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# ARES

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Advanced Research in English Series

## Shakespeare at UFSC: a tribute to José Roberto O'Shea

Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês  
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina

ARES | Advanced Research in English Series

Shakespeare at UFSC:  
a tribute to  
José Roberto O'Shea

Beatriz Kopschitz Bastos | Janaina Mirian Rosa  
| Orgs. |

## ARES | Advanced Research in English Series

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# Table of contents

Foreword _____	5
Lincoln P. Fernandes	
Tribute to a Shakespearean: José Roberto O’Shea seen through his graduates’ research _____	7
Beatriz Kopschitz Bastos and Janaina Mirian Rosa	
“You are the most immediate to our throne”: Steven Pimlott’s <i>Hamlet</i> ____	13
Janaina Mirian Rosa	
1955, the year of <i>Titus</i> : Peter Brook’s <i>Titus Andronicus</i> and its relevance _____	28
Filipe Avila	
“The sleeping and the dead / Are but as pictures”: an analysis of some filmic renderings of <i>Macbeth</i> _____	36
Lola Aronovich	
“When shall we three meet again?”: medievalism and perceptions of time in Justin Kurzel’s <i>Macbeth</i> _____	47
Fernanda Korovsky Moura	
Palimpsestuous sedimentation: the libretto of Charles Gounod’s opera <i>Rómeo et Juliette</i> _____	56
Anna Stegh Camati	



A brief analysis of pictorial representations of Ophelia before her madness _____	71
Marina Martins Amaral	
“Life’s but a walking shadow”: the ethos of Shakespeare’s playhouse ____	87
Alexander Martin Gross	
(Im)possibilidades na análise do teatro virtual: breves considerações sobre um campo em franca expansão _____	107
Aline de Mello Sanfelici	
Ricardo II: o rei-mártir _____	117
Roberto Ferreira da Rocha	
Shakespeare em terras brasileiras _____	134
Célia Arns de Miranda	
About the authors _____	148

# Foreword

Lincoln P. Fernandes

Few threads in the vibrant tapestry of academic exploration are so skillfully woven with all the diligence, passion, and unwavering commitment to excellence as those by Professor José Roberto O’Shea. As I stumbled through my nascent days in academia, floundering through CCE’s hallowed corridors, I first found solace in his tutelage. His course on North American Literature (1992) was not a series of academic lectures; it was a voyage, an odyssey across unexplored and vast expanses of literary thought, navigated by his impressively organized, comprehensive, and deep knowledge of the subject matter. His encyclopedic knowledge is not what impressed me the most – it was his humility, his cautious embrace of the unknown in a frank “I don’t know”. It was a humility rarely found in the academic field, one that allows for a space where curiosity could flourish, unimpeded by the ego found in the realms of high intellect.

A distinguished CNPq researcher since the mid-90s, Professor O’Shea has led a project focusing on verse translations and annotations of Shakespearean drama. His scholarly contributions include published translations of notable plays such as *Antônio e Cleópatra*; *Cimbeline, Rei da Britânia* (Jabuti Award, Honorable Mention, 2003); *O conto do inverno* (Jabuti Award, Finalist, 2008); *Péricles, príncipe de Tiro*; *O primeiro Hamlet in-quarto de 1603* (previously unpublished); *Os dois primos nobres* (previously unpublished); *Troilo e Créssida*; *Tímon de Atenas*; and *As alegres esposas de Windsor*.

As I ventured further into the academic domain, embarking on my MA within the nurturing confines of our Postgraduate Program in English (PPGI), I once again had the privilege of being part of Professor O’Shea’s scholarly world. This time (1995), the focus was on the Theory and Practice of Translation – Shakespeare’s plays – a subject he approached with the same vigor and depth, yet humbly refrained from considering himself a translation studies scholar. Instead, he preferred the mantle of a Shakespeare Scholar, a testament to his devotion to the Bard of Avon, despite his expansive knowledge that easily spans both domains.

Now, standing alongside Professor O’Shea as a peer, within the revered confines of PPGI, I am granted a unique and esteemed opportunity to honor a figure of profound admiration and respect. Professor O’Shea transcends the role of a mentor; he is an embodiment of inspiration, a pinnacle of academic rigor coupled with humility. To pay homage to him through this foreword, recognizing his monumental contributions to English studies and his steadfast support of students and colleagues alike, is both a privilege and a testament to his unparalleled influence in shaping scholarly minds.

This issue of ARES (Advanced Research English Series), a homage to Professor O’Shea, is a reflection of the indelible mark he has left on his students – PhD and Post-Doc scholars alike. Each chapter, contributed by those who have had the honor of learning from him, serves as a beacon of his scholarly influence and dedication to Shakespearean studies.

From the nuanced “Brief analysis of pictorial representations of Ophelia before her madness” to the profound exploration of ethos in “‘Life’s but a walking shadow’: the ethos of Shakespeare’s playhouse”, each piece is a testament to the depth and breadth of Shakespeare’s impact across different mediums and cultures. The exploration of (Im) possibilities in the analysis of virtual theatre, the palimpsestuous sediments found in the libretto of Charles Gounod’s opera *Roméo et Juliette*, and the unique lens through which Shakespeare is viewed in Brazilian lands, all contribute to a rich, multifaceted dialogue on the Bard’s enduring legacy. Additionally, the issue delves into medievalism and perceptions of time in Justin Kurzel’s *Macbeth*, the relevance of Peter Brook’s 1955 *Titus Andronicus*, and the nuanced study of authority and proximity to power in Steven Pimlott’s *Hamlet*. Each chapter, in its own right, stands as a scholarly homage to Shakespeare, viewed through the unique prism of Professor O’Shea’s teachings.

Thus, as you peruse the pages of this issue, I invite you to not only appreciate the scholarly rigor and intellectual curiosity encapsulated within but also to reflect upon the spirit of mentorship, passion for knowledge, and humble pursuit of academic excellence that Professor José Roberto O’Shea embodies. May this issue serve as a beacon of inspiration for current and future scholars, a tribute to a remarkable educator, and a testament to the timeless relevance of Shakespeare’s work across cultures and disciplines.

# Tribute to a Shakespearean: José Roberto O'Shea seen through his graduates' research

Beatriz Kopschitz Bastos<sup>1</sup>

Janaina Mirian Rosa

Volume 14 of ARES is a tribute to the person and career of one of the most distinguished members of the Postgraduate Programme in English (PPGI) at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC): Professor José Roberto O'Shea. The articles included in the volume – research papers by ten of his former PhDs and Post-docs in Shakespeare Studies at PPGI-UFSC – provide a wide view of his main area of expertise.

José Roberto Basto O'Shea – his full name – has a BA degree from the University of Texas at El Paso, an MA in Literature from the American University of Washington DC, and a PhD in English from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has held fellowships in Shakespeare Studies at the Shakespeare Institute of the University of Birmingham, at the University of Exeter, and at the Folger Shakespeare Library.

He joined UFSC in 1990 as an Associate Professor and was Professor of English from 1993 to 2016, when he retired, but has remained active as a Volunteer Professor with the Postgraduate Program in English. At PPGI-UFSC, he has supervised 26 MAs, 13 PhDs, and 5 Post-docs, of which 32 were in Shakespeare Studies. He has also taught by invitation at The American University of Paris, the University of Warwick, and various universities in Brazil.

He had CNPq research grants from the early 1990s, with a project that contemplated annotated, verse translations of Shakespeare's drama into Brazilian Portuguese, and

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<sup>1</sup> The editors of this volume and authors of this introduction, Beatriz Kopschitz Bastos and Janaina Mirian Rosa, were José Roberto O'Shea's first and last Post-docs at UFSC, respectively, in the periods of 2005-6 and 2023-4, in the fields of Irish and Shakespeare Studies – Janaina having also been his MA (2015) and PhD (2019) supervisee.

concluded translations of *Antony and Cleopatra*; *Cymbeline*; *The Winter's Tale*; *Pericles*; *Hamlet*; *The First Quarto*; *The Two Noble Kinsmen*; *Troilus and Cressida*; *Timon of Athens*; and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* – most of which with an introduction by Marlene Soares dos Santos. Moreover, he translated Philippa Gregory's *The Last Tudor*, Bernard Cornwell's *Fools and Mortals*, as well as Harold Bloom's *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*, and *Hamlet: Poem Unlimited*.

Paulo Henriques Britto and Márcia A. P. Martins (2011, p. 130), in their article “*Shakespeare em português do Brasil: as traduções em verso de José Roberto O’Shea*” (Shakespeare in Brazilian Portuguese: the verse translations of José Roberto O’Shea), offer us a detailed analysis of O’Shea’s options in his first three annotated translations: *Antony and Cleopatra*; *Cymbeline*, *King of Britain*; and *The Winter’s Tale*. They describe O’Shea’s overall strategy in these works, and his use of pentameters – unrhymed or rhymed:

Always taking into account that Shakespeare’s plays were originally written for the stage – although they have over time acquired the status of works of both drama and literature – O’Shea seeks to produce a text which is similarly theatrical, obeys the changes in the original between prose and verse, and between rhymed and blank verse, and uses pentameters for the lines in verse. (Our translation) <sup>2</sup>

On his overall choices for style and diction, Britto and Martins (2011, p. 131) comment that “O’Shea seeks to use a language that is simple, but not poor in spirit, seeking to avoid any cacophonies or adverse double-entendres, rendering alliterations and images, recreating puns and wordplays, and maintaining variations in second-person address (you/thou)” (our translation)<sup>3</sup>. As O’Shea himself has observed (2002, p. 38),

when rewriting Shakespeare for a public that is distant from the author in terms of time, space and culture, I chose a lexicon and patterns of speech which I hope are accessible to the target public and are part of the target culture: Brazil at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>. (Our translation) <sup>4</sup>

O’Shea has been influential in a vast range of areas, nationally and internationally. He has translated over 70 literary works – three of which have been shortlisted for the prestigious *Prêmio Jabuti* – encompassing various textual genres. He has written and

<sup>2</sup> In the original: Em linhas gerais, O’Shea, sempre levando em conta que as peças de Shakespeare foram escritas originalmente para o palco – embora tenham, ao longo do tempo, adquirido o duplo estatuto de obra dramática e literária –, procura produzir um texto igualmente teatral, que respeite a distribuição de prosa/verso e versos brancos/versos rimados do original, empregando decassílabos para as passagens em verso.

<sup>3</sup> In the original: O’Shea busca uma linguagem simples, mas não empobrecedora, cuidando para evitar cacófonias, repetindo as aliterações e imagens, recriando os trocadilhos e jogos de palavras, mantendo a mistura de tratamentos (tu/vós)”

<sup>4</sup> In the original: [a]o reescrever Shakespeare para um público distante do dramaturgo inglês em termos de tempo, espaço e cultura, fiz a opção por um léxico e por padrões de fala, espero, acessíveis ao público-alvo e inseridos na cultura de chegada: o Brasil no final do século XX e início do século XXI.

talked extensively on subjects, apart from Shakespeare Studies, such as, for example, Translation Studies, Performance Studies – and, not surprisingly, Irish Studies. An Irish descendant, from a family who emigrated from Ireland to New York, then to Rio de Janeiro, his city of birth, O’Shea is a translator of James Joyce, Sheridan le Fanu and Jonathan Swift, and has been a representative of the Brazilian Association of Irish Studies in the state of Santa Catarina for many years.

Along with his academic and translation work, O’Shea has also been active in the theatre scene in Brazil, and his translations have been staged by companies including *Companhia de Teatro Atores de Laura*, in Rio de Janeiro, *Grupo Galpão*, in São Paulo, *Teatro Vila Velha*, in Salvador, *Persona Companhia de Teatro* and *Grupo de Pesquisa Teatro Novo* (UFSC-DAC) – these last two in Florianópolis.

The articles included in this volume favour his main area of expertise, featuring research by ten of his former PhDs and Post-docs in Shakespeare Studies at PPGI/UFSC, from a wide range of critical points of view.

The first article foregrounds the analysis of a Royal Shakespeare Company’s performance of *Hamlet* in 2001 and its political implications. In “‘You are the most immediate to our throne’: Steven Pimlott’s *Hamlet*”, Janaina Mirian Rosa investigates how the work of the director Steven Pimlott suggests a connection between elements of the play and the political context related to the 2000 American presidential election. Drawing on Marco De Marinis’s notion of *performance text*, as well as Alan Dessen’s and Dennis Kennedy’s concepts of performance analysis, Rosa provides a detailed study of the performance of passages in selected scenes of the play, offering a critical perspective of this political production of *Hamlet*.

In the second article, Filipe dos Santos Avila explores the much-debated production of *Titus Andronicus* directed by Peter Brook in 1955. In “1955, the year of *Titus*: Peter Brook’s *Titus Andronicus* and its relevance”, Avila highlights the director’s stylized treatment of violence on stage, which reestablishes the significance of the play and foregrounds its tragic repercussions. Resorting to Patrice Pavis’s and Dennis Kennedy’s concepts of performance analysis, Avila investigates the performance of specific moments in the play which emphasize complex themes, underlining his critical viewpoint of Brook’s production.

Some highlights of filmic productions of *Macbeth* are examined by Lola Aronovich in the following article. In “‘The sleeping and the dead / Are but as pictures’: an analysis of some filmic renderings of *Macbeth*”, Aronovich comments on acclaimed movies, such as the ones directed by Akira Kurosawa (1957), Orson Welles (1948), Roman Polanski (1971), Justin Kurzel (2015), Vinícius Coimbra (2015), and Joel Coen (2021). The author approaches the development of themes and characters, the performance of iconic

scenes in the play, besides making comparisons of relevant issues among the films and presenting a compelling overview of cinematic productions of *Macbeth*.

Fernanda Korovsky Moura also provides the reader with a significant analysis of Kurzel's filmic production of *Macbeth*. Moura, in "When shall we three meet again?: medievalism and perceptions of time in Justin Kurzel's *Macbeth*", brings forth a theoretical debate about *medievalism*, involving scholars such as David Matthews and Leslie J. Workman, as well as Gilles Deleuze's notions of time, which support the author's investigation of the film. Moura explores the issues of *medievalism* and perceptions of time by means of a more detailed cinematic analysis of some scenes in the film, proposing an engaging discussion on Kurzel's work.

In the fifth article of this volume, Anna Stegh Camati investigates Charles Gounod's opera *Rómeo et Juliette* (1867). In "Palimpsestuous sedimentation: the libretto of Charles Gounod's opera *Rómeo et Juliette*", Camati concentrates on the subject of the diverse sources of the opera, also commenting on the relevance of libretti as significant intermediate media. In terms of theoretical support, the author counts on Lars Elleström's discussions on the issues of intermediality and adaptation, as well as Linda and Michael Hutcheon's remarks on the subjects of adaptations and operas, offering an intricate study of Gounod's captivating opera.

Marina Martins Amaral, in turn, offers the reader a fragment of one of the chapters of her doctoral dissertation, chapter IV "Constellation I – Representations of Ophelia before madness", here titled "A brief analysis of pictorial representations of Ophelia before her madness". She addresses a plethora of visual images produced about Ophelia throughout Western Art, to conclude that "issues such as submissiveness, obedience, patriarchy and naivety [stand] out among the images collected".

Alexander Martin Gross opens the seventh article, "Life's but a walking shadow': The ethos of Shakespeare's playhouse", with some of Shakespeare's most famous lines, in *You Like It*, which contends that the world we inhabit is analogous to a playhouse:

All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players.  
They have their exits and their entrances,  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages. (2.7.139-43)<sup>5</sup>

He then leads the reader through an analysis of the famous Globe Theatre in London. Gross draws from a vast number of critics, and from some of Shakespeare's plays, such as *Hamlet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Macbeth*, and *Othello*, to discuss the emblem of The

<sup>5</sup> This quotation was taken from WELLS; TAYLOR, 2005.

Globe sign, global iconography in early modern Europe, and the symbolism of The Globe. The article is also richly illustrated.

“(Im)possibilidades na análise do teatro virtual: breves considerações sobre um campo em franca expansão” ((Im)possibilities in the analysis of virtual theatre: brief considerations about a field in frank expansion), by Aline de Mello Sanfelici, provides new insight into theatre performance analysis by considering the non-tangible space of the virtual stage. Sanfelici’s article reflects her most recent research on digital theatre, in theory and practice – its possibilities and impossibilities – by testing O’Shea’s own writings on analysis of performance in the examination of this new form of theatre, with caution but without prejudice.

Text analysis is favoured by Roberto Ferreira da Rocha in “Ricardo II: o rei-mártir” (Richard II: the martyr-king). Da Rocha explores the tragic course of the protagonist Richard II in the play *A tragédia do rei Ricardo II* (*The Tragedy of King Richard the Second*), translated by Carlos Alberto Nunes: from king to martyr. His detailed text analysis views the king’s trajectory as a medieval tragedy, still adopted by Elizabethan drama, of the fortune of a king, from good to worse. Da Rocha’s work proposes an insightful look into the inability of the character Richard II to sustain the role of a king which culminates in his fall.

The closing article very pertinently brings the focus of the volume to Brazilian productions: “Shakespeare em terras brasileiras” (Shakespeare in Brazilian lands), by Célia Arns de Miranda. Miranda offers us a fascinating critical appreciation of the presence of Shakespeare on the Brazilian stage, as well as TV – from the nineteenth to the twenty first century. She highlights productions of *Hamlet*, such as the one with João Caetano dos Santos as the protagonist of a translation by Oliveira e Silva, in 1835; the production of 1948, in Rio de Janeiro, with the unforgettable Sérgio Cardoso as Hamlet; José Celso Martinez Corrêa’s *Ham-let*, at Teatro Oficina, in São Paulo, in 1993; the rewriting of *Hamlet*, as *Estou te escrevendo de um país distante*, by Felipe Hirsch, in Curitiba, in 1997; and the production by Aderbal Freire Filho, with Wagner Moura in the main role, in 2008; to cite just a few. A must read!

Both José Roberto O’Shea himself and his academic career have been shaped by his sharp sensibility and intelligence. As a dedicated researcher, an award-winning translator, and an inspirational tutor – also a conversationalist by nature, deeply versed in literature, theatre and performance – he taught his wide knowledge with generosity and care. This volume is an expression of gratitude, respect and admiration, offering a critical retrospective of his work as mirrored in the research of some of his former advisees. We hope that it pays fair tribute to a remarkable Shakespearean, dear teacher and friend to so many of us!



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# “You are the most immediate to our throne”<sup>1</sup>: Steven Pimlott’s *Hamlet*<sup>2</sup>

Janaina Mirian Rosa

## 1 Introduction

This article focuses on the analysis of scenes from Steven Pimlott’s *Hamlet*<sup>3</sup> regarding the approach to specific political circumstances, in this case the 2000 American presidential election. 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 article act 3, scenes 1 and 2, and act 5, scene 2<sup>4</sup>, drawing on Marco De Marinis’s notion of *performance text*, and Alan Dessen’s and Dennis Kennedy’s concepts regarding performance analysis.

Pimlott intensively highlights political aspects in his production for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Pimlott’s (2001) staging of *Hamlet* is set in contemporary times, conveying the

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<sup>1</sup> Line spoken by Claudius in the Second Quarto of *Hamlet* (1.2.109). *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). All quotations utilized in the analysis of Pimlott’s *Hamlet* are taken from the Second Quarto, except lines 250 to 256 from act 5, scene 2, which are taken from the Folio text. All quotations from Q2 are taken from the Arden Shakespeare edition of *Hamlet*, and quotations from 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).

<sup>2</sup> This article is based on the author’s doctoral dissertation, more specifically from the Introduction and Chapter 4 (see Acknowledgments).

<sup>3</sup> This Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) production premiered on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2001, according to Kathy Elgin (2001, p. 20) in the theater program. The video of this production, available at the Shakespeare Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon, was recorded on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2001. All descriptions of scenes in this article are taken from such a recording.

<sup>4</sup> The First Quarto presents different scene divisions.

idea of a presidential environment in Denmark, with heavily surveillance equipment and personnel (BATE; RASMUSSEN, 2008, p. 185-86). Samuel West (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.

### 1.1 Theoretical background

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). I find Marinis’s concept extremely valuable as it takes into account the issue of contextualization among several other elements in a theatrical production, encouraging the understanding of performances as something more than the words of a playscript.

Dessen and Kennedy also offer significant contributions to the study of theatrical performances. Regarding the analysis of the verbal aspect in productions, Dessen (2009, p. 3) explains that the notion of *rescripting* 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). In connection with the previously mentioned notion, 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 [...]” *Trade-offs* concern the exchange

of aspects in the playscript, taking into account their subsequent developments in the stagings (DESSEN, 2009, p. 4).

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 (1996, 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”. I find Dessen’s and Kennedy’s concepts highly appropriate to the analysis of theatrical productions as they can be considered practical and efficient tools in the investigation of the verbal and visual aspects of performances of Shakespeare’s plays.

### 1.2 Bush v. Gore

In order to achieve the goals proposed in this article, 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 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 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:

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, 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.

## 2 Scene analysis

### 2.1 A presidential environment in Denmark

Before presenting the analysis of the selected scenes for this article, 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. They are enthusiastically applauding and cheering the King and Queen, played by Marty Cruickshank, who are entering through a large door in the background. 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 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, and Voltmand, played by James Curran, 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.

## 2.2 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 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.

### 2.3 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 or 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)<sup>5</sup>

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

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<sup>5</sup> 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.

side, 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), 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<sup>6</sup>. Her confused response can be clearly visualized and all her movements are 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.

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<sup>7</sup>, which straightforwardly exposes his facial expressions, at the delivery of “Whether Love lead Fortune or else Fortune Love” by the Player King (Robert Jezek). 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<sup>8</sup>, 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, 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

<sup>6</sup> 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”.

<sup>7</sup> 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”.

<sup>8</sup> According to Bordwell and Thompson (2008, p. 191), “the medium shot frames the body from the waist up”.

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.

#### 2.4 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.

OSRICKE. Nothing neither way.

LAERTES. Have at you now! *In scuffling they change rapiers.*

KING. Part them—they are incensed. (5.2.250-256)<sup>9</sup>

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 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

<sup>9</sup>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.

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:

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, 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, 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.

### 3 Final remarks

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 article. 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. The production, therefore, resonates the present-day relevance of productions of *Hamlet*, as it intensely communicates with critical perspectives related to contemporary political matters.

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# 1955, the year of *Titus*: Peter Brook's *Titus Andronicus* and its relevance<sup>1</sup>

Filipe Avila

The present paper aims to examine the major production of *Titus Andronicus* of the 20th century, namely Peter Brook's 1955 production. *Titus*, with its complicated reception and controversial authority, had been avoided by audiences, practitioners and critics alike. The present paper argues that Brook's staging of the play retrieved George Peele and William Shakespeare's text, paving the way to future successful productions in the 21st century (Ninagawa's at the RSC and Bailey's at the Globe, for example). Mariangela Tempera (1999, p. 9), in her comprehensive volume on the play's stage history, highlights Brook's importance to this process of "reviving" *Titus*:

the reasons why this gruesome tragedy was so popular with the Elizabethans thoroughly escaped later generations until Peter Brook's 1955 watershed production set off a process of re-evaluation and rehabilitation which was initially fairly slow, but which has been gaining momentum since the late 1980s.

Thus, in the following pages I intend to conduct an exercise in what Patrice Pavis calls "theater historiography", so that the available records of Brook's production can be taken into account in a methodologically appropriate way. Peter Brook's *Titus*, opening in 1955 in Stratford and then touring London and Europe eastwards, highlights the irony of a review written on a previous production of the play, staged in the 1923 at the Old Vic: "if you think you can stand *Titus Andronicus* you had better see it during this week. You may never have a chance of seeing it again if you live to be a hundred years of age" (apud TEMPERA, 1999, p. 383). That might have been true for the older members of the audience, but 32 years later the prospect of seeing *Titus* on stage would

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have been very different. Brook's production stylizes violence to regenerate the play and heighten its tragic effect without losing decorum, and, in a way, prefigures Barker's reading of the play in his *The Culture of Violence*; Brook (apud FRIEDMAN, 2013, p. 17) describes *Titus Andronicus* as an "eventually beautiful barbaric ritual". Dennis Kennedy (1996, p. 164) situates Peter Brook's productions as key to the way Shakespeare went on to be performed in the post-war: "Peter Brook has made it his life-long business to apply innovative and avant-garde methods to the mainstream theatres, asking his audiences to rethink classic plays in terms of contemporary life and transcendent images". The keyword was "relevance". According to Kennedy (1996, p. 165), Brook saw drama as "[a] true search for values". Brook "believes in the existence of values in drama, and believes that they inhere in the text; and he passionately believes in the importance of searching" (KENNEDY, 1996, p. 165). Thus, this "beautiful barbaric ritual" presented in *Titus Andronicus*, however beautiful it might have been, did not serve merely an aesthetic purpose. To Peter Brook and his audiences (at least judging the production's reception), the play mattered because it was able to speak directly to them, and relate to audiences' experiences and emotions. I believe this is particularly true to European audiences, especially eastwards. "There", Brook (apud KENNEDY, 1996, p. 171) says, it "touched audiences directly [because] we had tapped in it a ritual of bloodshed which was recognized as true".

Before starting my analysis of Peter Brook's *Titus*, I would like to bring to the reader's attentions some of the limitations in this study, and how I plan to overcome them, at least in part. Peter Brook's now iconic *Titus* does not survive in film; sadly, Olivier's magnificent performance – at least according to the numerous reviews, some even claiming it was his best – can only be reconstructed by means of other people's words and photographs of the production. It is precisely about the photographs I wish to write about. Such visual resources are obviously valuable to the researcher, but must be considered with a pinch of salt. In this sense, I side with Dennis Kennedy's remarks in *Looking at Shakespeare: A Visual History of Twentieth-Century Performance*. In the theater historian's task of "reimagin[ing] the moment of past performance and to contextualize it with a narrative about its social meaning" (KENNEDY, 1996, p. 16), photographs and other visual records can be misleading in their representation of past performances.

In comparison to other types of records, such as critical reviews, eyewitness accounts, drawings such as Peacham's, for instance, pale in comparison to more palpable objects such as photographs and pieces of set and costume design. Drawings of set design, for instance, sometimes do not reflect their concretization on stage. Turning what the designer first thought into a three-dimensional object can pose problems and require changes, and these would not be present, thus, in said drawings. The creative work of a designer in its conception, thus, might be misleading and therefore have little

to do with the actual performance under scrutiny. Concerning photographs, Dennis Kennedy (1996, p. 20) raises the question: “Since photographs are central to this book, the point deserves elaboration. When can we trust a theatre photo?”. Since I rely mostly on photographs to analyze Brook’s production, I shall follow Kennedy’s footsteps in discussing photographs.

Kennedy thus highlights the sort of idealized status photographs hold for us, in the sense that they are taken for granted as representing the true character of what is being portrayed. As an example, he mentions a photograph of his grandfather, “whom [he] never knew, as a young man on a camping trip in the woods sometime about 1890” (KENNEDY, 1996, p. 21). Such a photograph allowed Dennis Kennedy to reconstruct an image of his grandfather, perhaps as an adventurous young man who enjoyed being in touch with nature. However, his relatives who had known the subject of the photograph cannot remember the event nor did they remember him as the type of person to go on such trips. The pertinence of this example is to highlight that “[j]ust as a family memory may be distorted by placing too much stress upon grandfather’s enigmatic smile or Aunt Mary’s floppy hat, so theatre history can be distorted by improperly emphasizing isolated moments that happen to have been recorded” (KENNEDY, 1996, p. 21). The same, of course, might happen when analysing photographs of a particular production. For instance, the notorious photographer Angus McBean, “who took photos of most of the important Shakespeare productions in England from about 1937 to about 1964” (KENNEDY, 1996, p. 21), thus covering Brook’s production, brought so much equipment to his shootings and focused mainly on close-ups to capture actors’ individualities that his photos, however important and aesthetically accomplished, must be taken with a pinch of salt, but, obviously, not entirely discarded.

Briefly, before analyzing the scenes, I’d like to highlight that the major changes in the text are three, all of them related to Marcus: the deletion of Marcus’s speech upon finding Lavinia, and the changes in the fly killing scene. Such changes do not seem intrinsically linked, but I argue that they operate on similar levels and have powerful implications. Concerning the final lines of the play, William P. Shaw writes that it is the only deletion that significantly changes the plot of *Titus Andronicus*. In this scene, Brook deleted “almost 100 lines [...] that point to Lucius’ assumption of power as the Emperor and the prospect of a better future out of the present carnage. Brook’s deletion of these lines forces us to dwell rather on the savage deeds and their consequences without hope or consolidation” (SHAW, 1990, p. 40). It is highly debatable that the removal of the last lines of the play alone would produce such an effect; sometimes, the effect of hopelessness is heightened by the presence of such lines, since many productions paint Lucius in an unfavorable light. Even in a production where Lucius is not presented as the proto-fascist he is sometimes depicted as, the mere presence

of the army of Goths that helped liberate Rome would serve to foreshadow the impending dissolution of the Roman Empire.

Nevertheless, whether the last lines offer hope or not depends on directorial choices, the production's context, and the audience's reception. However, I believe that both the ending lines and Marcus's speech to Lavinia have something in common: they both represent an attempt to use language to fix a state of affairs. Beyond that, however complicated the use of the body as a metaphor for political action in *Titus Andronicus* may be, a parallel could be traced between Lavinia's body and the Roman body politic, which Marcus, in a way, tries to mend with his oratory. In a play where language often works on an ironical level (for instance, *Titus* says he will chop his hands off to join Lavinia in her suffering upon seeing her, and, moments later, ends up chopping his own hand off only to have his sons' heads in exchange), embellished discourses are often ineffectual. Marcus says:

O, let me teach you how to knit again  
This scattered corn into one mutual sheaf,  
These broken limbs again into one body. (5.3.69-71)<sup>2</sup>

Can Marcus really teach that? And was this body ever whole? Marcus's speeches, more than anyone else's, can be made to signify how language fails: how language is incapable of dealing with dismemberment, be it literally in Lavinia's case or metaphorically in the political decadence that Lucius is supposed to revert, further advance, or unable to stop, depending on the reading.

Peter Brook's production is known for its stylization of violence, and the most commented aspect of such a stylization is the treatment of Lavinia after she is raped and mutilated by Chiron and Demetrius: the severed body parts have long ribbons to represent her wounds. Evocatively, violence is toned down by the usage of the ribbons coming out of her mouth and hands, producing a hauntingly beautiful image<sup>3</sup> – something that can be criticized even on a moral ground, in the sense that it beautifies the outcome of the violence done to her. Whereas a more realistic approach might make this image more frightening at this specific point of the play, with fake blood pouring out of Lavinia's mouth and hands, Brook keeps the ribbons on her hands far longer than the usage of fake blood would allow. Thus, the stylized wound may mitigate the obvious graphic violence in the post-rape scene, but it serves as a powerful reminder throughout act 3, scene 1 and later, of Lavinia's suffering. If Lavinia's presence onstage is normally a reminder of the dismembered political body of a decadent Rome, the ribbons, to a sense, further highlight how wounded both family and State are. They can be contrasted to the

<sup>2</sup> This quote was taken from the play *Titus Andronicus* published in The Riverside Shakespeare edition (1997).

<sup>3</sup> The photographs I analyzed cannot be reprinted here due to copyright issues. Images of Brook's production, however, can be easily found online through a simple Google search.

treatment Julia Taymor gave Lavinia in her *Titus*: if the branches from her arms seem loosely inspired in Peter Brook's ribbons, later on, Young Lucius gets her prosthetics. Of course, her end is just as somber, but this hint of tenderness further highlights Taymor's optimistic ending: in her filmic adaptation, Young Lucius and Aaron's baby march back to the 20th century, allegedly to the "end of history" (in hindsight, an ending that would be actually considered dystopian). On the other hand, they are incapable of revealing the extent to which Lavinia was violated, something her male relatives take way too long to realize. At the same time the wound reminds us of her suffering, it also calls attention to the fact that they are unable to convey "her true meanings".

Lavinia's ribbons remain with her until the end of the play, as seen in photographs of the final scene of the play, and also one I would like to discuss here: Lavinia guiding the stick to write down what happened to her and who did it. The image also reveals that Brook, unlike what is indicated in the playtext, avoids having Lavinia guide the stick with aid of her mouth – thus avoiding the phallic imagery that could be regarded as poor taste. The starking contrast between Lavinia's black dress and the white ribbon seems to materialize Thomas P. Anderson's (1993, p. 142) arguments about the body as a metaphor in the play: "in its parody of sovereignty's charismatic survival beyond death, [*Titus*] transform[s] political theology into a feminist politics of overliving in which performing objects [...] evoke the phenomenon of non-sovereign agency that defines Shakespeare's fugitive politics" (142). With this idea in mind, the ribbons are a lively reminder of the body's "agitating power", an expression that here acquires another layer of meaning due to the materiality of the ribbons and the way they possibly move on stage. As previously mentioned, Lavinia carries her ribbons, that is, her wound, to her grave; dead by her father's side, it is possible to see the white ribbon hanging from her hand in one of the most telling photographs of the production. In it, it's possible to see the stage as if divided in three vertical levels: Lavinia, Tamora, Saturninus, and Titus dead on the banquet table; Roman and Goth soldiers attending the bodies, with Aaron in the middle; and on the top level, Marcus and Lucius, ready to install a new order.

Considering Dennis Kennedy's remarks on the usage of photographs, the one described above is a good example of a valuable photograph for analysis. If the photo seems inaccurate as a depiction of a scene from the actual production due to its quality and general tableau aspect, reviews of Peter Brook's *Titus* corroborate the use of this photo as evidence. As commented by Evelyn Waugh (1955) with a bit of irony, "the corpses that accumulated about the stage were very elegant, particularly the ladies" and were "lying gracefully disposed, all unlike the real debris of carnage". Evelyn Waugh provides one of the harshest reviews of Brook's rendition, going against the grain of general praise. However, one remark in her review calls attention: the play's "notorious horrors, repellent to gentler generations, seemed drab today" (WAUGH, 1955). However questionable the

nostalgic notion of “gentler generations”, her comment might be revealing of the way audiences at the time related to the violence in the play according to their own context, possibly prepared to handle the horrors on stage since they witnessed the horrors of mass assassination on unprecedented scale.

The outcome of the tragedy is thus laid out vertically in three levels, with the aid of the dining table. On the first level the dead are beautifully put to rest, having the two women killed by Titus in the middle. It is possible to see how the colors of their attires contrast: the Andronici are dressed predominantly in white whereas the royal couple are dressed in darker tones. Lavinia is, this time, dressed in white, as if the white from her ribbons spread to the rest of her costume, as if the physical and psychological wounds have taken over all her body. That is Titus’s thinking, at least, in the sense that the only fate possible for Lavinia is death by her own father’s hand. If Lavinia stands as the major symbol for political power and Rome, Titus “regains” control of her body, as patriarch of the Andronicus family and a powerful player in Roman politics, by killing her, inflicting a wound greater than rape and mutilation. It is only after killing Lavinia that he properly revenges himself, revealing the contents of the pie and subsequently murdering Tamora.

