needs to be carried away by the guards.

Zeffirelli's choice of showing the original setting of *Hamlet* was not a daring decision, maybe because the daring point in Zeffirelli's adaptation comes from the casting. Unlike Franco Zeffirelli's film, Almereyda's controversial point lies in his wise exploration of the vastness of context. Critics such as Linda Hutcheon state that

> […] An adaptation, like the work it adapts, is always framed in a context – a time and a place, a society and a culture; it does not exist in a vacuum. Fashions, not to mention value systems, are context-dependent. Many adapters deal with this reality of reception by updating the time of the story in an attempt to find contemporary resonance for their audience. (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 142)

Almereyda' *Hamlet 2000* is framed in our contemporary place and time. The spectator who went to the cinema and expected to find a medieval Hamlet dressed in medieval style may get frustrated or positively surprised. Almereyda's proposal is to place the film setting in New York, 2000. Hamlet is acquainted with computer programs and all kinds of filming gadgets to such a degree that he seems to be addicted to filming people and things. The first place watched by the viewers is the dark sky seen from the sun roof of a limousine, then the scene cuts and we, for the first time, see Hamlet crossing the street and entering the Elsinore Hotel, where he lives. The name Denmark – appearing on a wide Panasonic screen – is no longer the name of a country, but of a company where Claudius is the C.E.O., and computers, video cameras and cameras in general are constantly present in the film, emphasizing that image reproduction is also a means of surveillance.

Almereyda builds such a contemporary setting that the Western spectator identifies himself/herself with it immediately. One of the effects created by that 21st-century New York is the feeling that we could bump into those characters on the street walking along Times Square. Julie Sanders, in *Adaptation and Appropriation*, states that an adaptation which is set in our contemporary time suffers the process of "proximation":

> […] adaptation can also constitute a simpler attempt to make texts "relevant" or easily comprehensible to new audiences and readerships via the process of proximations and updating. This can be seen as an artistic drive in many adaptations of so-called "classic" novels or drama for television and cinema. Shakespeare has been a particular focus, a beneficiary even, of these "proximations" or updatings. (SANDERS, 2006, p. 19).

That time proximity in Almereyda's *Hamlet* also allows the audience to share characteristics with the characters such as the intense contact with technological equipment causing isolation from the real world. But does Almereyda's daring setting jeopardize the adaptation putting in question its quality? Jay Halio discusses setting an adaptation far from its original time. He states that

> One rationale is that by changing the locale or the time period of the play the production will appear fresher and more relevant to present audiences. Another is that the changes will help uncover hitherto undiscovered or unsuspected aspects of the plays as the company gets away from tradition-bound ways of viewing and, hence, performing them. (HALIO, 1988, p. 22)

Halio expresses two important benefits that a set design in a different place and time may bring to a play: the first is the possibility of providing a fresher atmosphere to the adaptation and uncover undiscovered or unsuspected aspects of the play. Time is an element that is also pointed by Linda Hutcheon as having the power of changing the context of reception (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 144). Considering that Almereyda's *Hamlet* is set in New York in 2000, the director does not only refresh the 17th-century play, but also makes the audience identify with a moment in history that coincides with the audience's own.

In *Hamlet 2000*, image has different functions: firstly, it may be considered as An element that contributes to create the setting design. Throughout the movie there are several TV sets that exhibit images which contribute to build a somber and mysterious atmosphere in that particular scene. Usually in those scenes there are spoken dialogues between the characters. In addition, the props, such as smoke and fire used to create a mood of mystery and that in other films are physically present in the setting, in Almereyda's *Hamlet* appear on the characters' TV screens. Secondly, in the soliloquies the image seems to work for materializing the protagonist's thoughts and feelings by showing images on TV sets – TV equipment is part of the movie setting – and using the voice-over resource so that the spectators are able to listen and visualize the emotional sensation in the characters. In this case, the image interacts straight with the viewers, not with the character himself. Thirdly, the

image works as a “character” that can be edited and manipulated in order to convey messages to the characters in the movie. The film made by Hamlet – in the original play actors and a theatrical performance are used – is an example of image as a meaningful tool to show the truth and change the characters’ courses in the movie from that moment on.

Focusing on the image as part of the setting, – the other functions attributed to the use of image will be approached in their respective sections – some of Almereyda’s props are created by image itself exhibited on several TV sets, contributing to set the atmosphere in his scenes. It is important to spotlight two scenes in which the director uses the image inside the movie in a peculiar way. In Shakespeare, the first apparition of the ghost takes place in the night. In some adaptations, such as Laurence Olivier’s – just to contrast with Almereyda’s choice –, the prince’s first meeting with the ghost takes place outdoors, on one of the castle’s towers. The ghost is dressed like a medieval warrior with his iron armour and is surrounded by a dense fog that obstructs his face from being seen clearly, intensifying the mysterious atmosphere in the scene. In Almereyda’s adaptation, the fog and the medieval armour are left out of the setting. However, the place where the meeting happens is similar to Olivier’s tower. The intense white smoke was brought back in Kenneth Branagh’s *Hamlet*, which places Hamlet’s meeting with the ghost in a forest where the fog and smoke come from the ground.

In Almereyda’s adaptation, the effects responsible for raising an atmosphere of suspense and mystery are shown on a TV set in Hamlet’s living room. Before describing how the usage of image is made in that scene, it is relevant to mention that the first apparition of the ghost is on a monitor of a security camera at Elsinore Hotel. Hamlet is alone in his apartment when suddenly he notices his father’s ghost bending over the balcony. Old Hamlet in Almereyda’s film was the C.E.O of Denmark Corporation, therefore when he appears to his son he is dressed like a businessman in a black overcoat, a black tuxedo and a red tie. When Hamlet approaches the balcony to open the door and let the ghost come in, there is a TV set on the left hand side of the setting exhibiting images of intense smoke, fire and explosions. That is one of the most mysterious moments in the film, when the feeling of suspense is charged with the effects that appear on a screen, suggesting that the ghost may have come from hell. Hamlet’s TV set displays a huge fire tornado at the moment when the ghost leaves the room. In that scene Almereyda dismissed any physical effects that could contribute to the atmosphere, actually, what he needed was the material he is used to creating and dealing with: image itself.

The film presents another important moment in which real phenomena or objects are shown through images. Unlike the moment in which the suspense effects are created by movie

images exhibited on a TV screen, during Ophelia's madness Almereyda transforms the flowers she would throw on the floor and give to her brother, to the king and the queen, into pictures, photographs. Ophelia, in *Hamlet 2000*, is as much linked to images as Hamlet, but she is a photographer, therefore her contact with images is through pictures. Almereyda once more chose to replace real flowers or objects that could be considered flowers by that girl with representations of them in photos.

