HAMLET ON SCREEN: KUROSAWA AND ZEFFIRELLI

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EKRANIZACIJE *HAMLETA*: KUROSAWA I ZEFFIRELLI

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Summary

To begin with, this paper analyses and compares two film adaptations of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet.* One is Franco Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* (1990) and the other one Akira Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* (1960). The paper observes similarities and differences between these adaptations and different ways they adapt certain aspects of the the source text. The chosen adaptations are analysed through their characters, main themes and the major scenes. While the emphasis of this study is on the exploration of the main themes, characterization and analysis of the most notable scenes serve the purpose of contextualizing them not just within the film itself but also in relation to Shakespeare's tragedy and each other. Finally, the purpose of this paper is to prove a thesis that Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* and Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* prove the timelessness of the main themes from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and their relevance in different contexts.

Key words: adaptation, film, Hamlet*,* Kurosawa, Shakespeare, *The Bad Sleep Well*, Zeffirelli

Sažetak

Za početak, u ovom radu analiziraju se i uspoređuju dvije filmske adaptacije *Hamlet*a Williama Shakespearea. Prva adaptacija je *Hamlet* Franca Zeffirellija (1990.), a druga Zli mirno spavaju (*The Bad Sleep Well*) Akire Kurosawe (1960.). U radu se opisuju sličnosti i razlike između ovih adaptacija te različiti načini na koje su prikazani određeni aspekti izvornog teksta. Odabrane adaptacije analizirane su kroz likove, glavne teme i ključne scene. Iako je naglasak stavljen na istraživanje glavnih tema, karakterizacija i analiza najznačajnijih scena služe kako bi se te teme kontekstualizirale ne samo unutar samog filma, već i u odnosu na Shakespeareovu tragediju i međusobno. Konačno, svrha ovog rada je dokazati tezu da Zeffirellijev *Hamlet* i Kurosawin *The Bad Sleep Well* potvrđuju bezvremenost i relevantnost glavnih tema Shakespeareovog *Hamlet*a u različitim kontekstima.

Ključne riječi: adaptacija, film, Hamlet*,* Kurosawa, Shakespeare, *The Bad Sleep Well*, Zeffirelli

Thesis: The purpose of my study is to explore the capacity of cinematic interpretations to maintain the thematic integrity and literary essence of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* by analysing and comparing two of its adaptations, Franco Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* and Akira Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well.* I intent to achieve that by analysing narrative fidelity, character portrayals, and thematic relevance in the chosen adaptations. My thesis endeavours to determine the extent to which film can effectively portray the intricate aspects of *Hamlet* as a literary work, transcending mere visual representation to maintain its prevailing literary significance. The main thesis of my paper is that Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* and Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well*, using different approaches and cinematic techniques, prove the ability of the themes from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* like revenge, corruption, madness, the position of women and death to resonate through different temporal and cultural contexts.

1. Introduction

In my paper, I will analyse and compare two film adaptations of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. The first movie is Franco Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, and the other one, with a different name but a similar plot, Akira Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well*, originally *Warui yatsu hodo yoku nemuru (*悪い奴ほどよく眠る*)*.

Zeffirelli's film replicates the plot of the original play with both its plot and dialogue. Also, components like the names and titles of the characters as well as places follow the original script. Even though most of the scenes replicate ones from the show, some parts are changed, placed in a different order or completely omitted.

On the other hand, Akira Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* has a different setting and plot. It is set in Japan where a vengeful young man marries the daughter of a corrupt industrialist in order to seek justice for his father's suicide. (IMDb, n.d.). The premise of the film is similar to that of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

After the introduction, in the following chapters of this paper, my objective will be to present, analyse and compare these two films in more detail, including characterization, analysis of the main themes and scenes, and finally a closing summary of the comparison between the two adaptations to one another and to the source text. The objective will be to present how the main ideas from Shakespeare's text can be adapted in different ways.

2. Introduction to Adaptation Theory

In order to discuss adaptations, some of the basic principles of the adaptation theory should be explained. Although there is an array of studies concerning film theory, referencing the theories of a few authors dealing with that topic should summarize it well enough. Author Linda Hutcheon, in her book *A Theory of Adaptation*, offers a detailed study of the adaptation theory. In the first chapter "Beginning to theorize adaptation: What? Who? Why? How? Where? When?", Hutcheon offers a thought-provoking idea that, if we are familiar with the prior text, we will always feel the presence of the source text. She explains that calling some work an adaptation directly connects it with some other work. She continues to support her statement by explaining how adaptation studies are often comparative studies. But, she makes a valuable point that adaptations are also autonomous, unique works. She uses these ideas as a base for her theory that adaptations should not be criticized and analysed based on their fidelity to the source text.

However, she offers a different perspective by stating that there are more possible intentions behind adaptations. She points out that the intention to honour some text is as likely as the intention to erase the memory of the original text (Hutcheon, 2006, pp. 6-7).

Hutcheon offers some valuable insights when discussing adaptation theory, more precisely the theory about the duality of adaptations' intentions. This duality suggests that adaptations can serve both to honour and to diverge from the original text, depending on the creator's intention. By suggesting that adaptations can aim to preserve the essence of the source material while simultaneously transforming it, Hutcheon offers a new perspective for viewing those works.

Her analysis encourages a more flexible approach to evaluating adaptations, one that considers the complex interplay between homage and innovation. Rather than merely measuring an adaptation against its source, Hutcheon's perspective invites us to appreciate the ways in which these works contribute to an ongoing dialogue with the original text, as well as how they stand as independent artistic expressions. This approach not only enriches our understanding of adaptation as a creative process but also enhances our appreciation for the diverse ways stories can be reimagined across different media.

Author Kamilla Elliott (2014) explores Linda Hutcheon's adaptation theory and places it in a broader context of 20th and 21st century adaptation studies in her article "Rethinking Formal-Cultural and Textual-Contextual Divides in Adaptation Studies". At the beginning of her article, before referring to Hutcheon's work, Elliot divides adaptation studies into two opposing theories, "formal/ textual and cultural/contextual theories". Furthermore, she explains the main theory that aesthetic formalists of the twentieth century represent the idea that literature and film should be

treated as entirely distinct art forms. However, at the beginning of the 21st century, the separation between formal and cultural scholars intensifies and they start to oppose and eliminate each other's ideas.

After emphasizing the counter-productive nature of this schism in adaptation studies, she points out how many scholars rejected the cultural theory represented by authors like Deborah Cartmell, Sarah Cardwell, Thomas Leitch, and others. She blames the lack of dialogues between Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysts for the reductive debates between two kinds of adaptation theorists.

Furthermore, after giving an overview of the history of the mentioned division between two types of scholars in adaptation studies. Moving forward to the 21st century, Elliott goes on to compare Linda Cahir's *Literature into Film: Theory and Practical Approaches* and Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation.* The main difference is, of course, their approach to adaptation theory, Cahir taking a formal approach and Hutcheon taking a cultural approach. That entails another significant difference - while Cahir's theory focuses on translation as the primary type of adaptation and thus divides formal and cultural approach, Hutcheon considers not just films but also musicals, ballets etc. as adaptations. Even though Hutcheon also considers a formal approach, cultural is still the primary one.

Furthermore, Elliot concludes this section with a conclusion that Hutcheon's versatility in studying adaptations was not enough for the unification of the two opposing groups, causing the rift to continue (Elliot, 2016, pp. 576-580).

To conclude, Elliott underscores that despite Hutcheon's versatile approach to adaptation studies, the division between formal and cultural adaptation theorists persisted. This ongoing rift highlights the enduring challenges in achieving a unified framework within the field.

All in all, both formal and cultural approaches, with their unique interpretation of adaptation theory , offer valuable insights about this field of study. Consequently, when researching adaptation theory it is important to consider both approaches. However, Hutcheon's *Adaptation Theory* presents revolutionary ideas that one should consider while analysing certain adaptations.

However, when studying Shakespeare's adaptations it is important to research authors who specialize in this field. One of the authors is Anthony R. Guneratne who offers a detailed study of some of Shakespeare's works in his book *Shakespeare, film studies, and the visual cultures of modernity.* Among other Shakespeare's literature works, Guneratne also provides a chapter about

Hamlet, but before delving into that, it is important to refer to the author's classification of adaptation or more precisely his criteria for it.

Tendencies in Film Adaptations

To preserve the printed text, score or choreography (A+)	To alter the printed text, score or choreography (A−)
To preserve the setting (B+)	To alter the setting (B−)
To preserve the time period (C+)	To alter the time period (C−)
To preserve the performance tradition (D+)	Not to preserve the performance tradition (D−)
To preserve the sociopolitical context of the original (E+)	To amend the sociopolitical context of the original (E−)

Fig. 1: "Tendencies of film adaptations" (Source: Guneratne, Shakespeare, film studies, and the visual cultures of modernity, 2008)

Later on, Guneratne offers Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* as an example to help the readers understand his theory. According to his table, the author names Akira Kurosawa one of the most "surprising directors" who seeks dramatic and historical equivalents for his versions of Shakespeare. Furthermore, Guneratne uses Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* as an example of Shakespeare's adaptation in which Kuosawa focuses on providing "moral commentaries" thus achieving the E++ category while disregarding the other categories (Guneratne, 2008, pp. 31-332).

To conclude, Guneratne's analysis of Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* serves as a compelling illustration of how a director can successfully adapt Shakespeare's work by prioritizing certain thematic elements over others. By focusing on "moral commentaries" Kurosawa elevates the adaptation to an E++ category, demonstrating how a creative reinterpretation, despite setting aside some elements that other authors include, can stay true to the essence of Shakespeare's plays while offering a fresh perspective. Guneratne's use of this example can be connected to Hutcheon's theory that an adaptation should be analysed as an autonomous work. According to Hutcheon, adaptations should be evaluated on their own, rather than solely on how closely they interpret the source material. This perspective suggests that, even though *The Bad Sleep Well* prioritizes one of Guneratne's criteria, it remains significant. Kurosawa's adaptation, therefore, demonstrates that work can diverge from certain aspects of the original Shakespearean play while still offering a powerful interpretation that resonates with its audience.

All in all, the theory of adaptation is a complex field of study with a complicated history and a wide range of sub-theories that contribute to the exploration and study of the field. When studying adaptation, it is important to consider those different interpretations and consider them while examining either adaptation theory alone or a certain adaptation.

3. About chosen adaptations

In the following chapters, two adaptations will be presented. The goal is to summarize and present the cinematic background and context behind Franco Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* and Akira Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well*. The intention of the following chapters is to explore authors' inspiration for their works and the temporal context in order to integrate them into a cohesive whole that will help with understanding how these adaptations developed.

3.1. *The Bad Sleep Well* (1960)

Akira Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* was released in 1960. It is considered an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet.* The setting and characters do not follow the source text but the plot and the general idea are somewhat similar which will be explained later in this paper.

During a high-profile wedding the daughter of Mr Iwabuchi, an important Japanese businessman, is marrying Mr Nishi who is a car salesman. Mr Iwabuchi and his colleagues are suspected of corporate misconduct and the wedding turns into sort of a satire overflowing with the press. The main event of the wedding is when the company officials are publicly reminded of an event which occurred a few years ago when one of the senior employees jumped from the 7th floor of their headquarters. This prompts a chain of other suicides that are seemingly connected to the suicide from seven years ago ("IMDb", n.d.).

In his essay "*The Bad Sleep Well*: Shakespeare's Ghost" Michael Almereyda gives his review of Kurosawa's work. He states that Kurosawa's film replicates some components of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* even though it does not present itself as a direct adaptation.

Almereyda's essay highlights Kurosawa's ability to reinterpret Shakespeare's themes and structures within the context of post–World War II Japan, without strictly adhering to a direct adaptation. By drawing parallels between *Hamlet* and *The Bad Sleep Well*, Almereyda illustrates how Kurosawa

cleverly uses elements from the original play to create a unique narrative that resonates with the socio-political climate of post-war Japan. The comparison of the wedding banquet scene with Shakespeare's play within a play emphasizes Kurosawa's innovative approach to storytelling, demonstrating his ability to capture a part of *Hamlet*'s essence while making it relevant to a different social and cultural context. This way Kurosawa adapts Shakespeare's ideas by showcasing their universality. Additionally, by placing the scene at the beginning of the film, Kurosawa proves his creativity and ability to achieve a similar effect even if changing the structure of the plot.

3.2. *Hamlet* (1990)

Unlike *The Bad Sleep Well* Franco Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* stays faithful to the source text. It is a much more literal adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* including the setting, characters, and plot. The feature that is at the same time stimulating and slightly challenging is that the film also uses the language of the original text. While it might be somewhat more difficult to follow when watching than when reading, it retains the authenticity of the source text.

The film begins when Hamlet returns to Denmark when his father, the King, dies. His mother Gertrude has already married Hamlet's uncle Claudius who became the new ruler of Denmark. The plot starts to develop when the ghost of Hamlet's father appears and tells Hamlet that he was murdered by Claudius and Gertrude. Hamlet is torn between docility and the need for vengeance which might result in severe repercussions for himself and Denmark ("IMDb", n.d.).

These short summaries about *Hamlet* and *The Bad Sleep Well* will help in analysing and comparing the two films. If we understand the general idea, it will surely be easier to get to the core of the matter discussed in this paper.

4. Characters

The characters in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* replicate the characters from the source material. Both the film and Shakespeare's play feature Hamlet, Ophelia, Gertrude, Claudius and Hamlet's father in the form of a ghost. However, that is not the case with all of the characters in Kurosawa's

The Bad Sleep Well. Kōichi Nishi resembles the character of Hamlet in his characteristics and role in the story and Yoshiko resembles Ophelia. They are both tender, gentle characters that are quite antithetical to other characters. On the other hand, the ghost character in s *The Bad Sleep Well* is different in two significant points which will be discussed later on in the paper.

After this brief introduction to characters in Kurosawa's and Zeffirelli's films, the next goal is to analyse and compare a few of the major characters in those films. The in-depth character analysis will help in later understanding and analysing the major themes and scenes.

4.1. Hamlet and Kōichi Nishi

Both Hamlet and Nishi can be considered conventional tragic heroes. More precisely, they have an established goal, an antagonist that presents an obstacle to their mission, and finally, they meet their demise in pursuit of their objective. In addition, the thirst for revenge, as an essential part of their pursuit, is what motivates them and makes them similar not just to one another but also to Hamlet from the source text.

To begin with, Kurosawa and Zeffirelli manage to lively interpret Hamlet's character, especially his vengeful spirit. Even though vengeance defines Hamlet and brings out his madness, Nishi's goals are even more powerful, as it would unmask the affairs of Iwabuchi and his associates. That surpasses mere revenge because people responsible for his father's suicide could be punished for their crimes instead of it just being revealed. On the other hand, even though Hamlet wants to punish Claudius, he remains focused on the revelation of the crime rather than the punishment. This difference in their approach to vengeance also highlights the difference between their mental states while trying to complete their tasks. Nishi seems to be more prudent than Hamlet from Zeffirelli's film. It is obvious that he is driven by anger and vengeance but he does not seem to be mad like Hamlet. His actions are much more thought through.

Furthermore, one of the secondary traits that protagonists often have is a love interest that Shakespeare's and Zeffirelli's Hamlet and Kurosawa's Nishi also have. However, there is a clear difference between them in this aspect. To begin with, Hamlet is not using Ophelia as a part of his plan while Yoshiko is one of the crucial components of Nishi's plan. Even though Hamlet and Ophelia are not in an official relationship, Hamlet seems much less cold towards her than Nishi towards Yoshiko. After their wedding, Nishi isolates himself from Yoshiko and becomes more focused on his ploy. However, later in the story, Hamlet becomes more rough and cruel towards Ophelia while Nishi becomes more affectionate towards Yoshiko.

One of the major distinctions between them is also their relationship with their father. To begin with, Hamlet was close to his father and was supposed to be an heir to the throne whereas Nishi was an illegitimate child. Despite the contrast in their family backgrounds, their motives for seeking revenge are similar. Hamlet's desire for vengeance stems from his deep affection for his father, whereas Nishi seeks to compensate for the lost time with his father. This can be seen in the way they speak about their fathers. There is, however, a difference even in the way Zeffirelli's Hamlet talks about his father in comparison with Shakespeare's Hamlet. For example, Shakespeare's Hamlet, while confronting his mother describes his father with a number of epithets:

"See what a grace was seated on this brow:

Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,

An eye like Mars, to threaten and command,

A station like the herald Mercury

New lighted on a heaven-kissing hill —

A combination and a form indeed

Where every god did seem to set his seal

To give the world assurance of a man." (Shakespeare, 2002, pp. 139)

This kind of description indicates Hamlet's idealised perception of his father, emphasizing his affection towards him.

However, Zeffirelli shortens this description, omitting the comparisons with deities:

"See, what a grace was seated on this brow. A combination and a form indeed where every god did seem to set his seal to give the world assurance of a man." (Zeffirelli, 1990, 01:20:21 - 01:20:34)

This, however, seems like an artistic choice rather than a narrative-driven decision.

Conversely, Nishi talks about his father mostly in terms of revenge:

"For five years now, I've lived only to avenge my father's death. I carry this picture

with me always. The poor man." (Kurosawa, 1960, 01:21:27 - 01:21:45)

This indicates that his affection towards his father is inseparable from his guilt of not knowing his father better.

Moreover, although their reasons are different, the plan and its execution are similar. It is justifiable to claim that both Kurosawa and Zeffirelli manage to vividly illustrate the vengeful spirit of Shakespeare's Hamlet. Kurosawa achieves a balance between Nishi's plotting and his eagerness to avenge his father and Zeffirelli focuses on Hamlet's scheming to unmask Claudius. That aspect seemed even more intense in Kurosawa's adaptation than in the source text. Nevertheless, vengeance was one of the crucial defining characteristics for both Hamlet and Nishi which will be discussed later in this paper.

Aside from the father-son relationship, the mother-son relationship is even more significant. That mostly applies to Zeffirelli's adaptation but is also relevant to the original text. However, this relationship is not a significant part of Kurosawa's film. In her article "Presentation of Hamlet and Gertrude in Franco Zeffirelli's Hamlet" author Magdalena Cieślak (2002) deals with the topic of Zeffirelli's interpretation of the relationship between Hamlet and his mother Gertrude. First, she points out how a scene in which Gertrude and Claudius discuss their marriage with Hamlet is altered to be more intimate. In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, this conversation is integrated into the court scene, but in the film, it is held in Hamlet's study. Cieślak emphasized the part of the scene in which Gertrude holds Hamlet. Even though Hamlet ignored his mother's words, he found himself helpless before her tenderness. An observation by the author that seems particularly significant in the context of Zeffirelli's adaptation is the discord between Hamlet and Gertrude's emotional connection. While Gertrude displays profound affection for Hamlet, her sentiments lean towards a more maternal role.

On the other hand, Hamlet struggles with the unsettling notion that Gertrude, not solely as his mother but also as a woman, is engaged in a romantic relationship with his uncle Claudius. Cieślak makes an important observation that in Zeffirelli's film, the events mentioned earlier happened before Hamlet's encounter with his father's ghost. It becomes evident that Hamlet's distress towards Claudius and Gertrude's marriage stems from his feelings for Gertrude rather than solely for Claudius. This interpretation gains credibility when Hamlet's father's ghost expresses affection for Gertrude and directs his wrath towards his brother (Cieslak, 2002, pp. 46-49).

As Cieślak explained, in Zeffirelli's film, the relationship between mother and son is the centre of the plot, and Hamlet's behaviour revolves around his feelings towards his mother and her new marriage. On the other hand, this relationship is not an integral part of Kurosawa's film. Nishi's

relationship with his mother is only mentioned in relation to his father and the fact that Nishi is an illegitimate child.

Furthermore, the difference that is important to mention when we compare Hamlet and Nishi is also their social status. Due to the fact that the historical periods and cultures they lived in are fairly different, their social status is incomparable. Hamlet is a prince of Denmark and his social status is clear despite his madness. His royal status is further reinforced by the fact that his mother remains the queen even though the new king is not his father. Other than that, Hamlet's reputation as a prince was already firmly established within the kingdom and among the subjects of Denmark.

In contrast, if we set aside Nishi's con, we can discuss his social status by comparing it to Hamlet's. Just as it is suggested by the reporters at the beginning of the film, Nishi married Yoshiko to get ahead in the company. He was not an important or powerful member of society until he married the daughter of an important figure in the business world. Even though moving up the hierarchy was not his main goal, he still would not be able to achieve his objectives without marrying Yoshiko. As opposed to Hamlet, his status was not secured by birthright, he had to earn his position through strategic alliances and marriage.

Last but not least, a personality trait that is also noticeable is inventiveness. Despite Hamlet's madness, whether feigned or genuine, his plan for Mousetrap emphasises his cleverness and creativity. The best example in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* is when he meets the acting crew and explains what he wants them to perform. He meticulously explains his vision for their performance, giving them precise directions. This act of staging a play within the play is an ingenious plan that proves Hamlet's capacity for strategising in his quest for truth and justice. Similarly, this trait can be seen when Nishi describes how he acquired his fake identity and planned the wedding cake stunt. Unlike Hamlet's improvised plan, it is evident that Nishi's manoeuvre is a product of long-term planning. The contrast between Hamlet's spontaneous strategy and Nishi's detailed plan highlights the difference between their approaches to achieving their goals. Both characters, however, share a common goal to achieve truth and justice.