On the second level, it is possible to see the survivors, both Roman lords and Goth soldiers who aided Lucius. It is somewhat difficult to distinguish them, and this seems to go hand in hand with one the major themes in *Titus Andronicus*, the blurring of lines between civilization and barbarism. Similarly, it is possible to see in the scene Chiron and Demetrius are captured by Titus how their costumes as Rape and Murder feature a Roman helmet. But perhaps the most striking feature in the photo is Aaron, in the middle of the carnage. It is curious to think that “no funeral rites” are to be observed to anyone in the scene – Tamora would not have them anyway, but, considering that Titus and Lavinia are to be buried in the family tomb and so is Saturninus in his – Aaron ends the play more “alive” than ever. Tempera (1999, p. 129) writes that “[i]n a play which opens the issue of succession, the audience would have been only too aware of the political threat represented by the Moor’s access to the body of a queen”. Similarly, having Aaron literally in the middle of the dead by the end of the play highlights how real the danger was, so much so that its outcome can be truly appreciated. If normally Aaron survives the play in the sense that his death sentence is decreed but not experienced, here he is barely sentenced, the new order to be established remains unclear, and the corpses are not even buried. Tempera writes about how the failure in observing proper burial rituals in the play leads to the multitude of undead “who populate the play” (1999, p. 110). “What happens when ritual fails?” (TEMPERA, 1999, p. 111) she asks herself. “The dead linger on”, she answers, and “[w]e see here a major sequence of failed or missing or distorted rituals, so the trapdoor that joins tomb and hell is never properly disclosed” (TEMPERA, 1999, p. 111). The end of the play with the dead lingering on, as well as



Aaron's presence, cannot be read but pessimistically: Rome will not be able to free itself from these violent ghosts.

On the top level, we can see Marcus and Lucius, contemplating "the feast of centaurs". If the issue of overliving is made explicit in Lavinia's ribbons, the Andronici clan, in Daniel Juan Gil's (2013, p. 128) view suffers from the phenomenon of "undeadness", that is, "victimized to the point of transcending the field of state power altogether". If the dead in this scene are beautifully arranged and seem even elegant, Marcus and Lucius, on the other hand, seem more undead than ever, confronted with the (perhaps impossible task) of putting together the dismembered social fabric. Saturninus, Tamora, Lavinia, and Titus, amid Goths, Romans, and Aaron, linger on stage, whereas Marcus and Lucius are barely given the space to establish a new order; Lucius is named emperor, but some of the crucial questions of the play are not answered, such as the destiny of Aaron's baby, how the funeral rites are handled, or how does Lucius behave as the new emperor. Furthermore, the fact that Titus and Tamora remain there, together, emphasizes the problematic difference between Romans and Goths: if one of the things that separate civilization from barbarism are funeral rites, these are denied to both Titus and Tamora, bringing them together in death. If in the playtext her body is treated as "detritus", as discussed by Francis Barker (1993, p. 233), here she stays within the city walls.

The seemingly lack of conclusion affirms precisely that the new order to be established will be haunted by the corpses, by Aaron's evil deeds (do not they live on, as Mark Antony says?), by a history that will repeat itself. Similarly to Marcus and Lucius, audiences are left to admire the incredible violence of the ending scene. To me, such a contemplation offers a more pessimistic ending than an explicitly pessimistic ending itself such as the one found in Jane Howell's BBC *Titus*, for instance. If in Howell's production the dark ending with a proto-fascist Lucius and a dead innocent baby is mitigated by the compassionate Young Lucius, however powerless he may be at the time in comparison to his then seemingly almighty father, a glimmer of hope still exists. Here, however, I argue that the beautiful contemplation of death and the absence of a clear resolution hints back to the beginning of the play: an empty throne and a bunch of dead children. Thus the ritual of violence is ended. It is not unreasonable to assume that most if not all audience members in Brook's *Titus* had heard of or seen the mass killings that took place from the 1930s well into the 1940s – especially as Brook toured eastwards – in this sense, their position would not have seemed as new or as strange as might be imagined. Evoking again Brook's words, that was a ritual of violence perceived as true. To conclude, my highlighting of a certain line of interpretation does not try to establish it as the single possibility for reading Peter Brook's *Titus*. As Tempera (1999, p. 18) notes, Brook's production "was also remarkable in the way it contained the seeds of future productions". Even if the wording is somewhat problematic, in the sense that it places

Brook's production on a pedestal, almost a "source" text in itself to be partially realized by future directors, I acknowledge that his staging played a role in enabling future endeavors in producing the play with its endless until then unexplored possibilities.

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# “The sleeping and the dead / Are but as pictures”: an analysis of some filmic renderings of *Macbeth*

Lola Aronovich

Ever since the invention of the moving picture, Shakespeare and cinema have always been strongly connected. The first film based on a bard's play dates back to 1899 and, since then, there have been hundreds of Shakespearean adaptations to the screen (ROTHWELL, 1999, p. 299). For Douglas Brode (2000, p. 5), Shakespeare's plays, “filled with murders, sexual transgression, ghosts, and witches, have more in common with the latest blockbusters than anything on the art-house circuit”.

Of the hundreds of Shakespearean adaptations to the screen, about eighty (twenty-five of those are not in English) have been based on *Macbeth*, the first in 1908, plus fifteen made-for-TV versions, the first from 1949. For Daniel Rosenthal (2000, p. 70), the Scottish Play is the one “that reads most like a film script”, which might explain the high number of movie renderings. In this article, I will analyze some of the highlights.

In the highly influential *Throne of Blood* (1957), there are no prophecies involving men not born of women, only forests moving, but, more importantly, Akira Kurosawa's protagonist is less cruel for not ordering the slaying of women and children. For a movie with such a title, there is very little blood. Only one witch (a male) is present, and he is a true spirit, capable of vanishing into thin air. Duncan is said to have killed his predecessor. Macbeth himself kills Banquo's murderer (for not having succeeded in killing Fleance, who is a young man, not a boy), on screen – but no blood is shown – and the violence is somehow lessened by the black and white photography. Banquo's ghost appears during the banquet, white and angelical. It is Lady Macbeth who pushes her husband to kill Banquo and his son, for she is pregnant, expecting an heir (the baby dies, stillborn). In her sleepwalking scene, she is sitting down, compulsively washing her hands, and the one watching is Macbeth, who tries to interfere. She does not kill herself.

Macbeth is betrayed by his own men, who kill him with arrows (so they can surrender), creating a spectacular porcupine effect. In the end, we see the same piece of wood that we saw in the beginning – a sign resembling a tombstone, in which the words “The site of Cobweb Castle” are inscribed.

Orson Welles’ *Macbeth* (1948) is the work of another canonical director, and his key marks – the tremendously original camera angles, the shadows – can be seen throughout the production, which, by the way, incorporated several points of his famous 1936 voodoo *Macbeth* for the stage. Here the witches are more prominent (they return at the end of the film), fate plays a larger role, and, overall, Welles’ protagonist seems more superstitious than the one in Polanski’s production<sup>1</sup>.

Roman Polanski chose to borrow from Shakespeare to make his first film after Charles Manson’s followers invaded his Hollywood mansion in 1969 and killed his pregnant wife, actress Sharon Tate, and four of their friends. The Polish director imagined that, by adapting *Macbeth*, (co-written with theater critic Kenneth Tynan), critics and audience would not think of the real-life murders that tragically altered his life. Ironically, everybody compared the violence in the film with that of the Manson massacre. Polanski was also criticized for casting young and good looking actors (Jon Finch and Francesca Annis, then in their late twenties) for the main roles. He justified his choice of young actors by saying that “Warriors didn’t live to be old men” (qtd. in JORGENS, 1977, p. 171). For Deanne Williams (2008, p. 148), the fact that the two main actors are young makes sense and relates to the feeling of the late 1960s, “Never trust anyone over thirty”.

In Polanski’s warrior society, violence is a joke to be laughed at, as thanes and other soldiers laugh when he mentions that Macbeth cut a soldier from “the nave to th’ chops”. And it is everywhere, in every frame, in every soundtrack. One early scene that is not in the playtext includes a soldier pillaging dead enemies covering a battlefield. When one man moves, the soldier hits him with a flail or spiked ball, a medieval weapon of extreme cruelty. We see red stains covering the man’s inert body at every hit.

Like in the playtext, in the 1971 *Macbeth* the protagonist is hesitant about killing Duncan. At first, the general ignores his wife’s insistence, turns his back to her, and goes back to the banquet while she speaks. He seems determined to forget the “terrible feat” (1.7.80)<sup>2</sup> – until, in a great touch that is not in the playtext, Malcolm puts his cup in front of him, demanding to be served, and says, sarcastically, “Hail, Thane of Cawdor”. Kliman (1995, p. 136) interprets his line as “putting Macbeth in his place”. Macbeth is so upset

<sup>1</sup> Some parts of the analysis of Polanski’s *Macbeth* were adapted from my 2009 unpublished doctoral dissertation “Strange images of death: violence and the uncanny in five productions of *Macbeth*”. I had the honor of having prof. José Roberto O’Shea as my advisor.

<sup>2</sup> I will be using the *Riverside Shakespeare* (2nd edition, Boston: Houghton, 1997) when quoting from the playtext *Macbeth*.

by Malcolm's arrogance that he seems to make up his mind to kill Duncan (Malcolm's father, no less) at that very moment. So much so that his next line to Lady Macbeth is "If we should fail?" From then onwards, he appears to be quite resolute – until he arrives at Duncan's chamber.

Since Duncan's murder is visually shown, Polanski understands that there is no need to linger on the couple's nervousness, and the scene between them is heavily edited. It is worth mentioning, though, that Lady Macbeth appears shaken when she sees the bloody daggers that Macbeth has brought. Her delivery of "My hands are of your color, but I shame to wear a heart so white" (2.2.61) cannot hide her insincerity. While she is framing the guards, Macbeth is shown taking water from a well, with a bucket. The water becomes red as he washes his hands. When he finishes, as he prepares to throw out the water, the camera shows a muddy floor, and it reflects his face. Only then does he cover that reflection with the red water from the bucket, literally drowning himself in blood.

In Polanski's film, Scotland is such a corrupt society that the thanes seem more than physically strong and war-like – they are murderers themselves. Rosse is the best example. In this movie in which forty percent of Shakespeare's lines are cut (ROTHWELL, 1983-4, p. 50), after all the alterations Rosse becomes the most abominable of characters, even more abominable, perhaps, than Macbeth himself. Here Rosse helps to defeat Cawdor, supports Macbeth, not only supervises but takes part in Banquo's murder (he becomes the mysterious third murderer), disposes of the two murderers, bribes a servant to open the gates to Macduff's castle, then betrays Macbeth because the king prefers Seyton, informs Macduff of his family massacre, pretending to be upset about something he himself has caused, and finally removes the crown from Macbeth's severed head and gives it to Malcolm. As Rothwell (1999, p. 52) puts it, John Stride's Rosse "is the quintessence of the smirking sociopath", an "embodiment of evil" as significant as Iago, Edmund, and Aaron the Moor (1999, p. 54). Kliman (1995, p. 127), however, does not see Rosse as a Iago because the thane is ticked by ambition, not by mere evil. Brode (2000, p. 191) adds, "On the eve of Watergate, Polanski turned Ross [sic] into a minor Machiavelli, a political animal who remains uncommitted to any cause and survives by joining whichever side appears likely to win".

Rosse is the one who, when first meeting Macbeth, helps him to his horse. In the scene in which Macbeth is crowned the new king, Polanski makes Macbeth stand on a stone, and three or four men elevate him. One is Rosse, the other is Banquo. Rosse is the one who shouts "Hail, King of Scotland!", and as soon as he does so, Banquo stares him down, until Rosse stops smiling.

Banquo is suspicious of Macbeth from the start. When Duncan names Malcolm his heir, Banquo observes Macbeth closely. He is surprised about the king's murder, and his reply –

“Too cruel any where” – to Lady Macbeth’s “What, in our house?” is a putdown. There is also an interesting camera movement before the thanes and guests head to Duncan’s chamber to see the dead king. Macbeth explains that he repents having killed the guards, which causes Macduff to look at Banquo, who looks at Lady Macbeth, who looks at Rosse. Only then does Macduff interrupt the complicity caused by this suspicion by asking Macbeth, “Wherefore did you so?” As they enter Duncan’s room, we hear women screaming, just as we will hear later, when Macduff’s castle is attacked. Banquo is key in telling the thanes to calm down. However, he is not at all happy when Macbeth is crowned.

It is intriguing that, in Polanski’s film, when Macbeth says “Here’s our chief guest” (3.1.11), followed by Lady Macbeth’s “If he had been forgotten, / It had been as a gap in our great feast,” they are not referring to Banquo, but to a bear. Berlin (1973, p. 297) points out that, when Macbeth says “bear-like I must fight the course” in the Shakespearean text (5.7.2), he is making a reference to a gruesome sport, that of bear baiting, in which a bear, tied to a stake, is attacked by several dogs. Polanski shows bits and pieces of this “sport” in his film. After Banquo is killed and the murderers themselves are disposed of, we see the bloody carcasses of the bear and dogs being dragged. The bear not only represents Duncan and Banquo, because the bloody bear comes after Banquo is killed, but also the carnage that takes place under Macbeth’s reign of terror, and how easy it is to get rid of corpses (but not of ghosts).

In Polanski’s film, in the banquet scene when Macbeth sees Banquo’s ghost for the first time, he drops his cup in horror. The image is similar to that of Duncan’s crown circling on the floor before being still, and it also foreshadows one of the film’s final scenes, when the tyrant is decapitated. As Banquo’s ghost moves toward Macbeth, it is able to corner him next to the chain, the same place in which the bear used to be. Macbeth is not acting “bear-like” in this scene, unless we remember the bear’s fate in the bear-baiting attraction.

The invasion of Macduff’s castle is one of the most disturbing scenes in Polanski’s film. Lady Macduff and her child are unwarned of the danger, but we are not: not only have we watched Macbeth’s order, Rosse’s bribe, and the murderers coming in, but now we start hearing off-screen screaming as early as the boy asks “What is a traitor?” The terrified screams continue throughout, though it takes a while for the characters to hear them. Polanski’s and Tynan’s decision to heavily edit the lines makes sense: after all, who would pay any attention to them with all the yelling in the background?

Macbeth wins the first bout against Macduff, and has a chance to kill him, but refuses, since he is too full of his blood already. Once Macbeth learns, however, that Macduff “was from his mother’s womb untimely ripp’d” (Macduff is speaking in third person, as if he were a ghost), his attitude changes. Macbeth continues to fight mostly because he

does not want to serve Malcolm now, as he did not want to serve him in the banquet in Duncan's honor. He throws his sword into the air and almost hits Rosse. But Macduff also changes after his confession. Now he does not even want to fight with a weapon, only with his bare hands. He refuses the soldiers' offers of a sword, and attacks Macbeth empty-handed. In one moment, the usurper loses his crown, but retrieves it and puts it on, exhausted. Macduff kills the tyrant almost by accident: his sword perforates an unbalanced Macbeth through the chest, below the armor, from one arm to the other. Macbeth is able to climb the stairs and Macduff follows him, cutting off his head. The camera shows a close up of Rosse and of Malcolm. Macduff points to the usurper's head, and the camera follows a trail of blood (mimicking the bear's trail of blood) from the stairs to the floor. It is Rosse who takes the crown and, with exactly the same intonation and enthusiasm he demonstrated during Macbeth's crowning, shouts "Hail King of Scotland" to Malcolm.

We then watch an uncanny image: the point of view through Macbeth's eyes. The camera sees what his decapitated head sees at ground level. His head, on a pole, is spit on and scorned at. In an arena, soldiers laugh at the spectacle. Since it is not possible for a head without a corpse to see, the line that separates reality from fantasy is blurred. According to Williams (2008, p. 150), "Polanski manipulates the tension between the violence and death, which take place at the outer limits of experience, and the mindset and frame of reference of the normal". Without the frame, the inside and the outside mingle, and Polanski's hand-held camera exacerbates our lack of equilibrium, making us tipsy.

The last scene in the movie, however, is not the one with the tyrant's head, but that in which Donalbain ends up at the witches' coven. It starts with a man riding a horse. In the first moment, the impression we have is that he is headless, since he is curved and uses a hood. This is a clever touch, because Macbeth has lost his head, and now there is another usurper who will be inspired to take away the "legitimate" king's crown. This time it will not be Macduff, but Donalbain, Malcolm's own brother. For Rosenthal (2000, p. 79), Donalbain seems like "a junior Richard III", deeply envious of his brother, and the message is "Macbeth is dead, but the cycle of violence is about to recommence".

There have been several other filmic adaptations of *Macbeth* since Polanski's magnificent picture, but I want to focus on three more recent films of the twenty-first century. The first one is Australian director Justin Kurzel's *Macbeth* (2015) with Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard in the title roles. If there does not seem to be a whole lot of love between the couple, there is a huge contrast with the love shown between fathers and sons. Duncan kisses his son Malcolm, Banquo is very affectionate with his son Fleance, and, when Macduff says goodbye to his family (instead of abandoning it), he is also kind. As Raquel Ribeiro (2022, p. 116) points out in her doctoral thesis about the representation of the Shakespearean tragic hero in cinema, and especially about Kurzel's film, the men

in the 2015 *Macbeth* may be bloody warriors in battle, but they demonstrate love to their sons in public. Miller (2016, p. 62) emphasizes: "From the opening frame sequence to the closing montage, Kurzel's film is saturated with children – dead, alive, human and supernatural. He takes the all-pervasive trope of childhood in *Macbeth* and turns it into a visual image that permeates the landscape of his film".

Indeed, children have a special place in Kurzel's *Macbeth*. The film opens with the image of a very young child, Macbeth's dead son being buried (which is useful to explain Lady Macbeth's enigmatic "I have given suck" speech later on), and closes with another image of a child, Fleance, this time, running towards an unspecified place, carrying Macbeth's sword. When Duncan and his troupe are being hosted in Macbeth's house, they watch a choir of very young children. Before the discovery of Duncan's murder, we see young girls playing around with a crown of flowers, one usurping it from the other.

The witches in the 2015 film are quite supernatural, or at least omnipresent. There are three adult women, a very young girl and a baby in a bundle (we never see his or her face), and the presence of the infants is in league with the importance the film gives children. Like in Polanski's film, the witches are also differentiated by age, although the three adults all look relatively young. They first appear to Macbeth in the battlefield, and it is as if time stops when he sees them from a distance. After they talk, they disappear into the fog. The girl is present when Fleance is trying to run away to save his life, after he watches his father being killed by Macbeth's men. The film makes it seem that Fleance disappears with her help, or at least they vanish together. The witches also appear when Lady Macbeth presumably kills herself (she delivers her sleepwalking monologue inside an improvised chapel, without being asleep, and then goes out into the open), and in the end, when Macbeth dies. However, there are other supernatural characters in the film. After Lady Macbeth's monologue, she sees her baby sitting down in front of her, the same baby that is shown dead in the opening shot of the movie. There is also a young teenager who may or may not be Macbeth's son. Macbeth is first painting this youngster's face, preparing him for battle. The teenager is killed, but he shows up again giving him the dagger to kill Duncan, delivering (probably in Macbeth's hallucination) the prophecy about only men who are not born of women being able to kill him, and again in the end, when Macbeth is about to die.

In Kurzel's picture, immediately after Macbeth kills Duncan, Malcom appears in the tent (there is no castle until Macbeth becomes king), Macbeth threatens him with the dagger, and Duncan's son decides to run away (there is no Donalbain). Also, there is no "porter from hell", no comic relief whatsoever. Both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth seem less guilty. Lady Macbeth might become insane not so much because she was an accomplice to Duncan's murder, who, in the playtext (not in the film), she says resembles her father, but for a combination of factors: witnessing the burning of Macduff's family,



not having any further influence on her husband, and, most importantly in this film that gives children so much predominance, having lost her son.

Also in 2015, the same year that Kurzel released his film, another adaptation of *Macbeth* was made, this time in Brazil. Like other adaptations, such as Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*, William Reilly's *Men of Respect* (1991), Billy Morrisette's *Scotland, PA* (2001), and Vishal Bhardwaj's *Maqbool* (2003), among others, this Brazilian production also changes the time and place of Shakespeare's play. Strangely, because it is set in São Paulo, Vinícius Coimbra's *A Floresta que se Move* begins with impressive green pastures and mountains of the Scottish Highlands. There might be an explanation for that, besides its being an adaptation of "the Scottish play". Elias, who represents Macbeth (played by Gabriel Braga Nunes), and César, who represents Banquo (played by Ângelo Antônio), have both returned from a trip to Britain to make the bank they work for desirable to foreign investors. While Elias tells their boss Heitor/Duncan (Nelson Xavier) that this was easy, for the bank has a very good reputation, and that César did practically everything, César replies that Elias gave a German executive a t-shirt from Pelé: "rasgou do umbigo ao pescoço", a reference to the famous "nave to th' chops" speech from the playtext to demonstrate Macbeth's prowess in the battlefield.

Before meeting Heitor, Elias and César obviously encounter the "weird sisters", the witches, who are reduced to only one, and she is an embroiderer. She already knows their names. For Elias/Macbeth, the prophecy is that he will be vice president of the bank today, and president tomorrow. For César/Banquo, she does not prophecize that his sons will become bank presidents, only that he will rise together with Elias, which does not sound as a very exciting prospect. Anyway, they laugh at this inside an elevator. And next, Elias becomes vice-president, for the previous vice-president was caught diverting 18 million reais from the bank.

In the Brazilian film, Elias/Macbeth seems to lack ambition, and he needs to be constantly pushed by his wife Clara (played by Ana Paula Arósio) to kill Heitor/Duncan. Clara points out that this ambition is not about money, but power. The bank president is a kind and ethical man (something harder to believe than the goodness of a medieval Scottish king), who gives Clara/Lady Macbeth an expensive tiara that looks like a crown and makes her resemble a queen, and Elias/Macbeth, an exclusive pen. The couple takes their time to murder him, using the knife Elias had used to carve a lamb that Clara cooked, and to hide his body, but they are amateurs. The only other person Elias murders, or hires to murder, is César/Banquo, because he becomes too suspicious and indicates that he can tell the police what he knows.

The character of Macduff is substituted by a detective that will investigate and find out what we, as an audience, already know – that Elias killed Heitor/Duncan with Clara's help.

The detective is also not of “woman-born”, so he will shoot Elias in the end. The forest that moves, which is the title of the film, is represented by ants carrying leaves inside the bank office. A lot of what makes *Macbeth* famous is also present in the film: several well-known lines, Banquo’s bloody ghost at the banquet (for the bank’s shareholders), Lady Macbeth’s sleepwalking and suicide (in a bathtub, cutting her wrists), among other things.

Some critics (VARELLA, 2015 and CARLOS, 2015) did not like the film very much, complaining about the artificiality of the dialogue and their delivery. “The film cannot decide if it wants to reinterpret the present, entertain as a mediocre police plot, or demonstrate the eternal link between power and corruption” (my translation), said the critic from *Folha de S. Paulo* (CARLOS, 2015). Others (MERTEN, 2015, for example) were more generous. For the critic from *Estado de São Paulo*, the film, although not perfect, does not allow the public to become accommodated. For him, the greatest moment is Emiliano Queiroz’s brief moment as the porter from hell. The performances of Gabriel Braga Nunes as Elias and Ana Paula Arósio as Clara were generally praised.

No other recent film adaptation of “the Scottish play” – or, for that matter, of any other of Shakespeare’s plays adapted to the screen in the last decade – has been as praised as *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, released in the end of 2021 and nominated for three Academy awards: best actor (Denzel Washington), best cinematography and best production design. Not to mention that this is also the *Macbeth* that includes more Academy Award winners: director and screenwriter Joel Coen has four statues, as does his wife, actress Frances McDormand, and Denzel Washington has two (Laurence Olivier was never able to gather financing to complete his version of *Macbeth*, which he performed at Stratford with his wife Vivien Leigh in 1955).

After directing eighteen films with his brother Ethan, including cinematic landmarks like *Fargo* and *No Country for Old Men*, Joel Coen set out to make his project solo, with his wife McDormand as Lady Macbeth (who also acted as producer). Like Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood* and Welles’ *Macbeth*, it is in black-and-white, with a very applauded cinematography by Bruno Delbonnel, influenced by *Metropolis* and *The Passion of Joan of Arc*.

One remarkable scene, for instance, shows Macbeth looking from a distance at the door which leads to Duncan’s chamber. The door’s handle seems to be a dagger, so Macbeth is not really evoking anything supernatural when he asks, “Is this a dagger which I see before me?”. The long corridor until the door has arcs in form of shadows, and Macbeth, in and out of light as he walks, matches his soliloquy with his footsteps. When he is near, he produces a small knife from his sleeve. As he finally grabs the door’s handle and opens it, there is some brief darkness, but we still hear his voice finishing the soliloquy with “or to hell”. Nevertheless, Duncan’s murder still takes place on screen, and is quite violent, although much less violent than, say, Polanski’s scene of the king’s murder, probably



because Coen's adaptation is in black and white. Since there is no red for blood, the film's violence seems more detached from reality. After all, it was to make the iconic shower scene less violent that Hitchcock decided to film *Psycho* (1960) in black and white.

*The Tragedy of Macbeth* brings several innovative touches. If Polanski's adaptation presented one of the youngest couples ever to portray the tyrant and his wife (in their late twenties), Coen's shows the oldest: Washington was 66 when the film was released, and McDormand, 64. This is ironic when we consider Tynan's (who wrote the screenplay for the 1971 film together with Polanski) insistence on casting a young couple: for him, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth over 60 would be too old to be ambitious (WILLIAMS 2008, p. 147). McDormand's 64 year-old Lady was probably the cause for the 2021 production to cut her line that she herself would kill Duncan if he did not resemble her father – the age difference between McDormand and Brendan Gleeson, who plays Duncan, would not be enough for the king to be a father-like figure for her (he is only two years older).

Washington was the first black actor to play Macbeth in an American or British film. Although Orson Welles cast a black cast in 1936 with what became known as the "Voodoo Macbeth" stage production in New York, that was theater. And Coen presents us with an interracial couple, even though that is never mentioned. Having a black actor as the protagonist brings another meaning to some of the lines, as when Macbeth calls a white servant "lily-livered boy" with "linen cheeks", showing that white is a symbol of cowardice.

Not since Polanski's *Macbeth* has Rosse been so important. In Coen's film, Ross (how the character is spelled in the movie), played by Alex Hassell, seems to be everywhere. Just like in the playtext, Ross is the traitor who supervises the "surprise visit" to Macduff's castle (though he leaves before, he sees – in Polanski's and Coen's films – the murderers coming), and, in the following scene, the one to tell Macduff that his family has been savagely slaughtered. He is not one of the three murderers to kill Banquo, but he goes after Fleance after he escapes, catches him and disappears with him. The boy is not seen again until the end, when Ross gives a coin to an old man and takes Fleance with him, before the screen is covered with crows. This plot twist occurs without adding any words to Shakespeare's "sacred" text. Polanski also did this in his *Macbeth*, which ends with Donalbain going to see the witches. The suggestion is that the cycle of murders and treasons will continue even without Macbeth, for the problem is the system, not the individual.

However, the most ingenious touch in *The Tragedy of Macbeth* concerning Ross is the suggestion that he kills Lady Macbeth. After her sleepwalking scene, he sees her in a trance on top of a staircase. He climbs up, surreptitiously, and later we see her on the bottom of the stairs, dead. The rivalry between Lady Macbeth and Ross is present in

the playtext. For example, at the banquet where Banquo's ghost will appear, as soon as Macbeth starts seeing the dead Banquo, Ross says, "Gentlemen, rise: his highness is not well", to which Lady Macbeth immediately replies, "Sit, worthy friends, my lord is often thus". In the same passage, Ross is the one who asks, "What sights, my lord?", and Lady Macbeth cuts him off: "I pray you, speak not". This does not happen in the 2021 film. There is no Banquo occupying Macbeth's place on the chair or bench. In Coen's film, Macbeth sees a crow from a distance, and this crow becomes a man, Banquo. The others at the banquet see Macbeth talking and fighting with a crow, but we see him with a bloody Banquo. Lady Macbeth opens the window and the crow flies away. Thus, the two fits that Macbeth has in the playtext are abbreviated into one.

Coen tries to add more scenes with Lady Macbeth. For instance, Macbeth tells her (not Lennox, as in the playtext) that he will send men to invade Macduff's castle and kill everyone, and a maid overhears and tries to warn Lady Macduff. Telling his wife his murderous plans, and not Lennox, makes Lady Macbeth more of an accomplice, although she does not reply. We see her sitting down after this, depressed.

Generally speaking, McDormand's performance did not receive as much critical acclaim as Washington's or even as Kathryn Hunter, who plays the witches (the theater actress won the best supporting actress award from the New York Film Critics Circle). Like in Kurosawa's and Coimbra's adaptations, only one person interprets the three witches, put together as one character. The difference is that, in Coen's film, Hunter plays all three of them. Sometimes she appears alone, and then suddenly two other figures materialize besides her, creating a supernatural suggestion. Hunter's first appearance, however, is her most formidable, because she is a contortionist, almost an arachnid figure. She holds "a pilot's thumb" with her feet, which are leveled at her head. Hunter undoubtedly presents a very sinister and unforgettable witch, half human, half apparition.

Surely there will continue to be several other adaptations of Macbeth in years to come, and they will all be unique, and most will bring new interpretations to mysteries that are never explained in the playtext. For instance: does Lady Macbeth actually faint in Act II, scene 3, or does she pretend to faint when Macduff and company are questioning Macbeth for having killed Duncan's guards, who could be witnesses to the regicide? If she faints for real, it is an indication that she is not as strong as she wants to be, and that her guilt will eventually drive her insane. If she is feigning, she shows how manipulative she can be. R. A. Foakes (p. 156, 2003) offers a fascinating interpretation in his book *Shakespeare & Violence*: for him, Lady Macbeth really faints, and the reason is that this is the time that the spirits that she had asked to "unsex" her and make her stronger and less feminine leave her for good. Each film adaptation which includes this scene will have to make a decision, and this decision, and how it is played, might shape not only Lady Macbeth's character, but the whole filmic adaptation.

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# “When shall we three meet again?”<sup>1</sup>: medievalism and perceptions of time in Justin Kurzel’s *Macbeth*

Fernanda Korovsky Moura

1 “If you can look into the seeds of time [...] Speak then to me”<sup>2</sup>: introduction

Umberto Eco (1932-2016) (1986, p. 61) wrote in his seminal essay “Dreaming of the Middle Ages” in 1986 that “Indeed, it seems that people like the Middle Ages”. Eco’s examples of medievalist books filling the shelves in the 1980’s bookshops illustrate the validity of his statement: Arthur Landis’ *A World Called Camelot* (1976), Evangeline Walton’s *The Sword is Forged* (1983), Lawrence Watt-Evans’ *The Lure of the Basilisk* (1980), Paul Williams’ *The Dome in the Forest* (1980), amongst other fantasy tales set in a mostly mythical medieval past. Over forty years later, it seems that people still like the Middle Ages. Medieval settings abound not only in historical fiction and best-seller books, but also in other media, such as the cinema. Just a glimpse at the catalogue of popular films and TV series can demonstrate the fact: George R. R. Martin’s pseudo-medieval saga *A Song of Ice and Fire* (1996-) was adapted to a highly profitable series broadcasted by the American television network HBO, *Game of Thrones* (2011-2019); William Shakespeare’s historical plays hit the television in an adaptation of the playwright’s two tetralogies produced by Rupert Ryle-Hodges for BBC Two in *The Hollow Crown* (2012-2016); *Macbeth*, one of Shakespeare’s great tragedies set in medieval Scotland, was adapted to the big screen in 2015. This production, directed by the Australian Justin Kurzel (1974-), will be the focus of analysis of the present article. However, before turning to Kurzel’s film, it is important to investigate how the Middle Ages have been represented on screen.

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<sup>1</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*, Act I, Scene 1, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*, Act I, Scene 3, 58-60. Banquo, Macbeth’s friend, talks to the witches after their first prophecy regarding Macbeth’s future.

In the first chapter of *Cinematic Illuminations*, Laurie Finke and Martin Shichtman (2010, p. 3) refer to Walter Benjamin's 1936 essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" and his recognition "that film would become the quintessential art form of our time and that it would bring about profound changes in how we view the work of art and, by extension, our own past". Indeed, the way we perceive the Middle Ages has been much affected by the way it has been represented in film and television. The different responses to the medieval past are inserted in the area of studies called *medievalism*. According to David Matthews, this field of research has gained prominence in the past three decades – since Eco's reflections on the different ways we dream and "return" to the Middle Ages. Importantly, Medievalist Studies differ from the area of Medieval Studies, since this is dedicated to the study of the medieval period itself, while the first investigates reactions and responses to the Middle Ages in other periods. Leslie J. Workman (1927-2001) (apud MATTHEWS, 2017, p. 7), considered the founder of the discipline and creator of the journal *Studies in Medievalism*, describes it as the "process of creating the Middle Ages" and "the study not of the Middle Ages themselves but of the scholars, artists, and writers [...] who constructed the idea of the Middle Ages that we inherited". Among these constructors of the medieval past, there are the film directors and actors, who recreate and embody the Middle Ages in film.

Reconstructing the medieval past is a process. As Eco (1986, p. 67-68) explains, "the Middle Ages have never been reconstructed from scratch: We have always mended or patched them up, as something in which we still live". In this sense, the Middle Ages we dream about and reconstruct in literature or film is connected to our present. Eco numbers ten ways we reconstruct the medieval past: the Middle Ages as a pretext, as the site of an ironic revisitation, as a barbaric age, the Middle Ages of Romanticism, of the *philosophia perennis*, of national identities, of Decadentism, of philosophical reconstruction, of the so-called Tradition, and as the expectation of the Millennium (ECO, 1986, p. 68-72). With this categorization in mind, I argue that the different perceptions of time in Kurzel's *Macbeth* evoke two different types of Middle Ages: the perspective of the medieval past as a barbaric age is achieved through the regular moving image, whereas a sense of a Romantic Middle Ages is constructed by means of time in slow motion, editing and the feeling of the power of the false.

## 2 "To beguile the time, Look like the time"<sup>3</sup>: perceptions of time in *Macbeth*

An interesting aspect regarding historical films is time: how the narrative is inscribed within a historical timeline and how the plot unravels during the length of the film. Also interesting, but not that well explored, however, is the perception of time itself within the film, and how this perception shapes the spectator's reconstruction of the Middle

<sup>3</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*, Act I, Scene 5, 63-64. Lady Macbeth incites her husband to kill the king.

Ages. In Kurzel's *Macbeth*, time mostly follows an organic chronology, but editing and instances of slow-motion destabilise the notion of time for the viewer. In this article, I explore two moments in Kurzel's *Macbeth* which challenge the organic chronological perception of time: the first appearance of the three witches, and the battle between Macbeth's and the rebellious army. I will draw on Gilles Deleuze's notions of time, the time-image and the power of the false. In addition, I will relate how these different perceptions of time affect the way the medieval past is reconstructed in *Macbeth* and experienced by the spectator.

In *Cinema 2*, Deleuze writes about different regimes of the image developed in post-war cinema, which have a major impact on how time is perceived: the organic or kinetic image, and the crystalline or chronic image. The first regime refers to moving images, which are interdependent, depicting the real through continuity and through the development of sensory-motor schemata. According to Deleuze (1989, p. 126-7), "it is a regime of localizable relations, actual linkages, legal, causal and logical connections. It is clear that this system includes the unreal, the recollection, the dream and the imaginary but as contrast". In this sense, the organic regime refers to the traditional cinematographic narrative, in which one event causally follows the other, resulting in a continuous whole. If instances of disruption exist, they function chiefly to oppose the reality of the main narrative. By contrast, the crystalline regime's focus is not on movement and interdependence of events, but on no-action. It is "a cinema of the seer and no longer of the agent" (DELEUZE, 1989, p. 126), which "implies a collapse of sensory-motor schemata. Sensory-motor situations have given way to pure optical and sound situations to which characters, who have become seers, cannot or will not react" (DELEUZE, 1989, p. 128). The organic and crystalline regimes are presentations of time in film. They consist of the two poles of a spectrum, therefore it is possible to go from one regime to the other in the same film. On the side of the organic regime, there are the indirect images of time based on sensory-motor situations. On the side of the crystalline regime, we find the direct time-image. In fact, it is extremely hard to create films composed of time-images only.

