UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA
CENTRO DE COMUNICAÇÃO E EXPRESSÃO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM INGLÊS:
ESTUDOS LINGUÍSTICOS E LITERÁRIOS

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“I doubt some foul play”:
A Contextual Analysis of Four Political Productions of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*

FLORIANÓPOLIS
2019

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Tese submetida ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina para a obtenção do título de Doutora em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários.
Orientador: Prof. Dr. José Roberto Basto O’Shea

Florianópolis
2019

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Rosa, Janaina Mirian
"I doubt some foul play" : A Contextual Analysis of Four Political Productions of Shakespeare's Hamlet / Janaina Mirian Rosa ; orientador, José Roberto O'Shea, 2019.
149 p.

Tese (doutorado) - Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Centro de Comunicação e Expressão, Programa de Pós Graduação em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários, Florianópolis, 2019.

Inclui referências.

1. Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários. 2. Shakespeare, Hamlet, Performance. I. O'Shea, José Roberto. II. Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. Programa de Pós Graduação em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários. III. Título.

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O presente trabalho em nível de doutorado foi avaliado e aprovado por banca examinadora composta pelos seguintes membros:

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Certificamos que esta é a **versão original e final** do trabalho de conclusão que foi julgado adequado para obtenção do título de Doutora em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários, na área de concentração Estudos Literários e Culturais.

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Florianópolis, 28 de agosto de 2019.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was financed in part by the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior - Brasil (CAPES) - Finance Code 001. Therefore, I would first like to thank CAPES for such a crucial financial support.

I am also thankful to my supervisor Professor José Roberto O'Shea for the invaluable encouragement and inspiration throughout the years dedicated to this research. His confident guidance since my undergraduate days and as my supervisor of both MA and PhD researches at PGI/UFSC has undoubtedly provided me with the appropriate tools to pursue my academic goals.

My thanks to Professors Beatriz Kopschitz Bastos, Maria Lúcia Milléo Martins, and Cláudia Junqueira de Lima Costa for the inestimable knowledge and dedication demonstrated during the courses at PGI/UFSC, as well as for being part of my defense committee. I would also like to thank Professor Anna Stegh Camati from UNIANDRADE who kindly accepted the invitation to be part of the defense committee.

Special thanks to Professor Michael Dobson at the Shakespeare Institute, and Michelle Devereux at the University of Birmingham who warmly welcomed me during my four-month research period at the Shakespeare Institute in 2017. I also thank the staff at the Shakespeare Centre Library who attentively aided me in the process of collecting valuable research material.

I would also like to thank Marcio Meirelles who thoughtfully accepted being interviewed via Skype in January, 2019, besides providing access to the material related to his production of *Hamlet*.

Finally, I warmly thank my parents and family for the undeniable support. To my sister Ketlyn, my heartfelt thanks for being there when I needed in this incredible and memorable journey.

RESUMO

O problema discutido nesta investigação abrange a análise de quatro produções de *Hamlet* com relação às suas abordagens referentes a específicos contextos políticos e históricos. Três montagens da Royal Shakespeare Company foram selecionadas, a saber, as dirigidas por Peter Hall (1965), Steven Pimlott (2001) e Michael Boyd (2004). A produção brasileira da peça dirigida por Marcio Meirelles (2015) também foi incluída neste estudo. O *Hamlet* de Hall debate questões relacionadas a elementos significativos da Guerra Fria, enquanto que a produção de Pimlott aborda situações relacionadas com a eleição presidencial nos Estados Unidos em 2000. Quanto ao trabalho de Boyd, a produção trata dos assuntos de espionagem e da crise de sucessão na Era Elisabetana. Já o *Hamlet* de Meirelles, encenado no Teatro Vila Velha, em Salvador, Bahia, e que fez uso da tradução do Primeiro In-Quarto por José Roberto O'Shea, explora questões referentes às especulações iniciais do impeachment da ex-presidente Dilma Rousseff e às atividades do Movimento Passe Livre. Cenas específicas da peça foram selecionadas com o intuito de investigar a abordagem crítica de tais assuntos. Sobre o arcabouço teórico, este estudo baseia-se na noção de *performance text*, segundo Marco De Marinis, a qual trata de aspectos relacionados à contextualização de produções teatrais. Para a análise dos elementos visuais nas montagens, noções de Dennis Kennedy são utilizadas, assim como o conceito de *rescripting* de Alan Dessen é aplicado para o estudo dos aspectos verbais. Todas as produções analisadas propiciam valiosos diálogos entre elementos de peça e os assuntos contextuais mencionados, oferecendo uma crítica aguda e pontos de vista específicos sobre questões políticas cruciais e contemporâneas, além de proporem um exame referente à repercussão de tais circunstâncias.

Palavras-chave: Shakespeare. *Hamlet*. Performance.

ABSTRACT

The problem discussed in this investigation concerns the analysis of four productions of *Hamlet* in relation to their approach to specific political and historical contexts. Three stagings from the Royal Shakespeare Company were selected, that is, the ones directed by Peter Hall (1965), Steven Pimlott (2001), and Michael Boyd (2004). The Brazilian production of the play directed by Marcio Meirelles (2015) was also included in the study. Hall's *Hamlet* addresses issues regarding significant elements of the Cold War, whereas Pimlott's staging approaches situations connected with the 2000 American presidential election. In relation to Boyd's work, the production stresses the subjects of espionage and the succession crises in the Elizabethan Era. As for Meirelles's *Hamlet*, which was performed at Teatro Vila Velha, in Salvador, Bahia, and made use of José Roberto O'Shea's translation of the First Quarto, the production explores issues related to the initial speculations concerning the impeachment of former President Dilma Rousseff and the activities of Movimento Passe Livre. Specific scenes from the play were selected in order to investigate the critical approach to such subjects. Regarding the theoretical framework, this study draws on Marco De Marinis's notion of *performance text*, which addresses matters that have to do with the contextualization of theatrical productions. For the analysis of the visual elements in stagings, Dennis Kennedy's notions on such aspects are utilized, as well as Alan Dessen's concept of *rescripting* for the study of the verbal aspects. All analyzed productions provided a valuable dialogue between elements in the play and the aforementioned contextual issues, keenly offering criticism and particular viewpoints about pressing contemporary political matters, besides proposing an examination of the repercussion of such circumstances.

Keywords: Shakespeare. *Hamlet*. Performance.

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"All this I can truly deliver"[1]:
Introduction

"And let me speak to th' yet unknowing world
How these things came about."[2]

Throughout centuries William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has caught the attention of diverse audiences. David Bevington (2014, p. vii) in *Murder Most Foul* clarifies that "the play is able to speak to persons and societies of all nations and all ages who have turned to it for better understanding of themselves." The contemporary reverberation of the play is emphasized by Bevington (2014, p. 199), as he states that "our conversation with the play shows no signs of slowing down. We continue to reinvent *Hamlet* to this day." Most importantly, it is relevant to take into account the subject of contextualization in performances of the play, as such studies can illuminate the impact of significant issues regarding cultural, social and political scenarios. Drawing on Marco De Marinis's (1993, p. 48) notion of *performance text*, which encompasses, among several aspects, the "context of production" in theatrical stagings, I investigate four productions of *Hamlet* in relation to their approach to specific political and historical contexts. For the purpose of my study, I have selected three stagings from the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC), more specifically the ones directed by Peter Hall (1965), Steven Pimlott (2001), and Michael Boyd (2004). I will also analyze a Brazilian performance of *Hamlet*, directed by Marcio Meirelles (2015).

In regards to the approach to political matters in productions of *Hamlet*, it seems that such an aspect has been rather overlooked in British stagings of the play. Thompson and Taylor (2017, p. 121) mention that "attempts to politicize the play in Britain have been more muted and more spasmodic." Also, Robert Hapgood comments on the general lack of commitment regarding the subject of politics by British theater directors at the

[1] Line spoken by Horatio in the Second Quarto of *Hamlet* (5.2.369). *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* is extant in three early texts: the First Quarto (Q1) (1603), the Second Quarto (Q2) (1604), and the First Folio (F1) (1623). Significant differences in terms of length, structure, characterization, and stage directions can be found in the aforementioned versions. As this investigation does not endeavor to examine the intricate differences among the three texts, I shall refer to textual variations only when necessary or helpful for supporting or illustrating my argumentation. Since I do not intend to use a conflated edition of *Hamlet*, all quotations from Q2 in this study are taken from the Arden Shakespeare edition of *Hamlet*, and quotations from Q1 and F1 are taken from the Arden Shakespeare edition of *Hamlet: The Texts of 1603 and 1623*, both edited by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (see References).

[2] Lines spoken by Horatio in the Second Quarto of *Hamlet* (5.2.363-364).

beginning of the twenty-first century. Hapgood (2014, p. 75) emphasizes their "refusal […] to engage the political dimensions of the play," and continues by stating that "for his version in 2000, Peter Brook significantly cut 'Prince of Denmank' from the title, and like many others of late he reverted to the earlier practice of cutting Fortinbras.[3] On the stage today, *Hamlet* has become simply a personal/family tragedy." In fact, such a scenario in which British productions do not exactly address political elements in *Hamlet* has been transformed into a stimulating challenge for my investigation, both in terms of finding and analyzing British productions that do emphasize such aspects.

In relation to foreign stagings of *Hamlet*, it is possible to highlight some notable productions that heavily invested in the discussion of political elements on stage.[4] Regarding, for instance, iconic Russian productions of the play, Grigori Kozintsev (1905-1973) directed a performance of *Hamlet* right after Josef Stalin's death in 1953, who had banned the play in Russia. Kozintsev made use of Boris Pasternak's translation of the text and emphasized the idea of opposition in a totalitarian state (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 118). Dennis Kennedy in *Looking at Shakespeare* mentions two memorable Russian performances of *Hamlet* as regards the significance of the visual in theatrical productions. The first one was staged in Moscow in 1954, and directed by Nikolai Okhlopkov (1900-1967). According to Kennedy (2001, p. 190), the aim of the production was to propose a criticism to the "Stalinist policy." Its political emphasis focused on "criticizing the strongman tactics of Soviet Communism" (KENNEDY, 2001, p. 191). The political context surrounding the production can be perceived specifically through the work of designer Vadim Ryndin (1902-1974) who "made prison the visual metaphor for the production, relying upon static and often colossal spectacle" (KENNEDY, 2001, p. 190). One of the focal points of the design was a "pair of vast metal gates or castle doors" that functioned as a wall or indoor setting which constantly portrayed an aura of "constraint or […] interdiction" (KENNEDY, 2001, p. 191-92).

The second production mentioned by Kennedy (2001, p. 193) is the one directed by Yuri Lyubimov (1917-2014), which staged in Moscow in 1971 and is described as "an event of major political and theatrical importance." Hamlet, played by Vladimir Vysotsky

[3] Surely, as Fortinbras can be considered a markedly politicized character in the play, his absence certainly decreases the opportunity of addressing a critical approach on political matters. In Chapter 2, I briefly comment on the removal and eventually reappearance of Fortinbras in the stage and film history of the play.
[4] As in Chapter 2 I offer a review of the most notable Brazilian productions of *Hamlet*, some of which do approach political issues, I decided to highlight in the Introduction of this study other significant foreign stagings of the play.

(1938-1980), an actor and protest singer, emphasized the atmosphere of resistance and the overcoming of authoritarian forces. A visual device that functioned as a "signifier of constraint" was the multifaceted curtain designed by David Borovsky (1934-2006) that accumulated different purposes throughout the staging, such as "a wall, a screen, a net, the arras, a shawl for Ophelia, even the royal throne" (KENNEDY, 2001, p. 193). But more than that it was "a symbol of the hidden forces beyond the characters' power" that "favored political authority" (KENNEDY, 2001, p. 194). The curtain can be seen as a scenographic device that supplied a political texture in accordance to the contextualization of the production.

Lastly, among several others foreign politicized productions of *Hamlet*, I would like to highlight a few German stagings. Ferdinad Freiligrath (1810-1876) made use of the play on stage to reprobate the political regime in the country in 1844 (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 117-118). Following the same path, Leopold Jessner (1878-1945) directed a production that openly criticized Kaiser Wilhem II in 1926, and in which Hamlet was clearly portrayed as a "political rebel" (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 118). Also, the acclaimed play entitled *The Hamletmachine*,[5] written by Heiner Müller (1929-1995), premiered in Paris in 1977. The two monologues of the play, portrayed by Hamlet and Ophelia, "explor[ed] the plight of the intellectual under communism: Hamlet was impotent, but Ophelia was a terrorist chanting 'Love live hate and content'" (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 121). Undoubtedly, the aforementioned foreign productions offer an outstanding contribution as a critical tool by boldly approaching significant political matters.

Concerning the productions that I analyze in this study, all four emphasize political and historical circumstances. Peter Hall (1930-2017), in his staging of *Hamlet* (1965) for the Royal Shakespeare Company, addresses pertinent issues that can be related to the Cold War. According to Hall, the sense of disappointment with political engagements strongly permeates his work (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 121). This feeling of disenchantment is connected with the political context at that time, especially with events that characterized the Cold War. Thompson and Taylor (2017, p. 121) attentively explain the restrained and complex situation of Denmark in Hall's *Hamlet*, as

[5] According to the online theater program of *Hamlet*, directed by Marcio Meirelles (1954-), which is entitled *A máquina Shakespeare* (2015, p. 15) and available on the webpage "Maquina Shakespeare – Programa," the Brazilian director makes use of the translation into Portuguese of *The Hamletmachine* by Cristhine Rörigh and Marcos Renaux in his own production. In Chapter 6, I briefly include more comments on Müller's play and investigate in the scene analysis the political implications of such an addition.

they state that "Elsinore was an efficient but oppressive court, Denmark was both a prison and itself imprisoned in a state of Cold War with Norway," hinting at the political criticism of the production in relation to the aforementioned contextual conflict.

Steven Pimlott (1953-2007) also stresses political aspects in his production for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Pimlott's (2001) staging of *Hamlet* is set in contemporary times, conveying the idea of a presidential environment in Denmark, with heavily surveillance equipment and personnel (BATE; RASMUSSEN, 2008, p. 185-86). Samuel West (1966-) (2006, p. 44), who takes the part of Hamlet, explains that events related to the polemical American presidential election of 2000, in which George W. Bush became president even though he had lost the popular vote, served as a major source of inspiration. At this point it is relevant to observe that Linda Charnes (2006, p. 104), in *Hamlet's Heirs*, claims an association between the aforementioned election in the United States and the political climate in the play, as she explains that "in the immediate aftermath of the Supreme Court decision, George W. Bush […] was more like Claudius, who 'popp'd in between th' election' and Al Gore's hopes." Charnes (2006, p. 106) clarifies that "just as in *Hamlet* the Court freely goes along with Claudius's installation of himself as the new king, [and] everyone knew in America that Bush lost the popular vote." An attentive connection with such a political situation in the United States can be then critically identified in the production.

In 2004, Michael Boyd (1955-) directed a production of *Hamlet* which highlighted the subjects of espionage and the line of succession to the English throne in the Elizabethan Era, as well as the ideas of Stephen Greenblatt in *Hamlet in Purgatory*.[6] Boyd mentions that one of the purposes of the set is strongly to encourage "eavesdropping" (BATE; RASMUSSEN, 2008, p. 202). Paul Taylor (2004), in his review for the online edition of *The Independent*, explains that the production, set in Elizabethan times, presents a "politicised account of the piece" that can be associated with "the historical circumstances at the time of the play's composition." The display of a coercive "surveillance network" is also emphasized by Taylor. In fact, the subject of espionage, as Michael Neil argues, can be perceived in the play and possibly connected with the Elizabethan court's spying system. Neil (2012, p. 323-324) points out that "we should not forget that the glorified monarchy of Queen Elizabeth I was sustained by a vigorous network of spies and informers […]. Shakespeare's Elsinore, too−the castle governed by

[6] Stephen Greenblatt's book was first published by Princeton University Press in 2001.

Claudius and home to Hamlet−is full of eyes and ears." Besides, the subject of succession is also taken into account in this production, as Sarah Gristwood (2004, p. 13) in the article "Succession Crisis," published in the theater program, captures the tone of Boyd's staging by commenting on the critical dispute to the throne in Elizabethan times, even comparing it with events in *Hamlet*. Additionally, Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (2008, p. 193) in the RSC Shakespeare edition of *Hamlet* explain that Boyd was greatly inspired by Greenblatt's *Hamlet in Purgatory*, which explores the complex relationship between a Catholic ghost and a Protestant prince, among other subjects. Such an influence from Greenblatt's work certainly enriches the discussion regarding historical aspects in the production.

The Brazilian production of *Hamlet* directed by Marcio Meirelles in 2015, which premiered at Teatro Vila Velha (TVV) in the state of Bahia, approaches political issues in the country. The production made use of José Roberto O'Shea's translation of the First Quarto into Portuguese, which is, in fact, the first professional staging of Q1 in Brazil. In the online theater program, Meirelles (2015, p. 9) mentions that political situations in the country influenced the staging, such as the initial speculations concerning the impeachment of former President Dilma Rousseff and the activities of the Movimento Passe Livre (MPL).[7] The director also comments, in an interview that I carried out via Skype,[8] about the experience of working with Shakespeare's plays in the theater with a focus on political aspects by arguing that "*na verdade isso não é difícil porque Shakespeare é politico*"[9] (see appendix). This has certainly served as an inspiration in terms of developing a fierce and critical approach in his production of *Hamlet* by addressing relevant social and political issues in Brazil.

In relation to the significance of the proposed research, it encompasses four main issues. Firstly, it aims at examining RSC stagings of *Hamlet* that particularly deal with political elements, an aspect that has been often explored by productions in non-English-speaking countries, but quite disregarded on British stages, as already mentioned (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 121). This study also aims at recognizing the artistic accomplishment of Brazilian adaptations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, especially Meirelles's *Hamlet* which, as previously remarked, can be considered the first professional staging

[7] The Passe Livre Movement. Comments on this social movement are included in Chapter 6.
[8] I had the opportunity of interviewing Meirelles via Skype about his production of *Hamlet* in January, 2019. Excerpts from the interview can be found in the Appendix.
[9] The truth is that this is not difficult because Shakespeare's plays are about politics. The translations into English provided in the footnotes of this study are done by the author of this PhD research.

of Q1 in the country. Additionally, this research, which involves the study of theatrical performances of the play taking into account the issue of contextualization, more specifically in relation to political and historical situations, should give rise to a critical reflection on the particular circumstances approached in the selected productions, possibly enlightening discussions on present-day political scenarios and conflicts. As a final remark, this investigation should contribute to Shakespeare studies in performance at PPGI–UFSC, as a way to enrich the corpora of research in this field. There have previously been fifteen MA theses and six doctoral dissertations at PPGI–UFSC concerning Shakespeare in performance.

As regards the objectives of this study, the overall aim is to investigate four productions of *Hamlet* regarding the issue of contextualization. The specific objective concerns the analysis of the aforementioned stagings in relation to the approach to historical and political circumstances. For this purpose, I have selected scenes of the play in which historical and political issues can be, in my view, significantly foregrounded. I concentrate my analysis mostly on a total of three scenes for each staging, taking into account the productions' choice of text. More specifically in relation to the Second Quarto and the Folio text, I examine act 3, scenes 1 and 2, and act 5, scene 2. Concerning Q1, scenes 7, 9, and 17[10] are analyzed, as they include significant moments such as the soliloquy "To be or not to be," the play within the play, and the final duel, similarly to the aforementioned scenes in Q2 and F1. Regarding Meirelles's production, which is based on O'Shea's translation of the First Quarto of *Hamlet*, I investigate [act 2], scene 7, [act 3], scene 9, and [act 5], scene 18.[11] I have selected scenes in which historical and political issues can be foregrounded, as previously commented, particularly concerning themes such as personal struggles, scheming and intrusive observance, as well as political corruption and succession.

As for the research materials involved in this study, I make use of diversified items. Regarding the study of the three RSC productions, prompt books, theater programs, photographs, book chapters, newspapers and magazine articles, which were all collected during my four-month research period at the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-

[10] The aforementioned division of acts and scenes in Q2 is based on the Arden Shakespeare edition of *Hamlet*, whereas the divisions in Q1 and F1 are taken from the Arden Shakespeare edition of *Hamlet: The Texts of 1603 and 1623*.

[11] O'Shea (2013, p. 47) explains that, in his translation of the First Quarto, he followed the divisions presented in Albert W. Weiner's edition of Q1 (1962), which differ from the Arden Shakespeare edition of the First Quarto.

Avon in 2017, are utilized in this investigation. Since I had access to the DVD recordings of the RSC productions while visiting the Shakespeare Institute,[12] which offer a valuable source of information about the stagings, I vastly use in this study my own video descriptions of the scenes. In relation to Meirelles's *Hamlet*, I make use of some of the theoretical material collected at the Shakespeare Institute, as well as Brazilian online newspaper and magazine articles, in this case for the analysis of the critical reception. Besides, Meirelles has kindly provided full access to the online video recording and theater program of his production. I could also interview Meirelles via Skype, as previously mentioned, which certainly contributes to a better understanding of his work in *Hamlet*.

Regarding the review of literature of this Introductory Chapter, as my research concerns the study of theatrical productions of *Hamlet*, I discuss some significant issues related to performance analysis. Firstly, Marinis's notion of *performance text* is commented, followed by remarks on the visual aspects in stagings by Dennis Kennedy. Besides, the investigation of verbal elements, more specifically in relation to the terms *rescripting* and *rewrighting*, as proposed by Alan Dessen, is included, as well as W. B. Worthen's critical viewpoint on performances of Shakespeare's plays. Towards the end of this review, some relevant comments on theater audience by Susan Bennett are highlighted. Finally, the subject of the translation of dramatic texts is briefly addressed by stressing Patrice Pavis's study on the "series of concretization."

Marinis's (1993, p. 47) concept of *performance text*, presented in *The Semiotics of Performance*, comprises distinctive components related to theatrical stagings. The term refers to "every unit of discourse, whether verbal, nonverbal, or mixed." Thus the *performance text* encompasses stage-related aspects, as the critic explains that the notion "manifests a number of textual levels that are almost always materially divergent: the available verbal text, intonations and accents, mime, gestures, costumes, music, stage sets, and so on" (MARINIS, 1993, p. 79). Additionally, "the context of […] production and reception" is also incorporated in the aforementioned notion (MARINIS, 1993, p. 48). Although I do not intend to pursue a semiotic investigation of stagings of *Hamlet*, I

[12] All the aforementioned research material can be accessed at the Shakespeare Centre Library in Stratford-upon-Avon, which holds the archives of the RSC productions, and some at the Shakespeare Institute Library. Copies from the RSC video recordings at the Shakespeare Centre are not allowed, and neither are stills taken directly from such videos by users. In relation to Peter Hall's *Hamlet*, the production is not available on video recording. However, the Shakespeare Centre has an extensive archive of photographs of this particular staging.

find Marinis's concept valuable to my research, as it takes into account the issue of contextualization among several other elements in a theatrical production. Most importantly, it encourages the understanding of performances as something more than the words of a playscript.

Concerning the visual aspects of staged performances, Kennedy keenly comments on the relevance of such elements. In *Looking at Shakespeare: A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Performance*, Kennedy (2001, p. 6-9) points out that "the visual is an essential part of the theatre, even when not particularly delightful or luxurious; what an audience sees is at least as important as what it hears," and he also asserts that such aspects distinctively stimulate the investigation of "the non-literary manifestation of performance." In relation to the term *scenography*, which presents components that are crucial to the comprehension of a performance, such a term can be referred to as the "visual counterpart to the text" (KENNEDY, 2001, p. 12), proposing a balance between both visual and verbal elements. For instance, Kennedy (2001, p. 15) comments that "how Hamlet is dressed reveals as much about the style and intention of the performance as anything he says, and may well influence a spectator more than Shakespeare's poetry." In my view, the critic's comments sensibly enrich the field of investigation of Shakespeare's works in performance, as he endorses the imperative contribution of visual elements in theatrical productions.

Additionally, Kennedy offers a broader perspective on a theatrical event by commenting on other varied features that can be related to it. Kennedy (2001, p. 8) explains that "a performance in the theatre [is] itself the result of extraordinary collaboration among a disparate group of artists coming together with successive series of audiences," highlighting the diversified and valuable work of the people involved. It is relevant in this case to mention Richard Schechner's remarks in *Performance Theory*, as Schechner (1994, p. xiv) calls attention to aspects that are connected to a theatrical production, referring more specifically to what precedes a performance, such as "training, workshop, [and] rehearsals," along with its aftermath, which includes the critical reception. The act of playgoing, as Kennedy (2001, p. 9) argues, should be taken into account as part of a theatrical event, since it certainly raises observations that go beyond the consideration of playtexts:

> Spectators have rarely arrived with single-minded purpose of hearing a play; they come in addition to see an actress, a marvel of scenery, or each other. They assist at the spectacle as necessary receptors of, and as reciprocal

> generators of, a complicated and imperfectly comprehended set of signs. Their attitudes to the theatre building and the ludic space, their dress and manners, their own status in the audience, what they eat and drink at intermissions, whether they laugh or cry: all these and many more social strategies greatly affect the experience of what is so reductively called "playgoing."

O'Shea's comments in "Impossibilities and Possibilities: The Challenges of Dramatic Performance Analysis" can be related to Kennedy's views on the significance of audiences in the theater, as O'Shea (2003, p. 14) claims that "they participate in the spectacle as receptors and generators of a complicated and subjectively comprehended set of signs." Chris Morash's (2005, p. 105) remarks in the article "The Road to God Knows Where" can also be included in the discussion on the distinctive components of a theatrical event, as the critic argues that the uniqueness of a performance relies upon diversified elements that "make a night at the theatre–actors, audience, events outside the theatre." Surely, the theatrical event cannot be solely represented by the playscript, as several other factors strongly contribute to and are intensely involved in the realization of a performance on stage.

Regarding the analysis of the verbal aspect in theatrical productions, Dessen in *Rescripting Shakespeare* proposes the concepts of *rescripting* and *rewrighting*, which concern the study of the modifications in the text performed on stage. More specifically in relation to the term *rescripting*, Dessen (2009, p. 3) explains that the notion is connected with "the changes made by a director in the received text in response to a perceived problem or to achieve some agenda." As Dessen (2009, p. 3) points out, "the forms of rescripting vary widely," and some examples related to such a term include cutting characters, speeches, passages, and scenes that streamline the playscript, focusing on the conception and running time of the production. Changes in stage directions can also be considered as an example of *rescripting* (DESSEN, 2009, p. 136), as well as the removal of aspects that are associated with "mythological allusions, difficult syntax, and archaic words" (DESSEN, 2009, p. 3). As for the notion of *rewrighting*, Dessen (2009, p. 3) clarifies that the term refers to moments when "a director or adaptor moves closer to the role of the playwright so as to fashion a script with substantial differences from the original […]. Examples of *rewrighting* include presenting the three parts of *Henry VI* as two plays (or more radically one)." I find Dessen's concepts highly appropriate to my analysis of theatrical productions as they can be considered practical and efficient tools in the investigation of the verbal aspect of performances of Shakespeare's plays.

In connection with the previously mentioned notions, Dessen (2009, p. 3-4) encourages the analysis of *trade-offs* in the investigation of theatrical stagings, which distinctly explore "the pluses and minuses of a director's rescripting and rewrighting." *Trade-offs* concern the exchange of aspects in the playscript, taking into account their subsequent developments in the stagings (DESSEN, 2009, p. 4). In the analysis of Folias d'Arte's 2003 production of *Otelo* in my MA thesis, I observe a valuable example of a *trade-off* that implies political criticism regarding the Abu Ghraib prison scandal in Iraq.[13] The Brazilian staging, which was directed by Marco Antonio Rodrigues (1955-) and made use of the text translated by Maria Sílvia Betti, critically foregrounds the scenario concerning the invasion of Iraq by the United States and allies (ROSA, 2015, p. 2). The *trade-off* is described as follows:

> The *trade-off* in Folias's *Otelo* consists in the replacement of the image of a sailor who comes to deliver an urgent message to the Duke and Senators for the image of a sailor who is being tortured in order to reveal confidential information about the war. Such portrayal of torture involves *rescripting* of stage directions and words that properly intensify the depiction of cruelty. The sailor (Val Pires) in Folias's production, differently from the stage directions in Betti's translation, is already on stage with the Senators before the Duke's entrance, being seated on a chair with his hands tied and showing signs of suffering, which implies that the sailor had been previously maltreated by the Senators. Moreover, instead of saying "*Olá! Olá! Olá! Olá!*", as stated in Betti's translation, Pires's Sailor desperately screams, after being tortured by having his head submerged in a bucket full of water (ROSA, 2015, p. 46).[14]

Meanwhile, the song "The End" by the group The Doors plays in the background as an association with the Vietnam War and a reminder of the abusive power of the United States towards Iraq in 2003 (ROSA, 2015, p. 47). I argue that the aforementioned *trade-off*, along with the song, suggests a connection with the polemic episode of torture of Abu Ghraib prisoners by the American government (ROSA, 2015, p. 46-47). Dessen's notion in this case played an imperative role in the investigation of the depiction of the scene, as the global political context in which Folias's *Otelo* is inserted can be perceived, emphasizing the criticism of a contemporary issue.

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[13] As I highlight in my MA thesis, the Abu Ghraib prison was being used by the Unites States government as a place to incarcerate prisoners allegedly involved in terrorist activities, a few months after the invasion of Iraq by the United States and allies in 2003 (GREENBERG; DRATEL, 2005, p. xv). However, prisoners were in fact being tortured, as the BBC online article entitled "Q&A: Iraq Prison Abuse Scandal" explains that photographs and videos register horrifying moments of utter degradation and violence (ROSA, 2015, p. 47).

[14] According to the video recording of the production *Otelo* (2003), kindly provided by the producer Alexandre Brazil to my MA research, Val Pires (1966-) plays the Sailor, as aforementioned, Dagoberto Feliz (1960-) plays the Duke, and one of the Senators is played by Nani de Oliveira (1965-).

At this point, it is relevant to address Jay L. Halio's however debatable comments on the subject of text alteration concerning productions of Shakespeare's plays. Halio (2000, p. 11) in *Understanding Shakespeare's Plays in Performance* submits that Shakespearean texts contain an "essential structure and meaning" that can be seriously jeopardized in case of unsuccessful modifications. Such remarks denote a text-centered view on performance that relies on Shakespeare's authority. However, a challenging notion in relation to Halio's comments is proposed by Worthen (1997, p. 24) in *Shakespeare and the Authority of Performance* when he claims that "rather than reproducing the work, stage performance produces it anew" and that "performance is a mode of production, not merely a mode of enunciation." Worthen (1997, p. 23, original emphasis) continues by mentioning that "each Shakespeare performance is an independent *production* of the work, part of an emerging series of texts/performances rather than a restatement or return to a single source." Therefore, Worthen discerningly emphasizes the idea that a performance generates meaning, which contrasts with Halio's understanding that the text has an inherent essence awaiting to be discovered and performed on stage. Worthen (2003, p.23) in *Shakespeare and the Force of Modern Performance* clearly reinforces his viewpoint:

> A stage performance is not determined by the internal 'meanings' of the text, but is a site where the text is put to production, gains meaning in a different mode of production through the labor of its agents and the regimes of performance they use to refashion it as performance material.

Indeed, Worthen's opinions sensibly demystify notions related to the study of productions of Shakespeare's plays, offering valuable guidance to my investigation.

Furthermore, Worthen explores his ideas concerning the concept of *dramatic performativity*. According to Worthen (2003, p. 3), the term *performativity* refers to "the terrain between language and its enactment," a subject that was tackled by John L. Austin. Worthen (2003, p. 4) recognizes the contribution of Austin's work regarding speech acts, similarly to Marvin Carlson (1996, p. 59) in *Performance: A Critical Introduction*, as the latter highlights that Austin, along with John R. Searle, "have provided a methodology for considering language as performance." Nonetheless, Worthen (2003, p. 4) criticizes Austin's view on theatrical discourse, as it considers that utterances performed by actors on stage are "hollow" or "void." For Worthen, bearing in mind the performance of the scripted drama, his understanding of *dramatic performativity* clearly opposes Austin's

views, since it includes the construction of meanings, as Worthen (2003, p. 3) clarifies that the term has to with "the relationship between the verbal text and the conventions […] of behavior that give it meaningful *force* as performed action." In this sense, as the critic exemplifies, "a performance of *Hamlet* is not a citation of Shakespeare's text, but a transformation of it" (WORTHEN, 2003, p. 13).

In *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception*, Bennett (1997, p. 204) explores her attentive viewpoint regarding audiences' experience in the theatre. She recognizes the complexity of the subject, which, among several aspects, deeply refers to the engagement and role of the audience in theatrical productions. The significance of understanding the audience as a "subject who can think and act," that is, a "productive and emancipated spectator" becomes a crucial point in comprehending the role and contribution of the audience in a theatrical event (BENNETT, 1997, p. 1). Bennett (1997, p. vii) also calls attention to the relevance of the audiences' personal experiences in building up connections with theatrical performances:

> Indeed, part of what makes us a theatre audience is our willingness to engage with performances in ways that speak to the most intimate detail of our experience. However that relationship works, it can only do so, I believe, because of the cultural context in which any person can conceive a place in the world.

At the same time, as Bennett (1997, p. vii) argues, a theatrical performance is able to offer a valuable contribution to the audiences' "cultural experience."

Even though my research does not aim to pursue a discussion on translation issues, I shall briefly comment on Pavis's "series of concretizations," as I investigate a Brazilian production of *Hamlet*. In *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*, Pavis (1992, p. 138-139) proposes such series, which encompasses five stages, T0, T1, T2, T3, and T4, that explore the crucial modifications the translated dramatic text experience. In this case, T0 refers to "the original text," that is, T0 "is the result of the author's choices and formulations," whereas the "textual concretization" stage, T1, concerns the idea that the translator "must reconstitute the plot according to the logic that appears to suit the action, […] the system of characters […], the individual traits of each character and the suprasegmental traits of the author," along with other aspects (PAVIS, 1992, p. 139-140). T2 characterizes the "dramaturgical concretization" stage, in which the process of translation "must incorporate a coherent reading of the plot as well as the spatiotemporal indications contained in the text, the transfer of stage directions, whether by linguistic translation or

by representing them through the *mise en scene's* extralinguistic elements" (PAVIS, 1992, p. 140). The "stage concretization" of the text, T3, is related to the situation in which the translated text is enunciated on stage (PAVIS, 1992, p. 141), whilst the "receptive concretization" stage, T4, refers to the moment in which the audience is exposed to the translated text (PAVIS, 1992, p. 142). Surely, Pavis's "series of concretization" sensibly clarifies such a diligent and careful process that involves the translation of dramatic texts.