In conclusion, the main character is one of the most significant indicators when we discuss adaptations. Zeffirelli's Hamlet and Kurosawa's Nishi both embody the characteristics of Shakespeare's Hamlet. Even though Zeffirelli's Hamlet bears more similarities to Shakespeare's Hamlet, Nishi manages to replicate the essence of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* just enough for the different settings and periods to remain true to Hamlet from the source text. That being said, both

adaptations successfully interpreted Hamlet's main features, mostly his ingenuity and appetite for revenge.

4.2. Ophelia and Yoshiko

Both Ophelia and Yoshiko stand out among other characters because, unlike other characters, they do not have a dark secret or a hidden agenda. They are pure and serve as a contrast to the rest of the characters. Some of their defining features are their childish and naive characteristics.

In her book *Enter the Body: Women and Representation on Shakespeare's Stage* author Carol Chillington Rutter describes Bonham-Carter's Ophelia as childish. She noticed an example of that when Ophelia tried to put a thread through the eye of her needle which seemed like she was aiming a camel through it. Rutter also noticed that Ophelia's face looks older than her mannerisms and her clothes, for example, a white bonnet tied under her chin. Even though these features make her seem juvenile, her face displays more mature thoughts and emotions.

Additionally, after she goes mad, Ophelia in Zeffirelli's film is also depicted as unattractive. The portrayal of her madness was fairly realistic. Unlike some other scenes and monologues in the film, her appearance and behaviour were convincing to the audience. Rutter offered a detailed description of Bonham Carter's performance. She noticed that Ophelia looked like she was climbing out of a tomb and that there was nothing attractive about her. Rutter describes her as a filthy ghost who is repulsive and lewd (Rutter, 2002, pp. 33, 37)

What makes Yoshiko similar to Ophelia from Zeffirelli's film is that she is not described as beautiful or flawless. In her article "The Auteur Affect: 'Forces of Encounter' between Shakespeare and Kurosawa in *The Bad Sleep Well*" author Felicity Gee (2016) comments on the wedding banquet scene. She points out how, during the scene where Mr. and Mrs. Nishi walk through the crowd, Yoshiko's limping is emphasized through a close-up of her feet because she wore a special platform sandal. During this scene, the journalists made a malicious comment about her struggle with walking (Gee, 2016, pp. 425).

Moreover, in the source text, Ophelia's physical appearance is not described so the character's looks depend on the actress and the director of the play or the film. This is why it is even more thought-provoking how Zeffirelli's Ophelia and Kurosawa's Yoshiko were given some unattractive traits. This could be attributed to a deliberate departure from the conventional femme fatale archetype. This is an example of how the artist interpreting the text can portray the character

in a way that aligns with the character from the source text even if other characteristics are attributed to the adapted character.

Furthermore, in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* Ophelia's character is profoundly influenced by men in her life. In the article "Hearing Ophelia: Gender and Tragic Discourse in Hamlet" author Sandra K. Fischer (1990) describes how Ophelia's discourse expresses uncertainty. She pointed out that Ophelia mimics her male interlocutors and later, she deteriorates to her mad speeches. (Fischer, 1990)

That indicates that Ophelia does not have a developed personality but rather imitates those around her. Both her actions and decisions are orchestrated by the men around her, she is merely their puppet, making her a symbol of the position and role of women of her time.

Similarly, Ophelia from Zeffirelli's adaptation is portrayed as immature and weak, her opinions and actions are easy to manipulate by her brother, father and Hamlet. This portrayal of Ophelia closely resembles her portrayal in the source text, solidifying her role as a passive character.

Furthermore, Yoshiko is portrayed as a naive character who is easily manipulated. For example, even after changing her opinion about her father upon learning the truth about him from Nishi, Yoshiko still gets manipulated into telling her father Nishi's location.

In conclusion, both Ophelia from Zeffirelli's film and Yoshiko possess similar traits to Ophelia from the source text. This is a good example of the directors' ability to demonstrate a theme of the position of women through one character and highlights how both films use these characters to explore the theme of women's vulnerability and lack of agency within patriarchal structures. By portraying Ophelia and Yoshiko as easily manipulated and passive, the directors emphasize the limited roles and power that women often hold in these narratives. This reinforces the idea that, despite different cultural contexts, the struggle of women to assert their autonomy remains a relevant and powerful theme. Through these characters, Zeffirelli and Kurosawa effectively illustrate the enduring relevance of Shakespeare's exploration of gender roles and the perception of women as naive and frail.

4.3. Ghost

The ghost character is considerably different in Zeffirelli's and Kurosawa's films. First, it is not a real ghost, it is actually a scheme. Second, the ghost is not Nishi's father. Kurosawa probably opted for that type of character portrayal to make his plot line more realistic and thus more impactful on the audience he meant to reach. Stripping the ghost character of its transcendental elements adds weight to that character. The ghost provokes the guilt in those whom he targets while in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, the ghost is an actual ghost and is presented in a more cinematic way, accompanied by eerie music, with unnatural movements, making him more contrived. That interpretation of the ghost noticeably derives from the ghost in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in which the ghost has a more important role. Conversely, even though his ghost was alive, in this aspect Kurosawa managed to reciprocate the meaning of the ghost more intensely than Zeffirelli. His ghost was, just like in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, a plot catalyst that initiated a series of dramatic events.

Furthermore, while Wada's position of assistant chief of contracts at Public Corp is not comparable to being the king of Denmark, partly because of the difference in the historical period and setting, his role in the narrative is much more impactful than in Zeffirelli's version and the source material itself. Wada's impact on the story is also increased by the fact that he is alive, which fits the setting of the adaptation and makes it more believable. Wada is a significant character and is much more involved in the plot than the Ghost in Zeffirelli's film. One of Wada's most significant appearances in the film is when Nishi makes him watch his own funeral. This scene exemplifies Wada's personality, he feels like he should kill himself because of a nice funeral and even after hearing the tape, he still does not show signs of anger or hate towards his former colleagues which makes Wada meek and non-confrontational.

Another element of Kurosawa's adaptation that is important to mention is that the Ghost is not Nishi's father. This choice not only makes the plot more realistic but also emphasizes that Nishi never had a good relationship with his father. Even if Kurosawa had opted for a ghost instead of a scheme, it would have been challenging to portray their relationship and genuine interaction. Instead, Nishi uses Wada to unveil the crime of his colleagues. In his book *Akira Kurosawa*, author Peter Wild refers to this as "...the haunting of Shirai by Wada,..." (Wild, 2014, pp. 121).

This observation summarizes Wada's role as a ghost in the film. Wada's main purpose is to haunt his colleagues to awaken their consciousness and make them aware of their crimes. In a way, Wada represents the victims of corruption, serving as a constant reminder of the consequences of their

actions. His presence forces the characters, and the audience, to confront his former colleagues with an impact of corruption and the inescapable guilt that accompanies it.

Moreover, even though Wada is a main parallel with the ghost from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, author Stephen Prince also interprets Itakura as a ghost. In his book *The Warrior's Camera: The Cinema of Akira Kurosawa* Stephen Prince brought to light the fact that Itakura would remain to haunt the landscape of past heroism just like Wada haunted Shirai in the present. Prince also points out how seeing his own funeral causes Wada's existential crisis as he is not sure whether he is alive or dead.

Furthermore, the author makes a connection between Itakura and Wada who were both in a way killed by Iwabuchi. While Wada was already dead in the eyes of society, Itakura lost his integrity and was left anticipating his demise (Prince, 1991, pp. 185-186).

This observation shines a different light on Nishi's whole scheme. Even though he planned to avenge his father and unveil the corruption of Iwabuchi and his associates, the only person left unharmed was Iwabuchi. That leaves us with a lingering question of whether this series of unfortunate events happened because Nishi was blinded by revenge and failed to see the weak points in his plan or if the plan was destined to fall through due to Iwabuchi's invincible power and influence. Nevertheless, the failure of Nishi's plot proves that nobody can overthrow Iwabuchi and others like him which shows that corruption is rooted deep in postwar Japan.

To conclude this chapter, the role of ghosts in both Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* and *The Bad Sleep Well* is one of the most important roles. However, in *The Bad Sleep Well* the role of the ghost is one of the central themes of the film, just like in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* while in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, the emphasis is more on Hamlet's relationship with his mother. Taking that into account, Kurosawa succeeded in transferring the ghost into a different spatial and temporal context. On the other hand, even though the context does not change in Zeffirelli's film, he does not make the most of the ghost.

4.4. Claudius and Vice President Iwabuchi

Both Claudius and Iwabuchi play the roles of the antagonists. In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, just like in Zeffirelli's adaptation, the antagonist is revealed gradually, as the protagonist searches for the truth about his father's death. On the other hand, in *The Bad Sleep Well*, the protagonist is aware

of the villain from the beginning. Accordingly, the film starts *in medias res*, meaning that the antagonist is exposed to the symbol of his crime at the very beginning of the film.

First, one of the significant elements is the relationship between the main character and the antagonist. In the original text as well as in Zeffirelli's adaptation, the antagonist is Hamlet's uncle and an heir to his late father's throne while in Kurosawa's adaptation, Nishi's main enemy is his new father-in-law who is also his superior. This kind of dynamic between the characters is somewhat similar in the original text as well as in both of the adaptations. In terms of family relations, both Claudius and Iwabuchi represent a sort of father figure. Claudius tries to establish a relationship with Hamlet and presents himself as the head of the family and Iwabuchi permits Nishi to marry his daughter which is a significant success for Nishi considering Iwabuchi's position, even if we set aside his scheme. Considering he let Nishi become part of his family and his closest circle of associates, we can conclude Iwabuchi trusted Nishi which matters more than affection in the corporate world. Conversely, Claudius had to gain Hamlet's trust using affection and comfort to get through to him.

Even though the relationships between Hamlet and Claudius and Nishi and Iwabuchi are similar, there is a significant difference. As previously described, in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, the Prince and his mother are very close which is the main reason for Hamlet's frustration and rage towards Claudius. On the other hand, Nishi's rage mostly stems from the desire to avenge his father and is directed towards Iwabuchi. In the source text, Hamlet's loathing for his uncle is also connected with his feelings towards his mother. However, it is more implicit than explicit like in Zeffirelli's adaptation, it is not one of the most prominent themes in the plot.

Furthermore, one of the most intriguing questions in Zeffireli's adaptation as well as in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is the protagonist's hesitation to murder his enemy. In his article "Hamlet and the Scanning of Revenge", author Paul Gottschalk (1973) suggests that older Hamlet's moderation, even if it is hypocritical, regarding revenge, intensifies Hamlet's rage directed at his uncle. This is manifested in Hamlet's speech during the prayer scene, where he hesitates to kill Claudius. Based on this observation, the author concludes that Hamlet's hesitation in seeking revenge is not due to a lack of bloodthirstiness compared to his father. Paradoxically, it is because his thirst for vengeance is more intense that he delays taking action (Gottschalk, 1973, p. 166).

This observation summarizes how Hamlet's madness changed his perception of the Ghost's words. At this point in the story, Hamlet is so blinded by his rage that he starts to drift away from the initial mission entrusted to him by his father's ghost.

Author John M. Major describes the relationship between Hamlet and Claudius. In his article "The "Letters Seal'D" in Hamlet and the Character of Claudius", Major (1958) summarizes various discussions and observations of other authors dealing with the issue of the timeline of Claudius's decision to murder Hamlet. He explains that some authors, specifically Bradley, Kittredge and Granville-Barker believe Claudius decided to murder Hamlet either before *the Mousetrap* play or between *the Mousetrap* and Polonius's death. However, Major believes otherwise and he agrees more with Howard Mumford Jones who suggests that Claudius decided to order Hamlet's murder only after Hamlet killed Polonius. Major argues that there are two kinds of letters, the initial one, that he calls commission, and the second one, that he calls mandate. Since Shakespeare does not make a clear distinction between these two kinds of letters, the confusion about the timeline is understandable.

Major proposes that Claudius initially decides to send Hamlet to England to protect himself and his kingdom from Hamlet's madness and that the decision to assassinate him is made only after *the mousetrap* or the murder of Polonius. This argument is supported by his notion that Claudius had no reason to kill Hamlet before suspecting that Hamlet knew about the murder. Another argument that Major offers is that another reason for the delay is Polonius's plan to reveal the cause of the Prince's madness. Last but not least, Major suggests his final and perhaps most relevant argument. More precisely, he disproves theories of other authors who think that, during the prayer scene, Claudius's plan has already been in motion. Keeping the audience unaware of a plot point like this would go against the narrative device of a Shakespearean soliloquy. Such deviation from Shakespeare's usual motifs is unlikely (Major, 1958).

Even though it focuses more on the timeline of the mandate for Hamlet's murder, Major's article gives a useful insight into Claudius's character. Major concludes that Claudius's decision was not premeditated which presents Claudius in a different light, as a man struggling with his conscience and initially trying to avoid further crimes.

This question can also be observed in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*. In the first instance Claudius mentions sending Hamlet to England he says:

"Madness in great ones must not unwatched go". (Zeffirelli,1990, 00:49:06 - 00:49:10)

While uttering this, Claudius seems concerned but his facial expressions do not indicate that he wants to harm Hamlet in any way, but that he genuinely cares for Hamlet's well-being and the peace in his kingdom.

Furthermore, two scenes might disprove the theory that the first letter orders Hamlet's murder. First, there is a scene right before the "Mousetrap" where Claudius asks Hamlet how he is feeling. Although this sign of affection could be insincere, it seems natural. Another scene that could further support the theory that the mandate for Hamlet's murder occurred later is, just like in Shakespeare's Hamlet, the prayer scene in which Claudius shows remorse for the murder of his brother.

Even though it is not certain whether or not the original letter is also Hamlet's death letter, these scenes provide compelling evidence that Claudius's initial intentions may not have included Hamlet's murder. This ambiguity in Claudius's character indicates the complexity and expanding his role from a mere villain to a diverse figure who struggles with his own morality and maintaining the power and influence in his kingdom.

In conclusion, both Major's article and Zeffirelli's adaptation offer an unconventional perspective of Claudius not just as a manipulative antagonist, but as a multi-layered character who is troubled by his own ambitions and fears.

After reconsidering Claudius's characteristics, it is important to highlight some of Iwabuchi's redeeming qualities as well. Observing Iwabuchi solely within his professional environment and from Nishi's perspective, it is clear that he is corrupt and criminal. However, in one scene of the film, he is seen preparing dinner with his daughter, displaying a milder aspect of his character. Despite this, by the end of the film, Iwabuchi appears indifferent to the fact that his children have disowned him. In summary, Iwabuchi is predominantly focused on maintaining his position and wealth, while aspects such as family and morality are secondary to him. He is thoroughly corrupt, and nothing seems capable of prompting him to reconsider his attitudes and conduct.

Moreover, it is evident that Zeffirelli's Claudius closely resembles Claudius from the source text. However, the film focuses more on Claudius's marriage to Gertrude than on his claim to the throne after the death of his brother. This shift in focus might be due to the film's emphasis on Hamlet and his perception of the situation, highlighting the personal and emotional dimensions of the characters over the political implications. In conclusion, while Zeffirelli's adaptation of Claudius closely mirrors Shakespeare's original portrayal, the adaptation prioritizes the character's personal relationships, offering a more intimate exploration of Claudius's emotional

struggles rather than the political dynamics of the original play which allows viewers to understand Claudius on a more personal level. Even though it derives from the original, this kind of portrayal is probably more alluring to a modern-day audience.

On the other hand, Iwabuchi is fundamentally similar to Shakespeare's Claudius. Their main characteristics are ambition for power and influence, despite the difference in time and place. However, Iwabuchi's overall character has more negative aspects than Claudius's as he is displaying more insensitive traits than Claudius who is more passionate and is struggling with his consciousness. In summary, Iwabuchi, while sharing Claudius's ambition and quest for power, is ultimately portrayed in a more negative light due to his insensitivity and lack of inner conflict. Conversely, Zeffirelli's Claudius shows affection, at least toward Gertrude, and remorse which can be seen in the prayer scene. All in all, even though Zeffirelli's Claudius might seem more similar to Shakespeare's, Kurosawa's equivalent of Claudius portrays the original character's personality more accurately.

4.5. Laertes and Tatsuo Iwabuchi

To begin with, Zeffirelli's Laertes closely resembles Shakespeare's with his character and role in the plot. Other than that, Tatsuo from *The Bad Sleep Well* resembles Shakespeare's and Zeffirelli's Laertes. For example, Laertes and Tatsuo can both be characterized by one defining feature, their devotion to their family. Laertes is overprotective towards Ophelia because he is concerned for her well-being, especially her chastity, due to her naive nature. Similarly, Tatsuo is suspicious of whether Nishi married Yoshiko out of corrupt intentions, particularly because of her deformation.

Something that adds gravity to the relationship between Yoshiko and Tatsuo is his involvement in her accident which makes him feel forever responsible for his sister as the accident significantly changed her life. The best example of Tatsuo's fear for his sister is pointed out by Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto in his book *Kurosawa: Film Studies and Japanese Cinema,* in which he cites Tatsuo when he warned Nishi that he would kill him if he did not take good care of Yoshiko. Later on, Yoshimoto also discussed the development of the relationship between Nishi and Tatsuo. He describes their relationship through the scene in which Yoshiko falls in the corridor after getting ice for Tatsuo's whiskey and Nishi helps her to get up. This proves to

Tatsuo that Nishi's fellings for Yoshiko are real and that he can finally relax and feel happy about his sister's marriage (Yoshimoto, 2000, pp. 280-281, 283).

This observation summarizes the relationship between Yoshiko and her brother through Tatsuo's concerns about Yoshio and Nishi's marriage, highlighting the deep sense of guilt and protective instinct Tatsuo feels toward his sister. As Tatsuo gradually realizes Nishi's genuine care for Yoshiko, his initial hostility softens, allowing him to find some peace regarding her well-being, which ultimately strengthens the bond between the siblings.

Similarly, in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* Ophelia's brother Laertes is concerned about his sister. However, instead of focusing on her emotions, he focuses more on her chastity, suggesting he does not believe his sister's judgement and decisions when it comes to her own body. This can be seen in a scene where Laertes warns Ophelia about Hamlet. He does not trust Hamlet and fears his intentions with Ophelia might be impure. This kind of dynamic between them is different than that between Yoshiko and Tatsuo, as it presents Laertes as controlling and sceptical.

In summary, even though their relationships might feel different at first, Yohiko and Tatsuo's relationship is more affectionate and sincere. However, the reason for this is probably a different time and culture in which the film takes place. Ultimately, while both brother-sister relationships are rooted in concern, the cultural and temporal contexts significantly shape their dynamics. Tatsuo's protective nature stems from a place of guilt and genuine care, whereas Laertes' concern is more controlling, reflecting the societal expectations and gender norms of his time.

Furthermore, there is one notable similarity between Laertes and Tatsuo – their determination. For example, Laertes seeks immediate revenge as soon as he finds out about his father's murder. Likewise, Tatsuo does not hesitate to fire a gun at Nishi after learning about his scheme. These characteristics indicate not only their loyalty to their family but also their determination to take action when needed.

All in all, Laertes and Tatsuo share a number of traits despite their different intentions. However, Zeffirelli's Laertes mirrors Shakespeare's Laertes while Tatsuo only bares certain similarities with the character.

4.6. Gertrude

Gertrude is one of the major characters in the source text, especially in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*. However, no character in *The Bad Sleep Well* mirrors Gertrude. Nishi's mother is mentioned in one instance but does not appear in the film. On the other hand, in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, Gertrude is one of the most significant characters. In the article "Toward an Objective Correlative: The Problem of Desire in Franco Zeffirelli's "Hamlet", author John P. McCombe (1997) discusses a problem of desire, primarily the desire between Hamlet and Gertrude. He points out that Zeffirelli prioritizes the relationship between Hamlet and his mother over the relationship between Hamlet and Ophelia, depicting Hamlet's apathy towards Denmark and the lack of affection towards Ophelia. Zeffirelli sets aside these possible desires to highlight the desire between mother and son. Later in the article, McCombe offers a more detailed explanation of this relationship. He compares Zeffirelli's adaptation to T.S. Eliot's essay "Hamlet and His Problems", emphasizing how Zeffirelli amplifies the relationship between Hamlet and Gertrude, making it appear more incestuous in contrast with the source text in which Hamlet is preoccupied with maintaining the stability of the state and with protecting his mother. The author believes Zeffirelli opted for this kind of simplified characterization and relationships between characters to emphasize Prince's yearning to fulfil Gertrude's desires (McCombe, 1997).

McCombe's article summarizes the relationship between Hamlet and Gertrude through the prism of incestuous desire. He points out how Zeffirelli reduced the character of Gertrude to an object of Hamlet's desire. Finally, McCombe concludes that this Oedipal tone to the film is a more provocative and simplified adaptation of Shakespeare's tragedy. This suggests that Zeffirelli's choice to accentuate the incestuous nature between Hamlet and Gertrude in a way dishonours Shakespeare's original intent by overshadowing the complexity of Gertrude's character and reducing her role to a mere object of desire. By focusing so heavily on this Oedipal interpretation, Zeffirelli diminishes Gertrude's maternal role which is integral to Shakespeare's portrayal of Gertrude, ultimately simplifying the dynamics between her and Hamlet.

