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**SHAKESPEARE NA JEVIŠTI A NA PLÁTNĚ:**

**KRÁL LEAR**

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**SHAKESPEARE ON STAGE AND SCREEN:**

**KING LEAR**

**Zuzana Šapovalová**

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci vypracoval/a samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

*V Plzni dne 29. června 2012*

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Jméno Příjmení

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## ABSTRACT

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The object of my undergraduate thesis is to cover the transmission from theatre to cinema. Thanks to the modern technologies, the shape of the theatre has change in many ways, but it has preserved its original purpose. The innovations in technology also gave rise to the cinema, which is a modern resemblance of the theatre. But it differs from theatre in many ways. It is not rare that a drama which was written to be performed on the stage is transformed into its movie version. My example is Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear* and its movie adaptation *Ran*, directed by Japanese director Akira Kurosawa. The matter of my thesis is to compare the play with its movie adaptation.

The whole thesis is divided into four major parts. In the first part I am focused on the theatre and its transformations from the Elizabethan era to the modern age. I have also covered the rise of the first silent movie and talking movie. Then I describe the main movie adaptations of *King Lear*. In the second part I deal with the genesis of *King Lear*. I have covered the main Shakespeare's sources and his inspiration for writing his famous tragedy. The third part deals with the main differences between *King Lear* and *Ran*. Amongst these differences belong the setting of the plot, the inspiration of the authors, the use of language and some differences in the plot. The last main part deals with the characterisation of the main characters. The aim of this part was to discover, whether the characters have identical personalities or not. Eventually in the conclusion I have summarized the result of my thesis.

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## 1. Introduction

There is a significant difference between the theatres as it used to be in the Elizabethan era and the cinema as we know it nowadays. Most differences are due to the age, which has progressed a lot and has brought a lot of innovations in technologies. The major amongst these innovations is probably the invention of electricity which enabled the transmission of the play from theatre to screen of the cinema. With the transmission from theatre to screen has changed a lot of things. First there is no interaction between the actors and the spectators. There are no breaks between the individual acts, therefore the plot of the movie is more fluent contrary to the plot of the play. The motion of the camera enables the spectator to see the plot also from others than just a frontal point of view. These differences provide the spectators slightly different experience. My task in this thesis is to compare the classical play of the Elizabethan era, *King Lear*, and its modern movie adaptation *Ran*, focussing on spectators preferring modern version of the theatre, cinema.

My reason for choosing Shakespeare's *King Lear* was purely subjective. I have always considered it as one of his greatest plays and it is also my favourite play. I especially appreciate the lack of romantic scenes and the timeless theme where power and property play more significant role in people's life than love and loyalty between the family members. The reason for choosing *Ran* as the main adaptation to describe was rather objective. There are a lot of famous adaptations, therefore I decided to choose one according to their rating on variable charts. Furthermore, *Ran* impressed me especially with its setting in the Japanese culture, which is very different from the British culture and very interesting.

*King Lear* is one of the longest dramas written by famous English playwright, William Shakespeare. It was written between years 1605 and 1606 and first published in quarto edition in 1608. It is a play consisting of five acts and discussing the tragedies in two families. One of the families is the family of king Lear and his three daughters Gonerill, Regan and Cordelia. The destiny of this family is rather tragic. Lear is a senescent king who decides to divide his kingdom amongst his three daughters. But the youngest daughter disappoints him with her answer about her love to her father and the other daughters eventually betray their father as well. Too late Lear realizes the good intentions of his youngest daughter and at the end of the play, the whole family is death. The second family in *King Lear* is the family of the Earl of Gloucester. The Earl of

Gloucester has two sons, the legitimate Edgar and the bastard Edmund. Unfortunately the Earl of Gloucester decides to trust Edmund over Edgar which causes the decay of their family. *King Lear* is one of the greatest tragedies where the majority of the main characters are dead at the end of the play.

*Ran* is a movie from French-Japanese production, made by famous Japanese director, Akira Kurosawa. *Ran*, made in 1985, is regarded as one of his masterpiece. The story is based on Shakespeare's *King Lear* and it is settled in feudal Japan in the 16th century. But according to Kurosawa, *Ran* was inspired by the true story of the Japanese warlord in the 16th century. The title of the movie, *Ran*, means in English "chaos". (O'Sullivan) The main plot is as well as in *King Lear* concerned with the breakdown of the powerful family. The head of the family, in this case Lord Hidetora, decides to impart his duties among his offspring and to live the rest of his life in peace. But his decision causes concision amongst his three sons. The concision culminates with the banishment of the youngest and most honest son. The miserable Lord Hidetora is consequently betrayed by his other sons and goes mad. It is his punishment for not hearing the truth and believing the lies. At one time he is a man, who has everything and suddenly loses all important things in his life. But all the people who have been rejected by him do not turn against him and try to save him, including his youngest son. And while they do so, the other sons try to kill each other to gain the absolute power over the land. Eventually one of them does succeed and later kills the youngest brother as well. Hidetora apprehensive the reality, dies above the corpse of the youngest son. The tragedy of the family is passed away. The movie *Ran* is the perfect example of the situation where lies and hate prevail over truth and love. Words characterising the movie would be lie, hate, betray, dissemblance, fratricide and madness. Vincent Canby, an American film critic working for The New York Times provided the following characterisation of *Ran*:

"Ran" is very much the work of a man who's lived a long, rich and sometimes deeply troubled life. Now there's no time left to cater to the genteel sensibilities of others. In spite of all its beauty, "Ran" is blunt. It makes its points abruptly, which may be what his younger Japanese critics mean when today they describe the Kurosawa oeuvre as "old-fashioned." It's hugely entertaining but never soothing.



In my thesis, I decided to briefly discuss the general differences between *King Lear* and *Ran*. Then I will enlarge the individual characters and their behaviour and transformation during the plot. My interest about the characters will be concerned whether the characters of *Ran* are identical or different from their equivalents in *King Lear*. The analyses of the characters will help me to uncover whether it is appropriate to equate *Ran* to *King Lear*.

## **2. From Stage to Screen**

My first aim is to impart you some general information about developing from the theatre to the cinema. From the beginning the cinema could not provide such realistic effects as theatre but it all changed during the years of developing technologies and after World War I. Shakespeare wrote all his plays to be performed in a particular way which had nothing in common with film realism. (Hatchuel 13-14)

### **2.1. From the Elizabethan Theatre to the Theatre of Nowadays**

Shakespeare's plays were intended for Elizabethan public theatre, where the plays were performed on the open-air stage in circular constructions. Shakespeare's stage was very simple with no special properties and visual effects. (Hatchuel 14-15) He wrote his plays directly to his audiences. (Manwell 6) The spectators were informed about the setting and time of the play verbally. Sometime the music was used to evoke a demanded atmosphere. As a consequence, the stage did not have to be changed between the acts and the plays were more fluent. All parts were played by male actors. Most of the plays were performed on entirely bare stage so the playwright had to show maximum of his linguistic skills to impress the audience.