Kurzel's *Macbeth* is a film rich with different layers of time. In certain scenes, time itself seems to move in a different rhythm for different characters, as I will argue. Certainly, *Macbeth* is composed of indirect images of time that follow an order of cause and effect, in which one scene has a palpable effect on the next. There are no time-images in the Deleuzian terms, since the sensory-motor schemata still rules the flow of the narrative: events happen for a certain reason in order to achieve a certain result. Nonetheless, there are instances of time disruption that challenge the organic regime of the image, resulting in a level of the power of the false. The power of the false is an idea systematised by Deleuze in *Cinema 2*. It is a power the cinema has to "replace[s] and supersede[s] the form of the true, because it poses the simultaneity of impossible presents, or the



coexistence of not-necessarily true pasts” (DELEUZE, 1989, p. 131). I will return to the notion of the power of the false when analysing the corpus of this article.

Kurzel’s film starts with reference to time. The first scene opens with the image of a dead baby: a paradox of new life and death in one small body, which has lived too little but has now entered the realm of eternity. While the infant’s body is inert, his clothes move gently due to the wind. Similarly, the people who stand at the funeral in mourning black clothes stand still while their robes are agitated by the breeze. The growling of the wind can be heard alongside a soundtrack of almost dissonant string arrangements: an intense sound effect in contrast with the almost immobility of the people in the scene. The opposition between stillness and movement is constant throughout the film.

After a close-up of the faces of Macbeth and his wife facing one another in silence and immobile, the frame opens up to an aerial shot of the remote mountains, covered by a grey mist that gives the place a mythical atmosphere. The smoke of the funeral pyre can be seen in the valley. Subsequently, the scene shows four figures in a medium shot: three women stand erect next to each other in black clothes; the one on the left puts her arms on the shoulders of a young girl, also in black, and the one in the middle holds what seems to be a baby wrapped in rags. There is a distance of approximately two meters between each of the three women, which conveys an unnatural atmosphere to the scene. The place seems to be the same as in the scene of the funeral. However, it becomes unclear for the spectator if one event follows the other in time, since the women were not present in the previous aerial shot, and the funeral pyre or the smoke emanating from it can no longer be seen when the dark figures are on screen. Moreover, it remains uncertain if the four figures are real or imaginary, if they belong to the same “presentness”, to the past or the future, or even if they belong to the same universe. As Deleuze (1989, p. 130) points out, “time has always put the notion of truth into crisis”. His argument is illustrated by the naval battle paradox:

If it is *true* that a naval battle *may* take place tomorrow, how are we to avoid one of the true following consequences: either the impossible proceeds from the possible (since, if the battle takes place, it is no longer possible that it may not take place), or the past is not necessarily true (since the battle could not have taken place). (DELEUZE, 1989, p. 130)

The two events cannot be true *at the same time*. In order to solve this paradox, Gottfried Leibniz proposes the idea of *impossibility*. The events are *possible* to happen, but in different worlds, which in turn cannot happen simultaneously: they are not *compossible*. Analysing the opening scenes in *Macbeth* through this lens suggests that the baby’s funeral and the four figures in black are not *compossible* events. In this case, the narration is no longer truthful, since it does not unfold events in a chronological sequence. This is what Deleuze (1989, p. 131) calls “the power of the false”.

Furthermore, as the camera captures the women in closer shots, what had seemed to be a wrapped baby in the hands of the woman in the middle disappears. Instead, she now seems to be holding an amulet made of small human bones. If the wrapped baby turned into bones refers to the death of Macbeth's son, does that mean that the child died while the speech of the women took place? In this case, did the scene of the women in black happen before the baby's funeral? Or did the change from wrapped baby to bones in the woman's hands signify the burning of the baby's corpse, in which case the scenes would have happened simultaneously? Surely, the power of the false in *Macbeth* is not as evident as in Robbe-Grillet's films, which Deleuze mentions in his book to illustrate his argument, but the awareness of such instances of "falsity" in Kurzel's film contributes to the understanding of how the film as a whole affects the spectator's response to the medieval past constructed in it.

The three women in black obviously refer to the witches in Shakespeare's play text. Their grotesque looks and scarred faces give them a supernatural appearance, emphasised by the mysterious and remote misty mountains that surround them. The witches' speech, in fact, composes the first scene in Shakespeare's play. The baby's funeral was an addition to Kurzel's cinematographic adaptation. Curiously, the first scene in Shakespeare also refers to time. The first line of the play is uttered by one of the witches: "When shall we three meet again?" (1.1.1). Indeed, the very first word of the play alludes to time: *when*. Sandra Clark and Pamela Mason (2015, p. 62), editors of the Arden Shakespeare edition of *Macbeth*, call attention to the relationship between *Macbeth* and time: "From at least Coleridge onwards, critics have drawn attention to the ways in which time is a major aspect, not to say a governing principle, of the play". They consider time and the passage of time as central to the understanding of the dramatic text. They go on:

From its opening with the First Witch's question, 'When shall we three meet again?', to its closing with Malcolm's reassurance that 'What's more to do, / Which would be planted newly with the time... We will perform in measure, time and place', it is permeated with time references. (CLARK; MASON, 2015, p. 62)

The obsession of the play with time may have induced Kurzel to work with different time perceptions in his film, as the examples in this article aim to illustrate. The final lines of the Witches in Shakespeare's scene are spoken by the oldest of the women in black in Kurzel's film: "Fair is foul, and foul is fair / Hover through the fog and filthy air" (1.1.9-10), followed by an abrupt cut to a black screen, which could indicate that the witches indeed "hovered", or disappeared.

If we consider Eco's definitions of how the Middle Ages can be reconstructed either as a *barbaric* age or as a *Romantic* site, it is possible to analyse the first scene of the baby's funeral as an illustration of the first. As Eco (1986, p. 69) puts it, the medieval past is seen



as “a land of elementary and outlaw feelings”, which would account for the rudimentary of the baby’s funeral pyre and rites. In opposition, when the three women and the girl are put on screen, involved by the mysteriousness afforded by the power of the false, it consists of a different type of medievalism. The medieval past is still perceived as rudimentary, but in a more Romantic light. According to Eco (1989, p. 69), the Middle Ages of the Romanticism are characterised by “their stormy castles and their ghosts”. The grotesque women in black allude to the witches in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, uttering their prophecies from the top of a misty mountain. This Romantic perspective of the Middle Ages is linked to the Gothic movement in English literature at the end of the eighteenth century, when writers such as Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823) and Horace Walpole (1717-1797) set their fantastic tales in medieval castles and ruins.

Another interesting instance of time perception in Kurzel’s adaptation is the first battle scene between Macbeth and his group against the army of rebels led by Macdonwald (as it is spelled in the film’s opening lettering). The first scene of the battle consists of a red-filtered moving-upwards shot of Macbeth alone. We see his back only, surrounded by the mystic foggy atmosphere. Despite the fog, the sun shines bright in the sky. The upward movement of the shot reminds the rising of the sun itself, which could indicate the passing of time, the start of a new day. The red filter undoubtedly functions as a foreshadowing of the bloody battle to come. The red tonality also denaturalises the scene, giving it a dream-like atmosphere. Afterwards, there is a dry cut to the medium shot of a mountain covered with snow: an intense contradiction with the warm colours predominating in the previous scene. It is not possible to see the mountain in its entirety, only the top and part of its body. It seems to be the same place as in the red-filtered scene before, but the difference in the colour palette results in a feeling of disruption. A closer shot at the mountain and an aerial shot follow, in which the fog moves quickly. In the next scene, the dark silhouettes of soldiers contrast with a dense white fog that envelops them. The presence of the fog in all scenes link them, giving the sequence a logical connection. Nevertheless, in the red-filtered scene the spectator finds Macbeth alone, and the next time we see him, he is walking amongst the dark silhouettes of Scottish soldiers. It becomes clear for the spectator that time has elapsed while the fog slithered down the mountains, although how much time it is impossible to say.

After Macbeth and his group are joined by the last reserves sent by the king, they await the battle in silence. When they are ready to march, they lift their swords and yell. As they run towards the enemy, the scene is seen through an aerial shot, and time loses organic presentation: the fog becomes still, the soldiers are seen marching in slow motion, and the sounds of battle are muffled, only the wind is heard. Moments of regular time motion are interweaved with moments in slow motion as the armies get closer. The intersection of different time presentations causes in the viewer a sense of bewilderment, for such

durations of time simultaneously are “impossible”. The bloody battle continues until three men are seen standing still in the midst of the moving soldiers in action. The contrast between stillness and movement calls attention to the different layers of time passing. It feels the time passes at a different rhythm for the men fighting and for the three men who stand there and watch. The camera rotates to the men in battle and when it returns to the three still figures, they are no longer men, but the three women from the beginning of the film: the three witches. As Macbeth sees them, he too becomes still. Time starts to move at a different speed for him as well, the same rhythm as the magical time of the witches. The next time the witches are captured by the camera, they are not only three, but four – the little girl from the beginning of the film has joined them. Macbeth remains immobile as the camera approaches him, while the battle goes on in his surroundings. In the next shot, time is restored to its regular speed and Macbeth is in the act of killing a man on the ground. The dry cut from Macbeth’s immobile reverie to Macbeth’s murderous action causes a feeling of discontinuity.

As Louis D’Arcens (2016, p. 1) points out in her article about mood and transhistorical empathy in Kurzel’s *Macbeth*, “its early alternating of kinetic battle scenes with static human tableaux establishes a paradoxical world of turbulence and stasis, where volatile dynastic politics churn within a world of unchanging tribal custom”. The constant opposition between stillness and movement throughout the film results in a contradictory perception of the Middle Ages: at times mythical, characterised by the slow motion of time, and at other times extremely violent, characterised by the rapid motion of time. As Macbeth is back in action, he looks at the place where the four mystical figures had been, but he sees only the three men he had seen before. The spectator again faces blurred boundaries between the real and the imaginary. Were the witches only in Macbeth’s mind, which ran in a different speed than the real action in the actual world? Or were the witches in fact there? If they were, they could not share the same physical space as the three men. Moreover, they could not stand still in the midst of a violent battle and remain unscathed. In this sense, the different layers of time could not occur simultaneously.

As the scene goes on, we hear in voice-over a man retelling the events of the battle. Later we find out it is a messenger who comes to King Duncan to bring the news of Macdonwald’s treason and Macbeth’s victory. The retelling of the results of the battle could only happen *after* the battle itself. However, the juxtaposition of the soldiers fighting and the messenger talking with the king inside a tent blur the division between present and future – if the current event is the battle; or past and present – if the current event is the retelling of the battle. The viewer remains uncertain as to when in time the narrative stands. This disruption of the organic flow of time gives the spectator another instance of the power of the false.

The analysed scene of the battle illustrates how the Middle Ages were recreated in different ways but within the same scene in the film. The mythical, magical, slow-motion Middle Ages in which the witches and Macbeth (temporarily) are inserted refer to a Romantic reconstruction of the medieval past, whereas the bloody battle between Macbeth's and Macdonwald's armies, which is in motion at a different layer of time than the mythical medieval past of the witches, illustrates the dreaming of the Middle Ages as a barbaric age, as the real Dark Ages.

### 3 *"Thy letters have transported me beyond this ignorant present, and I feel now the future in the instant"*<sup>4</sup>: final considerations

Kurzel's film is extremely rich in offering the spectator different perspectives of time. I have focused on two moments in the film that illustrate how editing and interweaving of different rhythms of time blur the distinctions of past, present and future, causing a power of the false in the viewer. In a film that reconstructs the medieval past such as *Macbeth*, the juxtaposed layers of time contribute to offering distinct reactions to the Middle Ages on screen. As D'Arcens (2016, p. 1) points out, the film is not set in a specific time in the past. As she puts it, Kurzel's film "is emphatically not a historicist venture". There are no references to specific moments in Scottish history, but only an overall medieval setting. "The expository intertitle at the beginning of the film, moreover, makes no specific allusion to the action's eleventh-century historical context. Indeed, the only 'grounding' historical event mentioned in the opening text, the 'Battle of Ellon,' is historically unattested" (D'ARCENS, 2016, p. 1). Such uncertainty adds to the power of the false elicited by the film. Where does the story take place? Is it a real or imaginary venue? When does it occur?

The instances of "falsity" in Kurzel's film affects the way the spectator perceives the medieval past through the film. As illustrated by the examples above, editing and time in slow motion can work as forgers of a power of the false, which elicits the reconstruction of a Romantic medieval past. Conversely, the rudimentary funeral rites and a bloody battle run in a different layer and speed of time reconstruct the Middle Ages as Dark and barbaric. Interestingly, the creeping fog is present throughout the film, linking the moments of "falsity" and reality, giving the narrative an overall cohesive unity based on sensory-motor schemata. Deleuze's definition of time-image, therefore, does not apply to Kurzel's film. However, there are instances in the film that challenge the organic flow of time and blur the boundaries between past, present and future, such as the two moments analysed in this article. These moments are capable of forging a power of the false, offering the viewer a double-voiced experience of the Middle Ages: perceived as both barbaric and Romantic.

<sup>4</sup> Shakespeare, William. *Macbeth*, Act I, Scene 5, 56-59. Lady Macbeth welcomes her husband, who arrives after his letters about the witches' prophecy.

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# Palimpsestuous sedimentation: the libretto of Charles Gounod's opera *Rómeo et Juliette*

Anna Stegh Camati

## 1 Statement of intentions

Opera is a plurimedial art form which combines and fuses elements from literature, music, theatre, and the visual arts. Like other arts and media, opera has experienced variations throughout the ages. The Romantic repertoire became the dominant modality in the nineteenth century, privileging mainly tragic plays or melodramatic novels as source texts. In this regard, Shakespeare's plays attracted great composers' attention for the creation of full-scale grand operas, among them *Otello* (1816), by Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868); *Macbeth* (1847;1865), *Othello* (1887) and *Falstaff* (1893), by Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901); *Béatrice et Bénédict* (1862), by Hector Berlioz (1803-1869), and *Roméo et Juliette* (1867), by Charles Gounod (1818-1893).

The almost infinite openness and indeterminacy of Shakespeare's texts provide countless possibilities to creative artists in the intermedial transit through time and space. When his plays are transformed into stage productions, movies, musicals, classic and contemporary dance, graphic novels, operas, or other media products, the result is always a new text, with varying deviations from the source. Identity between source and target texts, be they scenic, filmic or operatic, is impossible and even undesirable, since different media are governed by distinct signs, codes and conventions. As Júlio Plaza (2003, p. 33, my translation) has aptly put it, "even the alleged mimetic process is characterized by the fact that something that tries to make itself equal to another, reveals itself as non equal. [...] Representing the thing 'as it is' configures mimesis mediated by the code".

Most opera study guides mention that the libretto of Charles Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* (1867), written by Jules Barbier (1825-1901) and Michel Carré (1821-1872), is entirely based on Shakespeare's homonymous tragedy. However, this statement is only partially valid if we approach the matter transmedially, focusing on the palimpsestuous nature<sup>1</sup> of the Romeo and Juliet narrative sedimented over the centuries.

The present article aims to convey that the libretto for Gounod's opera *Roméo et Juliette* is not a direct transfer from a single source text – namely Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1595-1596) –, but that several sources are combined and rearticulated in the operatic adaptation process. In addition, I shall evince why libretti are important assisting or intermediate media, worth examining in investigations that focus on relations between different media types or products.

## 2 Theoretical perspectives: adaptation and intermediality

In the article "Adaptation and Intermediality", Lars Elleström (2017) situates the practice of adaptation within the broader academic field of intermediality, arguing that adaptation can be seen as a specific phenomenon of media transformation or transmediation. To support his thesis, he presents two main arguments. The first, based on a synchronic perspective, postulates that all media are plurimedial and multimodal, composed of elements that will only be fully understood in comparison with other media with which they share basic features. The second, conceived from a diachronic perspective, predicates that the compositional elements of media in general are transmedial and, therefore, can be transferred to different media types and products. In this sense, "as the core of adaptation consists of the transfer of media traits from one media product to another, adaptation involves a diachronic rather than a synchronic view of intermedial relations" (ELLESTRÖM, 2017, p. 524). In this regard, the notion of transmediation constitutes an important theoretical tool to understand the complex, multidirectional intermedial relations of operatic adaptation processes.

In "Opera and Adaptation", Linda and Michael Hutcheon (2017, p. 305) claim that opera, since its beginnings, has shown a penchant for adaptation: as it is a notoriously expensive practice, composers often turn to reliable sources and financially successful productions in order to avoid economic problems, favoring "the tried and tested, not the new and original". The Canadian theoreticians propose three distinct steps for the concrete analysis of the process of creation and production of an opera, emphasizing that in each of these moments all the people involved are adaptors: the librettist adapts one or several source

<sup>1</sup> A palimpsest is a manuscript or piece of writing (usually on vellum or parchment) which has been partially effaced and overwritten by another manuscript so that remnants of the erased writing are still visible (still bearing visible traces of earlier forms. Gérard Genette (1997) has used the term 'palimpsest' as a metaphor to convey texts derived from previous textualities.

texts, the composer adapts the libretto to create the musical score, and both libretto and score are adapted when the opera is transposed or transmediated to the stage. However, “while adaptation is a constant over the centuries, its sources, ideology, and aesthetics change with time and place” (HUTCHEON; HUTCHEON, 2017, p. 306).

This tripartite model for opera analysis finds support, in several respects, in Elleström’s (2017) essay “Adaptation and Intermediality”, introduced above, in which he investigates medial border zones in adaptation studies and presents ten theoretical assumptions that deal with neglected aspects of adaptation processes, which are generally little explored or even ignored in investigations that focus on relations between different media.

In his overview of the ten border zones of adaptation practices, the second assumption, specified by Elleström, is that adaptation studies generally ignore and do not address issues that are assisting in the process of media production. In this regard, he argues that “[...] qualified media such as scores, scripts, and libretti, designed to be transmediated and having qualities that make them less fit to be appreciated by non-specialists, are not treated as source media for adaptation” (ELLESTRÖM, 2017, p. 515).

The seventh assumption, noted by Elleström, is the faulty understanding that adaptation involves only one source medium. However,

[...] specific transfers of media characteristics may also be understood as parts of more far-reaching networks involving many media. Several source media products or source media types may be transformed into one target media product or media type, and one and the same source media product, may be transformed into several target media products or target media types. (ELLESTRÖM, 2017, p. 518-519)

The ninth assumption, pointed out by Elleström (2017, p. 519), is related to the second, but not identical, since different issues are at stake:

Whereas the second assumption excludes assisting media, the ninth assumption excludes intermediate media. Hence, according to the ninth assumption adaptation is normally understood (or at least investigated as) a direct transfer of characteristics from a source to a target, without considering potential intermediate media that may be either assisting or self-reliant, finished works in their own right.

### 3 Romeo and Juliet palimpsests: towards an archaeology of numerous variations

It is common knowledge that almost all the plots of Shakespeare’s *oeuvre* are based on narratives he found in the literary heritage available in his time. The Romeo and Juliet narrative, which goes back to oral tradition, is part of an aggregate, an



intertextual and intermedial network of numerous variations that originated in different times and places.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, the first prose versions of *Romeo and Juliet* were written by Italian storytellers, among them Masuccio Salernitano (1476), Luigi da Porto (1524) and Matteo Bandello (1554). Then, the narrative passed from Italy to France, where it was translated with modifications by Pierre Boaistuau (1559) and, a little later, it arrived in England, being retextualized, after Boaistuau, in the form of a narrative poem by Arthur Brooke (1562) and in a prose version by William Painter (1567), before being adapted as a theatre script by Shakespeare (CASO, 1992).

Although the different incarnations of the same narrative substrate, mentioned above, present similarities and divergences among them, there is consensus among critics that Shakespeare's primary source for writing *Romeo and Juliet* (1595-1596) in the form of dramatic poetry was Arthur Brooke's *The Tragicall Historye of Romeus and Juliet* (1562), a narrative poem which, according to René Weis (2012, p. 44), "distils information from all its predecessors". Nevertheless, scholars claim that Shakespeare also had access to the Italian variants and to the French version, since intertextual traits of all these sources can be found in the playwright's theatre script. As far as sources are concerned, it is important to emphasize that, although the playwright appropriated the *Romeo and Juliet* narrative and other traits from previous textualities, he carried out the richest transformation, thus creating a work that immortalized the story of the unfortunate lovers of Verona. As Linda Hutcheon (2006, p. 2) has noted, "Shakespeare transferred his culture's stories from page to stage and made them available to a whole new audience".

Due to the musicality of Shakespeare's dramatic verse and to actual musical insertions in some plays, his texts have established themselves on the operatic stage since the period of the Restoration in 17th century, when they were reconfigured into an operatic aesthetics in vogue at the time, to make them fit "for a new audience who had a veneer of European sophistication due to the long exile of the court in France" (GAY, 2016, p. 80). This process began with Davenant and others, consisting not simply of inserting new opportunities for musical performance, in the form of both song and dance, but:

[...] often meant "correcting" Shakespeare's language to a more even style, and providing extra plot and characters to create the symmetries and contrasts admired by neo-Classical theory. At the same time, the spectacle of scenery and "machines" with extensive music, was demanded, despite obvious incongruities with the narrative. (GAY, 2016, p. 80)

The operatic and semi-operatic versions created during the Restoration and in the following period, influenced later musical adaptations and operatic versions of Shakespeare's plays. Approximately twenty-five operatic, musical or ballet versions of



Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* emerged during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, most of them not directly based on the playwright's lyric tragedy, but on subsequent famous stage and musical productions or translations, or even on Shakespeare's narrative sources mentioned above. One of the earliest adaptations is a *Singspiel* composed by Georg Benda in 1776, based on German translation of Shakespeare's tragedy, which provides a happy ending and omits most of the action and characters. In 1830, *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*, by Vincenzo Bellini, which premiered at the Teatro La Fenice in Venice, was based on Italian sources, mainly on Romani's libretto for an opera by Nicolai Vaccari.

In the nineteenth century, composers and librettists tended to take great liberties with Shakespeare's plays, which resulted in significant changes of plot, characterization, and other media characteristics. Most musical and operatic alterations of *Romeo and Juliet* were mainly inspired in an edited version by David Garrick (1717-1779), which can be traced back to previous modified versions of Shakespeare's text by Thomas Otway (1679) and Theophilus Cibber (1744), in which the heroine awakes before the hero dies (LEVENSON, 1978).

Thomas Otway's *The History and Fall of Caius Marius*, performed in 1677, integrates Romeo and Juliet into Plutarch's account of the first century Civil War between Caius Marius and Sylla: Romeo becomes Marius's son, Marius Junior, while Juliet becomes Lavinia, the daughter of Metellus who supports Sylla. The events of the play turn less on the love affair than on banishment and civil strife, clearly suggesting contemporary parallels to the Exclusion Crisis in England, in which Whig forces in Parliament endeavored to exclude James, the Catholic brother of Charles II, from succession to the throne. In Otway's adaptation, the tomb scene radically differs from Shakespeare. It can be traced back to the Italian storyteller Luigi da Porto who inaugurates the idea of a final conversation between the lovers. He was followed, in this regard, by Bandello who, in his turn, modifies and extends the final verbal exchange introduced by Da Porto. In Otway, however, the words spoken by Romeo and Juliet are fundamentally different from Da Porto's and Bandello's variants. In 1744, Theophilus Cibber mounted a new version of *Romeo and Juliet*. He rejected the political focus of Otway's text and centered the strife on domestic quarreling. He also kept the final discourse between the couple, incorporating a lot of Otway's dialogue (MUNRO, 2016).

These variations by Otway and Cibber, Levenson (1987, p.18) argues:

[...] probably inspired the longest lasting version in the theatre history of *Romeo and Juliet*: David Garrick's revival, which opened at Drury Lane on 29 November 1748; played over 329 times at Drury Lane and Covent Garden between 1748 and 1776; held the stage for ninety-seven years; and was not finally displaced until the late nineteenth century.

Besides inserting a lot of additional text throughout his edited version, Garrick made other substantial changes: he suppressed Shakespeare's prologues, and created a processional musical interlude within the play, namely a funeral procession for Juliet with a sung dirge at the opening of Act V. However, most significantly, he

[...] composed several new lines in a development of the tomb scene to include a final meeting of the doomed lovers. [...] Garrick gave an additional turn to the tragic screw by having Juliet wake up while Romeo, having drunk poison, is still conscious. Her apparent return to life causes him to forget his condition, but after a moment of joyous reunion, he dies. Refusing to follow the friar. Juliet stabs herself. (RUSHTON, 1994, p. 19)

The death-scene in the tomb was Garrick's major transformation, which appealed to opera and symphonic music composers. As the actor-manager himself noted, he restored Bandello's dénouement (which, in fact, first appeared in Luigi da Porto's version)<sup>2</sup>, although the words Garrick employed differed from earlier versions. In a section of the edited playscript, entitled "Advertisement", Garrick ascertained that the chief intention of his alterations was to clear away "the Jingle and Quibble which were always the great Objections to the reviving" of the play (ROMEO, 2018, p. 5). He mainly eliminated rhyme and other poetic devices, reducing the word-play (puns) to a minimum, and exchanged elevated words for low ones. This absurd allegation of 'correcting' Shakespeare's language, based on Neoclassical theories, is followed by Garrick's report of some of his adaptation options, among them the elimination of Rosaline. He states that this change, albeit necessary, was made reluctantly:

The sudden Change of Romeo's Love from Rosaline to Juliet, was thought by many, at the first Revival of the Play, to be a blemish in his Character; an Alteration in that particular has been made more in Compliance to that Opinion, than from a Conviction that Shakespeare, the best Judge of human Nature, was faulty. (ROMEO, 2018, p. 5)

In his statement of intentions, Garrick also conjectures that the leave-taking scene, namely the final dialogue between the lovers in the tomb, was omitted by Shakespeare because of his reliance on imperfect translations of Bandello's variant in French and in English:

Bandello, the Italian Novellist (sic), from whom Shakespeare has borrowed the Subject of this Play, has made Juliet to wake in the Tomb before Romeo dies: This Circumstance Shakespeare has omitted, not perhaps from Judgement, but from reading the story in the French or English Translation,

<sup>2</sup> Although the final conversation between the lovers in the tomb scene was introduced by Luigi Da Porto, Garrick attributes the invention of this scene to Matteo Bandello. It is in Da Porto's variant that the lovers are first named Romeo and Giulietta. When Romeo believes Giulietta is dead, he returns from Mantua, disguised as a peasant. He enters the tomb, laments over the body of Giulietta, takes the poison and embraces her. She awakes and speaks to him before he dies. See Luigi da Porto's *Historia novellamente ritrovata di dui nobili amanti* (CASO, 1992, p. 23-51).

both which have injudiciously left out this Addition to the Catastrophe. (ROMEO, 2018, p. 5)

Levenson reports that the alterations made by Garrick in his successive revivals, which were slight at first, became more and more radical as time went by. Gradually, he complied to the Neoclassical notions of decorum, which insisted in separating tragedy and comedy. In this respect, he drastically reduced the roles of comic characters, among them Mercutio, the Nurse, and the Capulet servants, and eliminated most of their bawdy discourse. In order to accomplish ideal renderings of the title characters and allowing his audiences to indulge pathos to the limits of good taste, he also removed most sexual innuendos from the speeches of Romeo and Juliet, which were considered offensive in the eighteenth century. The continuous appeal of Garrick's play script, which continued to prevail in nineteenth century – the era of Romanticism –, can be explained by his compliance to operate changes in Shakespeare's text according to variations in theatrical conventions and shifts in social sensibilities and expectations. In fact, Levenson (1987, p. 21) explains, Garrick "reduced the complications which Shakespeare had imposed on the sixteenth-century novellas" largely in response to his patrons.

In September 1827, Hector Berlioz attended a stage production of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Odéon Theatre in Paris performed by a visiting English troupe led by the actor-manager Charles Kemble (1775-1854), who presented an abridged version in English of Garrick's edited play script, with Harriet Smithson as Juliet and Kemble himself as Romeo. Berlioz was fascinated by the performance, however the adjustments he and his librettist Emile Deschamps (1791-1871) made for creating the choral dramatic symphony *Rómeo et Juliette*, a work for voices and orchestra, were not entirely dependent on Kemble's abridged version but went back to Garrick's edited text and beyond it to Shakespeare himself in French translations. The two prologues which Garrick had omitted were brought back, and Garrick's funeral procession with a sung dirge, excised by Kemble, was reintroduced. Berlioz preferred Garrick's dénouement (instead of Shakespeare's) which he found more impressive and visually striking, and, although "he was in no position to realize the poverty, even silliness, of Garrick's verses", his sensitive ears seem "to have felt the beauty of Shakespeare's poetry in, for instance, the love-scenes" (RUSHTON, 1994, p. 19). Hence, he did not assign vocal parts to the love-scenes (which were purely instrumental), because he thought that only music, not words, could convey the couple's feelings. Instead of privileging the Prince's intervention in the closing scene of his dramatic symphony, Berlioz chose to restore Friar Lawrence's final oration, which had been eliminated by Garrick. This resulted in a substantial change of emphasis: "the reconciliation is at the hand of the Catholic Church, with an explicit reliance on the healing power of the Cross" (RUSHTON, 1994, p. 20).

The changes in Berlioz's *Roméo et Juliette* appealed to Charles Gounod, a deeply religious person, who was greatly moved when he attended a performance of the dramatic symphony at the Paris Conservatoire in 1839, before leaving Paris as a winner of the annual Prix de Rome. And much later, when composing his homonymous opera, which premiered in 1867 at the *Théâtre Lyrique* in Paris, he paid tribute to Berlioz at the very start of the opera, when the chorus interrupted the overture to set the scene in a kind of choral recitative that had only occurred in the introduction of Berlioz's dramatic symphony (RUSHTON, 1994).

#### 4 From source texts to libretto: Jules Barbier and Michel Carré's textual models

As mentioned in the second section, the first step for the concrete analysis of the creation of an opera is the writing of the libretto, a process which generally selects and adapts the words from one or several source texts in view of their musical rendition. Librettists in general exert an extremely difficult role because operatic adaptations involve, for the audience familiar with the source text(s), "a doubled response, as they oscillate between what they remember and what they are experiencing on stage" (HUTCHEON; HUTCHEON, 2017, p. 307). In face of this double vision, which involves the memory and the experience of the spectator at the moment of reception, librettists are often accused of simplification, since the spectators think that the large cuts they are forced to make imply in loss of quality. However, compression is strictly necessary in operatic art, since it takes "much longer to sing than to say a line of text" (HUTCHEON, 2006, p. 38). Furthermore, it is important to underscore that

Librettists interpret through the lenses of their knowledge and opinion of the text and its author, as well as with an eye to audience expectations and social custom (concerning the conventions of both the theater and the general society). In moving from interpretation to creation, however, librettists may treat the adapted text's words more as a reservoir of dramatic possibilities, for they must look now as well to opera's specific generic conventions. While these have always been flexible, they have varied according to the historical period. (HUTCHEON; HUTCHEON, 2017, p. 308-309)

In this sense, to meet the demands of the *Zeitgeist* and fulfill the requirements of opera conventions, Jules Barbier and Michel Carré used several sources when writing the libretto for Gounod's opera *Roméo et Juliette*. They transformed Shakespeare's lyrical tragedy into a domestic melodrama in five acts, operating drastic textual and structural alterations and, to concentrate on the love theme, they opted to reduce the civil strife among Capulets and Montagues to a minimum. Although they drew selectively on different translations of Shakespeare's text in French available at the time, their main models were Garrick's edited play script for *Romeo and Juliet* and the performance text

of Berlioz's dramatic symphony *Roméo et Juliette*. They appropriated and reconfigured Garrick's extended dialogue between the couple in the tomb, reduced the comic roles of Mercutio, the Nurse, and the Capulet servants, cutting most of their bawdy discourse, and preserved the idealization of the title characters, presenting them as completely innocent and unblemished by removing all the sexual innuendos from their dialogues and never alluding to physical love. Furthermore, they cut or displaced entire scenes or parts of them, paraphrasing and shortening speeches or transforming speeches into arias, duets, and choral recitatives. Like Berlioz, they restored and condensed Shakespeare's prologues, which had been excised by Garrick, and introduced a wedding ceremony inexistent in Shakespeare which closes with Juliet fainting. Nevertheless, for all the adjustments and abridgements, the key scenes that move the plot forward were maintained, namely the ball, balcony, bedroom, and tomb scenes (FISHER, 2017).

The uniqueness of the opera libretto, besides impressive soliloquies converted into arias which express the interiority of the characters, consists of four extended dialogues, allotted to Romeo and Juliet, transformed into musical duets composed for the lovers by Gounod, which add poignancy to the Romantic love theme. When the couple first meets, they sing *Ange adorable* (Adorable angel), a duet which deviates enormously from Shakespeare's rendition of their first encounter. The second duet *Ô nuit divine* (O divine night), which occurs near the end of the balcony scene, conveys the exchange of vows of the couple after Juliet's birthday party. The third *Va! Je t'ai pardonné* (Come, I have forgiven you) occurs in the fourth act, when Romeo defies his sentence of exile to consummate the marriage in Juliet's chamber. Their amorous exchange terminates with their discussion whether it is the lark (harbinger of the dawn) or the nightingale (the nocturnal songster) they hear singing. As it is the latter, they part with reluctance. The fourth passionate duet *À toi, ma Juliette* (To you, my Juliet) takes place in the tomb scene. It starts at the moment when Juliet regains consciousness just after Romeo has ingested the venom and before the poison has taken effect. They recall happy memories in their conversation, including their previous lark/nightingale discussion, and after Juliet learns from Romeo that he is dying and no venom is left for her, she stabs herself. The opera ends with the lovers dying in each other's arms while Juliet enunciates words that evoke the *Liebestod* motif (the erotic union or consummation achieved by the lovers in death): "Ah! How sweet this moment is! /O infinite, supreme joy of dying with you! /Come! One kiss! I love you!" (FISHER, 2017, p. 70)<sup>3</sup>. Thereafter, the couple, in unison, ask God to be forgiven for their double suicide: "Lord, Lord, forgive us!" (70).

Considering space limitations, I shall concentrate only on textual specificities of the first act of the libretto to illustrate how much Gounod's opera differs from Shakespeare's lyrical

<sup>3</sup> Quotations from the opera libretto *Roméo et Juliette* are English translations of the French text written by Barbier and Carré, extracted from the Opera Study Guide listed in the bibliography. Henceforth, passages quoted from the libretto will be indicated only by page numbers.

tragedy. Thereafter, in a separate section, the lovers first dialogue (musical duet), near the end of Act I, will be comparatively analyzed in relation to Shakespeare's play script.

A somber choral prologue, which had been omitted by Garrick (but was restored by Berlioz, is reintroduced by the librettists in Gounod's opera. To announce the bloody rivalry of the Montague and Capulet families, the rescripted prologue sacrificed Shakespeare's poetic language, so that it might feel, sound, or look familiar and recognizable to nineteenth century opera audiences:

In old Verona, two rival families, / the Montagues and Capulets, feuded endlessly; it was fatal to both, /and blood stained the thresholds of their palaces. /Juliet appeared, like a rosy ray gleaming in a stormy sky. / Romeo loved her. / Both of them, forgetting the name that caused the outrage, were fired by love's passion! /Fatal destiny! Blind passions! / These star-crossed lovers paid with their lives: /The end of the century-old hatreds witnessed the birth of their love! (29)

The first scene of the first act, set in a brilliantly lit gallery, begins with a ball at the Capulets' residence, with Lords and Ladies in dominoes and masked, chanting in chorus a *carpe diem* song: "The hour flies past / in wild merriment, / we must seize it as it goes by! / Let us gather the roses /that have bloomed for us / in joy and delight! [...]" (29). The elderly Count Capulet presides over the ball, which he organized to celebrate Juliet's birthday and to introduce her to high society. He praises Juliet's beauty (his adulation being immediately re-echoed among the choruses of Ladies and Lords), and urges the couples to dance and enjoy their youth.