Furthermore, author William Van Watson (1992) also comments on the relationship between Hamlet and Gertrude in his article "Shakespeare, Zeffirelli, and the Homosexual Gaze". Even though he focuses more on Zeffirelli's filmmaking and the homosexual gaze that characterizes his camera work, he also gives an overview of the mother-son relationship in Zeffirelli's Hamlet. Van Watson points out the incestuous nature of their relationship, explaining Gertrude's physical manifestations of affection towards her son, like kissing, caressing and so on. He particularly stresses one scene in the film in which Hamlet confronts Gertrude about the murder of his father.

In this scene, Hamlet pushes his mother onto the bed and mounts her which simulates sexual intercourse and is followed by a passionate kiss on the lips between mother and son. Watson points out the detail that, after this interaction, the camera focuses on Hamlet rather than on Gertrude, suggesting Zeffirelli's homosexual gaze (Van Watson, 1992, pp. 319-320).

This observation also stresses the incestuous desire between Hamlet and his mother with a special emphasis on the closet scene. However, unlike McCombe, who focuses more on the problem of the Oedipal nature of their relationship, Van Watson does not delve deep into the problem of this, but on the camera's homosexual gaze, capturing Hamlet rather than Gertrude. Even though the article focuses on a different issue, it suggests Hamlet's priority over Gertrude, which might indicate Zeffirelli simplifies her role not just during the conflict but in the film in general.

Furthermore, the insights of the two authors regarding Zeffirelli's Gertrude offer valuable perspectives on Gertrude's role in the film. While the Oedipal tendencies are evident between Hamlet and his mother, it is not clear whether it is intentional or caused by the director's oversight. On the other hand, this aspect of their relationship is not explicitly shown in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* which is another proof that Zeffirelli simplified Hamlet's characteristics and the overall plot of the film, especially the political instability and characters' aspirations for the throne. Additionally, he reduces Gertrude's role to an object of desire, giving her role as an active participant in the plot less attention. Either way, Zeffirelli omits some of the important parts from the book in favour of the mother-son relationship. Although, he certainly gave Gertrude a lot of screen time and thus raised her importance in comparison with Gertrude from the source text. It is questionable whether this choice suggests the director's patronizing opinion of women or rather his perception of the role on women in the source text. Despite the reason behind the directors' choice, it is important to notice Gertrude's depiction lacks depth, wasting the potential of her character.

4.7. Horatio and Itakura

Horatio from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Itakura from Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* serve the role of the protagonist's closest ally and best friend. However, Horatio from Zeffirelli's film does not play a prominent role as he does in the play. His role and relationship with Hamlet are most precisely described in Van Watson's article (1992) in which he points out that Zeffirelli

turns Horatio into a secondary character and lowers his relationship with Hamlet to a trivial level. As a most prominent example, Van Watson notes a scene of Hamlet's death. In the adaptation, Hamlet is lying on the floor and Horatio is in the same shot, but they are out of each other's reach to avoid homosexual tension. However, in the source text, Hamlet dies in Horatio's arms. Their relationship and the manners they communicate are quite cold and formal. (Van Watson, 1992, pp. 320)

Watson's view of the relationship between Hamlet and Horatio in Zeffirelli's offers a valuable observation. However, even though Horatio's role is noticeably reduced, the final scene between Hamlet and Horatio does not seem to indicate their estrangement. While Watson points out that the final shot where Horatio does not touch Hamlet, he omits the fact that Hamlet dies in Horatio's arms, which can be seen in a shot right before the final one:

Fig. 2: "Hamlet dies in Horatio's arms" (Source: Zeffirelli, *Hamlet*, 1990)

This shot questions Watson's statement that "...the homophobically-determined treatment of the relationship of Hamlet and Horatio refuses to risk an embrace between the two men even at Hamlet's death". (Van Watson,1992, 320)

In summary, while Horatio's role in Zeffirelli's film is reduced in comparison with his role in the source text, he does share one final tender moment with Hamlet, indicating that their relationship is not completely alienated.

Furthermore, in *The Bad Sleep Well*, Nishi's friend Itakura mirrors Shakespeare's Horatio. Unlike Zeffireli's Horatio, Itakura is a close friend of Nishi. The best representation of their relationship is an identity switch Nishi uses to perform his scheme. Only a close friend or someone highly motivated would give up their identity knowing the risks. Their relationship is warmer and more personal than the relationship between Hamlet and Horatio from Zeffirelli's film. Author Maple Wyand offers a short and precise summary of their relationship in an article "Were Shakespeare and Kurosawa Marxists?: Examining Structural Critiques in *Hamlet* and *The Bad Sleep Well*". Comparing their relationship to Hamlet and Horatio's, Wyand (2020) describes their relationship as true and sincere and describes it through one of the scenes from the film. The author opted for a scene in which Nishi and Itakura reminisce about their time in the war. This scene highlights a clear contrast between their past when they worked hard and the lifeless, impersonal nature of the corporate world, where anyone is easy to replace (Wyand, 2020, pp. 8).

Kurosawa's presentation of friendship between the protagonist and his best friend is similar to Shakespeare's. On the other hand, Zeffirelli does not give this relationship enough importance. This way, he misses an important element of the story and thus changes Hamlet's overall character which is a clear dichotomy between him and Hamlet from the source text. Even though Nishi is fairly different from Shakespeare's Hamlet, this element creates an important similarity between them. Kurosawa's decision to give this element enough importance makes the relationship between Nishi and Itakura more similar to the relationship between Hamlet and Horatio from Shakespeare's play while Zeffirelli misses the opportunity to follow the source text and accordingly to give both Horatio and Hamlet more character depth.

5. Main themes and motifs

In the next few chapters the main objective will be to present and analyse some important themes and motifs from Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* and Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well*, and if applicable, compare them to the source text.

5.1. Revenge

The theme of revenge is one of the central themes both in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and the film adaptations of the two authors. Revenge is closely connected with the protagonist which makes it more prominent, it is a part of the protagonist's character. Hamlet constantly dwells on questions regarding revenge and hesitates to perform the Ghost's assignment. These issues are explained in detail in the article "Revenge, Honor, and Conscience in "Hamlet". Author Harold Skulsky (1970) explains how Shakespeare's Hamlet is conflicted between revenge and honour that he associates with suicide and at some point prioritizes. However, he decides to put his wishes second and focus on avenging his father but he is afraid that his conscience might discourage him from performing his task. Additionally, the play consistently portrays revenge in a negative light (Skulsky, 1970).

In Zeffirelli's film, Hamlet also wonders if death is a better option than revenge, especially because he is more focused on his mother's marriage and the pain it brings him than revenge. If one observes Hamlet throughout the film, it is obvious that he does not prioritize revenge. However, as opposed to Zeffirelli's Hamlet, his main goal seems to be regaining his mother's affection. With that in mind, revenge is not described as something negative in the adaptation, but rather something peripheral.

On the other hand, in Kurosawa's adaptation revenge is a central theme of the film and, for most of the plot, the character's main goal. Even though Nishi is a somewhat polarized character, in a way that the viewer is unsure whether he is bad or good, revenge does not have an entirely negative connotation. In his book, *The Films of Akira Kurosawa* author Donald Richie (1970) observes the theme of revenge in *The Bad Sleep Well*. He explains the meaning of the film as ambivalent. The main hero proposes the idea that the revenger is no better than those he seeks revenge against but he is unsuccessful in his revenge (Richie, 1970, pp. 145).

All in all, the portrayal of revenge in the source text and the adaptations is not entirely positive or negative. However, that might be because the theme of revenge is closely connected with the

protagonist who is unsure about performing revenge. This concept proposes another issue connected to revenge, the hesitation of the main hero to execute the revenge.

Several authors deal with the issue of hesitation in Hamlet. In her article "Hamlet, Revenge!", author Millicent Bell (1998) reflects on Hamlet's delay of revenge. The author suggests that Hamlet's reason for procrastination is not that it is hard to reach the King who is surrounded by guards, because Shakespeare omits them in the story and she also points out how Hamlet never complains about the lack of opportunity. She connects this concept with Hamlet's madness and questions the purpose of his madness since in other revenge plays, madness serves the purpose of distraction while in *Hamlet*, it only provokes suspicion (Bell, 1998, pp. 314).

Another author who deals with this topic is Claude C. H. Williamson (1922) in his article "Hamlet". He begins by comparing Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to an older, bloodier version of *Hamlet*. Since that version was focused on madness, murder and a ghost, Shakespeare's remake probably disappointed those who prefer the earlier version. The explanation for this lies in the fact that Shakespeare's hero is hesitant, overly philosophical and generally unable to act as a canonical hero from tragedies. Later on, Williamson adds that even though Shakespeare used some previous ideas like a play within a play or a character of the ghost, he made some adjustments to make the play more appealing to an Elizabethan audience. He assigned Hamlet some soliloquies that present him, among other characteristics, as pessimistic and inactive. The author attributes Hamlet's hesitation to these features. (Williamson, 1922, pp. 91-92)

These authors' views on Hamlet's hesitation offer a clear summary of this issue. However, it is important to add that Hamlet's hesitation is visible in his utterances, especially during Claudius' prayer scene:

"Now might I do it pat, now 'a is a-praying.

And now Ill do't. And so 'a goes to heaven.

And so am I revenged. That would be scanned.

A villain kills my father, and for that

I, his sole son, do this same villain send

To heaven." (Shakespeare, 2002, pp. 133)

Here, frequent pauses and short sentences, that are not usual for Hamlet, indicate his hesitation. This moment vividly encapsulates Hamlet's inner conflict, as his contemplation outweighs his desire for swift revenge. It underscores how his philosophical nature and obsession with the consequences of his actions paralyse him, preventing him from acting in the decisive manner expected of a tragic hero.

Similarly, in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, the hesitation of the main character is portrayed quite vividly. Mel Gibson's performance offers the audience a profound insight into the main hero's struggle. The close-up shots of the actor's face, especially during Claudius' prayer scene, and his melodramatic soliloquies create a special relationship between the main character and the viewer. In the moments of Hamlet's contemplation and hesitation, the viewer can sense the hero's struggle which helps in understanding the reasons for his delay of revenge.

On the other hand, Nishi's situation is somewhat different because he had to gain Iwabuchi's trust before taking serious action. However, he resents his own lack of determination, especially for not pushing Shirai out the window. On the other hand, even though his hesitation ultimately costs him his life, it results in some positive outcomes as well, like growing to love Yoshiko. The difference from Zeffireli's revenger is also in his plan which is much more elaborate and he is involved on a much larger scale. His scheme does not leave space for impulsive decisions so his hesitation is more understandable than Hamlet's.

Furthermore, another vengeful character in the source text and in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* is Laertes. In terms of revenge, he is the complete opposite of Hamlet. In his article "Laertes' Return to Elsinore" author L. S. Champion (1966) compares Hamlet and Laertes from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. He states: "Laertes' aggressiveness acts as a foil to Hamlet's lethargy; his "Let come what comes, only I'll be revenged / Most throughly for my father" (IV. v. I32-I33) is in direct contrast with Hamlet's "How all occasions do inform against me / And spur my dull revenge" (IV. v. 32-33)" (Champion, 1966).

Similarly, Laertes from Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* reacts in the same manner to the news of his father's death. First, he does not hesitate to find and kill Claudius, and after he learns who the real killer is, he wants to do the same. The dynamics of the scene and ther actor's performance show a clear distinction between Hamlet and Laertes in terms of revenge.

In *The Bad Sleep Well*, Nishi also has a more hasty and resolute foil in the context of revenge. Even though the plot preceding his action is not the same as in the source text and Zeffirelli's adaptation, Tatsuo also displays determination for revenge. Immediately after he learns about Nishi's scheme, he decides to shoot him. However, in that moment Tatsuo acts on impulse and later even forgives Nishi after learning his motive.

Finally, the theme of revenge is at the centre of the plot in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* and *The Bad Sleep Well*. It is a major theme in all three works and the strongest connection between them. Even though it is portrayed and implemented in both adaptations, it is clear that Shakespeare's *Hamlet* serves as an inspiration. Out of all the themes, revenge might be the best adapted one. Zeffirelli and Kurosawa both managed to maintain the importance and idea of the theme of revenge from the source text. Its role as one of the plot catalysts and the hero's main goals is well executed in the adaptations and the original idea is preserved.

5.2. Corruption

The theme of corruption is tightly connected to the theme of revenge, as corruption is, both in the source text and in the adaptations, one of the reasons for revenge. Corruption is certainly one of the most prominent issues and consequentially one of the main themes in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* and Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well*. In the source text and Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, Claudius is the face of corruption, and in Kurosawa's adaptation, that role is assigned to Iwabuchi. While revenge is used mostly as a plot catalyst, corruption is embedded into the very core of all three stories. Unlike the aforementioned theme, which is mostly confined to the main hero, corruption is a part of a larger picture. Aside from its influence on the main characters, in the source text and Zeffirelli's film, it affects the whole Kingdom, and in *The Bad Sleep Well*, the Japanese society as a whole.

The issue of corruption is encapsulated by one quote from the first act of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*:

"Something is rotten in the state of Denmark"

(Shakespeare, 2002, pp. 46)

This quote foreshadows the following events in the story. By linking corruption with the term 'rotten,' it creates an image of Denmark as a decaying entity. In this sense, corruption is portrayed as a devouring worm, consuming the very body of the state.

Similarly, Author Richard D. Altick (1954) notices a connection between corruption and rotting in his article "Hamlet and the Odor of Mortality" by offering an analysis of Shakespeare's portrayal of corruption as a rotten body. At the beginning of the article, Altick notes that the aforementioned symbolism is not an isolated case in Shakespeare's plays as he often alludes to rotten flesh that vividly symbolises revolting concepts. He continues by focusing on this depiction in *Hamlet* where corruption, together with an olfactory image of stench, is directly connected to Claudius, and subsequently the whole Kingdom. The rotting process is unstoppable, and accordingly, the devastating effects of sin are detrimental to the human soul. Altick provides several examples from *Hamlet* that feature language associated with decay. First, he mentions Hamlet's conversation with the Ghost and highlights the word "foul". Then, the author connects this scene with scenes III. and IV of Act III. and emphasizes the use of corruption-smell images that are most prominent in them. He mentions offence, strong, foul, and corrupted as the words that define the course of events to come. Other than that, he stresses and cites Hamlet's comparison of Claudius with a "mildew'd" ear which is associated with fungi that infect otherwise healthy organisms. Altick concludes his article by summarizing his thoughts into a well-rounded argument. He suggests that Shakespeare's main objective in *Hamlet* is to emphasise the profound consequences of one man's sin. The author compares sin with the smell of decaying bodies that spreads and eventually infects the whole society (Altick, 1954, pp. 167, 170-171, 176).

This interpretation of the theme of corruption, together with its connection to imagery of rottenest and disease, highlights its role as a destructive force that plagues anyone in contact with it. Altick's analysis underscores how Shakespeare uses gruesome imagery to convey the pervasive effects of corruption. By associating Claudius and his reign with the stench of decay, Shakespeare intensifies the sense of inevitable doom, illustrating how one man's corruption gradually spreads, infecting the entire society. This vivid portrayal reinforces the idea that the consequences of sin are inescapable, leading to the ultimate downfall of both individuals and the broader community.

Likewise, since Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* uses several soliloquies and dialogues from the source text, the theme of corruption is also connected to decay. However, the connection seems less intense than in the play. Despite Mel Gibson's distinct facial expressions of disgust, it is harder to picture the images of decay while watching the film, as opposed to reading that allows us to imagine certain imagery of rottenness that Shakespeare paints in his play.

However, author Linda Charnes suggest that Zeffirelli focuses on Hamlet's sins rather than those of Claudius. In her article "Dismember Me: Shakespeare, Paranoia, and the Logic of Mass Culture", Charnes (1997) notes that Zeffirelli encourages his audience to sympathize with Hamlet

and direct their anger towards his corrupt uncle since Hamlet is predictable to the audience - they know all his thoughts. She supports her argument by saying that Prince's sins can be contained instead of spreading on the state and causing disorder (Charnes, 1997, pp. 10).

Even though the focus of Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* is on the main character, and accordingly to his sins, there is still a strong presence of corruption. Despite Claudius's outward concern for Hamlet, his primary focus is on maintaining his power and position on the throne.

Moreover, in *The Bad Sleep Well*, the theme of corruption is perhaps equally prominent as the theme of revenge. In the beginning, the emphasis is mostly on revenge but towards the end of the film, there is a shift in focus as corruption becomes more central.

Just as in the source text and Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, the theme of corruption is mostly connected to the antagonist. It is evident from the beginning that Iwabuchi is corrupt while in Shakespeare's play and Zeffirelli's adaptation, we do not know that Claudius is corrupt until later in the plot.

In this adaptation, the theme of corruption is also connected with the images of the human body. For example, Nishi uses a picture of his late father's body as a motivation to continue his revenge and fight corruption. The body of his father is a symbol of the destructive consequences of corruption.

This symbolic use of the human body highlights the invasive nature of corruption which surpasses mere ethical decay and manifests itself into physical harm for the individual. This imagery supports the notion that corruption is not only an abstract concept but a concrete force with real and irreversible consequences.

Furthermore, the image of a dead body can represent not just an individual but all the direct and indirect victims of corruption. That means that corruption not only affects the individual but also those around him and consequentially humanity in general.

In this light, *The Bad Sleep Well* combines the theme of revenge with the theme of corruption to offer a commentary on the far-reaching impacts of corruption. These intertwined themes provide the grounds for examining the moral and ethical postulates that drive the characters and, by extension, the audience's understanding of justice and corruption in the modern world.

Nevertheless, the theme of corruption is one of the most important themes from the source text and both adaptations succeeded in conveying its importance. Unlike with other themes, both Kurosawa and Zeffirelli take a similar approach regarding the theme of corruption. They both opt for the same aspect of corruption – its consequences for the individual and the society. Both

directors manage to emphasize the detrimental nature of the corruption. Just like the theme of revenge, this theme is very well adapted and it preserves the literary essence and the significant role it plays in the source text. Even though the director's creativity is important, keeping some original ideas from Shakespeare's text is a valuable virtue of the two adaptations.

5.3. Madness

Madness is also one of the central themes in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Zeffirelli's adaptation. Just like revenge, madness is also an ambiguous concept. One of the main questions in the source text and Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* is whether Hamlet is actually mad or just pretending to be. In the beginning, it is clear that he is feigning the madness but later on, during his interactions with other characters and his soliloquies, the distinction becomes less clear. Hamlet's erratic behaviour and psychological turmoil blur the line between genuine madness and strategic insanity. The uncertainty regarding the protagonist's sanity enhances the complexity of his character and keeps the audience on the edge of their seats. Likewise, in Zeffirelli's adaptation, Mel Gibson's performance vividly portrays Hamlet's psychological and moral struggles.

Author Patrick J. Cook offers an example of Gibson's portrayal of Hamlet's madness in his book *Cinematic Hamlet: The Films of Olivier, Zeffirelli, Branagh, and Almereyda*. The author comments on the first instance in the film when Hamlet expresses his simulated madness. Zeffirelli opted for a wordless scene where Hamlet pantomimes a conversation with Ophelia which demonstrates how convincing Hamlet's scheme is. Cook emphasizes how, despite creating an impression of madness, Hamlet's plan also proves his creativity in outwitting his opponents (Cook, 2011, pp. 77-78).

This example displays the complexity of Hamlet's character. By choosing to convey his madness through subtle, calculated actions rather than erratic behaviour, Hamlet maintains control over his situation, demonstrating both his cunning and his understanding of the power of perception.

Another author, Eileen Cameron (2014) deals with the theme of madness from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in her article "The Psychology of Hamlet". She connects Hamlet's inner conflict to "*The Mousetrap*", more precisely she considers the play to symbolise Hamlet's struggle. The author adds that Hamlet, by pretending to be mad, is acting. Cameron explains this statement through Hamlet's "To be, or not to be" soliloquy, where Hamlet ponders about life and death. Aside from

deciding his own destiny, he has to decide on Claudius's destiny, so the only solution to end all his questions is to commit suicide and stop acting altogether (Cameron, 2014, pp. 167).

There is a visible connection between Hamlet's mental state and "*The Mousetrap*" in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*. The audience can see Hamlet's reactions during the viewing of the play. Also, the climax of the play is the climax of Hamlet's feigned madness. In that moment, Hamlet's madness becomes apparent to everyone. Other than that, most of Hamlet's troubles stem from his doubt about whether Claudius was the one who killed his father, so the play, combined with Claudius's reaction to it, undoubtedly affects Hamlet's emotions and behaviour.

On the other hand, madness is not a central theme in Kurosawa's adaptation. Nishi uses a different strategy to achieve similar goals, mainly because he is in a better position since nobody knows his real identity. However, during the most intense scenes, like the kidnapping of Shirai, the viewers can notice Nishi humming which indicates that he may not be completely sane. His calmness can either imply that he has a plan and is confident that everything will go according to it or that he is suppressing his emotional distress. Either way, Nishi is still more composed than Hamlet, even if we take into account that his madness is only a ruse.