There are some similarities between cinema and Elizabethan theatre but the number of the differences is more considerable. The major similarity is in the fluidity. The cinema as well as the Elizabethan theatre provides fluent process of the story. (Hatchuel 15) Like it is said in Sarah Hatchuel's book *Shakespeare: From Stage to Screen*: "A film, like a theatre production in Shakespeare's time, can go quickly from a battle scene to a discussion behind closed doors inside a palace." (16) But unlike from the theatre, in cinema there is no physical interaction between the actors and the audience and the level of the realism is higher. And in the cinema we are able to watch the performance only from frontal viewpoint.

As the time proceeded the shape of the theatre was changing. The considerable changes came with the Restoration stage. The king Charles II. allowed women to perform, so the female characters in Shakespeare's plays started to be played by actresses. The theatres became private and indoor, where the light was supplied by candles. Other improvement which appeared was a curtain, but it still did not serve to cover the action between individual scenes. The theatres had small capacity and were based on an intimate relationship between the actors and the audience. The stage properties still were not present but they were simulated with paintings on the shutter at the back of the stage. These shutters were changing together with the scenes.

The 18th century brought development of the system of shutters. They were placed on the stage in diverse distances to create more realistic effects. The theatres also started to have a bigger capacity and raised the distance between the actors and the audience. The effort to make this distance even larger culminated in 1762 with the complete separation. In this century the curtain eventually started to serve like protection from curious eyes of the audience and hid the action between the individual scenes. This historical period brought significant progress in lightning. The candles became more effective thanks to small tin reflectors on them which enabled to point the light on any part of the stage. David Garrick even improved this method in his production of *King Lear*, where the scene with the storm was accompanied by thunder and bright flashes of light. (Hatchuel 17-20) A great hit of the eighteen century was to rewrite Shakespeare's place to even more satisfy the audience. To rewrite the play was not a problem because there was not such a thing as copyright. (Manwell 2)

The 19th century was the century of Romanticism. This historical period was typical for emphasising personal emotions, especially the feelings of loneliness. Shakespeare's plays were considered and performed as romantic drama by this time. Very popular act was to use real trees, animals and even water in the performances. The properties became as important as actors themselves. The progress of lightning came almost to perfection thanks to invention of gaslight in 1817 and of electric limelight in 1885. The theatre obtains the shape very similar to the theatre of nowadays. (Hatchuel 21-24)

The 20th century was specific for its experiments with the presentation of the plays. The plays were presented on vast open stage, on the open air, in modern dress, and they were variously modernized. Some of the performances were settled in different culture and a lot of them had nothing in common with the original Shakespeare's plays. (Manwell 2)

## **2.2. Shakespeare and the Silent Movie**

The first resemblance of the silent movie based on Shakespeare appeared in 1899, when one of the Shakespeare's plays, *King John*, was shot for advertising purposes. The most productive in making silent movies were Italy and France but even in the United States sprung up several Shakespeare's adaptations. The movies were very similar to the theatre except the sound. The camera was not moving and it was shooting the actors from the frontal viewpoint only.

However, in the twentieth century the technologies of the cinema were improved and the competition between theatre and cinema has risen. The theatres tried to reach the perfect realism but it proved that they cannot be as realistic as the cinema. From that reason they came back to their simplicity of the Elizabethan era. They used bare stage and curtain as the only properties on the stage. (Hatchuel 24-25)

### **2.2.1. Silent Movie - the First Adaptation of King Lear**

During the history of the silent movie was made several adaptations on Shakespeare's play *King Lear*. The first movie adaptation on *King Lear* ever was directed by Gerolamo Lo Savio in Italy in 1910. The film lasts approximately sixteen minutes and is accompanied by the piano play. The camera functions in the way I described in the previous chapter. It is not moving and takes picture only from frontal point view. As a consequence it reminds more of theatre than movie. Surprisingly the film is not black and white. Very significant role in this film have plays with colours. For example when Lear gets mad in Cordelia, the whole screen turns purple to support the expression of Lear's anger. But the colours do not reach such perfection as they do nowadays. The movie is interlarded by explanation signs to help the viewer to understand the plot of the movie. The plot was contracted to the main events but it kept the major idea. Savio also put the accent on the costumes of the actors. (Lang) Although this movie is silent and short, it is greatly comprehensible and fascinating.

## **2.3. Shakespeare and the Talking Movie**

In this chapter I will provide some general information about the rise of the talking movie and the most famous adaptations of *King Lear*. The era of the silent movie brought a huge number of adaptations, but it is nothing to compare with the era of talking movie. In this era the most significant movies came into existence. The development in technology

enabled the cinema to provide not only the picture but even sound in quite acceptable quality. But that was not easy at the beginning. Although the directors have possibility to make a talking movie, sometimes they chose not to use it. The reasons are simple. First, it was too expensive and second, there were problems with the Shakespeare's texts. The directors asked the question if it is appropriate to use the Elizabethan language for the medium of cinema. There would be a risk that people would not understand it. (Hatchuel 15)

Before I describe the major adaptations of *King Lear*, it is important to learn what this term actually means. As Sarah Hatchuel writes in her book:

It is relatively easy to define what a screen adaptation is. It has been shot on film and has been shown in a cinema on big screen. Moreover it takes advantage of the possibilities offered by editing and camera effects to present a personal and highly subjective vision of the play. (15)

Hatchuel also identifies four types of adaptations. First type of adaptation is a movie which uses the original English text from some of the Shakespeare's play. Second type of adaptation is a movie which uses a translation of the original text. Among this type of adaptations belongs movie *Ran* directed by Akira Kurosawa in 1985 or *King Lear* directed by Grigori Kozinstev in 1970. Third type of adaptation is a movie which plot is inspired by Shakespeare's play. This is for example American movie *King of Texas* directed by Uli Edel in 2002. The last types of adaptation are movies in which the actors are supposed to play a part in Shakespeare's play or they teach about it. In these movies the story does not follow the plot of a play but extracts from Shakespeare's play appear in some scenes. (Hatchuel 16-18)

### **2.3.1. *King Lear* - Movie Adaptations**

My aim in this chapter is to briefly describe the most famous film adaptations of *King Lear*. During the years there was shot an enormous number of *King Lear* adaptations but it is not my intention to describe them all. I chose four movies which I will describe, *Korol Lir* directed by Grigori Kozinstev, *King Lear* directed by Peter Brook, *King of Texas* directed by Uli Edel and *A Thousand Acres* directed by Jocelyn Moorhouse. I wittingly omitted movie *Ran* directed by Akira Kurosawa because I will dedicate to this movie the rest of my thesis.