All things considered, the following Chapters concentrate on the critical review of performances of *Hamlet*, the analysis of the selected productions, and the conclusive remarks of this investigation. Therefore, in Chapter 2, I present a review of the stage history of the play taking into account notable artists and productions, mainly in the Anglo-American and Brazilian context. In Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6, I analyze Peter Hall's, Steven Pimlott's, Michael Boyd's, and Marcio Meirelles's productions of *Hamlet*, respectively, focusing on the depiction of the selected scenes and providing comments on the suggested political and historical contexts. Remarks on the critical reception of the performances, based on articles, newspapers, and magazines, are also provided. Subsequently, in Chapter 7, I offer a debate on the final comments, presenting the general and specific conclusions of the research.

Chapter 2

"We'll hear a play tomorrow"[15]:

Highlights of Anglo-American and Brazilian Performances of *Hamlet*

"The players cannot keep council−they'll tell all."[16]

Important aspects of *Hamlet* have extensively called attention of readers and theater audiences for centuries, and can still be considered relevant in contemporary times. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine (2012, p. xiv) in the Folger Library Shakespeare edition of *Hamlet* comment on the significance of the play:

> [Hamlet's] world, and Hamlet himself, continue to draw us to them, speaking to every generation of its own problems and its own yearnings. It is a play that seems particularly pertinent today−just as it has seemed particularly pertinent to any number of generations before us.

Throughout the years, uncountable theatrical productions of *Hamlet* have been performed, offering diversified approaches and stressing a considerable array of issues. As my research concentrates on the analysis of performances of *Hamlet*, this Chapter aims at reviewing the stage history of the play taking into account notable actors, directors, and productions, mainly in the Anglo-American and Brazilian contexts.

Even though this investigation does not endeavor to examine the intricate differences among the three extant texts of *Hamlet* (see Chapter 1), a brief comment on the variations presented in such texts becomes a significant starting point. In the introduction to his translation of the First Quarto of *Hamlet*[17] into Portuguese, José Roberto O'Shea (2013, p. 11) mentions that the alterations in Q1 "*enfatizam mais a ação do que a instrospecção*."[18] Renowned critics and theater practitioners such as Harley Granville-Barker (1877-1946) and William Poel (1852-1934) endorse the performance aspects of Q1, highlighting the fact that the text is more suitable for the stage than Q2 (O'SHEA, 2013, p. 14). Indeed, Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen (2008, p. 11) claim

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[15] Line spoken by Hamlet in The Second Quarto of *Hamlet* (2.2.472-73).
[16] Line spoken by Hamlet in The Second Quarto of *Hamlet* (3.2.134-35).
[17] The First Quarto of *Hamlet* was considered one of William Shakespeare's "bad quartos" (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 86). The term is proposed by A. W. Pollard and refers to "shorter, earlier, markedly different, and, in the opinion of most readers, artistically inferior versions of some Shakespeare's plays" (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 86). Nevertheless, as José Roberto O'Shea (2013, p.10) remarks, performances, editions, and studies of the so-called bad quartos have been recently produced.
[18] The alterations in Q1 emphasize more the idea of action than introspection.

that the Second Quarto "may represent a 'reading text' as opposed to a 'performance' one." As for the variations in the Folio text in comparison to Q2, Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (2017, p. 82) argue that the alterations possibly indicate a "preparation for performance […] in the theatre." O'Shea (2013, p. 24) then remarks that "*cada texto concretiza um momento distinto na historiografia cênica da peça*",[19] and encourages a focus on the examination of thematic and performance elements, proposing a constructive view in relation to the study of the variations observed in the three texts.

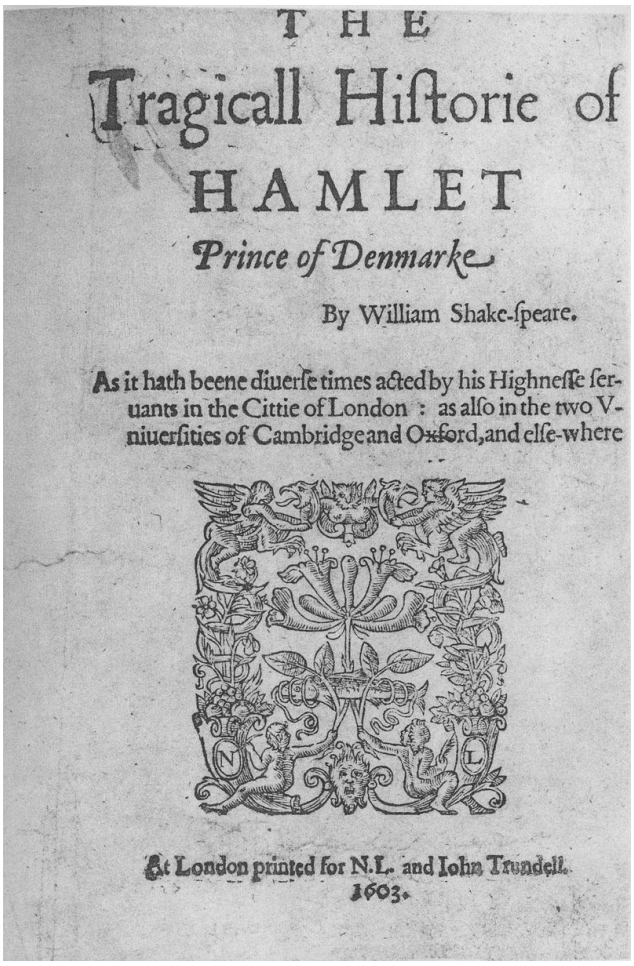
Perhaps one of the most notable alterations in the First Quarto concerning structure is the anticipation of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy. In Q1, the famous soliloquy is located in a moment equivalent to 2.2 in the other two texts, rather than in 3.1[20] (O'SHEA, 2013, p. 15). Various modern performances based on Q2 and F1 have embraced the earlier location of the soliloquy in Q1 due to the fact that it speeds the action and, therefore, seems "for their purposes more logical than the Q2/F placing in 3.1" (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 18). The performance of the play directed by Trevor Nunn (1940-) and staged at the Old Vic in 2004, the RSC production directed by Boyd in the same year, the filmic adaptation directed by Franco Zeffirelli (1923-2019) in 1990, among others, are examples of productions that have adopted the Q1 placing of the soliloquy (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 18). Additionally, the First Quarto displays stage directions that can be considered more theatrical than the ones presented in Q2 and F1 (O'SHEA, 2013, p. 17). For instance, during Ophelia's funeral, "*Hamlet salta dentro do túmulo*"[21] and quarrels with Laertes, an action that has been several times portrayed in productions that made use of Q2 or F1 (O'SHEA, 2013, p. 18), underlining performance features of Q1.

Critics have largely analyzed evidence in pursuit of the first performances of *Hamlet*. The information on the title-page of the First Quarto (see fig. 1), which states "As it hath beene diuerse times acted by his Highnesse seruants in the Cittie of London: as also in the two Vniuersities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elsewhere" (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 56) cannot be fully trusted, as Bevington (2014, p. 25) observes, though it is possible that the play went eventually on tour. Similarly to Bevington,

[19] Each text characterizes a distinctive moment in the history of the performances of the play.
[20] The soliloquy appears in [act 2], scene 7 in O'Shea's translation of the First Quarto, following Albert Weiner. In the Arden Shakespeare edition of Q1, the soliloquy is presented in scene 7.
[21] This stage direction is located in [act 5], scene 17 in O'Shea's translation. In the Arden Shakespeare edition of Q1, "Hamlet leaps into the grave" appears in scene 16.

Thompson and Taylor (2017, p. 56-57) comment on the content of the title-page of Q1 and argue that "unfortunately, no one has been able to corroborate these statements by producing hard evidence of any particular performance in London, Cambridge or Oxford." Thompson and Taylor (2017, p. 57) also call attention to Alan H. Nelson's studies on the subject, which observe that performances at Cambridge University in 1568 were apparently prohibited, as well as in 1590s and 1605-6, leading to the conclusion that the information on the title-page of the First Quarto might be false.

Figure 1 - The title-page of the First Quarto of *Hamlet*.


THE
Tragicall Hiſtorie of
HAMLET
Prince of Denmarke
By William Shake-ſpeare.
As it hath beene diuerſe times acted by his Highneſſe ſeruants in the Cittie of London : as alſo in the two Vniuerſities of Cambridge and Oxford, and elſe-where
At London printed for N.L. and Iohn Trundell.
1603.

Source: Thompson and Taylor, "Introduction"

Nonetheless, it seems that *Hamlet* was performed on September 5, 1607, on board a ship named *Red Dragon* anchored off the coast of Africa. This information was found in Captain William Keeling's notes in his journal, though there has been some disagreement among critics regarding the authenticity of this information (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 54-56). Besides, critics claim that in the early seventeenth century,

due to the existence of the text *Der bestrafte Brudermord oder Prinz Hamlet aus Dännemark*, which in English is known as *Fratricide Punished*, it is possible that productions made use of a similar version of Q1 in Germany (O'SHEA, 2013, p. 25-26). In 1626, the production *Tragoedia von Hamlet einen Prinzen in Dennemarck* was staged in Dresden by John Greene's company (HIBBARD, 2008, p. 16) with a text presenting features that strongly resembled Q1 (O'SHEA, 2013, p. 25-26). Concerning stagings of the play at the Globe, G. R. Hibbard (2008, p. 14) in the Oxford Shakespeare edition of *Hamlet* points out that "it is true that no record has come to light of its being put on at the Globe, and that we have but two references to its being staged at Court, in 1619 and 1637."

Regarding actors' performances of Hamlet, Richard Burbage (1567-1619) played the role of the prince of Denmark. He ran the Chamberlain's Men, later referred to as the King's Men,[22] along with Shakespeare and other shareholders, and was considered its leading actor (BEVINGTON, 2014, p. 26). An anonymous elegy on the actor's death, who thoughtfully praises Burbage's work on stage, mentions that he performed the role of Hamlet:

> He's gone and with him what a world are dead!
> Which he reviv'd, to be revived so,
> No more young Hamlet, old Hieronymo
> King Lear, the grieved Moor, and more beside,
> That lived in him; have now forever died
> Oft I have seen him, leap into the grave
> Smiting the person which he seem'd to have
> Of a sad lover with so true an eye
> That there I would have sworn, he meant to die;
> Oft have I seen him, play this part in jest,
> So lively, that spectators, and the rest
> Of his sad crew, whilst he but seem'd to bleed,
> Amazed, thought even then he died indeed. (apud BATE; RASMUSSEN, 2008, p. 172-73)

Burbage, who was "praised for the realism of his performances" (BATE; RASMUSSEN, 2008, p. 173), remained in the company until his death, when Joseph Taylor (1586?-1652)[23] joined the King's Men. With the advent of the English Civil War, theaters were

[22] In 1594, the Chamberlain's Men became a theatrical company, but in 1603 it was referred to as the King's Men, after King James I, also King James VI of Scotland, ascended the throne of England (BEVINGTON, 2014, p. 26).

[23] According to the *British Library* website, more specifically on the webpage entitled "Players," Joseph Taylor's date of birth is uncertain.

closed in 1642 and would only reopen with the Restoration of monarchy in 1660, as King Charles II came to the throne of England (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 100).

In the seventeenth century, William Davenant (1606-1668) proposed varied modifications in the playtext of *Hamlet*. The Duke's Company, managed by Davenant, acquired the rights to perform the play from the King's Men (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 100). Davenant's alterations were later published in the so-called Players' Quarto of 1676,[24] which nearly excludes Fortinbras's participation, as the character only appears in act 5, as well as eliminates the following passages:

> Polonius's advice to Laertes and Reynaldo, most of Laertes's advice to Ophelia, the roles of Voltimand and Cornelius, much of Rosencrantz's and Guildenstern's parts, Hamlet's advice to the players, the last thirty-eight lines of Hamlet's highly emotional interview with his mother in act 3, scene 4, Hamlet's encounter with the captain in Fortinbras's army, and parts of Hamlet's soliloquies (BEVINGTON, 2014, p. 84).

The "To be or not to be" soliloquy, however, remained intact (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 100-101). Bevington (2014, p. 84) argues that, as the play was probably considered too long to be performed on stage, some of the aforementioned alterations were possibly acquired from productions of *Hamlet* prior to 1642. In my view, the study of text alterations in stagings of *Hamlet* throughout the years provides a valuable understanding of tendencies and priorities connected with performances of the play.

Thomas Betterton (1635-1710), in his portrayal of Hamlet on stage, displayed an acting style that was considered exquisitely impactful and emotional. He played the character in the Duke's Company, and for several years, that is, from 1661 to 1709, performed the role (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 101). The actor-manager Colley Cibber (1671-1757), according to Thompson and Taylor (2017, p. 101), expressed his admiration for Betterton's Hamlet by referring to the more than emphatic reaction of the prince in the encounter with the Ghost, which differed from the usual approaches at that time. Indeed, Cibber (1822, p. 89-90), in *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber*, seemed fascinated by Betterton's meticulous and impressive display of emotions when confronting the Ghost:

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[24] Thompson and Taylor (2017, p. 79) explain that Q2 was reprinted with minor modifications in 1611 as the Third Quarto (Q3), in 1621 as the Fourth Quarto (Q4), and in 1637 as the Fifth Quarto (Q5). The Players' Quartos were also reprints of Q2 in 1676, 1683, 1695, and 1703, which "were not only adapted to suit Restoration tastes, but include sections marked to record cuts made by the Duke's Company as it acted the play at its Dorset Gardens and Drury Lane theatres" (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p.19).

> This was the light into which Betterton threw this scene, which he opened with a pause of mute amazement; then rising slowly to a solemn, trembling voice, he made the Ghost equally terrible to the spectator as to himself, and in the descriptive part of the natural emotions which the ghastly vision gave him, the boldness of his expostulation was still governed by decency, manly but not braving; his voice never rising into that seeming outrage or wild defiance of what he naturally revered. But alas! to preserve this medium, between mouthing and meaning too little, □ to keep the attention more pleasingly awake by a tempered spirit than by mere vehemence of voice, □is, of all the master-strokes of an actor the most difficult to reach. In this none yet have equalled Betterton.

The Restoration stage was intensely concerned with "arresting and memorable moments of sensation" (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 101), and Betterton's performance certainly demonstrated such aspects.

In the eighteenth century, the prominent actor-manager David Garrick (1717-1779) implemented bold innovations in the playtext of *Hamlet*. In his performances of the character during several years,[25] Garrick made use of a text based on the version prepared by John Hughs (1677-1720) and Robert Wilks (1665-1732)[26] (EDWARDS, 2014, p. 64). Hughs and Wilks's version of *Hamlet* eliminates Fortinbras's presence at the end of the play, even though the character is mentioned by others, a decision that was maintained by Garrick. In fact, as Philip Edwards (2014, p. 64) in the New Cambridge Shakespeare edition of *Hamlet* points out, "Fortinbras does not reappear in the play's ending until Forbes Robertson's production in 1897." Garrick practically rewrote the playtext in 1772, entirely modifying several elements. For instance, the gravediggers, the burial of Ophelia, and act 5 were removed, Laertes survived, the deaths of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were not mentioned, among others (BEVINGTON, 2014, p. 99-100). According to Bevington (2014, p. 100), Garrick's alterations suggest that he was putting into practice the idea of exoneration regarding the issue of Hamlet's blame in the play. Again, the investigation concerning changes in the text in performances of *Hamlet* underlines preferences and conceptions related to productions of the play.

Garrick's performance impressed theater audiences, similarly to Betterton's, displaying a vigorous Hamlet on stage. Bate and Rasmussen (2008, p. 175) exemplify Garrick's captivating acting style in Georg Lichtenberg's report of the actor's stirring encounter with the Ghost, in which the German scientist seemed quite mesmerized by Garrick's portrayal of the prince. In fact, Lichtenberg (1969, p. 10-11), in *Lichtenberg's*

[25] Garrick played the role of Hamlet from 1742 to 1776 (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 102).
[26] The version prepared by John Hughs and Robert Wilks, published in 1718, was based on the previously mentioned Davenant's text (EDWARDS, 2014, p. 63).

Visits to England, registered not only his own reactions, but also commented on the audience's response, as he stated:

> I wish you could see him, with eyes fixed on the ghost, though he is speaking to his companions, freeing himself from their restraining hands, as they warn him not to follow and hold him back. But at length, when they have tried his patience too far, he turns his face towards them, tears himself with great violence from their grasp, and draws his sword on them with a swiftness that makes one shutter, saying: "By Heaven! I'll make a ghost of him that lets me." […] He begins slowly to follow him, now standing still and then going on, with sword still upon guard, eyes fixed on the ghost, hair disordered, and out of breath, until he too is lost to sight. You can well imagine what loud applause accompanies this exit. It begins as soon as the ghost goes off the stage and lasts until Hamlet also disappears.

Surely, Lichtenberg's description offers a significant account on the impact of Garrick's depiction of the character.

Additionally, Garrick was famously attentive to elements of stage business, and intensely took into consideration the issue of grief in his performances. During the closet scene (3.4), for instance, the overturn of a chair at the moment when the Ghost presented himself, was one of the actor's well-known points[27] (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 102), besides the use of "a wig wired so that the hair stood on end and his famous 'start' on first seeing the Ghost" (BATE; RASMUSSEN, 2008, p. 175). Garrick's portrayal of Hamlet emphasized the issue of revenge, but the sense of grief was considered the character's central motivation (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 102). The prince's state of mourning apparently called Lichtenberg's (1969, p. 9-15) attention, since among the comments on the actor's performance, he mentioned that "Hamlet appears in black dress, the only one in the whole court, alas! still worn for his poor father, who was dead scarce a couple of months […]. In the excellent soliloquy: 'O that this too, too solid flesh would melt,' […] Garrick is completely overcome by tears of grief," suggesting the idea that the subject of grief played a relevant role in the actor's representation of Hamlet.

However, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the theatrical perspective of Hamlet began to diverge from Garrick's vivacious approach to the character. Thompson and Taylor (2017, p. 102) argue that "Garrick was an active and energetic Hamlet, but interest was beginning to shift from the external action of the play as a whole to the inner life of the central protagonist." For instance, John Philip Kemble

[27] Thompson and Taylor (2017, p. 6) define "point" as "details of stage business which had been introduced by their predecessors and had become in effect canonized as part of the acting tradition."

(1757-1823), who played the role from 1783 to 1817, highlighted melancholic features, becoming a contemplative prince in his performances, which can be understood as an influence of the "Romantic emphasis on feeling" (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 102). His sister, Sarah Siddons (1755-1831), was also in the acting business, and she was the first actress to take the part of Hamlet (BEVINGTON, 2014, p. 110). Regarding the reception of Kemble's performances, he was both criticized and praised. William Hazlitt strongly disapproved Kemble's work in the theater (BEVINGTON, p. 109). The critic indeed stated that "Mr Kemble unavoidably fails in this character from a want of ease and variety" (HAZLITT, 2008, p. 155). Bate and Rasmussen (2008, p.175) stress the fact that Kemble depicted a "melancholy prince," an aspect that can be perceived in Mary Russell Mitford's remarks on Kemble's representation. Mitford's comments in *The Life of Mary Russel Mitford Vol. II* certainly reveal her opinion on such a facet of the actor's performance, as she also sensibly complimented his work on stage. Mitford (1870, p. 336) stated that "From many years I have heard of Herr Devrient□all speaking just as you do.[28] He must be a great actor." She observes that "John Kemble is the only satisfactory Hamlet I ever saw□owing much to personal grace and beauty□something to a natural melancholy, or rather pensiveness of manner□much, of course, to consummate art" (MITFORD, 1870, p. 336).

Edmund Kean (1787-1833) offered memorable performances of Hamlet, exhibiting his own notorious "points." Thompson and Taylor (2017, p. 103) call attention to Hazlitt's remarks on Kean's famous kiss on Ophelia's hand in the portrayal of the nunnery scene (3.1), which highly impressed the audience. Indeed, Hazlitt (2008, p. 150) described such a moment, and distinctively commented on Kean's representation:

> Both the closet scene with his mother, and his remonstrances to Ophelia, were highly impressive. If there had been less vehemence of effort in the latter, it would not have lost any of its effect. But whatever nice faults might be found in this scene, they were amply redeemed by the manner of his coming back after he has gone to the extremity of the stage, from a pang of parting tenderness to press his lips to Ophelia's hand. It had an electrical effect on the house.

There was also the famous crawl during the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago* (3.2) in which the *London Herald* (1814) registered that Kean "positively crawled upon his belly towards the King like a wounded snake in a meadow rather than a Prince" (apud

[28] Karl Devrient (1797-1872) was a German actor who also played the role of Hamlet (YOUNG, 2002, p. 124).

THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 103). Other artists reproduced such a piece of stage business, for instance, William Charles Macready (1793-1873) in 1842 (BEVINGTON, 2014, p. 114), the actress Asta Neilsen (1881-1972) in a German movie (1920), and Laurence Olivier (1907-1989), who adapted "Kean's crawl" by performing it during the closet scene in his own movie in 1948 (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 103-105). Additionally, Kean was interested in "exploring Hamlet's introspective state of mind," as Bevington (2014, p. 114) argues that "he abandoned the royal finery in which the character had been customarily dressed, choosing instead to present the prince in black velvet free of ornament."

Portrayals of Hamlet on stage in the nineteenth century began to display a more delicate and afflicted facet of the character. Thompson and Taylor (2017, 105) argue that "Hamlets became increasingly sensitive, oppressed, paralysed by consciousness," and the performances of the American actor Edwin Booth[29] (1833-1893) can be considered an example of such a tendency. Charles Clarke, as Thompson and Taylor (2017, p. 106) remark, thoughtfully registered Booth's depiction of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy:

> He comes down to the left and drops into a chair. Every moment is replete with thoughtfulness and mental absorption, and his face is almost condensed, so powerful seems the working of his mind […]. But although his eyes are resting directly on one he does not see a single external thing. He does not speak for ten or fifteen seconds−not with his tongue; but his eyes proclaim the thought almost as well as the voice could. I forget all about the man then; for the time I see right through his flesh and overlook his *mind* (apud THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 106, original emphasis).

Clarke's attentive description of Booth's portrayal of the soliloquy emphasizes the actor's representation of a rather inert prince, immersed in his own thoughts (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 106). Booth, who first took the part of Hamlet in 1853, in San Francisco, and played the role until 1891 (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 105), also performed in London at the Princess's Theatre in 1880 (BEVINGTON, 2014, p. 126). His interpretation of the character seemed to have impressed the audience, as an anonymous review for *The Times* in 1880 stated that "Mr. Booth had a reception of the warmest kind, and was called before the curtain at the end of every act amid enthusiastic applause from all parts of the house" (apud WELLS, 2000, p. 128).

[29] His brother, John Wilkes Booth, assassinated Abraham Lincoln inside a theater in 1865 (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 3-6).

Charlotte Cushman (1816-1876) and the French actress Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923) also notably took the part of Hamlet. Cushman, who was born in the United States, had already successfully interpreted Romeo at the Princess's Theatre in 1845, as well as Cardinal Wolsey in *Henry VIII*, before performing the role of the prince in 1851 (BEVINGTON, 2014, p. 147). Bernhardt displayed a "resolute Hamlet in male attire" in 1899, at the Adelphi Theatre in London (BEVINGTON, 2014, p. 148), besides famously appearing as the "first onscreen Hamlet" (BATES; RASMUSSEN, 2008, p. 181) in a five-minute silent film, which portrayed the duel scene, in 1900 (BEVINGTON, 2014, p. 148). In addition, Bernhardt went to North America and played the role of Hamlet in the theater (BEVINGTON, 2014, p. 148). Regarding other artists who depicted the character in the United States, the American actor Edwin Forrest (1806-1872) was also praised for his performances, and Edmund Kean was among other British actors who visited the country in order to play the prince on stage (BEVINGTON, 2014, p. 114).

In 1881, William Poel (1852-1934) directed a production of *Hamlet* at St. George's Hall, based on the First Quarto. According to Bate and Rasmussen (2008, p. 176), Poel endeavored "to recreate an authentically Elizabethan bare stage as opposed to a cluttered historical realism with elaborate scenery," a bare stage which would influence early twentieth-century productions. It seems, however, that the staging displeased reviewers (O'SHEA, 2013, p. 27). One possible reason has to do with the fact that Henry Irving (1838-1905) was also portraying the role of Hamlet at the Lyceum, in a production style with which late-Victorian audiences were more familiarized. Besides, Poel, who played the title role, was working with actors who were mostly amateurs, ostensibly displaying a clumsy behavior on stage (O'SHEA, 2013, p. 27). He directed another production of *Hamlet* in 1900 allegedly based on the First Quarto, which, although it was better received among reviewers, was also criticized for not making use of Q1, but the Folio text instead (O'SHEA, 2013, p. 27).

Concerning Irving's work on stage, the actor relinquished the performance of well-known "points," and emphasized psychological aspects of Hamlet. Thompson and Taylor (2017, p. 97) highlight Clement Scott's remarks in which he criticizes Irving's representation of the prince, as the actor disregarded famous "points" staged by previously acclaimed Hamlets, such as Betterton and Garrick. In fact, Scott's (1897, p. 62) comments in *From "The Bells" to "King Arthur"* not only confirm his sense of disapproval, but also disclose Irving's particular acting style:

> There is not an actor living who on attempting Hamlet has not made his points in the speech, "Oh! what a rogue and peasant slave am I!" But Mr. Irving's intention is not to make points, but to give a consistent reading of a Hamlet who "thinks aloud". For one instant he falls "a-cursing like a very drab, a scullion"; but only to relapse into a deeper despair, into more profound thought. He is not acting, he is not splitting the ears of the groundlings; he is an artist concealing his art: he is talking to himself; he is thinking aloud.

Surely, Irving seemed to propose a distinguishing approach by avoiding recognizable pieces of stage business. His portrayal of the prince explored an intricate psychological condition of the character, resulting in a Hamlet who "was more than moody: his sanity was at stake" (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 108). As an example, Thompson and Taylor (2017, p. 108) mention Irving's performance of Hamlet while the character was watching *The Murder of Gonzago*, as they explain that "he gnawed away at Ophelia's peacock-feathered fan until he demolished it; then with the play abandoned, hurled away the remains of the fan, shrieked and leapt into the King's empty chair," a description that certainly reveals Irving's Hamlet's unbalanced behavior and psychological state.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Fortinbras returns to the stage in the final act, as previously mentioned, though the character continues to be quite disregarded in contemporary theatrical productions and films. It was George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) who inspired Johnston Forbes-Robertson (1853-1937) with such an innovating idea (BEVINGTON, 2014, p. 142). Edwards (2014, p. 67) attentively comments that "with the re-appearance of Fortinbras, we are at the end of an acting tradition going back to Betterton." Nonetheless, Marlene Soares dos Santos (2009, p. 318) in "O discurso shakespeariano em *Hamlet*: da importância de Horácio e Fortimbrás" points out that the character continues to be neglected in present-day performances of *Hamlet*, though some few exceptions can be noticed, such as the film directed by Kenneth Branagh (1960-) in 1996, and the theatrical production directed by Adrian Noble (1950-) in 2008, among others. Regarding the significance of the character in performances, Santos (2009, p. 318) argues that the removal of Fortinbras impairs both the understanding of the main character and the world around him. Additionally, among other elements, Fortinbras's role emphasizes the political aspect of the play, extending the sense of tragedy to the entire country, rather than proposing an exclusive focus on Hamlet's personal misfortunes (SANTOS, 2009, p. 321-322), which in my view reinforces the relevance of the character in the discussion of political issues in theatrical productions and films.

In the twentieth century, Barry Jackson (1879-1961) and H. K. Ayliff (1871-1949) brought important innovations to performances of *Hamlet*. They directed a modern-dress

production in 1925 which "sensationally demolished […] tradition[s] by updating the play and dressing Hamlet in plus-fours" (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 111). Along with Poel's previous stagings of *Hamlet* and the innovative work of Gordon Craig (1872-1966) in the theater, Thompson and Taylor (2017, p. 111) argue that "the modern-dress experiments of 1920s […] liberated design and opened up the play to new acting styles and new meanings." Additionally, Thompson and Taylor stress Hubert Griffith's remarks in his review for *The Observer* regarding Jackson and Ayliff's production at the Kingsway Theatre in London (1925). He commented that other characters' perspectives were emphasized, rather than Hamlet's standpoint (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 113). Also, in this review, Griffith emphatically praised the staging:

> This production so pleased me and excited me, so amused me and thrilled me, that I find it difficult to collect my thoughts about it or to become articulate on the subject. Early in the proceedings I ceased to be an intelligent spectator with an account to render afterwards. I merely enjoyed, and lost myself in the enjoyment. There was quite enough of the new and unexpected to absorb, and to take all one's faculties of absorption. I can only give a scattered note to explain why the present *Hamlet* at the Kingsway is the richest and deepest *Hamlet* I have ever seen (apud WELLS, 2000, p. 204).

Griffith's mesmerized reaction reinforces the impact of Jackson and Ayliff's updated *Hamlet*, as they incorporated inventive elements to their work on stage. The directors certainly proposed an influential idea, since subsequent productions have often decided to stress the story of other characters and their worldviews (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 113).

Significant characteristics related to performances of *Hamlet* can be singled out in the twentieth century. The portrayal of well-known "points" was no longer a concern for actors, who were conversely interested in preventing a connection with prior depictions of Hamlet (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 7). In addition, directors acquired a distinguishing status in productions, establishing a more predominant position in comparison to actor-managers (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 7). Also, the challenge of performing the so-called "entirety," defined by Thompson and Taylor (2017, p. 115) as "an eclectic incorporation of all the substantive action and dialogue of the Second Quarto and the First Folio," was tackled a few times since Frank Benson in 1899, more precisely in the theatrical production directed by Peter Hall in 1975, and in Branagh's movie (1996). Bates and Rasmussen (2008, p. 177) briefly comment on what

can be considered worldwide tendencies of productions of *Hamlet* in the twentieth century, extending their comments to early twenty-first-century performances:

> Interpretations […] veered between exploration of the politics of the play and interest in sexuality in the light of Freud's theory of the family romance. Late twentieth and early twenty-first-century productions were often concerned with self-conscious dramatic devices (overhearings, the play-within-the-play) and references to play-acting, a phenomenon that became known as "meta-theatricality" (theatre about theatre).

According to Bates and Rasmussen (2008, p. 177), the idea that productions were often interested in "interrogat[ing] their own meaning" is also an aspect that characterizes contemporary performances of the play.

Sigmund Freud's analysis of the play was notably incorporated and strongly foregrounded in the production directed by Tyrone Guthrie (1900-1971), staged at London's Old Vic in 1937, and in Olivier's film. Thompson and Taylor (2017, p.116) attentively point out that "the complexity of Hamlet's psyche […] has dominated most productions in the Anglo-American tradition," and Guthrie's *Hamlet*, as well as Olivier's film, exemplify such a tendency. Guthrie fully embraced Freud's studies regarding the Oedipal complex,[30] and as a result, Olivier, who played the title role in the production, presented an energetic character on stage, though somehow inactive due to the conflicts with his mother (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 116). Olivier's filmic version, in which he also took the part of the prince, displayed a Hamlet that was impressively influenced by the aforementioned Freudian interpretation of the play, and whose viewpoint overpowered other characters' perspectives (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2017, p. 116-117). Besides, the film eschewed political elements, such as "Fortinbras [sic] story and all its political ramifications" (BEVINGTON, 2014, p. 153). Indeed, as psychological aspects were extremely emphasized and political issues largely avoided in the film, it seems that Olivier managed to draw attention to Hamlet's personal dilemmas in his adaptation.

Another production that intensively stressed psychological issues was the Royal Shakespeare Company's staging of *Hamlet*, directed by Ron Daniels[31] (1942-) in 1989.

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[30] Bevington (2014, p. 151) clarifies that Freud's Oedipal complex has to do with the fact that "Hamlet is driven by a subconscious incestuous desire for his mother and hence a psychological inability to punish his uncle for having done what Hamlet fears most in himself."

[31] Ron Daniels was born in Brazil, and became the Artistic Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1977, and its Associate Director in 1980 (BATE; RASMUSSEN, 2008, p. 199).

In this production, which was highly praised by critics, Mark Rylance[32] (1960-) played the title role, and the subject of madness was underlined. Hapgood (2014, p. 76) attentively comments that "reviewers felt strongly the atmosphere of a mental institution, an effect heightened when Rylance appeared in stained, striped pyjamas and stockings to deliver the 'to be or not to be' soliloquy. He was clearly not simply assuming an 'antic disposition'."[33] Daniels's *Hamlet* also toured in the UK, and was successfully performed at Broadmoor, a high security psychiatric hospital. Once again, Rylance portrayed an impressively deranged prince (BATE; RASMUSSEN, 2008, p. 196). Even though Freud's Oedipal complex could be detected in Daniels's production (HAPGOOD, 2014, p. 76), it was surely overpowered by Rylance's Hamlet's general display of a disturbed behavior due to the character's unbalanced psychological state.

Simon Russell Beale (1961-), who interpreted the prince in the production directed by John Caird (1948-) in 2000, received positive reviews of his work on stage. Hapgood (2014, p. 74) highly praises Beale's depiction of the character:

> One of the strengths of his performance was the freshness of his address to his lines. At the same time, his performance also resonated much more than most within the great Hamlet tradition. Stocky and bearded, thirty-nine years old, he did not look the part in a conventional way yet bore considerable resemblance to the first Hamlet, Richard Burbage, himself thirty-four when he first played the part […]. Indeed, [Beale] was very much a "sweet prince," the sweetest natured since Johnston Forbes Robertson (1897).