The choice of adapting the play to a contemporary American setting went beyond the attempt of refreshing the play by providing a new setting to it. Actually, it may have contributed for the Americans to taste Shakespeare from a different perspective. That attempt has also to do with causing a different reception of the play by Americans. Hutcheon reflects upon the awareness of the adapter of the kind of reception that an adaption may cause in a specific public. Talking about the adaptation of *The Godfather* to video games Linda Hutcheon states that "Whether an adapted story is told, shown, or interacted with, it always happens in a particular time and space in a society. Therefore, the video game adaptation of *The Godfather* will be experienced differently today by an Italian American player than by a Korean one. And adapters know this and take it into consideration" (Hutcheon: 2006, p. 144). Adapting Shakespeare to New York in 2000 may mean more than just updating Shakespeare to our contemporary time. In Al Pacino's *Looking For Richard*, he asks the actors around him what it is that gets between American actors and Shakespeare, because when they are about to perform those plays American actors usually stop and cannot go on. The actors answered Al Pacino's character by saying that American actors share a feeling of incapacity in performing Shakespeare because they have been told throughout the years that they would never perform those plays the way the British would do. In Almereyda's *Hamlet 2000*, Shakespeare has never been so American, except for the 17th-century language used. The huge New York city swallows the characters and the plot and imposes on them an American way of life among high technology and a capitalistic environment. Therefore, the setting would provoke a different way of experiencing Shakespeare by the Americans by placing the story inside an American city and culture and with American actors.

To conclude, both directors make the setting and lighting design meaningful to prove that Shakespeare cannot be confined to the English Renaissance, as Harold Bloom suggests in *The Western Canon* (BLOOM, 2001, p. 58). Zeffirelli's medieval setting shows that the play can be set in the 12th century and still be attractive, interesting, beautiful and efficient in screening *Hamlet*. Almereyda chooses to refresh it successfully in our contemporary time. According to Duane Byrge's review on *Hamlet 2000* for *The Hollywood Reporter Review*, he

declares: “For those who have only seen ‘Hamlet’ within the often sterile reaches of proscenium arch, this vivid visual interpretation rejuvenates the play with accessible bright flourishes. Certain to be a hit on the select-site circuit, ‘Hamlet 2000’ is the quintessence of independent filmmaking.”[13]

2.8 Focusing on soliloquies: transforming feelings and thoughts into images

Soliloquies may be considered one of the hardest challenges the adapter and the director have to face in order to transpose the characters’ inner thoughts uttered on stage and make them visible on screen. Russell Jackson, in “From Play-Script to Screenplay”, considers the soliloquy in films as one more point of “coincidence or collision” for dealing with spoken words and visual images at the same time:

> Another point of coincidence or collision between the spoken word and the shown image in Shakespearean film is the soliloquy. The theatrical convention, allowing access to a character’s “private” thoughts, depends on that character’s ability to address the audience directly. With the tragic heroes in particular this conventional means of access to their interiority has been essential to a critical tradition celebrating the plays as studies in psychology. The speeches are perceived both as technical tests, and as a measure of the performer’s emotional (even spiritual) range and capability in the role.
>
> Film has other means of access to the characters’ interiority, to which speech may even be a hindrance, and has little (or at least, very selective) use for direct address to the audience.
> (JACKSON, 2000, p. 25).

To take soliloquies to the screen is a challenge that despises any recipes of do’s and don’ts. Actually, to transpose soliloquies to the screen requires the adapter’s imagination to make thoughts visual, balancing visual image and spoken words. Halio states that “the liberty of invention may sometimes find dimensions to a scene or an episode that may not have been intended by Shakespeare but that once discovered, deepen our understanding of what is happening” (HALIO, 1988, p. 65). The liberty of creation is an important tool that must be within the power of any adapter in order to make the audience’s understanding of the adaptation more complete and full, mainly in the most complex moments, such as the soliloquies. Franco Zeffirelli and Michael Almereyda take good advantage of the liberty of creation in order to show and materialize in the setting the subjective state of mind of the characters.

In Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* there are seven soliloquies: 6 delivered by Hamlet and one by Claudius, as shown in the chart below:

[13] Available at <http://www.designol.com/AA_Films/hamlet_hollywood.html>. Accessed on December 23rd, 2011.

Act/scene/lines	Who utters	Theme
I.2.131-159	Hamlet	Indignation towards his mother's hasty marriage
II.2.501-558	Hamlet	The actor's role
III.1.56-89	Hamlet	The choice: to live or to die
III.2.345-360	Hamlet	Plotting how to approach Gertrude in her bedroom
III.3.36-72	Claudius	The confession of his crime
III.3.73-96	Hamlet	The delay in killing the King
IV.4.31-66	Hamlet	The final decision of taking revenge

Chart 2 - *Hamlet*'s soliloquies. Source: SHAKESPEARE, William. *Hamlet.* Cambridge University Press: New York, 2009.

In Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* there are five: four by Hamlet and one by Claudius. However, three of them deserve to be explored. In the theater, the soliloquy is the moment when the actor/actress is alone on stage, speaking to him/herself or to the spectators, revealing his/her thoughts, feelings or wishes. Actually, this is the moment when thoughts flow freely, without any kind of external restrictions. Unlike theater, for which language is the most important tool, cinema has the image as its strength. Soliloquies have been transposed to the screen in conventional ways: usually the performer is alone and filmed in close up while he/she reveals his/her thoughts by talking or in voice-over. Laurence Olivier's Hamlet soliloquizes parts of his speech while other parts are in voice-over; Zeffirelli chose the speaking way. Gibson's Hamlet reveals his thoughts by speaking them out, with some parts filmed in close ups. Zeffirelli's strength in filming those moments lies on the perfect match and harmony between language and image.

The first soliloquy of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is the one in I.2, in which the prince expresses all his indignation towards his mother's hasty marriage to his uncle:

Hamlet: O that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew,
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter. O God, God,
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't, ah fie, 'tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed, things rank and gross in nature

Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead – nay not so much, not two –
So excellent a king, that was to this
Hyperion to a satyr, so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly – heaven and earth,
Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on, and yet within a month –
Let me not think on't; frailty, thy name is woman –
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she followed my poor father's body
Like Niobe, all tears, why she, even she –
O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason
Would have mourned longer – married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules – within a month,
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her gallèd eyes,
She married. Oh most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets.
It is not, nor it cannot come to good.
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tonge. (*HAMLET,* I.2.129-159)

In Zeffirelli's adaptation, Gertrude leaves the chamber where Hamlet is, comes down the stairs, puts her royal cloak and meets Claudius, who has been waiting for her outside the castle. Hamlet starts soliloquizing, goes to the window and, while he is talking and revealing his feelings towards his mother's marriage, he watches Gertrude and Claudius riding horses happily. Zeffirelli does not only present a text to be uttered by Hamlet, but also uses his shooting techniques in this moment.