In the second scene, Romeo and Mercutio with some friends, all of them masked, appear in one of the adjoining galleries of the Capulet palace and start teasing Romeo about Rosaline. Romeo becomes uneasy and wants to leave the manor house of the Capulets, but Mercutio dispels his fears and compares his apprehension to the dreams and illusions in legends. His Queen Mab speech is entirely re-textualized, with all the sexual references removed: "Mab, queen of illusions presides over drams: / more fickle than the deceiving wind: through space, / through the night / she passes / and is gone! [...] And you, o virgin whom a sigh startles, /as you lie in bed / she lightly touches your lips and makes you dream of kisses!" (33-34).

In the third scene, Juliet appears after having exited the ballroom, attended by her nurse renamed Gertrude, who suggests that Paris might make a good match. Juliet replies she has no interest in marriage. In a waltz aria, titled *Je veux vivre* (I wish to live), Juliet imparts that she wants to enjoy the freedom of youth: "Ah! I want to live / in this intoxicating dream! / This wonderful day, this gentle flame, / I keep you in my heart / like a treasure! / This intoxication of youth, alas! / Lasts but a day! [...]" (35-36).



This gorgeous waltz aria, a musical addition not present in Shakespeare's text nor in Garrick or subsequent adaptations, serves as a portrayal of Juliet's personality. While Juliet is singing, Romeo catches a glimpse of her, falling in love at first sight. When Gertrude is summoned to dinner, and Juliet is left alone, Romeo steps out from hiding. Their eyes meet and both sense the chemistry of love at first sight, which is expressed in their first musical duet, followed by Tybalt's reappearance and desire to fight, which is avoided by the intervention of Count Capulet.

As the above account shows, Barbier and Carré produced an accretive text since they absorbed successive textual and performative adaptive stances embedded in the production history of Shakespeare's play.

## 5 Romeo and Juliet's first meeting: Shakespeare's play script and Gounod's opera libretto

Concerning the first musical duet of the opera, I shall briefly highlight the similarities and differences between both, Shakespeare's play script and the lyrics of the libretto set to sublime music by Gounod. Shakespeare conveys the first encounter of Romeo and Juliet in the form of a sonnet, a love duet spoken alternately by Romeo and Juliet, marking the self-conscious verbal game of the couple's first meeting. In this shared sonnet, Shakespeare appropriates discourses involving religious rites for secular purposes. The sonnet as a whole is unified by an extended metaphor that alludes to the fervor of a pilgrim (Romeo) for the holy object of his devotion (Juliet). The motif of hands touching, which appears, for the first time, in a totally different narrative context in the version of Da Porto (one of Shakespeare's source texts), and has been taken up with minor variations in all subsequent variants since then, is transfigured by Shakespeare's creative imagination to dramatize the experience of love at first sight, or, better saying, of love "at the first touch":

Romeo. If I profane with my unworthiest hand  
This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this:  
My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand  
To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.

Juliet. Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,  
Which mannerly devotion shows in this;  
For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,  
And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

Romeo. Have not saints lips, and holy palmers too?  
Juliet. Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer.  
Romeo. O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do.  
They pray: grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.



Juliet. Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.  
Romeo. Then move not while my prayer's effect I take. [kisses her]

Thus from my lips, by thine, my sin is purged.  
Juliet. Then have my lips the sin that they have took.  
Romeo. Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly urged!  
Give me my sin again. [kisses her]

Juliet. You kiss by the book. (1.5.92-109)<sup>4</sup>

The lovers' first kiss marks the end of one complete sonnet – the so-called “English sonnet” or “Shakespearean sonnet”, with fourteen lines, three quartets and a couplet at the end – and the beginning of an incomplete sonnet, interrupted by the Nurse, who calls Juliet at the request of her mother. Romeo, fearing the worst, wants to know who the girl's mother is. When the Nurse replies that Juliet's mother is the owner of the house, Romeo realizes his tragic existential situation. In a state of shock, he exclaims: “Is she a Capulet? / O dear account! / My life is my foe's debt” (1.5.116-117).

According to Farah Karim-Cooper (2016), Elizabethan dramaturgy, for predominantly using the sense of hearing – spectators were invited to listen to the play – to provide emotions related to other senses, such as sight, taste, smell and touch, included numerous references to hands as they are the organs that provide expressive and passionate communication, mainly through touch. The woman's hand, for example, was seen as an object of desire and erotic fantasies, especially with regard to the palm of the hand, reputed as one of the most intimate parts of femininity, a powerful sexual symbol, capable of arousing overwhelming passions and the desire for carnal union. Thus, it is possible to infer that, according to the prevailing view at the time, “[...] the palm touches between Romeo and Juliet have an added significance in that they express a depth of feeling also associated with the extremity of devotional worship and they occur spontaneously, triggering, at an instant, the *feeling of love*” (KARIM-COOPER, 2016, p. 177).

Through performative language, the gestures embedded in the speeches (materialized by the voice of the performers), Shakespeare creates the perfect ambience or *Stimmung* (GUMBRECHT, 2012) for this intimate love duet. It is possible to perceive the boldness of Juliet who offers the palm of her hand (the intimate part) to Romeo, encouraging him to touch her. This gesture implies that “the threshold of intimacy had already been crossed by the time their lips finally meet” (KARIM-COOPER, 2016, p. 180).

In the opera libretto, although hands are mentioned several times, the emphasis is not placed on palm touching, nor on Juliet's cunning provocation and boldness, offering

<sup>4</sup>The transcription of Shakespeare's sonnet and other quotations are from Arden Shakespeare, Third Series, edited by René Weis. The complete reference is listed in the bibliography.

Roméo the palm of her hand, a most intimate part of herself. The love duet starts with Roméo praising Juliette's beauty, addressing her as "adorable angel":

Roméo: Adorable angel, / my guilty hand profanes, / by daring to touch it.  
/ The divine hand / which I imagine / no one has the right to approach! /  
Here, I think, is the proper penance to / impose on me. / It is that I efface/  
the unworthy trace of my hand/ by a kiss!

Juliette: Calm your fears! These hands clasping / the pilgrim on his knee. /  
The seven saints / provided that / it is pardoned in advance. But the hand  
/ that he touches to his lips / sought prudently to refuse/ that enchanting  
caress/ she implores in a kiss.

Roméo: Yet the saints have rosy lips!

Juliette: Only to pray with!

Roméo: Do they not hear the voice which counsels / a more merciful  
decree?

Juliette: Their hearts remain unmoved by the / prayers of love even as they  
grant them.

Roméo: (*kisses Juliet's hand*) Then do you grant mine, and do not move /  
your blushing face.

Juliette: (*smiling*) Ah! I could not help it! / I have taken the sin upon myself!

Roméo: To allay your anxiety, would you like to / give it back to me?

Juliette: No! I have taken it! Leave it with me!

Roméo: You have taken it away! Return my sin!

Juliette: No! I have taken it! Leave it with me!

Roméo: You have taken it away! Return my sin! (*replacing his mask*) /  
Someone comes. [...] (38-38).

In fact, as evidenced in the transcript above, all the sexual innuendos of the duet are removed in order to accomplish an ideal characterization of the lovers. Juliet is cast into the conventional passive feminine role of Petrarchan poetry. Her blushing stands for her chaste maiden coyness, and when Romeo kisses her, she expresses her joy mixed with guilt when she exclaims: "Ah! I could not help it! / I have taken the sin upon myself" (38). However, although Shakespeare's dramatic poetry is not retained in the words pronounced by the lovers, this aspect is compensated by the energy and intensification of emotion provided by Gounod's most lavish musical scoring.

## 6 Final remarks

Gounod's opera *Roméo et Juliette* is a masterpiece of the genre that retains the same flavor of novelty and creativity since the time of its inception and continues being an inspiration for different maestros and *regisseurs* around the world. When adapting the story of the unfortunate lovers of Verona, Gounod and his librettists opted for complex interfaces and crossovers, so that the creative synthesis achieved in the opera retroactively enriched and revitalized the perception of Shakespeare's dramaturgy as well.

After an investigation of the complex network of different versions of the Romeo and Juliet narrative sedimented over time, I examined the main specificities of the libretto of Gounod's opera *Roméo et Juliette*, showing that, although specifically created to be transmediated, it is an important assisting medium in the operatic adaptation process, since "in this collaborative art form, librettists are obviously the composers' enabling co-creators, for without the libretto there would be nothing to set to music" (HUTCHEON; HUTCHEON, 2017, p. 308).

In the light of Elleström's ninth theoretical assumption, I have demonstrated that not only the final product, namely the performance of Gounod's opera *Roméo et Juliette*, but also the intermediate stages of the operatic adaptation process are relevant and can only be fully understood if we consider the complex networks of transformations of the Romeo and Juliet narrative over the centuries, since conventions and sensibilities tend to change from time to time.

In addition, considering Elleström's seventh assumption, I have provided evidence that Barbier's and Carré's adaptation is not a direct transfer of media characteristics from Shakespeare's play script, since they rely on a series of subsequent sources. To create the libretto of Charles Gounod's opera *Roméo et Juliette*, they draw not only on French translations of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, but also on a series of intertexts derived from play scripts or musical performance texts of Shakespeare's lyrical tragedy available during the nineteenth century.

Emulating Garrick, in each revival of his opera, Gounod indulged in making changes, recognizing that different audiences required new adaptive strategies. Thus, the opera *Roméo et Juliette* survives in many different palimpsests, which can, in turn, be adjusted depending on the vocal capacities of the singers, the stage direction, and the audience.

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# A brief analysis of pictorial representations of Ophelia before her madness

Marina Martins Amaral

This essay is a fragment of one of the chapters of my doctoral dissertation, chapter IV “Constellation I – Representations of Ophelia Before Madness”. The dissertation was defended in 2019 under the guidance of Professor José Roberto O’Shea. The research addressed the plethora of visual images produced about Ophelia, one of the two female characters in William Shakespeare’s play *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, throughout Western Art.

At a first glimpse, Ophelia seems to be a relatively minor character, when we analyze the play in its structure – number of scenes and lines where she appears –, but what can be observed over the years, and what concerns this essay, is that she may be simplified as a character, but in fact is nothing simple at all. I choose to start with some basic information: saying that she is a secondary character in the play, appearing in only five of the twenty scenes in *Hamlet*. She is also one of the two female characters, with Gertrude, present in the play; however, despite her underestimated importance in *Hamlet*, Ophelia became an icon among artists in the History of Art.

Besides the intriguing facts about the relation between the status of the character and her popularity, none of this information tells us who exactly this woman is. If we look into synopses of the play the most common answer to the question, “Who is Ophelia?” is “she is a young noblewoman of Denmark, the daughter of Polonius, sister of Laertes, and is in love with prince Hamlet”. It is valid to remember that there are some variations to the definition above; for instance, if we change the part “in love with prince Hamlet” to “potential wife of Prince Hamlet”, which I consider a hasty interpretation of the text, we get exactly Google’s synopsis of our character in question. However, what is important despite

the slightly different versions of Ophelia's "definition" is that we go back to the same issue that we had with the basic information given earlier: we still do not know who Ophelia is.

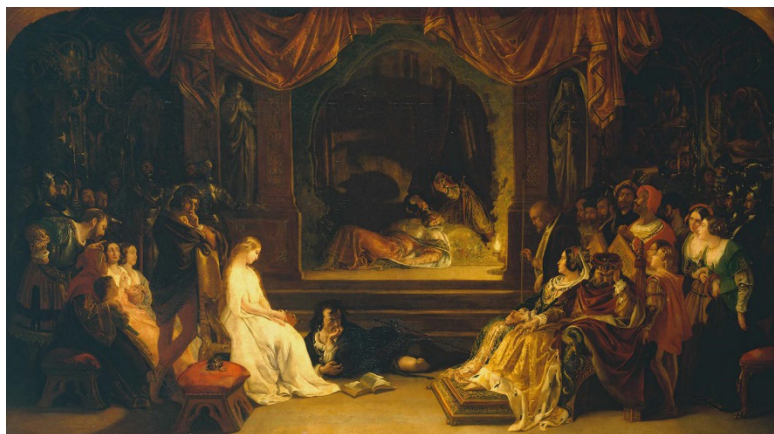
The identified problem in those last descriptions is the apparent lack of personality or characteristics given about the character herself, who is described only from her relationships with other characters in the play. She is somebody's daughter, somebody's sister and somebody's lover; therefore, the description gives us no empathy with Ophelia, or characteristics of this woman, but instead gives us the same amount of limited information as that of a genealogic tree.

The truth is that we do not know Ophelia, what she thinks, her desires, what her intentions are in the play, and I even dare to say that without her the main plot would be the same. Hamlet would see the ghost, swear and succeed in his revenge against his uncle, hate his mother and pretend his madness.

It is precisely this lack of information and malleable personality that make Ophelia a mystery to be explored by the visual artists. Her untold story, her ambiguous speeches and events, her non-staged actions have aroused interest in this supposedly dispensable character. However, Ophelia's tradition in the arts does not start suddenly; Ophelia's popularity among artists was developed over time and in different ways. Her visual representation over the years presents two distinct Ophelias: one that represents the figure of the obedient daughter and naive girl; and another that, despite the oppression in which she is immersed, is able to break free in her madness.

One of the most emblematic scenes in which Ophelia appears before her Madness is Act III Scene II, the famous "mouse-trap scene". Although this was not her first known visual representation, I choose to start this essay analysis with Daniel Maclise's much commented oil painting "*The Play Scene in 'Hamlet'*". The painting was first exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1842.

Figure 1: Daniel Maclise. *The Play Scene in 'Hamlet'*, 1842.



Source: The British Museum



An overall description of Maclise's image indicates a scene divided in two groups, one on the right and the other on the left. In center bottom, Hamlet's body works as a visual link between the two groups. At the back, in the middle of the composition and behind the two main groups of characters, the actors perform the play on a small stage. The staging has reached the moment when the murderer is in the act of pouring the poison into the sleeping victim's ear. Behind the players, the shadow of the murderer's hand and the sleeping man's head are projected upon the wall, emphasizing the evil nature of the staged scene.

Maclise's painting emphasizes the dichotomy of good and evil by the figure of Ophelia. She is highlighted in the painting, being the focal point of the piece. In spite of Ophelia not being in the center of image, nor the main character of that scene in the play, she attracts the viewer's eyes. This happens because there are two sources of light in the image: one comes from a candle lit on the stage corner that illuminates just the actors on stage; and the other is Ophelia herself, the main source of light in the painting that illuminates the rest of the picture.

Ophelia in Maclise's picture can be understood as a symbolic representation of a celestial being, or even be compared to holy representations in history. In Maclise's picture, she shows to be a figure of strength that overpowers the scene with her light. I believe that Ophelia is the main character of the Maclise's painting, and in this specific depiction, the key to Hamlet's plan. Without her, all the characters would fall into darkness, and the only thing visible in the painting would be the actors on stage; therefore, without her light Hamlet would not be able to watch his uncle's reaction.

Visually we can suppose that Maclise seems to draw on religious paintings' references to depict Ophelia. Some of the elements used by him, her clothes, body language and physical characteristics, can be found in Middle Age and Renaissance religious paintings. In the artist's image Ophelia is dressed in white and is depicted with long, golden and loose hair. Ophelia's arms are bare from the elbow and her hands are properly resting on her lap, with delicacy and elegance. The character looks down to the prince with a soft and tender expression, as if she forgives Hamlet's insults.

In figures 3, 4, 5 and 6, we can see a selection of images showing the representation of the archangel Gabriel. In the details shown below, the figures painted between 1333-1513 have characteristics in common with Ophelia. The four angels are represented using a loose white gown; their physical appearance, despite the difference of time periods, is similar; they have gold, blond and loose hair; all of them have their heads or bodies making a reference; in a position of submissiveness – in this case, to Mary mother of Jesus, in the moment of the annunciation of her pregnancy.



Figure 2: Daniel Maclise. The Play Scene in 'Hamlet', 1842. (Detail)



Source: The British Museum

Figure 3: Benvenuto di Giovanni. Annunciation, 1470. (Detail) / Figure 4: Simone Martini and Lipo Memmi. The annunciation with St. Margaret and St. Ansanus, 1333. (Detail) / Figure 5: Master of Mebkirch. Thalheimer Retable, 1518. (Detail) / Figure 6: Sandro Botticelli. The annunciation, 1485. (Detail)



Sources: Figure 3: San Bernardino Monastery / Figure 4: Uffizi Gallery / Figure 5: Württemberg State Museum / Figure 6: Metropolitan Museum of Art

Thus, similarities between the image of Ophelia and the religious representations are feasible. The representation of Maclise's Ophelia's description could be easily replaced by the description of one of the figures above. Symbolically, we can draw a parallel between the archangel Gabriel and his mission to announce the arrival of Jesus, and Ophelia in the picture of Maclise. As was observed, in the painting she can be seen as an essential element in the revelation of the king's murder; hence, we can think that Ophelia has the role of annunciation, the annunciation of the murder in the painting and, by implication, in the play.

Maclise was not the only one to lead us on this interpretive path. The English painter Keeley Halswelle, in his representation of *"The Play Scene"* from 1878, also conducts us on a holy interpretation of Ophelia. The overall composition of Halswelle's painting is different from Maclise's. Halswelle does not choose a theatrical setting, but a specifically Roman one. His conception of nineteenth-century Denmark is based on his experience of seventh-century Rome. The setting thus has religious connotations, which are in keeping with the strong religious thread that runs through the play.

Figure 7: Keeley Halswelle. *The Play Scene*, 1878.



Source: <https://www.artnet.com/>

While Maclise places the stage at the center of the painting, with the audience on either side, Halswelle makes a bold move away from Maclise, changing the scene round, taking a more adventurous angle, which opens the foreground to a great expanse of marble floor, and throws the figures back into the middle distance. Halswelle's painting shows us similarities in what concerns Ophelia's depiction. Halswelle, as Maclise, represents her in a white dress, a symbol of purity, with long golden, loose hair. Ophelia is sitting on what looks like a marble bench; and at first glance, she seems to be part of a large classical sculptural group, maybe in reference to the artist's roman inspiration; her figure blends with her broad fabric dress, the marble bench and the other two female figures behind creating a prank to the eye.

As in Maclise's painting, Halswelle's light in the picture has an important interpretative role for us. The light in the image divides the scene. However, in Halswelle's the source of light is not Ophelia, like what we saw in Maclise's, where she had her own light. Although she is not the source of light, in Halswelle's she is the one chosen to be touched by light. The natural light comes from what seems to be a huge window behind the stage. A curtain blocks half of the light causing a contrast of light and shadow in the painting. The only ones illuminated by the natural light are Ophelia and the stage with the actors. Characters such as the King, the Queen, and Hamlet are all in the foreground but out of the light, in the shadow.

The pictorial legacy of the Fine Arts is undoubtedly the one that has contributed most to the imaginary about light and shadow. These two elements usually carry symbolism about good and evil, ascension and fall, life and death, glory and terror. In the case of Halswelle and Maclise, Ophelia's light brings us a sensation of a holy or sacred figure. Her similarities with the figure of Archangel Gabriel are allowed first by her intense contrasts in the scene. Ophelia in those paintings demands the viewers' attention, being the point of reference to all other interpretative relations in the images.

The feminist critic Lee R. Edwards (1979, p. 36), in *The Labors of Psyche. Critical Inquiry*, points out that "it is impossible to reconstruct Ophelia's biography from the text: we can imagine Hamlet's story without Ophelia, but Ophelia literally has no story without Hamlet". However, in Maclise's and Halswelle's paintings we can construct a narrative about Ophelia without Hamlet, but the opposite, contrary to what Edwards states, in this visual case, maybe not be true. Ophelia undoubtedly outstands from the other characters on the representation. Her vivid contrast of light in a scene full of dark makes her a monumental character. Although exaggerated, it is the illumination that increases the sense of realism in the scene, making her facial expressions more evident and emphasizing the movement of the characters.

The inspiration to Ophelia's visual representation as a pure and naïve woman may have had its origins in the early seventeenth century. Mary Floyd Wilson (1992, p. 402), in *Ophelia and Femininity in the Eighteenth Century: 'Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds'*, argues that British playwright William Davenant modified some parts of the original text in order to transform Hamlet into the ideal hero and Ophelia into the ideal woman. According to Floyd-Wilson, Davenant, led by the didacticism of the period, excluded the "improper" dialogs. Consequently, Ophelia became represented as an innocent woman, with no consciousness of her sexuality and with no expressiveness of her own. Those modifications of the text, consequently of the play, were reflected in visual arts as well.

Ophelia in Victorian England gained greater expressiveness in literature, on the stage, and in iconography. Georgianna Ziegler (1997, p. 11), in "Queen Victoria, Shakespeare, and the ideal Woman", explains that it "was not an accident that Queen Victoria's reign (1837-1901) corresponds the heightened cult of womanhood which revealed itself in a focus on the heroines of that other idol of the period, Shakespeare". This "cultural phenomenon" encouraged girls and women to read Shakespeare, as well as books and essays about his heroines. According to Ziegler, this happens for two reasons: first to improve women's minds; and second to improve their character.

Thus, in order to "educate women", editions of Shakespeare's plays were produced especially to "chaste ears". The representation of Ophelia in Shakespeare's "chaste

editions” and “domesticated texts” moralized the original texts making them “proper” to female readers and bourgeois families. Shakespeare’s drama in the Victorian period was transformed into a model of virtue, and one of the methods to achieve this was to control the depiction of moral issues in the plays. Cristiane Smith (2007, p. 51), in *Representações da Ofélia de Shakespeare na Inglaterra Vitoriana: Um estudo interdisciplinar*, explains that in order to keep Shakespeare’s texts in the service of the moralizing purposes of the period, a sanitization occurs, purging characteristics that were considered improper and obscene.

Observing visual images of Ophelia before madness, we notice that the Victorian tradition and culture is present on the visual artists’ work of the period. Most of the iconography used to represent Ophelia before madness, is inspired on the sanitized versions of the play. After all, as we have seen, great part of the original construction of Ophelia’s character favors her visual representation with characteristics of an ideal woman of Victorian time. However, even with the “cultural agenda” of the nineteenth century, some of the artists stayed true to their interpretation of the original text, representing readings of Ophelia “not suitable” for Victorian homes.

In Act II scene I, the non-staged scene in which Ophelia narrates her encounter with Hamlet in the sewing room, some of those Victorian characteristics can be recognized. It may seem ironic that Ophelia, a supposedly secondary character who struggles to gain voice in the play, and whose death scene -- the one she is usually remembered for in the visual arts -- is narrated by someone else, is the character who provides the audience with the first description of the prince’s mental stress. This is an important scene in the play, where we can first observe the effects of the Ghost’s revelations upon Hamlet’s psyche.

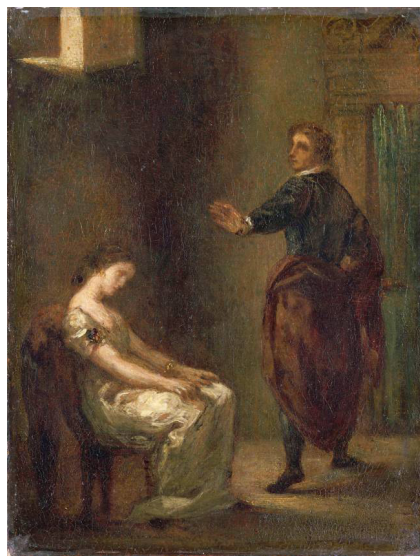
In this appearance, Ophelia tells Polonius that she was interrupted by Hamlet’s arrival in her closet while she was sewing. Ophelia explains that Hamlet broke the decorum of dress and held her by the wrist. He stared at her face along the length of his arm, while holding his other hand to his brow. He said nothing, but after a pitiful sigh, he left the room, without ever taking his eyes from her. Ophelia seems scared by Hamlet’s strange behavior and, as a “good daughter”, runs to her father and recounts what happened.

The scene provides us with two possible visual representations: one is the depiction of the moment when Ophelia talks to Polonius about her encounter with the prince; and the other depiction is her description of the encounter with Hamlet. From the few reported visual representations, this research has found only two depictions of the scene; both display Ophelia’s description of Hamlet’s behavior to Polonius. The two images are different in terms of composition and interpretation. The textual scene itself can lead us in two paths, one that shows us a damsel and the other a woman and her sexuality.



The first image of act II scene I to be analyzed shows Ophelia's obedient behavior, and can be related to some characteristics explored by the Victorian period. In this image, we can assume an interpretation in which Ophelia's devotion and full trust in her father lead her first reaction, as a "good daughter", to run to Polonius and tell the occurred situation. Ophelia's honesty and benevolence towards Hamlet is demonstrated in her description of the scene, when she leaves no indecorous detail hidden from her father. Ophelia tells Polonius about Hamlet's indecent garb and his awkward manners. She comes to her father to report what happens to her, and to seek guidance about what to do. Ophelia demonstrates her obedient condition, letting her father decide what is best for her in that situation.

Figura 8: Eugène Delacroix. *Reproches d'Hamlet à Ophélie*, 1840.



Source: Louvre Museum

The picture above shows a painting by Eugene Delacroix. Delacroix was not unfamiliar with subjects from Shakespeare's dramaturgy. The artist depicted several plays from the Bard, but no play received more of his attention than Hamlet, Ophelia being one of his favorite subjects. Delacroix produced a series of lithographs of the play that were influenced by the Paris performance of Hamlet in 1827. The painting *Reproches d'Hamlet à Ophélie* was first conceived as a lithograph, and then transposed into painting by Delacroix in 1840. The representation focuses on the two characters' expressions and body language. The scenario is simple, with no ornaments, containing only a window, a chair and a door. Although the window in the room is open, the light seems to be scenic; it does not come naturally in diagonal, as if it were coming from the outside. However, it seems that Hamlet and Ophelia have their own spots of light. Maybe this can be a reference from the theater.

In the scene, Hamlet is standing next to Ophelia. His body posture suggests that he is leaving the room. Hamlet's right side of the body is facing the door, but his left side and

head are turned in the opposite direction towards Ophelia. He is wearing dark clothes and has his left arm extended to Ophelia with an open hand. The pose suggests that Hamlet is ordering her to stay in her place, or saying good-bye to her. His facial expression can be better interpreted along Ophelia's expression. While Hamlet keeps his head upright looking down at Ophelia, she is sitting in a chair, wearing a white gown, and has her head down. We cannot identify if she has her eyes closed or if she is staring at the floor. Either way, she appears to be in a submissive position in relation to the prince.

Ophelia is a character taken by submissive behavior in the play. She is surrounded by men who hold power over her life. Polonius, her father; Laertes, her brother; and Hamlet, her beloved. Although in this scene we can only observe visually her submissiveness to Hamlet, the original text is full of indications of submissiveness to the three men in her life. This characteristic in relation to Ophelia in the text may have influenced artists in their visual characterization, regardless of the scene portrayed; after all, the theme of submissiveness is one of the strongest issues in the play.

But despite the obedient and submissive attitude, Ophelia gives us brief glimpses of ambiguity and doubts in her lines before madness. For example, the encounter with Hamlet in the sewing room, where she sees the prince in intimacy. Thus, the same scene that we interpreted as being an act of obedience and trust of Ophelia in her father can be interpreted as an allusion to a pre-existent sexual relation between Ophelia and Hamlet. Therefore, double interpretations of the play exist, and Ophelia is one of the characters surrounded by ambiguities. Visual representations of the play are an independent form of art that expresses its own meanings, being interpreted by the viewer without the necessity of knowing the text. However, it cannot be ignored that interpretations come from textual reverberations that were processed and reinterpreted by visual artists; from their own perspectives and personal readings. Previously, the image of Delacroix and his representation of the sewing room showed us an interpretation of Ophelia as the obedient and submissive maiden, an interpretation completely different from the next artist and image to be presented.

The image in question is the earliest, and probably the most unusual, from the "sewing room" scene. The drawing by Henry Fuseli, from 1775-6, places Ophelia's image as a damsel in check. It is not clear if the artist was inspired just by the individual scene to draw his work, or his understanding of the whole play could have influenced him. The representation shows Hamlet as a naked figure, about to leave through a door. He extends his right hand to Ophelia, while he leans his head on his right shoulder. His body language indicates that he is leaving the room, in a slow-motion movement, but during the entire time, Hamlet stares at Ophelia, almost as if he was asking for help or saying good-bye. It is difficult to read his facial expression, which oscillates between insane and languid.

Figure 9: Henry Fuseli. Hamlet, act II, scene 1. Ophelia and Hamlet, 1775-76.



Source: The British Museum

Ophelia is wearing a white gown, as we have seen, but here her hair is up. She rests her elbow upon a kind of shelf beside her, and her chin is upon her hand as she leans forward gazing intently at Hamlet. Curiously, her expression does not go with the disturbed description of the scene; she does not seem scared or worried about Hamlet; she does not seem anything. Her face is depicted as a blank space of emotions. The light of the picture falls diagonally illuminating Hamlet, taking special focus on his facial expression and on Ophelia's profile.

Fuseli challenges the viewer with a mixture of references in his drawing. The postures of Ophelia and Hamlet do not correspond exactly to those textually described in the scene, but there is enough resemblance to it, and to the tone of the scene as a whole. Fuseli uses the episode reported as basis for his visual treatment. The composition alludes to a decorated Etruscan vase from classical antiquity (Figure 10), even if, in the vase, it is the female who seems to be leaving. Fuseli's extensive study of Renaissance art brings another feature to his paintings. Stuart Sillars (2006, p. 102), in *Painting Shakespeare: The Artist as Critic, 1720–1820*, comments that in Fuseli's work the "use of iconographical reference is not simply to follow a convention of depiction but to generate meaning through the equation between an element's signification in its original context and that which it conveys in its new setting".



Figure 10: Etruscan Vase. Satyr and Maenad, date unknown.



Source: SILLARS, Stuart. **Painting Shakespeare: The Artist as Critic, 1720–1820.** University of Bergen: Norway, February 2006

Fuseli in his earlier works, being the “sewing scene” one of them, uses a radical exploration of textual ideas through an idiosyncratic use of iconographic reference. The Etruscan vase referenced by Fuseli shows a Satyr entreating a dancing Maenad who moves away from him with outstretched hand and gracefully arched body; according to Sillars (2006, p. 107), the scene records “part of a Grecian feast where ‘lamentations made an essential part of devotion’”. Fuseli takes as reference the image but makes some modifications on it. As has been observed, the artist reverses the gender of the character in the image: Hamlet is the one with the outstretched arms moving away, the Maenad; and Ophelia is the one leaning and dispirited, the satyr.

The depth of reading in this image is not only rare in late eighteenth-century painting, but of a quality rarely approached elsewhere in Fuseli’s own work, as it moves towards a greater public acceptance. Although the image in question is slightly different from the other representations of Ophelia, it is important to register its existence. This is an image, one of the few found here before Ophelia’s madness, that explores her sexuality or at least intends to. Fuseli’s representation of act II scene I, leads us in a complex relation between Ophelia and Hamlet. His work suggests a sexual intensity in the scene.

This interpretation is much stronger when related to the original source of inspiration. Ophelia is related with the image of a Satyr, minor divinities who lived in the fields and woods and who had frequent sexual relations with nymphs, especially Maenads. Although the body position of Ophelia and the Satyr is slightly different, Fuseli’s reference is recognized in her facial expression and in the whole composition of the classical image. When Fuseli chooses this pagan image as reference and reverses the gender of the characters, the painter is making a statement about the play. After all, his interpretation of Ophelia is inspired on an entity that has its history always connected with sexuality and luxury.

Satyrs in art’s history have been portrayed in many forms, but always connected with sexuality. In Antiquity they were seen in scenes with nymphs, who were constantly

repelling them from unwanted amorous advances; in Middle Ages they were portrayed as symbols of Satan, because of their lasciviousness; and in the nineteenth century they provided a classical pretext which allowed sexual depictions of them to be seen as objects of high art rather than mere pornography (SCOBNEY, 2002, p. 43-63). Fuseli's use of a Satyr, this iconic being full of signification, demonstrates his views of some of Ophelia's ambiguities in the text.

However, it is not only his inspiration on the earlier picture that suggests a seductive interpretation of Ophelia. Other characteristics in his drawing can also suggest his thoughts about her sexuality in the play. Thus, Besides Fuseli's references to Antiquity, we may also observe some similarities connected with Fuseli's own period. Ophelia's depiction, especially her head and face, can be compared with the French women of the time. Although her clothes indicate a classical period, her hair and jewelry can refer us to eighteenth-century France. The period where Fuseli painted this image corresponds to Louis XV's reign on France, highly unpopular, among other reasons, for his sexual excesses. The female model of France at the time was Marie Antoinette, Louis XV's wife, known by her naivety and alienated life in Versailles. She was accused of squandering and of being promiscuous.

Thus, once more in the image of Fuseli there is evidence that relates Ophelia to the image of sensuality. In the case of the two historical characters, the Satyr, and Marie Antoinette, the comparison seems to go beyond sexuality or desire but rather lust, since the chosen characters are related to this thematic. Fuseli seems to have a clear interpretation towards Hamlet and Ophelia's relationship, leaving no doubt to the viewer that in the artist's view the two characters were sexually involved.

Figure 11: Marie-Gabrielle Capet. Self-portrait, 1783. / Figure 12: Jean-Baptiste Gautier Dagoty. Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, 1775. / Figure 13: Henry Fuseli. Hamlet, act II, scene 1. Ophelia and Hamlet, 1775-76. (Detail)



Sources: Figure 11: National Museum of Western Art / Figure 12: Château de Versailles / Figure 13: The British Museum

Given Fuseli's references and allusions, we can conclude that the painter points us to a direction of interpreting Ophelia as a woman cognizant of her sexual desire. The

image delivers a sense of malicious behavior long before the bawdy songs she sings in her mental distress. Ophelia's relaxed body, her hand touching her sex, the hero's nudity, are Fuseli's critical statements. He employs classical iconographic references in an original perspective system to clarify in his inventions his reading of the play. Sillars (2006, p. 109) comments that the artist "is using what he needs of Neo-Classical tradition allusion, but adapting it to suggestively complicate critical aporia with a sensitivity that far out measures other contemporary criticism". Moreover, Ophelia is recognized either as innocent maiden or a sinner; either way, being most often realized as a fragile and powerless maiden with few words beyond "I shall obey, my lord" (1.3.19)<sup>1</sup>. She has become the embodiment of virgin/promiscuous dichotomy, rarely imaged as a woman in control of her own choices before the madness scene.

Before the madness of Ophelia, one of the most iconic moments is the "Nunnery scene". This scene contains one of the most thought-provoking dialogues between Ophelia and her beloved Hamlet. The iconography and interpretation of the representations found follow similar paths: depicting Ophelia as the obedient maiden. Despite the intense and intriguing dialog offered by Hamlet and Ophelia in the scene, none of the artists seems to explore the couple's sexual ambiguities, as we saw in Fuseli's work; instead, they focus on Ophelia's dilemma of obedience and love versus the deceived prince.

The "nunnery scene" can be considered one of the highlights of the play. After all, although we know from previous dialogues that there is a relationship between Ophelia and Hamlet, this is the first time when the audience can see the romantic couple interact and meet on stage. After all, the "sewing room scene", the previous moment that we know that they were together, is narrated by Ophelia, not seen. Most importantly, this scene is also the first one to provide single images of Ophelia.