Hapgood (2014, p. 75) comments that, lamentably, other elements in Caird's staging were not in accordance with the successful representation of Beale. Susannah Clapp (2000) in the online article for *The Guardian* entitled "The Villains of the Piece" also compliments the actor's portrayal of Hamlet by arguing that "Simon Russell Beale was a wonder: witty, grave and powerfully intelligent." The production toured to the United States, and Beale's interpretation was equally well-acknowledged. Ben Brantley (2001) in the online edition of *The New York Times* seemed impressed with the facets of Beale's Hamlet, declaring that "Mr. Russell Beale's performance flows in […] a natural rush of ambivalence."

Towards the end of the twentieth century, two significant film versions of *Hamlet* were produced, more specifically the ones directed by Branagh (1960-) and Zeffirelli (1923-2019). In relation to Branagh's adaptation, the director included acclaimed actors

[32] Mark Rylance was the Artistic Director of the Shakespeare's Globe in London from 1997 to 2007 (BEVINGTON, 2014, p. 180).
[33] In fact, the staging became known as "Hamlet in Pyjamas."

in his film, casting, for instance, Derek Jacobi (1938-) as Claudius, and Julie Christie (1940-) as Gertrude. Branagh elegantly set the film in the late nineteenth century (Bevington 186), and played the title role, presenting a prince that was, according to Hapgood (2014, p. 73) "both a hero and an anti-hero, increasingly stained with blood as the action proceed[ed]." Notwithstanding, Hapgood (2014, p. 73) critically examines Branagh's grandiose version of *Hamlet*, which lasted four hours, by arguing that "[his] approach often goes 'over the top'." Regarding Zeffirelli's cinematic adaptation, it was distinctly set in medieval times. Bevington (2014, p. 184) comments on the visual aspects of the film:

> The costumes and architecture are richly appropriate to a film intent on providing visual splendor […]. The film is vividly contemporary in these terms while lavishing its attention on what Hollywood has to offer. It is a conservatively "safe" film, apolitical, commercially appealing to audiences desirous of entertaining action and romantic intrigue.

Zeffirelli's version also presented a well-known cast, including Mel Gibson (1956-) as Hamlet, Glenn Close (1947-) as Gertrude, among others (BEVINGTON, 2014, p. 184). Gibson certainly portrayed an energetic prince on several occasions during the film, though particularly in the depiction of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy he displayed a compelling and introspective facet of the character. Clearly, the theme of death was underlined, as Gibson's Hamlet delivered the entire soliloquy in a partially lit catacomb which exhibited tombs and exposed skeletons.

Michael Almereyda (1960-) also directed a filmic adaptation of *Hamlet* (2000) which portrayed the Prince of Denmark in a contemporary context, surrounded by a busy and technological New York City. Hapgood (2014, p. 74) comments that "what in Shakespeare is expressed through spoken words may be communicated visually and electronically, by camera and telephone." Hapgood (2014, p. 74) continues by stating that with the technological apparatus "Almereyda seeks to drive home the play's appeal for contemporary spectators, giving a present-day edge to its statement about 'the frailty of spiritual values in a material world'." Hamlet, played by Ethan Hawke (1970-), foregrounded the sense of indifference and apathy, especially in the portrayal of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy that took place inside a video store. The prince delivered the aforementioned passage in an emotionless manner right in the midst of several action movie tapes, which suggest the sense of excitement and adventure that were displayed on the shelves and some being shown on screens. Such a contrast could be seen as a reference

to the cultural contextualization of the film, relating to the idea that the advance of technology and the great amount of exposure to information might channel the issues of alienation and disdain.

Maxine Peake (1974-) and Benedict Cumberbatch (1976-) have recently interpreted Hamlet on British stages. Sarah Frankcom (1968-) directed the production of the play in which Peake took the part of the prince at the Royal Exchange Theatre, in 2014. According to Paul Vallely (2014), in his review for the online edition of *The Independent*, the "family drama" was intensely emphasized. The actress' performance was greatly acclaimed, and Clapp (2014), in the online article for *The Guardian* entitled "Hamlet Review: Maxine Peake Is a Delicate Ferocious Prince of Denmark," attentively comments on her representation:

> Peake's delicate ferocity, her particular mixture of concentration and lightness, ensure that you want to follow her whenever she appears. Anger is her keynote. Her voice is reedy with indignation. The speeches tumble out at high speed, as if she is surprised by her own fervour.

In 2015, Cumberbatch, who has recently found great recognition due to his portrayal of Sherlock Holmes in the BBC TV series *Sherlock* (2010), played the role of Hamlet in the staging directed by Lyndsey Turner (1976) at the Barbican. Initially the production caused an uproar, since the director intended to bring innovations by opening the performance with the "To be or not to be" soliloquy. Jess Denham (2015) in the online edition of *The Independent* observes that the decision was suspended, as critics emphatically disapproved such an anticipation. Concerning Cumberbatch's performance, Michael Billington (2015) in the online edition of *The Guardian* praises his depiction of the character, but claims that Turner's *Hamlet* presented several "dismal" moments which were disconnected with the actor's work on stage.

As I am analyzing a Brazilian performance of *Hamlet* in this investigation, I would like to highlight some notable stagings of the play in the country. Anna Stegh Camati (2004, p. 50-53) comments on the production directed by Marcelo Marchioro (1952-2014) in 1992, which made use of the text translated by Anna Amélia Carneiro de Mendonça. The staging was part of a project entitled "*Shakespeare no Parque*,"[34] which was held in the city of Curitiba and developed by Marchioro (CAMATI, 2004, p. 49). According to Camati (2004, p. 50-53), Marchioro's *Hamlet* was acclaimed by the critics,

[34] Shakespeare in the Park.

and significantly approached the political crisis in Brazil regarding the impeachment of former President Fernando Collor de Melo. Camati (2004, p. 52) remarks that:

> *Marchioro escolheu o momento exato para remontar Hamlet, uma vez que o país encontrava-se à deriva, à beira de um colapso, sob a presidência de Collor de Melo, e coincidentemente, o espetáculo, cujo processo de idealização e ensaios já durava alguns meses, estreou em plena época de impeachment e manifestações de rua por toda a parte da população. Em um de seus pronunciamentos públicos, o encenador declarou que apesar do deliberado enfoque político que norteou a sua encenação, sua intenção original havia sido denunciar a corrupção em geral e o consequente sucateamento e esfalecimento do país.*[35]

Most certainly, Marchioro thoughtfully made use of *Hamlet* to put under the spotlight a critical moment in Brazil. The idea of addressing contemporary matters in productions of Shakespeare's plays has become, according to Camati (2004, p. 52), a common practice among present-day directors:

> *Assim como Shakespeare, que escrevia peças sobre reinos distantes para iluminar o seu próprio momento histórico, os encenadores da atualidade lançam mão da obra de Shakespeare, que apesar de remeter-se a tempos remotos, falam com eloquência da época atual*.[36]

Marchioro, in this case, emphasized the contemporary relevance of the play by insightfully approaching a political and economic crisis in the country.

Another iconic Brazilian production of the play is entitled *Ham-let*, directed by José Celso Martinez Corrêa (1937-) in 1993. The text was translated by Corrêa, Marcelo Drummond (1962-), who plays Ham-let, and Nelson Sá (1960-).[37] On the *MIT Global Shakespeares* website,[38] Cris Busato Smith comments on the bold and creative choices of Corrêa that can be perceived in the production:

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[35] Marchioro chose the right moment to stage *Hamlet*, once the country was adrift, on the verge of collapse, under Collor de Melo's presidency. Coincidently, the production, in which the conception and rehearsal processes had already begun a few months earlier, premiered at the precise moment when Melo was being impeached and people were protesting all over the country. In one of his public statements, Marchioro declared that, despite the political focus that guided the production, his original intention was to denounce the corruption in general and the subsequent damage and failure in the country.

[36] Just as Shakespeare, who wrote plays about distant kingdoms in order to illuminate his own historical moment, contemporary directors make use of Shakespeare's works which eloquently comment on present-day issues, even though such works refer to ancient times.

[37] A video recording of *Ham-let* is available on the *MIT Global Shakespeares* website, more specifically on the webpage entitled "*Ham-let*: (Martinez Corrêa, 1993)." By watching this particular recording of the staging, I noticed that the director made use of a conflated text, mostly following Q2. Therefore, all quotations from *Hamlet* in English which are included in the remarks about this production are taken from Q2, whereas the quotations translated into Portuguese are transcribed from the aforementioned recording.

[38] More specifically on the webpage entitled "*Ham-let*: (Martinez Corrêa, 1993)."

> With his five-hour production of *Ham-let* (1993-4), director José Celso Marinez Corrêa shocked purists who prefer not to see the Shakespearean text desecrated, but he was equally revered by his creative talent. In proposing a Brazilian *Hamlet*, this exuberant rendition achieves a liberation from the Shakespearean text by proclaiming and celebrating its affiliations to Brazilian culture and themes.

Corrêa certainly offered a diversified production of the play, which included various Brazilian songs, some of them performed by the actors themselves, as well as the distinctive presence of Fortimbrás, played by Fernando Alves Pinto (1969-), who appears several times on stage. In the article entitled "Zé Celso põe *Hamlet* no Carandiru" (1994), published in the online edition of *Folha de S. Paulo*, Corrêa comments in an interview about his personal opinion regarding the significance of the subject of action in *Hamlet*:

> *A peça é um intrincado de ações, uma catedral de ações, mas é uma ação retardada, que não se cumpre no momento. Não é uma ação de novela das oito, de novela espanhola, tipo ah! matou meu pai, vou matar você. Entra todo um elemento que desnoveliza a coisa, que desdramatiza e leva para um outro lado onde o importante não é a ação pela ação, mas uma ação que contracene com céu, inferno, terra, cidade, políticos, soldado, burocracia, religião, uma ação de transmutação.*[39] (apud "Zé Celso põe *Hamlet* no Carandiru," 1994)

Such perspective inspired Corrêa during the conception process of *Ham-let*, according to *Folha de S. Paulo*, and can certainly be perceived on stage, as the production offered an intertwined display of aspects related to politics, economics, war conflicts, religious matters, and several other subjects, which were connected with events in the play.

One of the distinctive characteristics of the translated text utilized on stage in Corrêa's production was the inclusion of religious elements. For instance, in the portrayal of Hamlet's soliloquy in act 1, scene 2, the reference to Niobe is replaced by the Brazilian Candomblé deity Oxum (JOHNSON, 2002, p. xi),[40] and therefore, instead of saying "Like Niobe" (1.1.149), Ham-let states "*Como uma Oxum*" (1.2). Since Oxum represents the fresh waters of a river (JOHNSON, 2002, p. 205), such a goddess was sensibly associated

[39] The play is full of intricate actions, a myriad of actions, but it presents a delayed type of action that is not completed on the spot. It is not an action that can be seen in Brazilian prime time soap operas, or Spanish soap operas, the ones that people say "Oh! You killed my father, now I will kill you." There is an important aspect that strongly opposes the comparison to soap operas, and proposes a distance from the notion of melodrama, leading to the idea that what matters is not to present an action for the sake of action, but an action that interacts with certain aspects, such as heaven, hell, the earth, the city, politicians, the soldier, bureaucracy, religion. It's a transmutable action.

[40] Paul Christopher Johnson (2002, p. xi) clarifies that in the Afro-Brazilian religion Candomblé, the deity is known as Oxum, whose name and background history derive from a Nigerian Yoruba goddess called Oshun.

with Niobe and her tears.[41] Another example that reinforced the inclusion of religious symbols in the staging concerns the reference to São Jorge,[42] still regarding the performance of act 1, scene 2. When Horatio claims "a figure like your father / Armed at point, exactly cap-à-pie" (1.2.198-199), the figure of the Ghost is replaced by the armed image of São Jorge, as Horácio, played by Boa Vadim Nikitin (1983-), says "*uma imagem como do seu pai, com todas as peças da armadura de São Jorge, da cabeça aos pés*" (1.2). Once more, cultural and religious aspects that are well-known in Brazil were then significantly incorporated in the production. Thus, the addition of such famous religious symbols in the country certainly offered a diversified approach on stage, proposing a cultural identification with the audience.

Additionally, an attentive criticism regarding the issue of drug traffic was pointed out in Corrêa's production. In the portrayal of act 2, scene 2, drugs as props were brought from the United States to Cláudio, played by Walney Costa (1961-). References to such a country appeared during the entire production, as connections to Norway were replaced by remarks about the United States, more specifically concerning the city of Miami. For instance, in the portrayal of a passage in act 2, scene 2, when the King claims "Say, Voltemand, what from our brother Norway?" (2.2.59), the translation of such a line refers to Miami instead, as Cláudio states "*Voltemanda, o que manda de volta o nosso irmão de Miami?*"[43] (2.2). Therefore, when Voltemanda finished reporting the news required by Cláudio, drugs from Miami were presented by Polônio, played by Pascoal da Conceição (1953-), as a gift to Ham-let's uncle (see fig. 2). Also, references to the use of drugs can be observed in the portrayal of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy. When Hamlet says "With a bare bodkin" (3.1.75), the possible death by a "bodkin" is replaced by an overdose, as Ham-let claims "*com uma simples overdose*" (3.1). Thus, such remarks about the use of drugs and drug traffic among countries suggest an evident concern of that time, a situation that undoubtedly has not yet changed, and the production is able to channel on stage a perceptive criticism on the subject.

Marcus Alvisi (1954-) also directed a production of *Hamlet*, which received both positive and negative reviews from critics. The staging premiered in 2001 and made use

[41] As Thompson and Taylor (2017, p. 208) explain, Niobe is a "Greek mythical figure who mourned for the deaths of her children until she was turned into a weeping stone statue."
[42] Saint George.
[43] In this case, there is a change in the role of Voltemand, as he becomes the female character Voltemanda, played by Sylvia Prado (1986-).

Figure 2 - Cláudio and Polônio opening a suitcase full of drugs.

Source: *MIT Global Shakespeares* website, "*Ham-let*: (Martinez Corrêa, 1993)"

of Millôr Fernandes's translation of the text. Barbara Heliodora (2001), for the *O Globo*, highly praises the portrayal of Hamlet by Diogo Vilela (1957-), as she states that:

> *Vem de longe o sonho de Diogo Vilela de interpretar o Príncipe da Dinamarca. Isto se torna bastante claro pela sua atuação na atual montagem no Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, já que há nele uma constante preocupação com a verdade interior de suas falas, que o destaca com força considerável de todo o resto do elenco*.[44]

However, Heliodora (2001) strongly criticizes Alvisi's work by pointing out some elements in the production that could have been reconsidered by the director:

> *Os maiores problemas da montagem são da responsabilidade da direção de Marcus Alvisi, que não revela qualquer concepção geral do significado do texto, e comete alguns enganos básicos em leitura de personagens. O caso*

[44] Diogo Vilela's dream of playing the Prince of Denmark has a long history. This can be clearly noticed in his performance for the current staging performed at Centro Cultural Banco do Brasil, as his portrayal of Hamlet strongly stands out from the rest of the cast since Vilela presents an unvarying concern with the inner truth of his lines.

> *mais chocante é o de Horácio, o discreto, equilibrado e estoico amigo de Hamlet, que grita e gargalha como um louco*.[45]

On the other hand, *O Estadão* published an online article entitled "Diogo Vilela faz 'Hamlet' no Rio" (2001), highlighting and praising several aspects of Alvisi's production. Vilela's performance is, once again, eminently recognized, as well as casting choices and the cuts in the text that emphasized "*as questões existenciais de Hamlet, como o mal-star e o sentido trágico de sua busca*" ("Diogo Vilela faz 'Hamlet' no Rio," 2001).[46] Vilela's portrayal of the prince seemed to have impressed many critics, as Marília Coelho Sampaio (2001, p. 28), for the *Jornal do Brasil*, also comments on his remarkable performance, and refers to him as an "*protagonista irresistível*."[47]

Wagner Moura (1976-), who played the role of Hamlet in 2008, also offered an acclaimed portrayal of the prince by critics. The production was directed by Aderbal Freire-Filho (1941-), and the text was translated by the director, Moura, and Barbara Harrington. In the online article entitled "Especialistas analisam atuação de Wagner Moura na montagem de *Hamlet*" (2009), *Jornal do Brasil* displays Macksen Luiz's remarks in which he highly praises Moura's work on stage, since the actor managed to combine diversified traits of the character and offered an impressive depiction of the character:

> *Wagner Moura projeta, como um malabarista de palavras e gestos, a dor do filho que tem o pai assassinado, revestindo a procura do culpado em interpretação astuciosa até a revelação, com uma força interpretativa em que a ironia e a manemolência se combinam para fazer de Hamlet menos melancólico e mais carnal. Uma interpretação rica e fascinante*[48] (apud "Especialistas analisam atuação de Wagner Moura na montagem de *Hamlet*," 2009).

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[45] The most substantial problems concerning the staging have to do entirely with Marcus Alvisi's decisions as a director, which do not reveal any general conception regarding the comprehension of the text. He also makes basic mistakes when it comes to his perception of the characters. The most shocking case has to do with Horatio, the discreet, balanced and stoic Hamlet's friend, who madly shouts and laugh.

[46] Hamlet's existential questions, such as the character's discomfort and the tragic meaning of his pursuit.

[47] Irresistible protagonist.

[48] Wagner Moura diffuses, like a skilled juggler dealing with words and gestures, the pain of a son who has his father murdered, enveloping the search for the culprit with an astute interpretation that lasts until the revelation. This happens through such a vigorous performance in which irony and indisposition are combined in order to create a less melancholic and more corporeal Hamlet. A rich and fascinating interpretation.

Apparently, the issue of melancholy did not seem to be the main characteristic of Moura's Hamlet, as Sérgio Salvia Coelho (2008) in his review for the online edition of *Folha de S. Paulo* remarks:

> *Não é pela melancolia, mas pelo deboche exasperado que ele rejeita a podridão de seu reino e ganha a platéia nos trocadilhos e na marcação frenética. Mas há método nessa loucura: quando é preciso, triunfa pela simplicidade, e inesquecíveis monólogos marcam sua entrada definitiva no mundo adulto*.[49]

Coelho (2008) also comments on Moura's performance by stating that the actor "*triunfa como o protagonista*,"[50] and that he certainly represents the "*Hamlet do milênio*."[51]

Moura's depiction of Hamlet was not the only recognized feature in the staging, since the translated text and Freire-Filho's production as a whole were also acclaimed by critics. Coelho (2008), for instance, compliments the work of the translators by mentioning that it is possible to understand the text in Portuguese "*sem perder o frescor nem a beleza sonora*."[52] Alexsandra Bentemuller (2009), in her review for the online edition of *Gazeta do Povo*, also comments positively on the translation and interviews Moura, who explains some pertinent aspects of the translated text:

> *Não há na nossa tradução nenhum traço de coloquialismo. Aderbal foi um mestre em passar o jogo de palavras do inglês shakespeariano para a nossa língua, sem tanto prejuízo. A nossa peça tem texto direto. É despojado sem abrir mão da poesia [...]. A gênese da montagem era a comunicação com o público. Hamlet foi um grande sucesso em 1600. Não havia por que não sê-lo hoje também. Isso não significa que estejamos tornando o texto "mais simples"*[53] (apud BENTEMULLER, 2009).

Coelho (2008) then praises the production by stating that "*ninguém faz sombra a ninguém, e é a história que prevalece. Esse 'Hamlet' é indispensável e antológico por*

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[49] It is not through the use of melancholy, but through the use of an exasperated debauchery that he rejects his kingdom's rottenness and captivates the audience with puns and frenetic movement. However, there is a method in his madness: when it is necessary, he uses simplicity and then triumphs, and unforgettable soliloquies mark his definitive entry into adulthood.

[50] As the protagonist, he triumphs.

[51] The millennium Hamlet.

[52] Without missing its freshness and beautiful sounds.

[53] There is not a single trace of colloquialism in our translation. Aderbal was a master in transferring the wordplay in Shakespeare's language without causing too much damage. Our production makes use of a straightforward text. This is an uncomplicated text that does not give up the poetry […]. The genesis of *Hamlet* on stage had to do with audience communication. *Hamlet* was a huge success in 1600. There is no reason why it should not be like that nowadays. It does not mean, though, that we are simplifying the text.

sua essencialidade. Não busca ser original, mas eficiente, e faz um apelo contagiante pela própria grandeza do teatro."[54] The rest of the cast, according to Coelho (2008), also significantly contributed to the success of Freire-Filho's production. For instance, regarding the work of Gillray Coutinho (1961-) as Polônio, the actor attentively put into practice his "*técnica espantosa*."[55] In addition, Tonico Pereira (1948-), who took the part of Cláudio, presented a subtle and astute portrayal of the character on stage, showing a King that is "*extremamente simpático, e por isso perigoso*,"[56] and Georgiana Góes (1977-) as Ofélia sensibly depicted the character's painful emotions (COELHO, 2008).

In 2012, Ron Daniels directed a production in which he translated the text, along with Marcos Daud. Thiago Lacerda (1978-) took the part of the prince. Heliodora was interviewed by Fábio Prikladnicki (2014) in the online edition of *Zero Hora*, and strongly criticized Daniels's *Hamlet*. Although Lacerda's portrayal of the character was praised by Heliodora, she emphasized her disappointment regarding some of the director's choices that generated a distance from issues in the play, such as the irrelevant exposure of Lacerda's Hamlet applying stage make-up during the interval (PRIKLADNICKI, 2014). However, the production also received positive reviews from the Brazilian media. For instance, Dirceu Alves (2012) in the online edition of *Veja São Paulo* highly compliments not only Lacerda's depiction of Hamlet, but also the other actors' interpretations on stage, as well as Daniels's work with contemporary traits in the staging.

In my view, performances of *Hamlet* have experienced considerable transformations throughout the years, insightfully demonstrating the predominant and distinguishing tendencies in productions of the play. In terms of text alterations, such an issue registers the artistic choices of theater practitioners, indicating their most valuable needs and preferences in relation to the conception and general goals of the productions. Additionally, directors and actors have chosen to emphasize specific pieces of stage business, as well as themes, offering diversified portrayals of the Prince of Denmark, some of which were able to influence subsequent performances of the character. As for the approach to political, social, and historical contexts, such a stance proposes an intriguing discussion involving elements of the play and relevant present-day issues, which sensibly contributes to the contemporary pertinence of the play.

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[54] Nobody is better than anyone, it is the story that prevails. This *Hamlet* is crucial and anthological because of its essentiality. The idea is not to be original, but efficient, and the production contagiously calls attention to the grandeur of the theater.
[55] Astounding acting technique.
[56] Extremely sympathetic, and because of that a dangerous King.

Chapter 3
"To me it is a prison" [57]:
Peter Hall's *Hamlet*

"[…] Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing. No, not for a king
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damned defeat was made. Am I a coward?"[58]

In this Chapter, I explore in Peter Hall's *Hamlet* the subject of contextualization in the selected scenes from the staging,[59] as has been mentioned in the Introduction of this study. Since the theater program points out that the text used in the production was the Second Quarto, which indeed can be observed in the examination of the prompt book, this Chapter concentrates on the investigation of the scenes I specified for the stagings that follow Q2 and F, that is, act 3, scenes 1 and 2, and act 5, scene 2.[60] Still regarding the text adopted by Hall, Anthony Dawson (1995, p. 138), in *Hamlet*, makes relevant comments on the text delivered on stage, as he states that "there were plenty of cuts, about 730 lines in all […], but most were directed to passages of amplification and reflection, pointing and quickening several scenes, but never sacrificing their political weight," reinforcing the political tone of the production. Additionally, since this investigation encompasses the analysis of three RSC productions, brief remarks on the early history of the company and Hall's work as the artistic director in the 1960's are especially included in this Chapter. Concerning the issue of contextualization, I shall focus on the approach to specific subjects related to the Cold War, such as the threat of nuclear conflict involving the American government and the Soviet Union, and the McCarthy era in the United States. Observations on the critical reception of Hall's *Hamlet* conclude the analysis of the production.

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[57] Line spoken by Hamlet in the Folio text of *Hamlet* (2.2.248-249).
[58] Line spoken by Hamlet in the Second Quarto of *Hamlet* (2.2.501-506).
[59] According to the prompt book of the staging, Hall's *Hamlet* premiered on August 19th, 1965. The descriptions of scenes in this Chapter are based on the RSC photographs collected at the Shakespeare Centre (see Chapter 1), and critics' reports.
[60] All quotations used in the investigation of scenes in this Chapter are taken from the Second Quarto of *Hamlet*.

3.1 The RSC and Peter Hall

Regarding the early history of the RSC, the troupe was previously referred to as the Shakespeare Memorial Company. In 1879, Charles Flower invested money to build a theater in Stratford-upon-Avon which would be dedicated to performances of Shakespeare's plays (CHAMBERS, 2004, p. 4). The opening of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre (SMT) was initially disapproved by critics, but the SMT gained recognition after a while, especially due to Frank Benson's (1858-1939) performances with his touring company. Also, the SMT was granted a royal charter in 1925, which increased its appraisal among critics (CHAMBERS, 2004, p. 4). A year later, the building was devasted by a fire, and the theater would only reopen in 1932, currently being called the Royal Shakespeare Theatre (GOODWIN, 1964, p. 6).

Many artistic directors brought in significant innovations to the Shakespeare Memorial Company. Robert Atkins (1886-1972), the first director, was able to implement extended rehearsals, and his successor, Barry Jackson (1879-1961), who envisioned the creation of a permanent company at the SMT, radically dismissed people from departments and rearranged the backstage structure (CHAMBERS, 2004, p. 5). Anthony Quayle (1913-1989), in his turn, made noticeable alterations in the building, for instance, the distance between the stage and the audience was considerably diminished (CHAMBERS, 2004, p. 5). Most significantly, Quayle carried out the following modifications:

> Quayle consolidated Stratford's prestige by persuading Hugh "Binkie" Beaumont, the most powerful London manager, to join the governing body and help him transform Stratford by means of a West End type of star system. Quayle reduced the number of new productions, brought successful ones back with cast changes, and introduced a two-company strategy, one at Stratford (under Byam Shaw) and one on tour (under him) (CHAMBERS, 2004, p. 5).

Similar to Jackson, Quayle had several restrictions implementing changes in the SMT due to the inexistence of a permanent company. He also pursued, unsuccessfully though, the opening of a theater in London (CHAMBERS, 2004, p. 5-6). Colin Chambers (2004, p. 4-5) in *Inside the Royal Shakespeare Company* comments on the moment when the theater's governors[61] perceived the necessity of considerable modifications in the SMT,

[61] According to the *Royal Shakespeare Company* website, more specifically on the webpage entitled "Who's Who," the current Board of Governors is chaired by Nigel Hugill. Gregory Doran is the artistic

as he explains that "yet, despite a handful of iconoclastic productions, the Stratford festival seasons soon revealed their own artistic limitations. As the new decade of the 1960 approached, it became clear to the chair of the theatre's governors that radical change was required." Thus, in 1958, Glen Byam Shaw (1904-1986) appointed Hall as his successor (CHAMBERS, 2004, p. 6), and, in 1960, Hall officially became the new artistic director of the SMT, "a potent symbol of the new decade, which his youth, liberal views and vigour epitomized" (CHAMBERS, 2004 p. 8).

Hall determinedly implemented noteworthy modifications at the SMT. Simon Trowbridge (2013, p. 31) in *The Rise and Fall of the Royal Shakespeare Company* comments on Hall's enthusiastic vision for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, as he states that "he took charge of the SMT with the intention of creating a national company; remarkably, he achieved this bold, unlikely, and controversial *coup de théâtre* within a year. Hall revolutionized Stratford and along with it the whole of English theatre." One of Hall's most significant changes was the transformation of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre into the RSC (HAMPTION-REEVES, 2013, p. 59). In order to achieve such a goal, Hall resolutely invested on a present-day approach in his SMT productions and altered the structure of the company, as Stuart Hampton-Reeves (2013, p. 50) in "Peter Hall" explains that:

> Before he established the RSC, Hall worked on several productions that laid the foundation for a different approach to Shakespeare that was more alive to the play's contemporary resonance. In particular, his productions of *Coriolanus* (1959), *The Two Gentleman of Verona* (1960) and *Troilus and Cressida* (1960) pointed a new direction for the Stratford company. He had a vision to recognize what the SMT could become and the audacity to implement it. He transformed an annual festival into a repertory company; he turned a regional theatre into a proto-national theatre; and, by introducing three-year contracts for actors, he remade the SMT into an ensemble company […]. Under Hall's direction, there was a new urgency to the SMT's work that energized a new generation of actors and audiences. Hall made Shakespearean performance vital and contemporary.

Additionally, Hall was able to accomplish one of his auspicious goals which was to find a London base for the productions, in this case, the Aldwych Theatre[62] (HAMPTION-REEVES, 2013, p. 55). The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre became officially the RSC in

director, and Catherine Mallyon is the executive director. The Patron is the Queen, Elizabeth II. From 2002 to 2012, Michael Boyd was the artistic director of the RSC, as it is stated on the webpage entitled "History."

[62] According to the *Royal Shakespeare Company* website, more specifically on the webpage entitled "History," the company's productions have been performed at the Barbican Theatre in London since 1982 instead of the Aldwych Theatre.

1961 (GOODWIN, 1964, p. 7), as Hall was intensely dissatisfied with the idea of something outdated inflicted by the previous name of the company (HAMPTION-REEVES, 2013, p. 59). Most certainly, Hall's modern views and innovative work mindset deeply contrast with old-fashioned perceptions, and his production of *Hamlet* distinctly proposes many instances in which his inventive perspective can be observed.

In *The Wars of the Roses* (1963), which is one of Hall's notable productions during his initial years at the RSC as artistic director, his political viewpoint is overtly emphasized. Hall (1993, p. 173) explains, in *Making an Exhibition of Myself*, that such a staging comprises four of Shakespeare's plays, namely the *Henry VI* trilogy and *Richard III*. John Barton (1928-2018) also worked with him in the adaptation of the text and as a codirector (HALL, 1993, p. 174). In fact, *The Wars of the Roses* and Hall's *Hamlet* became remarkably well-known among his productions at the RSC (HAMPTION-REEVES, 2013, p. 60). Regarding discussions involving Shakespeare's plays and significant contemporary issues, both stagings effectively generate compelling political assertions (HAMPTION-REEVES, 2013, p. 59-60). Peter Holland (2008, p. 261) in "Peter Hall" reinforces the present-day and political tone of the aforementioned performances as he argues that they "were both marked by their immediacy of a political modernity." As for the impact of *The Wars of the Roses* in the company, as well as the political approach of the staging, Hall (1993, p. 175-178) comments:

> *The Wars of the Roses* was bred of its time. John Barton and I aimed for a lean, quick rendering that concentrated on the story. We wanted to reveal the political ironies which are at the heart of any power struggle at any time. Hypocrisy and cant were as common on the lips of politicians in Tudor England as they are on television during modern British elections […]. *The Wars of the Roses* established, as nothing else had, the style and purpose of the company. Suddenly, we had done all that we had aimed to do and more.

John Wyver (2016, p. 1), in "*The Wars of The Roses* on Stage and Screen," explains that in Hall's and Barton's viewpoint the present-day relevance of the four Shakespeare's plays involved in the adaptation, in terms of addressing political matters, represents one of the most significant issues explored in the production. Surely, Hall's *Hamlet* also echoes such a pivotal purpose, since it promptly offers a critical angle on pressing matters related to the Cold War, as the analysis of the selected scenes in this Chapter shall exemplify.

The idea of calling attention of the youth to political subjects is an aspect explored by Hall in his staging of *Hamlet*. The production indeed became extremely popular among

young people, who were willing to spend two days in line in order to buy tickets for the opening night (DAWSON, 1995, p. 136). Hall identified at that time the presence of a strong sense of disenchantment, which is incorporated in the production (see Chapter 1) as a "mirror of the youthful disillusionment and apathy" (DAWSON, 1995, p. 138). Dawson (1995, p. 138) points out that by exploring such aspects in the staging the director "was clearly seeking both to develop a young audience for his company and to awaken them politically." In Hall's perception, the young people in the audience could identify themselves with Hamlet's sense of disappointment, which prevents the prince from accomplishing his deeds, and therefore react against such a state, especially regarding political matters (DAWSON, 1995, p. 138). In the theater program of the production, Hall (1965, p.11) mentions the youth's reaction to the nuclear threat, which was one of the crucial aspects of the Cold War (McMAHON, 2003, p. 76), and criticizes the new generation's indifference towards politics:

> It is an emotion which you can encounter in the young today. To me, it is extraordinary that in the last 15 years the young of the West, and particularly the intellectuals, have by a large lost the ordinary, predictable radical impulses which the young in all generations have had. You might march against the Bomb. But on the other hand, you might not […]. There is a sense of what-the-hell-anyway, over us looms the Mushroom Cloud. And politics are a game and a lie, whether in our own country or in the East/West dialogue which goes on interminably without anything very real being said. This negative response is deep and appalling.

David Warner (1941), who played the title role, seems to be the perfect tool for Hall's purposes, as the actor is effectively able to propose a strong connection with the youth in the audience (MAHER, 2003, p. 48-50), although such a connection, as Dawson (1995, p. 138) argues, produced a rather opposite effect, since the young people tended to admire Warner's Hamlet's state of inertia. The production succeeds, however, in offering a fierce critical approach to political subjects (DAWSON, 1995, p. 138). The actor's performance regarding his affinity with the youth, as well as the other members of the audience, is surely of great value for the production, and, in the analysis of act 3, scene 1, such a subject can be overtly observed.

Warner portrays a rather divergent Hamlet, taking into account previous performances of the prince, and highlights the characteristics of a contemporary student on stage. He was considerably younger than most of his predecessors who were generally around their fifties, drastically contrasting with the twenty-four-year-old Warner (MAHER, 2003, p. 42). Additionally, the actor does not present the usual romantic

version of the character, disregarding princely manners (MAHER, 2003, p. 42). Hall (1993, p.188) comments on Warner's Hamlet and the impact of his performance:

> When he came to *Hamlet* in 1965, he was the very embodiment of the Sixties student□tall, blond, gangling. He was passive, yet had an anarchic wit. His performance, I believe, defined the play for a decade. It completely expressed the spirit of the young of that period, gentle but dangerous.