Picture 9 - A sequence to show Hamlet watching Gertrude and Claudius's happiness. Source: HAMLET. Screenplay by Franco Zeffirelli. Mel Gibson as Hamlet, Glenn Close as Gertrude. USA: Icon Production, 1990. 1 DVD (115 min).

There is no space left for the viewers' imagination, the director shows that the marriage and his mother's happiness with his uncle disturb the prince's state of mind. When the royal couple is filmed from the window where Hamlet is, the spectators see the same scene, from the same angle Hamlet does. The audience is not restricted to listening to what anguishes Hamlet, but also observes it, sharing the same view from the prince's window.

In the "to be or not to be" monologue:

Hamlet: To be, or not to be, that's the question –
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep –
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to – 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep –
To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there's the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause. There's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life,
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th'unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue to resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action. Soft you now,

The fair Ophelia. – Nymph, in thy orisons
Be all my sins remembered. (*HAMLET,* III.1.56-89)

the matching between meaning and image seems to follow a more complex pattern. Zeffirelli transposes Hamlet's most famous soliloquy, materializing the death theme in the speech into the setting. In addition, the director seems to go beyond it, materializing also the psychological atmosphere of the scene. In a more superficial glance at that moment when Hamlet wonders about life and death in a mausoleum, it may be concluded that he went to a place where the contact with physical death is an attempt to feel death somehow. However, Zeffirelli's scene in the mausoleum seems to mean more than just Hamlet's attempt to approach death.

Zeffirelli could have filmed the "to be or not to be" soliloquy showing action itself, as Michael Almereyda did with the explosions displayed on the large TV screens spread over the video club. But in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* there is no physical illustration of action, except for Gibson's image and the intertextual relationship spectators may establish with it on screen. Zeffirelli seems to focus on a journey made by Hamlet into his conscience and the dark royal mausoleum may be an allegory to Hamlet's mind. That place was the very first setting in the film, the place where Old Hamlet was buried. Hamlet comes down the stairs and walks into the dark place, where he is surrounded by tombs and skeletons. The way Hamlet comes down to the place seems to show his entering his dark mind, where his conflicts and doubts live. There, deep inside, the soliloquy is developed.

Picture 10 - A sequence to show Mel Gibson performing Hamlet's "To be or not to be". Source: HAMLET. Screenplay by Franco Zeffirelli. Mel Gibson as Hamlet, Glenn Close as Gertrude. USA: Icon Production, 1990. 1 DVD (115 min).

Hamlet seems to be the only life surrounded by, and contrasting with, all dead elements present in that scene. Zeffirelli's monologue goes up to "And lose the name of action", Ophelia's name is not included in it. Therefore, it suggests that at that moment, Hamlet's mind belongs just to him and his reflections inside it; there is no place for anybody else. In the end, he places himself in front of the exit and the daylight. He is ready to come up the stairs and leave that dark and claustrophobic setting as if he was coming back to his physical world. While in the theater that dark atmosphere would be built mostly through words, Zeffirelli takes the spectators inside Hamlet's state of mind through images. The visual power of this scene and Shakespeare's eloquence allowed him to innovate and go beyond the challenge of revealing thoughts, creating in the setting an allegory to the character's psychological state of mind.

Claudius's soliloquy confessing his crime

Claudius: Oh my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will.
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,
And like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer but this two-fold force,
To be forestalled ere we came to fall,
Or pardoned being down? Then I'll look up,
My fault is past. But oh, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder'?
That cannot be, since I am still possessed
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardoned and retain th'offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law. But 'tis not so above;
There is no shuffling, there the action lies
In his true nature, and we ourselves compelled
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults
To give in evidence. What then? What rests?
Try what repentance can. What can it not?
Yet what can it when one cannot repent?
Oh wretched state! Oh bosom black as death!
Oh limed soul that struggling to be free
Art more engaged! Help, angels! – Make assay:
Bow stubborn knees, and heart with strings of steel
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe.
All may be well. (*HAMLET,* III.3.36-72)
[he kneels]

is partially present in Zeffirelli's adaptation. Franco Zeffirelli opts for filming the scene by placing Claudius in front of an altar with the picture of Jesus Christ. Zeffirelli's Claudius utters the first two verses of the soliloquy – "Oh my offense is rank, it smells to heaven; / it hath the primal eldest curse upon't, a brother's murder." (*HAMLET*, III.3.36-38) – then, he kneels praying, while Hamlet watches him.

In *Hamlet 2000*, four soliloquies are uttered by Hamlet and one by Claudius. All of them are worth being explored because Almereyda develops them in a peculiar way. The first soliloquy uttered by Ethan Hawke's Hamlet is the one when Hamlet shows all his despise regarding his mother's hasty marriage. Unlike Gibson, whose speech is clear when he soliloquizes Hamlet's lines, Hawke's Hamlet will hardly ever say a word while he is soliloquizing. As he fits the figure of an introspective Hamlet, the audience only knows about Hamlet's thoughts and feelings because in voice-over we listen to the protagonist revealing his inner thoughts. However, that cannot be considered an innovative attempt by Almereyda, because soliloquizing in voice-over was often used by other directors, such as Laurence Olivier. Almereyda's great contribution lies in showing through images exhibited on the TV screens spread over the settings the feeling, the thoughts and the psychic state of the character. When Hamlet speaks his "this too too solid[14] flesh" soliloquy (*HAMLET*, I.2.129), he is in his bedroom thinking about the incestuous marriage between his uncle and his mother a short time after the death of Old Hamlet. While Hamlet remembers and speaks how his father was an excellent husband to Gertrude, he simultaneously watches images of his parents strolling together. At that moment, Almereyda uses the image to materialize the thoughts of the character. The images of Gertrude and Old Hamlet together along with the uttered words by Hamlet work as if we, spectators, were inside the prince's mind, seeing what is crossing his ideas at that moment.