Figure 14: Thomas Francis Dicksee. *Ophelia*, 1864. / Figure 15: Thomas Francis Dicksee. *Unfortunate Ophelia*, 1861.



Source: Figures 14 and 15: Bilbao Fine Arts Museum

<sup>1</sup> This quote was taken from The Arden Shakespeare Third edition of *Hamlet* (2006).

The artist Thomas Francis Dicksee depicted two portraits of Ophelia in the nunnery scene. He was not the first artist to paint a portrait of Ophelia, but was one of the few who portrayed Ophelia before the madness scene, by herself, and not in a group. Dicksee's images show an Ophelia with no emotions and sad eyes. He approaches the image of Ophelia from a perspective that we can relate to the aforementioned angelical iconography. In both of Dicksee's images, Ophelia wears a white dress with a cape, which almost appears to be wings, and she has golden long and loose hair. Her arms are gathered in the center of her body and her hands touch each other gently. In both images the artist depicted Ophelia in profile, and holding a book. The book is the key feature used by the artist to indicate to the viewer the scene in which Ophelia is being portrayed.

In the painting of Charles Buchel, date unknown, the British artist portrays Ophelia, who is being used as bait to prove that Hamlet, as Polonius believed, was mad with love. Buchel is the only one, in this research, to paint the king behind the tapestries observing Ophelia. Although Polonius is also present in the text, the artist chooses to depict just the king. While in other representations of the nunnery scene we can only feel the presence of Polonius and the King by the discomfort in Ophelia's expression, in this picture, we can witness their espionage on Ophelia and Hamlet. The painter provides the viewer with the opportunity to share with Ophelia the experience of being observed. The experiment of being positioned as the character stimulates us to understand better her oppression and anxiety in the scene.

Figure 16: Charles Buchel. Untitled, date unknown.



Source: <https://www.agefotostock.com/age/en/>

Both painters, Dicksee and Buchel, highlight the representation of Ophelia in their paintings. Dicksee in giving her own space, in portraits, and Buchel in depicting her as the focal point of the painting. Buchel puts her in the foreground with a dramatic expression emphasized in relation to the other characters of the scene. Buchel's Ophelia

requests the attention of everyone involved in the image: Hamlet, who is watching her astounded; the king, who is watching her as a bait; and us, the viewers of the painting, who, because of all such factors, are automatically drawn to her.

Ophelia's gaze is a highlight in this analysis. The character's eyes are always represented by the artists as looking down, or staring fixedly at a point which the observer, no matter how hard he tries, will never reach, or looking at others who do not correspond to her. There is a nuisance in this mismatch of Ophelia's glances. The gaze is a powerful weapon that can reveal the other without the words becoming necessary. The awareness that we acquire in the gaze between the self and the other causes a strangeness before the revelation of the self under the eyes of the other, and vice versa. The shared identity between the "self and the other" destabilizes the individual, who feels vulnerable, invaded in their intimacy. The "me and the other" are invaded by the fear of the revelation of what a glance allowed to be accessed. In this way Ophelia is alone. She does not share her emotions or true feelings.

From the pictorial representations of Ophelia before madness, it was observed that the character is understood by the artists in different ways; however, some issues involving the character seem to gain special prominence among the artists. Issues such as submissiveness, obedience, patriarchy and naivety stood out among the images collected. The issues involving Ophelia's sexuality are also represented, as in Fuseli's image; however, this is not an issue highlighted among the majority of artists until this moment in the play. It is believed that one of the reasons for this involves the moments in which the representations were produced and their cultural tradition at the time; most of the paintings representing scenes before Ophelia's madness are from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Ophelia became ichnographically famous by the image of a woman lying dead in a brook, but we cannot ignore that is her whole story, before madness, and in madness, that lead her in this terrible fate. She became an "emblem" of her own whole history on the play; "symbolically", she is a contemporary "allegory" to discuss issues of femininity, patriarchy, submissiveness, domestic violence, suicide, sexual freedom among other issues. Her representation is the representation of every woman that fights her way through the painful privilege of being born a woman.

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# “Life’s but a walking shadow”: the ethos of Shakespeare’s playhouse

Alexander Martin Gross

*He does smile his face into more lines  
than is in the new map with  
the augmentation of the Indies  
(Twelfth Night)*

## 1 *Theatrum mundi*

Among the most famous lines in all Shakespeare is Jaques’s contention that the world we inhabit is analogous to a playhouse stage:

All the world’s a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players.  
They have their exits and their entrances,  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages. (*As You Like It* 2.7.139-43)<sup>1</sup>

The idea that we are all actors who play a series of parts in a larger design is engrained in our collective cultural consciousness, but for this conceit to have its full effect on Shakespeare’s audiences in 1599, the still fledgling London theatre industry first had to achieve an obverse impression that the stage represented the world outside. The concept of *theatrum mundi* (“theatre as world”), recovered from antiquity, is a legacy of the Renaissance that was consolidated by the name of the most important performance space in the period, the Globe. It remains instructive to ask how, scarcely two decades after the appearance of London’s first long-standing, purpose-built playhouse – the Theatre in Shoreditch, built by James Burbage and John Brayne in 1576 – a situation had arisen where Shakespeare and his fellow players set about building a new theatre on vacant land outside the city walls, with its ambitious appellation signalling the works of universal resonance that would be first performed within its own walls. It was a venue

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<sup>1</sup> All quotations of Shakespeare’s works are taken from WELLS; TAYLOR, 2005.



where the dramatist could confidently proclaim that “all the world’s a stage” because his stage encompassed all the world. The Globe stood on London’s Bankside in name, form, and function as the pre-eminent example of a widespread association of the Elizabethan playhouse with the larger concerns surrounding it, and this shaped the works written with a view to fill its galleries, to sustain it financially, and to justify the considerable risks undertaken in its construction. How were such attitudes and conceits shaped by contemporary developments, not just in the theatre world but in the wider world also? More simplistically, what lay behind the choice of the *Globe* name?

## 2 “Hercules and his load”: the emblem on the Globe sign

Much like the concept that our world is a stage on which we act, the notion that a sign on the exterior of the Globe heralded this new London landmark is well established in our cultural heritage. At the beginning of Laurence Olivier’s 1944 film version of *Henry V*, the camera pans over an elaborate model of Elizabethan London, slowly focussing on Olivier’s vision of the Globe, where a flag which depicts a classical deity bearing an orb on his shoulders is hoisted above the playhouse. Although the name of Renaissance London’s most famous playhouse is not in doubt, we have no firm evidence for such an affiliated sign, emblem, or motto. However, an examination of the circumstantial evidence that points to such features, as part of a wider enquiry into the possible reasons behind the choice of the Globe name, points to cultural developments and events which shaped the dramatic content of Shakespeare’s Globe plays. In his important early treatise on the possible characteristics of Shakespeare’s theatre, John Cranford Adams (1961, p.32) presented the following anonymous elegy on Richard Burbage (d. 1619) as possibly alluding to the Globe sign:

Hence forth your wauing flagg, no more hang out  
Play now no more att all, when round aboute  
Wee looke and miss the Atlas of your spheare.

This is an allusion to a playhouse rebuilt after fire, but the assumption is that the second Globe emulated the first in many respects. The elegy indicates the presumed custom of advertising by means of a flag on the exterior of the playhouse, underlining the impression that such a flag was almost certainly a feature of the Globe. Tantalisingly, it also provides a metaphor which at once does justice to Burbage’s unsurpassed reputation as an actor and appears also to allude to the sign of the Globe: the deity and his “spheare”. The implication seems to be that Burbage’s career sustained the Globe theatre, raising it high above all else. If indeed referring to the sign, the anonymous author casts the Titan Atlas as its motif, while other editors of Shakespeare have insisted it was Hercules.<sup>2</sup> In Greek mythology, both were said to have borne the heavens, and

<sup>2</sup> Most notably Edmond Malone, *Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare* (1790).

thus a confusion – or even a conscious amalgamation–of the two is understandable. In the case of the Burbage elegy, it may simply have been a matter of poetic metre, with the duo-syllabic “Atlas” more suitable than its unwieldy alternative.

Meanwhile, the received identification of Hercules as the figure on the Globe sign appears to emanate from George Steevens in the 1778 “Johnson-Steevens” edition of Shakespeare’s works. His claim comes in the form of an editorial comment on a reference to Hercules in *Hamlet*, when Rosencrantz and Guildenstern inform the prince about the travelling players who have arrived at Elsinore. The passage concerning the “tragedians of the city”, which appears in F but not in Q2, is widely accepted as a metatheatrical allusion to the London theatre scene, and more specifically to a rivalry between the adult and boy players<sup>3</sup>. It suffices here to note the moment when Hamlet asks his courtiers about the runaway success of the young players:

HAMLET. Do the boys carry it away?  
ROSENCRANTZ. Ay, that they do, my lord, Hercules and his load too. (*Hamlet* 2.2.361-63)

Steevens (v. 10, p. 256, original emphasis) commented that “the allusion may be to the *Globe* playhouse, on the Bankside, the sign of which was *Hercules carrying the Globe*”. Richard Dutton has demonstrated that a reference to the *Globe* at the point indicated by Steevens would be consistent with other richly allusive moments that appear to suffuse the scene and the play as a whole. For Dutton (1979, p. 37), “Hercules and his load” remains a reference that is “not obscure [...] but seems heavily pointed”.

The passage discussed above is preceded by another moment that indicates the metatheatrical self-consciousness of *Hamlet* and which supports the reading of “Hercules and his load” as an allusion to the *Globe* sign:

HAMLET. I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercise; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory. This most excellent canopy the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire—why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. (*Hamlet* 2.2.297-305)

These lines form the preamble to Hamlet’s famous ruminations on mankind as the supposed “paragon of animals”, a speech printed with only slight variances between F and Q2, and in characteristically meagre form in Q1. Hamlet sees the earth as a “goodly frame” and the air around him as an “excellent canopy”, before drawing attention to a magnificent “o’erhanging”, likening the starry sky to a gilded roof. He extols the wonders

<sup>3</sup> Metatheatre is defined as “any moment of self-consciousness by which a play draws attention to its own fictional status as a theatrical pretence” (BALDICK, 2004, p. 151).

of nature before declaring that they appear only “foul and pestilent” to him, which throws into relief his depressive state of mind. The idea of the earth as a “frame” corresponds to contemporary usage, but a cursory gesture from the actor—most likely Burbage, the Atlas of this sphere—would surely focus attention on the framing timbers of the playhouse, inducing a metaphorical association of the world of the play with both the inner world of the playhouse and the world outside<sup>4</sup>. A promontory is “a point of high land which juts out into the sea or another expanse of water” (“promontory, n.” *OED*). Hamlet’s “sterile promontory” is thus conceivably also an allusion, easily accentuated by an actor’s gesture, to the expansive, bare stage of the Elizabethan playhouse. If we venture to take the copy of Johannes De Witt’s drawing of the Swan theatre as archetype, we may notice that the stage was clearly raised above the so-called understanders (see fig. 1). Although “promontory” is commonly glossed as signifying a headland pointing out into eternity, in this instance the playhouse metaphor seems to me to be more directly accessible than its wider signification.

De Witt’s sketch also shows two large onstage pillars supporting a stage roof which extends from the front of the tiring house. The decorated underside of this roof, painted with images of the sun, the moon, and stars, was colloquially referred to as the “heavens”. Hamlet’s “brave o’erhanging” – or “brave o’erhanging firmament” as printed in Q2 – is at once the sky above Elsinore and above London, but it is surely also the roof immediately over Burbage’s head. Harold Jenkins (1982, p. 468) emphasized the plausibility of the metaphor when lifted from the context of its first performance space:

It is sometimes suggested that the Shakespearean imagery derived from, and could apply to, the playhouse in which the words would be spoken [...] But in view of the frequent Elizabethan use of *frame*, *canopy*, *firmament* in descriptions of earth and heaven, it seems unlikely that Shakespeare needed such inspiration.

In opposition to this view, however, Dutton (1979, p. 38) upholds that “the inescapable fact is that, during a performance at the Globe, Burbage must have been self-consciously gesturing at a piece of theatrical architecture which directly mirrors Hamlet’s lines”. Hamlet’s prose monologue bespeaks not only his own acute self-consciousness but also that of the dramatist and his play. For Shakespeare and his contemporaries, the playhouse itself was an integral part of performance, a ludic space that played its part by means of the metaphorical potential of its structural features. With the “Hercules and his load” moment in F coming just fifty lines after this passage, I concur with Dutton’s assessment that it is surely a pointed reference to the presumed emblem of the playhouse, given that “Hamlet’s whole conversation

<sup>4</sup> *OED* provides the now archaic definition: “the universe, the heavens, the earth, or any part of it, regarded as a structure” (“frame, n. and adj.2.” *OED*). See also “The frame and huge foundation of the earth” (*1 Henry IV* 3.1.15).

here with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is built around allusions to the world of the theatre” (DUTTON, 1979, p. 39).

As the earliest of a number of allusions to the “heavens” being a regular feature in the public theatres, E. K. Chambers (1923, v. 2, p. 544) cites the playwright Thomas Nashe (1567-1601) in the preface to Philip Sidney’s compendium of sonnets entitled *Astrophel and Stella* (1591): “here you shal find a paper stage streud with pearle, an artificial heau’n to ouershadow the faire frame”. Nashe likens Sidney’s works to a magnificent playhouse, and by extension the cosmos. The reference indicates common usage of the “heaven” and earthly “frame” metaphors in relation to theatres a decade before the Globe appeared on Bankside. A further reference is found in Thomas Heywood’s famous *Apology for Actors*, published in 1612. In describing the elaborate features of the Roman amphitheatre Campus Martius, built by Julius Caesar, Heywood (1841, p.34) mentions “the coverings of the stage, which we call the heavens”. He also echoes Hamlet’s words in his summary of the classical stage: “in briefe, in that little compasse were comprehended the perfect modell of the *firmament*, the whole *frame* of the *heavens*, with all grounds of Astronomically conjecture” (1841, p. 35, my emphasis). This confirms that Heywood at least would—or perhaps did in person—interpret the Prince’s monologue as an ironical panegyric to the Globe playhouse. Moreover, the *Apology* in its account of the Roman theatre points towards the origin of those theatrical traditions “which, taken separately, are almost clichés”, but which Shakespeare so adroitly interweaved at such moments (JENKINS, 1982, p. 468).

### 3 “The Atlas of your spheare”: global iconography in early modern Europe

The association of the term *Atlas* with cartography was a late sixteenth-century innovation. After the Greek scholar Ptolemy of the second century AD, the most significant figure in geographical science was Gerardus Mercator, born in Flanders in 1512. A protégé of the Dutch polymath Gemma Frisius, whom he assisted in the construction of a terrestrial and celestial globe in 1534-36, Mercator established himself as a distinguished cartographer and prolific producer of maps. In 1585 he published the first part of his *magnum opus*, for which he collected maps of the known world from his own *oeuvre* and from his contemporaries. The completed Mercator *Atlas*, published in 1595, was the first collection of maps to be given that name, although an image of Atlas holding a terrestrial globe had earlier been used by Antonio Lafreri (d. 1577) on the cover of his *Geografia Tavole Moderne di Geografia* (see fig. 2). The Mercator *Atlas* represents a consummation of almost two hundred years of cartographic developments that ensued from the first Latin translation (c. 1406-07) of Ptolemy’s *Geographia*.

The Ptolemaic opus is seen as “the atlas in embryo” (CAMPBELL, 1949, p. 188), and after it was first printed in Bologna in 1477, new maps were added in important editions including the *Berlinghieri* edition of 1482, named after the Florentine scholar Francesco Berlinghieri (1440-1501); the widely disseminated edition printed that same year at Ulm, Germany; and the Strasbourg edition of 1513, compiled by the renowned cartographer Martin Waldseemüller (1470-1520). This latter edition of *Geographia* followed Waldseemüller’s famed *Universalis Cosmographia* (1507), a large wall map of the world in twelve sections printed from woodcuts. His achievements are testaments to a changing world. Indeed, the *Universalis Cosmographia* is regarded as “the map that named America” thanks to its dedication to the Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci (d. 1512), set forth in the accompanying text *Cosmographiae Introductio*<sup>5</sup>. As Eila Campbell (1949, p.189) explained in an article entitled “The Early Development of the Atlas”, the map did much to cement inchoate ideas of the New World, which for some years had wavered between fact and fiction:

The discoveries of Columbus did not at first affect the essential feature of the world map, namely, the tripartite land mass comprising Europe, Africa and Asia. It was only when the outline of a new continent began to emerge that the map of the world was seriously affected. Amerigo Vespucci’s narrative of his voyages along the north-east coast of Brazil was incorporated by Waldseemüller in [*Cosmographiae Introductio*]. Waldseemüller realised that the cartographical implications of the Portuguese and Spanish discoveries were too real to be ignored.

With the continued exploration of *terrae incognitae* and concurrent advances in cartography throughout the sixteenth century, the discipline grew steadily into a significant part of European culture. In Antwerp in 1570, Mercator’s contemporary Abraham Ortelius (1527-98) completed and published the “first bound collection of maps to warrant, although it did not bear, the title of ‘atlas’” (CAMPBELL, 1949, p. 191). The striking title chosen by Ortelius was in fact *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, or “Theatre of the World”. Its innovative title page illustration is suggestive of a classical theatre proscenium, and an explanatory poem informs that it depicts Europe as sceptred empress on top of the world, with Asia, Africa, and America represented below (see fig. 3). This particular compendium had a widespread appeal; it was translated into several languages, and via numerous editions it grew from a total of 70 maps in 1570 to 167 in 1612. As such, it is a conspicuous attestation to the currency in sixteenth-century Europe of the “theatre of the world” conceit which would give rise to Jaques’s famous speech or Antonio’s avowal: “I hold the world but as the world, Graziano – / A stage where every man must play a part, / And mine a sad one” (*Merchant of Venice* 1.1.77-79). The close

<sup>5</sup> “The map has been referred to in various circles as America’s birth certificate and for good reason; it is the first document on which the name ‘America’ appears. It is also the first map to depict a separate and full Western Hemisphere and the first map to represent the Pacific Ocean as a separate body of water” (HERBERT, 2003).

association of the world of the Renaissance theatre with that of cartography is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the striking image known as *Fool's Cap World* (see fig. 4). The combination of the theme of the Fool with the developing world map creates a visual metaphor of “the universality of human folly” and is suggestive of *theatrum mundi* (WHITFIELD, 1994, p. 78). Even Macbeth, ostensibly of another time long before the Renaissance, is no stranger to the notion of life imitating art, as evidenced by his contempt for the transitory nature of life, on- and offstage:

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing. (*Macbeth* 5.5.23-27)

Alongside *Universalis Cosmographia* in 1507, Waldseemüller also produced a set of gores for terrestrial globes, and as with cartography, interest and expertise in the construction of globes spread throughout Europe during the period, aided by improved print technologies and new discoveries<sup>6</sup>. The oldest extant terrestrial Globe is the *Erdapfel* (see fig. 5), produced by Martin Behaim (1459-1507) in Nuremberg in 1492, and the process was refined in the sixteenth century principally by Frisius, who instructed both Mercator and the Elizabethan courtier John Dee. Frisius (qtd. in BROTTON, 1997, p. 20) had insisted as early as 1530 that the mounted globe was “indescribably useful and necessary for everyone”, but perhaps the most perspicuous insight into the importance of these developments in contemporary culture, and the esteem in which the associated paraphernalia was held, may be found in Dee's *Preface to Euclid*:

While some, to beautifie their Halls, Parlors, Chambers, Galleries, Studies, or Libraries with; other some, for things past, as battles fought, earthquakes, heavenly firings, and such occurrences in histories mentioned: thereby lively as it were to view the place, the region adjoining, the distance from us, and other such circumstances [...] Some, either for their owne journeyes directing into farre landes: or to understand of other mens travailes. To conclude, some, for one purpose: and some, for an other, liketh, loveth, getteth, and useth, Mappes, Chartes, and Geographical Globes<sup>7</sup>.

An important point to draw from this much-quoted extract is the great variety of uses for cartographic instruments, as they were evidently fashionable status symbols as much as they were dependable for practical use.

In an English context, the successful circumnavigation of the Earth completed in 1580 by Sir Francis Drake (d. 1596) was an event which intensified still further the interest in

<sup>6</sup> A *gore* in this sense is defined as “one of the many triangular or lune-shaped pieces that form the surface of a celestial or terrestrial globe [...]” (“gore, n.2.6.” *OED*).

<sup>7</sup> In *Euclid's Elements of Geography*, first published in 1570.



narratives of exploration, in maps, and in terrestrial globes<sup>8</sup>. The symbolic importance of the globe is evidenced by its appearance in portraits of Queen Elizabeth I, such as the so-called *Sieve Portrait*, dated 1583 (see fig. 6). Detail on the globe situated behind the Queen shows the British Isles illuminated by the artist, and several ships traversing the Atlantic. Jonathan Bate and Dora Thornton (2006, p. 37) point to the significant identity of a background figure:

The globe with ships plying west suggests the foundation of a new western empire: the badge on the central figure is that of Sir Christopher Hatton (1540-1591), who [...] was a financier of that foundational gesture of British empire-building, the circumnavigation of the Globe by Sir Francis Drake.

An inscription on the globe reads *tutto vedo et molto manca* ("I see all and much is lacking"); the portrait employs the symbolism of the terrestrial globe to commemorate Drake's achievements, but at the same time it points towards further territorial expansion and Elizabeth's perceived destiny of global dominion. It therefore substantiates Jerry Brotton's (1997, p. 21) affirmation that "it is precisely upon the figure of the globe, as both a visual image and a material object, that many of the social and cultural hopes and anxieties of the period came to be focused".

Responding to what was by then a palpable fashion for globes, a London merchant named William Sanderson in 1587 commissioned the first English celestial and terrestrial globes. The task of construction fell to Emery Molyneux (d. 1598), who was personally acquainted with several explorers of the period, and his creations are now known as the Molyneux globes. Completed in 1592, they were "by far the largest globes produced in Europe since antiquity", and their prestige "announced the arrival of England as a global empire while transforming the globe itself into an English symbol" (COHEN, 2006, p. 968)<sup>9</sup>. Adam Max Cohen (2006, p. 970) has ably demonstrated what he calls an "Englishing" of the globe in terms of the features added by Molyneux that differentiated his terrestrial globe from its continental predecessors:

A red line and a blue line wind around the globe to denote the routes of the English circumnavigators Sir Frances Drake and Master Thomas Cavendish. The lines resemble red and blue ribbons wrapping a gift, which is appropriate because the globe announces itself as a gift to Queen Elizabeth in a long dedication<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> This was the second successful circumnavigation after the *Magellan-Elcano* expedition of 1519-22. Drake was the first man to complete the entire circumnavigation as captain (1577-80).

<sup>9</sup> "We find very little recorded of Emery Molyneux, beyond the fact that he was a mathematician residing in Lambeth. He was known to Sir Walter Raleigh, to Hakluyt, and to Edward Wright, and was a friend of John Davis the Navigator. The words of one of the legends on his globe give some reason for the belief that Molyneux accompanied Cavendish in his voyage round the world" (MARKHAM, 2010, p. xxvi).

<sup>10</sup> Thomas Cavendish (1560-92), died at sea during his second circumnavigation attempt.



Looking at contemporary documents and reactions to the appearance of the Molyneux globes, it would seem that the fascination for such new technologies among the Elizabethan literati can hardly be overstated. In 1594, the mathematician Robert Hues (1553-1632), who had participated in the circumnavigations led by Cavendish, published an exhaustive study of the Molyneux globes entitled *Tractatus de globis et eorum usu* ("A treatise on globes and their use"). This was an influential work that appeared in thirteen editions across Europe by 1663. In a dedicatory preface to Sir Walter Raleigh, Hues (2010, p. 16) makes clear his admiration for the globe:

I hold it very superfluous to goe about to prove that a Globe is of a figure most proper and apt to expresse the fashion of the Heavens and Earth as being most agreeable to nature, easiest to be understood, and also very beautifull to behold.

Shakespeare around this time imaginatively employed the image of globes signifying uncharted territory, in the narrative poem *The Rape of Lucrece*:

Her breasts like ivory globes circled with blue,  
A pair of maiden worlds unconquerèd,  
Save of their lord no bearing yoke they knew,  
And him by oath they truly honourèd. (Lines 407-10)

The mention of "globes circled with blue" recalls the exploits of the circumnavigators, as depicted on the Molyneux globes.

The pan-European fascination for globes at the end of the sixteenth century is epitomized by the Mercator *Atlas*. Its title page, which shows five different globes, bears a depiction of the mythological Atlas resting a globe on his knee with another at his feet (see fig. 7). The plinth is inscribed with the words *Atlas sive cosmographicae meditationes de fabrica mundi et fabricati figura* ("Atlas, or the meditations of a cosmographer on the making of the world and the shape in which it was made"). Atlas himself – founder of astronomy and cartography – is depicted as the cosmographer, apparently using the larger completed globe as a guide to inscribe the smaller, or perhaps completing a set of celestial and terrestrial globes. The image in its context conflates two important themes: the prominence of globes as cartographic instruments, and Renaissance theories of man as determiner of his own fortune. The power of human knowledge and discovery enables the cosmographer in effect to create the world, by inscribing the boundaries of the known world onto the blank canvas of the globe. In this sense, the Mercator *Atlas* – like the Molyneux globes – is a monument to the developing confidence of Renaissance intellectuals to separate the mind as subject from the world as object.

#### 4 “In this distracted globe:” exploiting the symbolism of the playhouse

The decision by Shakespeare and his company to name their new playing space the *Globe*, with an associated emblem that tapped into the iconography of human subjectivity and endeavour, established an ethos that would prove to be an ingredient in its success. The Renaissance playhouse served as a physical manifestation of our thoughts and dreams. If there is a moment in the Globe plays which encapsulates the notion of the playhouse representing human subjective experience to a greater extent than the many others, it is Hamlet’s only use of the word *globe*:

GHOST.

Fare thee well at once.

The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,

And gins to pale his uneffectual fire.

Adieu, adieu, Hamlet. Remember me.

HAMLET.

O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?

And shall I couple hell? O fie! Hold, hold, my heart,

And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,

But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee?

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat

In this distracted globe. Remember thee? (*Hamlet* 1.5.88-97)

As spoken here by Hamlet, “distracted globe” has at least three connotations that may reasonably be sustained in context<sup>11</sup>. In its immediate dramatic sense, the phrase refers to Hamlet’s troubled mind, shortly after the lengthy and voluble exposition of events by his murdered father’s spirit: “Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother’s hand / Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatched” (1.5.74-75). Considering the contemporary association of *frame* with the earth or globe, we may also take Hamlet’s “while memory holds a seat / In this distracted globe” to mean “while [my] memory has any power over my shattered frame”. This interpretation accords with contemporary usage of *distracted*. Meanwhile, Hibbard (1987, p. 190) comments that “Hamlet is rather given to applying scientific terms to himself”, citing the end of the Prince’s letter to Ophelia, read by Polonius: “Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him, Hamlet” (2.2.123-25)<sup>12</sup>. Taken as such, Hamlet sees his mind or body as a complex structure—akin to a Molyneux globe—that has been rent asunder.

<sup>11</sup> The varied and changing definition of *distracted* must be considered in order properly to interpret this multivalent phrase. Hamlet’s use of the term in these lines, as printed in the 1604 Second Quarto, is given by *OED* as the earliest recorded application of the meaning: “Much confused or troubled in mind; having, or showing, great mental disturbance or perplexity” (“distracted, adj.4.” *OED*). An earlier, now obsolete meaning is recorded as dating back to John Florio’s *World of Wordes* (1598): “Drawn apart, rent asunder; divided” (“distracted, adj.1.” *OED*).

<sup>12</sup> Hibbard (209) informs us that this is cited by *OED* as the earliest use of *machine* to denote the human body (“machine, n.2.” *OED*).

In a wider sense, Hamlet's lines are given a hyperbolic force by the use of "distracted globe" to refer to the unsettled world of the play, with Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor (2006, p. 219) offering the following paraphrase of the above-cited lines: "while memory [in general] is a force in this disordered world". This meaning already carries a certain metatheatrical edge, as the real-life world outside the theatre is implicated alongside that which Hamlet inhabits: London in the twilight of Elizabeth's reign is at risk of the kind of political instability seen in Elsinore. Between these two worlds lies Shakespeare's playhouse, and the full force of these lines as metatheatrical can only be apprehended in consideration of their enactment at the Globe. In the Arden third series edition of the play, Thompson and Taylor supplement their interpretations of "distracted globe" – as Hamlet's bodily frame and as the disordered world – with a tentative indication of its localised metaphorical potential: "Yet a third meaning may have occurred to the earliest auditors at the Globe" (THOMPSON; TAYLOR, 2006, p. 219). I maintain that the image of "a seat" in the globe in question tips the passage away from its alternative referents and towards the theatre in which it was first enacted, *this* distracted globe. The usage of *globe* here arguably serves a tripartite function, at once alluding to Hamlet's consciousness, the wider world, and the Globe playhouse. It is the latter which is most easily lost in modern performance, particularly in non-theatrical media such as film. Yet I would argue that it is precisely this connotation which was most accessible to what Thompson and Taylor call the earliest auditors at the Globe. The audience has heard the same exposition from the Ghost as Hamlet has, and the Prince's words at this point consolidate the dramatic effect of the scene. Shakespeare capitalises on the reaction of his audience by allowing Hamlet to draw attention to their involvement.

It would, I think, be a misstep to affirm that such dramatic moments came about as a direct consequence of the name of Shakespeare's new theatre. The *theatrum mundi* conceit was already firmly rooted in contemporary culture and, of course, Shakespeare was always aware that his plays would be performed at court or elsewhere, and not just at the public playhouse. The micro- and macrocosm implied by the globe metaphor ensure that there is ample meaning to be inferred from such lines, irrespective of where they are enacted, and this also causes many an editor to neglect to mention their locally specific import. The choice of the *Globe* name, however, certainly afforded the playwright an additional layer of significance with which to fashion some of his most intensely dramatic moments. One such instant comes soon after Othello has smothered Desdemona, as he begins to realise the consequences of his act:

OTHELLO. O insupportable, O heavy hour!  
Methinks it should be now a huge eclipse  
Of sun and moon, and that th'affrighted globe  
Should yawn at alteration. (*Othello* 5.2.108-09)

Ernst Honigmann (1997, p. 313), in the Arden third series edition of *Othello*, privileges literal meaning in glossing these lines; Othello thinks that “chasms should open in response to the changed appearance of sun and moon”. This is ostensibly the macrocosmic hyperbole which heightens the dramatic intensity of the scene at a critical juncture, but the “affrighted globe” –like the “distracted globe” in *Hamlet* – is also the playhouse that is witness to the tragedy. *OED* gives the obsolete meaning “to open the mouth wide from surprise or the like; to gape” for the verb *yawn*, citing these lines in *Othello* as its earliest application (“yawn, v.4.b.” *OED*). Shakespeare here again colludes with his public to elevate his drama, and in this moment of dizzying metatheatricality he implicitly elicits a collective gasp from the audience, asking them to “yawn at alteration”.

### Acknowledgements

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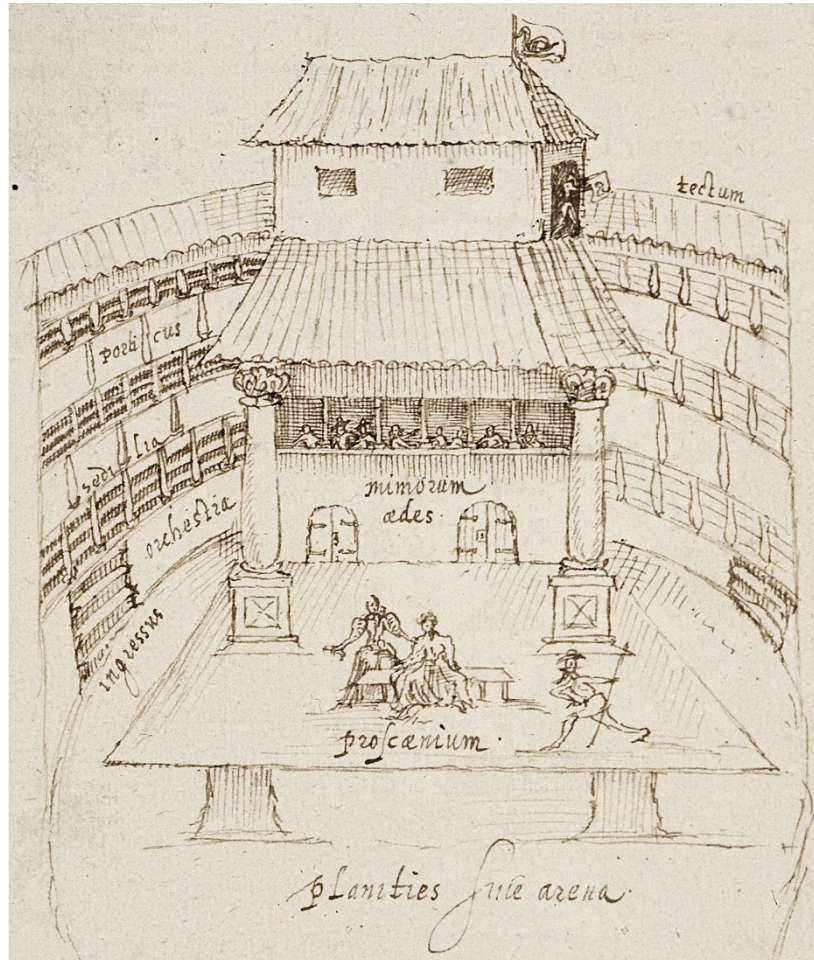
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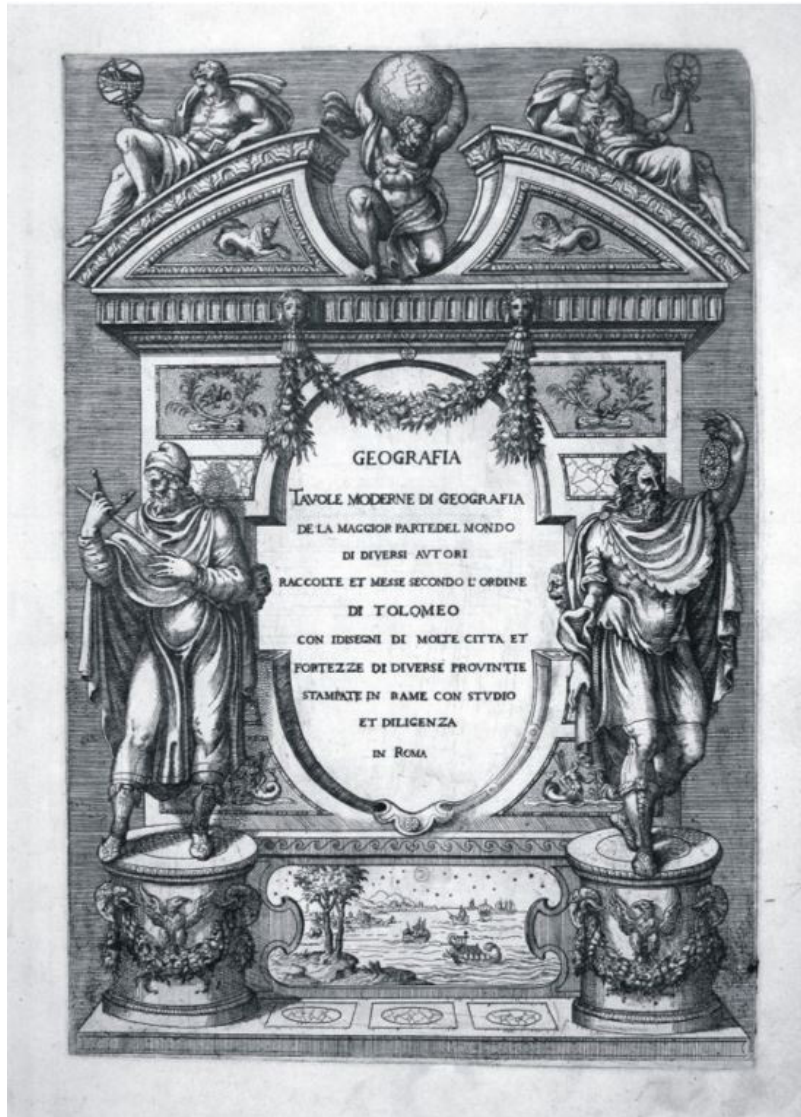


Figure 1 – Arend van Buchell's copy of the drawing of the Swan playhouse (1596) by Johannes De Witt.