The actor's similarity to a student in the 1960's, according to Holland, is also emphasized by the red scarf that he constantly wears in his depiction of Hamlet (HALL, 1993, p. 263) (see fig. 3). In fact, Warner's Hamlet appears to be one of the members of the young audience (MAHER, 2003, p. 42), thus proposing an identification between them (MAHER, 2003, p. 48-50). Also, the actor surprisingly delivers the soliloquies directly to the audience, as opposed to the usual introspective style of the majority of his predecessors (HAMPTON-REEVES, 2013, p. 66). Mary Zenet Maher (2003, p. 51-52) in *Modern Hamlets & Soliloquies* argues that, due to the fact that Warner addresses the audience, the actor's performances of the soliloquies can be considered one of the moments in the production in which the bond between him and the young people in the theater reaches its highest point.

Figure 3 - David Warner as Hamlet wearing the red scarf whilst talking to the players (3.2).

Source: *RSC Image Library* website, Shakespeare Centre Library. Photo by Reg Wilson © **RSC 1965**

3.2 The Cold War

Given this study's thematic focus, I shall make brief comments on specific aspects related to the Cold War. Such an extensive conflict initiated with the Truman Doctrine[63] in 1947[64] involving the United States and the Soviet Union (BUCK-MORSS, 2000, p. 2), and collapsed in 1990 (McMAHON, 2003, p. 168). As previously mentioned, the threat of nuclear war concerning the two countries was a pressing characteristic of the conflict (McMAHON, 2003, p. 76). The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II in 1945 not only caused appalling traces of destruction, but also raised concerns in the Soviet Union regarding power struggle, as Morss (2000, p. 132) comments that "after the war, in the Soviet Union, 'catching up with the West' took on the meaning of developing equal weapons of mass destruction." McMahon (2003, p. 75) clarifies that, during the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union actively invested in the production of weapons and military resources with unbalanced results in comparative terms:

> Both the United States and the Soviet Union inaugurated major arms build-ups conventional and nuclear […]. Between 1950 and 1953, the United States increased its armed forces by over a million troops while also significantly expanding its production of aircraft, naval vessels, armoured vehicles, and other instruments of conventional warfare. Its nuclear build-up was even more impressive […]. By [1960], the US Strategic Air Command (SAC) boasted a total of 1,735 strategic bombers capable of dropping nuclear weapons on Soviet targets. The Soviet Union laboured to keep pace. Between 1950 and 1955, the Red Army expanded by 3 million troops to create an armed force of nearly 5.8 million […]. [T]he Soviet Union's marked edge over the United States and NATO in men under arms was paralleled, and vitiated, by a significant inferiority in virtually every other measure of military strength. That disparity was particularly glaring in the nuclear sphere.

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[63] Robert McMahon (2003, p. 28-29) in *Cold War: A Very Short Introduction* comments that the Truman Doctrine began on March 12th, 1947 with former American President Harry S. Truman's speech to Congress, in which he asked for military support to Greece and Turkey. McMahon (2003, p. 28) explains that "the right-wing Greek Government was fighting a civil war against the indigenous communists supplied by communist Yugoslavia. The Turks, for their part, faced persistent Russian pressure for concessions in the Dardanelles." The term refers to "a policy that would be at once anti-Soviet and *anti-communist*. The Truman Doctrine thus amounted to a declaration of ideological Cold War along with a declaration of geopolitical Cold War" (McMAHON, 2003, p. 29, original emphasis).

[64] Susan Buck-Morss (2003, p. 2) in *Dreamworld and Catastrophe* explains that, although the Cold War officially initiated in 1947 with the Truman Doctrine "to 'contain' communism, […]. the structuring logic of its political imaginary was already in place by the end of World War I. For the Western imaginary, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was an absolute threat from the beginning." Additionally, McMahon (2003, p. 5) argues that the beginning of the Cold War was highly influenced by the outcome of World War II in which "the tension, suspicion, and rivalry […] came to plague US-Soviet relations."

According to scholars and governmental strategists, the great accessibility of such an abundant military power of unrestricted destruction, specifically concerning nuclear weapons, is one of the most significant aspects that differs the Cold War from the previous contemporary war conflicts (McMAHON, 2003, p. 76).

In the United States, the fierce communist persecution installed by former Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy in the late 1940's and 1950's represents a significant aspect of the Cold War in the country (SCHRECKER, 2004, p. 5). In *American Inquisition*, Ellen Schrecker (2004, p. 5) comments on the impact of such an alarming moment in the history of the United States:

> During the early years of the Cold War, the anticommunist witch hunt that we now call McCarthyism swept through American society […]. It was the most widespread and longest-lasting episode of political repression in American history. Dozens of men and women went to prison, thousands lost their jobs, and untold numbers of others saw what happened to those people and refrained from expressing controversial or unpopular ideas. McCarthyism remains all too relevant today; if nothing else, it reminds us that we cannot take our basic freedoms for granted.

The involvement of John Edgar Hoover, the director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) from 1924 to 1972, was crucial to support McCarthy's ideology, as Hoover tirelessly sought conspirators and spies in order to arrest them, thus contributing, in his viewpoint, to the elimination of the communist threat (SCHRECKER, 2004, p. 31-32). During the McCarthy era, illegal espionage was secretly used by the FBI in its pursuit of suspects. Schrecker (2004, p. 33) comments on classified procedures employed by the FBI while investigating cases:

> Often Hoover did not inform his superiors in the Justice Department about what the Bureau was doing […]. The FBI conducted many secret illegal activities, including break-ins, unauthorized wiretaps, and searches through people's trash looking for evidence.

Besides, several FBI investigations concerning people who were allegedly involved in suspicious activities presented flaws (SCHRECKER, 2004, p. 28), exposing the tribulations imposed by the government at that time in dealing with McCarthy's ideology of eradicating communism in the U.S.

3.3 Military Power

The study of the portrayal of act 1, scene 1 in Hall's *Hamlet* is of the utmost significance for the scene analyses in this Chapter, as it keenly sets the political tone of the production, in this case, offering a connection with the Cold War. For the investigation of the depiction of such a scene, I shall take into account the following passage from the play:

> MARCELLUS. Good now, sit down, and tell me he that knows
> Why this same strict and most observant watch
> So nightly toils the subject of the land,
> And with such daily cost of brazen cannon
> And foreign mart for implements of war,
> Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
> Does not divide the Sunday from the week.
> What might be toward that this sweaty haste
> Doth make the night joint labourer with the day?
> Who is't that can inform me?
>
> HORATIO. That can I.
> At least the whisper goes so. Our last King,
> Whose image even but now appeared to us,
> Was as you know by Fortinbras of Norway□
> Thereto pricked on by a most emulate pride□
> Dared to the combat, in which our valiant Hamlet
> (For so this side of our known world esteemed him)
> Did slay this Fortinbras, who by a sealed compact
> Well ratified by law and heraldry
> Did forfeit with his life all these his lands
> Which he stood seized of to the conqueror;
> Against the which a moiety competent
> Was gaged by our King, which had return
> To the inheritance of Fortinbras
> Had he been vanquisher, as by the same co-mart
> And carriage of the article design
> His fell to Hamlet. Now, sir, young Fortinbras,
> Of unimproved mettle, hot and full,
> Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there
> Sharked up a list of lawless resolutes
> For food and diet to some enterprise
> That hath a stomach in't, which is no other,
> As it doth well appear unto our state,
> But to recover of us by strong hand
> And terms compulsatory those foresaid lands
> So by his father lost. And this, I take it,
> Is the main motive of our preparations,
> The source of this our watch, and the chief head
> Of this post-haste and rummage in the land. (1.1.69-106)

In the passage cited above, the subject of warfare combat is overtly emphasized, as Marcellus[65] questions the extensive military preparations, including the production of "brazen" cannons, and Horatio[66] confirms the possibility of an armed conflict. Regarding the portrayal of act 1, scene 1 in Hall's production, Dawson (1995, p. 138) comments on the significance of the immense cannon placed center stage (see fig. 4),[67] as he states that "international militarism was epitomized in the aggressive opening image: a massive cannon pointing directly at the audience." Bearing in mind the previously mentioned passage, the portrayal of act 1, scene 1, with the presence of such an enormous destructive weapon on stage facing the audience, offers the image of the great and lethal military power that the country has in hand, proposing the idea that Denmark is prepared and willing to make use of its devastating armament in order to defend its interests. Such an image critically hints at the war conflict and nuclear threat involving the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, in which both countries developed an intensive production of weapons, especially nuclear missiles. As the staging begins with the suggestion of elements related to the Cold War, the portrayal of act 1, scene 1 establishes the tone of the production by foregrounding such aspects.

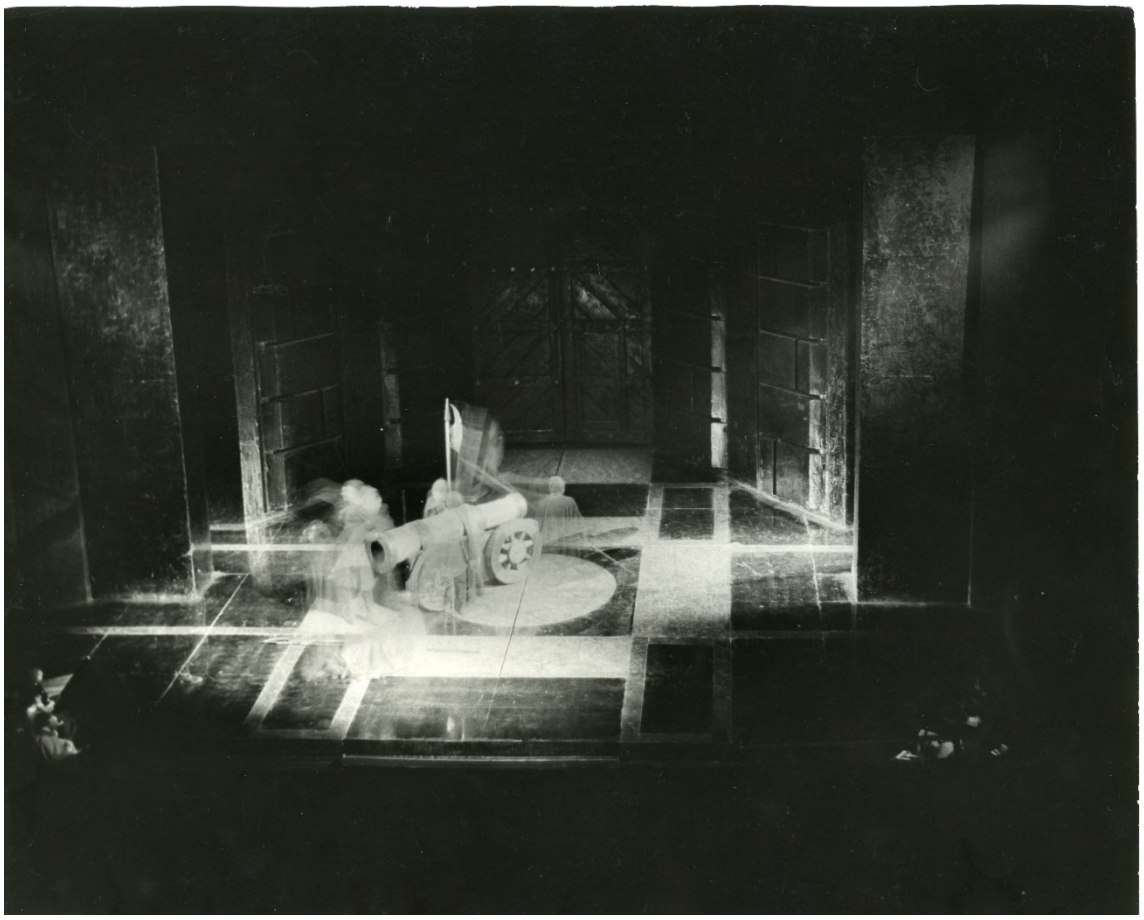
3.4. Analyzing Act 3, Scene 1

Regarding the study of act 3, scene 1, I shall focus on the portrayal of the soliloquy "To be or not to be"[68]:

> HAMLET. To be or not to be□that is 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 heartache 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

[65] In Hall's production, Marcellus is played by Jeffery Dench (1928-2014).
[66] In Hall's production, Horatio is played by Donald Burton (1934-2007).
[67] A note on the back of the photograph confirms that it refers to the portrayal of act 1, scene 1, although the precise passage captured in the photograph is not specified.
[68] According to Douglas Bruster (2007, p. x) in *To Be Or Not To Be*, the soliloquy ends in "The fair Ophelia!", in line 88. I have added the remaining of the words until line 89, as they are also mentioned in the analysis of act 3, scene 1.

Figure 4 - The cannon located center stage.



Source: © **RSC 1965, Shakespeare Centre Library**

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 despised 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□
And thus the native hue of 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. (3.1.55-89)

In the depiction of the passage cited above, Warner's Hamlet highlights the idea of secrecy and conspiracy by specially making use of the tone of his voice, offering an association with the context of the Cold War. Maher (2003, p. 56) briefly describes the actor's delivery of the soliloquy, which mentions the fact that he looks at the audience during his performance:

> Ophelia had gone off the stage. Hamlet entered upstage center through the left door. He crossed to down center, stopped, and then turned downstage to face the audience, contacting them immediately with a searching look which created a very theatrical pause before the opening phrase. On "Devoutly to be wish'd" he went to the very edge of the forestage and stayed there for most of the speech, until "lose the name of action," when Ophelia reentered.

Besides the fact that Warner directly addresses the audience, which increases, as already mentioned, the bond between the prince and the young people, possibly including other members of the audience, the actor also speaks in a low voice during the delivery of the soliloquy, differing from the manner he performs the previous soliloquy in the portrayal of 2.2 (MAHER, 2003, p. 56). Warner delivers the lines "Soft you now, / The fair Ophelia" "in a highly conspiratory whisper, which indicated how closely he and the audience had bonded" (MAHER, 2003, p. 57). The use of a low voice in the portrayal of the soliloquy thus implies that Hamlet trusts the audience to the point in which he can reveal his inner thoughts and plans to them only. Such an intense moment of connection and confidentiality is interrupted at the delivery of "Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remembered," since Warner is practically shouting these lines in an angry manner and moving away from Ophelia (MAHER, 2003, p. 57), played by Janet Suzman (1939-). The change in Hamlet's tone of voice when addressing Ophelia also emphasizes the feelings of trust and secrecy shared with the audience, as the prince seems to be comfortable in revealing his plans to them, whereas he appears to be extremely irritated with Ophelia's interruption and her presence on stage. In relation to the context of the Cold War, as Hamlet in the production is highly concerned with confiding his secrets to the audience and plotting along with them, the portrayal of the passage cited above foregrounding such aspects suggests a criticism on the targeted idea of conspiracy during the McCarthy era in the United States. During this period, as aforementioned, the FBI relentlessly searched for people involved in suspicious activities, even making use of illegal strategies in order to achieve its goals.

3.5 Analyzing Act 3, Scene 2

The depiction of act 3, scene 2 in Hall's *Hamlet* offers elements related to the production of *The Murder of Gonzago* that can also be connected to aspects concerning the Cold War. In the analysis of the portrayal of such a scene, I shall take into account the following passages from the play:

> HAMLET. There is a play tonight before the King□
> One scene of it comes near the circumstance
> Which I have told thee of my father's death.
> I prithee when thou seest that act afoot,
> Even with the very comment of thy soul
> Observe my uncle. If his occulted guilt
> Do not itself unkennel in one speech
> It is a damned ghost that we have seen
> And my imaginations are as foul
> As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note,
> For I mine eyes will rivet to his face
> And after we will both our judgements join
> In censure of his seeming
>
> HORATIO. Well, my lord
> If 'a steal aught the whilst this play is playing
> And scape detected I will pay the theft.
>
> *Enter Trumpets and Kettledrums*, KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA [, ROSENCRANTZ *and* GUILDENSTERN].
>
> HAMLET. [*to Horatio*] They are coming to the play. I must be idle. Get you a place. (3.2.71-87)
>
> KING. Have you heard the argument? Is there no offence in't?
>
> HAMLET. No, no, they do but jest. Poison in jest. No offence i'th'world.
>
> KING. What do you call the play?
>
> HAMLET. *The Mousetrap*. Marry, how tropically! This Play is the image of a murder done in Vienna. Gonzago is the duke's name, his wife Baptista. You shall see anon 'tis a knavish piece of work, but what of that? Your majesty and we that have free souls□it touches us not. Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung. (3.2.226-236)

The two passages cited above emphasize Hamlet's spying plans and movements that intend to verify whether the Ghost is telling the truth about his uncle's alleged crime. Hamlet's elaborated strategy involves varied elements, such as the aid of a specific theatrical production, *The Murder of Gonzago*, which purposely mirrors Claudius's deeds, and a trustworthy spy, in this case Horatio, who is willing to fully support Hamlet.

The prince also intentionally provokes the King during the performance of the play-within-a-play with a sarcastic conversation about Claudius's indisputable lack of involvement in a crime. Concerning Hall's *Hamlet*, Maher (2003, p. 44) comments that the design by John Bury (1925-200) for the staging generates the idea of a "claustrophobic kingdom." In the depiction of *The Murder of Gonzago*, the display in the background of fortified walls with centralized bars (see fig. 5)[69] evokes the idea of a repressive environment and, most importantly, an image that resembles the interior of a prison cell. Considering the two passages mentioned above, the portrayal of *The Murder of Gonzago* in Hall's production, with such a specific background, strongly implies a criticism on the intense FBI espionage activities and investigations that aimed to apprehend communist suspects. As already commented, such methods generated a drastic sense of repression, and resulted in the imprisonment of a great number of people during the McCarthy era in the United States.

3.6 Analyzing Act 5, Scene 2

The performance of act 5, scene 2 in Hall's production addresses distinct aspects related to the Cold War. For the final scene analysis in this Chapter, I shall consider the following passages from the play:

> KING.
> Set the stoups of wine upon that table.
> If Hamlet give the first or second hit
> Or quit in answer of the third exchange
> Let all the battlements their ordnance fire.
> The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath
> And in the cup an union shall he throw
> Richer than that which four successive kings
> In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups,
> And let the kettle to the trumpet speak,
> The trumpet to the cannoneer without,
> The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth.
> *Trumpets the while*
> Now the King drinks to Hamlet. Come, begin.
> And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.
>
> HAMLET. Come on, sir.
>
> LAERTES. Come, my lord. [*They play*.]

[69] The image in the photograph indicates that it concerns the depiction of *The Murder of Gonzago* in Hall's *Hamlet*, although a note on the back, which informs that the photograph refers to the portrayal of act 3, scene 2, does not designate the specific passage captured.

Figure 5 - The portrayal of *The Murder of Gonzago*.

Source: **© RSC 1965, Shakespeare Centre Library**

HAMLET. One!

LAERTES. No!

HAMLET. Judgement?

OSRIC. A hit, a very palpable hit. *Drum, trumpets and shot*

LAERTES. Well, again.

KING.
Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine:
Here's to thy health. Give him the cup. (5.2.244-265)[70]

OSRIC. How is't, Laertes?

LAERTES.
Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric:
I am justly killed with mine own treachery.

[70] In Hall's production, Claudius is played by Brewster Mason (1922-1987), Laertes is played by Charles Thomas (1935-), and Charles Kay (1930-) plays the role of Osric.

HAMLET.
How does the Queen?

KING. She swoons to see them bleed.

QUEEN.
No, no, the drink, the drink, O my dear Hamlet,
The drink, the drink□I am poisoned. [*Dies*.]

HAMLET.
O villainy, ho! Let the door be locked.
Treachery! Seek it out. [*Exit Osric*.]

LAERTES.
It is here, Hamlet, thou art slain.
No medicine in the world can do thee good:
In thee there is not half an hour's life;
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand
Unbated and envenomed. The foul practice
Hath turned itself on me. Lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again. Thy mother's poisoned□
I can no more□the King, the King's to blame. (5.2.290-305)[71]

The passages mentioned above not only foreground Claudius's and Laertes's plans to murder Hamlet, but also underline the harsh disclosure of such plots through grim circumstances involving Gertrude's death and the fact that Laertes and Hamlet will soon die as well. In Hall's *Hamlet*, the portrayal of act 5, scene 2 (see fig. 6)[72] displays in the background fortified walls which recall the feeling of a repressive atmosphere proposed in the analysis of act 3, scene 2. Besides, the two guards distinctly blocking the entrance with weapons intensify the idea of oppression. Bearing in mind the previously mentioned passages and such visual aspects, Hall's portrayal of act 5, scene 2 suggests a strong criticism on the extreme repressive environment in the McCarthy era, in which the FBI fiercely sought the discovery and exposure of conspiracies related to communist activities in the midst of extremely uncomfortable situations, as the Bureau also applied illegal methods to achieve its purposes. Additionally, the background in the depiction of act 5, scene 2 also displays a tapestry with the figures of two imposing horses (see fig. 6), which, as Dawson (1995, p. 135) comments, evoke the feeling of "danger." Along with the visual of the guards safely blocking the entrance with weapons, the figures in the tapestry offer an image that hints at the menacing and great military power available in Denmark ready

[71] In Hall's production, Gertrude is played by Elizabeth Spriggs (1929-2008).
[72] The image in the picture seems to refer to a moment in the production in which the King drinks the fresh wine, possibly concerning lines 244 to 265 from the first passage cited in the analysis of act 5, scene 2. A note on the back of the photograph confirms that the image refers to the portrayal of act 5, scene 2, though the specific passage that it refers to is not mentioned.

Figure 6 - The final scene of the production being portrayed.

Source: **© RSC 1965, Shakespeare Centre Library**

to be used in war conflicts. Such image recalls the criticism suggested in the investigation of act 1, scene 1 related to the U.S. and the Soviet Union massive production of armament, especially nuclear missiles, during the Cold War, emphasizing the political focus of the production.

3.7 Critical Reception

Before the premiere of Hall's production, several newspaper articles emphasized similar facts about the staging. Warner's performance of the title role as a young actor is certainly one of them. For instance, the *Daily Telegraph*, in the article "Play Tells of Time Between War and Strike" (1965), mentions that "at 24, he is the youngest actor to play the part since Alec Guinness first acted in it in 1938." This information reappears in many other articles, such as the ones entitled "Peter Hall's First *Hamlet* Stars Youngest Prince in 27 Years" (1965), for the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*; "David Warner Stars in *Hamlet*

at Stratford" (1965) for the *Leamington Spa Courier*; "Big Test for David Warner" (1965), for the *Warwick Advertiser*, among others. J. C. Trewin (1965), in the *Midland Magazine* article "In Search of Hamlet," also comments that "David Warner, aged 24, is the youngest Hamlet to appear in a Stratford-upon-Avon Festival, younger than Scofield, who was 26 in 1948, younger than Benson who was 27 in 1886," foregrounding Hall's revitalized approach of the character in his staging in comparison to previous performances of the prince. The fact that Hall's *Hamlet* in 1965 is his first production of the play is also intensely commented by the newspapers. Such a subject is highlighted in the aforementioned articles from the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, which includes this information in the title, and the *Leamington Spa Courier*. Sean Day-Lewis (1965) in "*Hamlet* for Modern Minds," for the *Daily Telegraph*, besides commenting on the subjects already pointed out, also makes some remarks about Hall's perspective on the political aspects of the play:

> In fact, Mr. Hall sees *Hamlet* as very much a political play and, because the Prince is born and bred into the politics of Elsinore, his personal disillusionment is all the greater when everything he trusts is shown to be tarnished. He is faced with the problem of "committal" and shows himself a thinker rather than a doer.

Day-Lewis's (1965) comments reinforce a notable element of Hall's production concerning Hamlet's apathy and political matters, previously discussed in this Chapter. Such articles register elements related to stagings of *Hamlet* that were considered significant at that time, as well as expectations regarding Hall's viewpoint on his production of the play.

The long line to buy tickets for the opening night was also a subject extensively covered by the newspapers. In "Hundreds Queue All Night for *Hamlet*" (1965) the *Birmingham Post* comments on the large number of people that were expecting to get a ticket for Hall's *Hamlet*:

> Several hundred people, mainly young students, last night bedded down outside the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, hoping to get tickets for tonight's opening performance of *Hamlet*. The queue stretched round the side of the theatre and was lengthening hourly. But only the first 100 are assured of seeing the play. Others will have to rely on purchasing tickets returned to the box office.

Such information certainly reinforces the popularity of the production at that time. Also, the *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, in the article "All-Night Wait to Buy Tickets for

Hamlet" (1965), makes some remarks on people's arrangements to wait in line, as it states that "during the night over 200 people camped alongside the theatre. All were well equipped for the night with blankets, sleeping bags and flasks of hot drinks." Additionally, the RSC doormen's astonishment with the long line for Hall's production is commented by the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald* in the article "David Warner Pulls All-Night Queue" (1965) which states that the "doormen of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre cannot remember a longer all-night queue than the one that waited for last night's first-night of *Hamlet*," confirming that Hall's *Hamlet* became an impressive event for the RSC.

Some critics, however, did not share the same enthusiasm for the production, as they seemed to be extremely dissatisfied with the staging. Dawson (1995, p. 136) points out that "many older critics deplored the slow and broken verse speaking, the deliberately anti-Romantic, anti-heroic conception, the matter-of-factness and lack of 'excitement'." Indeed, some critics overtly stated their disapproval concerning Hall's production and Warner's portrayal of the prince. For instance, Philip Hope-Wallace (1965) in "*Hamlet* at Stratford-upon-Avon," for *The Guardian*, argues that the staging is "not by any means one of the more exciting *Hamlets* to watch. And the delivery, though admirably clear as exposition, is at once flat and sometimes slow." Hope-Wallace (1965) goes further and states that "David Warner as Hamlet does not seem to have the vocal equipment to put on speed. When he did so, which was seldom, he became rather difficult to follow […]. I found it simply too unprincely and too limited of wit, passion, and depth of feeling." B. A. Young (1965) in "Hamlet," for the *Financial Times*, also criticizes Warner's performance by claiming that "the trouble with David Warner's Hamlet is that he is not royal at all […]. The trouble, I think, is that Mr. Warner isn't ready, by five years or so, to tackle this part. He gets almost nothing out of the big speeches, and his delivery is full of mannerisms." Additionally, Herbert Kretzmer in "Was This Squatting Really Necessary?" (1965), for the *Daily Express*, questions people's enthusiasm to watch the production:

> As I see it, those sturdy folk in the queue are bound to be questioning before long whether their vigil was entirely worthwhile. For this *Hamlet* turns out to be curiously lacking in warmth, majesty or urgency. It is indeed, as has been endlessly claimed, a "*Hamlet* of our time," but it is not, as it must also be, a *Hamlet* of *all* times.

Even though Hall's *Hamlet* was intensely disapproved by some critics, the staging was able to fascinate audiences, specially calling the attention of the youth, as aforementioned

in this Chapter. Such a divergence between the audiences' viewpoints and critics' perspectives reinforces Hall's impactful perception and bold directing decisions in dealing with his production of *Hamlet* at the RSC.

Despite the criticism regarding Hall's *Hamlet*, the production also received positive reviews. The *Nottingham Evening Post*, in the article "Youthful Hamlet Commands Part" (1965), praises the staging by claiming that "there were in Peter Hall's production a number of triumphantly theatrical moments," such as the work of Bury as the set designer. The *Yorkshire Post*, in the article "Hamlet Who is Young and Modern" (1965), also praises Bury's set design, as it perfectly combines with the behavior of the characters on stage. In addition, the *Coventry Evening Telegraph*, in the article "Leamington Actor Gives a Gripping Study as New Hamlet" (1965), emphasizes several positive aspects of the production:

> The climax of the present Shakespeare season at Stratford-upon-Avon came last night when Peter Hall's production of *Hamlet* joined the repertoire at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre. This is a *Hamlet* which has been awaited with more than usual expectancy and Mr. Hall has created an exciting production of epic dimensions […]. Mr. Warner digs deeply into dark corners of Hamlet's mind and he produces a study that has a gripping fascination. Despite the great length of time he spends on stage, this is a performance that never wilts.

Bury's work is, once again, acclaimed, as well as the performance of the other actors. Surely, Hall's *Hamlet* can be highlighted amongst the notable productions of the play, as it offers a compelling contextual approach involving a critical viewpoint on political matters.

All things considered, Hall's *Hamlet* certainly offers an attentive approach to the political issues mentioned in this Chapter related to the Cold War. Subjects such as the military power and the nuclear threat are immediately addressed at the beginning of the production, with the presence of the cannon on stage strongly emphasizing the significance of the visual aspects in theatrical performances. Warner's keen control of the volume of his voice during the delivery of the soliloquy "To be or not to be" foregrounds the specific acting choices for this notable passable of the play, which contributes to the criticism concerning aspects of the McCarthy era during the Cold War. The set design, in this case regarding the fortified walls, centered bars, and tapestries in the background of the stage, plays a key role in addressing military power issues and aspects related to McCarthyism. Once again, the relevance of the visual aspects is underlined, especially concerning the approach to political contexts. Additionally, the discussion of the early

history of the RSC with Hall's intense modifications highlights his innovative views, which overtly proposed a political focus for the beginning of the company. Even though many critics at that time did not approve Hall's choices in *Hamlet*, his production epically transcends such comments, as it offers a powerful stance on relevant political matters.

Chapter 4
"You are the most immediate to our throne" [73]:
Steven Pimlott's *Hamlet*

"In what particular thought to work, I know not, But
in the gross and scope of mine opinion
This bodes some strange eruption to our state."[74]

As mentioned in the Introduction to this investigation, Chapter 4 focuses on the analysis of scenes from Steven Pimlott's *Hamlet*[75] regarding the approach to political circumstances. According to Simon Reade (2001, p. 21) in "*Hamlet* – The Script," published in the theater program of the staging, the three texts of the play were taken into consideration for this production, as Reade explains that "there are nips and tucks, darting back and forth between Folio and Second Quarto, with the occasional good idea filched from the First Quarto in our pretty full version of a play which has no one definite text, after all." Since the text utilized on stage refers mostly to the Folio version and the Second Quarto, I analyze in this Chapter act 3, scenes 1 and 2, and act 5, scene 2,[76] which are the scenes I have previously selected for the productions that follow F and Q2. Regarding the subject of contextualization, I concentrate on the approach to a specific political moment, which is the 2000 American presidential election. This Chapter also encompasses remarks on the critical reception of Pimlott's *Hamlet*.

4.1 Bush v. Gore

In order to achieve the goals proposed in this Chapter, I shall briefly make some remarks on the 2000 presidential election in the United States. Such an event was considered an unusual political situation, as Gloria Borger (2015) in the *CNN* online article entitled "Bush v. Gore: Democrats Brought a Knife to a Gunfight" explains that the election, in comparison to prior circumstances, was "an unmatched moment in modern

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[73] Line spoken by Claudius in the Second Quarto of *Hamlet* (1.2.109).
[74] Line spoken by Horatio in the Second Quarto of *Hamlet* (1.1.66-68).
[75] The production premiered on March 31st, 2001, according to Kathy Elgin (2001, p. 20) in the theater program. The video of this production, available at the Shakespeare Centre (see Chapter 1), was recorded on October 2nd, 2001. All descriptions of scenes in this Chapter are taken from such a recording.
[76] All quotations utilized in the analysis of Pimlott's *Hamlet* are taken from Q2, except lines 250 to 256 from act 5, scene 2, which are taken from the Folio text.

political history." Dennis W. Johnson (2002, p. 70) in "The 2000 American Presidential Election" also mentions, considering previous elections, the uncommon circumstance:

> The 2000 Presidential election was the closest American Presidential election in history. In the popular vote, Vice President Albert Gore, Jr., bested Texas Governor George W. Bush by 550,000 votes out of a total of 101,452,000 cast between them; and in the deciding electoral vote, Bush beat Gore by 4 votes, winning one more than the minimum needed to be declared the winner outright. It was also one of the longest and was the most expensive contests.

Additionally, the polemic vote recount event established due to the proximity of the results in Florida was interrupted, since the election was unconventionally decided by the Supreme Court, as Johnson (2002, p. 77-79) clarifies:

> Florida state election law required an automatic recount because of the closeness of the election. But 18 of the state's 67 counties never recounted; they simply checked their original results. Altogether, 1.58 million votes (out of over 6 million cast) had not been counted a second time, as required by state law […]. For the first time in history, the Supreme Court of the United States had a direct and immediate impact on the election of the President. Its 5 to 4 decision, along party and ideological lines, on December 12, halted any further recount of ballots, stopping the Gore uphill battle to gain precious votes, and effectively handed the Presidency over to George W. Bush.

According to Borger (2015), the highly criticized recount process lasted for thirty-six exhausting days, building up inevitable expectations and anxiety in the country.

Even though Al Gore could count on an exceptional team to legally support him throughout the development of the events when the recount of votes began, it seems that George W. Bush was more prepared to deal with such an intensified situation. Bush was initially aided by Katherine Harris, the Florida Secretary of State, "a Republican insider whose every key interpretation of Florida law benefited the Bush campaign" (JOHNSON, 2002, p. 79). Besides, the Republican candidate strategically selected the well-recognized lawyer James A. Baker III to guide his legal team and defend his interests as the controversial recount process started in Florida (JOHNSON, 2002, p. 79). Borger (2015) comments on Bush's campaign team's decisions and emphasizes Baker's rather intense determination in winning the case:

> From Day One, Team Bush led by Jim Baker had a plan and stuck to it. Get the case out of Florida (where the courts were dominated by Democrats) and into the Supreme Court. An odd federalization of a state issue, especially for a Republican, but Baker had no qualms about it when pressed by conservatives. "Do you want to be ideologically pure or do you want to win?" he told his fellow Republicans. The answer was self-evident.

Surely, Baker played a significant part as the leader of Bush's legal team, and Kim Lane Scheppele (2001, p. 1363) in "When the Law Doesn't Count" reinforces Baker's successful role in dealing with Bush's interests throughout the events until the Supreme Court's final decision.