Aside from Nishi, other characters in *The Bad Sleep Well* display emotional distress, first, at the beginning of the film Wada wants to commit suicide. Even though suicides were common in the post-war Japanese corporate world, Wada still exhibits significant distress. Second, after Nish's threat to throw Shirai out the window or poison him, Shirai ends up in a mental institution due to acute schizophrenia. Last but not least, Yoshiko is left catatonic after finding out that her father is responsible for Nishi's death. Despite everything listed above, the characters do not exhibit madness in the same sense as Hamlet in the source text or Zeffirelli's film and madness is not one of the central themes in *The Bad Sleep Well*.

In the end, madness is certainly one of the foundations for the plot of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Zeffirelli's adaptation. Aside from serving as a plot catalyst, this theme also provides a close perspective into Hamlet's mind, helping the audience understand his motivations and actions. In both the original play and the film, madness serves as an essential element that exposes the internal and external conflicts that the protagonist faces, reflecting the turmoil and instability of the world around him. Ultimately, the portrayal of madness emphasizes the tragedy of Hamlet's struggle and the strong impact of his feigned and real insanity on the course of the story.

5.4. The position of women

After introducing some aspects of the position of women while analysing the characters, it is crucial to write a more in-depth analysis of this theme.

To begin with, in the source text and Zeffirelli's adaptation, there are two important female characters, Ophelia and Gertrude. Even though the two characters are different in terms of their personality and position in society, there is one important aspect of their personality that makes them similar and that is their relationship with men - their dependence on the male characters. Both Gertrude and Ophelia mould their behaviour to fit the wishes and desires of men around them.

At the beginning of the film, Gertrude mourns her late husband and shortly after, it becomes apparent to the audience that she is romantically involved with Claudius. She seems overjoyed which can be seen in her facial expressions and behaviour around Claudius, she is constantly smiling and running around. However, after Hamlet reveals Claudius's sins to her, she grows distant from her husband.

This shift in Gertrude's demeanour proves how her feelings and behaviour are easily influenced by the men around her. The Queen's affection towards Claudius reflects a desire for stability and comfort following her husband's death. Although, as Hamlet exposes Claudius's treachery, Gertrude's estrangement from Claudius signifies her internal conflict regarding her marriage and the impact Hamlet's words have on her. Gertrude's identity and emotional state are intertwined with the men she is closest to, emphasizing a dependency that shapes her actions throughout the film.

Zeffirelli created the character of Gertrude to be similar to Gertrude from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and also her position as a woman. However, author Abigail L. Montgomery offers a different perspective of Queen Gertrude and her role in Shakespeare's play. In her article "Enter QUEEN GERTRUDE Stage Center: Re-Viewing Gertrude as Full Participant and Active Interpreter in Hamlet", Montgomery (2009) begins by revisiting Gertrude's character and role. She explains how Gertrude should be perceived through her actions and decisions instead of through her sexuality and dependence on men. The author describes her as a developed and independent character and participant in the play.

Montgomery supports her argument by analysing one of the scenes from the play, Scene 4, Act 3, where Hamlet finally confronts her about her marriage to Claudius. Even though, at the beginning of the scene, Gertrude obeys Polonius's wishes and is thus under the influence of men, later in the scene she changes her behaviour. Her reaction to Hamlet's allegations fortifies her independent self as she displays concern for her soul.

In addition, Montgomery comments on another author's theory that deals with the social aspect of Gertrude's position. Focusing more on the position of women in the Elizabethan theatre, author Steven Mullaney points out the rise of misogyny in that period. (Montgomery, 2009, pp. 101-103)

Montgomery's article is a basis for the issue of Gertrude's polarized role, questioning whether she is a character that shapes her actions and behaviour to please men in her life. Both authors who do not perceive her as an active participant in the play and those, like Montgomery, who see Gertrude's role in a different light, offer strong arguments. Gertrude truly acts differently depending on who she is interacting with and changes her opinions based on conversations with men. However, the play would not be able to take the same course without her character, as her marriage to Claudius is one of the plot catalysts. Regardless of the approach taken, Gertrude is a crucial character in Shakespeare's play, even though her role in the play is not as prominent as those of Hamlet or Claudius. Nevertheless, the view of Gertrude as the less important character should be compared with studies that suggest otherwise to gain a better understanding of her role.

Even though Mullaney points out the misogynistic atmosphere of Elizabethan theatre, Gertrude is maybe not the best example of that. On the other hand, misogynistic elements can be seen in Ophelia's character, which will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

Conversely, the misogynistic perception of Gertrude is present in Zeffirelli's film. Gertrude's sexuality is more noticeable than in the source text. Her display of affection towards Claudius and Hamlet is a big part of her presence in the scene which overshadows her other traits. This portrayal reduces Gertrude to a figure defined primarily by her sexuality, diminishing her other traits.

On the other hand, the fact that the relationship between her and Hamlet is more prominent so is her role in the film. Her actions cause Hamlet's reactions and her decisions are the source of

most of Hamlet's actions. Even if viewers do not recognize her as an active participant her appearance is more than noticeable. Her extravagant costumes and theatrical performance list her among the most notable characters in the film.

The only other female character in the source text and Zeffirelli's adaptation is Ophelia. Her position in the play and the film is less favourable than Gertrude's position. One of the reasons is that Gertrude is a queen which instantly makes her status different from Ophelia's. Furthermore, the influence of men on Ophelia's role is even more powerful than in Gertrude's case. Her personality and actions are heavily defined by her relationships with the male characters, particularly her father Polonius, her brother Laertes, and Hamlet. Unlike Gertrude who is influential due to her royal status, Ophelia is portrayed as a passive victim of circumstances, manipulated by others. Her tragic destiny highlights her limited power and status in the patriarchal structure depicted in both the play and the adaptation.

In Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* Ophelia also shares the features mentioned before. She is passive and does not display any distinct personality traits. Aside from her speech when she goes mad, we only see Ophelia conversing with Hamlet, Laertes and Polonius. To further emphasize her subdued role, Zeffirelli showed how Hamlet and Laertes displayed more affection towards the deceased Ophelia than they ever did while she was still alive. Even though Zeffirelli does focus his camera on dead Ophelia, in two close-ups lasting two seconds the burial scenes are more focused on Hamlet than Ophelia. Even in the scene where he ultimately walks away from Ophelia, the camera watches him walk away instead of getting one final shot of Ophelia. (Rutter, 2002, 67-68)

This kind of framing raises a question of the director's reason for that sort of camera work, whether he opts for it because of his attitude towards women or to emphasize the role of women in the context of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Despite the misogynistic undertone mentioned earlier, it is more believable it is the former since it seems like a convenient feature to subtly replicate the role of women from Shakespeare's play into his film.

Similarly, Kurosawa shows a close-up of Yoshiko's feet, emphasizing her physical flaws rather than her face and facial expressions. This also provokes certain questions, but not quite the same ones discussed earlier, regarding Zeffirelli's filming. In Kurosawa's film, Yoshiko is portrayed through her physical deformation, probably because that is the exact aspect that society focuses on. Not her personality, or even her other physical features, but the one thing that differentiates

and isolates her from the rest of society. This can be interpreted in a way that post-war Japan's society perceives women mostly through their flaws rather than their virtues which displays a hostile approach towards women. An example of this can be seen in a wedding scene when everyone stares at Yoshiko's feet with displeased expressions.

Just like Ophelia, Yoshiko is also influenced by men, her brother Tatsuo, her father Iwabuchi, and Nishi. Even though Tatsuo is worried about Yoshiko and her marriage, he still tries to control her life, and by talking to Nishi about her marriage, he violates her privacy and does not allow her to develop opinions and feelings for her husband on her own. Similarly, the marriage between her and Nishi is arranged not because her father cares for her or thinks Nishi will treat her well but because he can benefit from their marriage. Iwabuchi deprives Yoshiko of deciding who to marry. Her almost instant affection towards Nishi might be due to her father's influence on her. Since she is not familiar with her father's crimes, she trusts his choice of her husband and it is not portrayed in the film whether she questions his choice or not, so the audience is led to believe she does not. Even though Nishi does not try to control Yoshiko the same way her father does, his whole scheme shows his disrespect towards her as a person which indicates his relationship towards women. Although he later contemplates the possible consequences of his scheme on Yoshiko, he is still blinded by his desire for revenge and considers it more important than Yoshiko's feelings.

Throughout the film, Yoshiko is mostly passive but towards the end of the film, she becomes aware of her father's wrongdoings. Her initiative to save Nishi despite her doubts about Iwabuchi's crimes indicates character development. She finally decides to make a decision herself and to act according to her opinions and decisions. However, the fact that her attempt to save Nishi fails underscores her helpless position.

All in all, the position of women in Shakespeare's play and the two adaptations is noticeably different from the position of men. It is clear that men and women are not equally treated and that their role in the family and society is considered secondary. Whether Zeffirelli or Kurosawa managed to portray this better and in the spirit of the source text is debatable. To begin with, Gertrude does not exist in Kurosawa's adaptation which instantly omits some of the important points about the position of women. Since her role as the main hero's mother is unique, Kurosawa's decision to exclude her from the adaptation results in the omission of numerous important plot points and significant details.

On the other hand, Zeffirelli opts for a completely different approach. He makes the role of Gertrude even more important than in the source text. He highlights the relationship between her and the main hero, which raises the significance of her role in comparison with the role of Shakespeare's Gertrude. However, both Kurosawa and Zeffirelli manage to replicate Ophelia's role as a helpless woman who is easily manipulated by men. The position of Zeffirelli's Ophelia is more or less the same as in the source text. Her actions, decisions and opinions are heavily influenced by her brother, father and Hamlet. Similarly, aside from her initiative to save Nishi, Kurosawa also excels at portraying Yoshiko as powerless and submissive, mirroring the limited agency of women in both his film and the broader societal context of post-war Japan.

To conclude, the theme of the position of women is a significant part of the source text and the two adaptations and also one of the themes that provide an important insight into the position of women in different cultures and throughout history. Even though there is a significant difference in the time setting of *Hamlet* and *The Bad Sleep Well*, the position of women is almost the same which offers an important message about the persistent nature of gender inequality. This parallel underscores how societal norms and structures continue to limit women's influence, regardless of the historical or cultural context. It highlights the enduring issue of marginalization and manipulation and awakens the consciousness of modern-day women to persist in the struggle for gender equality for those women who still face those barriers. By drawing attention to these persistent issues, both *Hamlet* and *The Bad Sleep Well* serve as reminders of the continued fight against the oppression of women that remains relevant even today.

5.5. Death

Death is the final theme that will be analysed in this paper. To begin with, the proof that death is one of the central themes in Zeffirelli's adaptation is that the plot starts and ends with death. Zeffirelli's film begins with Old Hamlet's funeral and ends with the death of the main hero and other important characters which highlights the inescapable presence of death throughout the narrative.

On the other hand, Shakespeare's play does not begin with a funeral but with the first appearance of the late King's ghost, and ghosts can be considered symbols of death. So, the source text also begins and ends with death, just like in Zeffirelli's adaptation death is inevitable.

This aspect of the theme of death in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, together with its commonality is explained in Richard Fly's (1984) article "Accommodating Death: The Ending of Hamlet".

Here, the author analyses Hamlet's perception of death in contrast with Claudius and Gertrude's. Fly points out how they managed to easily adapt to the new situation, unlike bereaved Hamlet who recognizes the singularity and tragedy of his father's death. Hamlet's view of the situation is contrary to the one of the court because he rejects its uniformity and adopts a more tragic perspective. Fly highlights the theme of death as one of the most valuable themes for Shakespeare's tragedy as it challenges "traditional, non-tragic responses to death." (Fly, 1984, pp. 257-258).

In Zeffirell's *Hamlet* Gertrude and Claudius also normalize death as a part of everyday life. This is further emphasized by the first scene in the film where Gertrude while crying over her late husband's grave, directs her look at Claudius. Soon after the funeral scene, the viewer can see Gertrude and Claudius celebrating their marriage, which is a clear contrast with the funeral scene. On the other hand, after the funeral, Hamlet is sitting in the dark alone until Gertrude and Claudius decide to awaken him from his mourning.

In this scene, Zeffirelli opted for sort of a chiaroscuro technique to emphasize the contrast between Hamlet's darkness and Gertrude's light. Hamlet is devastated because of the situation, so his emotions are represented by the dark, while Gertrude is overjoyed because of her new marriage, so her presence brings light into his darkness. This kind of filming highlights two different views on death. Hamlet sees death as tragic, final and individual, whereas Gertrude sees it as usual, normal and common. Both consider their perception normal and the other one unhealthy. He is disgusted by his mother's hasty marriage after her husband's death, and she is deeply worried about his grief.

This distinct contrast between their attitudes towards death not only creates a barrier between mother and son but also sets the stage for the unfolding drama. Gertrude's rapid transition from widowhood to a new marriage indicates her desire for stability, while Hamlet's lingering grief reflects his deep emotional struggle. Zeffirelli's depiction brings to light the conflict between acceptance and resistance of death as well as different ways individuals cope with loss.

Furthermore, the theme of death concludes the film. Despite their different views of death Hamlet, Gertrude and Claudius still cannot escape it. All of their dwellings and coping reduce to one primary aspect of death, its inevitability. Regardless of their status or age, all of the main characters, except for Horatio, meet their demise. Ophelia, devastated by the death of her father, and unrequited love, dies by her own hand, Polonius by mistake, Laertes by Hamlet's sword, and

the royal love triangle by each other. The cause for all of their deaths can be traced back to the murder of Old Hamlet. By killing the king, who is a representation of the state, Claudius destabilizes the *status quo* in the social structure of the state which subsequently leads to a series of unfortunate events.

In conclusion, Zeffirelli manages to grasp the importance of the theme of death and to emphasize its inescapable nature. With dramatic scenes of the death of Polonius and Gertrude, and especially the last scene, he enhances the tragic impact of death, making the adaptation a powerful interpretation of Shakespeare's work.

Furthermore, death is also one of the major themes in Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well*. In this film, death is a plot catalyst, a motivation for the main character to perform his scheme. Even though the first scene is a wedding rather than a funeral like in Zeffirelli's film, the wedding cake symbolizes the death of Nishi's father, so the beginning of Kurosawa's film is also marked by the theme of death.

Furthermore, death is omnipresent in the film. Firstly, because Nishi carries around a photograph of his dead father. Secondly, Wada is often with him, pretending to be a ghost. Even though Nishi prevented Wada from committing suicide, he is a constant reminder that death, either by suicide or some other circumstances, is something common.

The presence of these symbols and characters constantly emphasizes the film's gloomy atmosphere and the inescapable reach of death. For example, the photograph of Nishi's father, which serves as a motivation for his quest for revenge and justice, is anchored in the past tragedy. Likewise, Wada's ghostly appearance reminds Shirai that he is responsible for Wada's suicide which adds an eerie and unsettling dimension.

Aside from these symbols, the film's desolate settings often evoke a sense of the omnipresence of death. A good example of this kind of scenery is an old bomb shelter of the munitions factory. In his essay "Moles, spots, stains, and tincts: marks of futurity in Shakespeare and Kurosawa", author Simon Ryle (2014) points out its symbolic meaning concerning World War II. Ryle describes that vast, traumatized area as a reminder of lives lost in World War II. He supports his argument by adding a quote from the film where Itakura describes the bombing (Ryle, 2014, pp. 830-821).

Ryle offers a useful observation that connects the theme of death with the trauma of war. Since the setting of the film is post-World War II. Japan, these two themes are not only connected but rather inseparable. The reason for this is that the characters, and their surroundings, still clearly remember the war.

The scars of war, both physical and psychological, are deeply embedded in their lives. The devastating sense of loss, grief, and trauma in the aftermath of the war makes the theme of death inseparable from the everyday reality of the characters.

In this context, the characters' actions and motivations, together with the corrupt corporate world they inhabit, are all influenced by the collective memory of war and its devastating consequences. The omnipresent shadow of death is not only a part of personal experience but a shared national trauma. This gives the theme of death a broader social and historical context in the film.

Kurosawa uses this inseparability of death and war to comment on the moral decay rooted in post-war Japan, where the pursuit of power and wealth is prioritized over human life. The atmosphere of death, trauma and corruption results in the characters' obsession with death, whether through revenge, guilt, or the haunting memories of war.

Moreover, this intertwining of personal and collective experiences of death and trauma enhances the meaning of the film, making it not just a story of individual revenge, but a saga of Japan's struggle to cope with its recent history and the moral and emotional struggles that arise from it.

However, it is useful to focus on Nishi's perception of death. One important aspect that differs him from Hamlet in this sense is that he feels guilt for not forming a closer bond with his father which can be seen in his conversation with Yoshiko in the bomb shelter:

"After my mother's death, I wouldn't see him. But then...five years ago...I don't even know how he managed to find me, but he suddenly turned up at my place. Later I realized he wanted to make peace with me before he died. He kept apologizing, his eyes full of tears. I didn't know why he'd come. I lashed out at him and then stormed out. The next day, I read about his suicide in the paper. Then an envelope arrived. Inside was a bankbook in my name. The account held 1.5 million yen. A lot of money for someone in his position. Probably kickbacks. But now I'm overwhelmed by how much he cared for me. The more I regret lashing out at him, the more the words and gestures I remember from my childhood seem like signs of his love for me. My

obsession with him after his death was as strong as my hatred for him while he was alive. That's what's driven me to go this far." (Kurosawa, 1960, 2:04:43-02:06:26)

This quote is a good overview of Nishi's struggle with his father's death and their entire relationship. To begin with, Nishi explains how he refused to see his father after his mother's death, meaning she was the only connection between them. Then, Nishi explains the crucial part of his father's death, the fact that he tried to gain Nishi's forgiveness before the suicide. The information about the suicide, together with the money his father left him, changed Nishi's lifelong hostility towards him. It is at that moment that Nishi finally realized that his father loved him.

His disdain towards Furuya transformed into deep regret and a moral obligation to avenge his death. This realization marks a turning point in Nishi's character, giving him a sense of purpose and changing the course of his life. What this development tells the viewer about Nishi's feelings about his father is that they are anything but apathetic. For example, his obsession with avenging his father's death is not just about justice or retribution, it becomes a deeply personal mission to reconcile with the father he resented for so long. His feelings of guilt and regret are so overwhelming that they motivate Nishi in his determination to expose the corruption that led to his father's demise. The intense anger that once defined his relationship with his father gradually led to the painful understanding of the unexpressed love that was always there.

This means that death, although tragic and devastating, can awaken one's consciousness and motivate them to break free from anything that constrains them from expressing their true feelings and desires. This film proves that death can be the ultimate driving force for major decisions and journeys in life.

With that in mind, the theme of death in Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* is certainly a major part of the plot. Overall, Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* successfully integrates the theme of death into every aspect of the film, from its plot and characters to its visual style and atmosphere. This omnipresence of death not only defines the plot but also serves as a powerful critique of the moral corruption that plagues the corporate world. Through this complex exploration of death, corruption, and their connection, Kurosawa delivers a thought-provoking cinematic experience that cannot be forgotten.

All in all, Zeffirelli and Kurosawa both successfully interpreted the theme of death, not just in relation to the source text but also as an integral part of their films. Following Shakespeare's example, Zeffirelli's adaptation emphasizes the emotional and psychological struggle associated with death, together with Hamlet's personal grief as he dwells on questions of mortality and the consequences of revenge. Similarly, Kurosawa portrays the theme of death through Nishi's attempt to avenge his father's death and to unmask the corruption that caused it.

Nevertheless, both adaptations possess a portrayal of the theme of death. Even though death in Zeffirelli's film is more similar to Shakespeare's play, both directors, through their unique cinematic techniques, offer in-depth reflections on the theme of death, leaving a lasting impact on their audience. In the source text and both adaptations, death is one of the most important themes because it adds depth to other themes like revenge and corruption. All of the previously mentioned themes, but especially those three themes, are bleak on their own, but when combined they form into a well-structured story with a strong message.

All in all, whether their goal was to replicate Shakespeare's theme of death or to present their original view, Zeffirelli's and Kurosawa's adaptations, while distinct in style, both accentuate the inevitability and omnipresence of death. The portrayal of death not only serves as a catalyst for action but also as a mirror reflecting the inner turmoil and ethical struggles of the characters. This thematic focus achieves two important outcomes. First, the long-lasting effect on the audience. Second, the timeless relevance of Shakespeare's exploration of death and its far-reaching impact on all aspects of human life.

6. Scenes

In this chapter, the objective will be to analyse some of the most notable scenes from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* and Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well*. Where possible, the goal is to also compare the scene from the source text with a parallel scene from the adaptation. From the source text, the chosen scenes are Act I, scene IV and V (Hamlet's first interaction with the Ghost when he finds out about his father's murder), Act III, scene I (Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy), Act III, scene II (*The Mousetrap* Play), Act III, scene IV (The Closet Scene), and finally, Act V, scene II (The Final Duel and Deaths Of The Main Characters, the final scene). From Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, the aforementioned scenes will be

analysed and compared with the source text. From Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well*, the analysis will contain three scenes that serve as play-within-a-play: an opening scene with the wedding reception, a scene in which Iwabuchi and Moriyma try to persuade Shirai to commit suicide, and a scene in which Nishi reveals his character to Shirai. Other than that the following scenes: a scene of Wada's suicide attempt, Nishi's contemplation about revenge, Wada's funeral, Nishi's conversation with Yoshiko, and Nishi's death scene.

6.1. The play within the play

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse and compare Shakespeare's play within the play, *The Murder of Gonzago*, better known as *The Mousetrap* with the play of the same name in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, and three separate scenes that pose as play within the play in Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well*.