Source: FOAKES, R. A. **Illustrations of the English Stage 1580-1642**. London: Scolar Press, 1985.

Figure 2 – Title page of *Geografia Tavole Moderne di Geografia* (1560-67) by Antonio Lafreri (d. 1577), including the image of Atlas supporting a terrestrial globe on his shoulders.



Source: <http://www.mbmmaps.net>

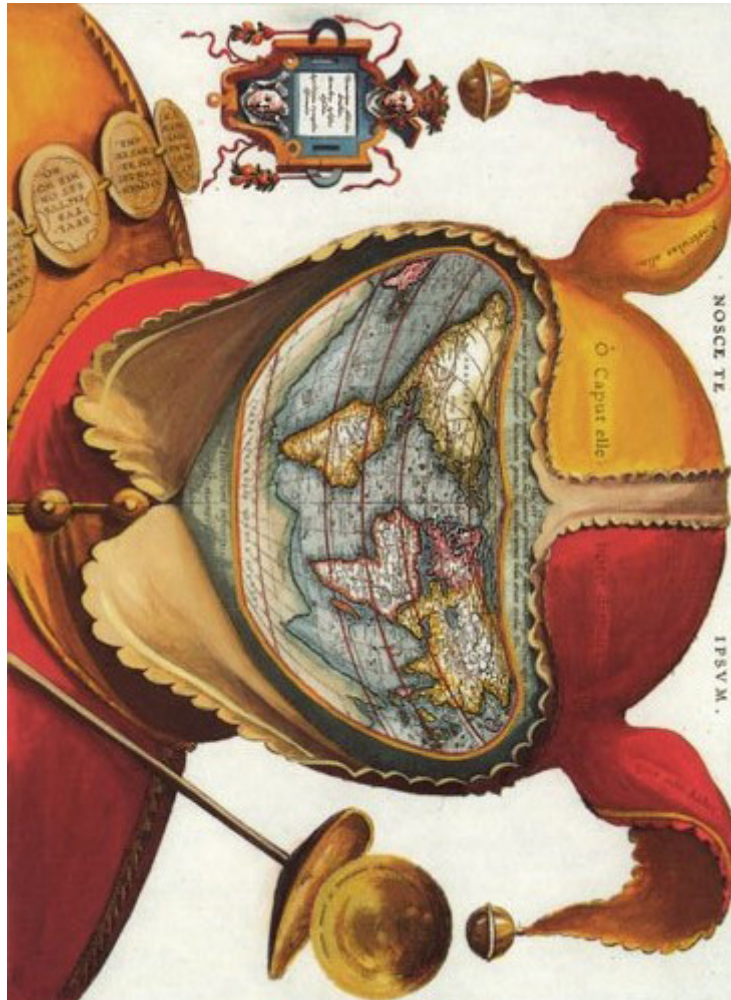


Figure 3 – Title page of *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (first published 1570) by Abraham Ortelius (1527-98). The 1612 edition is shown here.



Source: British Library

Figure 4 – The so-called *Fool's Cap World* (ca. 1590). The artist, place, and precise date of publication remain unknown, although the map resembles the work of Abraham Ortelius published in the 1580s.



Source: WHITFIELD, Peter. **The Image of the World: 20 Centuries of World Maps**. London: British Library, 1994.

Figure 5 – The *Erdapfel* globe, the oldest surviving terrestrial globe, ca. 1490-92, by Martin Behaim.



Source: Germanisches National Museum, Nürnberg

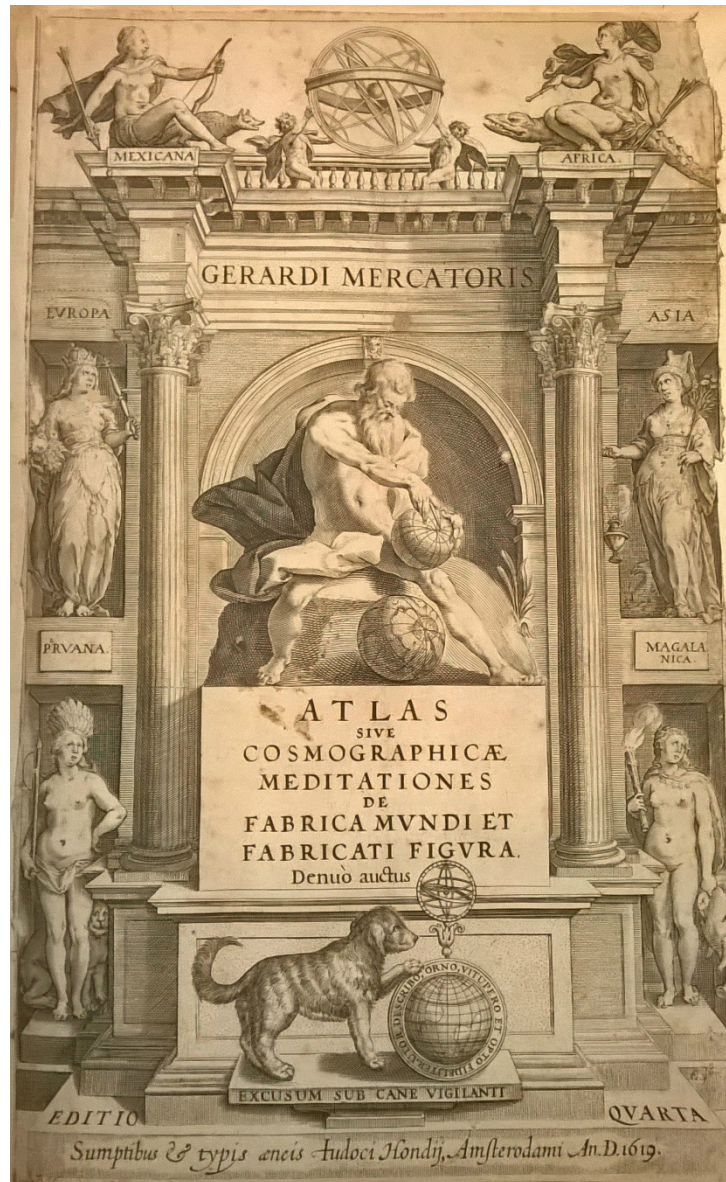


Figure 6 – The *Sieve Portrait* of Queen Elizabeth I, dated 1583 and attributed to Quentin Metsys the Younger.



Source: BATE, Jonathan; THORNTON, Dora. **Shakespeare: Staging the World**. London: British Museum Press, 2012.

Figure 7 – Title page of Gerardus Mercator's *Atlas*, first published in 1595 (the 1619 edition is shown here). Showing Atlas with a globe at his feet and another on his knee.



Source: British Library

# (Im)possibilidades na análise do teatro virtual: breves considerações sobre um campo em franca expansão

Aline de Mello Sanfelici

Em fevereiro de 2023, completam-se doze anos da conclusão de meu doutorado em Língua inglesa e literaturas correspondentes, na Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. A tese então defendida foi orientada pelo professor José Roberto O'Shea e, como não poderia ser muito diferente, versava sobre Shakespeare. Mais especificamente, o trabalho propunha uma análise de quatro performances de *O Conto do Inverno* (*The Winter's Tale*), incluindo uma montagem brasileira que utilizou a tradução do próprio O'Shea, publicada pela Editora Iluminuras alguns anos antes.

No processo desses anos de doutoramento, e em todos esses anos subsequentes, percebi ser difícil, para não dizer praticamente impossível, pensar em análise de performance teatral sem pensar no meu querido orientador. Afinal, o começo de minha caminhada acadêmica nessa área de especialização se deu com ele, com seus ensinamentos tão norteadores e certos. Foram incontáveis livros, capítulos, resenhas, entrevistas e artigos compartilhados, sempre com tanta atualidade e generosidade, em sessões instigantes de orientação e de aulas. Também muitos foram os contatos profissionais estabelecidos e as oportunidades de espetáculos e eventos compartilhados, que até parece, por um rápido momento, que a defesa da tese foi um dia desses...

E de todos os materiais discutidos, um dos que mais me marcou e que me acompanha, até hoje, por coincidência (ou nem tanto assim), é de autoria do próprio O'Shea. Este tem sido um texto de referência e introdução aos meus próprios alunos que se aventuram pelos estudos do teatro e, mais especificamente, da análise de espetáculos. O capítulo "Impossibilidades e possibilidades: análise da performance dramática" foi publicado no livro *Performances: estudos de literatura em homenagem a Marlene Soares dos Santos*, com organização dos professores Luiz Paulo da Moita Lopes, Fabio Akcelrud Durão e



Roberto Ferreira da Rocha, no ano de 2007. Nesse aparentemente despretensioso texto, em aproximadamente dez páginas, o autor faz elucidações teóricas essenciais para estudiosos da área, e comenta com clareza sobre as limitações e os alcances da análise de performance.

Então, quando chega o convite das queridas colegas Beatriz Kopschitz Bastos e Janaina Mirian Rosa para um volume especial, em homenagem ao José Roberto e sua importância em nossa formação, não tive muitas dúvidas: se a ideia, como dito no convite, era escrever sobre nossa área de pesquisa, lembrei logo do capítulo “Impossibilidades e Possibilidades” e optei por uma espécie de releitura do mesmo – com o reconhecimento verdadeiramente humilde da distância intelectual que separa quem aqui escreve e seu sempre professor orientador.

Enquanto o texto original cumpre importante papel na introdução de questões chave para o analista e o estudante de teatro e de performance teatral, minha pesquisa atualmente tem transitado por outras searas, passando pelos campos não tangíveis do palco não presencial. Com o acontecimento pandêmico que enfrentamos a partir de março de 2020, eu, assim como muitos outros, aguicei melhor o meu olhar para os cenários virtuais, e comecei, primeiramente, a me familiarizar com esse tipo de teatro. Em um segundo momento, decidi pesquisar de modo mais sistemático sobre o que é o teatro digital, o que as teorias dizem a respeito, e o que as companhias têm desenvolvido nesse sentido – em especial, considerando que a maioria dos grupos foi forçada a trabalhar nesse tipo de ambiente, independente de sua vontade ou de sua formação / preparação para tanto, em função do período de isolamento social, com as recorrentes orientações para o fechamento dos teatros e outros espaços, como medida de segurança sanitária. Um dos eixos norteadores de minhas investigações têm sido, justamente, o que esse teatro virtual “pode” ou “não pode” fazer, isto é, quais são suas possibilidades e quais suas impossibilidades.

Neste sentido, o que farei a seguir é um diálogo entre o norteamento inicial acerca do teatro, a partir do capítulo do José Roberto, com o que tenho aprendido sobre esse campo virtual em rápida expansão. Faremos um vai e vem entre o teatro digamos convencional, ou o teatro como normalmente o pensamos (ou seja, acontecendo em um auditório, arena, na rua, com um palco, com cortinas, enfim, aquela ideia de teatro como teatro necessariamente presencial) e o teatro que se dá em meios eletrônicos, sem a presença física de plateia e atores no mesmo espaço. Exemplos específicos serão pontuados, quando oportuno, de modo a melhor ilustrar as ideias expostas. E aqui cabe justamente o primeiro ponto a dialogar: o entendimento do conceito de performance e, diretamente relacionado a isso, a visão de que sua análise não é exatamente algo simples.



Em seu ensaio, O'Shea lembra as definições de Marvin Carlson e Richard Schechner, as quais evidenciam o potencial de amplitude do conceito de performance. O conceito comporta visões diversas e, por vezes, discrepantes – incluindo desde formas artísticas até simples práticas do dia a dia, por exemplo. Nessas definições, portanto, o teatro se apresenta como um elemento dentro de um emaranhado de outras possibilidades performáticas: “um nodo em um *continuum*, que vai desde rituais envolvendo animais [...], passando por performances na vida cotidiana [...] e chegando às brincadeiras, ao esporte, ao teatro, à dança...” (SCHECHNER, 1988, apud O'SHEA, 2007, p. 153). Evidentemente, cada tipo de evento deve exigir sua apreciação em seus próprios termos, um aparato teórico-analítico condizente com a materialidade da performance. Em outras palavras, não se irá analisar um espetáculo cênico com os mesmos termos usados para um espetáculo circense ou um show musical, e muito menos uma palestra de cunho acadêmico. E aí já reside uma das dificuldades dessa análise. É preciso buscar as ferramentas adequadas, e entender os distintos processos conhecidos como historiografia cênica e análise de performance. Como informa Pavis (2003), e reitera O'Shea, que justamente me introduziu a diversas leituras fundamentais do importante pesquisador britânico, a historiografia cênica implica o trabalho com reconstrução do evento teatral, a partir de registros diversos (o programa do espetáculo, press releases, entrevistas, materiais de divulgação, resenhas, vídeos e fotografias, o próprio texto verbal da peça, etc), e a análise de performance implica a presença do analista no desenrolar ao vivo do evento. De todo modo, ambos processos necessitam a reconstrução, pois mesmo o analista presente na encenação precisa reconstruir o evento teatral depois, uma vez que, fechada a cortina, o evento acaba (O'SHEA, 2007, p. 154).

E como fica essa questão no campo do teatro virtual? O conceito de performance virtual é, também, amplo e inquietante. Performances virtuais podem ser gravações de apresentações, o chamado teatro filmado e, como vimos na pandemia, também podem ser transmissão on-line de sessões especiais com o auditório vazio ou quase vazio – a exemplo de Marcelo Serrado, em *Os vilões de Shakespeare*, com direção de Sergio Módena, que teve apenas um ingresso presencial vendido (e mil espectadores on-line), simbolizando o auditório lotado. Essa performance transmitida on-line foi uma adaptação da elogiada encenação previamente realizada de modo “tradicional”, ou seja, presencial. Performances virtuais podem então ser encenadas e transmitidas ao vivo, em uma plataforma como YouTube, Google Meet, ou Zoom, exatamente o tipo de teatro on-line que mais pareceu proliferar na pandemia. Elas podem habilitar ou não a interação do público via chat – fato que em si é interessante de se pensar, pois a manifestação ao vivo da plateia na estrutura de um chat costuma ser mais acentuada do que a mesma manifestação em um teatro presencial; ela é silenciosa enquanto texto escrito, mas barulhenta enquanto impactos e liberdades às vezes excedidas da parte de espectadores menos familiarizados com as convenções da arte teatral.

O teatro virtual pode ocorrer inteiramente de modo síncrono (isto é, ao vivo), em uma única sessão, ou o espetáculo pode ser construído a partir de vários encontros em uma proposta de continuidade. Podem também mesclar o síncrono com o assíncrono, em um encontro entre o tecnológico e o analógico, a exemplo da produção *Titus Andronicus – o rosto da guerra – uma experiência analógica para tempos virtuais*. Esse experimento teatral virtual foi produzido pelo Coletivo bobik & sofotchka (com letras minúsculas, mesmo), um grupo de sete jovens mulheres sob direção de Marcia Nemer, e o evento combinou apresentações em *lives* no Instagram com a distribuição de cartas aos espectadores, com tarefas relacionadas à cena (como, por exemplo, construir um cenário em casa). As performances no campo virtual podem buscar transmitir um enredo previamente elaborado e decidido (ou fechado em seus acontecimentos, digamos assim), que se apresenta diante da plateia, ou então podem propor uma espécie de performance-jogo, muito mais interativa, à moda das redes sociais e mundo cibernético que vivemos – e que tanto nos arroudeou, de modo evidenciado, no período pandêmico de isolamento social. Esse tipo de iniciativa foi feito pela Companhia de Teatro Armazém, em 2020 e em segunda edição, em 2021, dado o sucesso da empreitada. Esses experimentos de performances-jogo virtual, dirigidas por Paulo de Moraes, intituladas *Parece loucura mas há método* e sua sequência, *Parece loucura mas há método a dois*, tinham a cada noite um desenvolvimento e desfecho completamente imprevisíveis e irrepetíveis, visto que envolviam sorteios de personagens para duelar, com decisão da plateia sobre quem eliminar (ou cancelar, para usar termos atuais dessa cultura de rápido julgamento que vivemos), e que personagem (e suas temáticas e visões) deveria continuar. Como podemos observar, o campo de possibilidades para o teatro virtual é infinito, e repete a necessidade do teatro presencial de se buscar ferramentas específicas para a análise de cada tipo de criação. E, no contexto da pandemia iniciada em 2020, o campo segue se alargando rapidamente, com inovações como os exemplos rapidamente elencados acima<sup>1</sup>.

Voltando ao capítulo do professor José Roberto, o próximo ponto a dialogar entre o teatro que presenciamos fisicamente e o teatro virtual é justamente as impossibilidades. No seu texto, O’Shea (2007, p.156) coloca que um dos principais nós, ou desafios, é justamente o trabalho de analisar algo que se esvai, que não pode ser recuperado: “Uma dificuldade crucial, no caso da análise de situações ao vivo, é a já mencionada natureza efêmera, instantânea, singular e irreproduzível de cada performance”. O trabalho quase arqueológico de reconstrução a partir das “pistas” deixadas pela encenação, tendo ou não ela sido presenciada ao vivo pelo pesquisador / analista / crítico, é uma tarefa que conseguirá “resgatar alguns dos princípios norteadores e seus respectivos efeitos, porém

<sup>1</sup> Um mapeamento mais vasto de experimentos teatrais on-line na pandemia, e de casos especificamente shakespearianos (como o nosso homenageado neste livro), pode ser encontrado na seção Education do projeto Global Shakespeares, intitulado: Shakespearean theater in Brazil during the pandemic, disponível em: [https://globalshakespeares.mit.edu/extra/shakespearean-theater-in-brazil-during-the-pandemic/#\\_ftn2](https://globalshakespeares.mit.edu/extra/shakespearean-theater-in-brazil-during-the-pandemic/#_ftn2).

jamais o evento em si”, o que imediatamente “impede (e mesmo descarta) qualquer avaliação ‘objetiva’” (O’SHEA, 2007, p. 154). Por fim, o autor também discute sobre dificuldades observadas na análise da performance em face da profusão de estilos na cena contemporânea (sendo, em nossa visão, que tal profusão em si não é um problema, e sim algo a ser celebrado, porém ao mesmo tempo algo que se coloca como um fator que exige maior flexibilidade e abertura para a recepção e análise das encenações).

E agora, olhando para o campo virtual, o que temos de semelhante e o que temos de diferente, no que toca a essas impossibilidades, ou desafios? Começando com o ponto levantado da efemeridade do evento, o teatro virtual parece sofrer a mesma pena: é claro que podemos revisitar a performance que ficou disponibilizada no YouTube, ou assistir novamente a *live* que ocorreu via Instagram, e até mesmo recuperar o chat da interação transcorrida no desenvolver da encenação virtual. Mas isso não significa que possamos recuperar o evento em si, nem estar novamente frente ao imprevisível de como a cena irá transcorrer e de como se darão as interações. Nem mesmo se haverá algum impedimento ou surpresa de ordem tecnológica (e como isso seria resolvido) é algo que poderia ser recuperado, pois todos esses são elementos da *liveness* da encenação, e qualquer filmagem ou registro semelhante não repete o próprio evento, mas apenas sua sombra, seu registro, suas pegadas. O que talvez possamos ver como diferente, em relação ao teatro presencial, é a probabilidade de que o teatro virtual deixará uma disponibilidade de pistas e registros muito mais generosa. Isso, claro, pensando na cena virtual (de fato) contemporânea, que conta com divulgação antes, durante e após a performance, em uma variedade de redes sociais digitais, e normalmente oferece muitos materiais em acervos on-line facilmente acessíveis. Já o teatro em seu formato mais convencional, o presencial, por vezes parece exigir muito mais esforço na busca por registros para a reconstrução do evento, especialmente quando falamos das montagens mais antigas – mesmo as de poucas décadas ou anos atrás.

Sobre a dificuldade da profusão de estilos, aqui também parece haver uma proximidade entre a cena presencial e a digital. Também no teatro on-line observamos uma abundância de estilos variados, mas de outras ordens. No caso digital, devemos considerar as muitas mídias envolvidas na encenação, além das questões estéticas, tecnológicas, de posicionamento dos espectadores frente à ficção, e demais variáveis que informam dado espetáculo. Uma performance virtual que ocorra somente via YouTube e uma outra, que inclua a criação de perfis dos personagens em redes sociais e suas interações no mural do Facebook ou via Twitter<sup>2</sup>, por exemplo, diferem muito em seus alcances e formatos, e isso pede a construção de aparatos teóricos e analíticos específicos. Ou então, para

<sup>2</sup> Casos assim não são oriundos dos tempos pandêmicos, já tendo sido experimentados por grandes companhias como a própria Royal Shakespeare Company, que inovou com seu famoso *Such Tweet Sorrow*, uma versão de *Romeu e Julieta* no Twitter, em 2010. Meu artigo na revista *Urdimento* (indicado nas referências deste texto) comenta em maiores detalhes a iniciativa.

expandir a visibilidade de como o cenário é variado, temos tanto as performances inteiramente em alguma plataforma virtual e que ficam registradas (como a *live* do Instagram), quanto as performances que não são gravadas, ocorrendo em uma sala de Google Meet ou Zoom, e ainda as performances que propõem uma parte da história desenrolada virtualmente e a outra parte em um local específico – como a versão de *Sonho de uma noite de verão*<sup>3</sup>, da Royal Shakespeare Company em parceria com a Google Creative Lab, combinando encenação no parque com uso do Google+. Essa diversidade de formatos, propostas, e possibilidades estéticas não compõem necessariamente uma *impossibilidade* para a análise da performance virtual, mas certamente trazem uma dificuldade que precisa ser reconhecida e respondida à altura.

Passamos, agora, para as possibilidades. O que pode a análise de performance teatral, e como se dá essa questão no teatro virtual? Justamente nesse ponto reside um dos meus aprendizados principais no campo da análise de performances, e é exatamente aqui que meu orientador pontua tão claramente o norteamento: em poucas palavras, me refiro à tríade concepção, produção e recepção a qual fui introduzida em minhas sessões de orientação no doutorado. Essa dinâmica é básica para uma visão mais abrangente e informada de dado espetáculo cênico, pois se atenta para o que ocorre desde o antes da concretização em si, na fase de amadurecimento da concepção que se quer levar ao palco, e passa pelo efetivo desenvolvimento da cena, culminando em como o espectador recebe o que lhe é exposto. Nas palavras de O’Shea (2007, p. 157):

abrangendo questões atinentes a concepção, produção e recepção, qualquer análise que espera ser conclusiva busca levar em conta aspectos que vão desde a expressão de concepções artísticas e temáticas por parte da equipe responsável pela produção da performance, passando pela concretização cênica dessas mesmas concepções (via cenografia, figurino, desenho de luz e som), em seguida por movimento, marcação, sinalização do subtexto, atenção aos gestos e expressões faciais do ator, para finalmente chegar à complexa rede sociocultural em que a performance e o teatro como um todo se inserem.

Então, a partir do trabalho com as pistas elencadas anteriormente, na tentativa de reconstrução do evento teatral, o analista pode descobrir com o material de divulgação e em declarações e entrevistas dos artistas algo sobre o direcionamento da concepção desenvolvida, por exemplo. A partir de seu comparecimento na encenação (quando possível), e com recursos como fotografias, vídeos, programa do evento, dentre outros, é possível começar um caminho de entendimento e análise da concretização cênica propriamente dita. Por fim, as entrevistas, as resenhas, *press releases*, estudos acadêmicos referentes à encenação, dentre outros registros, podem apontar direções

<sup>3</sup> Para ver mais sobre essa performance, acesse: <http://theshakespeareblog.com/2013/06/midsummer-nights-dreaming-on-line-experiment-and-real-time-event/>.

para compreensão da recepção efetivamente desenrolada da performance. Tudo isso deve ser feito levando em conta os diversos tipos de contexto envolvidos na encenação. A título de ilustração, o clima político ou a crise de uma emergência sanitária são fatores que operam na concepção do espetáculo, em maior ou menor grau, de modo mais latente ou mais vago, mas sempre estão lá de algum modo, pois nenhum artista faz teatro em um vácuo social, político ou cultural. Como diz O'Shea (2007, p. 158, ênfase no original), "a inserção sociocultural é crucial ao processo de construção e interpretação dos significados *encenados* (em contraste com os significados literários do texto da peça". O analista da performance teatral deve, então, investigar esses contextos, de modo a melhor iluminar sua análise da obra concebida, produzida e recebida que ocupa seu foco.

Evidentemente, podemos antecipar que qualquer produção teatral *virtual* que se proponha a ser de qualidade e não amadora também terá passado pela fase de concepção do espetáculo on-line que se almeja. O grupo, atuando on-line, também terá que discutir e decidir com que entendimento e interpretação da peça, objetivos, temáticas, e potenciais significações quer trabalhar. Igualmente importante é, à luz da concepção definida, o grupo preparar cuidadosamente tudo que diz respeito à sua produção, considerando, inclusive, a imaterialidade do mundo virtual e as demandas tecnológicas envolvidas (por exemplo, o trabalho com som e iluminação também pontua significados e contribui para a cena, e pode e deve ser explorado em prol dos objetivos dos artistas, mesmo que seja para ocorrer no enquadramento da tela do YouTube). E qualquer análise de teatro virtual que se pretenda bem feita deve tentar entender e reconstruir a visão de concepção dos artistas, investigar como se deu na prática a produção (que recursos foram utilizados, e como contribuíram para a cena, como ficou a questão do espectador no evento, o que foi manipulado ou reduzido do texto teatral para o texto cênico virtual, etc.), e buscar materiais para entender a recepção que se atingiu, e refletir em torno disso. Então, podemos ver que as possibilidades de análise se amparam nesse mesmo tripé, tanto no teatro presencial quanto no on-line, resguardadas as diferenças inerentes às especificidades de cada meio de execução (palco convencional x palco digital). Em outras palavras, é possível analisar o teatro em cada uma dessas formas, mediante a investigação das fases de concepção, produção e recepção, e também atentando para o contexto sociocultural e momento histórico, seja em âmbito nacional ou local, em que a encenação está envolvida.

Por fim, outro aspecto importante das possibilidades referentes à análise do teatro que José Roberto traz em seu capítulo diz respeito ao espectador. Retomando a noção de que a performance pressupõe alguém performando e alguém assistindo, conscientes de seus respectivos papéis, o teatro não acontece sem uma plateia, e mais do que isso, essa mesma plateia é *parte* do espetáculo, enquanto receptora e também produtora "de

um complexo conjunto de signos subjetivamente apreendidos” (O’SHEA, 2007, p. 159). A argumentação que segue, baseada em estudos de Susan Bennett (1990) e Dennis Kennedy (1993), é que o espectador, com sua motivação diversa para ir ao teatro e com seu comportamento no evento (em reações durante a performance, ou mesmo no intervalo da peça), constrói sentidos para a própria experiência teatral e atua como um participante desta experiência. Assim coloca O’Shea (2007, p. 159):

o evento teatral é maior do que as intenções artísticas/estéticas que o concretizam. Já que a performance é dirigida para o público e por ele condicionada, em última instância, mais do que os significados que os artistas inscrevem em seu trabalho, o que importa são os significados que o espectador constrói.

Essa visão importa não apenas por concluir a tríade de concepção, produção e recepção, atentando para o próprio espectador, mas também por libertar a plateia de qualquer posicionamento limitado de buscar “o” sentido (único e inalterável) que supostamente existiria no espetáculo. O teatro, como qualquer arte, é plural e plurissignificativo, e melhor aproveitado quando em relação direta com quem a ele se entrega. A liberdade de atribuir o significado individualmente possibilita que cada espectador se relacione com a performance de modo coerente e honesto consigo mesmo, construindo significados do que enxerga a partir da pessoa que se é, das visões que se tem, daquilo que se pensa ou está disposto a pensar. Isso é muito mais alentador e relevante do que buscar entender o que o outro quis dizer; o foco é, de fato, no que o espectador concebe que foi comunicado para ele mesmo.

Já no teatro virtual, temos algumas semelhanças, mas também talvez o ponto discutido neste texto em que haja maior distância em relação aos modos teatrais convencionais. Sem dúvida o espectador do teatro virtual também deve ser livre para atribuir os sentidos, se relacionar com o espetáculo de modo individual e significativo para si mesmo, e também é uma parte integrante do espetáculo. Mas enquanto no teatro convencional, justamente por convenção, a prática predominante é de que a plateia se *comporte* de modo mais silencioso e, digamos, controlado<sup>4</sup>, interagindo e conversando muito pouco ou realmente nada com as pessoas dos assentos vizinhos, no teatro virtual parece haver a expectativa de maior barulho e interação, e preferencialmente ao longo de todo o evento teatral. Quer dizer, se o chat da sessão ao vivo se mostrar sem movimentação, sem novas contribuições, pode ser um mau indício de que a performance talvez não esteja agradando. Do mesmo modo, se os participantes ficarem entrando e saindo da sala virtual (da *live*, do Google Meet, do YouTube), também não parece bom – enquanto

<sup>4</sup> Claro que existem propostas múltiplas, no teatro presencial, em que a plateia é chamada à cena, a partir da escolha de pessoas específicas para “atuar” em situações pontuais da peça, ou a partir de sua própria colocação na cena como um coletivo que transita entre os cenários e atores, a exemplo de *Insônia – Titus Macbeth*, de André Guerreiro Lopes, em 2019.



isso, no teatro presencial, parece ser mais raro alguém simplesmente levar e ir embora do espetáculo a qualquer momento. Então, se no teatro convencional o espectador já tem o seu comportamento como algo importante na produção de “um complexo conjunto de signos subjetivamente apreendidos” (O’SHEA, 2007, p. 159) que afeta o evento de ir ao teatro, no teatro virtual esse mesmo espectador e seu comportamento parecem redimensionar e expandir significativamente o impacto de sua existência. Em outras palavras, paradoxalmente, parece ser justamente na solidão da performance virtual, que é vista por cada espectador de sua própria casa, que o espectador *aparece* e se destaca mais do que quando está no coletivo do auditório, presencialmente. E essa visibilidade tem impactos talvez mais significativos na cena sendo desenvolvida, precisamente lembrando o fato de ser uma produção artística ao vivo, e portanto mais suscetível ao calor do momento. É possível, desse modo, que o teatro virtual seja mais aberto à imprevisibilidade, pelo fator do posicionamento da audiência nessa circunstância.

E aqui novamente se aproximam o teatro convencional e o on-line. Em sua conclusão do capítulo, após discutir sobre o espectador, José Roberto (2007, p.160) reconhece que “o conhecimento total do receptor (ou dos mecanismos de recepção) é inalcançável. Sempre haverá algum hiato no entendimento dos mecanismos da recepção teatral”. Nas duas possibilidades teatrais discutidas nesse texto, isso parece ser verdadeiro, implicando em uma dificuldade de se fazer a prática crítica e não sem subjetividades da análise da performance. E, nesse sentido, podemos concluir que a análise de performance, seja presencial ou virtual, se torna um exercício de abertura, de possibilidades e impossibilidades, de olhar crítico e simultaneamente criativo.

Ao que tudo indica, e como espero ter demonstrado nessas modestas considerações, apesar de o teatro de formato mais tradicional parecer tão diferente do teatro tecnológico bastante em evidência na atualidade, parece que essas duas formas tem muito mais proximidade entre si do que poderíamos julgar inicialmente. Acredito ser frutífero não encarar o teatro virtual com nenhum tipo de preconceito ou desconfiança, e abrir os olhos para as experiências tão diversas que ali têm sido, cada vez mais, proporcionadas aos espectadores internautas. E o teatro virtual não vai, evidentemente, “roubar” o lugar do teatro convencional. São duas formas próximas e distintas, como uma irmã mais velha e a caçula – e como tal, cada uma destas formas artísticas deve ser apreciada e analisada em seus próprios termos e méritos.

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# Ricardo II: o rei-mártir

Roberto Ferreira da Rocha

*Antes de lhes dizeres o boa-noite, conta-lhes, minha história lamentável e em lágrimas os faze ir para o leito.*  
(A tragédia do rei Ricardo II, V, 1)

A *tragédia do rei Ricardo II* relata como o protagonista, que empresta seu nome à peça, soberano legítimo, perde o trono para um antagonista mais astuto e competente. Descrito dessa forma, o enredo da peça de Shakespeare parece bem simples, quase linear e sem nenhuma ambiguidade. Porém, uma leitura, mesmo superficial da obra, não pode deixar de notar a complexidade que a história ganha pelo tratamento que o dramaturgo lhe confere. Em primeiro lugar, o perfil dos personagens centrais não se enquadra a um padrão maniqueísta. A *tragédia do rei Ricardo II* não pode ser vista simplesmente como uma peça que mostra o embate entre o fraco e incompetente, Ricardo e o astuto e “maquiavélico”<sup>1</sup>, Henrique Bolingbroke. Além disso, a trama faz um confronto não só entre duas personalidades distintas de governante como, também, entre duas formas opostas de se encarar o poder. Vista sob a ótica da teatralidade, a peça coloca frente a frente um rei-ator, que não sabe como representar seu papel, e que, por isso, perde a coroa para um pretendente ao trono, a quem o papel de rei não estava destinado mas que, possuindo um talento inato para desempenhá-lo, acaba conquistando-o.

A leitura aqui proposta seguirá o percurso de Ricardo II na representação de dois papéis: primeiro, o de rei; e, segundo o de mártir. Sua queda se deve, antes de tudo, aos crimes que ele próprio comete: o assassinato de um tio, no qual está diretamente implicado como mandante, seu favoritismo, privilegiando homens inescrupulosos, a cobrança de impostos ilegais e, principalmente, a alienação dos bens da nobreza e a apropriação indevida da herança de seu primo Bolingbroke. Num segundo momento,

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<sup>1</sup> Nesta frase, o termo “maquiavélico” aparece no seu sentido tradicional e caricatural, designando aquele que, na luta pelo poder, se utiliza dos meios mais cruéis para alcançar seus fins. No entanto, vamos também mais adiante dotar este termo de um significado mais “positivo”, o de um monarca mais competente, capaz de bem representar o papel de rei.

quando seu poder já se encontra bastante comprometido, Ricardo tenta, sem grande sucesso, como se verá adiante, trocar o papel de rei pelo de mártir. Os passos dessa trajetória trágica, no sentido medieval do termo, e adotado ainda pelos dramaturgos elisabetanos, da mudança da fortuna dos reis de melhor para pior, serão mostrados agora em detalhes, começando pela maneira pela qual Ricardo encarna o papel de rei, até o momento em que ele o perde.