"To be or not to be" is the following soliloquy in *Hamlet 2000*, and it also calls the viewer's attention for its unusual way of showing the inner conflict in the young prince. However, before the soliloquy is actually uttered, the audience has its expectation increased by two scenes – which are analyzed in detail in the following section – that provide in advance signs of the "to be or not to be" moment: the first one is the scene of a monk who is shown in Hamlet's TV screen talking about the importance of the "inter-be", the inter-relationship among people and nature in order "to be"; the second – three minutes later – is a

[14] José Roberto O'Shea points out in his explanatory note that this is a part in the text that raises the debate "Sallied-sullied-solid". The word "Sallied" – a variation of "assailed", "besieged" is found in the Q1 and Q2 texts, whereas in the Folio the word "solid" is used. Furthermore, O'Shea states that in 1918, Dover Wilson – an English scholar of Renaissance drama – suggested the word "sullied". (O'SHEA, 2010, p. 57)

scene in which Hamlet is in front of the TV watching himself pointing a gun at his own head and saying “to be or not to be” (*HAMLET,* III.1.56) repeatedly. Between the gun scene and the “to be or not to be” soliloquy there is a seven-minute gap which is spent with the scene in which Polonius tells Claudius that the reason for Hamlet’s madness is the love he feels for Ophelia. Then, the soliloquy finally starts.

Unlike any other adaptation of the Shakespearean play, Almereyda places his protagonist inside a video club walking through the action movies section. While Hamlet is in black, wearing his woolen hat and getting near three wide TV screens showing scenes of destruction, fire and murder, behind him there is a sign, reading “go home happy” that he gets farther and farther from. The blue color predominates in the walls and in the DVD covers where the word “Blockbuster” can be found, and the color may refer to the feeling of sadness and melancholy felt by the character. While Hamlet goes walking along the section, the word “action” – which indicates that that section is dedicated to the action genre – appears constantly on Hamlet’s right and left sides as if it was a clamor for his physical action against his worries.

Picture 11 - A sequence to show Ethan Hawke performing Hamlet’s “To be or not to”. Source: HAMLET 2000. Screenplay by Michael Almereyda. Ethan Hawke as Hamlet, Diane Verona as Gertrude. USA: Double A Films, 2000. 1 DVD (134 min).

In the “to be or not to be” scene, the images on the TV screens suggest more than a simple look at a movie whose scenes are normally shown in a video club. They work to illustrate the psychological state of the protagonist and make it visible to the audience. Although those destruction scenes with fire, shots and guns do not make any difference to the protagonist at that moment, they do for the audience of *Hamlet 2000*. Besides the splendid idea of placing the protagonist in a video club surrounded by blockbusters, Almereyda uses the image on the screens to allude to the conflict and the internal action inside Hamlet that contrast with his lack of physical action and even with his calm and carefree walk.

Hamlet starts soliloquizing in voice-over, therefore the effect produced by that resource is that the audience is listening to the protagonist’s thoughts. When Hamlet changes aisles he is about to say “Ay there’s the rub” (*HAMLET,* III.1.65), and from that moment on the monologue is spoken by the character. While Hamlet is considering dying as the solution to all his problems the voice-over is used in the scene, but when he considers that death may

not be the end his anguish seems to increase and the necessity of vocalizing his thoughts appears.

The third soliloquy in Almereyda's *Hamlet 2000* is the one dedicated to the role of the actor when Hamlet compares himself to an actor and admires the actor's strength for acting out of a false motive whereas he, whose motives are strong and real, cannot move:

Hamlet: Ay so, God bye to you. Now I am alone.
O what a rogue and peasant slave am I!
Is it not monstrous that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit
That from her working all his visage waned,
Tears in his eyes, distraction in's aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
With forms to his conceit? And all for nothing?
For Hecuba!
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,
And cleave the general earwith horrid speech,
Make mad the guilty and appal the free,
Confound the ignorant, and amaze indeed
The very faculties of eyes and ears. Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing – no, for a king,
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damned defeat was made. Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain, breaks my pate across,
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face,
Tweaks me by th'nose, gives me the lie i'th'throat
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha, 'swounds, I should take it, for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-livered, and lack gall
To make oppression bitter, or ere this
I should ha' fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!
Oh, vengeance!
Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave,
That I, the son of the dear murdered,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must like a whore unpack my heart with words,
And fall a-cursing like a very drab,
A scullion!
Fie upon't, foh! About, my brains. Hum, I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have by the very cunning of the scene
Been struck so to the soul, that presently
They have proclaimed their malefactions;
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks,
I'll tent him to the quick. If I do blench,
I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
May be a devil – and the devil hath power
T'assume a pleasing shape. Yea, and perhaps,
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,

> As he is very potent with such spirits,
> Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds
> More relative than this. The play's the thing
> Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king. (*HAMLET*, II.2.501-558)

The soliloquy ends by Hamlet deciding that "the play is the thing" that he will use to "catch the conscience of the king" (*HAMLET*,, II.2.558). In fact, in Shakespeare's play that soliloquy comes before the "to be or not to be" passage, whereas in the movie Almereyda displaces it and places the monologue as the third one[15]. Unlike the other movies in which Hamlet usually utters that soliloquy looking at the actors, such as in Zeffirellli's, Almereyda's protagonist looks at a movie scene on the screen of his camera. Then, the scene shifts to Hamlet, who is in front of the computer and the TV. While the idea of using a play to check Claudius' reaction is introduced, Hamlet edits in the computer an image of a yellow flower. On his right side, the TV screen exhibits an image of a man dressed in Roman style with a skull on his hand. At that moment, Hamlet is working on those images – editing and cutting them – since they will be part of the montage he is creating to show Claudius.

The fourth soliloquy in *Hamlet 2000* is the one in which Claudius confesses his crime. After telling Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to take Hamlet to England and being aware that Polonius was going to eavesdrop on Hamlet and Gertrude's conversation in her chamber, Claudius is alone confessing his crime and kneeling. In Almereyda's movie, it is Halloween and before entering his limousine, Claudius comes across with a child dressed like a ghost who tries to scare him. To understand the meaning of that child dressed like a ghost at that moment it is important to highlight that the scene takes place right after the movie – *The Mousetrap* – presentation. Therefore, the meeting with the ghost kid suggests that Claudius is persecuted by his crime. Furthermore, it also brings a comic atmosphere to the scene. Claudius is inside his limousine, he talks to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern on the phone. Hamlet is in the driver's seat listening to everything and to Claudius's confession. That is the moment when the prince could kill his stepfather by pointing a gun at Claudius's head. As in the play, Hamlet's attempt is stopped; he steps out of the car and goes to meet his mother in her bedroom. Almereyda's Claudius utters more than the Claudius played by Alan Bates in Zeffirelli's adaptation, but part of the soliloquy uttered by Kyle MacLachlan is physically uttered while part of it is in voice-over.