### **2.3.1.1. *King Lear* by Peter Brook**

Peter Brook's *King Lear* is a black-and-white film adaptation of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, which was filmed in 1971, the same year as Kozintsev's *Korol Lir*. It is probably the most famous and the most successful adaptation of the Shakespeare's drama *King Lear*. The screenplay of Brook's *King Lear* follows the original Shakespeare's text but it is modified into a modern English to be more comprehensible for the modern viewers. Brook also omits and rearranges some scenes but in principal he preserves the story in the way as Shakespeare wrote it. He set the story in Denmark in wild and frozen waste land of Jutland. (Parlato)The scenes are supported by frozen and gloomy nature as a precursor of the hapless end of our characters. Brook also tried to make the film very simple without any redundant subjects and instead of music there are only crude sound effects. He also used interesting visual effects. As the story continues and individual characters die, the screen becomes paler and finally turns completely white when Lear dies. (Canby) As the main representatives Brook casted Paul Scofield as King Lear, Irene Worth as Gonerill, Susan Engel as Regan and Anne-Lise Gabold as Cordelia. Film critics indicate Brook's choice of actors as the main success of the film. They especially appreciate the actor Paul Scofield, who has won award for the best Shakespearean performance of the 20th century by the Royal Shakespeare Company. Unfortunately the supporting cast did not get the chance to show themselves very much because of Brook's cuts and his concentration on the main characters. An American poet and film critic Jonathan Henderson appreciate this film especially for its originality. He wrote:

One fascinating aspect about the film is that Scofield and Brook almost never "play up" the drama. This is an extremely subdued Lear, and those who appreciate the play for its thunderous emotions, raging madness and the often downright evil language might be disappointed in this presentation. Personally, I think it reveals a wonderfully fresh perspective of the play. We have Olivier and McKellen who are both superb in the "classic" Lear mode, but, as far as I know, there is no other Lear like Brook's and Scofield's on screen.

### **2.3.1.2. *A Thousand Acres* by Jocelyne Moorhouse**

*A Thousand Acres* is an American movie directed by Jocelyne Moorhouse. This drama is based on novel written by Jane Smiley which plot is inspired Shakespeare's play *King Lear*. The story is set in a farm in Iowa which is a property of the family Cook. The owner of the farm Larry Cook (Jason Robards) is the most powerful farmer in the neighbourhood and he has three daughters. One day he decides to divide his farm into three parts. One part for each daughter. The two daughters, Rose (Michele Pfeiffer) and Ginny (Jessica Lange) agree with him. But as it is in *King Lear*, the youngest daughter, Caroline (Jennifer Jason Leigh), deconstructs this idea. Larry gets angry with her and therefore she does not get her part of the farm. The farm fall to the two daughters who run it with their husbands. And this moment is beginning of breakdown of the Cook family. Between the sisters who used to be best friends increase rivalry. Contrary to *King Lear*, all the male characters are described in negative way. And the father, Larry Cook, is the worst of them all. We learn from Ginny and Rose that their father sexually abused them when they were little girls. Larry, as well as Lear, after loosing his farm becomes paranoid and disillusioned. He hires Caroline, who works as a lawyer, to sue the two daughters and get his farm back. This moment divides the family forever. Ginny and Rose whose husbands are gone start their new lives on their own.

As we can see from the plot, *A Thousand Acres* is not the exact adaptation of *King Lear*. According to Hatchuel we call this type of adaptation 'free' adaptation. The movie is inspired by Shakespeare's play *King Lear* but it does not use the original text and it is set in different culture and historical period. I find this movie purely average, sometimes boring, and sometimes interesting. Roger Ebert, famous American film critic and playwright, wrote about this movie:

*A Thousand Acres* is an ungainly, undigested assembly of "women's issues," milling about within a half-baked retread of *King Lear*. The film is so unfocused that at the end of its very long 104 minutes, I was unable to say who I was supposed to like and who I was supposed to hate - although I could name several characters for whom I had no feelings at all... The screenplay is based on a novel by Jane Smiley, unread by me, which won the Pulitzer Prize - which means that either the novel or the prize has been done a great injustice.

### **2.3.1.3. *King of Texas* by Uli Edel**

*King of Texas* is another free adaptation of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. The movie takes place in Texas in 1840's, but it was filmed in Mexico. The land baron, John Lear (Patrick Stewart), is the wealthiest and most powerful man in the territory. One day he realizes he will not live forever therefore he decides to divide his property among his three daughters Susannah (Marcia Gay Harden), Rebecca (Lauren Holly) and the youngest Claudia (Julie Cox). The only thing they have to do to get their part of Lear's property is to tell him how loyal they are and how great their love to him is. Susannah and Rebecca do not have a problem with this task and tell their father what he wants to hear. But the youngest daughter Claudie refuses to answer this question from the reason that her love cannot be expressed by words. This statement makes Lear very angry and he banishes Claudia of ranch although she was the only one who has lived with him for years and has taken care of him. Claudia finds sanctuary by Mexicans living in the neighbourhood to her father's ranch. But as time continues Lear discovers what a mistake he has made. His older two daughters betray him and he has to leave the ranch. Lear is wandering through the land when the violent storm appeared. He is rescued by his youngest daughter Claudia while his unfaithful two daughters have a conflict with some Mexicans. (Williams)

This movie is a free adaptation of *King Lear*. As we can see the screenwriter preserved the name Lear as a surname of the main characters. The plot also remains similar to the plot of *King Lear* although it is set in another country in different historical period. Generally the film is not described as a precious adaptation. The film critic, David Williams, wrote about this movie:

This was a valiant attempt, but not completely successful one, in bringing Shakespeare back to the Old West. Unfortunately, it was full of unbelievable and unlikable characters who stumbled around a bit too much through uncomfortable and awkward dialogue. At a running time of 95-minutes, "King Lear" just doesn't get the treatment here he deserves, as we jump around from plot point to plot point and never really pause to understand the intricacy of the tale.