To begin with, *The Mousetrap* is not just a play within the play, but a unique way of storytelling used for the re-enactment of the Kings's murder which serves the purpose of revealing the truth to the audience. Until this point in the play, the events surrounding King Hamlet's death remain uncertain as the only source of information about them is the word of the King's Ghost himself.

The Mousetrap functions as a narrative device that brings to light the truth about King Hamlet's death. In order to prove the Ghost's accusations, Hamlet uses the play to provoke a reaction from King Claudius. The play not only advances the plot but also reveals one of the most important mysteries of the play, making it a critical moment in the unfolding drama.

Other than its role as a climax of the play, The *Murder of Gonzago* serves other functions as well. In his article "Forms and Functions of the Play within a Play", Dieter Mehl (1965) comments on Shakespeare's play within the play. He begins his observation by emphasizing the influence of *The Mousetrap* on the audience along with its role of summarizing the plot and encouraging the viewers to see the rest of the play. However, he notices another significant purpose of the dumb show, its moral function. Mehl supports his statement by explaining that Elizabethan dramatists often aimed to probe the consciousness of the guilty (Mehl, 1965, pp. 44).

Another author, William Witherle Lawrence (1919) in his article "The Play Scene in "Hamlet", also emphasizes that aspect of the role of *the Mousetrap*. However, he also mentions another important role, to reveal to the audience that Claudius is aware of Hamlet's knowledge of the murder, even before explicitly showing it in the play. This awareness causes the King to become

more cautious, reducing the chances of him exposing his guilt which increases the dramatic tension, making it appear as though Hamlet's plan might fail (Lawrence, 1919, pp. 21).

In summary, The *Murder of Gonzago* serves as much more than just the climax of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. As scholars like Dieter Mehl and William Witherle Lawrence have noted, it serves to probe the morality of the guilty and thus heighten the dramatic tension by revealing Claudius's awareness of Hamlet's suspicions consequently complicating the dynamics of the plot and Hamlet's quest for justice. Furthermore, through its various significant purposes, the play within the play acts as a crucial tool for Shakespeare, not only advancing the plot but also emphasizing its moral dimension. To conclude, these functions collectively enhance the richness of the play, making The *Murder of Gonzago* a crucial element in Hamlet that accentuates the complex nature of guilt and morality.

Similarly, in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, *The Mousetrap* is one of the most notable scenes. It bears a similar importance as Shakespeare's play within the play, like prompting the King to display signs of guilt, driving the plot forward and increasing the tension in order to keep the viewers engaged in watching the film.

However, the experience of film viewing is significantly different than reading Shakespeare's play, which is particularly prominent in this scene. To emphasize that The *Murder of Gonzago* is a play within a play, Zeffirelli opts for a few directorial choices that contribute to his goal.

First and foremost, before the beginning of the play, during Polonius's introduction of the actors to the audience, Zeffirelli's camera keeps turning from the audience to the actors on stage. For example, when Polonius presents the actors or the play, the camera focuses on the stage, and when it is the audience's turn to react, the camera switches its focus on them, capturing their expressions and responses. This constant back-and-forth movement reinforces the dual layers of performance, the actors within the play and the court as the observing audience.

Additionally, Zeffirelli uses close-ups to intensify the reactions of key characters, particularly Claudius and Hamlet, drawing the viewer's attention to their psychological states. For example, Claudius's initial state of joy gradually transforms into agitation and unease as the play progresses, and the camera captures this shift in his demeanour by capturing his expressions with increasing intensity.

Fig. 3: “Claudius before the play” (Source: Zeffirelli, *Hamlet*, 1990)

Fig. 4: “Terrified Claudius after the play” (Source: Zeffirelli, *Hamlet*, 1990)

This kind of camera work, together with the actor’s hyperbolic reactions, effectively demonstrates the intended effects of The *Murder of Gonzago*. The close-ups not only reveal Claudius’s guilt but also highlight Hamlet’s determination to reveal Claudius as the murderer as he analyses King’s every move. By focusing so closely on the characters' faces, Zeffirelli amplifies the psychological and moral duel between them, making it clear to the audience that Claudius is the murderer and that he knows Hamlet is aware of it.

Moreover, the stark contrast between Claudius's increasing agitation and Hamlet's focused composure, together with his constant comments during the play, underscores the tension between them. Even though the scene is not particularly long, the tension between the two characters creates the atmosphere of suspense, and thus, like in Shakespeare’s play, leads to a climax of the plot.

Finally, by using close-up shots together with exaggerated emotional displays, Zeffirelli not only stays true to the theatrical roots of Hamlet but also adapts these elements for a cinematic

audience. Therefore, Zeffirelli ensures that the dramatic significance of The *Murder of Gonzago* resonates powerfully in the film. His approach transforms *The Mousetrap* into a visually and emotionally charged scene that amplifies the underlying themes of guilt and retribution, while also keeping viewers informed about and immersed in the drama.

Furthermore, Zeffirelli's use of lighting and sound adds another layer of complexity. The dimming lights and music as The *Murder of Gonzago* begins distinguish it from the surrounding scenes, making it clear that what the audience is witnessing is a performance within the larger narrative. This choice not only underscores the play's role within the story but also enhances the dramatic tension, as the viewers become aware of the significance of this moment.

Furthermore, in Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well*, the play within the play also serves the moral function of bringing to justice Iwabuchi and his associates. However, unlike in the original play, and Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, in which it takes place within one scene, in *The Bad Sleep Well* it happens in three instances. First, at the beginning of the film during a wedding reception. Second, in the middle of the film, when Moriyama and Iwabuchi confront Shirai. Third, also in the middle of the film, when Nishi reveals his identity to Shirai.

Before the main event in the wedding reception scene, there are a few details that set the tone for the rest of the scene which is crucial for understanding the central part that will be analysed here. To begin with, the sequence when Yoshiko walks towards the wedding hall. First, the audience can notice that Yoshiko struggles with walking, she is slow and limps, and there is a close-up of her feet that indicates one of her legs is shorter than the other. However, what is particularly notable in this scene is the combination of Yoshiko's facial expressions and the music. Her grimaces of pain, together with Richard Wagner's Bridal Chorus, a traditional wedding music that is usually portrayed as pleasant, but in this context, it becomes unsettling as it amplifies her pain, creating an atmosphere of discomfort in the film and also for anyone watching it. Although it might not be pleasant to watch, this scene is important to connect with the character and sympathize with her, which was probably Kurosawa's intention.

Fig. 5: “Yoshiko on her wedding day” (Source: Kurosawa, *The Bad Sleep Well*, 1960)

After this tense section of the scene, there is an abrupt ending of the song and a few seconds of complete silence which is a clear distinction between this and the next sequence of the scene.

The next part of the scene that is important to analyse is the one in which guests toast the newlyweds. Shirai, who gives a speech instead of Nishi’s father, is visibly nervous since, just a moment before his speech, his co-worker Wada gets arrested, which will be referenced later in this paper.

A combination of Shirai’s agitated voice and mannerisms, together with the reporters commenting all the time, create a sharp contrast with the usual joy of weddings. His unease casts a shadow over the entire celebration, subtly hinting at the underlying corruption and tension within the company. On the other hand, Iwabuchi, who is in a higher position in the corporate world, does not seem concerned, just like Claudius before *The Mousetrap*. Here the viewers can see a close-up of Shirai’s face and Iwabuchi’s blurred figure in the background, on the opposite end of the table.

Fig. 6: “Nervous Shirai during the wedding speech” (Source: Kurosawa, *The Bad Sleep Well*, 1960)

Shirai’s nervousness on one hand and Iwabuchi’s blurred, expressionless silhouette on the other may indicate Iwabuchi’s control over Shirai who is constantly under supervision. Iwabuchi, who holds a higher position in the corporate hierarchy, remains in the background of the scene, emphasizing his distance from the immediate tension and suggesting his detachment from the situation. This visual contrast between Shirai’s anxiety and Iwabuchi’s indistinct presence underscores the power dynamics in their corporation.

Shirai’s agitation reveals the vulnerability of his lower position within the corporate hierarchy. His lower rank places him in an unfavourable position possibly becoming a scapegoat for the company, especially given the history of suicide within the company.

This dynamic is further emphasized by the cinematography, with Shirai’s face in sharp focus and Iwabuchi’s figure blurred in the background. The visual contrast not only highlights the physical distance between them but also symbolizes the emotional and hierarchical border that separates them. While Shirai is consumed by fear of potential repercussions, Iwabuchi's composure suggests the safety his position promises. In the end, the cinematography in this section effectively conveys the dichotomy between those at the top of the corporate ladder who remain insulated from the consequences and their lower-level associates who take on the risks instead of them.

What is also important about this sequence of the scene is that reporters introduce us to the characters. They offer a short description of other characters' backgrounds and their roles in the corporation. This narrative technique offers an unusual, but effective overview of the characters. For example, the characterisation of each character is combined with a closer shot of their reactions as Shirai quietly informs them about Wada.

Furthermore, the role of reporters can be compared to the role of the audience during the play within the play. During *The Mousetrap* Hamlet and other characters comment on the play, and since the wedding serves a similar role, the reporters' observations during the wedding scene role-play as the audience, guiding the viewers' understanding of the unfolding drama.

Aside from that, the reporters are the first ones to comment on the scandalous wedding cake. They do not leave anything up for interpretation, but rather immediately explain its symbolic meaning.

From that point, the scene gets more intense. Several elements combined, the Bridal Chorus that continues, again with the close-ups of dramatic facial expressions of Shirai and Moriyama, and guests raising their heads to take a better look at the cake, create one of the most dramatic scenes in the film, reminiscent of the tension in *The Mousetrap* scene. Similarly, in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, Claudius's expression of shock and confusion is also accompanied by high-pitched music that escalates the tension. The music in these "play within a play" scenes amplifies their intensity, giving the films an advantage over simply reading the text.

Moreover, the visual and auditory elements used by Zeffirelli and Kurosawa serve to immerse the audience deeper into the psychological turmoil of the characters which is more challenging to achieve through the written word alone. In Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, the escalating music not only mirrors Claudius's visible distress but also makes the audience feel the mounting pressure. Similarly, in *The Bad Sleep Well*, the subtle yet unnerving details, such as the ongoing Bridal Chorus, emphasize the underlying tension of the moment. These cinematic techniques create an immersive experience that substitutes for reading the play. Even though achieving this effect in written text is more demanding, as previously mentioned, Shakespeare's play succeeds in that aspect which can be noticed only with a focused reading of the play.

Furthermore, the director's ability to visually and audibly prompt the audience's emotions through these intense scenes highlights the unique power of film as a medium. While Shakespeare's original script for the play relies on the imagination and interpretative power of the reader, the films provide a more direct connection to the characters' emotions and the

narrative's dramatic moment. This sensory engagement can make the themes of death, corruption, and revenge more impactful, demonstrating how adaptations can offer new dimensions to well-known stories.

Finally, one short interaction between two reporters that concludes the wedding scene particularly stands out:

“Best one-act I've ever seen.”

“One-act? This is just the prelude.” (Kurosawa, 1960, 00:20:10-00:20:19)

Not only does this indicate that the whole wedding is a play, but it is also foreshadowing the further development of the corporate scheme.

Furthermore, the scene that can be considered a continuation of the wedding scene, even though it happens later in the film is a scene in which Iwabuchi and Moriyama try to talk Shirai into killing himself. As he immediately notices the same setting and conversation that happened with Furuya, the film subtly indicates the cyclical nature of corruption and despair within the company. Even though this scene does not have the same effect as the wedding scene, it is also a re-enactment of something the viewers were not able to see during the film.

By echoing a past event unfamiliar to the viewers, Kurosawa effectively uses this scene to fill in the narrative gaps. The thematic repetition not only connects the present to the past but also emphasizes the hardships and fragile position of those of lower rank in the corporate world.

Furthermore, there is one prominent difference between this and the wedding scene. Even though both scenes are intense, the suspense is achieved in different ways. While in the wedding scene, the tension is amplified by music and swift camera work, this scene is slow and quiet, emphasizing the silent but deadly nature of corporate pressure on the individual. The calm demeanour and approach of Iwabuchi and Moriyama, as they try to push Shirai toward suicide, highlight their cruelty and emotional detachment from the situation. Even though Shirai does not obey, the viewers can see the visible shock on his face. Here, a combination of the actor’s impressive ability to stand in the motionless position for 20 seconds, and the director’s choice to combine Shirai’s expression of complete dread, and his new-found enemies leaving the room and closing the door, creates an atmosphere of impending doom, making it obvious to the viewers that Shirai is in a hopeless situation.

Fig. 7: “Terrified Shirai” (Source: Kurosawa, *The Bad Sleep Well*, 1960)

Ultimately, this scene not only continues the narrative established during the wedding but also highlights the issues of power, guilt, and the cyclical nature of violence towards the weaker individuals within the corporate world. Through this clever re-enactment, Kurosawa successfully interprets the psychological and moral decay of his characters.

Last but not least, the scene where Nishi directly confronts Shirai completes the set of scenes in Kurosawa’s film that act as the play within the play. The scene has a powerful beginning, with Nishi pointing a flashlight at Shirai, a technique often used to elicit the truth from the criminals, foreshadowing the following events. Then, Nishi switches the direction of the light towards the window his father jumped from, together with the unnerving music. Unlike the scene with Iwabuchi and Moriyama, this scene is fast and loud. The abrupt switch of the camera focus, with a beam of light following the view as the camera turns, creates a brief but intense sense of disorientation, mirroring the chaos and panic Shirai feels as he is confronted with the past.

In the following segment of the scene, the light once again shifts to Shirai as Nishi reveals a photograph of his deceased father, causing Shirai to instinctively avert his gaze. The persistent beam of light that shines upon him symbolizes the inescapable reality of the situation, trapping Shirai in a moment of unavoidable confrontation. However, the dynamic shifts when Nishi turns the light towards himself as he begins to tell his own story. This action not only intensifies the

psychological pressure on Shirai but also underscores Nishi's role in the story, suggesting that he also reached the point of no return in his scheme.

This dynamic is interrupted by the background noise of Wada's silent sobbing before confronting Shirai. This moment in the film is important as it is the first instance the viewers can see Wada actively participating in the plot and expressing his emotions about the whole situation, symbolically reinforced by his figure emerging from the dark and slowly approaching Shirai. This crucial moment marks a turning point in Wada's character, as his quiet sorrow transforms into rage, catalyzing the unfolding confrontation.

Finally, the climax of the scene happens as Nishi tries to throw Shirai out the same window his father leapt from. This part of the scene is visibly different from the rest of the film. The effect of cars passing by on the road under the building, Shirai's muffled struggle and the fast camera movement are reminiscent of American action films, which is different from slower-paced, detailed scenes in the rest of the film. This sharp contrast suggests the shift in Nishi's character from hesitation and careful strategizing to determined actions against his enemies. This sudden change in style not only increases the tension in the film but also serves as a visual representation of Nishi's inner turmoil reaching its breaking point. Even though he does not end up killing Shirai, he achieves the desired effect of sending a message to Iwabuchi.

To conclude, the synthesis of light, sound, and camera movement not only heightens the tension but also helps unveil past crimes, paralleling the function of *The Mousetrap* in Shakespeare's and Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*. The intensity of this encounter is heightened by Kurosawa's use of light and shadow, which emphasize the uncomfortable atmosphere and the growing tension between the two characters. Furthermore, this scene serves as a culmination of the previous re-enactments, bringing the underlying tensions to the surface and setting the stage for the film's final resolution. Thus, this culmination of events resembles *The Mousetrap* in Shakespeare's and Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*. Both scenes are crucial for the plot, using the device of the play within a play or the re-enactment to expose the true natures of the characters and drive the plot towards its inevitable conclusion.

All in all, the main difference between Zeffirelli's and Kurosawa's interpretation of Shakespeare's play within the play is that Zeffirelli's play, other than following the source text, is integrated while Kurosawa's is split into three separate events. Even though the wedding scene is the most notable, and the longest, three scenes together serve the same purpose The *Murder of Gonzago* from Shakespeare's play. This comparison between Zeffirelli and Kurosawa highlights the directors' distinct filming styles and their unique interpretations of Shakespearean themes,

particularly the exploration of revenge and guilt. Despite their artistic qualities, in both Kurosawa's and Zeffirelli's films, these elements are not merely stylistic choices but are also crucial parts of displaying the psychological states of the characters and catalysing the plot.

In the end, both directors, despite their different styles and techniques manage to achieve the same effect as Shakespeare's Mousetrap, to probe the consciousness of the guilty and make them reveal their wrongdoings.

6.2. Hamlet meets the Ghost

To begin with, these two scenes from Act I are particularly important in Shakespeare's play and Zeffirelli's adaptation because they serve as a foundation for the rest of the plot. These scenes mark a moment when Hamlet begins his quest for the truth. This moment not only sets the stage for his internal struggle but also introduces key themes of deception, revenge, and the search for justice that will be present throughout the play and the film.

In Shakespeare's play, this sequence of the scene begins with the sounds of trumpets and cannons. This auditory introduction not only signals the gravity of the moment but also serves as a reminder to Hamlet that he resents his uncle. Even though his resentment is partially due to his feelings about Claudius's marriage to Gertrude, it foreshadows the events in their near future. The use of such powerful sounds creates an atmosphere of tension, drawing the audience's attention to the significance of the scene.

Similarly, in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, the auditory effect is also an integral part of the scene. However, in the adaptation, instead of trumpets and cannon, Zeffirelli opts for suspenseful music. The reason behind this is probably to adjust the music to the modern audience who might not perceive the intended role of the Shakespearean tension-building sounds.

Furthermore, by choosing suspenseful music over traditional sounds, Zeffirelli creates a more universally accessible sense of tension that resonates with contemporary viewers. Although different, this modern approach not only retains the scene's intensity but also enhances the emotional engagement of the audience. This significant change surpasses the gap between Shakespeare's time and the present, preserving the essence of the scene and ensuring it remains powerful and effective.

Moreover, Zeffirelli achieves a sense of tension with his camera work and the use of light and shadow. For example, when Hamlet sees the Ghost for the first time, the ghost slowly emerges from the darkness, with light shining only on his face, and Hamlet is standing in the light. The

camera work at that moment suggests that they are on different sides, Hamlet being among the living, and his father among the dead. This difference is further emphasized by Hamlet's expression of utter shock and the Ghost's lack of reaction. In addition, Mel Gibson's astounding performance, especially when he gasps in astonishment and nearly goes mute, captures Hamlet's overwhelming mix of fear and disbelief. The combination of precise camera work, strategic use of light and shadow, and Gibson's powerful acting intensifies the level of suspense, helping the audience feel Hamlet's fear.

Fig. 8: "Hamlet sees his father's Ghost" (Source: Zeffirelli, *Hamlet,* 1990)

This dynamic continues when Hamlet, after following the Ghost, finally catches up with him. With Hamlet in the light and his father's ghost in the dark, we can see Hamlet's reaction as his father reveals details of his murder. This is a particularly important part of the scene and the whole film because it shows Hamlet's true emotions towards his father as well as Old Hamlet's regrets. The heart-to-heart conversation between father and son is a distinct moment in the film as it presents Hamlet neither as bitter because of the situation, enraged towards Claudius or in contemplation but rather as a vulnerable and grieving son faced with the source of his sorrow. Not only does this moment reveal the profound bond between Hamlet and his father, but it also

highlights the pain of their separation. The scene is fundamental for Hamlet's quest for truth. Aside from that, the scene also provides the viewers with Old Hamlet's remorse regarding the life that Claudius took away from him. The combination of overexposed facial expressions and other aforementioned cinematic techniques adds layers of complexity to both characters and further intensifies the moral and emotional base of the story.

Similarly, in Shakespeare's original play, this same scene unfolds. Although without the contemporary effects Zeffirelli uses, with dialogue that effectively presents the character's struggles and emotions, Shakespeare manages to convey the themes of grief and regret. By comparing these two approaches, we can see how both the film and the play effectively capture the sentimental value of Hamlet's encounter with his father's ghost, despite using different methods to achieve this.

In conclusion, both Shakespeare's original play and Zeffirelli's adaptation depict Hamlet's encounter with his father's ghost, each through their distinct style and methods While Shakespeare relies on powerful dialogue and thematic depth to explore Hamlet's grief, regret, and search for truth, Zeffirelli enhances these emotions through modern cinematic techniques such as suspenseful music, careful camera work and impactful performances. Despite the differences in medium and approach, both versions successfully convey the emotional and moral complexity of this notable moment in the plot, highlighting the timelessness of Hamlet's struggle and the themes presented in the scene.

The only scene in *The Bad Sleep Well* that can mirror this scene is a scene of Wada's suicide attempt. Even though the relationship between the characters is completely different, and the thematic connection is vague, this scene is important for the plot and needs to be analysed.

6.3. Nishi saves Wada / How Wada became a Ghost

First and foremost, this scene marks an important moment in Wada's story as it decides the course of his life. The scene begins with a scenery of a vast, barren landscape. Here, the viewers can see Wada roaming around, visibly distressed. His face, displaying confusion and numbness, amplified by the steam hissing around him, creates an atmosphere of isolation and despair. The barren landscape serves as a visual metaphor for Wada's emotional emptiness, emphasizing his suffering and sense of being lost. As he wanders through this desolate

environment, the scene foreshadows the inner turmoil and difficult decisions that will shape the rest of his journey.