Another notable fact regarding such a tumultuous moment in the United States was the TV networks' disorderly coverage of vote results during election night. The *BBC* online article entitled "TV Networks Behind Turmoil" (2000) summarizes the absolutely confused situation involving the release of the final outcome by stating that "at first, they said Al Gore had won Florida. Then they changed their forecast to say George W. Bush was the victor. Then they said it was too close to know. 'If you are disgusted with us, frankly, I don't blame you,' CBS television anchor Dan Rather told viewers." Johnson (2002, p. 77) explains that the TV networks, more specifically NBC, ABC, CNN, FOX News and CBS, were basing their information on the material provided by Voters News Services (VNS), which analyzes proper statistic and generates predictive results called exit polls. According to Johnson (2002, p. 77), the problem was that "no one had anticipated that the data and the conclusions drawn from VNS exit polls would be fatally flawed and have such major consequences," which in a way, besides amplifying the uproar concerning the final results of the election, exposed possible complications related to TV networks' reliable sources.

Concerning Pimlott's *Hamlet*, the 2000 presidential election in the United States caused a significant impact in the creative process of the staging. The initial plan, as Samuel West (2006, p. 41-43) explains, was to interpret the play as a present-day story, and therefore, the decision was to set the staging in contemporary times. West (2006, p. 44) comments on the influence in the production of the aforementioned political situation in the United States (see Chapter 1):

> We were lucky, if you can call lucky, that we were working on the shape and feel of our Elsinore at exactly the same moment that another regime was coming rather more conspicuously into being. We started rehearsing exactly two weeks after George Bush Jr was finally confirmed for his first term as president of the United States, after an election which he actually hadn't won: and those events were of course going to be in our minds and those of our audience when Hamlet complained that Claudius had popped in between the election and his hopes (5.2.66).The installation in the US, despite the popular ballot, of what appeared to be a hereditary president certainly provided a useful backdrop to our thinking about the play's Denmark.

Thus Claudius, played by Larry Lamb (1947-), was greatly inspired by the figure of Bush (WEST, 2006, p. 47), and the visual of the character on stage certainly resembles the Republican politician's features. Also, the idea that the prince and Claudius were both candidates, aiming for the throne of Denmark, was also incorporated in the conception of Pimlott's *Hamlet*, emphasizing the feeling of a presidential election (WEST, 2006, p. 44-45). Claudius represented the canny politician, as he saw the opportunity to seize the throne by murdering the King and convincing the court that he was absolutely prepared to rule the country, unlike the "hopeless" prince (WEST, 2006, p. 45). The approach to such a political context on stage can be surely perceived in the following scene analysis of Pimlott's production.

4.2 A Presidential Environment in Denmark

Before presenting the analysis of the selected scenes for this Chapter, the investigation of the portrayal of act 1, scene 2 becomes a significant starting point, as its depiction offers moments that can be keenly associated with the 2000 presidential election in the United States. I shall focus on the performance of the following passage:

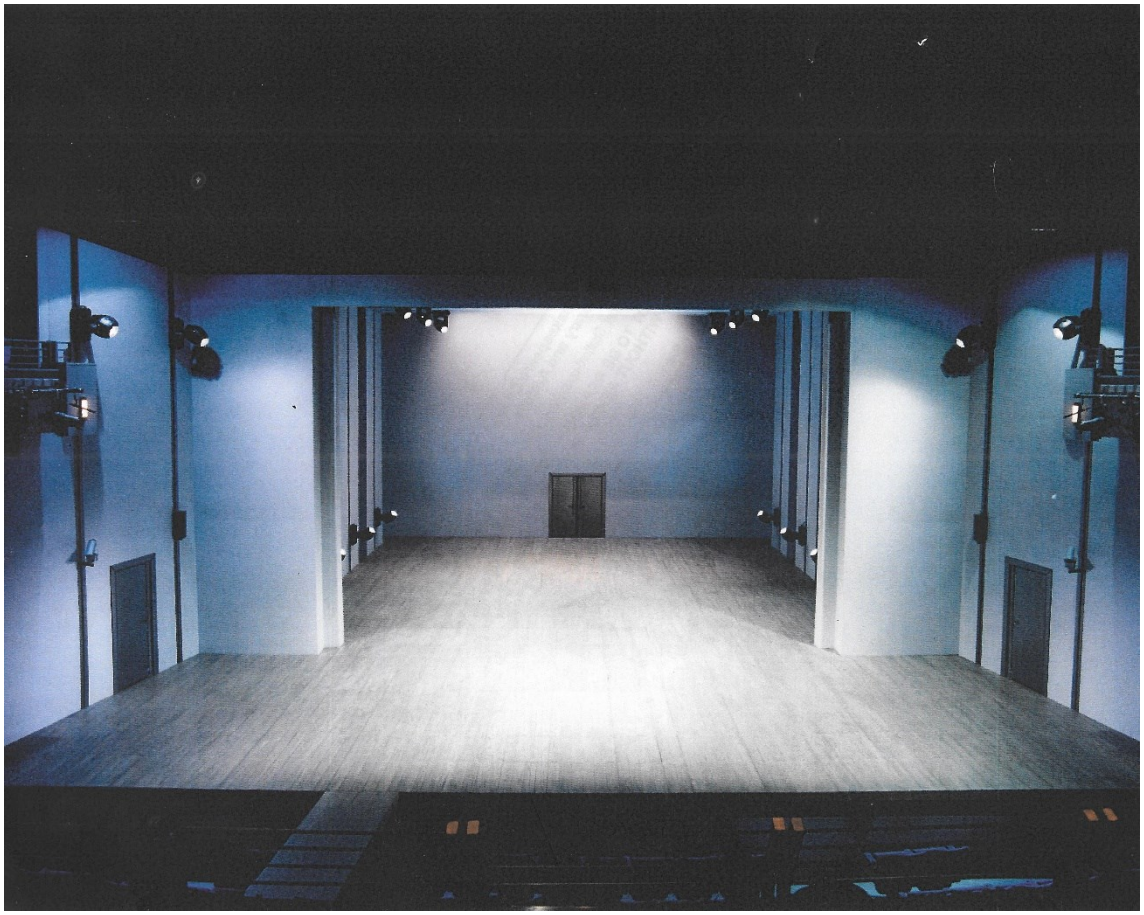
KING.
Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
The memory be green, and that it us befitted
To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
To be contracted in one brow of woe,
Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature
That we with wisest sorrow think on him
Together with a remembrance of ourselves.
Therefore our sometime sister, now our Queen,
Th'imperial jointress to this warlike state,
Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,
With an auspicious and a dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,
Taken to wife. Nor have we herein barred
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along. For all, our thanks.
Now follows that you know: young Fortinbras,
Holding a weak supposal of our worth
Or thinking by our late dear brother's death
Our state to be disjoint and out of frame□
Co-leagued with this dream of his advantage□
He hath not failed to pester us with message
Importing the surrender of those lands
Lost by his father with all bands of law
To our most valiant brother. So much for him.
Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting,
Thus much the business is: we have here writ

To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras□
Who impotent and bedrid scarcely hears
Of this his nephew's purpose□to suppress
His further gait herein, in that the levies,
The lists and full proportions are all made
Out of his subjects; and we here dispatch
You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltemand,
For bearers of this greeting to old Norway,
Giving to you no further personal power
To business with the King more than the scope
Of these delated articles allow.
Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.
CORNELIUS, VOLTEMAND.
In that and all things we show our duty. (1.2.1-40)

In the portrayal of the passage cited above, before the King starts his speech, several people come through two doors located in the foreground, one on each side of the stage (see fig. 7). They are enthusiastically applauding and cheering the King and Queen, played by Marty Cruickshank (1943-), who are entering through a large door in the background (see fig. 7). As the people are positioning themselves side by side, turning their backs to the audience, the King shakes hands with every single one of them, in the midst of much applause and smiles after every handshake. The King then gently brings Gertrude center stage, passes through the group of people who are still applauding and following Claudius's movements, and cheerfully looks at the audience, as if waiting for the round of applause to cease in order to commence his speech. Claudius, visually resembling Bush, as already commented, appears to be the candidate who has just won the election and is celebrating with his family and party members, ready to give his victory speech. Bearing in mind the previous discussion on the influence of the political scenario in the United States in Pimlott's *Hamlet*, such a portrayal sets the tone of the production by suggesting a compelling association with the 2000 American presidential election, more specifically in this case with Bush's victory.

The depiction of Claudius's speech in the passage cited above can also be connected with Bush's celebration as the winner of the presidential election in 2000. While Claudius awaits the conclusion of his supporters' round of applause, he looks at the audience with a thankful smile, proposing the idea that the members of the audience are there with the only purpose of congratulating him and listening to the previously implied victory speech. When the applause ceases, Claudius makes a long pause and addresses the audience. Lamb's emphasis on words and inclusion of short pauses while

Figure 7 - A view of the stage: two doors are located in the foreground where several people come through during the performance, and another door is placed in the background, through which the King and the Queen enter in the production.



Source: © RSC 2001, Shakespeare Centre Library

talking, besides making an attentive use of his tone of voice and body posture on stage, denote a clear connection with the image of a present-day politician giving a speech, once again visually evoking Bush's figure. After the delivery of "For all, our thanks," a cheerful round of applause can be heard, and Claudius awaits satisfactorily for a moment to continue. As Cornelius, played by Chuk Iwuji (1975-), and Voltemand, played by James Curran (1967-), reply "In that and all things we show our duty," the King and his supporters start applauding. Such a portrayal resembles the dynamics of a politician and guests in a rally, in which they are very much applauded throughout the entire situation. Therefore, the depiction of this passage can be related to the American presidential election in 2000, as it suggests a moment of political celebration involving Bush and his victory speech.

4.3 Analyzing Act 3, Scene 1

Concerning the investigation of act 3, scene 1, I shall explore the portrayal of a passage from the "To be or not to be" soliloquy, as follows:

> HAMLET.
> To be, or not to be□that is 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 heartache 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, (3.1.55-70)

In the depiction of the selected passage from the "To be or not to be" soliloquy cited above, Hamlet attentively resembles the figure of a politician giving a speech at a presidential debate, hinting at the aforementioned political context in the United States. Hamlet enters through the door located in the background, stops center stage and initiates the soliloquy by addressing the audience. The prince appears to be very calm, since he is not emotionally affected by the content of the speech, nor does he seem to be enraged by the circumstances he is facing in life. Hamlet looks at the members of the audience as if he is there to talk to them in order to clarify his objectives, and, therefore, adds many pauses while speaking, suggesting the idea that the prince is giving the audience a certain amount of time to process what is being said. West's Hamlet also considerably moves around during the soliloquy. For instance, at the delivery of "and by a sleep to say we end," Hamlet walks to the right, and after stating "For in that sleep of death what dreams may come," he returns center stage. The prince goes to the right again at the delivery of "For who would bear the whips and scorns of time," and walks to the left in "Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely." Such an explanatory attitude and tone of voice, besides the constant movement on stage, resemble the image of candidates in a debate, in this case, of Bush and Gore, due to the influence of the 2000 American presidential election. The *BBC* online article entitled "Final Showdown for Bush and

Gore" (2000) explains that the third and last debate, held at Washington University, was similar to a "town-hall meeting," that is, the candidates had to answer the questions from the audience. Bush and Gore were then situated in a place that appeared to be a stage, in which they could walk around and address the members of the audience (see fig. 8) while responding to the questions, and, according to the *BBC* online article entitled "Gore Comes out Fighting" (2000), making sure that their ideas were convincing and understood.

Figure 8 - Al Gore and George W. Bush in the final debate at Washington University.

Source: Romano and Love, "10 Great Debate Moments"

4.4 Analyzing Act 3, Scene 2

In relation to the analysis of act 3, scene 2, I shall investigate the two following passages related to the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago*:

PLAYER QUEEN. *O, confound the rest!*
Such love must needs be treason in my breast.
In second husband let me be accurst:
None wed the second but who killed the first.

HAMLET. That's wormwood!

PLAYER QUEEN.
The instances that second marriage move
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love.
A second time I kill my husband dead
When second husband kisses me in bed.

PLAYER KING.
I do believe you think what now you speak.
But what we do determine oft we break.
Purpose is but the slave to memory,
Of violent birth but poor validity,
Which now like fruit unripe sticks on the tree
But fall unshaken when they mellow be.
Most necessary 'tis that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt.
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending doth the purpose lose.
The violence of either grief of joy
Their own enactures with themselves destroy.
Where joy most revels grief doth most lament,
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
This world is not for aye, nor 'tis not strange
That even our loves should with our fortunes change,
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove
Whether Love lead Fortune or else Fortune Love. (3.2.172-197)

HAMLET. 'A poisons him i'th' garden for his estate. His name's Gonzago. The story is extant and written in very choice Italian. You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

OPHELIA. The King rises.

QUEEN. How fares my lord?

POLONIUS. Give o'er the play.

KING. Give me some light, away.

POLONIUS. Lights! Lights! Lights! (3.2.254-262)[77]

Concerning the depiction of the first passage cited above, Gertrude's image is broadcasted live on stage, which emphasizes her authentic reactions during the production of *The Murder of Gonzago*. A large screen is positioned center stage with two chairs on each side (see fig. 9), in which the King and the Queen are seated. As the performance of the play-within-a-play begins, nothing is being shown on the screen. However, at the delivery of "None wed the second but who killed the first" by the Player Queen (Jennifer McEvoy (1956-)), a loud snapping sound can be heard, which abruptly interrupts the performance, calling attention to Gertrude's image that appears on the screen in a medium close-up shot.[78] Her confused response can be clearly visualized and all her movements are

[77] The portrayal of this selected passage makes use of Q2 and F interchangeably. I decided to keep as a reference the Second Quarto, since more aspects related to such a text are utilized in the depiction of the aforementioned passage.
[78] According to David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson (2008, p. 191) in *Film Art: An Introduction*, a medium close-up shot "frames the body from the chest up."

distinctly exposed, since she is unable to hide her reactions in such circumstances. A few seconds later, when Hamlet claims "That's wormwood," another snapping sound echoes in the theater, Gertrude's image vanishes from the screen, and the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago* continues. Gertrude is filmed once again in a medium close-up shot, looking extremely uncomfortable, as the Player Queen states "When second husband kisses me in bed." Hamlet is in fact intently observing his mother's feedback to the performance, and the use of a camera in the portrayal of such a passage broadcasting her reactions live on a screen, so that everyone can unmistakably see all her movements, enhances the exposure of her genuine responses.

Figure 9 - The screen positioned center stage with two chairs on each side.

Source: © RSC 2001, Shakespeare Centre Library

Regarding the portrayal of the two passages previously mentioned, such a depiction suggests a critical approach concerning the TV networks' realistic role while covering the vote results on the 2000 presidential election night. As well as Gertrude, Claudius appears on the screen in two situations during the performance of *The Murder*

of Gonzago. First, he is shown in a close-up shot,[79] which straightforwardly exposes his facial expressions, at the delivery of "Whether Love lead Fortune or else Fortune Love" by the Player King (Robert Jezek (1955-)). Claudius looks distinctly confused and irritated. After Hamlet claims "'A poisons him i'th' garden for his estate," which is the precise moment when Claudius's crime is being demonstrated on stage through Lucianus's actions, the image of the King appears on the screen in a medium shot,[80] still looking very confused, though rather humiliated. During Hamlet's delivery of lines 255 to 257, the camera zooms in Claudius's face to a close-up shot, directly exposing and emphasizing his facial reactions. The King moves away from the camera focus when Ophelia, played by Kerry Condon (1983-), claims "The King rises." He then stands up and leaves, nervously stating "Give me some light, away." As the camera zooms in Claudius, Hamlet seems to be remarkably concerned about capturing and revealing every single detail related to the King's reaction to the murder performed on stage. Therefore, the live broadcast in the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago* suggests the idea that such a device can effectively serve as a tool to reveal true elements, that is, Gertrude's and Claudius's authentic responses to situations, as they cannot hide their reactions in front of the camera. In this case, the portrayal of both passages cited above proposes a criticism regarding the distraught coverage of the 2000 presidential election night, as the disclosure of the true results during the live broadcast was shamefully mishandled by the TV Networks, whose primary and significant role in such circumstances involves the exposure of valid information.

4.5 Analyzing Act 5, Scene 2

The investigation of the depiction of act 5, scene 2 initially concerns the study of the portrayal of the following passage:

> HAMLET.
> Come for the third, Laertes, you but dally.
> I pray you pass with your best violence.
> I am afeared you make a wanton of me.
>
> LAERTES.
> Say you so? Come on. [*They*] *play*.

[79] Bordwell and Thompson (2008, p. 191) explain that "the close-up is traditionally the shot showing just the head, hands, feet, or a small object."
[80] According to Bordwell and Thompson (2008, p. 191), "the medium shot frames the body form the waist up."

> OSRICKE. Nothing neither way.
>
> LAERTES. Have at you now! *In scuffling they change rapiers*.
>
> KING. Part them they are incensed. (5.2.250-256)[81]

A *trade-off* involving the *rescripting* of a stage direction in the depiction of the passage previously cited can be attentively observed in the production. As Hamlet claims "Come for the third, Laertes, you but dally," the duel has already started, and Laertes, played by Ben Meyjes (1971-) is about to hurt Hamlet with his poisoned weapon, which occurs after Meyjes's delivery of "Have at you now." The *rescripting* of the stage direction "*In scuffling they change rapiers*" can be then perceived, since Laertes and Hamlet do not switch weapons while fighting. The *trade-off*, in this case, has to do with the exchange of the significant image that decides the fate of Laertes and involves Hamlet, when they change weapons, for the impressive image of Claudius picking up the poisoned rapier that is on the floor and delivering to the prince so that the duel can continue. Laertes looks baffled by Claudius's action and perplexingly stares at him, as the King's attitude is clearly endangering Laertes's life.

Such a valuable *trade-off* in the production cleverly hints at aspects related to the 2000 American presidential election. It implies the fact that the King is willing to use any means necessary to secure the throne of Denmark, which includes the sacrifice of Laertes's life. Polonius's son, at this point, is the only one aware of Gertrude's accidental drinking of the poisoned wine and the plots to kill Hamlet during the duel, and therefore could pose a threat to Claudius's future. Most importantly, the *trade-off* suggests the idea that Claudius is able to perceive the exact situation in which something has to be done strategically in order to protect his own interests. Thus, such a significant *trade-off* in the production can be connected with the crucial moment in which the controversial recount of votes started in Florida, and Bush had to make an effective decision in order to protect his interests in the election. Bush then strategically chose, as already mentioned, James A. Baker III as the leader of his legal team, who played an influential role in Bush's victory.

Still regarding the analysis of act 5, scene 2, I shall explore the portrayal of the following passage which is related to the very end of the production:

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[81] The portrayal of act 5, scene 2 in Pimlott's *Hamlet* makes use of Q2 and F interchangeably. For this particular passage, I decided to utilize the Folio text due to the fact that many aspects from F are emphasized. Osricke, though, is spelled Osric, as it is in Q2, in both the theater program and prompt book. In the production, Osric is played by Christopher Good (1956-).

HORATIO. Not from his mouth,
Had it th'ability of life to thank you;
He never gave commandment for their death.
But, since so jump upon this bloody question
You from the Polack wars and you from England
Are here arrived, give order that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view,
And let me speak to th'yet unknowing world
How these things came about. So shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning, and for no cause,
And in this upshot purposes mistook
Fallen on th'inventors' heads. All this I can
Truly deliver.

FORTINBRAS. Let us haste to hear it.
And call the noblest to the audience.
For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune.
I have some rights of memory in this kingdom
Which now to claim my vantage doth invite me.

HORATIO.
Of that shall have also cause to speak
And from his mouth whose voice will draw no more.
But let this same be presently performed
Even while men's minds are wild, lest more mischance
On plots and errors happen.

FORTINBRAS. Let four captains
Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage,
For he was likely, had he been put on,
To have proved most royal. And for his passage
The soldiers' music and the rite of war
Speak loudly for him.
Take up the bodies. Such a sight as this
Becomes the field but here shows much amiss.
Go, bid the soldiers shoot. (5.2.357-387)

The emphasis on the celebration of Fortinbras, played by Finn Caldwell (1970-), as the new King of Denmark in the depiction of the passage cited above may be seen as critically addressing the final moments of the aforementioned presidential election. Fortinbras clearly demonstrates through his body posture that he is a figure of authority among the others on stage, for instance, when Horatio, played by John Dougall (1969-), claims "Not from his mouth," and continues speaking. The same idea is reinforced at Fortinbras's delivery of lines 370 to 374, when he sits on the King's chair that is placed on stage after stating "For he was likely, had he been put on," and later as he commands "Take up the bodies." Such a portrayal distinctly highlights his figure at that particular moment in the production, proposing a focus on the new monarch. As he demands "Go, bid the soldiers shoot," a group of supporters that is already on stage, and others who are entering, enthusiastically start applauding him. The image offered at this point is similar

to the one previously commented in the analysis of the portrayal of act 1, scene 2, in which the King's supporters are vigorously applauding him and congratulating his victory. In this case, the celebration of Fortinbras as the new monarch is ironically emphasized in the production after uncommon and traumatic circumstances. Such a depiction critically hints at the final moments of the 2000 presidential election in the United States, since Bush's victory was in fact unusually decided by the Supreme Court after a tumultuous legal process involving the vote recounts in Florida.

4.6 Critical Reception

Michael Billington (2001) in "Pistols and Politics in Denmark," for *The Guardian*, underlines the political tone of the production. Billington (2001) praises the staging by comparing it with Pimlott's and West's previous work with *Richard II*, as he states that "having collaborated on a triumphant *Richard II*, the same actor-director team of Samuel West and Steven Pimlott now give us a strikingly similar *Hamlet*: cliché-free, anti-romantic, visually spare and politically vivid." The critic points out that one of the strengths of the production is its emphasis on political issues, especially due to the lack of current stagings of the play that address such aspects. He then claims that "we have lately had a rash of depoliticized *Hamlets*. Pimlott puts power back at the play's centre and, with West, makes it enthrallingly clear that Hamlet's tragedy is that he is the paralysed individual conscience in a world of realpolitik" (BILLINGTON, 2001). Undoubtedly, the political tone of Pimlott's work is greatly foregrounded during the performance, as in the scene analysis in this Chapter, for instance, many references to the 2000 American presidential election can be noticed.

In relation to West's portrayal of Hamlet, Billington (2001) remarks that the actor stresses compelling facets of the prince. A suicidal Hamlet is frequently seen on stage, and West even points a pistol against himself during the performance. A distinct sense of inaptitude is also explored by the actor, as Billington (2001) comments that "each actor creates his own Hamlet and West's is sardonic, clever and cruelly aware of his own powerlessness. When the First Player describes the immobilized Pyrrhus confronting Priam, West brilliantly echoes the phrase about the way Pyrrhus 'did nothing'." West surely offers a notable depiction of the prince by consistently underlining pertinent features of the character.

Some of Pimlott's decisions as a director seem to dissatisfy the *Birmingham Post*'s critic, Richard Edmonds. In "Bare Bones of the Boredom Factor," Edmonds (2001) is distressed by the imposing minimalistic style of the production, which is also present in Pimlott's already mentioned *Richard II*. The treatment of the text on stage is also criticized by Edmonds (2001), as the poetry of the lines appear to be disregarded by the director. Another aspect that displeases the critic is the fact that the text spoken on stage is not in accordance with the visual modernity of the production:

> It is a directorial concept which leads to a schism between what is spoken and what we see on this grim stage. Hamlet, for example, speaks of a sword but actually waves a gangland flick knife before drawing the gun with which he eventually shoots Polonius. On another occasion, Laertes tells us of a poison bought from a mountebank. But Laertes is today's globe-trotting, 20-something in jeans and a bright blue zip-up. What would this young man know of mountebanks? A hundred such people crowd the Stratford streets, and so how he looks and how he acts has little connection to what he says and there is not much that suggests a connection to a statesman father schooled in the graces of court. But then again, what court? Claudius is rather like senior partner in a banking set-up. His "court" is in suits with plastic identity tags (EDMONDS, 2001).

Indeed, the distance between the delivered text and what is actually being shown on stage can be discerned in the production. However, Pimlott's decision regarding the dismissal of *rescripting* in some of the passages offers a critical emphasis on the sense of improperness, which, in a way, has to do with elements related to the political context approached in the production, such as the polemic coverage of the election night.

For Susannah Clapp (2001), in the review published in *The Observer*, entitled "There's Nothing Rotten in This State," Pimlott's *Hamlet* is able to present several distinctive aspects that enhance the production. Clapp (2001) underlines the creative dynamics on stage, which offer a calculated visual distance between the characters and a significant proximity to the audience. The critic comments that the delivery of the soliloquies can serve as an example of such a proximity to the public in the theater:

> [The] soliloquies, addressed to [the audience] directly, are arguments rather than lyrical musings. For the 'To be or not to be,' West marches furiously up to the edge of the stage and puts his question as a matter of urgency. When he talks of guilty creatures sitting at a play, he rakes his eyes over the stalls (CLAPP, 2001).

Besides, according to Clapp (2001), the subject of politics is distinctly foregrounded in the production with the presence of Fortinbras. Surely, the depiction of Fortinbras on

stage collaborates to the development of political matters, though other elements in the staging also offer a significant contribution, as can be observed in the analysis of the portrayal of scenes in this study. As for West's performance, the actor's intense depiction of Hamlet is highly praised by Clapp (2001):

> Sam West has proved his admirers right. It's long been obvious to them that he would be a penetrating Hamlet. And he is. Sceptical and precise, continually turning his insights to his own disadvantage, he's always riveting and sometimes chilling. This is a prince so sharp he's bound to cut himself.

West certainly brings to the stage a perceptive view of the prince that effectively blends to the other features in the production.

In "A *Hamlet* So Hip It Hurts," Charles Spencer (2001), for *The Daily Telegraph*, points out positive and negative aspects of the production. As opposed to Edmonds, Spencer (2001) praises the minimalist style of Pimlott's *Hamlet*, which is in accordance with the contemporary tone of the show. Spencer (2001) disapproves, though, the apparent lack of "spontaneity" that the production demonstrates due to Pimlott's intensely crafted environment in the staging, leaving almost no room for improvisation. The critic also calls attention to the political approach of the production, highlighting Lamb's similarity with Bush:

> The newly elected Claudius is a smooth, presidential figure, greeted by his courtiers and interns with cheers, whoops and applause, like George W. Bush arriving at the White House […]. The play's political dimension brutally cut from several recent productions is fully restored, with a strong sense that Denmark is on a nervy war footing (SPENCER, 2001).

The political tone of Pimlott's *Hamlet*, as aforementioned, is definitely foregrounded in the production, enhancing the array of subjects that are also addressed in the staging, such as Hamlet's dilemmas and uncertainties. Not only the emphasis on political matters is underlined by Spencer, as other critics have already remarked, but also the fact that the prince displays suicidal traces, which Billington has previously pointed out. Spencer (2001) comments on such a subject and praises West's performance:

> From the start it is clear that this Hamlet is in a state of near-suicidal depression he even turns a gun on himself during the first soliloquy. But you catch flashes too, of his old charm, wit and natural authority, while the verse is delivered with exemplary clarity. I have never heard 'To be or not to be' more freshly minted.

However, Spencer (2001) does not share the same opinion regarding the performance of the other actors, except for the works of David as a meticulous Polonius and Dougall as a highly supportive Horatio. Most certainly, Lamb's portrayal of Claudius can also be highlighted in the production, especially due to the impressive resemblance of a contemporary politician that he incorporates in the depiction of the character.

The critics Benedict Nightingale (2001) and John Gross (2001) also highly praise West's performance on stage, both mentioning the suicidal facet of West's prince in the midst of other elements presented by the actor. Nightingale (2001) in "Din of Clashing Symbols," for *The Times*, emphasizes the fact that West's Hamlet "is driven to bouts of frenzy and thoughts of suicide as he desperately tries to make himself want to use violence." Gross (2001) in "There's Life at the End of Sunset Boulevard," for *The Sunday Telegraph*, comments on West's work, also mentioning the actor's performance of the "To be or not to be" soliloquy:

> He is quick, nervous, responsive; […] working his way towards maturity as the action progresses: half genuinely embittered, half playing with suicidal gestures. He speaks incisively, with a feeling for a natural rhythm, and he has a freshness which keeps at bay any suggestion of cliché, even in "To be or not to be."

Indeed, West's delivery of the soliloquy keenly displays innovative elements, which, as already observed in this Chapter, propose a connection with the political context approached in Pimlott's *Hamlet*. Also, West certainly depicts an anxious prince on stage, underlining his inner turmoil and suicidal traces.

As has been noted, the production's distinct approach to the political context regarding the 2000 presidential election in the United States can be intensely perceived in the analysis of the selected scenes for this Chapter. The contemporary tone of Pimlott's *Hamlet*, underlining the presidential environment in Denmark, offers productive ground concerning the examination and criticism of such a context. In relation to the performance of the characters, the actors' tone of voice and the visuals displayed on stage, which include the actors' body posture and their movement throughout the analyzed scenes, not to mention the fact that Lamb's Claudius cleverly resembles Bush in the production, discernibly incorporate aspects of the aforementioned political scenario in the staging. The use of visual devices, such as the live broadcast of Claudius and Gertrude in the portrayal of *The Murder of Gonzago*, not only emphasizes the significance of visual elements in a theatrical production, but also collaborates in terms of critically exploring

the issues related to the 2000 American presidential election. Additionally, the *trade-off* observed in the depiction of act 5, scene 2 reveals a situation that cleverly hints at the political context addressed in the production, channeling a critical stance on the subject. As for the critical reception, the emphasis on political issues in Pimlott's *Hamlet*, taking into account the fact that previous performances have often avoided exploring such subjects, is highlighted by some of the critics, foregrounding the significance of Pimlott's work. The production, therefore, resonates the present-day relevance of productions of *Hamlet*, as it intensely communicates with critical perspectives related to contemporary political matters.

Chapter 5

"I hear him coming□withdraw, my lord" [82]:

Michael Boyd's *Hamlet*

"Her father and myself,□lawful espials□
Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge […]"[83]

In this Chapter, as already pointed out in the Introduction to this study, I investigate selected scenes from Michael Boyd's production[84] in order to explore the issue of contextualization. In terms of text choice for the stage, Jonathan Bate (2004, p. 9) in the article "Which Hamlet," published in the theater program, points out that Boyd took into account all three texts of *Hamlet*. By analyzing the video recording and the prompt book of the staging, I could observe the predominance of Q2, with some added passages and alterations from Q1 and F. For instance, the "To be or not to be" soliloquy is anticipated as it is in Q1 (see Chapter 2), and the passage in which Hamlet famously declares "Denmark's a prison" (2.2.242) in F is included. Therefore, for this particular staging, I investigate the scenes I pointed out for productions that follow Q2 and F, namely, act 3, scenes 1 and 2, and act 5, scene 2.[85] Regarding the subject of contextualization, the analysis encompasses comments on the impact and historical relevance of Stephen Greenblatt's *Hamlet in Purgatory* in the production. Besides, the approach to political and historical aspects in relation to the issues of espionage and the succession crisis in Elizabethan times is significantly explored. Also, this Chapter includes observations regarding the critical reception of the staging.

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[82] Line spoken by Polonius in the Second Quarto of *Hamlet* (3.1.54).
[83] Line spoken by the King in the Folio text of *Hamlet* (3.1.32-34).
[84] According to Emma Smith (2004, p. 16) in the theater program of Boyd's *Hamlet*, the production premiered on July 9th, 2004. The video of this production, available at the Shakespeare Centre (see Chapter 1), was recorded on September 23rd, 2004. All descriptions of scenes in this Chapter are taken from such a recording.
[85] Even though I have noticed the predominance of Q2 in the production, most of the passages analyzed in this Chapter refer to the Folio text. The lines quoted in the analysis of act 3, scene 2 (128.1-128.10), and the passage from act 1, scene 1 (lines 128-140) are taken from Q2. The remaining quotations utilized in the analysis of Boyd's *Hamlet* are taken from the Folio text.

5.1 Hamlet and the Ghost

As the influence of Stephen Greenblatt's *Hamlet in Purgatory* in Boyd's production is eminent and foregrounds historical aspects, I begin this Chapter by addressing such subjects. Michael Dobson (2006, p. 2) reinforces the impact of Greenblatt's work and states that "Boyd's *Hamlet* was explicitly interested in matters of religioun and the afterlife." Greg Hicks (1953-) (2006, p. 22) in "The Ghost, the Player and the Gravedigger,"[86] explains the influence of Greenblatt's ideas in the production:

> Following Michael's lead, we pursued over the course of rehearsal the idea that Stephen Greenblatt develops in his book *Hamlet in Purgatory* (2001), namely that this is a Catholic ghost confronting a Protestant prince so there is an extraordinary dynamic, as a student prince who has been taught that such things simply do not exist suddenly finds that they do.

Greenblatt (2004, p. 6) also comments on the religious conflict between Hamlet and the Ghost in "Who's There," published in the theater program, in which he problematizes the effects that the visit of the Ghost from purgatory has on Hamlet:

> The problem is that this spirit has not returned to ask for funeral masses or alms for the poor. He is asking his son to "remember" him, but remembrance here means one thing: revenge. And vengeance, as ministers endlessly reiterated, was the monopoly of the Almighty. Spirits in God's great penitentiary could not by definition ask anyone to commit a crime. After all, they are being purged of the sins in order to ascend to heaven. Yet his ghost is demanding that his son kill the man who murdered him, seized his crown, and married his widow. Audiences then as now would not necessarily worry about this the play is not after all a theology lesson. But Hamlet worries about it, and his paralyzing doubts and anxieties displace revenge as the centre of the play's interest.

Bearing such a discussion in mind, the presence of the Ghost in Boyd's production most certainly has a powerful impact on Hamlet, played by Toby Stephens (1969-), who looks absolutely aghast on stage. He seems to be completely helpless and effectively terrified by both the image of the Ghost from purgatory and the revengeful task at hand.

As regards the appearance of the Ghost in the production, a resemblance between the visual aspect of the character and Greenblatt's description of illustrations depicting the souls that are in purgatory can be attentively noticed. Hicks (2006, p. 20-21) comments on the visual conception of the character:

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[86] In Boyd's production, Hicks not only performs the role of the Ghost, but also plays the roles of the Player King in *The Murder of Gonzado* and the Gravedigger (HICKS, 2006, p. 17).