#### **2.3.1.4. *Korol Lir* by Grigori Kozintsev**

The Russian director Grigori Kozintsev made a film *Korol Lir* in 1970 as his second adaptation from Shakespeare. It was the same year in which Peter Brook was making his own adaptation of *King Lear*. (Manwell 84) His first adaptation from

Shakespeare was *Hamlet* which is also better known in the world of cinema. Kozintsev's *Korol Lir* is an example of adaptations which use the translation from the original text. In this case it is a translation from English to Russian language based on translation of Boris Pasternak. We have two types of translation, modern translation and more academically correct line-by-line translation. Kozintsev preferred the modern translation to optimize the movie to the modern viewers. (Cummings) Kozintsev set the story in Baltic location, on the river Narva in Estonia in the castle from fifteenth century. The plot of Kozintsev's *Korol Lir* is almost identical with *King Lear* from Shakespeare. In the title roles, we can see Yuri Yarvet as King Lear, Elza Radzina as Gonerill, Galina Volchek as Regan, Valentina Shendrikova as Cordelia and Oleg Dal as Fool. The film lasts more than two hours and it is black-and-white. Kozintsev was a friend and long-time co-operator with Shostakovich whose music he used in the film to underline the story which increased the impression on the viewer. The film critics denote *Korol Lir* as the one of the most successful adaptations of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. As the most outstanding scene of the film they indicate the storm scene. Kozintsev himself described his film as: "A generalized picture of a civilization heading towards doom."

### 3. *King Lear* - Genesis

*King Lear* is a tragedy written by William Shakespeare probably between the years 1605-1606. Although *King Lear* is one of the most interesting and most important plays of Shakespeare, the story of it is not exactly original. When Shakespeare wrote this play, he was influenced by many other stories and historical events. One of the stories which have influenced the plot of *King Lear* is a story called *The Proud King*. In this story the king's identity is stolen while he is swimming in the lake. He has to live amongst the poor and nobody recognize him. His duties are overtaken by an angel. By living with the poor, the king realizes how arrogant he used to be. This self-awareness gets him back to his royalty power. The other story is about king Nabuchodonosor who had a dream about harvest tree. He is told that he will be banished from the people and he will live with the cattle. After a certain time Nabuchodonosor who had become lunatic, came back to the normal state. Contrary to Lear, Nabuchodonosor retrieved his lost power.

However *King Lear* was influenced also by the biblical text about Job. The story of Job served to Shakespeare as a model for Lear's suffering. But contrary to Job who lived for the rest of his life happy and in wealth, Lear's destiny is rather tragic. (Hilský 12-14) As I have already mentioned earlier in this chapter, Shakespeare was also inspired by some



historical events. The events, which inspired Shakespeare, are listed in books written by Geoffrey Monmouth and Raphael Holinshed. Geoffrey Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* was written in 1136. The Monmouth's book narrates the history of the kings of Britons from king Brutus to the king Cadvallader. Among others there is also a chapter about king named Leir who: "...was without male issue, but had three daughters, whose names were Gonorilla, Regau, and Cordeilla, of whom he was dotingly fond, but especially of his youngest, Cordeilla." (28) King Leir was a son of king Bladud, who became a king in 863 BC and was also a legendary founder of the city Bath. This is the first reference to the existence of king Lear ever. The Holinshed's book *Chronicles* contains many historical events of England, Scotland and Ireland. One of the historical events is a reign of king Leir, the son of Bladud and father of three daughters. Holinshed story of king Leir is almost identical with Monmouth's story and Leir "was admitted ruler over the Britaines, in the yeare of the world 3105". (416)

The other event which probably inspired Shakespeare was the event which happened in London around year 1603. There was a sir called Brian Annesley. He had three daughters and the name of his youngest daughter was Cordell. She defended his father, while the eldest daughter was trying to proclaim him as irresponsible and to take over his property. Although there are parables with *King Lear*, we have no proof that Shakespeare knew about Brian Annesley and was inspired by his family. Also the name Cordell could be concurrence of circumstances since the name Cordell, Cordelia, Cordeilla, Cordella etc. was a very popular name in England. The other factors which influenced Shakespeare when writing *King Lear* was also politic and society. Shakespeare lived during the reign of king Jacob I. who struggled for unification Of England and Scotland. But parliament protested against him and Jacob was compared to the thunderer Jove. Consequently Lear was perceived by some people as a hidden political allusion. And the last important factor which influenced Shakespeare was the mentality of the society. One of the movements in the Shakespearean society was the self-cognition. People believed that the best way to self-cognition is the suffering. And there is a lot of suffering in *King Lear*. The other movement is the Renaissance scepticism. The Renaissance sceptics presumed that the prevision is not infallible, that the soul is not immortal and that the God's work is actually nature's work. And Lear speaks about all these things in his speeches. (Hilský 14-24) All these things which are mentioned below were more or less inspiration for Shakespeare to write *King Lear*.

#### 4. General differences between *King Lear* and *Ran*

The first main difference is in the number of plots. *King Lear* consists of two plots, where one is concerned about the Lear's family, while the other is concerned with the family of Gloucester. For *King Lear* these two plots are mutually dependent since the faith of the several family members intermingle with each other. On the other side, Kurosawa completely omitted the second part of the story that appears in *King Lear*. However he also developed the secondary characters which have in *Ran* more important role than their equivalents in *King Lear*. The fitting example is the character of Lady Kaede in *Ran* and the character of the Duke of Albany in *King Lear*. The actions of Lady Kaede have more significant impact on Hidetora's family than the actions of the Duke of Albany on Lear's family.

The second main difference is in the family itself. While Lear has three daughters, Hidetora has three sons. This difference is due to the diverse initial inspiration of Shakespeare and of Akira Kurosawa. Shakespeare used two sources to create the story of *King Lear*. One of the sources is *Historia Regum Britanniae* written in 1136 by Geoffrey Monmouth and the second is *Chronicles* written in 1577 by Raphael Holinshed. Both these sources cover the story of king Leir, who lived around 800BC. This king Leir had three daughters, Gonerilla, Regau and Cordeilla. It is obvious, that the similarity of the names is not an accident, but that Shakespeare really based his story on real historical event. And so did Kurosawa. Although *Ran* is an adaptation of *King Lear*, Kurosawa's initial inspiration comes from entirely different source. Kurosawa himself admitted that as his initial inspiration served the old Japanese legend about Mori Motonari and his three sons. Motonari was a daimyo, powerful warlord in pre-modern Japan, living in years 1497 to 1571. After Motonari's predecessors had died under strange circumstances, he became a head of the Mori clan and later he became a Lord of Koriyama. There is a legend of Motonari and his three sons. It is called "The Legend of the Three Arrows". Motonari distributed three arrows among his three sons and asked them to break it. After breaking them apart, Motonari gave each son three arrows and asked them to do the same as with the one arrow. None of them was able to break them apart. The purpose of this action was to show his sons that since they stay together no one can break them. In *Ran* we can see a scene where Hidetora teaches their sons exactly this lesson. Therefore there is no doubt that *Ran* really is inspired by this legend and it also serves as the explanation why Hidetora has three sons instead of three daughters. Despite of this difference, Kurosawa preserved the faith of the family as it is in *King Lear*.