## 1 O papel de rei

*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II* se inicia com o rei-protagonista em plena vivência do seu papel. Para além do espetáculo pomposo que se desenrola aos olhos do espectador, o importante, para a leitura que se pretende desenvolver aqui, são as indicações apresentadas nesta cena (I, 1), sobre as atribuições do monarca. A cena trata de uma questão judicial que coloca em lados opostos Henrique Bolingbroke e Thomas Mowbray, o primeiro acusando o segundo do assassinato do tio do rei, Thomas Woodstock, duque de Gloucester, e, portanto, de alta traição<sup>2</sup>. A cena coloca Ricardo numa situação bastante embaraçosa, pois, em última instância, foi ele o mandante do assassinato do duque. O que nos interessa aqui é de que forma a figura real é apresentada e, portanto, como o papel é vivido pelo rei.

Como figura central em cena, Ricardo apresenta-se, sobretudo, como o juiz supremo e imparcial:

[...] Ouvidos e olhos imparciais eu tenho.  
 [...] A vizinhança ao nosso sacro sangue  
 privilégio nenhum lhe ensinaria,  
 nem deixaria parcial a inabalável  
 firmeza de minha alma íntegra e justa.  
 (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, I, 1, p. 133)

E usa da sua autoridade para impedir o duelo entre os dois nobres. Esta posição de superioridade da figura real é reforçada pelas imagens emblemáticas que são associadas a ela. A do leão, por exemplo: “Leões domam leopardos” (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, I, 1, p. 135). A imagem do leão irá juntar-se a do sol (que, aliás, é o emblema do próprio Ricardo) que representa, analogamente, a posição superior de Ricardo dentro da ordem social. Assim, como o leão, entre os animais, e o sol, entre os astros celestes, o rei é o mais importante entre os homens, seu chefe e o representante legítimo de Deus na terra. A imagem solar é usada por Ricardo para representar e afirmar sua força e autoridade:

<sup>2</sup> Os fatos referidos nesta cena de *A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, são dramatizados numa outra peça histórica, de autor desconhecido, intitulada Thomas Woodstock, ou, simplesmente, Woodstock, provavelmente escrita e representada entre 1592 e 1595. Ela é tida por alguns estudiosos como a Primeira Parte de Ricardo II. Seu status de fonte para a peça de Shakespeare, no entanto, é discutível.

Mas quando se alça da terrestre esfera  
e os cimos orgulhosos dos pinheiros  
orientais ilumina, dardejando  
sua luz pelos recantos criminosos,  
as traições, os pecados detestando,  
todos os assassínios, porque o manto  
da noite os deixa agora descobertos,  
se patenteiam, nus e, de si próprios,  
dão mostras de pavor.  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, III, 2, p. 184-185)

A imagem solar reaparece no momento da queda de Ricardo da sua posição de rei:

Descer... Descer... Já vou, como o brilhante  
Faetonte, que não tenha mais domínio  
sobre os corcéis indóceis. É para irmos  
ao pátio baixo? Pátio baixo, é certo,  
onde os reis se rebaixam [...].  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, III, 3, p. 204)

Mas no final da primeira cena, do primeiro ato, Ricardo ainda se encontra de posse do seu papel de rei, de uma forma que lhe parece (e aos espectadores/leitores também) incontestável. Nada mais natural, portanto, que ele afirme, de forma peremptória, o seu poder supremo: “Não temos por costume pedir nada, / senão dar ordens” (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, I, 1, p. 136).

Todo o início da peça (isto é, até a quarta cena do primeiro ato), nos momentos em que Ricardo está em cena, nada mais é do que a dramatização da imagem convencional do monarca medieval que era a do legítimo representante de Deus (o chefe supremo do Universo) na terra, tendo a função de legislar sobre os negócios e haveres humanos. C.W.R.D. Moseley (1988, p. 64, tradução minha) resume as funções tradicionalmente atribuídas ao papel real:

Muitas são as obrigações do príncipe. O conceito agostiniano de “ordo” o coloca imediatamente em uma posição de grande responsabilidade frente a seu criador com relação a seu povo, que foi colocado sob seu comando. [...] Como suprema autoridade em seus domínios, ele é responsável frente a Deus não só pela boa administração do reino e pelo bem estar dos súditos, mas também pela justa e santa correção dos abusos contra a estrutura hierárquica humana da própria Igreja. O príncipe é, em última instância, a garantia das condições pelas quais cada súdito pode alcançar o mais alto grau de desenvolvimento espiritual na terra.

Porém, com o desenrolar da peça, os espectadores/leitores vão percebendo que Ricardo não segue, em seus atos, os preceitos que estão ligados à figura do monarca, revelando-se, à medida que prossegue o primeiro ato, um mau rei.

Na segunda cena do primeiro ato, João de Gaunt, frente aos clamores de vingança da viúva do Duque Gloucester (o tio de Ricardo assassinado), defende a inviolabilidade da figura real (um dos dogmas da política dos Tudor) e deixa claro que, neste caso, juiz e réu são a mesma pessoa:

[...] Mas, como o castigo  
se acha nas mãos que a falta cometeram,  
que punir não podemos, à vontade  
do céu entregue fica nossa causa.  
Quando vir que é chegada a hora oportuna  
sobre a terra, vinganças esbraseantes  
ele fará chover nos criminosos.  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, I, 2, p. 137)

Dentro desse contexto, Ricardo sente-se intocável no seu papel de rei, que ele acredita ser sua própria substância. Como explica James Winny (1968, p. 4, tradução minha), “Ricardo vive na superfície da experiência, negando o contato com a realidade interna do eu pela completa absorção na identidade de rei, que ele toma por ela”. Traduzindo em termos de teatralidade a observação de Winny, o ator não consegue distinguir-se do papel que encarna e acredita, ilusoriamente, que, só pelo fato de viver o papel de rei, sua pessoa é inatacável, mesmo ao cometer os piores delitos. Ricardo não faz diferença entre o “corpo político” que ele representa como rei, e seu “corpo humano”, isto é, sua essência pessoal e individual. Nesta confusão de identidades é que se encontra a origem de seus erros e sua tragédia. Por seus atos, Ricardo, o rei-ator, não conseguirá manter seu papel de rei. Vejamos agora os atos que o levam a perda do papel.

## 2 A degradação do papel de rei

A medida que a trama se desenrola, a imagem convencional do rei pouco a pouco desmorona-se e, por trás dela, começa a surgir a face real do ator. Ricardo suspende o torneio entre Mowbray e Bolingbroke, que decidiria qual dos dois estava com a verdade; e, em seguida, bane a ambos do reino. Sua atitude é uma estratégia política necessária. Ele afasta, dessa forma, as especulações sobre o assassinato de seu tio (Thomas Woodstock, duque de Gloster), no qual ele se encontra envolvido. E, ao mesmo tempo, livra-se de Bolingbroke, cuja popularidade crescente faz dele um rival temível.

Nós próprio [...] e Bushy  
observamos como ele costumava  
bajular o povinho, parecendo  
mergulhar-lhe no peito com saudades  
de cortesia familiar e humilde;  
[...] como se por herança ele tivesse  
recebido a Inglaterra e da esperança



dos meus súditos fosse o degrau próximo.  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, I, 2, p. 152)

O banimento de Bolingbroke é um ato político necessário para que Ricardo se mantenha em seu papel. Mas, muito diferente disso, é a atitude que ele toma ao decidir apropriar-se das riquezas do país, para financiar sua campanha contra a Irlanda. Com esta atitude, Ricardo comete seu segundo erro enquanto monarca:

[...] seremos obrigados  
a penhorar nosso real domínio.  
Servirá essa renda para os gastos  
do negócio imediato.  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, I, 4, p. 152)

Ricardo, mais uma vez, degrada o papel de rei. As palavras do moribundo João de Gaunt bem definem a situação: “És o intendente/da Inglaterra, tão só, não seu monarca” (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, II, 1, p. 159). Esta degradação do papel real contamina, naturalmente, o próprio ator e abre o caminho que o leva a sua destruição, como bem afirma Gaunt que consegue ver a “doença” de Ricardo.

Deus, que me fez, me diz que de mezinhas  
tu precisas de que já te avizinhas,  
como eu, do fim da vida. Tens por  
leito de morte a própria pátria, onde  
agoniza tua reputação.  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, II, 1, p. 158-59)

A doença moral do corpo humano causa a doença do corpo político da mesma forma como o mau ator empobrece seu papel.

Ao se apoderar dos bens de João de Gaunt, recém-falecido, e assim privar Bolingbroke de sua herança paterna, Ricardo mexe nos próprios alicerces que sustentam o seu poder monárquico: o direito inalienável de sucessão, cometendo, assim, seu terceiro erro. Seu outro tio, o duque de York, alerta sobre as consequências dessa ação arbitrária e, politicamente, bastante perigosa:

Espoliar Hereford de seus direitos  
equivale a tomar do tempo as cartas  
de privilégio e o seu direito usual.  
Desse modo impedis que o dia de hoje tenha por sucessor o de amanhã.  
Por que sois rei, senão por descendência  
legal e sucessão?  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, II, 1, p. 162-63)

Este último ato de Ricardo é tão monstruoso para a mentalidade vigente no contexto da peça que chega a ser comparado a uma desordem na esfera do macrocosmo da natureza, como o duque de York observou acima.

O último erro de Ricardo enquanto rei é o de se deixar influenciar por seus favoritos que só pensam em tirar proveito dessa preferência do monarca. O governante esquece, assim, o bem comum e beneficia os poucos que se encontram sob sua proteção, angariando, dessa forma, os ciúmes dos outros nobres, e semeando a desestabilização de seu governo. A moralização desse fato aparece sob forma alegórica na cena dos jardineiros. Diz o chefe dos jardineiros a seus ajudantes:

Olha aqueles damascos pendurados; vai  
amarrá-los. São como crianças  
turbulentas que os pais a dobrar forçam  
sob a opressão de seu pródigo peso.  
Põe estacas nos ramos mais descidos.  
Tu aí, faze ao jeito dos carrascos:  
decapita as vergôntes mais viçosas,  
as que se sobressaem na república.  
Em nosso Estado há uma bitola apenas.  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, III, 4, p. 200-01)

O jardim é o reino; o chefe dos jardineiros, o soberano deste reino, que não permite que as parasitas se aproveitem das plantas sadias, da mesma forma que os preferidos do rei se apoderaram das riquezas da nação. De forma mais direta, João de Gaunt, em seu leito de morte, avisa a Ricardo:

[...] os milhares  
de adutores que se abrigam dentro  
da coroa, cujo âmbito, contudo,  
se mede apenas pela tua cabeça.  
Mas, com ser tão pequeno o ninho deles,  
estende-se a devastação por toda  
tua terra.  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, II, 1, p. 159)

Os adutores de Ricardo (Bagot, Bushy e Green) funcionam na peça de forma semelhante ao(s) Vício(s) das moralidades de tema político, escritas principalmente na Inglaterra reformada. Eles desviam o governante do seu bom caminho, causando a ruína da Nação. De qualquer forma, esta preferência do rei-ator, juntamente com seus outros erros, o levará à perda do seu papel, porque ela vai servir de pretexto aos nobres descontentes para se voltarem contra seu próprio governante.

Os atos imprudentes de Ricardo tornam a rebelião contra o rei-tirano inevitável, pois, com a alienação dos bens de Bolingbroke, após a morte de João de Gaunt, os

outros nobres indagam quem será o próximo. A revolta dos nobres, nas palavras de Northumberland, tem como objetivo uma verdadeira campanha de renovação e revigoração do papel real, degradado pelos atos inconsequentes de Ricardo. Com a partida do rei para Irlanda, os nobres, liderados por Northumberland, começam a armar uma rebelião contra Ricardo:

[...] sacudir [queremos], pois, o jugo,  
 pôr novas penas na asa fraturada  
 do país sucumbido, da hipoteca  
 vergonhosa livrar logo a coroa,  
 tirar o pó que o ouro do cetro encobre  
 E restituir a forma à majestade.  
 (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, II, 1, p. 166)

Mas é preciso atentar para o fato de que a resolução dos nobres também é, por seu lado, um ataque muito sério contra a figura do rei ungido, representante de Deus na sociedade humana, configurando-se, pois, como rebelião aberta. Tal ato de insubordinação vai contra o dogma político dos Tudors, segundo o qual o rei é “o vicário de Deus e Seu substituto, a figuração da majestade divina. Seu capitão, a favor de quem lutam os anjos” (URE, 1961, p. Xlviii, tradução minha). É preciso, pois, para uma perfeita compreensão do que se passa na peça, atentar para as seguintes palavras de M. M. Reese (1961, p. 226, tradução minha) sobre a revolta dos nobres:

Essa atitude deve ser vista com cuidado, pois os rebeldes procuravam livrar-se da peja de traidores, afirmando que estavam somente tentando resgatar o rei de seus conselheiros, os quais o estavam conduzindo pelos caminhos do erro, mas no caso de Ricardo, ela parece ter algo de verdade.

A partir de então, a crise já se encontra armada: “Já fugiu toda nobreza; / frio se mostra o povo, parecendo-me / que ficará ao lado de Hereford” (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, II, 2, p. 170). Estas palavras do duque de York são um resumo preciso da situação. O importante para nós é saber como Ricardo lida com esta crise, isto é, de que forma o rei-ator enfrenta esta ameaça a seu papel. Ao saber da presença de Bolingbroke na Inglaterra, desobedecendo ao decreto de banimento e, portanto, desafiando diretamente a autoridade do rei, Ricardo, mesmo sabendo da ameaça que isto representa, é capaz, ainda assim, de comentar em tom triunfante:

Toda água do mar áspero e selvagem o  
 óleo santo não tira que foi posto  
 na frente de um monarca. O curto sopro  
 de homens terrenos é impotente para  
 depor um rei que foi por Deus eleito.  
 (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, III, 2, p. 185.)

Ricardo vive na ilusão de que o papel de rei possui uma força mágica em si mesmo:

Tem Deus para Ricardo um dos seus anjos  
gloriosos, a que dá celeste paga.  
Se não há homem que essa força enfrente,  
Vencerá a justiça plenamente.  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, III, 2, p. 185)

Ricardo é o ator que se identifica tanto com seu papel, que acredita ser ele sua segunda natureza, perdendo, assim, a capacidade de separar o ideal do real. Ele acredita que a carga simbólica do papel de rei por si só é capaz de protegê-lo e defendê-lo de uma realidade que ele é incapaz de enfrentar de forma objetiva. O ator não consegue separar-se do seu papel. Como observa James Winny (1968, p. 54, tradução minha):

ele tem o poder de usar as palavras criativamente para produzir impressões de realidade fortes o suficiente para dominar sua percepção do mundo material. Seu infortúnio é que somente ele se ilude com essas sombras de realidade. Ele não consegue perceber que o papel esplêndido com o qual se identifica não tem mais substância do que o papel de um ator.

Além disso, Ricardo não se dá conta de que ele, como ator, tem que agir a fim de sustentar seu papel. Ele acredita que o rei-ator, pelo simples fato de encarnar o papel de governante, não precisa assumir nenhuma responsabilidade pessoal para mantê-lo. Para ele, o corpo político e o corpo humano são, na verdade, um só e o indivíduo que vive o papel de rei é invulnerável. Seu drama, porém, o levará a reconhecer que “o monarca, não importa quão poderoso e estável possa parecer, na verdade é como o rei do carnaval que só fugazmente mantém sua posição” (BERGERON, 1991, p. 40, tradução minha) Como o rei momo que, terminados os festejos carnavalescos, volta à sua condição de homem (do mesmo modo que o ator ao terminar a peça), o rei-ator também deverá, um dia, abandonar o seu papel, seja através da morte ou pela perda da força e do cargo. Fechado numa concepção fantasiosa da sua condição social, Ricardo não é capaz de atentar para as palavras do bispo de Carlisle:

[...] É preciso  
não desprezar os celestiais recursos,  
mas saber acatá-los; do contrário,  
se o céu o quiser e nós nos opuséssemos  
aos seus intentos, equivaleria  
tal proceder a recusar o auxílio  
celeste e a toda oferta de socorro.  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, III, 2, p. 184)

Ricardo não saberá tirar proveito desse sábio conselho, fiando-se apenas no poder ilimitado que ele pensa que seu papel lhe confere.

Atitude diametralmente oposta é a de Henrique Bolingbroke que sabe tirar proveito das oportunidades

YORK – Não tomeis, caro primo, senão  
quanto vos competir, que vos seria fácil  
esquecer que o alto céu a todos cobre.

BOLINGBROKE – Sei-o, tio, e de forma alguma, intento opor-me a seus  
desígnios.

(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, III, 2, p. 192)

M.M. Reese (1961, p. 230, tradução minha) resume muito bem a questão levantada pelas falas acima, ao afirmar que “caráter e destino cooperam com o impiedoso caminho de Bolingbroke em direção ao trono”. Bolingbroke é a ilustração do herói maquiavélico, aquele que, segundo o pensador florentino, sabe aproveitar-se dos lances favoráveis da Fortuna. As palavras de Bolingbroke acima citadas lembram as do capítulo XXV de *O Príncipe*: “é feliz quem age de acordo com as necessidades de seu tempo, e da mesma forma e infeliz quem age opondo-se ao que o seu tempo exige” (MAQUIAVEL, 1979, p. 90). Mais adiante, o próprio Ricardo irá reconhecer com amarga ironia esta “virtude” de Bolingbroke. “[...] merecem possuí-lo/quantos sabem obtê-lo pela estrada/segura da violência” (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, III, 2, p. 199).

Ao tomar consciência de que seu papel de rei não pode sustentar-se sem força, Ricardo vê nele apenas um vazio:

[...] É que, no centro da vazia  
coroa que circunda a real cabeça  
tem a Morte sua corte, e,  
entronizada aí, como os jograis,  
sempre escarnece da majestade e os  
dentes arreganha  
para as suas pompas, dando-lhe existência  
fugaz, somente o tempo necessário  
para cena pequena, por que possa  
representar de rei, infundir medo,  
matar apenas com o olhar, inflada de  
ilusório conceito de si mesma, como  
se a carne que nos empareda na vida  
fosse de aço inquebrantável.

(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, III, 2, p. 189)

Aqui começa a mudança de papel que Ricardo procura realizar, quando percebe que está perdendo o controle do papel de rei: “Assim que Ricardo percebe que está perdendo sua condição real, ele tenta se adaptar a um novo papel, tão patético quanto o primeiro tinha sido esplêndido; mas, mais uma vez, sem os meios para encarnar o personagem” (WINNY, 1968, p. 56, tradução minha). Ao vacilar em vez de agir, ele deixa escapar a oportunidade de se manter no poder: “Ricardo, que só ocasionalmente fora perverso, foi deposto porque vacilações e achaques mal calculados, eram em um rei uma

falta mais séria do que uma mente sanguinária” (REESE, 1961, p. 227, tradução minha). Preferindo esconder-se da realidade, Ricardo encarnara o rei-mártir, de quem é tirado o poder.

### 3 O abandono do papel de rei pelo papel de mártir

A deposição de Ricardo acontece sem que haja derramamento de sangue. Ele, de certa forma, abdica por vontade própria, ou melhor, falta-lhe vontade e firmeza para se manter no poder.

No momento em que recebe a notícia do avanço de Bolingbroke e seus aliados, quando de sua volta a Inglaterra depois de sua fracassada campanha na Irlanda, ele se desespera e refugia-se no papel de rei traído e deposto. Este novo papel é a contrapartida da imagem altamente idealizada do rei representante da nação e, como esta, também pouco tem de real.

[...] Maldito sejas,  
Primo, que deste modo me desviaste  
Do meu doce caminho da desgraça.  
Que ides agora dizer-me? Que esperança  
ainda podemos ter? Votarei ódio –  
pelo Céu! – para toda eternidade,  
a quem vier falar ainda em conforto.  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, III, 2, p. 190)

Ricardo exige que lhe deixem viver o papel de rei-mártir. Ele encontra até um perverso prazer em representá-lo. A linguagem extremamente elaborada que usa é uma prova disto. Talvez por isso, os críticos vejam Ricardo como um dos personagens mais líricos de Shakespeare. Como diz Mark van Doren ([s.d], p. 75, tradução minha),

Durante todo esse tempo, Ricardo tinha sido um poeta, não um rei, um poeta menor a espera das deixas da dor e do desastre. Agora que os tem, só honrará a eles, nada fará a não ser compor versos belos, ternos e desoladores, nada além de improvisar sobre as infundáveis variações do tema de seu infortúnio pessoal.

A dor de Ricardo é tão brilhantemente expressa que parece existir mais para ser contemplada do que sentida. Ricardo parece até feliz em exibi-la. O Ricardo-ator não quer mais agir como rei, quer apenas representar a sua própria desgraça: “Não me fale / ninguém mais em conforto, mas em túmulos, / epitáfios e vermes” (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, III, 2, p. 188).

Ao mesmo tempo em que a exibição de sua mágoa transforma-se em uma *performance*, Ricardo, pouco a pouco, abandona o papel de rei. Frente a frente com os revoltosos,



que exigem sejam os bens de Bolingbroke restituídos, colocando em cheque, dessa forma, a autoridade real, ele parece não saber mais como agir de acordo com a majestade de seu papel:

Rebaixamo-nos,  
primo, não te parece, por mostrarmos  
tanta pobreza e usarmos de linguagem  
a tal ponto benigna?  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, III, 3, p. 195)

Neste momento, o rei é um “falso” rei que não tem poder de fato para sustentar seu papel. Por isso, o ator vacila, sem saber como agir.

Que é preciso que o rei agora faça?  
Submeter-se? Fá-lo-á. Deixar o trono?  
Ficará satisfeito o rei com isso.  
Perder o título de rei? Em nome  
de Deus, que seja assim.  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, III, 3, p. 196)

Ricardo não quer mais se manter no papel de rei, negando-se inclusive, a seguir a única estratégia possível que lhe é aconselhada por Aumerle, um dos poucos que ainda lhe são fiéis: “Que valham palavras por espadas / até possuirmos armas aceradas” (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, III, 3, p. 196).

Ricardo quer, neste momento da peça, mudar de papel, deixar o de rei, que ele não consegue e nem parece mais querer manter, e encarna o de mártir, tentando talvez esconder as suas faltas enquanto rei. Ele vai, assim, melancólica e pateticamente, trocando de papel.

Darei as joias  
por um rosário; meu palácio esplêndido,  
por um eremitério; as vestes ricas,  
por andrajos de pobre; minha alfaia  
lavrada, por um prato de madeira;  
meu cetro, por bastão de peregrino;  
meus vassalos, em troca das imagens  
de dois santos, e meu imenso reino,  
por sepultura exígua, pequenina  
sepultura, um sepulcro obscuro e humilde.  
Ou me inumem em meio à estrada real,  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, III, 3, p. 196)

No momento em que Ricardo troca o papel de rei pelo de mártir, ele comete a dessacralização mais absoluta do papel tradicional do governante, que se mantivera de pé com a dinastia Plantageneta na Inglaterra durante toda a Idade Média até o momento

de sua abdicação. Como observa M. M. Reese (1961, p. 227, tradução minha): “sob certos aspectos, pode-se dizer que a Idade Média termina com Ricardo e [...] o século dezesseis foi capaz de perceber que algo, que eles nunca veriam novamente, tinha terminado. Uma nova ordem aparecera com os Lancaster, uma dinastia gerada com sangue”.

Traversi vê, igualmente, na peça, esta passagem de um tipo de ordem política para outro. Diz o crítico que, em *A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, Shakespeare dramatiza a queda “de uma concepção tradicional da realeza, substituída por uma força política ao mesmo tempo mais competente, mais verdadeiramente autoconsciente, e mais precariamente alicerçada sobre os fundamentos de seu próprio desejo de poder” (TRAVERSI, 1969, p. 159, tradução minha).

A dessacralização do papel de rei está no fato de que, ao abandoná-lo de forma caprichosa e irresponsável (lembramos que Ricardo não dá ouvidos ao conselho de Aumerle para lutar contra os rebeldes, citado acima), o rei compromete uma ordem política estável e dá passagem para uma nova ordem em que a todo momento o poder pode ser contestado. O que é sólido e inatacável torna-se passível de ser questionado e derrubado: o papel de rei que até então possuía uma aura sagrada, ganha uma feição dessacralizada. A nova ordem política, inaugurada com a deposição de Ricardo, será regida pelo signo da instabilidade e da ilegitimidade. Tal configuração política é representada com maior nitidez nas peças que compõem a primeira tetralogia, a qual dramatiza fatos posteriores ao período aqui tratado e que, de certa forma, são a consequência deles.

Anteriormente já foi feita uma comparação entre o rei, o ator e o rei momo do Carnaval. Voltamos a ela para reafirmar que o primeiro, ao contrário dos dois outros, dentro de uma ordem política estável, só tinha a morte a ameaçar-lhe o poder. A partir do momento em que o chão sobre o qual se alicerça o poder torna-se pouco seguro, o rei se assemelhará aos dois últimos. Como o ator e o rei momo, ele gozará da pompa e da majestade, enquanto conseguir manter afastado aqueles que contestam seu poder e almejam-lhe a posição.

Tendo-se aproximado tanto do mundo incerto, ilusório e profano do teatro e do carnaval, o rei terá que usar, com maestria, a arte do ator, para não ser obrigado a viver outro papel – o do Bobo (Fool) –, como o faz Ricardo em seu embate com Bolingbroke. A ele só resta ironizar sua decadente realeza, numa demonstração patética de seu próprio rebaixamento: “Fosse eu um rei ridículo de neve / Posto em frente do sol de Bolingbroke, / Para me derreter em gotas de água!” (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, IV, 1, p. 214). Este aspecto de carnavalização de *A tragédia do rei Ricardo II* e de seu herói é também observado por David M. Bergeron e se aproxima de nossa leitura, que se desenvolve pelo domínio vizinho da teatralidade. O conceito de carnavalização de Bakhtine, apesar de tentador, não foi incorporado aqui, porque afastaria a proposta de leitura que é a da teatralidade.

Porém, não parece descabido citar Bergeron (1991, p. 159, tradução minha) a propósito da troca de papéis efetuada por Ricardo: “Abandonando as vestes reais e colocando as de um outro implica que o rei carnavalesco assume agora um papel menor”.

O próximo passo no drama de Ricardo II será, na sua deposição (IV, 1), a cena principal da peça, em que ele alcança o clímax da perda do papel do rei.

#### 4 A perda do papel de rei

Em certa medida, Ricardo abdica, por livre e espontânea vontade. É verdade que, pelos atos injustos que cometera, ele angariara para si a oposição de nobres e plebeus. Quase todos se voltam contra ele e ele não é capaz de tomar nenhuma atitude para reverter a situação, permanecendo passivo, e se auto-gratificando com a exibição pública de sua dor; deixando de ser rei, para ser mártir. Tem, pois, razão M. M. Reese (1961, p. 235, tradução minha), em afirmar que “sua imaginação poética transforma sua queda em um rito sacrificial”.

Mas esta passividade de Ricardo não é seguida por seus correligionários. O começo da cena da deposição (IV. 1) mostra uma grande divisão entre os nobres fiéis a Ricardo e os fiéis a Bolingbroke. Luvas dos componentes das duas facções são lançadas ao chão, em sinal de desafio, e a questão levantada é a do assassinato do duque de Gloucester. Esta questão, na verdade, encobre uma outra, politicamente relevante: a possibilidade de julgamento do rei por seus súditos, a fim de legalmente tirar-lhe o poder. Tal situação vai de encontro à visão ortodoxa do papel de rei, defendida na fala do bispo de Carlisle:

E ora o emblema da própria majestade  
de Deus, seu capitão, representante  
por ele eleito, ungido e coroado  
há tanto tempo e sobre trono posto,  
vai ser julgado sem presente achar-se,  
por um sopro inferior e dependente?  
Deus não permita que em país cristão  
almas de tal quilate a fazer venham  
ação tão imoral, odiosa e negra.  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, IV, 1, p. 209-10)

Toda a cena tem *como* propósito político definido legalizar a tomada do poder por Henrique Bolingbroke. Ele, por sua vez, usa a mesma tática que usou ao condenar Bushy e Green, os favoritos do rei (III, 1): lava suas mãos da morte dos dois, ao mostrar ao mundo os atos criminosos deles. Já naquele momento, Bolingbroke prova saber como deve agir aquele que pretende o papel de rei.

[...] para lavar-me  
De vosso sangue as mãos, publicamente

Darei algumas das razões de estardes  
 Condenados à morte.  
 (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, III, 1, p. 181)

Tais palavras ecoam na cena da deposição de Ricardo, quando Bolingbroke diz: “Trazei Ricardo para que ele possa, / de público, abdicar. Dessa maneira, / ficaremos estremes de suspeita” (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, IV, 1, p. 210).

A cena da abdicação no Parlamento tem como objetivo tornar públicos os crimes de Ricardo. Só que ele, com seus recursos histriônicos, rouba a cena e consegue driblar as artimanhas de seus opositores. Como afirma David Bergeron (1991, p. 38, tradução minha), “a cena da deposição [...] é o grande momento histriônico de Ricardo”.

Ricardo entra em cena, afirmando não saber como representar seu papel:

Ai de mim! Por que frente a um rei me chamam,  
 Antes que eu me despoje das ideias  
 Com que reinei? Não tive tempo, ainda,  
 De insinuar-me, saudar, dobrar os joelhos,  
 Mostrar-me adulator.  
 (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, IV, 1, p. 211)

No momento da passagem da coroa, Ricardo cria e dirige toda uma encenação na qual, tendo Bolingbroke como coadjuvante, ele resume seu infortúnio e todo o movimento da peça – a ascensão de Bolingbroke e a queda de Ricardo:

Dai-me a coroa. Primo, segurai-a.  
 Aqui, primo.  
 Minha mão deste lado; a vossa, no outro.  
 Assemelha-se agora esta coroa  
 De ouro a um poço profundo com dois baldes  
 Que em tempo diferente se enchem de água:  
 Dança no ar o vazio; o outro, no fundo,  
 Cheio de água, é invisível. O de lágrimas  
 Cheio, sou eu, que bebo as minhas dores;  
 Ascende o vosso: é todo riso e flores.  
 (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, IV, 1, p. 211-12)

Nesta fala, Ricardo, além de conceber, dramatizar, dirigir e representar a sua dor, ainda orienta os gestos de seu antagonista. Ele tem pleno domínio de sua atuação. Em vários momentos dessa mesma cena, ele procura chamar a atenção de sua plateia (a dos nobres, na peça, e a do público, no teatro) reunida no Parlamento para o seu desempenho: “Vide agora a maneira porque eu próprio/ vou me destruir” (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, IV, 1, p. 212).

Ricardo também sabe usar seu talento teatral, para se livrar do que lhe seria muito prejudicial. A piedade que ele tenta suscitar nos espectadores (dentro e fora da peça), com sua patética *performance*, talvez tenha a intenção de os fazer esquecer o verdadeiro motivo de sua presença no Parlamento. Ou, como diz Andrew Gurr (1984, p. 22, tradução minha): “Ricardo pede o espelho a fim de esquivar-se da insistência de Northumberland para que ele leia o documento contendo a lista de seus delitos”.

A fala do espelho explicita ainda mais a teatralidade que permeia toda a cena. Ricardo pede um espelho para ver seu sofrimento refletido nele, isto é, ele quer contemplar sua atuação e se extasiar com ela: “[...] Hei de ler tudo, / depois de ver o livro em que se encontram / escritos meus pecados: minha própria pessoa” (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, IV, 1, p. 214). Mas se enfurece e quebra o espelho, ao notar que ele não reflete fielmente sua representação:

Como! Sem rugas, ainda, mais profundas?  
Tão grandes bofetadas a tristeza  
Me aplicou, sem deixar marcas mais sérias?  
Ó espelho adulator! Como as pessoas  
Que na prosperidade me seguiam,  
Tu me estás enganando.  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, IV, 2, p. 215)

O espelho, como símbolo, possui ainda uma outra significação. O poder do rei Ricardo, por causa de seus erros, tornou-se tão delicado e quebradiço quanto a superfície do espelho. Poder este que o rei não soube manter.

[...] Muito frágil  
É a glória que irradia desta face;  
Tão frágil quanto a glória é a própria face.  
(*Joga o espelho no chão.*)  
Ei-la aí, reduzida a cem pedaços.  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, IV, 1, p. 115-16)

A dor de Ricardo, no entanto, parece a Bolingbroke, um engodo, uma mera atuação. Com desprezo, e mesmo despeito, ele comenta o gesto de Ricardo, ao quebrar o espelho: “Foi a sombra de vossas amarguras / Que a sombra, apenas, vos destruiu da face” (*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, IV, 1, p. 216). Ricardo sabe, no entanto, tirar proveito da réplica, frustrando a intenção de Bolingbroke de desmascará-lo, exibindo-se aos olhos de todos, como mero ator.

[...] É verdade, as minhas mágoas  
estão dentro. Estas mostras exteriores  
de desespero são somente a sombra  
da tristeza invisível que, em silêncio,  
se intumesce numa alma torturada.

Eis a sua substância. Eu te agradeço,  
rei, a tua bondade incalculável,  
pois tu não só me deste a causa toda  
do desespero, como em ensinaste,  
também, a lastimá-la.  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, IV, 1, p. 216).

Os dois últimos versos são a fala de um ator para outro. Um deixa a cena política para que o outro assuma o centro do palco.

Mas, de certa forma, Bolingbroke tem razão em duvidar da sinceridade dos sentimentos de Ricardo, vendo neles um mero desempenho. O papel de mártir não cabe verdadeiramente a Ricardo, que não o representa completamente, porque ele perde o trono por seus erros e abdica sem resistência. Ele, no fundo, é tão culpado de sua queda quanto os que se apossaram de sua coroa, como, aliás, ele próprio reconhece.

[...] Percebo  
Que sou também traidor como os demais,  
Porque meu coração foi conivente  
No despojar o corpo de um monarca,  
Em deixar vil a glória, a potestade  
A escrava rebaixar, do altivo mando  
Fazer vassalo e do meu reino, um  
rústico.  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, IV, 1, p. 214)

Tão culpado quanto seus antagonistas, pelo rebaixamento da figura real, Ricardo não consegue sustentar-se no papel, quando percebe que mesmo o soberano mais legítimo nunca está totalmente seguro em seu trono. Não conseguindo vivenciar esta realidade, ele abandona o papel de rei.

Com a queda de Ricardo, todos os papéis se embaralham e é necessário a quem pretender ao papel de rei dominar bem a arte de representar. Ser rei será, a partir de então, a capacidade de se encarnar bem um papel. Esta é a verdade que Ricardo atinge ao final da peça, sozinho, preso na torre, pouco antes de ser morto: ele não soube encarnar bem o seu papel ou, usando sua metáfora musical, não soube acompanhar o tempo de sua dança:

[...] Mas que ouço? Música?  
Conservai o compasso! Como a doce  
música é insuportável para o ouvido,  
quando falha o compasso e não se observa  
nenhuma proporção. A mesma coisa  
se passa na harmonia da existência  
dos mortais. Aqui eu tenho ouvido fino



para apanhar pequena dissonância  
de uma corda mal posta, No entanto,  
não percebi a falta de compasso  
que deveria haver na consonância  
do meu tempo e do Estado.  
(*A tragédia do rei Ricardo II*, V, 5, p. 237)

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# Shakespeare em terras brasileiras

Célia Arns de Miranda

*Sua história requer romanos e reis, mas ele  
pensa apenas em homens.*

(Samuel Johnson)

O cruzamento das fronteiras culturais e intermediárias torna-se evidente quando nos deparamos com as encenações das peças shakespearianas, que acontecem no mundo inteiro, com o grande número de filmes, pinturas, óperas, balés, composições musicais e produções literárias que estabelecem um vínculo com a sua obra. Não restam dúvidas de que Shakespeare é um poeta que continua a dialogar com a contemporaneidade. A obra shakespeariana tem sido estudada no mundo inteiro e esta dimensão internacional tem sublinhado temas como racismo, política, poder, misoginia, miscigenação, identidade cultural, gênero, conflito sexual, violência doméstica, dentre outros. Não é de admirar que suas peças estejam sendo traduzidas, apropriadas, adaptadas, realocadas, subvertidas de uma maneira tão expressiva.