> Much to Michael Boyd's delight I came in on day two of rehearsal saying I wanted to be completely white, skeletal, sinewy, silently screaming (trying to speak in answer to Horatio in 1.1, for example, but being agonizingly unable to do so), and walking incredibly slowly, destroying normal time boundaries so that my movements would not be part of the living world which was operating around me. That was the first keynote of my performance as the Ghost: being a withered, pallid, tormented, dead thing who was horribly there but also horribly wasn't, wearing only the tattered remnants of cerecloths around by loins. The second keynote was a superhuman-sized sword, dragged with clattering echoes along behind me […]. [We] both agreed that it should be larger than life, Excalibur to the power of ten, and that it should be heavy for me to carry.

Such a description of the visual aspect of the Ghost in the conception of the character can be perceived on stage (see fig. 10),[87] and Hicks's Ghost intensively looks as if he is a lost and suffering soul. The idea was to propose something unusual in relation to the appearance and behavior of the character that would directly reflect on the relationship between Hamlet and his father, as Hicks (2006, p. 20) explains:

> Productions where the Ghost is just a man in a suit, just Hamlet's dad, seem to me a surrender to the banality of the modern; I wanted to bring something onto the stage that would lodge in people's psyches beyond the end of the play, a Ghost that isn't just a particular man's father but an archetypal father-energy from a burning beyond which the boy has no equipment to deal with at all.

Indeed, Hicks's Ghost is able to display an overwhelming sense of power over Hamlet, even though he looks extremely weakened and immersed in agony. As the Ghost appears to be an injured and afflicted spirit, he sensibly resembles the art image of souls in purgatory that can be noticed in the illustrations of the *Book of Hours*, which are commented by Greenblatt in *Hamlet in Purgatory*. The illustrations show the exposed body of the souls, who are mostly naked and have suffered hideous torments while waiting for their rescue (GREENBLATT, 2013, p. 52-54). In Boyd's production, the image of the Ghost himself displays the frailty of his body and emotional state, a soul who is still absorbed in pain, and his sword attentively suggests the idea of torture and punishment. Most carefully, some lines that describe Old Hamlet's armor when he appears as a ghost, such as Horatio's when he declares "Armed at point, exactly cap-à-pie" (1.2.199), are not mentioned in the production, reinforcing a focus on the debilitated visual condition of the character.

[87] In this picture, Hicks's Ghost appears with a long wig, but in the video recording he has very white short hair.

Figure 10 - The Ghost dragging his sword.

Source: ***RSC Image Library*** **website, Shakespeare Centre Library.** Photo by Manuel Harlan **© RSC 2004**

An example of a *trade-off*, involving the *rescripting* of a stage direction in Boyd's *Hamlet*, can be perceived in the depiction of a conversation between Horatio, played by Forbes Masson (1963-), and Marcellus, played by Sion Tudor Owen (1983-). The conversation is cited below, which is followed by a brief description of its portrayal on stage:

> HORATIO. Speak to me
> If there be any good thing to be done
> That may to thee do ease and grace to me,
> Speak to me
> If thou art privy to thy country's fate
> Which happily foreknowing may avoid,
> O, speak.
> Or if thou hast uphoarded in thy life
> Extorted treasure in the womb of earth □
> For which they say your spirits oft walk in death □
> Speak of it, stay and speak. *The cock crows*.
> Stop it, Marcellus!

> MARCELLUS.
> Shall I strike it with my partisan? (1.1.128-140)

As Masson's Horatio starts delivering his lines in the passage cited above, he is positioned, along with Marcellus and Barnardo, played by Ian Drysdale (1973-), nearby the wood-paneled structure that covers the whole background of the stage. The Ghost is situated on the left side in the foreground, which is extremely well lit in comparison to the area where the other characters are placed. The Ghost's body posture and the specific well-lit location reinforce his suffering and supernatural appearance, as he frequently bends his body forwards, displaying a painful state, and looks intensely pale. Also, during the delivery of Horatio's lines, the Ghost slowly walks towards the other characters and, as he drags his sword across the floor, a terrifying scrapping sound can be distinctively heard, an aspect that stresses the idea of torment. Right after Masson's delivery of "Speak of it, stay and speak," a sound similar to church bells echoes loudly in the theater, making the Ghost turn around with considerable difficulty. In relation to the *rescripting* of the stage direction "*The cock crows*," a *trade-off* can be noticed, since the sound of the rooster is replaced by the sound of church bells during the performance.

Such an example of a *trade-off* sensibly highlights the historical religious conflict in England involving Catholics and Protestants. At this point, Greenblatt (2013, p. 43-44) remarks on the religious discord between English Catholic and Protestant viewpoints regarding church bells in the seventeenth century help shed light on the significance of this specific moment of *trade-off* in the production:

> The tolling of the bells in Protestant England was a subject of contention. More zealous Protestants wanted to see the custom eliminated as a remnant of popery, and they had a strong case. Traditionally the bells, signaling the passing of a fellow Christian, were a call for prayers that would help speed the newly departed soul through its purgatorial torment. Such assistance would come most naturally from the immediate family of the deceased, but the bells alerted and invoked the assistance of the entire congregation, for all the faithful, living and dead, were bound together. The sound of the bells demarcated a geographical unit of fellow feeling within whose limits prayers were particularly appropriated. The English Church instituted restrictions on this practice, but it did not eliminate bell ringing altogether.

Therefore, the *trade-off* concerning the addition of the sound of church bells in the staging attentively hints at the historical tension between English Catholic and Protestant views in the seventeenth century. The sound of the rooster, which makes the Ghost leave the stage and raises a discussion in the play about the nature of spirit, is then keenly replaced

in the production by a newly added element that proposes a connection with such a significant conflict in the country, reinforcing the staging's criticism on relevant historical issues.

5.2 Elizabeth I's Network of Spies

Given this investigation's thematic focus, I shall make some contextual remarks concerning the subject of espionage in the Elizabethan Era. As mentioned in Chapter 1, surveillance activities were markedly part of the Elizabethan court. Alan Haynes (2000, p. xi) in *The Elizabethan Secret Services* comments on the popularity and relevance of spies at that time:

> There were almost as many compelling reasons for being a spy as there were spies themselves belligerent conviction, self interest, family necessity, vanity, desperation and perhaps a low threshold of boredom […]. Elizabethan espionage was the work of individuals collaborating, not whole departments. It was controlled by individual officers of state, but ultimatly had a collective, that is national, purpose. It therefore shaped Elizabethan society, and grew parasidically on the body of the political nation.

In the midst of the vast array of plots against Elizabeth I, the Queen could count on her most trustworthy spies, namely, Francis Walsingham, William Cecil, and Robert Dudley (HAYNES, 2000, p. xv). More specifically about Walsingham, the Secretary of State was actively in charge of the Queen's secret services and became well-known as a "spymaster" (WILSON, 2007, p. xi).

Walsingham's commendable reputation concerning the Elizabethan surveillance service was supported by a great number of agents that worked for him. As Derek Wilson (2007, p. 101) points out in *Sir Francis Walsingham*, "diplomats; merchants, mariners and others whose work took them abroad; Huguenots and other Protestant friends; foreign courtiers who could be bribed to be Walsingham's eyes and ears" were constantly employed by the Secretary. Since the extended list of collaborators was highly costly, the secret service expenditure often called Elizabeth I's attention, who became displeased with the amount of money spent in those activities (WILSON, 2007, p. 101), even though Walsingham was investing in her own security. The Secretary of State also had to deal with the copious amount of intelligence gathered by his agents, which were thoroughly examined in order to discover useful pieces of information (WILSON, 2007, p. 102). As an example of Walsingham's surveillance service at work, Charles Sledd, one of his

agents, was able to unveil a secret plot to invade England in 1579 (WILSON, 2007, p. 142). He disguised himself as a "potential Catholic" in the English College in Rome and provided Walsingham with a list of names and the invasion plots that students in Rome were planning (WILSON, 2007, p. 142). Suspects were quickly arrested, and then later exposed to Walsingham's cruel treatment of his captives which usually involved torture and bribery in order to reveal information (WILSON, 2007, p. 142).

The Secretary of State also helped uncover some other plans that intended to overthrow Elizabeth I, which involved Mary, Queen of Scots, one of them being the Throckmorton Plot in 1583. As Bernie Sheehan (2013, p. 3) in *The Gunpowder Plot* explains, "Francis [Throckmorton] acted as an informer between the Spanish Ambassador[88] and Mary, Queen of Scots." Throckmorton was arrested by Walsingham, whose agents were able to collect a considerable amount of evidence in Throckmorton's house (WILSON, 2007, p. 174). Still, the Secretary of State authorized his men to torture the prisoner on the rack in order to gather more specific information (WILSON, 2007, p. 174-175). Under such extreme circumstances, Throckmorton revealed the whole plot, as Wilson (2007, p. 175) clarifies that "Phillip II [of Spain] and Pope Gregory were to finance an invasion led in person by the Duke of Guise[89] […]. Mary had been apprised of the plan and the principal intermediary between her and the conspirators had been Mendonza." The Secretary of State's group of spies once again proved its efficiency by achieving its main purpose, which was to protect Elizabeth I, even though Walsingham relied on gruesome methods in order to obtain the necessary evidence for his investigation.

Another plan unmasked by Walsingham, that eventually culminated in the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, was the Babington Plot in 1586. Sheehan (2013, p. 3) clarifies that "in 'secret' correspondence, Anthony Babington and Mary, Queen of Scots hatched a plan to place her on the throne." Walsingham counted on Gilbert Gifford's work as a spy, who gained the confidence of Mary to the point where Gifford successfully had access to her messages (WILSON, 2007, p. 210). Consequently, the Secretary of State was able to read Mary's letters and became aware of her plans. Later on, due to the work of his spies, Walsingham was in possession of two letters that played a major role in the dissolution of the Babington Plot, as Wilson (2007, p. 211) explains:

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[88] Bernardino de Mendonza (WILSON, 2007, p. 143).
[89] Henri I, Duke of Guise in France (CARROLL, 2009, p. 177).

> On 6 July [Babington] wrote to Mary the letter which would seal the fate of them both. It set out all the elements of the scheme and sought permission to proceed. Mary's impatiently awaited reply was penned by her secretary on 17 July and, to Walsingham's delight, it was a long letter explicit about her acquiescence in the conspirator's treason.

As a result, Babington and other conspirators were arrested, tortured in order to reveal more information, and executed, mostly by "hanging, drawing and quartering" (WILSON, 2007, p. 212). Mary's letter was used by Walsingham as a strong evidence against her in the trial which decided that she was guilty and should be executed (WILSON, 2007, p. 215-219). Walsingham's network of spies was thus able to protect the Queen once again, leaving behind the usual trace of violence.

In relation to Boyd's production, the issue of espionage, a subject that can be related to some aspects of the play (see Chapter 1), is discerningly explored on stage. Patricia Tatspaugh (2005, p. 448-449) comments on Boyd's choices that emphasize the theme of espionage in his production:

> Michael Boyd set the tragedy in a spy-infested early-seventeenth century […] [and] expanded instances of spying. Guards hovered ominously before the wooden cyclorama that enclosed the stage or took their positions before or behind every possible entrance and appeared, quickly and unnecessarily, to remove three chairs when Horatio […] explained the Ghost's attempt to speak. Slats in the cyclorama provided spying positions not only for Claudius and Polonius but also for the functionary who eavesdropped on Gertrude […] and Horatio when he confided to the queen that her son had returned to Denmark and that Claudius had intended Hamlet's death.

Indeed, the idea of espionage is highlighted in Boyd's staging, which can be perceived in distinct moments of the production, as the analysis of the selected scenes in this Chapter shall demonstrate. According to Michael Neil (2012, p. 324), several characters in the play act like spies:

> It is symbolically appropriate that the play should begin with a group of anxious watchers on the battlemented walls of the castle, for nothing and no one in Claudius's Denmark is allowed to go "unwatched": every appearance must be "sifted" or "sounded," and every secret "opened." The King himself does not hesitate to eavesdrop on the heir apparent; and his chief minister Polonius, will meet his death lurking behind a curtain in the same squalid occupation.

Neil (2012, p. 325) complements by arguing that Denmark's court is in fact the appropriate place for Polonius to reside, since the character is constantly spying on Ophelia's and Laertes's sexuality. In addition, the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago* in the play

proposes one of the most compelling instance that deals with the image of surveillance (NEIL, 2012, p. 325). Therefore, by analyzing the play through the lens of espionage, Neil identifies situations which can offer a specific definition of the characters' behaviors, reinforcing the significance of a spying system in the plot. Boyd is then able to capture the tone of such a pertinent issue in the play and keenly channels it in his production.

5.3 Analyzing Act 3, Scene 1

More specifically in relation to the analysis of act 3, scene 1, I investigate the depiction of a passage that immediately precedes the "To be or not to be" soliloquy,[90] as follows:

> KING. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too.
> For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither
> That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
> Affront Ophelia.
> Her father and myself□lawful espials□
> Will so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,
> We may of their encounter frankly judge
> And gather by him as he is behaved
> If't be th'affliction of his love or no
> That thus he suffers for.
>
> QUEEN. I shall obey you.
> And for your part, Ophelia, I do wish
> That your good beauties be the happy cause
> Of Hamlet's wildness. So shall I hope your virtues
> Will bring him to his wonted way again
> To both your honours.
>
> OPHELIA. Madam, I wish it may. [*Exit Queen*.]
>
> POLONIUS.
> Ophelia, walk you here. (Gracious, so please ye,
> We will bestow ourselves.) Read on this book
> That show of such an exercise may colour
> Your loneliness. We are oft too blame in this□
> 'Tis too much proved that with devotion's visage
> And pious action we do sugar o'er
> The devil himself.
>
> KING. O, 'tis true. (3.1.28-49)

In the portrayal of the passage cited above, Polonius, played by Richard Cordery (1978-), takes control of the situation by decisively organizing the moment to spy on

[90] In Boyd's production, this particular passage is also anticipated.

Hamlet, which hints at the work of Elizabeth I's spies to protect her interests. When the Queen, whose role is played by Sian Thomas (1953-), leaves the stage, Polonius is positioned on the right side, close to the wood-paneled background. Ophelia, played by Meg Fraser (1980-), is located at the center of the stage, and the King, played by Clive Wood (1954-) is standing on the left side, also close to the wood-paneled structure. After Cordery's delivery of "Ophelia, walk you here," he moves towards her indicating the best place to wait for Hamlet. During the delivery of "We will bestow ourselves," Polonius also adjusts the location of the King, indicating that Claudius should stay on the right side near the wood-paneled structure. Polonius continues arranging the situation, as he goes to Ophelia and gives her the book. Cordery's active and resolute movement on stage, as well as his determined tone of voice, denote that the character is truly confident and dominates the circumstance. The other characters only respond to Polonius's instructions, doing exactly what he tells them to do. In this case, considering the contextualization issues previously pointed out, the depiction of Polonius's efforts to make sure that the spying operation is successful and that he is righteously serving the King's interests resembles Walsingham's work in the field of espionage, taking all the necessary measures to protect Elizabeth I.

Additionally, the display of shadows during the portrayal of the same passage suggests an association with the already mentioned context of espionage in the Elizabethan Era. The significance of the use of light in a theatrical production is explained by Patrice Pavis (1998, p. 197) in *Dictionary of the Theatre*:

> Light is not simply a decorative element; it participates in the meaning-producing efforts of the performance. Its dramaturgical and semiological potential is infinite. It can clarify or comment on an action, isolate an actor or an element of the stage, create an atmosphere, pace the performance, help interpret the development of arguments and emotions, and so on.

Since light is an element that encompasses a great variety of movements, it also generates diversified aspects to a theatrical production, such as shadows (PAVIS, 1998, p. 197), which are widely employed in Boyd's production. For instance, as Polonius is arranging the best scenario to spy on Hamlet, and thus guides the King to a better location on stage according to his own understanding, that is, on the right side, close to the wood-paneled structure, their shadows are doubled and can be clearly seen in the background. The image offered on stage suggests the involvement of more people secretly plotting along with the characters. Therefore, taking into account the influence of contextual matters in the

staging, such a visual element in Boyd's production can be connected with the fact that Elizabeth I had many agents working for her in the field of espionage.

Another moment in the portrayal of the passage cited above in which the addition of shadows hints at the existence of the Queen's surveillance system is when Polonius hands the prayer book to Ophelia. As Polonius moves around on stage, in the midst of his preparations to spy on Hamlet, his shadow, along with the King's, continue to appear on the wood-paneled structure. Polonius's shadow, however, is multiplied to the point where several silhouettes can be seen in the background. Once again, the stage is no longer occupied by a few characters, as it becomes highly populated due to the addition of a considerable number of shadows. Bearing in mind that in Boyd's production Polonius is actively organizing the situation to spy on Hamlet, such a portrayal with the inclusion of a great amount of Polonius's shadows can be connected with the idea that Walsingham worked with a vast network of agents, whose focus was to obtain information related to any action against Elizabeth I's interests.

Once more, the acting on stage and the use of shadows in Boyd's production, in this case related to the depiction of the following passage in act 2, scene 2, indicates a thematic connection with Walsingham's espionage activities, more specifically concerning his practice of interrogating suspects:

> HAMLET. No such matter. I will not sort you with the rest of my servants, for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended. But, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinore?
>
> ROSINCRANCE. To visit you, my lord, no other occasion.
>
> HAMLET. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks. But I thank you, and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me. Come, come, nay speak.
>
> GUILDENSTERNE. What should we say may lord?
>
> HAMLET. Why, anything. But to the purpose□you were sent for, and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to colour. I know the good King and Queen have sent for you.
>
> ROSINCRANCE. To what end my lord?
>
> HAMLET. That you must teach me. But let me conjure you, by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved

> love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me whether you were sent for or no.
>
> ROSINCRANCE. What say you?
>
> HAMLET. Nay then, I have an eye of you. If you love me, hold not off.
>
> GUILDENSTERNE. My lord, we were sent for. (2.2.265-291) [91]

After the delivery of "No such matter," Stephens's Hamlet, who is standing by the wood-paneled structure close to Rosencrantz, played by John Mackay (1975-), and Guildenstern, played by John Killoran (1977-), moves to the left side of the stage near the audience. The two characters remain in their locations and, as Hamlet distances himself from center stage, they become the focal point. Their shadows in the background are doubled and can be distinctly visualized. At this point, the fixed camera that is recording the production cannot detect Stephens's presence anymore, since he is positioned very close to the audience. Coldly, Hamlet asks the two characters "Were you not sent for?", which is followed by a long and uncomfortable pause. Hamlet continues by asking "Is it your own inclining? Is it a free visitation?", followed by another long pause. Stephens's Hamlet seems to be conducting a moment of tense interrogation, as he calculatedly asks questions and adds distressing pauses between them, besides leaving the two characters alone in an exposed manner until Guildenstern reveals the truth by stating "My lord, we were sent for." In this case, the image of the doubled shadows can be related to the idea that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who are in fact acting as spies to the King, are not working by themselves. Such a portrayal can be associated with Walsingham's espionage activities, which also included the moment of interrogating his captives in order to find out useful information, as well as who else could be involved in potential plots against Elizabeth I.

5.4 The Elizabethan Era and the Succession Crisis

At this point, I shall briefly comment on the subject of the succession crisis in the Elizabethan Era, as it will be of the utmost relevance in the analysis of the subsequent

[91] According to the video recording, as well as the prompt book and theater program, Rosincrance and Guildensterne are referred to as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as they are in Q2, even though the production makes use of the Folio text in the portrayal of this passage.

scenes in Boyd's *Hamlet*. The issue was pertinent at that time, and apparently well-known among the population, as Sarah Gristwood (2004, p. 10) explains:

> Those years when the sixteenth gave way to the seventeenth century saw England in a state of terrifying uncertainty. The succession was at once the most sizzling, and the most secret, topic of the day. If Shakespeare managed to remain untouched by it, he must have been the only person blissfully ignorant in the country.

Even though the subject was rather popular among Elizabethans, there was not much freedom to openly discuss about it (GRISTWOOD, 2004, p. 10). In addition, the succession of the crown turned out to be fairly complicated, as the throne seemed to be watched by several sources. Gristwood (2004, p. 13) comments on such a troublesome process:

> Looking back now, we tend to see a smooth and inevitable line of royal succession. Son succeeds father: having no child. Queen Elizabeth was succeeded by her nearest male relative James … easy. History can lose its losers very rapidly. But in fact, as the old queen approached the end of her long reign, there seemed to be a dozen candidates striving to succeed her. When the moment came, rumours of a Spanish invasion force in the channel, waiting to back the claim of their Infanta, were as plausible as the reports that rebels were massing in the west country. For years, wrote the French ambassador, "all Christendom" had believed that "trouble and confusion" were a certainty.

The uneasiness regarding the succession of the crown also involved other perplexing matters, such as the fact that it was not absolutely defined whether a hereditary line should be respected. Other options were considered as well, namely, the interference of the parliament and the designation of the next monarch by the Queen, in this case, as Gristwood (2004, p. 13) remarks, "much as Hamlet gave Fortinbras his 'dying voice', although Denmark had an elective monarchy." In relation to Boyd's production, similar to the issue of espionage, the staging sharply offers circumstances in which such a political context is explored.

5.5 Analyzing Act 3, Scene 2

Regarding the analysis of act 3, scene 2, I firstly concentrate on the portrayal of the dumb show in *The Murder of Gonzago*, the play-within-a-play in *Hamlet* which strongly evokes the issue of espionage, as previously commented. I am focusing on the

depiction of the stage directions cited below, which is followed by a brief description of its performance in Boyd's production:

> *Enter [*Players *as] a king and a queen, the queen embracing him and he her. He takes her up and declines his head upon her neck. He lies him down upon a bank of flowers. She seeing him asleep leaves him. Anon come in [a* Player *as] another man, takes off his crown, kisses it, pours poison in the sleeper's ears and leaves him. The queen returns, finds the king dead, makes passionate action. The poisoner with some three or four [*Players*] come in again, seem to condole with her. The dead body is carried away. The poisoner woos the queen with gifts. She seems harsh awhile but in the end accepts love.* (3.2.128.1-128.10)

During the entire portrayal of the dumb show, a rhythmic song with drums plays loudly in the background, emphasizing the apprehensive atmosphere of the situation, since Hamlet intends to verify whether the Ghost is telling the truth about his uncle. In fact, the performance is transformed into an impressive dancing show. Thus, the queen[92] becomes a ballerina (see fig. 11), and the man who poisons the king incorporates laughable body gestures in his dancing movements, which can be related to a moment of comic relief in the dumb show, even though he keeps a rather devilish tone regarding his general attitude. The actors are positioned center stage, while Polonius, the King, and Gertrude are placed on the right side and sit on chairs to watch the performance (see fig. 11). Hamlet is standing next to Ophelia on the left side. Close to the wood-paneled structure, a large red curtain, also located on the left side, falls from the ceiling touching the stage floor, offering Horatio the perfect spot to hide in darkness and spy on Claudius. The darkened background and the display of the red curtain intensify the idea of espionage in the dumb show, as several characters remain almost unseen close to the wood-paneled structure, as well as Horatio who is positioned behind the curtain.

Towards the end of the performance of the dumb show, an instance of *rescripting* in Boyd's production related to the previously cited stage directions can be attentively associated with the issue of succession in the Elizabethan Era. As the poisoner makes his move to murder the king, he indeed "*takes off his crown,* [and] *kisses it*," leaving the desired object on the left side of the king who is lying on the floor. When the queen realizes that her husband is dead, the poisoner starts dancing with her, while the other

[92] The names of the actors who participate in the dumb show are not specified in the theater program of the production. They are, however, identified as "members of the company" (*Program*, 2004, p. 16).

Figure 11 - Polonius, Claudius, and Gertrude watch the actors dancing at the dumb show.

Source: ***RSC Image Library*** **website, Shakespeare Centre Library.** Photo by Manuel Harlan **© RSC 2004**

actors remove the king's body from the stage. At a certain point, the queen clearly looks back and visualizes the crown on the floor. The song then stops playing, which gives emphasis to the unexpected situation that is being unfolded on stage; that is, Hamlet is no longer standing next to Ophelia watching the performance, but he is crouching near the crown, staring at it. As the queen tries to reach the object and take it to herself, Hamlet quickly snatches the crown first, and puts it on his own head. The prince laughs with surprise for performing the daring deed and looks exhilarated, conveying the idea that he actually appears to be, for a moment, a King. Hamlet eventually returns the object to the queen, so that the dumb show can continue. Such an instance in which Hamlet interacts with the queen, gets the crown and wears it can be considered a valuable moment of *rescripting* due to the fact that the stage directions were altered with the inclusion of certain elements, generating significant implications. Hamlet's actions in the dumb show hint at a possible succession conflict between Claudius and the prince, as it offers an image which suggests that Hamlet also wishes to be the King of Denmark. Most importantly, this moment of *rescripting* in the staging implies a reference to the

succession crisis in the Elizabethan Era, since it reinforces the idea of dispute among the several candidates who were fiercely interested in being the next English monarch.

Another instance in Boyd's *Hamlet* that keenly suggests a reference to the same succession conflict regarding Elizabeth I can be observed at the end of the performance of the *Murder of Gonzago*. I shall analyze the depiction of the following passage:

> HAMLET. […] This one Lucianus, nephew to the king.
>
> OPHELIA. You are a good chorus, my lord.
>
> HAMLET. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.
>
> OPHELIA. You are keen, my lord, you are keen.
>
> HAMLET. It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge.
>
> OPHELIA. Still better and worse.
>
> HAMLET. So you mistake your husbands. Begin, murderer: pox, leave thy damnable faces and begin. Come, 'the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.'
>
> LUCIANUS.
> *Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing,*
> *Confederate season else no creature seeing,*
> *Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,*
> *With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,*
> *Thy natural magic and dire property*
> *On wholesome life usurp immediately.*
> (*Pours the poison in his ears.*)
>
> HAMLET. He poisons him i'th' garden for's estate. His name's Gonzago. The story is extant and writ in choice Italian. You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.
>
> OPHELIA. The King rises.
>
> HAMLET. What, frighted with false fire?
>
> QUEEN. How fares my lord?
>
> POLONIUS. Give o'er the play.
>
> KING. Give me some light, away!
> POLONIUS. Lights! Lights! Lights! (3.2. 235-261)[93]

[93] Boyd's portrayal of *The Murder of Gonzago* follows passages from Q2 and F interchangeably. For instance, according to the prompt book, the stage directions for the dumb show refer mostly to Q2. In the case of this particular passage that is being analyzed, I decided to keep as a reference the Folio text, since lines 235 to 261 refer mainly to F. Line 257, however, which appears only in F, is excluded from the prompt book, as it is in Q2.

In the portrayal of the passage cited above, while Hamlet is talking to Ophelia during lines 235 to 242, the prince looks very agitated and moves around the stage. However, at the delivery of "'the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge'," Hamlet sits on the curtain fabric that is touching the floor in order to watch Lucianus's performance[94] and the King's reaction. The murderer and the Player King, who is sleeping, are located center stage, and Lucianus, soon to become the next monarch, finally performs his vile deed. After the delivery of "You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife," in which Hamlet is practically shouting such lines, he suddenly stands up as Ophelia reports "The King rises." At this point, the song that is playing in the background is interrupted after a loud sound of a drum, increasing the tense atmosphere on stage, and both Hamlet and the King are standing, fiercely looking at each other. Hamlet's body posture indicates that he is ready to physically attack his uncle, and Claudius seems to be rather threatened and looks offended. Such an image of confrontation in the staging, which attentively occurs right after Lucianus kills the Player King and becomes the King himself, suggests a conflict between the two characters regarding the issue of the succession of the crown in Denmark, a subject implied in the portrayal of the dumb show. Thus, the depiction of this passage also conveys an association with the political dispute involving the English crown in the Elizabethan Era, since the throne, as previously commented, was being vigorously watched by various sources.

5.6 Analyzing Act 5, Scene 2

Regarding the investigation of act 5, scene 2, I shall explore the depiction of the following passage:

> KING.
> Set the stoups of wine upon the table.
> If Hamlet give the first or second hit
> Or quit in answer of the third exchange
> Let all the battlements their ordnance fire.
> The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath
> And in the cup an union shall he throw
> Richer than that which four successive kings
> In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups
> And let the kettle to the trumpets speak,
> The trumpet to the cannoneer without,

[94] The theater program of the production does not specify the name of the actor who plays Lucianus. However, similar to the actors who perform the dumb show, he is one of the "members of the company" (*Program*, 2004, p. 16).

> The cannons to the heavens, the heaven to earth.
> Now the King drinks to Hamlet. Come, begin.
> And you, the judges, bear a wary eye.
>
> HAMLET. Come on, sir.
>
> LAERTES. Come on, sir. *They play*
>
> HAMLET. One!
>
> LAERTES. No!
>
> HAMLET. Judgement?
>
> OSRICKE. A hit, a very palpable hit.
>
> LAERTES. Well, again.
>
> KING.
> Stay, give the drink. Hamlet, this pearl is thine:
> Here's to thy health. Give him the cup.
> *Trumpets sound and shot goes off.*
>
> HAMLET. I'll play this bout first. Set by awhile. Come,
> Another hit! What say you?
>
> LAERTES.
> A touch, a touch, I do confess.
>
> KING.
> Our son shall win. (5.2.214-238)

The perceptive use of shadows in the portrayal of the passage cited above implies a connection with the existence of plots to dethrone Elizabeth I. As the King prepares himself to deceive Hamlet, so that later the prince can drink the poisoned wine, Wood's Claudius then declares "Now the King drinks to Hamlet." At this moment, the King is located center stage, along with an Attendant,[95] close to an open door in the wood-paneled structure. Their doubled shadows are frightfully visible in the background, especially during the moment in which the King drinks the wine, strongly emphasizing the fact that the horrendous deed of killing someone is being planned by various people in secrecy. When Hamlet and Laertes, played by Gideon Turner (1973-), start to fight, their doubled shadows can be visualized in the wood-paneled background, which implies the idea that there are several people fighting uncontrollably, resembling the tumultuous atmosphere of combat in a battlefield. Before Osric,[96] played by Jonathan Forbes (1976-), mentions

[95] Although the theater program does not mention the name the of the actor who plays the Attendant, he is also part of the theatrical company (*Program*, 2004, p. 16).
[96] Even though the production adopts the Folio text in the portrayal of this passage, Osricke is referred to as Osric, as he is in Q2, in the theater program and in the prompt book.

"A hit, a very palpable hit," Hamlet and Laertes are dueling center stage, and the King slowly walks around them, demonstrating a dominant presence. At certain times, the doubled shadows of Hamlet and Laertes fighting with foils and the King's shadows moving around them can be clearly observed in the wood-paneled structure, considerably proposing the idea that Claudius is in control of the situation and prepared to use any violent means necessary to pursue his goals, which involve the dispute to the throne of Denmark, as previously implied. Claudius's circular movement on stage and the use of shadows are repeated when Hamlet and Laertes continue their duel. Such images in which the display of shadows offers an emphasis on murdering schemes concerning the throne of Denmark and the visual of a battle keenly suggest an association with the existence of plots to dethrone Elizabeth I, which encompassed plans to invade England as well.

5.7 Critical Reception

Boyd's *Hamlet*, according to Richard Edmonds (2004) in "Fine Acting through Chilly Darkness," for the *Birmingham Post*, is undoubtedly a successful production. Edmonds comments that "if you thought classical theatre was losing its moorings then take heart from the fact that Michael Boyd has produced a wonderful *Hamlet* that is truly centred upon Shakespeare's constantly shifting tapestry of action and language." The critic also points out that the production is able to catch the audience's attention throughout the staging. In relation to Stephens's portrayal of Hamlet, his performance is highly praised by the critic, as Edmonds (2004) remarks:

> Mr. Stephens has found the bitter laughter which lies deep in the soul of this character something that can truly move you to tears□ a phrase often repeated but here perfectly true in this actor's good hands. […] "to be or not to be" comes across us as a shattering cry of despair from the heart, a moment amongst many which Mr. Stephens makes quite firmly his own.

Additionally, not only Stephens's performance impressed Edmonds, but also the fact that the production, even though it is set in Elizabethan times, can perfectly communicate with a contemporary audience.

Stephens's depiction of the prince is also recognized by other critics. In "Production is a Triumph," Clare Fitzsimmons (2004), for the *Observer*, sensibly appreciates the actor's work on stage by commenting that "to surprise an audience with a character and a play so well-known must be near impossible but the actor more than

managed it and even Hamlet's overquoted speeches took on a whole new meaning under Stephens's portrayal." Similarly, Quentin Letts (2004) in "Death, Despair and a Feast of Stephens," for the *Daily Mail*, highly compliments Stephens's own perception of the character, as can be attentively observed on stage. According to Letts, "this is a huge performance. It catapults Stephens into the very top league. He is tousled, sweaty, expanding his presence to fill the large stage even when there alone. Magnificent." In addition, Martin Smith (2004) in "Passionate and Fiery Hamlet," for *The Journal*, highlights the actor's energy on stage, as Stephens performs his role intensely and is able to impress the audience throughout the production.

However, not all reviews concerning Stephens's portrayal of Hamlet in Boyd's staging offer positive remarks. Nicholas de Jongh (2004) in "A Prince Pauperised by a Lack of Spirit," for the *Evening Standard*, seems to be displeased by the actor's work on stage, as the critic argues that Stephens's lack of subtlety in tackling the role causes damages in his performance. Likewise, Carole Woddis (2004) in "Review," for *The Herald*, criticizes the actor's approach to the character, since Woodis refers to Stephens's Hamlet as the "indecisive Dane" and compares his work with Hicks's portrayal of the Ghost:

> The most arresting thing about this year's RSC *Hamlet* is Greg Hicks's Ghost. That may sound strange for a play whose central focus should be all about the eponymous hero […]. Certainly, Hicks's style seems to come from a wholly different world to Stephens's Hamlet whose old-fashioned, declamatory and surprisingly one-tone performance is totally at odds with Boyd's otherwise fascinating, minimalist approach.