The other differences are closely related to each other. And these differences are time, place and culture. Although there is no reference to exact day in *King Lear*, according to Shakespeare sources of Holinshed and Monmouth, we presumed that the story takes place around the year 800BC in England. This time is the inception of the Iron Age in England. Contrary to *King Lear*, Kurosawa's *Ran* is set in completely different historical period. As I have already mentioned above the primal inspiration for Kurosawa's *Ran* was the old Japanese legend of Mori Motonari and his three sons. Mori Motonari lived during the 16th century and Kurosawa also decided to set the story in the 16th century, which was the period of feudal Japan and samurais. And according to Bonnie Melchior: "Initially, Kurosawa did not conceive of his film as a version of Lear, but as he worked on the screenplay, he noticed the parallels and intensified them."(42)

The last main difference I intend to mention is the language. In *King Lear* Shakespeare uses three types of language, blank verse, rhymed verse and prose. And it is not unusual that one character speaks in verse while the other character responds in prose. The most common language in *King Lear* is blank verse composed in iambic pentameter. It is spoken mainly by the higher nobles. The other characters usually use prose or rhymed verse when speaking. The rhymed verse is typical especially for the Fool. Although in Shakespeare's time was convention to write plays in verse, he started to use prose to break this custom and to prove his originality. Sometimes he used prose in his plays to distinguish between the lower class and the higher class whereas the prose was used usually by the lower class. But he did not apply this way in every play. He often inserted prose between the verses to make his characters more realistic. The switch from prose and to poetry also indicates some change in the play. In prose Shakespeare frequently used wordplay such as alliteration, repetition or puns. (Johnson) According to Shakespeare's ability to work with words it is not surprising he is considered as a master of words. But on the other side to understand Shakespeare's language may be challenging for many people. Contrary to Shakespeare, Kurosawa cannot be considered as a master of words. According to the English screenplay of *Ran*, which created Kurosawa by himself, the language used in *Ran* does not bear any traces of uniqueness. Kurosawa used the modern easily understandable language. On the other side, what he was not able to express by words, he did by images. He fully utilised the advantage of the modern technology and some of his shots are breathtaking. Especially the ones of the Japanese magnificent nature. Therefore as Shakespeare is considered as master of words, Kurosawa could be considered as a master of images.

As we can see from the previous paragraphs, the general differences between *King Lear* and *Ran* are indeed significant. *Ran* is very modern version of *King Lear*, which would not be understandable in Shakespearean society. But it is possible to put them both on the same level, considering their complexity and comprehensibility.

## 5. The Characterisation of the Main Characters

### 5.1. Taro/Gonerill

Taro is, as well as Gonerill, the eldest offspring of his father. As the eldest of the three brothers, he is established to be Hidetora's successor. His character is fairly predictable. At the very beginning of the movie, he accuses Saburo of vilification their father, but when Hidetora falls asleep, he leaves together with Jiro, while Saburo takes care of Hidetora by himself. A few moments later, when Hidetora has a speech to his sons about dividing the kingdom, he defends his father against Saburo's offensive but faithful words. But it is not because he loves his father and wants to protect him, but because he wants to gain father's inclination for himself. And he is successful in this way, because Hidetora proclaims him the new landlord. At first Taro pretends that this task is unthinkable for him, that he is not able to overtake the reign. But it is only a dissemblance to impress Hidetora's feelings.

However Taro is content with his new position until he has a serious conversation with his wife, Lady Kaede. She is at the birth of the war between the brothers and father. The conversation between Taro and Lady Kaede proves that Taro's mind is easily suggestible. Lady Kaede by saying the right words arouses in Taro the new ambition to overtake all father's power and to become a new head of Ichimonji clan. Great example of the preceding statement is the following dialog between Taro and Lady Kaede:

TARO: But Father said that he would keep  
the title and forms of lordship...

KAEDE: Without the forms you are just a  
shadow.

TARO: What do you mean? Father definitely  
said that the headship would go to  
me.

KAEDE: Then behave like it. (*Ran*)

Taro may appear as a strong personality but in fact he is under the influence of Lady Kaede who actually runs their household. Quite soon he gains the opportunity to betray and deceive his father. While Kyoami, Hidetora's fool, is making fun of Taro, one of the Taro's soldiers attempts to kill him. But he fails since he is killed by Hidetora. Taro is resentful with his father and shows him no respect by letting Lady Kaede to sit in higher position than Hidetora. He also forces him to sign a new contract about Taro being the only head of Ichimonji clan. Taro arguments this contract with words which he was told from Lady Kaede which only proves my preceding statements about Lady Kaede being in control of him.

To be sure that his father will not unite with his brother Jiro, he sends a latter to Jiro in which he provides him false information. He knows that the union of Hidetora and Jiro would cause him a lot of troubles. As he becomes the head of Ichimonji clan, his avidity arouses. To the advice of Lady Kaede he decides to occupy the third castle which was supposed to be Saburo's castle. Unfortunately for him, he does not know that his brother Jiro makes the same decision. They collide in front of the gate of the third castle and Taro is killed.

There is offering the question whether Taro would have made the same decision if he was not married to Lady Kaede. It is very presumable that he would have been content with his father's decision and that he would have lived in peace with his brothers, since he never though of the betrayal until Lady Kaede spoke to him. But we will never know for sure the answer for this question.

Gonerill is the eldest daughter of King Lear. And as we can discover during the play, she is also the most evil daughter. Her personality could be described by words like jealous, malicious, ungrateful, greedy, mean, etc. As we learn at the beginning of the play, she is married to the Duke of Albany. Together they obtain one third of the kingdom, which has Lear decided to divide amongst his three daughters. All she has to do is to express her love towards her father. This is the first time in the play, when she lies. She says she loves him "beyond all manner of 'so much' "(I.1, 60), but it is not true, since the only person she loves is herself. Nevertheless her lies are awarded by the third of the kingdom.