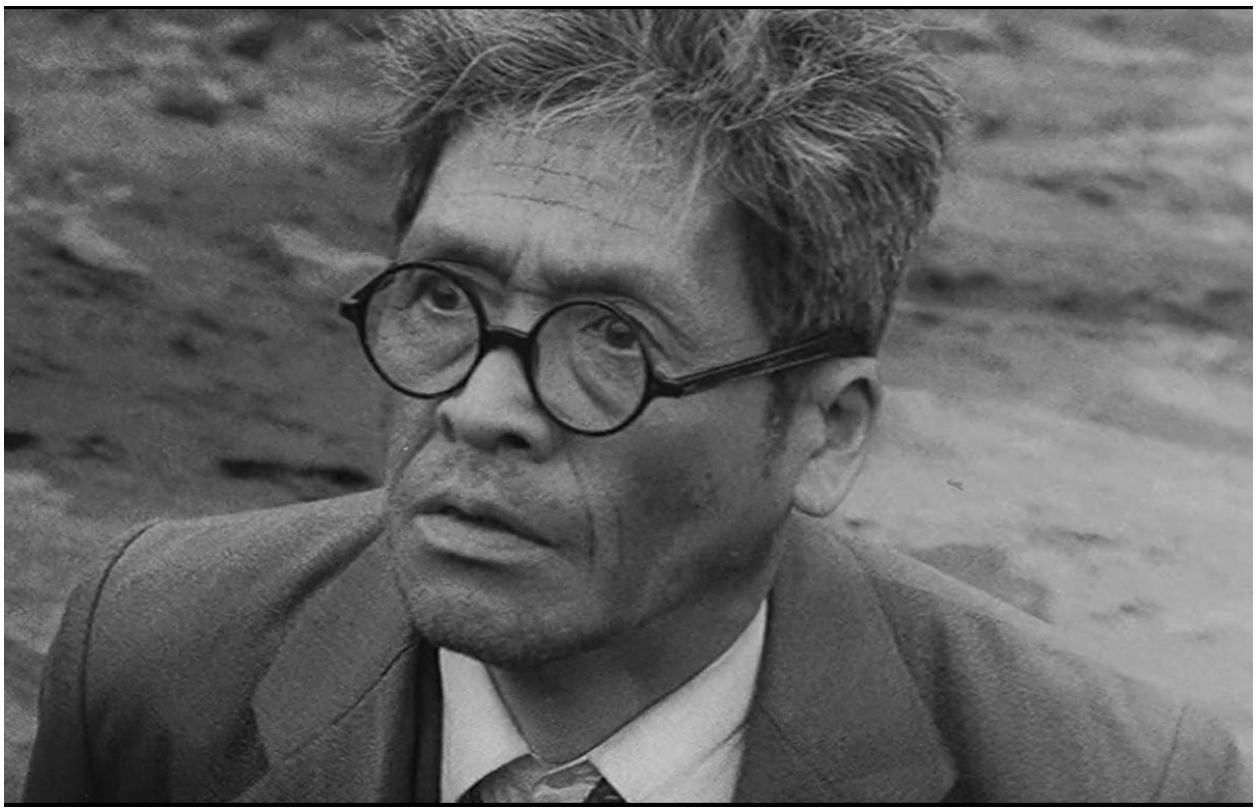

Fig. 9: “Wada before attempting suicide” (Source: Kurosawa, *The Bad Sleep Well*, 1960)

Wada’s desperation and contemplation about suicide are interrupted by Nishi. Kurosawa opts for a camera movement that slowly reveals Nishi from his legs to head, surrounded by steam. This kind of framing builds suspense by placing the gaze of the viewers at the same angle as Wada’s gaze, slowly building suspense.

Fig. 10: “Nishi appears before Wada” (Source: Kurosawa, *The Bad Sleep Well*, 1960)

The gradual pace of the reveal not only heightens the mystery surrounding Nishi’s presence but also reflects Wada's shifting focus from his despair to the unexpected intrusion. As Nishi emerges from the steam, the visual contrast between his composed demeanour and Wada's bafflement underscores the power dynamic between them. This moment marks the beginning of their relationship, where Nishi's intervention becomes a turning point in Wada’s life, transforming him into a living ghost.

Furthermore, even though this scene does not mirror a scene from Shakespeare’s play, Wada’s dramatic reactions after his suicide attempt and an argument between him and Nishi resemble emotional exchanges and thematic depth found in the source text. The heightened tension, expression of vulnerability, and exploration of guilt in their dialogue capture the same tragic intensity that defines Shakespeare’s Hamlet.

To conclude, this scene is an integral part of the film not only because of its visual and emotional impact but also because it serves as a foundation for Wada’s new identity. Other than that, this encounter is an important moment in Nishi’s ploy, as Wada is an essential part of it. It is a turning point that intertwines their fates, driving the narrative forward.

6.4. To be or not to be

The scene begins with Hamlet’s gradual descent into the family tomb followed by a slow, mute shot of the tomb. The camera work probably imitates Hamlet’s view of the room, making it

one of the slowest shots in the film. This slow, quiet section of the scene creates a gloomy atmosphere and sets the stage for Hamlet's most notable soliloquies.

In addition, before Hamlet starts to speak, there is a long pause with a close-up of Hamlet's face which amplifies the unsettling ambience. These pauses continue during his soliloquy, indicating his contemplation and train of thought. This technique, together with an echo in the background further heightens the sense of isolation and internal conflict. The echo serves to emphasize the weight of Hamlet's words which, when combined with the emptiness around him, underscore his alienation and deepen the tension within the scene.

Another element that serves this purpose is Hamlet's frequent change of pace. Switching between desperation and contemplation to anger vividly reflects his inner turmoil and instability. These abrupt shifts in tone and intensity not only mirror the chaotic nature of his thoughts but also keep the audience involved, unsure of what to expect next. This unpredictable rhythm deepens the sense of uncertainty, further immersing the viewer in his psychological struggle.

To continue the previous observation regarding the camera work, this scene, like many others in Zeffirelli's, film uses a combination of light and shadow to enhance the visual storytelling. The interplay between light and shadow not only serves to highlight the characters' expressions and movements but also to draw the audience's attention to specific details within the frame, for example, the skeletons that Hamlet gazes upon each time he mentions death, thus adding layers of meaning to the narrative.

Guneratne (2008) also comments on this scene in his book Shakespeare, Film Studies, and the Visual Cultures of Modernity:

"...the uterine tomb into which Hamlet descends to deliver his soliloquy, pierced by a shaft of light, enables Zeffirelli to juxtapose the prince's living features over those of his father's marble ones. Zeffirelli's command of space and a camera...only emphasize here the confining, circular gloom of the enclosure, ... At the scene's conclusion, Gibson's Hamlet pauses at the passageway, as if to give still more thought to the responsibilities of mortality, but a dissolve to the castle above him allows him to be reborn into the light, ..." (Guneratne, 2008, pp. 157)

This short but valuable insight highlights the symbolic depth of Zeffirelli's interpretation of the scene. The imagery of the "uterine tomb" and the juxtaposition of Hamlet and his late father reinforce the themes of life and death that are central to the soliloquy. Guneratne's description of the "confining, circular gloom" of the tomb aligns with the previously discussed gloomy atmosphere, emphasizing its connection with Hamlet's inner turmoil.

Furthermore, Guneratne's observation that Hamlet pauses at the passageway for yet one more moment of contemplation of life and death adds another detail that helps in understanding the scene. This moment symbolizes Hamlet's ongoing struggle with the weight of mortality and his search for meaning in life. The transition from the tomb to the castle above can be seen as a visual metaphor for Hamlet's movement from the depths of his existential crisis to being one step closer to achieving his goal.

In conclusion, Guneratne's analysis offers a profound understanding of how Zeffirelli's visual choices deepen the thematic resonance of Hamlet's soliloquy. The imagery of the tomb, the interplay between life and death, and the careful pacing of Hamlet's movements all serve to enhance the portrayal of his inner conflict. Zeffirelli's filming style not only captures the essence of Shakespeare's text but also adds a layer of visual symbolism that underscores Hamlet's psychological journey. Through these cinematic techniques, the film brings to life the existential themes of the soliloquy, making them more accessible and impactful for the audience.

Moreover, this soliloquy is also one of the most important and tense moments in the source text as it shows Hamlet in a different light than during dialogues with other characters. While Hamlet pretends to be mad around other characters, which is reflected in the way he converses, in his soliloquy the readers can see Hamlet in a different light. His introspection and deep moral and philosophical pondering are evident in Hamlet's language. For instance, his soliloquy is a good synthesis of Shakespeare's writing styles:

" 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 ..." (Shakespeare, 2002, pp. 98-99)

To begin with, Hamlet's soliloquy is written in verse, as in most of the play. Additionally, Hamlet opens his soliloquy with iambic pentameter, also often used in Hamlet, adding a specific tone and rhythm. This kind of introduction, together with a profound question, "To be, or not to be? at the very beginning of the section, serves to engage readers to read the rest of Hamlet's existential dilemma. The combination of these elements sets the stage for the introspective and philosophical journey that follows.

Furthermore, “To be, or not to be?” has a dualistic function. More precisely, since Hamlet has ambivalent feelings regarding the question of life and death, his quote can be considered an antithesis. Hamlet's ambivalence about life and death is encapsulated in this phrase, reflecting his deep internal conflict. The antithetical structure highlights the tension between existence and non-existence, mirroring Hamlet's fluctuating thoughts about whether to endure the pains of life or to seek an end to his suffering through death.

As Hamlet continues his soliloquy, he delves deeper into his contemplation of life and death, using symbols like “slings and arrows of outrageous fortune” and the “sea of troubles”. The metaphorical language Hamlet uses, together with frequent pauses, amplifies the sense of struggle and suffering. This existential questioning reaches a climax as Hamlet considers whether “to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them,” which symbolizes Hamlet’s desire to relieve his suffering by ending his life

Moreover, in the continuation of his soliloquy Hamlet connects death with a metaphor of sleep:

“...To die, to sleep -

No more—and by a sleep to say we end

The heartache...

...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.” (Shakespeare, 2002, pp. 99-100)

This metaphor allows him to present death to himself as a peaceful escape from the suffering of life. Instead of its finality, he focuses on its serenity thus justifying his desire for it. In the lines, “...To die, to sleep - /No more - and by a sleep to say we end / The heartache...”, Hamlet views death as an escape from pain.

However, despite Hamlet’s suicidal thoughts, the soliloquy reveals his fear of the unknown that awaits beyond death. The line “To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there’s the rub” usurps

Hamlet’s idealisation that death may not be the peaceful escape his soul craves. Here, Hamlet's metaphorical use of “dream” symbolizes the unknown nature of death. The “dreams” in death could represent potential nightmares and unimaginable sufferings that make Hamlet reconsider his thoughts.

Through this metaphor, Shakespeare makes Hamlet's internal conflict even more complex, showing how the allure of death as an escape is compromised by the fear of what might come after. This moral dilemma between the desire for release and the fear of the unknown emphasizes the depth of Hamlet's existential crisis, highlighting the human struggle with mortality and the unknown.

Furthermore, until the end of his soliloquy, Hamlet continues to ponder on hardships and the pointlessness of life, expanding and elaborating his previous thoughts.

In the end, this passage not only reveals Hamlet’s deep existential crisis but also represents Shakespeare’s poetic language. The repeated use of metaphor, like comparing life’s struggles to a “sea of troubles” and death to “sleep” underscores the tension between Hamlet’s desire for eternal peace and his fear of the unknown. Here, the use of language successfully reflects his inner troubles.

Moreover, the structure of the soliloquy reflects Hamlet's wavering thoughts. The rhythmic flow of iambic pentameter, enhanced by pauses, mirrors his contemplative state, as he weighs the pros and cons of existence. This internal debate, framed by rhetorical questions, gives readers insight into Hamlet’s deep moral conflict and psychological suffering, which contrasts sharply with the erratic behaviour he displays around others.

In the broader context of the play, this soliloquy is a turning point. It allows the audience to see the true depth of Hamlet's despair and his philosophical engagement with themes of life, death, and the afterlife. This moment of introspection emphasizes the complexity of Hamlet’s character, making him not just a tragic figure but a deeply reflective character burdened by questions of mortality universal to humanity. This way, Shakespeare uses the soliloquy not only to explore the timeless theme of existentialism but also to probe the human psyche together with its eternal dwelling on life, death and mortality.

After analysing one of the most notable scenes from Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, and comparing it with Zeffirelli’s creative and contemporary cinematic techniques, it can be concluded that the director managed to adapt these everlasting themes, proving that hardships that burden the human mind surpass all obstacles of time.

There are no scenes in *The Bad Sleep Well* that completely mirror this. However, there is one short instance in which Nishi questions himself and his mission. Even though it is not a soliloquy or contemplation of suicide, this scene is a good example of Nishi's inner turmoil regarding revenge and the means of achieving it.

6.5. Nishi's contemplation of revenge

In this scene, instead of having a soliloquy, Nishi is talking to Itakura and Wada. While Hamlet's soliloquy serves as an introspective exploration of his inner turmoil, Nishi's conversation with the others externalizes his thoughts, giving them an opportunity for a second opinion which reduces its gravity for the individual. This externalization not only reduces the intensity of Nishi's internal conflict but also allows for a more collaborative and objective exploration of Nishi's issues. By expressing them to others, Nishi's dwellings are subject to debate and potential resolution, whereas Hamlet's solitary reflection leaves him isolated, with his thoughts spiralling out of control due to lack of external evaluation. This contrast highlights how the presence of others can if nothing, elevate the struggle of an individual.

Furthermore, the first detail to notice about this scene is its composition. Nishi, Wada and Itakura form a triangle, with the camera focusing on Nishi, indicating his dominant role in the conversation while the other two participants are listeners and commentators. Additionally, during the first part of the scene, when Nishi starts talking, Wada and Itakura remain motionless, with Wada facing Nishi, and Itakura facing the tinted window.

Additionally, the physical positioning of the characters in Nishi's scene further underscores the nature of their interaction. Wada faces Nishi, indicating his attentiveness and eagerness to respond, while Itakura faces the window, possibly symbolizing his contemplation of Nishi's situation.

Fig. 11: “Triangular composition” (Source: Kurosawa, *The Bad Sleep Well*, 1960)

On the other hand, there is one significant similarity with Hamlet’s soliloquy – an antithesis of Nishi’s thoughts. First, Nishi says:

“I'm too soft. I should have thrown Shirai out that window.” (Kurosawa, 1960, 01:30:01-01:30:07)

Then, after Wada’s input that Nishi seems to be “going against his nature” he concludes:

“It's not easy hating evil. You have to stoke your own fury until you become evil yourself.” (Kurosawa, 1960, 01:30:44-01:30:51)

The combination of these two opposing thoughts reveals Nishi’s conflict regarding his revenge. Although these conflicting thoughts do not exactly mirror Hamlet’s inner turmoil, the essence of the problem remains the same, the question of life or death.

This comparison highlights the different ways in which similar inner conflicts and existential questions are explored in the two scenes. While Hamlet's soliloquy is a deeply personal and isolated struggle with the idea of existence, Nishi’s conversation reflects a more collaborative process of dealing with similar themes. Both scenes are centred around existential questions, but the modes of expression, introspection versus dialogue, offer distinct approaches to understanding and resolving inner conflicts.

Furthermore, later in the scene, Nishi’s conflict resolves as he tears and burns the symbol of his revenge, his father’s picture. As Donald Richi concludes in his book *The Films Of Akira Kurosawa*, this moment marks a turning point in Nishi’s character, relieving himself of the anger

and violent acts, and focusing on his goal to bring Iwabuchi and others to justice. (Richie, 1970, pp. 145)

In conclusion, while Hamlet and Nishi both struggle with existential dilemmas of revenge, life and death, there is a stark contrast in their surroundings which makes their paths significantly different. Hamlet remains trapped in his cycle of doubt and fear, isolated in his introspection. Nishi, on the other hand, benefits from external perspectives, leading him to a more decisive course of action. This contrast underscores how different narrative techniques, soliloquy versus dialogue, can shape the exploration and resolution of similar thematic concerns, offering unique insights into characters' inner conflicts and their resolutions.

6.6. Gertrude's closet scene

This scene is one of the most active and tense scenes in both Shakespeare's and Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*. Aside from his soliloquy, in this scene, the audience can see Hamlet's intense expression of his troubles, and the first time he honestly talks to his mother about her new marriage. However, before getting into detail, it is important to address the events from the beginning of the scene to make the main conflict easier to analyse.

Before Hamlet enters his mother's bedchamber Gertrude is discussing recent events with Polonius who hides when they hear Hamlet arriving which sets the stage for an important event that happens later in the scene.

In the play, Hamlet's arrival is announced to the audience by his voice off-stage:

"*(within*) Mother, mother, mother!"

Here, the combination of an off-stage voice and the rhythmic role of Hamlet's words sets the tone for the interaction between Hamlet and Gertrude, creating a sense of urgency and signalling to the audience that a critical confrontation is about to take place. This disembodied voice, placed outside the scene, heightens the tension and prepares the audience for the upcoming event. The repetition of "mother" emphasizes Hamlet's frustration with Gertrude, announcing that he is ready for the conflict.

In Zeffirelli's adaptation, this off-stage utterance is intercepted by Polonius and Gertrude's conversation, fragmenting Hamlet's cries and thus reducing its intensity. However, a combination of Hamlet's approaching footsteps and an echo of his voice substitute and create a

similar effect as in the source text. The use of sound here enhances the dramatic tension and atmosphere of discomfort.

After building the tension, in the source text and the adaptation, Polonius hides and Hamlet finally steps into the room, immediately starting the confrontation with Gertrude. Additionally, in the adaptation Hamlet's anger is reinforced by Mel Gibson's facial expression of anger and anticipation:

Fig. 12: "Hamlet in anger" (Source: Zeffirelli, *Hamlet,* 1990)

Moreover, a similar pace continues in the continuation of the scene in both Shakespeare's and Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*. More precisely, the repetition of Hamlet's words by Gertrude continues the previous fast-paced rhythm:

" HAMLET

Now, mother, what's the matter?

QUEEN

Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAMLET

Mother, you have my father much offended.

QUEEN

Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAMLET

Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue." ((Shakespeare, 2002, pp. 135-136)

While in the play the rhythm is set purely by rhyme, in the film it is amplified with a fast movement of the camera, switching back and forth between Hamlet and Gertrude. This rapid back-and-forth exchange between Hamlet and Gertrude enhances the intensity of the verbal conflict between the two characters. The rhythmic repetition in their dialogue in which Hamlet mirrors his mother's words, serves to escalate the argument in which Hamlet challenges Gertrude, suggesting her guilt and involvement in the events of Old Hamlet's murder.

The combination of Shakespeare's engaging dialogue and the camera work Zeffirelli uses effectively translates the energy of Shakespeare's verse into film, allowing the audience to experience the escalating conflict and characters' emotions.

Furthermore, in the next section of the film scene, verbal conflict escalates into physical. Even though this is not marked in the source text, the reader can conclude it from Polonius and Gertrude's scream for help. Despite the absence of the source text, Zeffirelli's adaptation intensifies the scene by materializing Hamlet and Gertrude's emotional exchange into a physical manifestation of their emotions.

However, the physical aspect of Hamlet's rage is depicted in the book as Hamlet slays Polonius. This act of violence is a significant moment not just for the scene, but for the whole plot, as it dramatically alters the course of events. In this instant, Hamlet's previous inaction finally erupts, sealing Polonius's fate and dramatically changing the course of Hamlet's.

In Zeffirelli's film adaptation, this moment is given special attention and significant weight. The abruptness of Polonius's death is emphasized through swift camera movements and intense close-ups, capturing the shock and horror. Additionally, the sound of the sword slicing through Polonius's flesh lifts the unsettling and horrifying atmosphere of the scene to another level. This auditory amplification of the tragic moment non not only heightens the emotional impact of the scene but also underscores the brutality of Hamlet's actions. In conclusion, Zeffirelli's directorial choices effectively convey both the moment of Hamlet's madness and the tragic consequences of his rage, making this moment a powerful turning point in both the film and the original play.

Despite the tragic murder of Polonius, the following part of the scene is also its longest and most notable part. In the source text, during this interaction between Hamlet and his mother, the first thing to notice is that Hamlet thoroughly and at length explains to his mother the struggles of his soul and her sins against her deceased husband while Gertrude answers in short, erratic sentences. This contrast between Hamlet's anguished but elaborate discourse and Gertrude's frightened replies underscores the emotional distance Gertrude's marriage causes between them.

However, in Zeffirelli's adaptation, this emotional distance between them is contrasted by their physical closeness. More precisely, Hamlet climbs onto Gertrude during their dispute:

Fig. 13: "Hamlet confronts Gertrude, close-up" (Source: Zeffirelli, *Hamlet*, 1990)

With this choice of scene composition, Zeffirelli probably aims to emphasize Hamlet's perception of moral and physical superiority over Gertrude, giving her no chance to escape the confrontation. Another element that is important to mention is the camera work during this interaction. The close-ups of the characters' faces are different than close-ups in the rest of the film. More precisely, they are filmed from an unusually tight angle, bringing the audience uncomfortably close to the characters' faces. This filming choice amplifies the intensity of the confrontation and forces the viewers into the same claustrophobic space as Gertrude, mirroring her inability to escape Hamlet's rage. On the other hand, while watching Hamlet's enraged face, the viewers can feel his anger and disappointment as he tries to express his uncontrollable anger and sadness to his mother. Additionally, the frequent switch between Gertrude and Hamlet in these close-ups serves to heighten the emotional tension, visually creating a rhythm that mirrors the escalating conflict. This dynamic not only reinforces the intensity of their confrontation but also keeps the audience involved, as the intensity of their emotions is fully exposed with every shift in perspective. Through this kind of camera work, Zeffirelli ensures that the viewer is not just a passive observer but an active participant in the emotionally charged interaction that defines the rest of the plot.