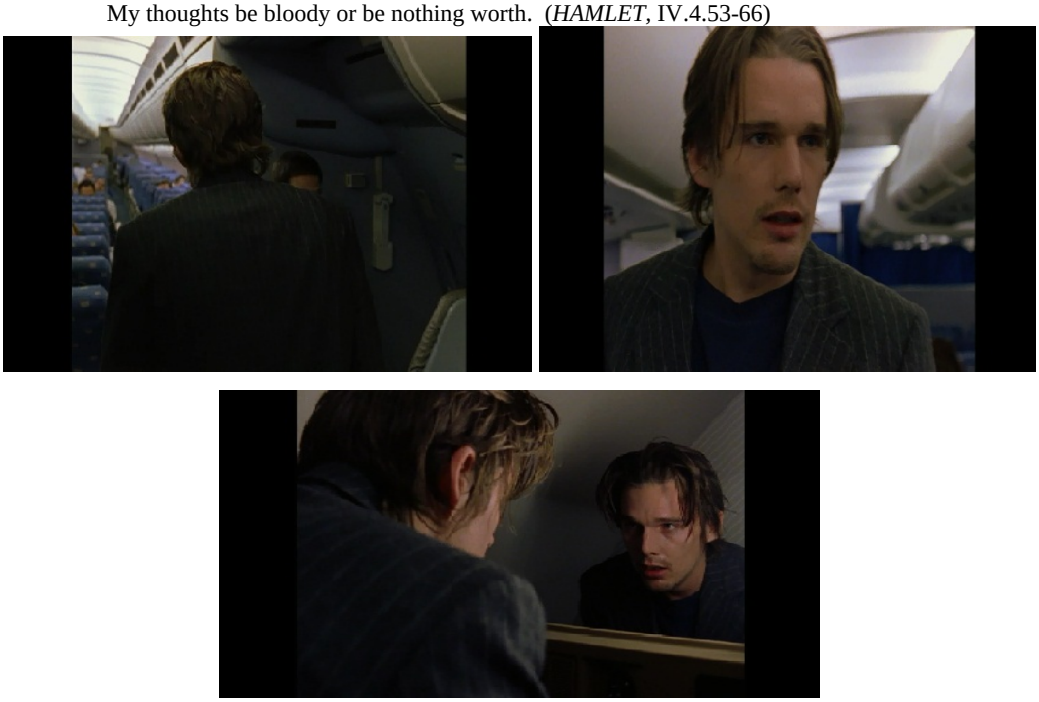
The last soliloquy in the play takes place right before Hamlet's departure to England.

[15] In *Q1*, the order of the soliloquies is different from the order in the Folio. In *Q1* both the "to be or not to be" and the soliloquy dedicated to the role of the actor come in act II. The "to be or not to be" comes first, though. In the Folio, the soliloquy about the role of the actor is placed in act II.2 whereas the "to be or not to" can be found in act III.1. Therefore, both Zeffirelli and Almereyda, who are following the Folio text, at that moment opt for the order found in *Q1*.

Hamlet: How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, give us not
That capability and god-like reason
To fust in us unused. Now whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on th'event –
A thought which quartered hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward – I do not know
Why yet I live to say this thing's to do,
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me.
Witness this army of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit with divine ambition puffed
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death and danger dare,
Even for an egg-shell. Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father killed, a mother stained,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep, while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That for a fantasy and trick of fame
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain. Oh from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth. (*HAMLET,* IV.4.32-66)

In that monologue he seems to bring back all his reflections but decides, in the end, that that is the time to finally take his revenge because, after all, he has nothing else to lose: "oh from this time forth, / my thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth." (*HAMLET,* IV.4.65-66). Michael Almereyda's setting is the airplane which is taking Hamlet to England. This is the first time in the movie that the prince soliloquizes without the presence of any kind of gadget that could interact with him and his thoughts. In the airplane, Hamlet stands up and walks to the restroom. While he is walking, the viewer cannot see his face because the camera only shows his back. Therefore, it is impossible to know if he is uttering the lines or if the voice-over resource is being used. The camera then shows the front part of his body, and it is now possible to see that he is clearly speaking the lines. Inside the restroom, Hamlet looks in the mirror and speaks to himself. That scene suggests that for the first time in the movie he does not see his image mediated by a screen, but the moment he keeps on looking in the mirror the protagonist seems to be face to face with himself and ready to say the following words:

[…] Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honor is at stake. How stand I then,
That have a father killed, a mother stained
Excitements of my reasons and my blood
And let all sleep, (…)
From this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth. (*HAMLET*, IV.4.53-66)



Picture 12 - A sequence to show Ethan Hawke on an airplane performing Hamlet's last soliloquy. Source: HAMLET 2000. Screenplay by Michael Almereyda. Ethan Hawke as Hamlet, Diane Verona as Gertrude. USA: Double A Films, 2000. 1 DVD (134 min).

That is the way chosen by Almereyda to depict the change in the character occurring from act four to act five. From that moment on, in the play and in Almereyda's adaptation, the prince is different, that soliloquy seems to be the last confrontation between the character and his inner self. The Hamlet who comes back from England is clearly the one whose intention of accomplishing the revengeful deed is taken and should not take long to make it happen.

In short, the soliloquies are one of the most difficult parts in the challenge of transposing a print text to the screen. Transposing soliloquies demands ability and creativity to go against Cliché #2 about the capacity of adapting from the telling to the showing mode studied by Hutcheon. According to her, the cliché states that "[…] language, especially literary fiction, with its visualizing, conceptualizing, and intellectualized apprehension, "does" interiority best; the performing arts, with their direct visual and aural perception, and the participatory ones, with their physical immersion, are suited to representing exteriority. […]" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 56). Both Zeffirelli and Almereyda show in their adaptations that the

showing mode is able to express interiority. Zeffirelli's way of making the thoughts and feelings filmed is basically through the setting, the lighting design and camera angles. Almereyda uses the images of image – the TV image, camera image and the photos – in an attempt of making interiority materialized. In Byrge's opinion – which I totally agree with –, "What makes this particular Hamlet so distinctive and so vital is the way in which the images give full body to the language. Emotions are pitched to the fullest range by sharply selected camera angles and varied depth of focus."[16]

2.9 Focusing on cuts and additions: adding and cutting scenes and characters

The necessity and demand for creation are part of the adapter's role – after being an interpreter first – in the process of adaptation; therefore, being an adapter implies being a creator. Linda Hutcheon states that the "adapted text, therefore, is not something to be reproduced, but rather something to be interpreted and recreated, often in a new medium. It is what one theorist calls a reservoir of instructions, diegetic, narrative, and axiological, that the adapter can use or ignore, for the adapter is an interpreter before becoming a creator" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 84). Furthermore, it is important to reflect upon Abbott's comment regarding the role of the adapter: "usually adaptations, especially from long novels, mean that the adapter's job is one of subtraction or contraction; this is called 'a surgical art' for a good reason" (ABBOTT *apud* HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 19). Linda Hutcheon and the quotations mentioned above are important to reflect about the additions and subtractions in Zeffirelli's and Almereyda's *Hamlets* and also to consider the contributions brought by those adapters' choices to the meaning of their movies.