However she has no respect for the power of family. When Lear decides to banish Cordelia, Gonerill feels gloat. This gloat is caused by the jealousy Cordelia, since she was the youngest and the most favourite child of their father. She also realizes that Cordelia knows about her real feelings and intentions:

The jewels of our father, with washed eyes  
Cordelia leaves you. I know what you are;  
And, like a sister, am most loath to call  
Your faults as they are named. (Act I.1, 267-270)

Now it would be possible to say that Gonerill is happy that Cordelia left, because she can be Lear's favourite daughter now, but it is not true. Gonerill does not care how the father feels about her any more, the only thing she cares about is the power and the property. Therefore she comes with the plan how to dispose of Lear and his knights which he decided to keep. Her plan sounds:

Put on what weary negligence you please,  
You and your fellows. I'd have it come to question.  
If he distate it let him to my sister,  
Whose mind and mine I know in that are one,  
Not to be overruled. Idle old man,  
That still would manage those authorities  
That he hath given away! ... (Act I.3, 13-19)

From this passage we also learn about the warm relationship with her sister Regan, who is almost as evil as Gonerill. Together they decide to acquit Lear of his power and his authorities and get this power for themselves. It is possible that Gonerill's warm feelings towards her sister are real at the beginning, but as we learn at the end of the play they hate each other. After she banishes Lear out of her castle, she writes a letter to Regan to warn her about behaviour of father's knights and of their father himself. This action still proves Gonerill's sympathy to Regan, which causes Lear's heartbreak.

During the whole play, Gonerill appears as a cruel heartless woman, with strong personality. She has a husband who used to love her and honour her but she pushed him away by her actions. It seems that she is not able to love somebody until she meets Edmund. The main reason for her affection towards him is undoubtedly his loyalty and obedience. Although Gonerill is insidious, she does not realize that she is being tricked by Edmund. She thinks that his feelings for her are as pure as hers but in fact Edmund thinks only how to help himself. Another reason for Gonerill's affection to Edmund may be that

he is quite opposite of her husband. She thinks about Edmund that he is a great representative of masculinity and braveness. But at the end he is the reason of the reluctance between the sisters. When Gonerill learns that her sister's husband is dead and Edmund is with her, she feels jealousy and she is decided to fight for him. Therefore later when she meets Regan, they have a fight which ends with the death of both of them. Gonerill gives Regan a poison and Regan kills Gonerill with a dagger. They both died because of men they loved. But Edmund used them both without having any true feelings for them. He just wanted to gain a power. It is possible to say that the death of Gonerill is kind of satisfaction. She has never done anything good in her life. She turned back to people who loved her and trusted to people who betrayed her. She appeared as very clever person but in fact she was killed by her own foolishness.

There are no many differences between Taro's and Gonerill's nature. They both are cruel and heartless. But there is a difference in the origin of their cruelty. While Taro's cruelty is invoked by Lady Kaede, Gonerill is cruel from her own decision. And while Taro is rather controlled, Gonerill likes to be in control of everything. But they have a common destiny, which is death caused by their siblings.

## **5.2. Lady Kaede/Duke of Albany**

Lady Kaede is one of the most interesting characters in *Ran*. She is the wife of Hidetora's eldest son Taro. Her equivalent in *King Lear* is the Duke of Albany, husband to Gonerill. But the Duke of Albany does not have such an important part in *King Lear* as Lady Kaede has in *Ran*. She appears first after Hidetora has divided his power and property amongst his sons. And right from the beginning we can forecast which way her character will take in the future. Her first words are the proof to us, that she has strong and dominating personality. She is moving to her new castle, but there are Hidetora's wives inhibiting her way. She considers it as impermissible. She says: "How rude! I am now the lady of this castle. How dare they block my path!" (*Ran*) Although Lady Kaede has now higher position in the Ichimonji clan she is not still content. Her true intention is to destroy the Ichimonji clan.

Although she may appear as a negative character, her action has roots in family history. Her family was murdered by Lord Hidetora and he also occupied their castle and forced Lady Kaede to marry Taro. Therefore it is not surprising that she wishes the death of Hidetora and his sons. But instead of doing it by herself she uses psychological tricks to

control her husband and his actions. While Taro is content with what he has got, she tries to find out the reason for him to want more and to become the only head of Ichimonji clan. She is very clever, she does not give orders to Taro but she uses words which have an effect on Taro's pride and emotions. She ends her speech with words that Taro shall do what he considers as the best way, but she knows he will do what she told him to do.

However she is also incredibly confident which is possible to see in the scene where she and Taro sit in the same room with Lord Hidetora, but she sits in higher position than Hidetora as a wife of the future head of Ichimonji clan. This is her way how to demonstrate that she does not accept Lord Hidetora's decision to remain the head of Ichimonji clan. And she is fully satisfied because she has full support of Taro and Lord Hidetora is completely helpless. This is the first of her victories. But this decision brings Taro in war with his younger brother Jiro and he dies. Taro's death is not what she planned, at least not until he would kill his father and his brothers. When Jiro brings to her Taro's hair and armour she pretends that she is devastated, but in fact she immediately comes with new idea. Although she is full of anger and she desires for revenge, she can absolutely control herself when there are people around. But as soon as she is alone with Jiro she puts a knife to his head and threatens him with death to prove him who is in charge now.

As a widow she is supposed to cut her hair and to lose the feminine part of her. She refuses to live this way not only because of the radical change of visage but especially that she would have to do it for a man she was forced to marry and she did not love. Therefore she starts to blackmail Jiro to marry her and to kill Jiro's wife Lady Sue. It is quiet surprising that she wants to kill Lady Sue since they both have similar history. Lady Sue's family as well as Lady Kaede's family was murdered by Lord Hidetora. It would be understandable if Lady Kaede would have sympathy with Lady Sue but she does not have. It proves that Lady Kaede has become completely heartless person. Jiro is terrified by her therefore he does not raise an objection when Lady Kaede commands Jiro's counsellor Kurogane to bring Lady Sue's head. But Kurogane is the only one who sees true intentions of Lady Kaede and he is not afraid to oppose her. Lady Kaede is raving when he comes back with the head of the statue instead of Sue's head. Kurogane brings the head of the fox and he talks in metaphors about fox which destroyed several kingdoms, but in fact he speaks about Lady Kaede. This is his way how to tell her, that he does not serve her and that he will fight against her.