Additionally, Sandy Holt (2004) in "Boyd Secures a Palpable Hit with Political Hamlet," for the *Stratford-upon-Avon Herald*, does not appear to be satisfied with Stephens's efforts on stage, though Holt declares that the actor positively develops some features of the character. Hicks's Ghost is once more praised, since, in Holt's (2004) opinion, his performance is one of the highlights of the production:

> Yet the most outstanding moments have to be the appearance of Greg Hicks's outstanding ghost of old Hamlet. Not only does he capture the picture of a man suffering utter torment, he adds a gruesome feel with his bloodshot-eyed, semi-naked spectre. Defy any Hamlet not to obey his menacing wishes for revenge.

Indeed, Hicks's work on stage can be considered a remarkable portrayal of the Ghost, though Stephens's Hamlet also offers a significant and compelling facet of the prince.

Besides the acting on stage, other features of the production are discerningly highlighted by the critics. Regarding the issues addressed by the staging, Letts (2004) points out the fact that political aspects are considerably emphasized, which offers the opportunity to bring Boyd's *Hamlet* closer to a contemporary audience. Also, Holt (2004) remarks that the production attentively concentrates on political elements of the play, more specifically in relation to the issue of the succession of the crown. As regards the portrayal of the duel between Hamlet and Laertes, Lizz Brain (2004) in "Moments of Genius Lift this *Hamlet* out of the Ordinary," for the *Leicester Mercury*, praises the depiction of such a passage and declares that "the fight sequence between Hamlet and Laertes […] is one of the most fast, frantic and furious to be seen on stage." Similarly, Giles Woodforde (2004) in "Energetic and Lucid," for the *Oxford Times*, points out that he is impressed by the performance of the duel on stage, as he comments that it is "one of the most terrifying fights I have ever seen." Surely, Boyd's portrayal of the fight between Hamlet and Laertes offers an intricate and energetic visual moment in the production.

All things considered, Boyd's *Hamlet* certainly proposes a sensible approach to the political and historical issues pointed out in this Chapter. The subject of espionage and the succession crisis in Elizabethan times are keenly explored in the production by means of the movement of the actors and the treatment of the verbal text on stage, revealing an intertwined connection with political subjects in the play. The inventive addition of shadows in various moments of the production also intensely channels such contextual matters, reinforcing the relevance of the visual in a theatrical performance. Additionally, the influence of Greenblatt's works in the production distinctly calls attention to the discussion on the sufferings of the Ghost and the relationship between the prince and his father, as well as on the historical conflict between English Catholic and Protestants in the seventeenth century. Besides, the review of the critical reception of the staging not only offers compelling comments on Stephens's and Hicks's work, but also underlines the fact that Boyd's *Hamlet* concentrates on the approach to political aspects, which highlights the significance of the production. Surely, Boyd's *Hamlet* offers an intriguing and revisited viewpoint concerning pertinent political and historical issues in the Elizabethan Era and Shakespeare's time while efficiently conversing with matters in the play.

Chapter 6
"Well, all's not well" [97]:
Marcio Meirelles's *Hamlet*

"SOMETHING IS ROTTEN IN THIS AGE OF HOPE"[98]

As already remarked in the Introduction of this study, Chapter 6 concentrates on the investigation of selected scenes from Marcio Meirelles's *Hamlet*,[99] performed at Teatro Vila Velha, in Salvador, Bahia, in order to explore the approach to specific political contexts in Brazil. In relation to Meirelles's text choice for his production, he explains in the online theater program[100] the decision of using Q1:

> *a escolha por montar o 1º quarto é pelo gosto de acreditar na hipótese de q* [sic] *ele é a versão de palco da peça como foi montada pela trupe do bardo em seu teatro é mais ágil teatral mais perto do jogo de suas outras peças deixa mais lacunas em aberto mais brechas para a nossa imaginação [...]*"[101] (MEIRELLES, 2015, p. 8-9).

Although Meirelles follows the First Quarto in his production, certain moments of Q1 are replaced by passages from other plays translated into Portuguese. For instance, as the director explains in the online theater program, excerpts from *Pourquoi Hécube* by Matéi Visniec[102] (1956-) appear in the portrayal of [act 2], scene 7 (MEIRELLES, 2015, p. 7). Also, Meirelles incorporates Heiner Müller's *The Hamletmachine* in his staging, which

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[97] Line spoken by Hamlet in the First Quarto of *Hamlet* (2.166).
[98] Line spoken by Hamlet in Heiner Müller's (1995, p. 1) *The Hamletmachine*, translated into English by Marc von Henning.
[99] The production premiered on January 10th, 2015, according to the online theater program (*A máquina Shakespeare*, 2015, p. 20). The video of this production is available online on the webpage entitled "HAMLET + HAMLET MACHINE - 2015." All pictures and descriptions of scenes in this Chapter are taken from such a recording. Meirelles's *Hamlet* returned to Teatro Vila Velha's stage on November 11th, 2018, according to the new theater program of the production entitled *HAMLET + HAMLETMACHINE* (2018, p. 29) available on the webpage "Programa do espetáculo HAMLET + HAMLETMACHINE." However, this Chapter concentrates specifically on the analysis of the 2015 staging of Meirelles's work.
[100] Although Meirelles's comments throughout the theater program do not present punctuation marks, the translation into English in this Chapter includes such an aspect.
[101] The decision of working with Q1 relies on the pleasure of believing in the hypothesis that the text is the stage version of the play that was performed by the Bard's troupe of players in his theater. It is faster, more theatrical, closer to the games played in his other works, besides presenting more gaps to be filled and leaving more room to the imagination […].
[102] According to the online theater program, Matéi Visniec's *Pourquoi Hécube* was translated into Portuguese by Vinicius Bustani (1987-), who plays the prince in Meirelles's *Hamlet* (*A máquina Shakespeare*, 2015, p. 15). The entire play had been previously performed in 2014 at Teatro Vila Velha, directed by Meirelles (*A máquina Shakespeare*, 2015, p. 17). The discussions in this Chapter do not encompass the analysis of the excerpts from Matéi Visniec's *Pourquoi Hécube* in Meirelles's work.

is a subject further discussed during the investigation of [act 3], scene 9 (see Chapter 1). Concerning the scene analysis of this Chapter, I study the scenes previously selected from José Roberto O'Shea's translation of the First Quarto into Portuguese, that is, [act 2], scene 7, [act 3], scene 9, as aforementioned, and [act 5], scene 18. Additionally, brief remarks on the history and projects of Teatro Vila Velha are commented, illustrating the political commitment of the theatrical company. As regards the issue of contextualization, this Chapter concentrates on the approach to the initial speculations related to the impeachment of former President Dilma Rousseff and the activities of Movimento Passe Livre. Remarks on the critical reception of the production are also included in this Chapter.

6.1 Teatro Vila Velha and Shakespeare

The political engagement of Teatro Vila Velha can be clearly perceived throughout its history. According to the theatrical company's website,[103] besides making use of its artistic repertoire to make a stand against crucial issues in the country, the TVV has remained politically active in many other circumstances:

> *O TVV sempre foi um espaço de liberdade, desde a sua inauguração, em 31 de julho de 1964, exatos quatro meses após o Golpe Militar. O Vila reagiu à ditadura, acolheu artistas e estudantes perseguidos, abrigou encontros do movimento estudantil. Por toda essa história, o TVV foi sede da Anistia Internacional. Foi também no palco do Vila que foram julgadas e aprovadas as anistias políticas do cineasta Glauber Rocha e do guerrilheiro Carlos Marighella [...]. Mais tarde, apoiou o Movimento Passe Livre [...]. É também histórica a luta do TVV contra o racismo. O Bando de Teatro Olodum*[104] *há 23 anos coloca em evidência a violência, a discriminação e as injustiças sofridas pelo negro ainda hoje. A luta por respeito ao povo negro e, especialmente, à arte negra, levantada pelo Bando, serve de inspiração a muitos, e já transcendeu as fronteiras do Brasil.*[105]

[103] More specifically on the webpage entitled "Nós, Por Exemplo."
[104] According to the *Teatro Vila Velha* website, more specifically on the webpage entitled "Quem Somos," the Bando de Teatro Olodum is a theatrical group composed of black actors, which is connected to the TVV and is under the direction of Meirelles and Chica Carelli.
[105] The TVV has always been a place that values freedom since its inauguration in July 31st, 1964, exactly four months after the military coup d'état in Brazil. The Vila reacted against the dictatorship in the country, welcomed persecuted artists and students, sheltered the student movement meetings. Due to the history of the theatre, the TVV became the headquarters of Amnesty International. Also, the political amnesty for the filmmaker Glauber Rocha and the guerrilla Carlos Marighella was put on trial and granted on Vila's stage […]. Later, the TVV supported the Movimento Passe Livre […]. The TVV's fight against racism is also historical. For the past twenty-tree years, the Bando de Teatro Olodum has been emphasizing the violence, discrimination, and injustices suffered by black people to this day. The fight for respect for black people, especially in relation to black people's artistic works, which is strongly addressed by the Bando, serves as an inspiration to others, and it has already transcended Brazilian borders.

Additionally, amongst the various TVV's projects, the theatrical company has invested in the creation of the universidade LIVRE do teatro vila velha,[106] which offers acting courses. The universidade LIVRE equally presents, according to the company's website,[107] a political and social commitment related to its activities:

> *[O projeto é] baseado na participação em montagens e na construção em palco de um discurso político e estético em diálogo com a plateia [...]. O programa prepara o participante para fazer TEATRO – no Vila Velha, o teatro no palco é a ponta de um iceberg. O trabalho real é no coletivo e na sociedade*."[108]

Such a program reinforces the political viewpoint of Teatro Vila Velha, which is intrinsically manifested in its artistic and social pursuits.

Apart from staging the modern-dress production of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, directed by Meirelles, was also performed at Teatro Vila Velha in 2015 as part of the official program of the universidade LIVRE, exploring political issues in the country. In fact, Meirelles (2015, p. 6-7), in the online theater program,[109] clarifies the significance of working with these two Shakespeare's plays on the TVV's stage, underlining their political implications:

> *fazer Shakespeare era a missão do segundo arco/ano do programa de formação da universidade LIVRE de teatro vila velha [...] trabalho MACBETH e HAMLET [...] nos interessa a humanidade e a política e a poesia e o ser humano e o mito e fomos kamikazes num voo de olhos sentidos razão emoção bem abertos escancarados ao encontro dos dois os dois falam de golpes de estados geradores de tragédias [...] nos dois como em toda a obra do bardo há uma ordem que foi rompida e uma nova ordem precisa ser instaurada*[110]

In Meirelles's viewpoint, as he explains during the interview via Skype (see Chapter 1), the atmosphere of another coup d'état in the country, with the possible impeachment of

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[106] Concerning the title of the institution, I follow the spelling presented on the TVV's website, more specifically on webpage entitled "Programas de Formação."
[107] More specifically on the webpage entitled "Programas de Formação."
[108] The project is based on the participation in productions and on the construction of a political and aesthetic discourse that dialogues with the audience […]. The program prepares the participant to make THEATER in Vila Velha, the theatrical productions presented on stage are the tip of the iceberg. The real work is done as a group in the society.
[109] The online theater program *A Máquina Shakespeare* displays information about Meirelles's productions of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, as both stagings premiered simultaneously.
[110] Working with Shakespeare was the mission of the universidade LIVRE do teatro vila velha's second year of the program […]. I work with *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* […]. We are interested in the humanity, politics, poetry, the human being, and the myth, and we were kamikazes in a flight composed by eyes, senses, reason, emotions, all extremely wide open, heading towards both plays. *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* talk about coup d'états which generated tragedies […]. In both works, as in all of the Bard's works, there is an order that was interrupted, and a new order must be established.

Rousseff and the establishment of a new and relentless government, had been installed since 2013 (see Appendix). Therefore, following Meirelles's and Teatro Vila Velha's political convictions, it was of the utmost importance for the TVV to perform both Shakespeare's plays (see Appendix). Besides, as is pointed out in the online theater program *A máquina Shakespeare* (2015, p. 17), the theatrical company performed Glaube Rocha's play *Jango: Uma Tragedya* (2014), directed by Meirelles, since the production addresses the story of former President João Goulart who was deposed by the military coup d'état in 1964. Meirelles comments that at that time he named the three productions as the "*Trilogia do Golpe*"[111] due to the aforementioned delicate political moment the country was going through (see Appendix).

6.2 The Initial Speculations about Rousseff's Impeachment and the Movimento Passe Livre's Activities

In order to achieve the goals proposed in this Chapter, I shall briefly comment on the initial speculations involving Rousseff's impeachment.[112] The talks concerning the former President's impeachment have certainly generated divergent opinions. In 2015, Jefferson Puff (2015), in the *BBC Brasil* online article entitled "O que os juristas que redigiram impeachment de Collor pensam sobre Dilma?", interviewed six legal experts, who were involved in the former President Fernando Collor de Mello's impeachment in 1992, concerning the accuracy of a possible Rousseff's impeachment process. The result is that three of them believed that such a process was valid, whereas the rest of the legal experts saw absolutely no reason to initiate the impeachment procedures. Right after Rousseff's reelection in 2014, an aspect that surely caused turmoil were the protests requesting her impeachment and the return of the military dictatorship. Renata Mendonça (2015), in the *BBC Brasil* online article entitled "Existe base para o impeachment de Dilma?", confirms that many of such protests were demanding the reestablishment of the military dictatorship in the country.[113] Meirelles and Teatro Vila Velha responded to such

[111] The Coup d'état Trilogy.

[112] *Época*, in its online article entitled "Dilma Rousseff" (2016), explains that the former President was elected in 2010, and in 2014 she was reelected. The impeachment process was approved in April 2016, and Rousseff was officially impeached in August 2016.

[113] Pablo Uchoa (2014), in the *BBC* online article entitled "Remembering Brazil's Decades of Military Repression," points out that during the military dictatorship in Brazil "almost 500 people were disappeared or killed, and many more detained and tortured." Uchoa (2014) also explains that "upon seizing power in 1964, the military regime□fully supported by the US□promised swift action to bring 'order' back to a country it perceived as slipping towards communism. But four years on, not only was the regime no closer

a crucial moment in the country with the "*Trilogia do Golpe*," as aforementioned. In the online theater program, Meirelles (2015, p. 9) clarifies the influence of such political crisis in his production of *Hamlet*:

> *recorremos às imagens de nossa montagem de JANGO para nos lembrar do golpe de 64 qdo* [sic] *o fantasma do rei pede vingança ainda não resolvemos no brasil* [sic] *o golpe de 64 e a ditadura decorrente dele e como hamlet* [sic] *assistimos impassíveis as tentativas de sua reencenação c* [sic] *pedidos de impeachment para a presidente recém eleita democraticamente*[114]

Additionally, during the interview via Skype, as Meirelles comments on the impeachment situation, he makes some remarks on the political role of the theater, as he states that "*a gente acredita que o teatro é uma ferramenta política, é um ato político. Aquela assembleia que tá ali reunida é pra discutir alguma coisa que interessa à polis, e a saúde da polis tem que ser discutida, portanto é um ato político*"[115] (see Appendix), foregrounding his political involvement concerning significant issues in the country when working with theatrical productions.

Also, given this study's thematic focus, I shall make brief remarks on some aspects related to the Movimento Passe Livre. A definition of this social movement is presented in its website:

> *O Movimento Passe Livre (MPL) é um movimento social autônomo, apartidário, [...] independente, que luta por um transporte público de verdade, gratuito para o conjunto da população e fora da iniciativa privada. O MPL é um grupo de pessoas comuns que se juntam há quase uma década para discutir e lutar por um projeto de transporte para a cidade.* [116]

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to handing power over to civilians, it was ready to ramp up repression […]. One of the infamous torture methods consisted of leaving prisoners hanging upside down from a pole for hours, heels and wrists tied together in a position known as the 'parrot's perch.' Many prisoners were also subjected to electrical shocks to their finger tips, genitals, and wherever else the sadistic imagination of their torturers would choose."

[114] We turned to images from our production *Jango* to remind us of the coup d'état of 1964 when the Ghost asks for revenge. We have not yet solved in this country some issues related to the coup d'état of 1964 and its subsequent dictatorship. Just as Hamlet, we impassively watch the attempts of its reenactment with the impeachment requests for the newly and democratically elected president.

[115] We believe that the theater is a political tool, a political act. That assembly is gathered to discuss something that interests the population, and the well-being of the population must be discussed, therefore, it is a political act.

[116] The Movimento Passe Livre (MPL) is an autonomous social and nonpartisan movement […] that fights for a real public transportation service in which the population does not pay bus fares and one that is not connected with the private initiative. The MPL is a group of ordinary people that have been getting together for almost a decade to discuss and fight for a city transportation project.

According to the MPL's website, among the several protests organized by the movement around the country, some of them can be highlighted, such as the Revolta do Buzu[117] in the city of Salvador in 2003, and the Revoltas da Catraca[118] in the city of Florianópolis in 2004 and 2005. Natália Fálcon et al. (2013), in the *Correio* online article entitled "Revolta do Buzu: semelhanças e diferenças de dois movimentos que agitaram a cidade," emphasizes the intensity of the protests against the increase of the bus fares in the Revolta do Buzu, in which the participants had to deal with the harsh treatment of the police officers. In relation to the Revolta da Catraca in 2004, Fábio Bispo and Maurício Frighetto (2013), in the *Notícias do Dia* online article entitled "Movimento Passe Livre nasceu em Florianópolis e tomou o Brasil," underline the significance of such an uprising in the country by stating that the movement "*simboliza o início da luta para que a tarifa do transporte seja zerada*."[119] The grim confrontation with the police on the streets was also a critical characteristic of such a protest. Besides, Caio Quero (2013), in the *BBC Brasil* online article entitled "Organização de protestos pode indicar 'novidade' política no Brasil," foregrounds the relevance of the Movimento Passe Livre's discussions and protests in the country, as they certainly serve as an inspiration for other social movements in Brazil. Regarding Meirelles's *Hamlet*, the director explains in the online theater program the effects of such a subject in his production, as he claims that "*a geração de hamlet* [sic] *laertes* [sic] *ofélia* [sic] *horácio* [sic] *é a geração do movimento passe livre é a geração q sente algo de podre no reino da dinamarca*"[120] (MEIRELLES, 2015, p. 9), recognizing the work of the social movement in the country, and once more incorporating a significant political context in his staging.

6.3 A Desolated Brazilian Hamlet

Before the investigation of the selected scenes in this Chapter, I shall make some comments on the portrayal of a passage from act 1, scene 2, since it has to do with the political tone of the production. Excerpts from Shakespeare's text and O'Shea's translated text are provided bellow:

[117] The Bus Uprising.
[118] The Turnstile Uprisings.
[119] It symbolizes the beginning of the fight towards the elimination of bus fares.
[120] The generation of Hamlet, Laertes, Ophelia, and Horatio is the generation of the Movimento Passe Livre. It is the generation that senses that something is rotten in the State of Denmark.

KING.
And now, princely son Hamlet,
What means these sad and melancholy moods?
For your intent going to Wittenberg
We hold it most unmeet and unconvenient,
Being the joy and half-heart of your mother.
Therefore let me entreat you stay in Court,
All Denmark's hope, our cousin and dearest son.

HAMLET.
My lord, 'tis not the sable suit I wear,
No, nor the tears that still stand in my eyes,
Nor the distracted haviour in the visage,
Nor all together mixed with outward semblance,
Is equal to the sorrow of my heart.
Him have I lost I must of force forgo,
These but the ornaments and suits of woe. (2.26-39)

REI.
E agora, Hamlet, filho meu e príncipe,
Por que este ar tristonho e melancólico?
Quanto à intenção de ir a Wittenberg,
Parece-nos imprópria e inoportuna,
Pois, tu és meio coração de tua mãe;
Portanto, peço-te: fica na corte,
Anseio do país, sobrinho, filho.

HAMLET.
Meu senhor, nem este meu traje negro,
Nem as lágrimas que 'inda tenho aos olhos,
Nem o aspecto abatido do semblante,
Nem tudo isso somado à imagem externa,
Iguala-se à tristeza do meu peito.
Aquele que perdi devo esquecer;
Meu traje é só o adorno do sofrer. (1.2.27-40)

The depiction of the previously mentioned passage offers a focus on Claudio's sarcastic behavior towards Hamlet and the prince's painful state. Bustani's Hamlet is placed outside the main stage playing the drums, and immediately stops playing the instrument as the Rei, performed by Franklin Albuquerque (1968-), talks to him, calling attention to their conversation. Claudio, who is located center stage, points to Hamlet and ironically addresses the audience by stating very loudly "*E agora*," followed by a brief pause, which puts the desolated Hamlet behind the drums in an uncomfortable spotlight. Claudio adds another pause after saying "*Hamlet, filho meu*," underlining his sarcastic and extended delivery of "*e príncipe*." The same sarcastic and mocking tone can be observed in "*Anseio do país*," as the Rei delivers such a line very loudly, looking at the audience. Meanwhile, Hamlet's sorrowful face appears in a close-up on the screens located in some parts of the stage, highlighting once more his distressing state (see fig. 12). Hamlet painfully delivers his lines, with his image still appearing on the screens, and

adds a brief pause before stating "*Iguala-se à tristeza do meu peito*," which emphasizes his inner suffering.

Figure 12 - Claudio talks to the desolated Hamlet.

Source: "HAMLET + HAMLETMACHINE - 2015"

Such a portrayal significantly foregrounds the political approach of Meirelles's staging. Hamlet's sorrow and uncomfortable state is then attentively underlined by Bustani's control of voice and the use of his image on the screens. Besides, Albuquerque's Claudio publicly shows no respect for Hamlet's feelings for the loss of his father, as he humiliates him by undermining his current situation. The Rei's sarcastic pauses and tone of voice suggest that Hamlet is far from being the "*Anseio do país*," as opposed to Claudio, who has mischievously achieved his goals of conquering the crown of Denmark. The idea that Hamlet is being absurdly disrespected and harmed with the establishment of a damaging situation in his life is then keenly underlined. Meirelles's depiction of this passage highlights the dismal and alarming situation pointed out in his previously discussed comments in which the possibility of another coup d'état in the country and the installment of a relentless regime could astonishingly become real. Meirelles's political position in relation to the initial speculations of Rousseff's impeachment and its possible consequences are critically hinted at the beginning of the production, emphasizing the political viewpoint of the staging.

6.4 Analyzing [Act 2], Scene 7

Regarding the analysis of [act 2], scene 7, I investigate the portrayal of a passage that encompasses the soliloquy "To be or not to be." Once again, excerpts from Shakespeare's text and O'Shea's translated text are provided, as follows:

HAMLET.
To be, or not to be□ay, there's the point.
To die, to sleep□is that all? Ay, all.
No, to sleep, to dream□ay, marry, there it goes,
For in that dream of death, when we're awaked
And borne before an everlasting judge
From whence no passenger ever returned□
The undiscovered country, at whose sight
The happy smile and the accursed damned.
Bur for this, the joyful hope of this,
Who'd bear the scorns and flattery of the world□
Scorned by the right rich, the rich cursed of the poor,
The widow being oppressed, the orphan wronged,
The taste of hunger, or a tyrant's reign,
And thousand more calamities besides□
To grunt and sweat under this weary life
When that he may his full quietus make
With a bare bodkin? Who would this endure,
But for a hope of something after death,
Which puzzles the brain and doth confound the sense□
Which makes us rather bear those evils we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Ay, that□O, this conscience makes cowards of us all.
□Lady, in thy orisons be all my sins remembered. (7.115-137)

HAMLET.
Ser ou não ser□sim, eis aí o ponto:
Morrer, dormir□tudo? Sim, tudo. Não:
Dormir, sonhar□sim, ora! Por aí vai;
Pois, do sonho da morte despertamos,
E somos ao eterno juiz levados,
De onde passageiro algum retorna,
Do reino escondido, cuja visão
Faz o bom sorrir e o mau praguejar.
Não fosse isso, a jubilosa esperança,
Quem seria capaz de suportar
O desprezo e a desilusão do mundo,
Desdém do rico, maldizer do pobre,
Viúva oprimida, órfão ultrajado,
Gosto de fome, reino de tirano,
E milhares de outras desventuras;
Grunhir e suar na vida fatigante,
Quando se pode obter pleno descanso
Na ponta de um punhal? Quem haveria
De isso tolerar, não fosse a esperança
De algo depois da morte, algo que
Deixa perplexo o cérebro e a razão,
Que nos faz aguentar males sabidos,
E não fugir para os desconhecidos?

É isso! E tal consciência nos faz covardes.
Dama, em tua prece lembra meus pecados. (3.9.119-143)

Bustani's Hamlet displays an energetic performance of the soliloquy "To be or not to be," intensely addressing the audience. Before speaking his lines, Hamlet prepares himself to play the drums that are located at the same place described in the analysis of act 1, scene 2. He is wearing a pink bikini, which, according to Meirelles, is part of the prince's plans to indicate that he has gone mad (see Appendix). His face appears in a close-up on the screens located on stage, underlining his discourse. Hamlet briefly plays the instrument, and after a pause addresses the audience by delivering lines 119 and 120 in a low voice, using a microphone located close to the drums. Then he plays the instrument again and suddenly shouts "*Dormir, sonhar□sim, ora! Por aí vai*," as if trying to call the attention of the audience members to his message. He continues playing the drums while delivering lines 121 to 136, firmly looking at the audience and using a defying tone of voice. Hamlet stops playing the instrument after stating "*punhal*" in line 136, followed by a brief pause, which proposes an intriguing invitation to continue listening to what he has to say. In "*É isso! E tal consciência nos faz covardes*," Hamlet hits the drums loudly, stands up and shouts such lines directly to the audience, strongly drawing attention to such a moment. After the delivery of "*Dama, em tua prece lembra meus pecados*," the lights fade out and he leaves his location.

The portrayal of the passage cited above in Meirelles's production offers a diversified performance of the soliloquy "To be or not to be" that can be associated with the activities of the Movimento Passe Livre. The prince neither looks emotional nor introspective, since he seems to be interested in problematizing his discourse as a significant message that must be shared with the audience. In fact, an image which involves Hamlet giving a speech in a rally is vividly suggested in such a depiction. Hamlet's speech includes intense music with the drums, specific images on the screens, in this case his facial expressions in a close-up that enhances his determination and speech content, and an overwhelming tone of voice and use of pauses while speaking. All these elements seem purposely designed to draw the attention of the people surrounding the prince in an attempt to spread a message that concerns and affects not only himself but everybody else. Such a portrayal attentively hints at the Movimento Passe Livre's rallies and protests which aim to call the attention of the Brazilian authorities and bus companies to the immediate changes regarding the bus transportation system within the country that need to be implemented.

6.5 Analyzing [Act 3], Scene 9

As this Chapter does not endeavor to pursue an in-depth study of Müller's *The Hamletmachine*, I shall briefly address some contextual aspects related to Müller's work that support the investigation of the portrayal of [act 3], scene 9 in Meirelles's *Hamlet*. Eva Elisabeth Brenner (1994, p. 94), in her PhD research on Müller's *The Hamletmachine*, comments on the complexity of the play and the difficulties of performing it on stage:

> In *HAMLETMACHINE*[121] we cannot fix a singular meaning from beginning to end, there are actually many layers of meaning in the play. This, without doubt, creates challenges for dramaturgs and directors. It is difficult to formulate one linear production concept. The play demands of its producers knowledge of European history, politics, and literary tradition. From actors it demands that they question their self-identity and acting techniques based on bourgeois psychology as there are no traditional characters.

Besides highlighting such intricate features of *The Hamletmachine*, Brenner (1994, p. 94) underlines specific social and political contexts that can be perceived in Müller's work, as she remarks that "in the play, we encounter a text written in the late 1970's […] encapsulating the entire history of the GDR[122] with historical data including the workers' uprising in 1953 and the Hungarian revolution in 1956," which foregrounds the elaborated and notable critical approach of Müller's work.

In relation to the aforementioned contexts involving social protests, such events represent significant moments in the history of Germany and Hungary which generated influential aftermaths. Richard Bernstein (2003), in the *New York Times* online article entitled "In Eastern Germany, 1953 Uprising Is Remembered," concisely points out some facts related to the 1953 uprising and its results:

> Hundreds of thousands of workers took to the streets in 272 cities and towns across what was then the German Democratic Republic, the eastern half of divided Germany. Within the space of that single day, they raided jails to release political prisoners, made and listened to speeches outlining a possible

[121] Brenner (1994, p. 85) makes use of the title of Müller's play translated into English in full capital letters. In this investigation, I adopt Marc von Henning's translation of title into English, which appears as *The Hamletmachine*.

[122] The German Democratic Republic. The *BBC* online article entitled "Guide: What Was the Berlin Wall?" (2014) clarifies that "by 1949 Germany had become two separate countries - The Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), run by Britain, America and France, and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), run by the Soviet Union." According to the article, the borders between the two countries were officially opened in 1989, and the Berlin Wall, which was built in 1961, was completely destroyed in 1990.

> better future, issued manifestos calling for both democracy and better conditions for themselves and threw a scare into the East German leadership from which it never completely recovered. At the end of the day, Soviet troops and the East German police, backed by tanks, put down demonstrations and arrested many of the movement's leaders. A number of people were killed in the process, estimated at between 25 and 300. Brief as it was, the June 17 uprising remained a treasured and inspiring memory for thousands.

Regarding the Hungarian revolution in 1956, Ben Cosgrove (2013), in the *Time* online article entitled "A Rip in the Iron Curtain," foregrounds some significant aspects by explaining that "hundreds of thousands of Hungarians, in cities and the countryside, rose up against occupying Soviet forces and, critically, against the country's brutal, homegrown secret police, the State Protection Authority." Cosgrove (2013) observes that "roughly 3,000 Hungarian civilians—men, women, children—were killed during those three weeks." The relevant impact of the Hungarian revolution is also commented by the author:

> It lasted less than three weeks […], but the Hungarian Revolution that convulsed Budapest and the rest of Hungary in late 1956 sent shock waves through eastern and central Europe that reverberated for decades. More than a few historians, in fact, cite the popular revolt as the first rip in the Cold War's Iron Curtain (COSGROVE, 2013).

Surely, by addressing crucial conflicts and divergent issues, Müller's work proposes a valuable contribution in terms of offering an overtly critical approach to the repressive political context that permeated the existence of the German Democratic Republic and the circumstances of other countries.

Concerning the analysis of the portrayal of [act 3], scene 9 in Meirelles's *Hamlet*, a moment of *rescripting* involving a significant *trade-off* can be observed, which has to do with the performance of the play-within-a-play. Such a *trade-off* refers to the fact that the depiction of *O assassinato de Gonzaga*,[123] from lines 88 to 165,[124] is replaced by the performance of Müller's *The Hamletmachine*. Meirelles (2015, p. 9), in the online theater program, clarifies his choice of incorporating Müller's work in his production by arguing that Müller himself included *The Hamletmachine* as the play-within-a play in his staging

[123] *The Murder of Gonzago*.

[124] Lines 88 to 165 refer to the passage that encompasses the *Prólogo* of *O assassinato de Gonzaga* until the moment Hamlet says "*Ele o envenena para usurpar o reino!*". In the Arden Shakespeare edition of *Hamlet: The Texts of 1603 and 1623*, such a passage refers to lines 91, which has to do with the beginning of the Prologue, up to line 171, in which Hamlet claims "He poisons him for his estate."

of *Hamlet*,[125] which served as an inspiration to Meirelles. The Brazilian director also explains that the idea of replacing *O assassinato de Gonzaga* by Müller's work generated a particular "*vontade de testar [...] isso como talvez uma nova leitura do assassinato do rei ou seja da destruição de uma antiga ordem*"[126] (MEIRELLES, 2015, p. 9). Most certainly, Meirelles's mirroring of Müller's decision proposes an emphatic and fierce approach which has to do with a contextual political criticism in Brazil.

For the purpose of this study, I briefly describe and investigate the depiction of the following passage from act 4 of Müller's *The Hamletmachine* in Meirelles's *Hamlet* in order to analyze the aforementioned *trade-off*. Translated excerpts into English and Portuguese are then provided:

> HAMLET.
> I don't want to eat drink breathe love a woman a man a child an animal any more. I don't want to die any more. I don't want to kill any more […]. I break open my sealed flesh. I want to live in my veins […] in the labyrinth of my skull […]. Somewhere bodies are being broken so that I can live in my shit. Somewhere bodies are being opened so that I can be alone with my blood. (4)[127]

> HAMLET.
> *Eu não quero mais beber comer amar um homem uma mulher uma criança. Eu não quero mais matar. Eu não quero mais morrer [...]. Eu estripo a minha carne lacrada. Quero morar nas minhas veias [...] no labirinto do meu cérebro [...]. Em algum lugar corpos estão sendo destruídos pra que eu possa habitar na minha merda. Em algum lugar corpos estão sendo arrombados pra que eu possa ficar só com o meu sangue*. (4)[128]

In the intense portrayal of the passage cited above, Hamlet, played by Giza Vasconcelos (1990-), delivers the visceral content of the speech in a most energetic and desperate manner. Loud electronic music can be heard during the entire performance of such a passage, and Hamlet, who is holding a microphone, jumps and dances around the main stage, while the character is furiously singing and shouting the lines. At the delivery of "*Eu estripo a minha carne lacrada*," the screens located on stage display images of a

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[125] David Barnett (2006, p. 188), in the article entitled "Resisting the Revolution," clarifies that "Heiner Müller directed Shakespeare's *Hamlet* together with his own *The Hamletmachine* as *Hamlet/Machine* in March 1990 at the Deutsches Theater, East Berlin."

[126] The desire to test this idea maybe as a new reading of the murder of Hamlet's father, that is, as the destruction of an old order.

[127] Such an excerpt is taken from Marc von Henning's translation into English of Müller's (1995, p. 90) *The Hamletmachine*. In Henning's translation, act 4 is entitled "Pest in Buda Battle of Greenland."