When the subject at stake is addition and cutts in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, two main aspects of the film must be brought to light: the opening scene and the absence of Fortinbras. The opening scene and its contribution to Zeffirelli's adaptation have already been approached in the section dedicated to the themes of the movies. It has also been said that the scene is neither present in the *First in-Quarto* nor in the *Folio*. However, it is relevant to spotlight that Old Hamlet's funeral is an addition created by Zeffirelli to show that those members of the monarchy are going not only through a family crisis – the death of a father and the union of a mother with an uncle –, but also that this represents a break with the normal course of

[16] Available at <http://www.designol.com/AA_Films/hamlet_hollywood.html>. Accessed on December 23rd, 2011.

succession: the king's brother gets the throne instead of the legitimate prince. Therefore, it has an objective and practical function in the first minutes of the movie.

The absence of Fortinbras and how much of Shakespeare's text remains in Zeffirelli's adaptation – the issue of the text used by both Zeffirelli and Almereyda is approached in the following section: "Language and Shakespeare" – are topics that contribute to the ferocity of the critics in attacking Zeffirelli's film. Liana de Camargo Leão[17], for instance, judges the adaptation as an apolitical movie which does not contribute to any reflection upon power and corruption in the kingdom: "[…] ao eliminar o contexto político da peça, Zeffirelli suprime qualquer reflexão sobre o poder e a corrupção no reino, temas centrais da peça" (LEÃO, 2008, p. 287). My suggestion is not to look at the movie as if the political discussion had been eliminated from it, but restricted to national politics alone. In other words, Zeffirelli seems to focus on the family problem and the political power that does not go to Hamlet's hand but to Claudius's first. However, leaving Fortinbras out of the plot configured a cut of one of the themes brought by the play, but does not mean a mutilation or a violation to the play itself.

Michael Almereyda offers more, in terms of significant cuts and additions, in his film. The presence of Fortinbras is something that must be spotlighted in his adaptation. The presence of the prince of Norway is not physical – the character does not appear in flesh and blood to say anything, as opposed to what he does in the play. Fortinbras's presence works like an atmosphere of threat and rivalry which the business companies usually go through in the market. The prince of Norway appears three times in Almereyda's film: his first apparition is through a picture on a newspaper shown by Claudius right after talking in public about his union with Gertrude and his current position as the CEO of the company. The second takes place when Hamlet is going to England by airplane and he sees an image of a man that alternates with images of men with guns as if they were playing videogames. The third time is at the end of the movie, when the news program announces that Denmark Corporation was bought by Fortinbras's company, showing the competitive world of business. Therefore, the company that had been ruled by Old Hamlet and by Claudius has as its present ruler the prince of Norway. In Almereyda, Fortinbras seems to be a force that symbolizes the ferocity of capitalism. The prince of Norway and also the city itself – that New York in which the power of money is exhaled from every part of the setting – swallow the characters, imposing a political system and a lifestyle that must be followed by people in the movie.

[17] The quotations from Liana de Camargo Leão's text "Shakespeare no cinema" are presented in their original Portuguese language.

In *Hamlet 2000*, there are two scenes added by Almereyda that deserve close attention: the monk scene – the moment when a monk on Hamlet's TV screen talks about the importance of the inter-relation among people and the impossibility of living alone – and the moment when Hamlet repeats insistently the words "to be or not to be". Both scenes share similarities and differences which add much to the understanding of the source play and the movie. Starting by the similarities, it is possible to say that both are images watched by Hamlet, therefore they are also watched by us. In addition, both scenes are shot in close up, focusing on the meaning of the word "to be" and anticipating the arrival of one of the most famous and expected moments for those spectators acquainted with the source text: the "to be or not to be" monologue.

The differences between the scenes lie in the setting and in the different meanings that the words "to be" have when applied to *Hamlet* and its protagonist. The monk scene brings a reflection upon life and the formation of the human being from the relationships established with someone else, therefore he defends the 'inter-be' – the integration among people as a necessity for human beings to exist. Besides mentioning the necessity of getting in touch with people in order to contribute to becoming oneself, the monk also mentions the importance of getting in touch with elements of nature such as the sun and the sunshine, rivers, air, trees, birds and elephants; everything that New York is not able to offer – Ophelia's flowers are *pictures* of flowers, the water in which Ophelia drowns comes from an artificial fountain –; New York can offer only loneliness, corruption and isolation. The monk says the following:

> We have the word "to be", but what I propose is the word "to inter-be". Because it's not possible to be alone, to be by yourself. You need other people in order to be. You need other beings in order to be. Not only you need father, mother but also uncle, brother, sister, society, but you also need sunshine, river, air, trees, birds, elephants and so on. So it's impossible to be by yourself, alone. You have to inter-be with everyone and everything else. And, therefore, 'to be' means "to inter-be". (HAMLET 2000, 2000)

Important discussions about the protagonist's personality and also aspects of the film are raised by the monk's speech. According to the monk, human beings need inter-relationship to contribute to their formation as individuals because it is not possible to be alone. The monk's message can be applied to Hamlet if we take into consideration the loneliness found in Shakespeare's Danish prince and strongly expressed in Almereyda's protagonist. At the moment the monk is speaking, Hamlet is alone in his bedroom listening to the monk's message but watching a short shooting of Ophelia. In the following scene, Hamlet is at a café writing some lines to Ophelia; then, he goes to her photo studio. Hamlet is face to face with

Ophelia; he gives her the letter and kisses her lips. When Polonius arrives, he leaves the apartment hastily. Therefore, the scenes that follow the monk's seem to show that Hamlet tries the "inter-be" suggested by the message on the screen, but he seems to be unable to overcome his melancholy and loneliness in order to make the "inter-be" happen effectively.

Before being uttered in the soliloquy, the words "to be" are also mentioned in a scene that is not present in the original play. Unlike the monk's scene, underlining that the meaning of the words "to be" result from interrelations, there is another use of "to be" which gets closer to its original meaning in the source text, which would be like "to live". Hamlet points a gun at his head and mouth, he is in his bedroom watching one of his videos in the camera screen which projects the image on the TV screen. In his images, the protagonist points a revolver to his mouth, at his head, at his neck then at his head again, and then he says: "to be or not to be". The prince rewinds the tape repeatedly in order to watch himself saying "to be or not to be". In other words, the scene clearly suggests that "to be or not to be" (*HAMLET*, III.1.56) implies the choice between living and dying, as is found in Shakespeare's text.