Meanwhile Jiro falls for Lady Kaede, because of her strong personality and sex appeal. She realizes her advantages and she refuses to meet Jiro until she gets Lady Sue's head. At the end she is killed by Kurogane but she is satisfied. She accomplished everything she had resolved. She has got Lady Sue's head and she destroyed the Ichimonji clan. Her last words in the movie are following:

It is not shallow or stupid. I  
wanted to see this castle burn and  
the House of Ichimonji ruined by  
the long grudge of my family. I  
wanted to see all this! (*Ran*)

She lived only for the revenge therefore when the revenge was done, she has found a peace in her mind.

As I have already mentioned earlier in this chapter, the equivalent to Lady Kaede in *King Lear* is the Duke of Albany, the husband of Gonerill. There is a great difference of personalities and actions between Lady Kaede and the Duke of Albany. When the Duke of Albany first appears on stage in Act I, he is confused and surprised with Gonerill's reluctance towards Lear. Since the Duke of Albany has not as important role in *King Lear* as Lady Kaede in *Ran*, he does not appear again until the Act 4. He already knows about appalling actions and intentions of both sisters and he is disguised by them.

He appears as a man with heart on the right side and with the great sense for family traditions therefore the actions of Gonerill toward her own father are beyond all understanding. The following extract is a proof about his feeling towards Gonerill:

O Gonerill,

You are not worth the dust which the rude wind  
Blows in your face. [I fear your disposition:  
That nature which contemns its origin  
Cannot be bordered certain in itself.  
She that herself will silver and disbranch  
From her material sap perforce must wither  
And come to deadly use. (Act IV.2, 29-36)

Although he would like to kill Gonerill, there is a real gentleman in him, who would not hurt a woman. He believes that God and justice will punish her as well as his brother-in-law the Duke of Albany who was Regan's husband.

The Duke of Albany as well as Lady Kaede desires for revenge but he wants to revenge Lear and his friend the Earl of Gloucester, not to revenge on him as Lady Kaede on Lord Hidetora. The rest of the time the Duke of Albany pretends that he stands on the same side as his wife, Regan and Edmund. But it is only dissemblance which will help him to arrest them. But he has a great sense for justice. When there is a fight between Edgar and Edmund, he forbids Edgar to kill Edmund when he has a chance. First he wants to hear Edmund's explanation. He is not as coldblooded and heartless as Lady Kaede. But when he learns that both, Gonerill and Regan are death, he does not feel any pity for them. In his final speech he promises that all friends will be rewarded and all enemies will get what they deserve. His personality is very different from Lady Kaede's personality. He is right-minded and tries to avoid the violence. However he married Gonerill of his own accord and his family was not murdered by Lear as Lady Kaede's. Therefore he has no reason to feel malignity towards Lear.

As a result we have two completely different characters. While Lady Kaede is cold, heartless woman, who desires for revenge, the Duke of Albany is utterly positive character. He has no wrong intentions and absolutely no desire for power, if it means to behave against Lear. He is one of the minorities of characters who still regards family value and does not let the evil prevail the good in him.

### **5.3. Jiro/Regan**

Jiro is the most inconsistent character. It may be due to the fact, that he is the middle child of the three siblings. The middle children have always the most difficult position in the family. The youngest children have the full attention of their parents while the eldest children already have their stable position in the family. Therefore their life could be characterised as one long fight. They also often use the older siblings as their models and compete with them. Because of that they know how to take the advantage of the situation, they are adaptable, and they know how to negotiate and to be diplomatic over their siblings. (Táborská) Jiro has a lot of characters of the middle child. At the beginning of the movie, he remains quite inexpressive. We can see that he always agrees with his eldest brother Taro against Saburo. This fact is caused due to the jealousy he feels towards Saburo, since as a youngest son of Lord Hidetora, he is also the most favourite one. In

front of their father, Jiro together with Taro assault Saburo for offending Lord Hidetora, but as soon as Lord Hidetora falls asleep they turn back to him and leave. The protectiveness of the father is only the dissemblance.

His inconsistent is very well noticeable in the scene when Lord Hidetora decides to impart the power to Taro. Although Jiro always takes sides against Saburo, now he is forced to join his side, because he is not comfortable with the idea of Taro being the head of Ichimonji clan. But he immediately changes his opinion when he sees father's anger towards Saburo. He uses the right words to remains in father's goodwill:

Father, pay no attention to Saburo.  
I feel the same way as Taro; we  
long to be safe in our father's  
arms. But the time has come for us,  
in order to make your remaining  
years peaceful, to stand in the  
thick of the world's arrows. (*Ran*)

Consequently he is pleased when father banishes Saburo, because Taro is now his only rival. And he is decided to beat him. He is tired of being oppressed all his life and encouraged by words of his counsellors, he decides to kill his brother and to gain the rule of the Ichimonji clan for himself.

However Jiro does not fear Taro, but he fears his wife, Lady Kaede. He realizes that she is the real ruler in Taro's castle. But first, he has to deal with Lord Hidetora. Since Lord Hidetora has lost all his power, Jiro does not need him anymore and reveals his true feelings to him. He let Lord Hidetora leave which, as he realizes later, was a mistake, since the reunion of Lord Hidetora with Saburo would be a difficulty for him. After killing Taro, Jiro travels to Taro's castle inform Lady Kaede about his death. Knowing that he eventually is not in the shadow of his brothers, Jiro feels new self confident. But it does not last very long. As well as Taro, he falls under control of Lady Kaede who blackmails him to marry her and to kill Jiro's wife, Lady Sue. All his life he was used to fighting with his brothers, but he is helpless against Lady Kaede. He fears her and eventually falls for her. At least they have the same target, although each of them has for it different reason. While he wants to gain the power, Lady Kaede wants to destroy the Ichimonji clan. And when they learn, that Saburo comes for father, they know that this is their best chance to fulfil

their dreams. Jiro sends Saburo into the trap which causes that Saburo and Lord Hidetora die. But at the same time Jiro learns, that he fell into the trap himself, Lady Sue and Lady Kaede were killed and he is going to die as well. Eventually he realizes that they all were betrayed by Lady Kaede. She is the only one who has won in this war, while Jiro has lost everything, family, wife, power and eventually life. Jiro as well as other family members realizes too late, what mistakes he has done in his life. That he let the evil in him prevail the good.

Regan, as well as Jiro, suffers from middle child syndrome. The subject of her jealousy and hate is especially her younger sister Cordelia, who is not only the most beloved daughter of Lear, but she is even offered the greatest part of the kingdom. Regan appears at the beginning of the play and she starts her appearance with the false words that accompany her for the rest of the play. She uses the same lies as Gonerill to please her father and to ensure she gets what she deserves.