The dynamic of the scene is interrupted by two events. First, Gertrude succeeds at calming Hamlet by kissing him, knowing it is one of Hamlet's greatest weaknesses. Second, Old Hamlet's Ghost appears during Hamlet and Gertrude's kiss. The contrast between these two images is striking and deeply symbolic. Gertrude's kiss, as an act of intimacy and Gertrude's maternal affection, calms Hamlet's intense emotional distress, revealing his vulnerability around his mother. However, this moment is once again interrupted by an apparition of Old Hamlet's Ghost, who reminds Hamlet of the unresolved task. This contrast between the tender kiss and with Ghost's dreadful reminder underscores the duality of Hamlet's inner struggle. This moment is captured by a unique camera angle that shows Hamlet's dazed look over Gertrude's shoulder:

Fig. 14: “Hamlet sees the Ghost for the second time” (Source: Zeffirelli, *Hamlet*, 1990)

The visual juxtaposition of Gertrude's nurturing embrace, enhanced by the sound of sobs under her breath, with the ghostly figure in the background deepens the psychological complexity of the scene, illustrating how Hamlet is constantly pulled between his emotional needs and his duty. This moment not only heightens the dramatic tension but also encapsulates the tragic essence of Hamlet's character, caught in an enchanted circle of vulnerability and revenge.

Furthermore, the source text does not indicate the physical interaction between Hamlet and Gertrude but, as previously mentioned, Shakespeare’s exchange of short and long utterances achieves a sense of tension. Similarly, Ghost’s interruption is evident in the change of Hamlet’s tone and demeanour:

“A king of shreds and patches —

(*Enter the Ghost*)

Save me and hover o’er me with your wings,

You heavenly guards! — What would your gracious

figure?” (Shakespeare, 2002, pp. 141)

Here, Shakespeare skillfully conveys the sudden reawakening of Hamlet's sense of duty through his language. The abrupt change from the emotionally charged exchange with Gertrude to the humility and urgency in his words when addressing the Ghost highlights the sense of obligation Hamlet feels towards his late father. This linguistic transformation is a reflection of the psychological burden the Ghost has on Hamlet, pulling him away from his moment of vulnerability and tenderness back into his role as the avenger. The interplay of these elements in both the source text and Zeffirelli's adaptation underscores the complexity of Hamlet's character, torn between loyalty and emotions.

Moreover, the final part of the scene marks a turning point in both the source text and the adaptation. A significant change in the pace and language of the interaction marks a moment of reconciliation between mother and son. For example, there is a noticeable difference in Hamlet's judgement of his mother's sin earlier in the scene:

"Nay, but to live

In the rank sweat of an enseamèd bed,

Stewed in corruption, honeying and making love

Over the nasty sty - "

And later, after Ghost's visit:

"...Mother, for love of grace,

Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,

That not your trespass but my madness speaks.

It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,

Whiles rank corruption, mining all within,

Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven." (Shakespeare, 2002, pp. 143-144)

His message in both interactions is similar, but the way Hamlet conveys it is significantly different. This shift in Hamlet's conduct is present in the play and in the film. However, in Zeffirelli's film, this drastic change is amplified by Hamlet's calmer tone and gentle physical mannerisms between Hamlet and Gertrude:

Fig. 15: “Hamlet and Gertrude in a gentle embrace” (Source: Zeffirelli, *Hamlet*, 1990)

This change of interaction is reinforced by a change in filming angle. The third-person, slightly distanced view and stable camera create a stark contrast with the previous, more erratic and close-up shots that captured the intensity of Hamlet’s initial confrontation with Gertrude. By pulling back the camera and stabilizing the frame, Zeffirelli underscores the change in Hamlet's approach, moving from an aggressive confrontation to a more profound interaction. The subtle yet significant alterations in camera work and tone between these scenes effectively display a change in Hamlet’s approach.

In conclusion, both the source text and the film succeed in presenting this significant turning point in Hamlet’s attitude towards his mother and set the stage for the final conflict soon to unfold.

All in all, both in Shakespeare's original play and Zeffirelli's film adaptation, this scene serves as a moment that decides the rest of the plot, bringing to light the full range of Hamlet's complex emotions, from his fury and moral outrage to his deep-seated vulnerability and crushing feeling of responsibility. Shakespeare's dialogue in the source text, and its synthesis with Zeffirelli's dynamic visual storytelling in the adaptation, intensify the audience's understanding of Hamlet's internal struggle and strained relationship with his mother. The interplay between verbal conflict and physical manifestations of emotion, accentuated by corresponding camera work and sound,

not only transfers Shakespeare's words into action but also brings the underlying tension to its climax. This scene encapsulates the essence of Hamlet's character who is torn between his duty as an avenger and his wounded soul, ultimately making it one of the most emotionally charged and critical moments in the narrative. Both the play and the adaptation demonstrate how this confrontation drives the plot forward.

6.7. Wada's funeral

The scene of Wada's funeral is one of the most memorable scenes in *The Bad Sleep Well*. Even though it does not reflect any of the scenes from the original play, it honours some of the major themes discussed earlier. More precisely, it combines the theme of death with the theme of corruption, highlighting their inseparable connection in the film.

At the beginning of the scene, a combination of muted funeral chanting and Wada's face behind a blurry windshield sets the gloomy atmosphere of the scene, foreshadowing an emotionally charged revelation about to happen:

Fig. 16: "Wada on his funeral" (Source: Kurosawa, *The Bad Sleep Well,* 1960)

As Nishi wipes the windshield the viewers can see Wada's face better and Wada gets a clear view of his funeral, symbolizing Nishi's role in revealing the truth to Wada and uncovering the reality of his situation. This simple yet powerful act of wiping away the blurred vision serves as a metaphor for Nishi's broader mission to gradually unveil the layers of deceit and manipulation

that plague Wada's understanding of his circumstances. The clearing of the windshield not only signifies a literal and figurative unveiling but also foreshadows the journey of self-awareness and confrontation with harsh truths that await Wada.

In the continuation of the scene, a combination of two camera angles creates an emotionally tense moment for Wada and presents it to the audience. First, the camera films the funeral from Wada's point of view, following his gaze directed at his framed picture and funeral attendees and then switches to his face to reveal an expression of horror. Then, the camera switches back to his point of view to reveal his family sitting by his casket and crying, only to show his face again, displaying even more agony:

Fig. 17: "Wada in agony" (Source: Kurosawa, *The Bad Sleep Well*, 1960)

The use of different points of view, combined with chanting creates an atmosphere of of heightened emotional intensity, drawing the audience deeper into Wada's emotional state and the scene's gravity. This technique allows the viewers to experience the funeral from multiple perspectives, each offering a unique experience. Whether from Wada's perspective or the audience's, the scene gives a powerful insight into the situation. Additionally, this carefully constructed visual and auditory symbolism sets the stage for the unfolding drama, where the lines between life and death, truth and illusion, become increasingly blurred.

Furthermore, Kurosawa unifies these two perspectives into a third perspective, capturing Wada and his funeral from the back seat of a car, immersing the audience in the scene as passive observers of both the ritual and its emotional impact on Wada. The combination of these viewpoints makes the audience not just witnesses to Wada's fate but active participants in the atmosphere of sorrow.

However, all this is just a prelude to the climax of the scene. The arrival of Shirai and Moriyama marks the beginning of the scene's culmination. Here, Kurosawa once again uses the camera technique from the earlier part of the scene, combining a view of Shirai and Moriyama praying over Wada's casket, and Wada shivering in disbelief. This filming technique, combined with the sound of music from the tape that overpowers the funeral chant, prepares Wada and the audience for the subsequent dialogue between Shirai and Moriyama. It is important to notice that their conversation about their relief over Wada's death is just a part of their night, not something worth further discussion. Additionally, one moment best encapsulates the gravity of this scene:

Fig. 18: "Wada's funeral" (Source: Kurosawa, *The Bad Sleep Well,* 1960)

Here, the audience can see Wada's associates paying their respect to Wada, with his wife and daughter by their side, while they talk about forgetting all troubles regarding Wada by spending the night with a young girl. This juxtaposition of mourning and indifference highlights the cold,

apathetic world Kurosawa depicts. The stark contrast between Wada's life-changing realization of his expandability and the nonchalant discussion of his former colleagues over his death emphasizes the dehumanizing effects of the corporate world. The shifting view of the camera, paired with the music overpowering the funeral chants amplifies the dreadful atmosphere, underscoring the detachment of those in power. As the scene reaches its climax, the audience is left with a dreadful understanding of how the corporate world functions and offers an insight important for understanding the context and the rest of the film.

In conclusion, this scene is a crucial moment in the film that encapsulates its broader commentary on the themes of death and corruption, highlighting their inseparable connection. These themes, combined with Kurosawa's filming and sound design depict a brutal, uncaring nature of the Japanese society Kurosawa criticizes, leaving a lasting impact on the viewer.

6.8. Nishi's conversation with Yoshiko

The importance of this scene lies mostly in the development of the relationship between Nishi and Yoshiko since that is the first time they have a heart-to-heart conversation despite being married for some time. Other than that, this is the moment Nishi reveals the background story about his father, focusing more on their relationship than on avenging him.

Furthermore, Kurosawa opens the scene with a unique composition:

Fig. 19: "The divide between Yoshiko and Nishi" (Source: Kurosawa, *The Bad Sleep Well*, 1960)

Here, the audience can see Yoshiko and Nishi standing in an abandoned bomb shelter, divided by a wall. This composition of the scene, and complete, motionless silence that lasts for 15 seconds suggest an estranged, cold relationship between the two characters.

This kind of placement of the scene, together with the point of view of the camera that films the characters from the back serves as an introduction to one of the most painful interactions in the film. Yoshiko breaks the silence by getting to the point straight away. This is the first time in the film that Yoshiko shows initiative in a conversation, instead of answering others' questions. Her agitated pacing although she can barely walk, together with the camera focusing on her while Nishi remains motionless emphasizes her confusion and fear as her illusion of her father is shattered. This moment is significant not just for Yoshiko but also for the rest of the film as it foreshadows the emotional unravelling that is about to take place, setting the stage for one of the film's most memorable scenes.

Furthermore, the uneasiness of the scene is broken by Nishi's kiss. This kiss is also a pivotal moment in the film as it is the first sight of physical affection Nishi expresses towards Yoshiko. However, two elements of the scenography behind it should be observed, and both contrast the previous part of the scene. First, they kiss over the wall dividing them just seconds earlier, thus symbolically overcoming the emotional barrier that had previously separated them. Second, the kiss that lasts 20 seconds is contrasted with the silence preceding their interaction. These two elements combined signify a turning point in their relationship, where physical affection becomes a bridge to emotional reconciliation, even if only momentarily.

Next, after their second kiss, the camera zooms in on Nishi over Yoshiko's shoulder:

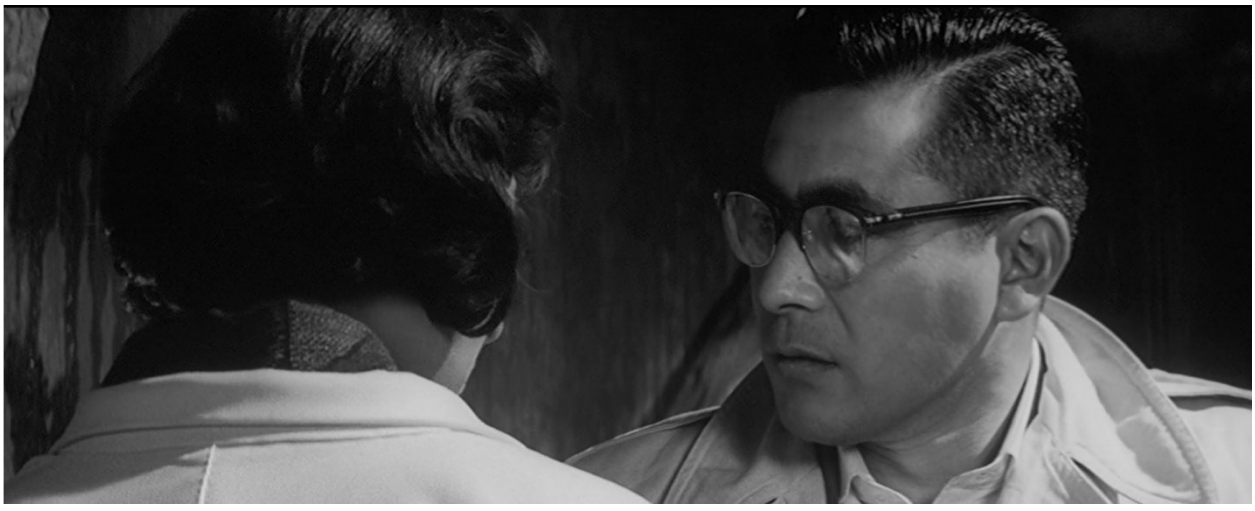

Fig. 20: "Yoshiko and Nishi over the shoulder shot" (Source: Kurosawa, *The Bad Sleep Well*, 1960)

This angle is similar to the one from Zeffirelli's Hamlet, but instead of a confrontation, it signifies a moment of tenderness and vulnerability between Nishi and Yoshiko, as it marks the beginning of Nishi's painful monologue about his father. Here, the camerawork combined with surrounding silence significantly amplifies the gravity of Nishi's words. These elements, combined with Toshiro Mifune's expressionless face that suggests his emotional numbness, heightens the emotional weight of his confession, allowing the audience to fully absorb the depth of his pain and unresolved grief, underscoring the significance of this revelation for the context of the film.

In conclusion, in this scene, Kurosawa uses cinematography to deepen the emotional impact and meaning of Nishi and Yoshiko's interaction. The careful composition, from the initial divide symbolized by the wall to the tender kiss that bridges this separation, visually implies the evolution of their relationship. The strategic use of silence and camera work, especially the close-up of Nishi during his monologue, amplifies the gravity of the moment, making the audience aware of the pain and unresolved grief that define Nishi's character and his quest. Through these cinematic techniques, Kurosawa not only conveys the characters' internal struggles but also highlights the theme of revenge by explaining its origin. This is particularly important as it explains Nishi's relationship with his father that is not clear like in Shakespeare's and Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, thus once again highlighting the theme of revenge and its importance for the main hero and the overall plot. Finally, this proves the timeless and transcultural nature of the theme of revenge and its impact on the individual.

6.9. The final scene in Hamlet

The final scene in both Shakespeare's and Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* results in the deaths of all the remaining main characters. This chain of deaths serves as the tragic denouement of the play's complex web of deceit, revenge, and moral corruption. Consequently, each character's demise is not just a consequence of the physical impact but also their ethical choices. The scene is charged with a sense of inevitability, as the characters quickly meet their fates one by one, highlighting the destructive power of vengeance and moral corruption.

However, before analysing the details of this scene, it is important to note the previous events and more importantly, the different ways in which Shakespeare and Zeffirelli organize them since they are important in setting the tone for the final "battle".

First, Zeffirelli shortens the scene in which Osric invites Hamlet to a duel with Laertes. Here, the question is whether the impact of this abbreviation favours the plot and its dynamics or not. Second, he inserts one part of a dialogue between Claudius and Laertes, plotting how to kill Hamlet, which in Shakespeare's play takes place in Act IV, scene VII. Third, he uses one part of Hamlet's conversation with Horatio as a moment of philosophical reflection for Hamlet.

These directorial changes of the source text that Zeffirelli makes mostly influence the dynamics, and not the plot. To begin with, by condensing Osric's invitation scene, Zeffirelli accelerates the pacing, heightening the tension and urgency leading up to the final confrontation. On the other hand, Shakespeare's intention with this dialogue is probably to dilute the tension to give the final confrontation more gravity. Despite the different techniques, the gruesome atmosphere of the final scene remains untainted.

Furthermore, reordering the scenes by placing a dialogue from the previous act between two dialogues within the same scene does not have a clear function. The only possible reason could be to foreground the moment of Claudius and Larertes's conspiring against Hamlet to clarify the motivations of Hamlet's enemies. Another purpose, that Zeffirelli often seeks to achieve, is to intensify the following scene, making the audience aware of the deadly plan mere moments before its execution.

Last but not least, Hamlet has a short moment to gather his thoughts before the duel:

"There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, it is not to come. If it be not to come, it will be now. If it be not now, yet it will come. The readiness is all." (Zeffirelli, 1990, 01:56:20 - 01:56:49)

This moment suggests Hamlet's unease about the following confrontation. A concerned look on his face, combined with his heavy sighs helps the audience sympathize with his weariness. This is enhanced with yet another back–and–forth switch of the camera, between Hamlet's face and the view of the sea and sun from the window. These visual cues underscore his inner turmoil and the heavy burden he carries as he faces the inevitable confrontation. Here, Hamlet's expressions and the serene view of the sea and sun are intertwined to heighten the sense of dread Hamlet feels despite the beauty of the world around him.

In conclusion, these changes maintain the steady momentum of the final sequence, ensuring that the tension built up throughout the scene reaches its peak seamlessly. As a result, both the play and the film smoothly transition into the climactic moment, allowing the main part of the scene to unfold.

The opening of the scene is arranged in detail in the play and in the adaptation but in two different ways. In the play, Shakespeare sets the scene by describing characters, objects and sounds present in the scene:

"*Trumpets and drums*

A table prepared, with flagons of wine on it

Enter officers with cushions, and other attendants with

foils, daggers, and gauntlets

Enter the King and Queen, Osrick, Laertes, and all

the state" (Shakespeare, 2002, pp. 215)

In the play, Shakespeare sets the scene by providing detailed stage directions that create a certain atmosphere. This description serves not only as a guide for the actors but also as a way to engage the audience's imagination. The mention of specific objects like "foils, daggers" indicates that a duel is about to take place, while the inclusion of trumpets and drums sets a ceremonial tone, underscoring the importance of the occasion. Additionally, the presence of the King, Queen, and other state officials emphasizes the formal nature of the confrontation and its political and personal significance.

On the other hand, in the film adaptation, Zeffirelli sets the scene with an almost seamless transition from Hamlet stepping away from the window to him stepping through the door in the hall. This transition symbolizes Hamlet's ascend from his anxious inactivity into his first real, intended action in the film. Similarly to Shakespeare, Zeffirelli also uses the sounds of trumpets and the visibly formal manner in which Claudius, Gertrude and others enter the hall to accentuate the formality of the situation.

After a short exchange between Hamlet and Laertes, which is equally formal and cold in the source text and the adaptation, the final duel finally begins.

In the play, the rhythm of the scene is set by short, sharp exchanges between Hamlet and Laertes, which is unusual and inconsistent with the rest of the play. This change in style, especially in Hamlet's utterances, emphasizes the dramatic importance of this scene. The dialogue between Hamlet and Laertes, enhanced by the interruptions of Claudius and Gertrude, effectively depicts the intensity of the duel.

Similarly, another significant change happens during the duel – Gertrude's first defiance against Claudius. In contrast with her earlier obedience and affection towards Claudius, Gertrude refuses to obey his plea not to drink the poisoned wine:

"I will, my lord. I pray you, pardon me.

She drinks." (Shakespeare , 2002, pp. 220)

Although this ends in tragedy for the Queen, it can be observed as a change in character and one of the dramatic turning points. Gertrude finally makes a decision on her own and takes her destiny into her own hands.

Aside from the change in Gertrude's character this moment also marks the point when the duel, reinforced with an even faster pace of the dialogue, accelerates even more. In just a few lines in the play, all of the main characters except Horatio lose their lives.

In these final moments of Hamlet, the rhythm, tone and dynamics of the text combine to create a culmination of the play's themes and emotional intensity. The rhythm of this passage is marked by a series of quick exchanges, short sentences, and abrupt shifts in the dialogue, reflecting the chaos of the scene. These elements create a sense of rapid progression of events. Similarly, the dynamics of the scene are intense and escalate rapidly, reflecting the climax of the play's plot. The reciprocal fatal wounding between Hamlet and Laertes, and the revelation of Claudius's treacherous plan that all result in deaths create a dynamic progression of the final events. The rapid power shifts, as the poisoned sword changes hands and as Hamlet finally kills Claudius add to the scene's dramatic intensity. Last but not least, the tone throughout this passage is formal and hostile. However, towards the end of the scene and the play as a whole, the tone becomes less intense, indicating resignation and a final attempt at reconciliation. As characters realize their impending deaths, their tone becomes one of confession and repentance, particularly with Laertes' confession of treachery and Hamlet's forgiveness. This mix of bitterness and reconciliation adds a layer of tragic irony, as the characters attempt to make peace only in their final moments. The tone of Hamlet's final speech, contrasts with the earlier chaos during the duel and murder of Claudius, suggesting his ability to reflect on his own mortality.