In *Hamlet 2000*, the gravediggers' scene was left out of the movie. Although an adaptation is supposed to make cuts in general, the exclusion of the gravediggers' scene did not only leave a detail out but also excluded the comic relief that the scene could have brought to the movie, the same way it brings to the play. In addition, the choice for excluding it rips out discussion about whether or not Ophelia should have a Christian burial:

> **Clown:** Is she to be buried in Christian burial, when she willfully seeks her own salvation?
> **Other:** I tell thee she is, therefore make her grave straight. The crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.
> **Clown:** How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defense?
> **Other:** Why, 'tis found so.
> **Clown:** It must be *se offendendo,* it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act, and an act hath three branches – it is to act, to do, to perform. Argal, she drowned herself wittingly.
> **Other:** Nay, but here your Goodman delver –
> **Clown:** Give me leave. Here lies the water – good. Here stands the man good. If the man go to this water and drown himself, it is will he, nill he, he goes – mark you that. But if the water come to him, he drowns not himself. Argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.
> **Clown:** Ay marry is't, crowner quest law.
> **Other:** Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.
> **Clown:** Why, there thou sayst – and the more pity that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even-Christen. Come, my spade; there is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and gravemakers; they hold up Adam's profession. (*HAMLET,* V.1.1-26)

In Almereyda, Hamlet comes back from England, goes to Horatio's place and then goes to the cemetery where he sees Ophelia's funeral. The image of a gravedigger is shown but there are

no lines uttered. Besides the doubt about how Ophelia killed herself, not presenting the gravediggers' scene means closing the door for discussions of privilege and social class, such as the one raised by the Marxist critic Michael D. Bristol in his 'Funeral Bak'd-Meats': Carnival and the Carnivalesque in *Hamlet*", for example.

As was said above, the adapter cannot fail to be an interpreter and then a creator. Actually, it is a basic requirement pointed out by Hutcheon in her introduction: "[…] what is involved in adapting can be a process of appropriation, of taking possession of another's story, and filtering it, in a sense, through one's own sensibility, interests, and talent. Therefore, adapters are first interpreters and then creators" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 18). The scenes and characters added and cut by Zeffirelli and Almereyda could not be in the films to avoid an overcharge of meaning due to language, film length time or because those scenes or characters – such as Fortinbras in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* – would not fit the plot and the theme selected to be developed by the directors. On the other hand, those added scenes and characters would contribute to the whole meaning of the film. Therefore, we can conclude that cuts and additions are unavoidable in any adapting process.

2.10 Focusing on language / Shakespeare's text: the canonical text

According to Russell Jackson, "the most obvious difference between a screenplay and the text of an Elizabethan play is the number of spoken words: in writing for the mainstream cinema it is axiomatic that dialogue should be kept to a minimum" (JACKSON, 2000, p. 16). In addition, Jackson also states that Shakespearean movies usually have used no more than 25-30 percent of the original text. Despite some attempts at transposing the full length of the Shakespearean text to the screen – such as Brannagh's four-hour *Hamlet* (1996) -, a mainstream movie must present a text reduction for two main reasons: to avoid overloading the movie with semantic units and to make the film fit in two hours at the most. Both Franco Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* and Michael Almereyda's *Hamlet 2000* present text reductions in their screenplay.

Trying to adapt the Shakespearean text means to deal with a text that is enormously rich in terms of poetic images. Actually, language was the resource that Shakespeare could count on to make his audience visualize in their minds the setting and the atmosphere that were not available for Elizabethan plays. Considering the transposition from print text to visual images, much of what was listened to from the Shakespearean poetry on stage must be transformed from words into images by the adapter. Therefore, according to Fernanda

Teixeira de Medeiros in her article “Três bons encontros entre o cinema e a poesia de Shakespeare” it is important that the text is not entirely present in the screenplays of adaptations from Shakespeare’s plays; otherwise the movie may run the risk of being unnecessarily overloaded with semantic elements (MEDEIROS, 2007, p. 44).

Despite the necessity of text reduction in the screenplay, adapters are frequently criticized by leaving out parts of the original text. Zeffirelli’s adaptation, for instance, has been criticized for the cuts in language in *Hamlet*. Ace Pilkington, for example, criticizes the adapter for using thirty-seven percent of the original text and classifying the cuts as “more than harsh” (PILKINGTON, 1995, p. 167). The critic also blames the director for his rearrangements and rewritings. Pilkington says that Zeffirelli’s *Hamlet* is part of the purists’ catalogue of seven deadly edits “for replacing words with others which are supposedly easier for his audience to grasp and by inserting entirely new lines for the same reason” (PILKINGTON, 1995, p. 167, 168). The critic considers that Zeffirelli’s enterprise in popularizing Shakespeare – such as replacing the word “Minerva” by “goddess” in order to facilitate the audience’s understanding – denotes that the adapter underestimates the intelligence of his audience.

Jay Halio displays a different view from Pilkington’s regarding the cutting and altering of the text. According to Halio, “cutting or otherwise altering the text – transposing passages or scenes, adding characters or even dialogue – may help simplify the text and clarify the interpretation […]” (HALIO, 1988, p. 10). Halio’s words also contribute to understand the necessity of cuts and alterations in language made by the adapters in their movies. We cannot forget that cinema is an art for which image is the basis. Thinking and analyzing Shakespeare in theatrical performance, Halio’s considerations regarding performing Shakespeare can also be applied to performances for the screen:

> The first step is realizing that the script used in the theater is never precisely the same as the text published in whatever edition the theatergoer may have read. There will always be a certain amount of change made by a theatrical editor, adapter, or script ‘doctor’: words, lines, perhaps whole speeches and, in some cases, whole scenes will be deleted; sometimes a modern word will be substituted for the word that the editor considers archaic or otherwise undesirable; occasionally there will be transpositions of speeches or scenes to create a new pattern of structure or meaning; in extreme cases there will be additions to the original text, whether in the form of songs, extended pantomimes, or actual dialogues. (HALIO, 1988, p.4)

Therefore, the cuts and rewritings made in Zeffirelli’s *Hamlet* can also be justified by the transposition to a visual medium and for aiming at an average, popular audience.