Centenas de livros, artigos, traduções, resenhas, dissertações de mestrado, teses de doutoramento têm sido publicados anualmente em torno da obra de Shakespeare, sobre o contexto político, ideológico e cultural da Inglaterra elisabetana; entretanto, são as adaptações de suas peças teatrais para as diversas mídias que têm despertado o maior interesse dos autores, diretores, intérpretes, público e críticos de forma geral. A permanência de uma obra reside na sua capacidade de influenciar e ser influenciada (MARSDEN, 1991). Essa é uma clara referência à necessidade humana de construir mitos e de manipular esses mitos uma vez estabelecidos, o que explica a motivação de muitos escritores de se apropriarem de uma obra do passado e de tentarem atualizá-la, deslocando-a para o contexto contemporâneo. Em outras palavras, no mundo dos estudos literários, a apropriação textual é um processo necessário e inevitável: uma obra literária estará exercendo influência se as pessoas não deixarem de manifestar uma reação diante dela, isto é, se houver leitores que, novamente, apropriem-se

da obra do passado, ou autores e recriadores que desejem recontextualizá-la para o consumo contemporâneo (MIRANDA, 2005, p. 77). Apesar de haver centenas de produções midiáticas que foram e que são realizadas a partir das peças de Shakespeare, a potencialidade de seus textos, que é infinita, não se esgota. Cada produção provê apenas um *insight* parcial e, obviamente, nenhuma produção pode realizar todas as perspectivas que o texto oferece. Como afirma Peter Holland (2021, p. 31, ênfase do autor), “...com Shakespeare, nunca é ou isto ou aquilo, sempre é isto e aquilo”, ou seja, podemos nos deleitar com todas as possibilidades que os seus textos permitem.

As peças do “Velho Bill” (HADDAD, 2021, p. 23) têm transitado através dos séculos e se enriquecem pelos diversos sotaques que lhes são agregados. A sobrevida dos textos é o resultado dessa trajetória textual e cultural que tem alimentado gerações de leitores durante mais de 400 anos. Quando Ben Jonson, um dos homens mais eruditos da era elisabetana, escreveu sobre Shakespeare dizendo que “he was not of an age but for all time”<sup>1</sup>, ele não poderia ter imaginado a implicação dupla de suas palavras: por um lado, esse verso enaltece o eterno apelo de Shakespeare enquanto que, por outro lado, ele pode ser interpretado como a descrição de um processo literário de apropriação cultural que já estava em curso naquele dado momento, no qual cada nova geração tenta redefinir Shakespeare em termos contemporâneos, projetando a sua própria ideologia nas peças e na elaboração mitológica do autor (MIRANDA, 2005). Realmente, o que impressiona em Shakespeare são todas as leituras possíveis que seus textos permitem, o que confirma as palavras de J. Guinsburg (1997, “Orelha do livro”), de que

[...] há tantos Shakespeares quantas as etapas e as transformações fundamentais do teatro e de suas correspondentes cosmovisões. Poder-se-ia até acrescentar que o seu número se multiplica pelo número de seus intérpretes mais significativos e renovadores. [...] [Como] nenhuma outra, a sua obra põe em cena, não importa se com as roupagens do século XVI, todo o universo dos comportamentos, dos sonhos e das fantasias do homem no seu diálogo consigo próprio, com seus interlocutores, com a sociedade e com o mundo, no que tange à existência, aos desígnios e o possível envolvimento de um nexos superior e ético nas ações e paixões do anjo-demônio que, barrocamemente, ou melhor, grotescamente, traz o nome do humano e compõe a sua condição.

Quando se trata da inserção de Shakespeare no Brasil, quais são as primeiras referências que surgem, principalmente, se levarmos em consideração as encenações de suas peças em terras brasileiras? O século XIX presenciou a disseminação de sua obra dramática, ao menos nas suas primeiras incursões nos palcos nacionais, através das

<sup>1</sup> Em 1623, sete anos após a morte de William Shakespeare, ao ser organizada e publicada a obra completa das peças do dramaturgo inglês, Ben Jonson escreveu um poema laudatório em homenagem ao seu contemporâneo, em que está inserido o verso mencionado acima, que pode ser traduzido desta forma: “ele não foi de um século, mas de todos os tempos” (BOYCE, 1991. p. 323).

encenações protagonizadas por João Caetano dos Santos, o qual tem o grande mérito de ser o primeiro ator de Shakespeare no Brasil. Ele representou *Hamlet*, pela primeira vez, em 1835 a partir de uma tradução do texto fonte realizada por Oliveira e Silva. O público não aprovou o espetáculo; no entanto, quando em 1840, Caetano voltou com a apresentação de *Hamlet* baseada na versão neoclássica<sup>2</sup> de Jean-François Ducis, dessa vez os espectadores aplaudiram a adaptação. Entretanto, esse sucesso comercial mereceu o repúdio de poetas e escritores como Gonçalves Dias, Álvares de Azevedo, Machado de Assis e Joaquim Nabuco. O ator também alcançou um grande prestígio com as plateias brasileiras ao atuar como Otelo, o que pode ser constatado pelas vinte e seis apresentações da peça entre 1837 e 1860. Ainda dentro desse contexto, Barbara Heliadora (2008) destaca que, com exceção de uma peça, todas as outras apresentadas por Caetano eram, na verdade, adaptações melodramáticas de Ducis, que disciplinou Shakespeare, “cortando o que considerava chocante, e transformando as tragédias em dramalhões românticos” (HELIODORA, 2002, p. 322). Em que pese Barbara Heliadora (2008) ressaltar que as encenações por Caetano foram, em grande parte, realizadas a partir das traduções francesas que são consideradas mutiladoras e disciplinadas ao gosto do neoclassicismo francês, é necessário enfatizar a grande relevância de Caetano como o primeiro ator-empresário<sup>3</sup> e o preceptor de um teatro verdadeiramente nacional (O’SHEA, 2004).

A difusão da obra shakespeariana no solo brasileiro também está fortemente vinculada com as companhias estrangeiras que aqui estiveram desde a terceira década do século XIX. Nesse sentido, José Roberto O’Shea (2004, p. 203) referenda que Shakespeare é divulgado entre nós, “em português, castelhano e italiano, quase sempre por intermédio de adaptações francesas, especialmente via Ducis, trazidas por atores portugueses, espanhóis e italianos” que visitaram o Brasil com muita assiduidade e apresentaram um vasto repertório de peças. Constata-se, portanto, que a “[...] história de Shakespeare no Brasil é um reflexo da clara predominância da cultura francesa [...]” (HELIODORA, 2008, p. 321). Somente entre 1871 e o final do século, mais de 12 companhias estrangeiras vieram para o nosso país, sendo que, em 1882, a companhia da atriz italiana Giacinta Pezzana Gulatieri apresentou-nos, pela primeira vez, uma mulher no papel de Hamlet; em 1905, Sarah Bernhardt foi a segunda mulher a interpretar o príncipe dinamarquês. Duas outras companhias italianas vieram para o Brasil em 1871. Apesar da companhia de Ernesto Rossi não alcançar um grande sucesso quando veio para cá pela primeira vez, o ator italiano retorna em 1879 com

<sup>2</sup> A dramaturgia inglesa da época de Shakespeare não seguiu as regras supostamente aristotélicas do neoclassicismo: além de mesclar tragédia e comédia, a ação das peças acontece em vários locais diferentes e ao longo de dias, meses ou anos (HELIODORA, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> “Como entender a posição de João Caetano com respeito ao surgimento do teatro nacional brasileiro? Sem dúvida, tendo organizado companhias teatrais, produzido espetáculos, construído e reconstruído teatros arrasados por incêndios, criado escolas dramáticas, Caetano foi um dos nossos primeiros atores-empresários, versão brasileira dos seus colegas ingleses e italianos” (O’SHEA, 2004, p. 211).

um vasto repertório de peças shakespearianas<sup>4</sup>. Entretanto, o maior reconhecimento aconteceu em relação às interpretações de Otelo e Hamlet por Tommaso Salvini não apenas no Brasil como em Londres e Nova Iorque. Quando esse ator apresentou-se com o *Otelo* em Londres, em 1876, a sua atuação foi recebida com tanto entusiasmo que ele teve que repeti-la 30 vezes na mesma temporada (O'SHEA, 2004).

Dentre os diversos escritores brasileiros<sup>5</sup> que estabelecem um diálogo intertextual com a obra shakespeariana, Machado de Assis é quem mais chama atenção: ele demonstra ter sido um leitor e estudioso assíduo de Shakespeare ao ter incorporado em sua obra muitos elementos da dramaturgia shakespeariana, além de ele próprio ter sido espectador e crítico teatral das representações empreendidas em solo brasileiro. Helen Caldwell (2002) menciona que o ciúme nunca deixou de fascinar o autor brasileiro que trata desse sentimento em nove de seus romances e na trama de dez contos, em algumas ocasiões, de forma irônica e, às vezes, cômica. A partir de seus estudos machadianos, Greicy P. Bellin (2019) afirma que *Hamlet* e *Otelo* são as peças que mais foram referenciadas por Machado de Assis ao longo de sua obra, com um destaque para *Memórias póstumas de Brás Cubas*, *Dom Casmurro* e o conto “A cartomante”, que traz nas suas primeiras linhas a célebre fala do príncipe dinamarquês: “Há mais coisas no céu e na terra, Horácio, / Do que pode sonhar a tua filosofia” (1.4.174-175). Conforme levantamento apresentado por Bellin (2019), Caldwell encontrou na obra machadiana 255 referências a Shakespeare enquanto José Luiz dos Passos localizou 211 e Adriana da Costa Teles, 273. O entrelaçamento textual entre Shakespeare e Machado explicita que um texto é composto de escrituras múltiplas, oriundas de várias culturas que entram em diálogo e/ou em contestação umas com as outras: o leitor é a entidade que é capaz de perceber toda a duplicidade e multiplicidade textual. As obras literárias jamais são simples memórias. Elas reescrevem o que lembram e influenciam seus precursores; como diria Jorge Luís Borges (apud HUTCHEON, 1985, p. 107, ênfase do autor), “Todo o escritor *cria* os seus precursores. A sua obra modifica a nossa concepção do passado, tal como modificará o futuro”. O significado de uma obra é estabelecido através de sua relação com os outros textos, o que evidencia outra propriedade da literatura que é o seu caráter de autorreflexividade.

<sup>4</sup> Sabe-se que Machado de Assis foi um crítico ferrenho da intermediação francesa, principalmente, em relação às peças shakespearianas que foram adaptadas a partir de Ducis. Por essa perspectiva, a atuação do ator italiano Ernesto Rossi no Brasil foi elogiada por Machado, que externou o seu entusiasmo pelo resgate dos originais shakespearianos: “Além do gosto de aplaudir um artista como Ernesto Rossi, há outras vantagens nestas representações de Shakespeare: vai-se conhecendo Shakespeare, de que o nosso público apenas tinha notícia por uns arranjos de Ducis” (ASSIS, apud BELLIN, 2019, p. 72-73).

<sup>5</sup> O diálogo textual com Shakespeare pode ser percebido em vários autores brasileiros, dentre os quais destacamos Gonçalves Dias (*Leonor de Mendonça*); Martins Pena (*Os ciúmes de um pedestre*); Olavo Bilac (escreveu poemas, como a paródia *Hamlet*). Mais recentemente, Nelson Rodrigues (*A mulher sem pecado*); Augusto Boal (*Hamlet e o filho do padeiro*); Adriana Falcão (*Sonho de uma noite de verão*); e Luis Fernando Veríssimo (*A décima segunda-feira*).

Depois da atuação de João Caetano no século XIX, Shakespeare, representado por atores brasileiros, desaparece de nossos palcos por quase um século. O seu retorno acontece com a fundação do Teatro do Estudante do Brasil (TEB) por Paschoal Carlos Magno, poeta e diplomata, que havia recém-retornado da Inglaterra, completamente apaixonado por Shakespeare. O TEB estreou em 1938 “[...] com a montagem, suntuosa para a época, de *Romeu e Julieta* [...]” (HELIODORA, 2008. p. 328). O sucesso do espetáculo foi enorme, com uma grande repercussão na imprensa. O TEB revelou-se bastante atuante em matéria de Shakespeare na década de 1940, produzindo e reencenando várias de suas peças. Entretanto, o maior triunfo viria em 1948 com a montagem do *Hamlet*, que foi apresentado no Teatro Fênix, no Rio de Janeiro. Como Maria Clara V. Gallery (2019, p. 123) destaca, “Seu sucesso inesperado e estrondoso deve muito ao desempenho do ator Sérgio Cardoso, que fez o papel principal, representando o texto shakespeariano na tradução de Tristão da Cunha”. A trajetória de sucesso de uma das produções mais famosas do nosso teatro pode ser comprovada pelas “...50 apresentações para casa lotada no Fênix, 20 no Teatro República, além de 15 dias em São Paulo e apresentações avulsas em Campinas e Santos” (GALLERY, 2019, p. 125). A atriz Nydia Licia (2004, p. 15), com quem Sérgio Cardoso foi casado, descreveu da seguinte forma a representação de *Hamlet* em 1948:

Seis de janeiro de 1948, um moço magro, franzino, muito míope, tirou os óculos e se preparou para entrar em cena no Teatro Fênix, no Rio de Janeiro.

Era a noite de estreia do *Hamlet* de Shakespeare, apresentada pelo Teatro de Estudante e ele ia interpretar o papel principal. A peça, dirigida pelo alemão Hoffman Harnisch, começou; bastaram poucos minutos para o público perceber que algo diferente estava acontecendo. Aquele moço de aparência franzina, ao pisar no palco, se transformou em um gigante. E a plateia carioca, num silêncio total, acompanhou o desenrolar da tragédia shakespeariana, para no final explodir numa verdadeira ovação. No dia seguinte, o nome de Sérgio Cardoso era manchete dos maiores jornais do Brasil.

Quase dez anos mais tarde, Sérgio Cardoso e Nydia Licia fundaram juntos a Companhia Teatral Nydia Licia-Sérgio Cardoso. Como tinham a intenção de terem um teatro próprio, empenharam-se na restauração do Cineteatro Espéria que foi transformado no Teatro Bela Vista, cuja inauguração aconteceu em 1956, “com um *Hamlet* mais ambicioso e elaborado do que aquele levado pelo TEB na década anterior. Com essa montagem, a primeira interpretação profissional de um texto de Shakespeare em São Paulo, Sérgio esperava consolidar a sua carreira no palco” (GALLERY, 2019, p. 128). Nydia atuou como Gertrudes e Sérgio Cardoso, além de interpretar o personagem principal, foi também o diretor da peça. O príncipe da Dinamarca, na segunda montagem, torna-se um intelectual sombrio, tomado de hesitações morais enquanto que, em 1948, Sérgio interpretou-o de uma maneira mais intensa e passional (GALLERY, 2019).



Com as comemorações do quarto centenário do nascimento de Shakespeare, em 1964, o Brasil testemunhou a encenação de muitas de suas peças, com um destaque para *Sonho de uma noite de verão*, *O mercador de Veneza*, *A megera domada*, *Júlio César* e *Ricardo III*. Entretanto, a partir dos anos truculentos da ditadura brasileira (1964-1985), as atividades artísticas, de maneira geral, ficaram estagnadas, além de prevalecer no país um clima de opressão causado pelas perseguições, prisões e tortura de intelectuais, manifestantes políticos e artistas. Em 1968, por intermédio da promulgação do AI-5 (Ato Institucional n.5), a censura tornou-se extremamente rígida, tendo sido tomadas várias medidas repressivas objetivando coibir qualquer protesto contra o governo. Apesar dessa conjuntura funesta, o teatro tornou-se uma das principais ferramentas de resistência contra o regime militar autoritário. Com isso, foi realizada uma série de produções provocativas de orientação esquerdista na cena teatral brasileira. Por motivos óbvios, a dramaturgia politicamente engajada de Bertolt Brecht e as práticas teatrais politizadas criadas por Augusto Boal para o Teatro de Arena foram usadas em maior escala do que as peças de Shakespeare, objetivando desafiar o *status quo*. Dentre as poucas encenações de Shakespeare, realizadas nesse período, citamos, dentre elas, *Júlio César* (1966), com direção de Antunes Filho; *Hamlet* (1969), de Flávio Rangel; *Macbeth* (1970), de Fauzi Arap; e *Coriolano* (1974), de Celso Nunes. No entanto, essas produções não conseguiram atingir o objetivo de refletir criticamente o contexto político deveras sombrio que os brasileiros estavam enfrentando. Nesse sentido, *A tempestade*, de Augusto Boal, levada à cena no Rio de Janeiro no final de 1981 e começo de 1982, foi reportada como sendo a primeira produção cênica de Shakespeare que, verdadeiramente, denunciou as medidas repressivas da ditadura militar. Com a redemocratização, mais efetivamente, a partir da reinstauração do governo civil em 1985, Shakespeare assume uma agenda de protagonismo nos palcos nacionais (CAMATI; MIRANDA, 2019).

As primeiras investidas cênicas de Shakespeare no Brasil, nos séculos XIX e XX, consolidaram o caminho para a popularidade do bardo em terras brasileiras, o que explica a proliferação de encenações de suas peças, principalmente nas últimas três ou quatro décadas, e a motivação do público em assisti-las. Isso, se não mencionarmos a imensa fortuna crítica que é produzida sobre a sua obra e as respectivas adaptações. Qual é o lugar que as encenações de Shakespeare ocupam no cenário brasileiro? Quais são as tendências estéticas? Qual é a concepção cênica? De que forma as peças shakespearianas são atualizadas para o momento contemporâneo? Qual é o seu impacto na plateia?

Considerando as dificuldades metodológicas decorrentes do caráter efêmero, mutável e único, que é peculiar das encenações, a análise da performance não é uma questão simples. O'Shea (2007, p. 153) distingue a análise da performance da historiografia cênica: enquanto a primeira exige a presença do crítico, a segunda "dependeria de um exercício de reconstrução, baseada em documentação e relatos". Entretanto, o autor alerta que,

mesmo quando o crítico presencia a performance em primeira mão, a análise vai depender de uma reconstrução, “[...] pois toda performance ao vivo, tenha ela ocorrido ontem, diante do crítico ou na Inglaterra elisabetana, esvai-se; por conseguinte, tenha ou não assistido à performance, o crítico trabalha com uma reconstrução, mediando-a” (O’SHEA, 2007, p. 154). No estudo do espetáculo, é imensurável a importância dos elementos formais de uma performance que deixam atrás de si inúmeros registros, dentre os quais citamos, o texto verbal que foi encenado, gravações visuais e audiovisuais ou digitalizadas (fitas de vídeo, DVDs, dispositivos, desenhos, CD-ROMs), programa e cartaz do espetáculo, fotografias, material publicitário, críticas produzidas por especialistas, entrevistas (O’SHEA, 2007). Por esse viés, são admiráveis os estudos e publicações que foram realizados a respeito das primeiras incursões de Shakespeare no Brasil quando esses recursos paratextuais ainda eram muito incipientes, muitas vezes, inexistentes.

Dentro da conjuntura da apropriação textual, Anne Ubersfeld (2002, p. 9, ênfase da autora) refere-se, com muita propriedade, ao fato de que “ler hoje é ‘des-ler’ o que foi lido ontem. [...] [É permitido] compreender que a obra clássica não é mais um objeto sagrado, depositário de um sentido oculto, [...] mas, antes de tudo, a mensagem de um processo de comunicação”. A obra clássica, inserida dentro do processo interativo de comunicação do teatro, portanto, prevê a participação conjugada do emissor e do receptor na formulação da mensagem, confirmando-se, por esse prisma, “[...] a relatividade histórica das leituras que se impõem ao pensamento” (UBERSFELD, 2002, p. 12). A partir desses pressupostos, o espectador-leitor é levado ao esforço árduo para integralizar o sentido que jamais é finito.

Ubersfeld (2002, p. 9), ao considerar que uma obra clássica é aquela que não tendo sido escrita para nós, “...reclama uma ‘adaptação’ a nossos ouvidos”, põe em evidência uma das questões cruciais na discussão da representação dos clássicos que, necessariamente, antevê a inclusão do referente contemporâneo em função da escuta atual do receptor<sup>6</sup>. A partir da percepção de que a tríade do processo comunicativo – emissor, receptor e mensagem – sofreu modificações profundas, pergunta-se se ainda é possível uma forma tradicional de leitura e interpretação dos clássicos, sem que seja realizada uma releitura histórica – a releitura do passado tem como propósito a apresentação de uma leitura do presente. A leitura ideológica espontânea que os contemporâneos de um determinado texto teatral eram capazes de realizar, vai reencontrar no presente uma outra proposta de leitura, em função do desenvolvimento da história e da contribuição das ciências humanas que mudaram radicalmente o repertório do espectador-leitor dos séculos XX e XXI.

<sup>6</sup> André Antoine, ao refletir sobre a função de uma encenação contemporânea da obra clássica, defende “...a rejeição da ortodoxia em matéria de encenação, o direito do encenador de sustentar um discurso diferente daquele da celebração da obra-prima. A direção não é mais (ou não é mais apenas) a arte de fazer com que um texto admirável [...] emita coloridos reflexos, como uma pedra preciosa; mas é arte de colocar esse texto numa determinada perspectiva; dizer a respeito dele algo que ele não diz, pelo menos explicitamente; de expô-lo não apenas à admiração. Mas também à reflexão do espectador” (ANTOINE, citado por ROUBINE, 1998, p. 41.).

Dentro do amplo contexto das adaptações, a convicção de que aquilo que um autor escreveu é uma forma sagrada, que deve ser preservada, continua a dificultar, muitas vezes, o trabalho teatral ainda hoje. Sem dúvida nenhuma, essa postura torna-se mais irredutível quando os textos são considerados canônicos, como no caso de Shakespeare, e as propostas de encenação das peças distanciam-se do consenso estabelecido pela tradição. Sob essa perspectiva, Felipe Hirsch, diretor da então Sutil Companhia de Teatro, realizou em Curitiba, no ano de 1997, uma versão contemporânea do *Hamlet* shakespeariano intitulada *Estou te escrevendo de um país distante*. Tendo sido descrita por Augusto Ceressa (1999) como uma “violenta recriação de um clássico”, percebe-se, se colocarmos as duas peças lado a lado, que tudo é, ao mesmo tempo, muito semelhante e muito diferente: é uma semelhança com diferença crítica. Tem-se a impressão de que é Shakespeare, de que grande parte dos episódios está lá, de que a crítica social se repete, de que os personagens revelam a mesma motivação interna. Entretanto, na versão contemporânea, o enfoque é outro: a radicalização, o grotesco, o travestimento e a paródia evidenciam a quebra da ilusão, a linguagem choca, a concepção cênica exige que o público participe como um observador atento a toda a evolução da ação – é como se Hirsch colocasse uma lupa sobre o que é peculiar, ampliasse e intensificasse os matizes da peça shakespeariana. O texto-fonte não mais fala, ele é falado; ele não mais revela, ele é revelado; ele não mais significa, ele é figurado metaforicamente (MIRANDA, 2005).

Chama nossa atenção o fato de o *Hamlet* shakespeariano “ser o texto mais frequentemente analisado de toda a literatura universal” (O’SHEA, 2010, p. 9). Por essa perspectiva, Marcel A. Amorin (2019) reitera que o interesse crítico por *Hamlet* é enorme conforme sinaliza o levantamento que aponta mais de 80 mil títulos já escritos sobre essa obra. Não é de espantar que seja também o texto de Shakespeare mais encenado uma vez que descortina uma grande potencialidade cênica. As recriações de *Hamlet* para o palco reverberam um conjunto de concepções estéticas e culturais, contextos sociopolíticos e filosóficos, questões de gênero e de poder. Nesse sentido, Jan Kott (2003, p. 74) menciona que “*Hamlet* é como uma esponja. [...] ele absorve imediatamente todos os problemas de nosso tempo”.

No Brasil, *Hamlet* alcançou um enorme prestígio entre os diretores de teatro que têm produzido dezenas de encenações dessa tragédia no decorrer das últimas três ou quatro décadas. Aderbal Freire-Filho (2008), quando dirigiu *Hamlet* em 2008, com Wagner Moura como o intérprete-protagonista, manifesta-se da seguinte forma: “O fascinante de *Hamlet* é sua força de atração. Mesmo quem não conhece nada da peça fica tomado pelo personagem”. Anos antes, na década de 1990, foi Ulysses Cruz quem produziu quatro peças de Shakespeare nas quais atuaram grandes nomes do teatro e televisão conforme Galery (1919, p. 134-135) ressalta:

Fizeram parte do elenco de *Macbeth* (1992) os atores Antônio Fagundes, Vera Fisher e Stênio Garcia; *Péricles* (1995), realizado com o apoio do SESI, contou com cenários e figurinos de Hélio Eichbauer; Paulo Autran, que fez vários papéis shakespearianos antes de trabalhar com o diretor paulistano, interpretou *Rei Lear* (1995) sob a direção de Cruz. Um ano mais tarde, Cruz levou *Hamlet* (1997) em cena com o ator Marco Ricca fazendo o papel principal.

A encenação de *Péricles* alcançou um grande sucesso, tendo sido apresentada para um público de 100 mil pessoas. Cruz ambicionava criar um Shakespeare popular, comunicativo e que fosse compreendido pelas pessoas que apreciavam espetáculos coloridos e movimentados, com música e coreografia. Esses efeitos visuais e a música ao vivo também foram um enorme atrativo para a produção do seu *Hamlet*, cuja estreia aconteceu no Teatro Sérgio Cardoso, em 1997. Além do diálogo que a encenação estabelece com o texto shakespeariano, ficam evidentes os ecos com outros intertextos como, por exemplo, *Hamletmachine*, de Heiner Müller. Ainda na mesma década, em 1993, Zé Celso decide apresentar uma releitura antropofágica do texto shakespeariano para celebrar a reinauguração do Teatro Oficina. O título da peça *Ham-let* recebeu um hífen objetivando chamar a atenção para o termo *ham* e, cujo significado, em inglês, quer dizer *atuar com exagero, de forma melodramática*. Nesse sentido, o *Ham-let* de Zé Celso passa a significar *solta o canastrão* (GALLERY, 2019, ênfase da autora). O vínculo dessa proposta estética com o contexto político brasileiro torna-se explícito no decorrer de todo o espetáculo como também é emblemática a reabertura do Teatro Oficina, “... local que fora cenário de contestação artística e resistência política durante os anos de chumbo da ditadura” (GALLERY, 2019, p. 132). Zé Celso menciona que “[...] seu grupo ‘devorou’ o cânone shakespeariano para transformá-lo num ato de transgressão e antropofagia” (GALLERY, 2019, p. 133, ênfase da autora).

A priorização do enfoque político brasileiro igualmente transparece de forma muito impactante no *Hamlet* de Marcelo Marchioro, cuja estreia aconteceu no dia 20 de agosto de 1992, na véspera do *impeachment* do Presidente Fernando Collor de Mello. Anna S. Camati (2019, p. 145) menciona que “[...] alguns dias antes da estreia, milhares de jovens tomaram as ruas nas principais das capitais brasileiras, vestindo roupas pretas e com os rostos pintados da mesma cor, em sinal de luto contra a corrupção”. Tendo como objetivo produzir uma imagem concreta do caos que estava impregnado no Brasil, Marchioro inundou o palco com lama, sangue e sucata. Também foram colocados, no fundo e laterais do cenário, grandes tambores da Petrobras pintados com as cores da bandeira nacional – os recursos visuais tornam-se uma evidente metáfora da corrupção e desordem que estavam instauradas no solo brasileiro (CAMATI, 2019). É preciso reconhecer que a escolha feita por Marchioro para representar essa peça específica naquele exato momento, quando o país estava tomado pelas manifestações de rua, foi

muito acertada. Ou seja, a encenação conseguiu estabelecer um elo “[...] entre as questões evidenciadas no texto apropriado e as circunstâncias locais prevalentes à época da recepção da produção cênica” (CAMATI, 2019, p. 146). Esse espetáculo, juntamente com a encenação de *Sonho de uma noite de verão*, em 1991, também realizada por Marchioro, fazia parte do projeto cultural “Shakespeare no Parque”, uma realização da Prefeitura de Curitiba, objetivando divulgar e popularizar Shakespeare.

Apesar de estarmos priorizando no presente artigo as apropriações e transformações da obra shakespeariana para o palco, torna-se difícil deixar de mencionar, nem que seja de forma breve, a adaptabilidade de seus textos para a mídia televisiva através das telenovelas, como as produções *Pedra sobre pedra* (1992), *Fera ferida* (1993-1994), *O cravo e a rosa* (2000-2001) e *O rei do gado* (1996-1997), dentre outras. Aimara da Cunha Resende reitera em seu excelente artigo sobre Shakespeare na televisão brasileira que “É assim que Shakespeare ressurge na terra tupiniquim, não só nos palcos, mas, de forma bem marcante e característica, na televisão” (RESENDE, 2016, p. 180).

Lima Duarte (1921), que testemunhou o nascimento da televisão no Brasil, tem um grande orgulho de ter sido o primeiro ator a representar Shakespeare nessa mídia. É emocionante lermos o seu depoimento que expressa a memória dos espetáculos dos quais participou:

Eu fiz o primeiro Shakespeare da televisão [...]. Isso era 1952. Fiz o Hamlet, quando eu podia. Hamlet teria uns trinta anos, segundo a peça. [...] Depois fiz também *Macbeth*, tudo ao vivo, preto e branco, aquela televisão movida a lenha. No *Macbeth* fiz o Macduff. Também fizemos *Otelo*, e interpretei o Iago, a encarnação do demônio. Na televisão, Shakespeare deve ter sido feito umas três ou quatro vezes. O primeiro fui eu. Depois foi o Luiz Gustavo, o Tatá, o Beto Rockfeller, que fez o Hamlet. Depois Juca de Oliveira fez também o *Hamlet*. Isso tudo na televisão velha, antiga... Em todos eu trabalhei. Nesse *Hamlet* do Luiz Gustavo, o Dionísio Azevedo foi quem dirigiu e ele queria que eu fizesse o Hamlet e eu disse: “Não, eu não faço o Hamlet. Outra vez, não. Agora já estou muito velho. Para você não falar que não quero trabalhar faço o Horácio”. (DUARTE, 2021, p. 521- 422)

Essa profusão de encenações das peças de Shakespeare na atualidade brasileira a que Lima Duarte se refere já fazia parte da realidade dos ingleses, principalmente, desde a década de 1580 até meados do século XVII uma vez que o teatro elisabetano foi extremamente popular e frequentado por todas as classes sociais. O público, herdeiro de uma tradição medieval que também era muito popular, cujas convenções teatrais foram sendo sedimentadas durante muitos séculos, assistiu à transição gradual do teatro religioso para o secular, do teatro das carroças – que serviam de palco, transporte e, muitas vezes, de abrigo – para os pátios internos das hospedarias que representavam na época um importante papel na vida social e econômica dos londrinos, além de atrair

muitas pessoas que queriam se divertir. As carroças, que eram encostadas na parede oposta ao portão de entrada do pátio interno das hospedarias, continuaram a ser o palco para a apresentação das peças; o público se acomodava ao redor da carroça e nas sacadas internas que se tornavam as galerias desse teatro improvisado. Em 1576, James Burbage construiu a primeira casa de espetáculos em Londres que passou a ser chamada The Theatre. Essa construção a céu aberto seguiu o modelo usado nos pátios das hospedarias, entretanto, Burbage introduziu modificações cruciais tanto em relação ao espaço cênico, que foi ampliado, quanto às arquibancadas. Tornou-se uma configuração teatral sem precedentes. Em poucos anos outros sete teatros públicos foram construídos na cidade.

Muitas das produções brasileiras das peças shakespearianas estabelecem um elo muito próximo com o público ao levarem as encenações para as ruas das cidades e praças públicas – esse teatro de rua faz uma referência direta ao teatro popular medieval e elisabetano na Inglaterra onde o povo de todas as classes sociais participava e se posicionava nas imediações do palco/carroça ou nas galerias. Ou seja, a estrutura intimista do teatro permitia que os atores ficassem tão próximos dos espectadores que tornava a plateia cúmplice da ação dramática. Nesse sentido, é fácil imaginarmos o impacto e o sucesso que as encenações, dirigidas por Gabriel Vilella, de *Romeu e Julieta* do Grupo Galpão (Belo Horizonte) e de *Sua Incelença, Ricardo III* do Grupo Clowns de Shakespeare (Rio Grande do Norte) alcançaram, uma vez que ambas foram concebidas para serem apresentadas na rua. Foi uma grande alegria quando uma boa parcela da população pôde usufruir dessa experiência artística e cultural sem precedentes. A produção intercultural de *Sua Incelença*, em 2010, ganhou as ruas das cidades por onde passou agregando o público, que foi atraído pelo despojamento circense, músicas tipicamente nordestinas (as incelenças) as quais foram mescladas ao rock clássico inglês. O Grupo Galpão, por sua vez, teve, como objetivo primordial, desde a sua fundação em 1982, “[...] produzir encenações que fossem acessíveis ao grande público e que refletissem com humor e crítica, os vários aspectos da política e da realidade cultural do país” (ALVES; NOE, 2006, p. 33-34). A montagem de *Romeu e Julieta*, em 1991, representou um sucesso absoluto não apenas no âmbito nacional como também na Europa e Estados Unidos. Em 2000, sua apresentação no recém-restaurado Globe Theatre, em Londres, foi emocionante.

Esse pequeno panorama sobre a presença de Shakespeare no Brasil é, certamente, muito acanhado em relação à multiplicidade de leituras e releituras que existem a partir da ótica contemporânea. As adaptações cênicas das suas tragédias, comédias e peças históricas que se proliferam pelo nosso país são uma prova evidente de que Shakespeare, ao atravessar o circuito anglo-saxão, está sendo assimilado pelo contexto brasileiro de maneira criativa e inovadora, fato que tem ampliado a sua popularidade em terras brasileiras. Quando Anne Ubersfeld (2002, p. 26) lança a pergunta, “como assegurar a



permanência do texto clássico?”, afirma que o dismantelamento dos textos clássicos já é um fato incontestável e que a ênfase nas produções cênicas deve ser colocada no heterogêneo e na descontinuidade. Dentro desse pressuposto, sabe-se que, se a visão tradicionalista tivesse predominado ao longo desses 450 anos, certamente, cada produção shakespeariana seria um transplante inanimado da página para o palco, e a originalidade e talento que a mente contemporânea traz para os conceitos tradicionais seria menor, senão inexistente.

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Manifesto a minha imensa alegria de participar desta merecida homenagem para o nosso grande mestre José Roberto O’Shea que é um dos nomes mais respeitados não apenas da cultura brasileira como da internacional. Sua vocação de educador abriu muitas oportunidades para os seus alunos como também para todos os aficionados pelos estudos shakespearianos através de seus cursos, palestras, artigos, livros, traduções e orientações acadêmicas. Pessoalmente, tive a honra de ter sido supervisionada pelo José Roberto na realização do Estágio Pós-Doutoral no Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras/Inglês e Literatura Correspondente da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina quando desenvolvi a pesquisa intitulada “Shakespeare Intercultural: *Otelo* em terras brasileiras”, sob os auspícios do CNPQ.

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Volume 14 of ARES is a tribute to the person and career of one of the most distinguished members of the Postgraduate Programme in English (PPGI) at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC): Professor José Roberto O'Shea. The articles included in the volume – research papers by ten of his former PhDs and Post-docs in Shakespeare Studies at PPGI-UFSC – provide a wide view of his main area of expertise.