These elements help to emphasize the importance of the themes this passage encapsulates - revenge, justice, mortality, and the consequences of corruption. Each character's death serves as a culmination and conclusion of their actions throughout the play. All in all, Shakespeare's

writing in this scene, with dialogue that reflects the urgency and desperation of the characters, contributes to the tension and significance of the final scene.

Moreover, Zeffirelli's film does not fully honour these aspects. The director relies on the visual elements to carry the weight of the scene. This kind of approach in a way reduces the formal tone of the duel, especially with Zeffirelli's addition of comedic moments. For example, Hamlet playfully prances around between the rounds of the duel, significantly changing the rhythm and tone of the scene and indicating Hamlet does not approach the battle seriously. Also, the viewers can notice that there are no close-up shots of the characters' faces as they fight, which is a sharp contrast with the previous scenes in the film that include confrontation. The first part of the duel looks more like a dance than a battle. However, this playful atmosphere relieves the tension and makes the audience feel more relaxed which makes the sudden deaths of the characters seem even more tragic.

Here, just like in Shakespeare's play, a moment when the Queen takes a sip from the poisoned chalet is a turning point in the scene. After that Laertes finally decides to wound Hamlet. However, one aspect of his decision needs to be addressed – the fact that he cuts Hamlet the moment Hamlet tries to pick up his sword. With this choice, Zeffirelli probably wants to emphasize Hamlet's reason to change his approach and fight back. This can be seen in Hamlet's perplexed reaction to a scratch that, if not poisoned, would be insignificant. The intensity of this section of the scene is amplified by a switch of the camera focus between confused Hamlet, scared Laertes and Gertrude who is dying in pain:

Fig. 21: "Multiple emotions" (Source: Zeffirelli, *Hamlet*, 1990)

This change in filming to Zeffirelli's well-known zoom-in sets up a drastic change of pace and atmosphere of the scene, foreshadowing a chain of unfortunate events about to take place. As the scene progresses, the tension escalates rapidly, enhanced by the close-up shots that capture the expressions of fear and desperation in each character's eyes. For example, Zeffirelli's choice to zoom in on Gertrude's agonized expression as she succumbs to the poison serves to heighten the emotional impact of her death. This is amplified by Hamlet's disbelief as he tries to listen to his dead mother's heartbeat thus causing the audience's emotional involvement in the scene.

Furthermore, the intense close-up of Laertes, burdened both by guilt and physical pain, allows the audience to perceive him as a victim rather than an avenger and Claudius' accomplice in treachery. This portrayal of Laertes, captured through the close-up of his tormented face, adds a layer of complexity to his character, transforming him from an antagonist to a tragic figure faced with the consequences of his actions. The audience witnesses his shift from vengeance to regret as he repents before his death in Hamlet's arms:

Fig. 22: "Dying Laertes" (Source: Zeffirelli, *Hamlet*, 1990)

As Laertes breathes his last breath, sharing the tragic destiny with Hamlet, their rivalry ends and brings a tragic resolution to their conflict. Through this intimate final shot of Laertes Zeffirelli

underscores the destructive nature of vengeance thus highlighting the role of revenge in the plot once more.

Furthermore, Hamlet's major character progression is encapsulated by his almost seamless transition from holding Laertes and trying to comprehend the situation to slaying Claudius and making him drink the poisoned wine. This action seems to gain even more importance when contrasted with Hamlet's powerless stagger just seconds later, underscoring his determination to kill Claudius and avenge his father with his final breath. Despite the constant change of the camera angle in this part of the scene, the characters' movements are captured to create a compact whole.

Finally, Hamlet starts to succumb to the effect of the poison. However, Mel Gibson's performance makes Hamlet's agony seem more like drunkenness as he stumbles around, leaning on the table and gazing around absently:

Fig. 23: "Hamlet dying" (Source: Zeffirelli, *Hamlet*, 1990)

In contrast, Laertes and Gertrude's reaction to poison is significantly different as the pain is visible on their faces and body movements. This is a sharp dichotomy from his earlier suicidal thoughts.

This sharp dichotomy between Hamlet's seemingly detached reaction to the poison and the visible suffering of Laertes and Gertrude adds a layer of complexity to the scene. Hamlet's

almost numbed state highlights the unique psychological and emotional journey Hamlet has endured throughout the play. His staggering movements and vacant gaze suggest his previous inner battle makes the physical effects of the poison seem negligible compared to the emotional and existential exhaustion he feels. This contrast not only underscores Hamlet's complex relationship with death but also serves to remind the audience of the different ways each character confronts their similar fates, ultimately enhancing the effect of the tragedy and solidifying Hamlet as an example of a tragic play, where the inevitability of death and the flaws of its characters lead to a devastating conclusion.

Additionally, another element of Hamlet's character is solidified in his final moments. His tender expression of love towards his mother one last time emphasizes what Hamlet cares for from the beginning and thus includes in his final moment.

Finally, as Hamlet dies in his friend's arms, the camera films his tortured face and as he exhales his last breath, it slowly moves upwards, as if it following Hamlet's soul as it leaves his body. Lastly, the final shot slowly reveals a hall with the dead bodies of Hamlet, Gertrude, Claudius and Laertes, encapsulating a tragic ending to the story:

Fig. 24: "The final scene" (Source: Zeffirelli, *Hamlet*, 1990)

Additionally, this perspective creates a sense of finality, giving closure to the plot and signalling to the audience that the story of the unlucky Danish prince is over.

Moreover, by ending the film with this image by cutting a part of the story when Fortinbras arrives Zeffirelli creates a more tragic closure that appeals more to his audience. The director probably opted for this thinking the contemporary audience would find Shakespeare's ending anticlimactic. This way, Zeffirelli crafts a conclusion that is more focused on the personal tragedy of Hamlet rather than shifting attention to the political consequences. This decision heightens the emotional impact of the final moments, leaving the audience with a memory of the dead Hamlet that will linger in their minds long after watching the film.

In conclusion, this sequence of events, enhanced by Zeffirelli's camera work, creates an impactful final scene of the film. The zoom-ins, combined with the frantic pacing of the scene, effectively foreshadow the catastrophic outcome and the ultimate demise of the key characters.

All in all, both Shakespeare and Zeffirelli excel in creating an atmosphere rich with tension and significance, each using their respective mediums to draw the audience into the scene and set the stage for the final, climactic showdown. While Shakespeare focuses on the dialogue and describing the stage in order to set the atmosphere, Zeffirelli uses meticulous camera work and actors' lively interpretations of Shakespeare's text. Even though he does not always stay true to Shakespeare's text, he enhances the visual and emotional intensity of the final moments thus honouring the importance of this scene in the source text. Either way, the audience is left with an impression of tragedy as the chain of unfortunate events unfolds and drives the story to its tragic conclusion. Despite their different techniques, both create a climax that leaves a lasting impact on the viewer thus proving the timelessness of this tragedy.

6.10. Nishi's death

Even though the exact moment of Nishi's death is not depicted in the film, the circumstances surrounding it and the aftermath of his murder are still an important part of the film, especially its thematics and unravelling of the plot.

At the beginning of the scene, before Yoshiko and Tatsuo enter the shelter, they hear wailing coming from the inside, foreshadowing that something horrible is happening. This ominous sound sets the stage for the rest of the scene. The first aspect that is important to address is that Kurosawa presents the revelation of Nishi's murder as a concept similar to a detective investigation. More precisely, Yoshiko and her brother learn about Nishi's murder from the real Nishi who, through his own identity crisis, tries to investigate the circumstances of his friend's murder.

More precisely, when Itakura tries to explain Nihi's murder he focuses on the evidence he collects in the bomb shelter, a bottle of alcohol, a syringe and Nishi's coat. During this part of the scene, the camera first films Itakura's face and then moves to show the broken bottle and syringe. Then, Itakura tries to re-enact the events using Nishi's coat:

Fig. 25: "Itakura explains Nishi's death" (Source: Kurosawa, *The Bad Sleep Well*, 1960)

This shot connects those three items and makes one integrated whole that, with Itakura's explanation, helps the Iwabuchi siblings and the audience find out what happened to Nishi. Here, Itakura's desperation as his identity dies with Nishi enhances a sense of tragedy and the finality of Nishi's death.

Furthermore, after presenting the circumstances to the audience Kurosawa makes a sharp scene cut that shows Nishi's car:

Fig. 26: “Nishi’s car” (Source: Kurosawa, *The Bad Sleep Well,* 1960)

Even though the viewers cannot see Nishi’s body, an image of a broken windshield and a car seat covered in blood represent what Nishi’s death looked like. This dreadful image, amplified with the sound of a train passing by, creates a dreadful atmosphere that amplifies the horror and finality of Nishi's death. The sharp cut to the bloodied car, combined with the unsettling sound of the train, forces the audience to confront the brutal reality of the murder without actually seeing the body. This indirect approach heightens the emotional impact, as the audience is left to imagine the violence that occurred, making it even more terrifying.

By withholding the explicit depiction of Nishi's death, Kurosawa intensifies the sense of loss and tragedy, allowing the audience to experience the full weight of the event solely through the aftermath. The scene’s construction, with its carefully chosen visuals and sounds, not only resolves the plot but also deepens the emotional impact of Nishi’s fate, especially knowing that his enemy lives on, ensuring that his death lingers in the minds of the audience long after seeing the film.

Even though Nishi’s death is nothing like Hamlet’s from either the original play or the film, it leaves a similar impact. The main hero is dead, Yoshiko is devastated even though she is alive, and his friend is a living ghost as a result of his death. However, his enemy lives on, making the tragedy even more devastating, meaning that his quest for justice changes nothing.

Nishi's death, much like Hamlet's, serves as a powerful commentary on the futility of revenge. The emotional aftermath, Yoshiko's devastation and Itakura's transformation into a living ghost underscores the far-reaching consequences of Nishi's quest, which ultimately fails to achieve any real change or redemption of the enemy. His death, rather than achieving justice, only solidifies the power of his enemy, leaving the audience with a sense of hopelessness and despair.

Kurosawa's decision to let the antagonist live raises the bitterness to an even higher level, making this contemporary tragedy even more devastating than Shakespeare's tragedy. This way, Kurosawa sends a powerful message to his audience that corruption and revenge overcome all temporal and cultural barriers and ultimately result in terrible losses and tragic destinies. Finally, this kind of approach leaves a long-lasting impact on the audience.

7. Conclusion

To begin with, this paper explores the themes from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* through the cinematic lenses of Franco Zeffirelli and Akira Kurosawa, revealing how both directors engage with the central themes of Shakespeare's work while adapting them to different contexts and artistic affiliations. This is achieved not just by analysing these themes alone, but through the analysis and comparison of these themes through characterization and most notable scenes. Furthermore, the connection between Zeffirelli's adaptation and Shakespeare's original is evident as the adaptation mirrors the play in most aspects. On the other hand, Kurosawa's adaptation at first seems vague but an attentive viewing of the film, together with a deeper analysis of its main themes offers a different perspective, making its connection to the source more distinct. To summarize, both adaptations honour the text in a unique way.

More precisely, both films demonstrate how Shakespeare's themes, especially revenge and corruption transcend time and cultural boundaries. However, each adaptation also reflects its director's unique perspective of these themes and their way of presenting them. While Zeffirelli focuses more on their consequences for the individual, Kurosawa places the themes into a broader critique of society. To clarify, Zeffirelli demonstrates the influence of personal re venge on society and Kurosawa reverts this logic and presents how society encourages the individual to become an avenger. Additionally, as far as the theme of corruption goes, both directors depict its consequences for the individual and for society and the way these two spheres intertwine. This comparison illustrates how adaptations can honour the main themes and principles of original work in different ways and transform in into a completely different work while simultaneously drawing the attention of contemporary audiences.

Moreover, the distinct approaches taken by Zeffirelli and Kurosawa highlight the flexibility of Shakespeare's work when interpreted through different cultural contexts and cinematic lenses. Even though Zeffirelli's film closely adheres to the original text, with actors' astonishing performances and camera angles that imply different meanings of the scenes, it appeals even to

those who do not necessarily seek a traditional representation of Shakespeare's text. On the other hand, not only is Kurosawa's adaptation different in terms of plot and characters but it is filmed in a different style, with slower scenes, different angles and acting styles. Kurosawa places his plot in stark, industrial landscapes and claustrophobic spaces to symbolize the suffocating grip of corruption on society. These cinematic techniques not only contribute to the films' artistic aspect but also serve to underscore the directors' different interpretations of Shakespeare's themes.

One of the reasons for their difference is that *The Bad Sleep Well* is eleven years older so it is only natural that the filming style is noticeably different. Other than that, one film is American while the other one is Japanese, which instantly changes their cultural background and influences the directors' approaches to storytelling. These cultural differences are reflected in the pacing, tone, and visual aesthetics of the films, which affects how the themes, characters and other aspects are portrayed. Zeffirelli's adaptation, influenced by Western cinema, emphasizes dramatic intensity and emotional expression, using close-ups and dynamic camera movements to capture the psychological complexity of Hamlet's character. Conversely, Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* employs a different pace by placing one of the most intense scenes in the beginning. However, instead of favouring one adaptation and undermining the other, this juxtaposition only amplifies the adaptability of Shakespeare's themes, underscoring how different cultural contexts can bring new dimensions to familiar narratives.

Additionally, the characterization in both films serves as a vital basis for exploring the main themes of revenge, corruption, madness, the position of women and death since all the characters are directly or indirectly affected by them. Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, with its detailed portrayal of Hamlet's internal struggle and his complex relationships, delves deep into the psychological aspects of revenge and madness that are intertwined with corruption and can be traced back to death and can also lead to it. Kurosawa, on the other hand, uses the character of Nishi to explore the dehumanizing effects of corruption as well as the death and revenge it entails. The in-depth portrayals of these themes in both films ensure that the audience remains engaged in their consequences and how the characters face them.

Furthermore, in Zeffirelli's adaptation, characters like Hamlet and Ophelia delve into the psychological turmoil that accompanies the pursuit of revenge and the descent into madness. Hamlet's internal conflict, his struggle with inaction and his complex relationship with Gertrude all highlight the personal aspect of revenge, as well as the broader impact on those around him. Ophelia's madness, on the other hand, is a result of the vulnerability of women in a patriarchal

society. Her descent into madness and eventual suicide emphasizes the destructive consequences of a world dominated by men who are blind to power or revenge.

In contrast, Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* utilizes its characters to comment on the destructive effects of corruption within society. For example, Nishi embodies the toll that corruption takes on the individual. His journey from a vengeful son seeking justice for his father to a victim of the very system he aimed to dismantle reflects the theme of corruption as a force that destroys anyone on its path. Furthermore, Yoshiko, as a sole female figure is, much like Ophelia, caught in the web of male-dominated power structures.

Lastly, the theme of death is a good example of directors' distinct approaches to this theme. More precisely, it can be highlighted through different portrayals of these characters and their relationship with death. In Zeffirelli's film, death is portrayed as both a personal and existential crisis, with Hamlet's famous soliloquy, "To be or not to be," capturing the universal fear of the unknown alongside the moral implications of committing suicide. This philosophical exploration of death is a reflection of Hamlet's internal struggles and psychological state, making it a deeply personal theme. Kurosawa, however, presents death in a more societal context. The deaths in *The Bad Sleep Well*, whether through murder, suicide or feigned death, serve as a social commentary of a corrupt system that devours its victims. Other than that, Kurosawa presents the theme of death through the collective trauma after World War II., which besides death, brought on a new system that Kurosawa criticises thus proving once again the inseparable connection between death and corruption. The film's broader context of this theme offers a different but equally important perspective.

Through the characterization in both films, the themes of revenge, corruption, madness, the position of women, and death are not only explored but also intertwined, reflecting the complexity of human experience as portrayed in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Just like in the source text, these characters serve as personifications of those themes through which the directors convey their interpretations, ensuring that the essence of Shakespeare's work is preserved while being adapted to new contexts and cinematic forms.

Moreover, the exploration of these themes, together with the characters that represent them is reflected in the scenes. Even though characterization and general analysis of the main themes as part of the plot as a whole is important, the analysis of these themes in particular scenes is crucial for a more precise exploration. To begin with, Shakespeare presents the main themes through the

most notable scenes in the play, whether through soliloquy or dialogue. Despite the limitations in contrast with the films, Shakespeare integrates his themes in the scenes from the play, making a strong point through the characters' words and actions. Each soliloquy and dialogue in the play is crafted to reveal the internal struggles, motivations, and moral dilemmas of the characters, thus highlighting the main themes. These techniques allow the plot to develop and invite the audience to contemplate the meaning behind the characters' words and actions.

In contrast, Zeffirelli and Kurosawa possess a larger quantity of tools and techniques to aid their presentation of the main themes to the audience, allowing them to enhance the narrative beyond the limitations of the stage. Instead of depending solely on actors and their performances like Shakespeare, these directors can utilize cinematography, sound design, editing, and visual symbolism to deepen the impact of their themes through the important scenes.
For instance, in Zeffirelli's *Hamlet*, the scene of Hamlet's first interaction with his father's ghost highlights more than one theme. First, the Ghost himself symbolises death, serving as a haunting reminder of mortality and the consequences of Claudius's corrupted soul as he is a victim of his brother's corruption and desire for power. Other than that, this encounter also introduces the theme of revenge, as the Ghost's revelation of his murder encourages Hamlet to seek vengeance. The eerie atmosphere, created through the combination of light and shadow, together with tense, chilling music, enhances the feelings of unease caused by death and the heavy burden of revenge entrusted to Hamlet, setting the stage for the rest of the plot. In this scene, the themes of death, corruption and revenge are intertwined which foreshadows their overpowering presence throughout the film.

Similarly, in *The Bad Sleep Well* Kurosawa employs specific scenes to present those themes. For example, the wedding banquet scene is not just a setting for Nishi's introduction but also a stage for revealing the corruption that plagues corporate Japan. Other than symbolizing corruption, the cake shaped like the corporate headquarters, with a rose on the seventh floor, serves as a powerful symbol of death caused by corruption, introducing the viewers to the theme of death. Aside from that, this scene sets the stage for Nishi's quest for justice and revenge.
Furthermore, scenes depicting madness, such as Ophelia's descent into insanity in Zeffirelli's adaptation, or Shirai's breakdown in *The Bad Sleep Well*, are crucial in illustrating the psychological toll the central conflicts take on the characters. These moments are not just expressions of personal struggle but also reflections of the consequences of revenge, death and corruption on the individuals.

Moreover, the theme of the position of women is also explored in the key scenes. In Zeffirelli's film, Gertrude's interactions with Hamlet, particularly in the closet scene, highlight her depiction as a woman of conflicted loyalties, easily influenced by patriarchal structures. Kurosawa mirrors this through Yoshiko's tragic role, where her physical disability and naive nature make her both a victim and a symbol of the collateral damage caused by a male-dominated society.
In conclusion, the careful analysis of specific scenes within Zeffirelli's *Hamlet* and Kurosawa's *The Bad Sleep Well* not only reinforces the main themes of the films but also provides a deeper insight into how these themes are presented. Focusing on these critical moments offers a deeper insight into the overall thematics of the films, allowing a more comprehensive understanding of how the directors interpret and adapt Shakespeare's work, transforming it into a cinematic experience that resonates with both the original play and the contemporary issues.
In summary, it is crucial to analyse not just the themes alone, but also their manifestation in the characters and the main scenes in both the play and the film to gain a complete insight into their meaning and importance for the text. Only after integrating all these categories is it possible to comprehend both the intentions Shakespeare wants to convey in his play and what Kurosawa and Zeffirelli seek to communicate to their viewers.

All in all, the analysis of Shakespeare's themes through the adaptations of Zeffirelli and Kurosawa offers a detailed insight into how directors adapt the themes and concepts from the source text onto the screen. To begin with, Shakespeare's play is a classic work of literature and adapting it is a challenging process with the risk of misinterpretation or oversimplification. However, when analysing adaptations it is important to note that their quality does not lie in copying the source text word for word but rather in their power to interpret some of the themes from the original in their unique way.

With that in mind, Kurosawa in *The Bad Sleep Well* and Zeffirell in his adaptation of *Hamlet* both try to present to their audience some of the concepts from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* even though these two adaptations differ in almost every aspect. Although not completely, Zeffirelli's film follows Shakespeare's original for the most part. On the other hand, Kurosawa's film is not an obvious adaptation of *Hamlet*. However, both directors, through their unique artistic visions, manage to capture the essence of Hamlet while adapting it to their audiences. While Zeffirelli uses the help of music and well-known actors to resonate with the Western audience in the 1990s, Kurosawa uses World War II. as a background for the events in his film to make Shakespeare's ideas more familiar to the audience of post-war Japan. So, the success of their adaptations lies exactly in this ability to adapt the themes from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to a

different context. Additionally, to favour one adaptation over another, solely based on their adherence to the source text would undermine their artistic contributions and overall value.

In conclusion, both adaptations, in their distinct manner, succeed in placing the main themes from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, thus proving their resilience to temporal and cultural limitations. These films demonstrate the power of adaptation, showing that *Hamlet*, as a notable work of literature, can transcend its original form to find relevance across different cultures and eras. Ultimately, both *Hamlet* adaptations serve as a bridge that overcomes the restraints of the past and the present, preserving the omnipresence of these existential questions that burden the individual and humanity as a whole.

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Obrazac A.

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