Michael Almereyda, as any other adapter, cuts Shakespeare’s original text and displaces utterances. However, what calls attention and raises curiosity in Almereyda’s

adaptation regarding language is the choice of using Shakespeare's text – in 17th-century English – in a 21st-century setting. Almereyda updates *Hamlet* in terms of setting, adapting the play to a contemporary New York city, but uses Shakespeare's original text. The adapter managed that alternation in the following way: every line the characters speak derives from the 17th-century text. But, when radio, the TV announcements or the taxi's security warning are heard, it is contemporary American English that reaches the audience.

Following a logical way of thinking, adapting a 17th-century play to a contemporary setting should require updating the language from renaissance English to contemporary English. Halio states that "[…] one of the important gains in changing settings has not been often enough stressed, that is, the advantage in replacing literalistic attitudes toward the plays and their interpretation with more flexible and versatile ones. While altering time-periods may require some adjustments in the text, the changes may not have to be substantial" (HALIO, 1988, p.25). Halio says that the change of setting "may" – not "must" – come along with a change or an updating in language. Almereyda chooses not to update Shakespeare's text and one of the effects produced is a feeling of untouchability and unchangeability in the Shakespearean text. It does not matter when in history Shakespeare will be performed, his language and the images will be able to communicate themselves. That position regarding Shakespeare's language is linked to the position Shakespeare occupies in the canon. Harold Bloom, in his book *The Western Canon,* considers Shakespeare's language and its linguistic power as one of the characteristics that contributes to Shakespeare's being in the center of the canon: "Shakespeare e Dante são o centro do cânone porque superam todos os outros escritores ocidentais em acuidade cognitiva, energia lingüística e poder de invenção" (BLOOM, 1994, p.52). Canonicity is probably the reason why Almereyda did not dare to rewrite or simplify the original. Furthermore, that treatment of the text suggests that problems such as corruption and isolation which were present in the original play are quite the same as those offered in our contemporary time. If that play fits 21st century problems and necessities four hundred years after being written, therefore, it contributes to the dissemination of the idea regarding the unlimited possibilities of the play.

In short, the necessity of pruning the Shakespearean text – or any other text during the process of adaptation – is quite expected when a transposition occurs from print to screen. The adapters have to be careful about the overcharge of meaning. Therefore, much of what would be said in a play-script has to be shown in the screenplay. Almereyda prunes as any other adapter. However, Almereyda's choice for keeping the Shakespearean text – while his story takes place in contemporary New York – is the main point brought by the section.

Keeping the Shakespearean text contrasting with the historical time shown on screen produces a disturbing sensation.

The points selected and analyzed in both Zeffirelli's and Almereyda's adaptations of *Hamlet* to the screen aimed at showing the different readings the adapters can provide from the same aspects in the play and how we, professionals of literature, may profit from this variety. Focusing on topics such as theme, protagonist, cast, soliloquies, settings and language it is possible to see the same point from different angles because the source text gives room to the multiple ways those points can be approached from. Definitively the films do not only contribute to a better understanding of the play but also to the unlimited possibilities that *Hamlet* and Hamlet provide to the theater and can provide to the screen. In other words, Zeffirelli and Almereyda are two more names that dismiss the idea of *one* Shakespeare and whose films should be seen as different critical texts, different readings of the same play.

3 CONCLUSION

When Hamlet addresses the actors arriving at Elsinore, he says that an excessive stage performance distorts the main function of theater:

> **Hamlet:** […] For
> anything so o'erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end both
> at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the mirror up
> to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image,
> and the very age and body of the time his form and pleasure. […] (*HAMLET,* III.2.16-20)

Hamlet believes that theatrical performances work as a powerful mirror which reflects reality itself. However, Hamlet's view about theatrical performance is highly questionable due to the impossibility of any performance to play "the truth" or even to prove its existence. Performances should be seen as mirrors showing alternative images containing different points of view of something. That is what is brought to the screen by Franco Zeffirelli and Michael Almereyda. Their biggest challenge is to show different readings of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, telling us – the audience – their points of view about the play. Their impressions and opinions delivered on the screen are an important part in the process of experiencing an adaptation. Although the audience knows the plot they are going to find in the movie, each adaptation – of *Hamlet* or of any other work – may surprise the audience by showing how the previous text was read and how distorting and new it will be like.

Analyzing both films and trying to identify the path that the directors followed to exercise intertextuality was useful to see how deep the complexity in the process of adaption from print to screen is. That complexity implies choices, selections, cuts, additions and a huge responsibility, mainly when the adapted text and its author are among the most read and commented in the Western world. Adapting Shakespeare means throwing oneself into the adventure of transposing a written text to the screen and dealing with the criticism and expectations from audience and critics about the new created work.

Both Franco Zeffirelli and Michael Almereyda were aware of the mantle of responsibility that covered their backs. However, they were quite successful in their projects. But what are the parameters that allow me to consider those adaptations successful? It is impossible not to agree with Linda Hutcheon when she states that "for an adaptation to be successful in its own right, it must be so for both knowing and unknowing audiences" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 121). Thus, I can consider those adaptations as successful ones because they are able to reach both "knowing" and "unknowing" viewers. To have read

Hamlet before is not a pre-requisite to understand the films – the unknowing viewers will experience adaptations which present their clear proposal and which successfully work as films, filling the requirements demanded by the cinematographic medium. Furthermore, those films are entertaining and may invite the audience to read the play. To "knowing" audiences, those films could work as materials for reflection upon the play as important as critical articles showing a reading of *Hamlet*.

The topics elected as points of comparison and contrast between the movies were not only important to systematize the method of analysis, but also to think whether fragments of the films would be useful if a professional of literature wanted to use them in his/her classroom. Following the way the topics were examined here, it would be possible for a professor, for example, to select parts of the films – such as protagonist or theme – and use them focusing on how differently *Hamlet* can be read. Showing different points of view and themes about the source text, the films would be very useful to exemplify on screen several possibilities of reading that the play offers. Therefore, education would also be favored by the phenomenon of adaptation.

To conclude, my main attempt is not to convince anyone that those adaptations transposed *Hamlet* in its entirety to the screen, even because it would be something impossible to be done. It is known that during the adaptation process gains and losses are unavoidable consequences, therefore, Zeffirelli's and Almereyda's *Hamlets* are also under that rule. However, those transpositions are successful in their purpose. The directors screen Shakespeare surprising the audience by the setting, the cast, the approximation with our contemporary time and with the strong intertextuality with the source text. In terms of challenge, Franco Zeffirelli and Michael Almereyda are not the only ones who are defied. In fact, they also defy the audience and its ability to be open and accept new possibilities in order to taste the pleasure provided by "palimpsestuous intertextuality" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 21).

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