[128] This excerpt translated into Portuguese by Cristhine Rörigh and Marcos Renaux (see Chapter 1) is transcribed from the video recording of Meirelles's production.

group of riot police officers ready to confront a crowd. Additionally, as Vasconcelos's Hamlet shouts "*no labirinto do meu cérebro*," the images of a protester being arrested and a riot police violently dispersing a crowd are shown on the screens. Such images strongly foreground the feeling of repression and the cruel clash with the police in social protests. Extended images of protests appear on the screens throughout the delivery of "*Em algum lugar corpos estão sendo destruídos pra que eu possa habitar na minha merda. Em algum lugar corpos estão sendo arrombados pra que eu possa ficar só com o meu sangue*," which emphasize the relevance of such activities in channeling the profound feeling of dissatisfaction among the members of a community.

Such a *trade-off* in the performance of [act 3], scene 9 in Meirelles's production offers a valuable connection with the Movimento Passe Livre's social actions. Hamlet's desperate tone of voice and behavior imply that the character is dealing with a practically unbearable situation which can no longer be sustained. The loud electronic music contributes to Hamlet's distressed manner as a harmful external element that inflicts the feeling of disturbance in the character's state of mind. Along with the critical references concerning social protests through the use of images on the screens, the depiction of such a passage hints at the idea that an urgent social change must be promptly incorporated. It seems then that the portrayal of this passage in Meirelles's *Hamlet* captures the fierce social and political tone previously discussed in Müller's work. Most importantly, the *trade-off* can be attentively connected with the work of Movimento Passe Livre, which tirelessly organizes protests on the streets of Brazil, even while dealing with the harsh treatment by the police, in order to claim for imperative changes regarding the bus transportation system. Thus, in this case, the significant moment in which the portrayal of *O assassinato de Gonzago* reveals to Hamlet the truth about the death of his father is keenly replaced by a vigorous critical viewpoint concerning Brazilian social issues with the addition of the performance of Müller's *The Hamletmachine*.

6.6 Analyzing [Act 5], Scene 18

For the final scene analysis in this Chapter, I investigate the depiction of the following passage, in which excerpts from Shakespeare's text and O'Shea's translated text are provided:

FORTENBRASSE.
Where is this bloody sight?

HORATIO.
If aught of woe or wonder you'd behold
Then look upon this tragic spectacle.

FORTENBRASSE.
O imperious Death! How many princes
Hast thou at one draught bloodily shot to death?

AMBASSADORS
Our embassy that we have brought from England□
Where be these princes that should hear us speak?
O most unlooked-for time! Unhappy country!

HORATIO.
Content yourselves. I'll show to all the ground,
The first beginning of this tragedy.
Let there a scaffold be reared up in the market-place
And let the state of the world be there,
Where you shall hear such a sad story told
That never mortal man could more unfold.

FORTENBRASSE.
I have some rights of memory to this kingdom
Which now to claim my leisure doth invite me.
Let four of our chiefest captains
Bear Hamlet like a soldier to his grave,
For he was likely, had he lived,
To ha' proved most royal.
Take up the body. Such a sight as this
Becomes the fields but here doth much amiss. (17.112-133)

FORTEBRAÇO.
Onde está a cena sangrenta?

HORÁCIO.
Se quereis ver desgraça e desastre,
Contemplai este trágico espetáculo.

FORTEBRAÇO.
Ó morte arrogante! Quantos príncipes
Derrubaste co' um golpe sanguinário?

EMBAIXADOR.
O despacho trazido da Inglaterra,
Cadê os príncipes que nos ouvirão?
Ah, momento imprevisto! País funesto!

HORÁCIO.
Acalmai-vos; a todos contarei
Como foi que a tragédia começou.
Armemos um tablado no mercado,
E que lá a nobreza compareça,
Onde ouvireis o mais triste relato
Já feito por qualquer mortal cordato.

FORTEBRAÇO.
Tenho certos direitos a este reino,
Que agora reclamar muito me apraz.
Que quatro capitães conduzam Hamlet,
Com honras militares, ao seu túmulo;
Pois tudo leva a crer que, se vivesse,
Tornar-se-ia um grande soberano.
Levai os corpos.
Cena assim serve ao campo de batalha;
Aqui, isso não é cena que valha. (5.18.115-137)[129]

The portrayal of the passage cited above offers a focus on the fearful appearance of Fortenbrasse and his soldiers on stage, which can be associated with the Brazilian political contexts discussed in this Chapter. At the harsh and loud delivery of "*Onde está a cena sangrenta?*", Fortinbrasse is located at a balcony using a microphone, which amplifies his voice in the theater and, consequently, reinforces the impact of his presence in the situation. His intimidating soldiers are located behind him, and all of them have their heads covered with a red piece of cloth, proposing a threatening image (see fig. 13). Such an image of the soldiers implies the fact that they are fully prepared to get into action and act violently in case they are called to keep order concerning a particular circumstance. As Querino's Fortinbrasse starts delivering his lines, the imposing figure of the character is intensified, since the disdain of Fortinbrasse in relation to the tragical spectacle is tremendously visible, and the use of a menacing tone of voice is increased. When the character says "*Tenho certos direitos a este reino*," the arrogant attitude of Fortinbrasse is clearly emphasized through his body gesture and tone of voice. After the delivery of "*Aqui, isso não é cena que valha*," the character goes to the main stage and makes the Nazi salute. Fortinbrasse's arrival surely does not propose any relief and balance to Denmark; instead, it offers the idea that he wants to fiercely rule the country and establish order regardless the consequences of his actions. Meirelles (2015, p. 10) comments in the online theater program that "*fortenbrasse* [sic] *não é a solução é a consequência da violência é o retorno brutal à barbárie*,"[130] making a critical reference concerning the possibility of Rousseff's impeachment and the instalment of a relentless regime, especially in relation to the Nazi salute performed on stage (see Appendix). Additionally, the frightening figures of the soldiers, which seem to be ready to confront

[129] Although Meirelles's follows O'Shea's translation of the First Quarto into Portuguese, the director refers to Fortebraço as Fortenbrasse in his production. Tiago Querino (1985-) plays the character in the staging. Additionally, the Embaixador's lines are cut in the production, reinforcing the focus on the performance of Fortenbrasse and his soldiers, as is discussed in the analysis of [act 5], scene 18.
[130] Fortenbrasse is not the solution, he is the consequence of violence, the brutal return to barbarism.

a crowd, also keenly hint at the previously mentioned scenario in which the participants of the Movimento Passe Livre have to deal with the violent treatment of the police during protests, reinforcing the production's critical approach to such a subject.

Figure 13 - Fortenbrasse and his soldiers in the background.

Source: "HAMLET + HAMLETMACHINE - 2015"

6.7 Critical Reception

Positive reviews emphasizing several aspects of Meirelles's *Hamlet* can be found in Brazilian newspapers and magazines. Before the production's premiere, *iBahia*, in the online article entitled "Vila Velha mostra programação 2015" (2014) highlights the inclusion of Müller's *The Hamletmachine* in the staging. In another online article entitled "Teatro Vila Velha volta com *Hamlet* e *Macbeth* depois do carnaval" (2015) which was published after the premiere, *iBahia* praises Meirelles's productions of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, recognizing once again the incorporation of Müller's *The Hamletmachine* in Meirelles's staging. Additionally, in the same article, the universidade LIVRE do teatro vila velha's work with both productions of Shakespeare's plays is also acknowledged by *iBahia*:

> *No palco está o resultado de um ano inteiro de pesquisas e trabalhos sobre a obra de Shakespeare realizados pela universidade LIVRE, programa de formação de atores do Teatro Vila Velha. O processo de criação contou com*

> *o total de 28 colaboradores de áreas como história, dramaturgia, dança, canto, esgrima, entre outras*[131] (2015).

Besides, according to *iBahia*, the present-day approach of the productions, specially by displaying a strong "*estética rock'n'roll*"[132] (2015), easily draws the attention of the youth to both stagings. Most certainly, in relation to Meirelles's *Hamlet*, the production offers diversified contemporary visual aspects that are able to captivate and intrigue the audience, especially in relation to political issues in the country, as previously discussed.

Mariana Paiva (2015) in the online article entitled "Shakespeare rocker na estréia do amostrão Vila Verão," for the *A Tarde*, emphasizes the contemporary and political aspects of Meirelles's work. Due to the fact that Meirelles's *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* premiered simultaneously, Paiva (2015) comments on both productions by praising the attentive use of the previously mentioned "*estética rock'n'roll*," foregrounding the director's innovative approach. Paiva (2015) also makes some remarks on the intertwined relationship between the two productions of Shakespeare's plays, as she argues that "*Os dois espetáculos não dividem apenas a autoria e a estética. Também terão o mesmo elenco e o mesmo cenário, e vão dialogar por meio de suas trilhas sonoras, figurinos e citações.*"[133] Most importantly, the political approach of Meirelles's work is underlined by Paiva (2015) when she comments on the performance of the aforementioned "*Trilogia do Golpe*":

> *Hamlet e Macbeth fazem parte da Trilogia do Golpe, que se iniciou com o espetáculo Jango: Uma Tragedya, com texto original de Glauber Rocha e montada em Salvador no ano passado. A ideia da trilogia □na qual todas as peças são encenadas por Márcio Meirelles□é discutir questões brasileiras atuais [...]. Para ele, os textos do dramaturgo inglês são bem contemporâneos.*[134]

Additionally, Meirelles, who is interviewed by Paiva (2015), comments on the valuable revolutionary aspects of Shakespeare's works, reinforcing their present-day relevance of

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[131] On stage, it is possible to observe the result of an entire year of research and work about Shakespeare's plays developed by the universidade LIVRE, which offers acting courses at Teatro Vila Velha. The creative process was able to count with 28 contributors in total from areas such as history, dramaturgy, dancing, singing, fencing, among others.

[132] Rock and roll aesthetics.

[133] Both productions share more than their authorship and aesthetics. They will also have the same cast and setting, and will dialogue through their soundtracks, costumes, and quotations.

[134] *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are part of the Coup d'état Trilogy, which began with the staging of *Jango: Uma Tragedya*, originally written by Glauber Rocha and performed in Salvador last year. The idea of the trilogy□in which all productions are directed by Marcio Meirelles□ is to discuss present-day Brazilian issues […]. For Meirelles, Shakespeare's texts are extremely contemporary.

in the discussion of political issues, which is certainly one of the most distinctive characteristics of his production of *Hamlet*.

The attentive political tone of the "*Trilogia do Golpe*" and its contemporary significance is once again highlighted by other Brazilian newspapers and magazines. *Leiamais.ba*, in the online article entitled "*Hamlet* e *Macbeth* estão no Vila Velha" (2015), foregrounds the present-day political relevance of Meirelles's work in Brazil:

> *Hamlet e Macbeth integram a Trilogia do Golpe, ao lado de Jango: Uma Tragedya, peça de Glauber Rocha sobre o exílio do presidente João Goulart montada em 2014 para celebrar os 50 anos do Teatro Vila Velha. A trilogia reúne tragédias que acontecem a partir de golpes de estado. Todas encenadas por Marcio Meirelles, as peças são atualizadas a partir de referências a fatos e questões do Brasil de agora.*[135]

More specifically in relation to *Hamlet*, *Leiamais.ba* comments that the prince can be clearly perceived as a young person from the twenty-first century, since the production addresses contemporary matters. The inclusion of Müller's *The Hamletmachine* in Meirelles's *Hamlet* is also underlined by *Leiamais.ba*. Besides, Laura Fernandes (2015) in the online article entitled "Montagens de *Hamlet* e *Macbeth* são destaques de festival de teatro em Salvador," for the *Correio*, not only praises the aforementioned productions which keenly integrate the "*Trilogia do Golpe*," but also emphasizes the stagings' contemporary relevance and criticism regarding the delicate political scenario in Brazil.

As has been noted, Meirelles's *Hamlet* offers a distinct approach to pressing political matters in Brazil. The discussion on the history of Teatro Vila Velha and Meirelles's works shows the company's strong commitment with social and political struggles in the country, which certainly contributes to Meirelles's critical viewpoint in his production of *Hamlet*. The political position of the director regarding the initial speculations about Rousseff's impeachment and the Movimento Passe Livre's activities is keenly suggested during the analysis of the scenes, specially concerning the actors' use of pauses and tone of voice, as well as the employment of microphones, music, and images on screens. More specifically in relation to the *trade-off* which involves the inclusion of Müller's *The Hamletmachine* as the play-within-a-play, such a decision

[135] *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* are part of the Coup d'état Trilogy, along with *Jango: Uma Tragedya*, a Glauber Rocha's play about the exile of former President João Goulart, performed in 2014 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Teatro Vila Velha. The trilogy combines tragedies that occurred due to coup d'états. The productions, all directed by Marcio Meirelles, are updated with references to present-day facts and issues in Brazil.

proposes an overwhelming moment in the production, critically channeling aspects regarding the Movimento Passe Livre. Additionally, Meirelles attentively makes use of Fortenbrasse, a character in the play that is clearly involved in political circumstances, and his soldiers in order to fiercely comment on the aforementioned contextual issues. Besides, the discussion on the critical reception of the staging demonstrates that the exploration of political matters that are relevant in the country can be considered as an intense feature of the production. Most certainly, Meirelles's *Hamlet* stands out in the Brazilian artistic scenario concerning theatrical productions by proposing a staging that boldly dialogues with pertinent matters in the country.

Chapter 7
"Let us haste to hear it"[136]:
Conclusion

> "*Hamlet* is one of mankind's great images. It turns a new face to each century, even to each decade. It is a mirror which gives back the reflection of the age that is contemplating it."[137]

The variety of elements that *Hamlet* encompasses can surely reach noticeable and extensive levels. Barbara Heliodora (2013, p. 19-20) in "Introdução à 2 ª Edição de *Hamlet*," comments on such a subject:

> *Ao escrever Hamlet, Shakespeare finalmente vai entrar pela forma dramática mais alta e significativa, a da tragédia, unindo tudo o que já se observara sobre relações interpessoais como também sobre as relações entre o indivíduo e o Estado, governantes e governados, a fim de investigar comportamentos humanos em situações extremas, de valores últimos, de crenças e convicções cruciais*. [138]

Theatrical productions of *Hamlet* are able to explore through the use of verbal and visual aspects an array of possible issues, aiming at exposing contemporary criticism, as the stagings analyzed in this study exemplified, in this case, focusing on political and historical matters. In the final pages of this investigation, some of the topics that were critically explored throughout the Chapters are then underlined. For this purpose, I initially comment on the discussion regarding the stage review which referred to several notable Anglo-American and Brazilian productions, highlighted in Chapter 2. In relation to the subsequent Chapters, which focus on the analysis of the selected productions of *Hamlet*, I make remarks on the investigation of the scenes and their approach to the issue of political and historical contextualization, as well as on the critical reception of each staging of the play.

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[136] Line spoken by Fortinbras in the Second Quarto of *Hamlet* (5.2.370).
[137] Peter Hall (1965, p. 7) in "*Hamlet*," published in the theater program of his production.
[138] When writing *Hamlet*, Shakespeare makes use of the most significant and notable dramatic style, the tragedy, joining together everything that has already been observed regarding interpersonal relationships, besides the relationship between the individual and the government, leaders and those being governed, in order to investigate the human behavior in extreme situations, as well as situations related to important values, beliefs, and crucial convictions.

In Chapter 2, as aforementioned in this study, the review of the stage history of *Hamlet* encompassing Anglo-American and Brazilian performances of the play emphasized diversified aspects in productions throughout the years. The various alterations observed in the text performed on stage disclosed the personal point of view and particular tastes of the artists working with issues in the play, which seemed to interest and please audiences in different periods of time due to their considerable acceptance. In this case, scenes and passages were completely cut or modified, and characters, such as Fortinbras, were eliminated in order to accommodate the conception of some of the stagings. More specifically in relation to the commented Brazilian production *Ham-let*, the exchange of elements in the text for well-known cultural aspects in the country offered an attentive connection with the audience. Additionally, the distinct traits of some of the actors who portrayed the prince on stage, which were able to influence subsequent generations, could be observed in the discussion proposed in the Chapter, as well as the work of directors and actors who opted to alter traditional features regarding performances of *Hamlet*, thus offering an array of innovative perspectives. As for the political, social, and historical approach in productions of the play, such a stance reinforced the relevance of *Hamlet* in critically conversing with contemporary issues and varied contexts, specially concerning Brazilian stagings, since this approach foregrounds the significance of theatrical productions of *Hamlet* in the cultural and social scenario of the country.

Regarding the early history of the RSC, as commented in Chapter 3, such a discussion underlined the impact of Peter Hall's seminal work with the company. The Shakespeare Memorial Company undertook several modifications implemented by different artistic directors, who were able to bring meaningful innovations to the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre. However, Hall introduced crucial alterations as the artistic director, which were in accordance with his bold and critical viewpoints. The successful establishment of a base in London for the performance of the RSC productions, the change of the name of the company, and, most importantly, the intense political focus of the stagings were some examples of his influential modifications. Along with *Hamlet*, Hall's *The Wars of the Roses* became notably recognized among his theatrical work with the RSC, especially due to the productions' fierce political approach, which reinforced Hall's inventive and critical perspective regarding contemporary issues.

Concerning Hall's *Hamlet*, significant aspects related to the Cold War could be perceived in the analysis of the scenes from this production, as pointed out in Chapter 3.

The discussion regarding the presence of a cannon on stage in the portrayal of act 1, scene 1 suggested a reference to the nuclear threat and war conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, strongly foregrounding the political tone of the staging. Besides, the depiction of the soliloquy "To be or not to be," in act 3, scene 1, proposed a focus on the idea of conspiracy and persecution during the McCarthy era in the United States. David Warner's attentive use of his tone of voice, as well as the fact that he directly addressed the members of the audience during his performance, which strengthened the connection between protagonist and spectators, resolutely contributed to the approach of such issues.

Additionally, the analysis of the portrayal of act 3, scene 2 concentrated on the depiction of *The Murder of Gonzago*, which offered elements that could be connected with the intensified espionage activities and investigations carried out by the FBI in the McCarthy era. Such activities provoked a harsh feeling of repression and were responsible for the imprisonment of several people in the United States. In this case, the visual aspects played a crucial role in approaching the aforementioned subjects, as the background displayed fortified walls with centralized bars, which invoked the image of a prison cell, besides sensibly underlining the idea of repression. The portrayal of act 5, scene 2, also strongly made use of the restricted environment suggested by the visual interpolation of the already commented fortified walls. The depiction of such a scene addressed the FBI's exposure of conspiracies in the midst of distressing circumstances with the application of illegal procedures. The image of the two guards blocking the door not only contributed to the sense of oppression, but, along with the visual of the horses in the tapestry, also hinted at intense production of military weapons by the United States and the Soviet Union, especially regarding nuclear missiles. This idea was suggested in the investigation of act 1, scene 1, reinforcing the political focus of the production.

In relation to the critical reception of Hall's *Hamlet*, as already commented in Chapter 3, the production seemed to have caused an overwhelming impact with the audience, although it received several negative reviews. The popularity of the staging could be perceived, for instance, with the formation of long lines for the purchase of tickets, which mainly encompassed young students and people who camped overnight. Despite the audience's enthusiasm, some critics harshly disapproved Warner's portrayal of the prince and Hall's work as the director, a fact that called attention to Hall's innovative and bold decisions in the RSC. However, not all critics shared the aforementioned discontent with the production, and several praised features of staging.

Surely, Hall's *Hamlet* was able to cause a remarkable impression at that time, which stills reverberates through its fierce political criticism.

According to the discussion in Chapter 4 in relation to Steven Pimlott's *Hamlet*, the production proposed several aspects that critically supported a connection with the 2000 American presidential election. The portrayal of act 1, scene 2, suggested a reference to the celebration of George W. Bush as the winner of the election and the delivery of his victory speech, setting the political tone of the staging. Various elements in the depiction of the scene have effectively contributed to this association, such as the visual resemblance of Larry Lamb's Claudius to Bush, the constant moments of applause performed by the King's supporters, and the extended instances of handshaking. Lamb's acting also added to the aforementioned association, especially due to the actor's work with his body posture, tone of voice, calculated pauses, and appreciation of the applause while delivering his speech directly to the audience. Additionally, Samuel West's performance of the soliloquy "To be or not to be," in act 3, scene 1, evoked the figure of a politician in a presidential debate, in this case proposing a connection with the final debate between Bush and Al Gore at Washington University. West then overtly demonstrated an explanatory mode during the delivery of the soliloquy, added several pauses, and addressed the audience while walking around the stage.

Besides, the depiction of act 3, scene 2, which focused on the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago*, critically hinted at the realistic role of the TV networks that covered the vote results during election night and diffused misguided information. The use of visual elements played an imperative part in approaching this subject, as the live broadcasting of Claudius's and Gertrude's movements on the two screens positioned center stage unmistakably displayed all their reactions. The camera movements enhanced the discomfort of both characters, exposing their truthful responses. As regards the depiction of act 5, scene 2, a valuable *trade-off* could be observed, involving the *rescripting* of the stage direction in which the weapons were not exchanged by Hamlet and Laertes while fighting. Instead, Claudius got the poisoned rapier himself and gave it to Hamlet. Such a *trade-off* implied an association with Bush's keen strategies to defend his own interests in relation to the controversial vote recount in Florida. In addition, the emphasis on the celebration of Fortinbras as the new King of Denmark ironically proposed a connection with the fact that Bush's victory was uncommonly determined by the Supreme Court, after the polemic vote recount in Florida. Finn Caldwell's authoritarian body posture and tone of voice in his performance of the character, besides

the image of the new King's supporters offering rounds of applause to Fortinbras in the midst of a chaotic situation, reinforced the approach to such a subject.

The critical review of Pimlott's *Hamlet* highlighted West's portrayal of the prince and the political tone of the production (see Chapter 4). The fact that the actor delivers the soliloquy "To be or not to be" directly to the audience, proposing a connection with them, and the attentive emphasis on the prince's suicidal traits are some of the features praised by critics. The production also received some negative responses; for instance, Richard Edmonds disapproved the gap between linguistic elements in the delivered text and the modern visual aspects presented on stage. In fact, such a gap was in accordance with the concept of the production, as it foregrounded the idea of inappropriateness, which was suggested in the analysis of act 3, scene 2, related to the controversial coverage of the vote results. In addition, several critics acknowledged the direct approach of Pimlott's work to political matters. Michael Billington also pointed out that current stagings of the play have opted to leave the political discussion aside in order to concentrate on different subjects, which indeed reinforced the production's critical relevance in commenting on politically pressing matters.

In the investigation of Michael Boyd's *Hamlet*, as pointed out in Chapter 5, the impact of Stephen Greenblatt's *Hamlet in Purgatory* could be attentively observed. The compelling visual of Greg Hicks's Ghost proposed an association with the image of the souls in purgatory displayed in the illustrations of the *Book of Hours*, which were discussed by Greenblatt. Concerning the portrayal of act 1, scene 1, a *trade-off* related to the *rescripting* of a stage direction, in which the sound of a rooster crowing was replaced by sound of church bells, hinted at the historical conflict between Catholics and Protestants in seventeenth-century England. Greenblatt's notes regarding the religious tension involving the tolling of church bells have certainly illuminated the discussion.

In the depiction of act 3, scene 1, more specifically concerning a passage that preceded the anticipated soliloquy "To be or not to be," the subject of espionage in the Elizabethan Era was highly explored (see Chapter 5). Richard Cordery's determined movement on stage and control of his tone of voice while organizing the spying arrangements for the King suggested a connection with Francis Walsingham's work in the field of espionage to protect the Queen's interests. Besides, the display of shadows in the wood-paneled background foregrounded such a subject. The distinct, doubled shadows of the King and Polonius secretly plotting hinted at the fact that Elizabeth I could count on many spying agents. Also, the intense multiplication of Polonius's shadows

while still preparing the espionage scheme reinforced the association with Walsingham's extensive network of spies. Additionally, in the portrayal of act 2, scene 2, the visual interpolation of the doubled shadows of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in the background aided once again in the approach to Walsingham's espionage activities, this time concerning the interrogation of prisoners to uncover plots against the Queen. The shadows then suggested that there were other people involved in the characters' spying movements towards Hamlet. By employing pauses after the questions and tension in his tone of voice, Toby Stephens's Hamlet seemed to be interrogating both characters, which were uncomfortably left under the spotlight on stage.

Besides, the depiction of act 3, scene 2, and act 5, scene 2 underlined the issue of the succession crisis in the Elizabethan Era (see Chapter 5). In the analysis of the portrayal of the dumb show in act 3, scene 2, the *rescripting* of stage directions offered a valuable connection with the fact that several people were eager to become the next English monarch. The remarkable *rescripting* concerned the inclusion of a moment in the stage directions, after the murder of the king, in which Stephens's Hamlet crouched near the crown placed on the floor, quickly grabbed the crown, wore it, and looked euphoric for appearing to be a King. In the performance of *The Murder of Gonzago* in act 3, scene 2, the subject of the dispute to the English throne was once again suggested by the tense atmosphere provoked during the confrontational moment in which Hamlet and Claudius impressively faced each other, after the staging of the Player King's murder. In relation to the portrayal of act 5, scene 2, the display of shadows in the background proposed an association with plots to dethrone Elizabeth I, which also referred to plans to invade England. In this case, Claudius's and the Attendant's terrifying doubled shadows highlighted the idea that more people were involved in the murdering scheme. In addition, the visual interpolation of Hamlet and Laertes's doubled shadows while fighting suggested the image of a turbulent battle conflict. The King's shadows moving around them hinted at the fact that Claudius was prepared to take any measures regarding the dispute to the throne of Denmark, thus contributing to the approach of the aforementioned contextual matter.

Concerning the reviews related to Boyd's *Hamlet*, as commented in Chapter 5, the portrayal of the prince by Stephens and the performance of the Ghost by Hicks, as well as the production's political approach, have certainly called the attention of the critics. Stephens's work was praised in some reviews for displaying his particular interpretation of the well-known speeches in the play, which included the famous soliloquy "To be or

not to be." The actor's energetic and intense disposition on stage when playing Hamlet was also emphasized. Some critics, however, were not pleased with Stephens's performance, for instance, Carole Woddis compared his work with Hicks's impressive depiction of the Ghost, stating that the former presented an outdated and plain version of the character on stage. Hicks's portrayal of Hamlet's father was indeed recognized by the critics for his dramatic display of the inner sufferings of the Ghost. Additionally, the political approach adopted by the production was mentioned in the reviews, for example, as Quentin Letts argued that such a fact provided a better proximity to a contemporary audience. Most certainly, the work of the actors offered distinguishing facets of their characters, and Boyd keenly proposed his own perspective on political and historical matters in connection with elements in the play.

As previously mentioned in Chapter 6, the discussion on Teatro Vila Vela's history emphasized the political commitment of the theatrical company. The TVV's productions and projects, which include the establishment of the universidade LIVRE, reinforced the strong political engagement of the company throughout the years, as they offered a valuable contribution to the cultural and social scenario in Brazil. The "*Trilogia do Golpe*," which encompasses Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, as well as Glauber Rocha's *Jango: Uma Tragedya*, all directed by Marcio Meirelles, can be considered remarkable examples of the TVV's critical work in stressing relevant matters in the country. More specifically in relation to Meirelles's *Hamlet*, such a fierce political approach could be attentively noticed in this investigation, as the analysis of the scenes have demonstrated.

Meirelles's *Hamlet* significantly addressed the issues concerning the initial speculations of Dilma Rousseff's impeachment and the Movimento Passe Livre's activities (see Chapter 6). In the depiction of act 1, scene 2, the possibility of the instalment of a relentless regime in the country with the impeachment of Rousseff was then suggested, setting the critical approach of the production. Franklin Albuquerque's use of a sarcastic tone of voice and pauses emphasized Claudio's cold treatment and disregard for Hamlet, undervaluing his situation as the prince. Hamlet's utter discomfort with his current situation was also stressed by the image on the screens showing Vinicius Bustani's desolated facial expression, besides the actor's attentive use of pauses and suffering tone of voice. In addition, the portrayal of the soliloquy "To be or not to be," in [act 2], scene 7, offered an association with the Movimento Passe Livre's rallies and protests. The use of music with the drums and the prince's close-up on the screens, which

called attention of the audience to Hamlet's message, as well as Bustani's determined use of his voice and pauses when problematizing his discourse, highly contributed to audience rapport.

The analysis of the depiction of [act 3], scene 9 presented a valuable *trade-off* that hinted at the MPL's protest activities, which also involved the confrontational moments with the police. The *trade-off* had to do with the replacement of *O assassinato de Gonzago* for Heiner Müller's *The Hamletmachine*, channeling the fierce political and social approach of Müller's work. In this case, the contextual subject was emphasized by Giza Vasconcelos's visceral and energetic delivery of Hamlet's lines in the midst of electronic music, besides the display of images on the screens of protests and the harsh treatment by the police. In relation to the performance of [act 5], scene 18, such a portrayal commented on both contextual issues previously pointed out. The figures of Fortinbrasse and his soldiers proposed a menacing image on stage, and Tiago Querino's arrogant behavior and tone of voice, not to mention his Nazi salut, suggested a critical association with the possible establishment of a cruel regime in the country with Rousseff's impeachment. The frightening visual interporlation of the soldiers also attentively hinted at the clash between MPL's participants and the police during protests.

Regarding the critical reception of Meirelles's *Hamlet*, as commented in Chapter 6, several positive aspects of the production were emphasized by Brazilian newspapers and magazines. The inclusion in the staging of Müller's *The Hamletmachine*, and the attentive display of a "*estética rock'n'roll*," which called the attention of the youth and foregrounded the contemporary approach of the production, were elements highlighted by some critics. Most importantly, the political pertinence of the "*Trilogia do Golpe*," in which Meirelles's *Hamlet* is encompassed, as aforementioned, was also underlined, since it criticizes pressing present-day issues in the country. Surely, Meirelles's works, more specifically in relation to his production of *Hamlet*, offered a notable contribution to the theatrical scenario in Brazil.

Overall, as this investigation has demonstrated, the selected productions' critical approach to political and historical subjects could be distinctly observed. The four appointed performances of *Hamlet* in this study keenly offered a valuable dialogue involving elements in the play and germane contextual issues. The significance of the visual aspects has certainly played a crucial part in channeling such contextual matters, as well as the attentive and creative treatment of the verbal element on stage. Most importantly, all analyzed stagings provided criticism and their own perspectives

concerning particular situations, which propose an invitation to contemplate the impact of the commented contextual issues in present-day circumstances, besides motivating further studies on performances of *Hamlet* in relation to their approach to varied political and social situations. Finally, the title of this study, in which Hamlet overtly declares his suspicions concerning the existence of inadequate circumstances that highly intrigued the prince, has certainly served as an inspiration to explore the selected productions' critical viewpoints on unbalanced situations connected with pressing political matters.

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APPENDIX

EXCERPTS FROM THE INTERVIEW WITH MARCIO MEIRELLES (TRANSCRIBED)

Naquela época a gente tava fazendo *Jango: Uma Tragedya*, de Glauber, *Hamlet* e *Macbeth* [...]. Então Jango, como tinha sido vítima de um golpe de estado, era o Hamlet Pai, e Duncan, quer dizer, o mesmo ator fazia os três papéis. E o ator que fazia Fortenbrasse era o mesmo ator que fazia Macbeth.

E agora em 2018 a gente encenou novamente *Hamlet*. Então veio essa coisa do Rei Hamlet ser isso que a gente tá vivendo agora, que começou antes também, a barbárie e o desejo de que a barbárie retorne como uma possível saída desse momento que a gente não sabe pra onde vai. Então o Rei Hamlet é o Fortenbrasse também. O mesmo ator que faz o Rei Hamlet volta como Fortenbrasse.

No final, na versão de 2018, [Fortenbrasse] faz a saudação nazista, a barbárie, e Horácio, isso não tinha em 2015, fica sozinho com o revolver na mão porque ele vai se suicidar, e Hamlet diz que não, você tem que sobreviver e contar a história. Então quando levam o cadáver de Hamlet todo mundo sai e Horácio fica sozinho no palco. Quando ele vê Fortenbrasse fazendo o sinal nazista, aí ele bota o revolver na testa, não sabe o que faz, abaixa o braço, e a luz apaga. Acaba com uma ameaça de suicídio de Horácio, e nem a história a gente vai ter.

Agora em 2018 ficou mais forte esse momento de barbárie por causa disso, porque o Rei Hamlet é o sistema bélico, é a barbárie mesmo. E Cláudio é o estrategista, é o articulador, ele consegue a mesma vitória que o outro Hamlet através da negociação com os embaixadores que conversam com o Rei da Noruega. E aí quando [o ator] volta como Fortenbrasse isso fica muito forte, é o mesmo Rei selvagem.

Outra coisa que ficou mais intensa na encenação de 2018 é que em três anos mudou muito essa questão sobre debates de gênero. Então quando Hamlet se veste de mulher pra fingir que é louco, isso fica tão atual. Ainda mais com a afirmação do presidente de que preferiria um filho morto do que ver um filho viado, aí vem Hamlet vestido de mulher confrontando mesmo o poder, o golpe, etc. Agora encaixou mais, porque *Hamlet* pra mim também é o sacrifício de uma geração, morre todo mundo e só fica Horácio porque Hamlet pede pra Horácio ficar, todo mundo morre. Em *Hamlet*

morrem todos inutilmente, não vai acontecer mais nada, vem um homem de outro Estado e toma conta da Dinamarca.

Os solilóquios são discursos direcionados à plateia. Os atores falam pra plateia, não falam pra si. E isso é uma dificuldade com os atores porque tem uma tradição, então é muito difícil romper com isso, fica todo mundo internalizando, falando pra si próprio.

Em relação ao nosso posicionamento diante do contexto político da Dilma, a gente acredita que o teatro é uma ferramenta política, é um ato político. Aquela assembleia que tá ali reunida é pra discutir alguma coisa que interessa à polis, e a saúde da polis tem que ser discutida, portanto é um ato político. Então qualquer coisa que a gente faz ou começa a fazer eu parto desse princípio. Por que que eu vou falar disso agora? O que isso tem a ver com o agora? Então quando a gente foi montar uma encenação, eu escolhi o que eu chamava da Trilogia do Golpe, o *Hamlet*, o *Macbeth* e o *Jango* porque o golpe tava anunciado desde 2013.

(Comentário de Meirelles sobre trabalhar com abordagens políticas e Shakespeare): Na verdade isso não é difícil porque Shakespeare é político.