Although she is pleased that Lear has banished Cordelia, she is also worried about his behaviour. She realizes that when he was able to abandon his beloved daughter, he can be capable of anything. Therefore she immediately starts to think of a plan with her sister, what they will do with Lear. This act is an expression of her ingratitude but also her cautiousness. Then while Lear is staying with Gonerill, she gets letters explaining the quarrel between them. Although she has to secretly believe her father's letter, she decides to prefer Gonerill's explanation, because it fits better to her plan. She is very heartless. When Lear, devastated of Gonerill's behaviour, comes to her for the solace, she precipitates him into even greater gloominess by defending her. She does not feel threatened by him any more, therefore she has no reason to pretend her love like she did at the beginning of the play.

However Regan had always warm relationship with Gonerill and now it persists. Together they keep working on the plan concerning their father. But Regan has one great advantage contrary to Gonerill. She has a full support of her husband, the Duke of Cornwall. During the play, the sisters become even more and more cruel. Not even they let their father wander in a storm, they also punish everyone who tries to help him. Regan's cruelty culminates with the cold hearted killing one of the servants. This act indicates us, that she is capable of anything to keep the respect. Until now it may appear that love means nothing for her. When her husband is killed, it means nothing for her. But it all changes when she falls in love with Edmund. As we learn from her speech to Oswald, Gonerill's steward, their love was nothing but a deal at the beginning:

Therefore I do advise you take this note:  
My lord is dead; Edmund and I have talked;  
And more convenient is he for my hand  
Than for your lady's. You may gather more. (Act IV.5, 31-34)

But as the time continues she starts to love him. She is impressed with his strong personality and she believes his lies. She believes it so much that she decides to kill her sister to prevent her to gain Edmund for herself. But before she kills her, she let hanged Cordelia, whose death causes the death of Lear. And she does not feel any regrets. She is still convinced that what she has done was rightful. She feels intrepidly, therefore she does not pay attention to Gonerill's evil intentions. She drinks her poison but before she dies she kills Gonerill with the dagger. She could not die with the knowledge that Gonerill will have her happy ending with Edmund, it was all she wanted for herself.

As we can see in the previous paragraphs, the characters of Jiro and Regan could be described by very similar words. They both suffered of the reality that they were middle children and they desperately desired for the attention of their fathers. But eventually Regan appears as slightly stronger and more independent person than Jiro. The main difference is that Jiro is controlled by Lady Kaede, while Regan is independent from her husband. But the other traits of character are parallel.

#### **5.4. Saburo/Cordelia**

Saburo, as well as Cordelia, is the youngest of the three siblings. He is also the most honest character as Cordelia in *King Lear*. At the beginning of the movie, the viewers might consider him as the most rude and disrespectful son of Lord Hidetora. It is due to the fact that he tries to decline his father's decisions. It is possible to say, that he has the right to do it, since the decisions are concerned with him. Lord Hidetora has got the offer of Lord Ayabe and Lord Fujimaki to marry Saburo to one of their daughters. And Saburo has no right to decide by his own as well as his brothers has no right to decide about their wives. But he is not afraid to say how he feels about it. Although he speaks in metaphor about two hares to be eaten by Lord Hidetora, actually he means the two daughters. It is the first time when his voraciousness makes his father and his brothers angry.

However immediately he proves that he is the only one of the three brothers who really loves and cares about his father. When Lord Hidetora falls asleep, he is cutting some

branches to protect sleeping father from the son, while the other regardless leave. He knows his father very well, therefore he is slightly terrified when Lord Hidetora starts express the feeling towards him. He immediately recognizes that there is something wrong with him and he is worried about him. In contrast to his brother Taro who tries to use this situation for his own good. In the following scene when Lord Hidetora divides his territory and power, Saburo might be considered as the family subversive. Some people could say that the reason for his actions against Lord Hidetora is that Taro is chosen as the future head of Ichimonji clan and obtain the greatest part of the power. However Saburo does not care about the power at all. He realizes, as the only one, the consequences of father's decision. He understands that the reality of world is difference than his father imagines it is. He says:

I will tell you. First, just what  
do you think this world is? This is  
a world where men's evil, cruel  
instincts are exposed, where you  
cannot live unless you throw aside  
your humanity and all noble  
feelings! (*Ran*)

He knows that the power of force is far stronger than the love inside the Ichimonji clan. He tries to prevent from the disaster which surely will come but he stays misunderstood as usually.

The biggest difference between Cordelia and Saburo from the beginning to the moment when are they banished is especially in their means how to express their disaccord. While Cordelia deals with the situation by the silence, Saburo uses the exactly opposite way. He thinks that the only way how to resolve the problem is to talk about it. But at the end both this means have the same result, the banishment. When is Saburo banished, he does not think what will happen to him, but he is worried what will happen to his father. It is another proof of his love and loyalty. At least he tries to convince Tango, who has been banished along with Saburo, to go back and protect Lord Hidetora. Saburo himself gain the support by an unexpected person. Lord Ayabe offers him the harbour and tells him that the offer to marry his daughter is still valid. It is the only person who appreciates the strength of Saburo's character.

The proof of Saburo's good nature is also the loyalty of his knights. Instead of living in the comfort of the Third castle and in their home land, they choose to leave and join Saburo in his new harbour. This situation reflects the best English proverb "Like master, like man." The Saburo's nature reflects the nature of his knights. It may appear that Saburo has now new comfortable life with his supporter and he does not have to care about what happens home. But Saburo shows his decisiveness to save his father and takes the road to his homeland to save Lord Hidetora. He is altruistic, he does not want to gain the reign of the land as his brothers, and all he asks is to take his father to his new home to live with him. When he is not allowed to he does not hesitate to lay down his life for Lord Hidetora, even though Lord Hidetora treated him badly the last time he saw him. He realizes that his father went insane but contrary to his brothers he does not want to use him, but to help him.

But at the same time he is rather naive. When Jiro suddenly changes his mind and allows him to take Lord Hidetora away, he believes him. He is not able to recognize that it is only Jiro's man-trap how to capture him and Lord Hidetora to enable Jiro to have the absolute power. At the end Saburo pays for his trustfulness with his own life. But before he dies he reconciles with Lord Hidetora and his father also admits that all the time he was right. These Hidetora's words have for him greater value than the whole land and the power. He dies with the feeling that his actions have been justified, therefore he dies with the piece in his mind.

Cordelia is the youngest daughter of Lear. And as we learn from Lear's words, she is his most favourite daughter. She could be described by words like love, honesty, veracity and humbleness. She does not get a lot of space in the play, but definitely she has a great importance for it. As much as she is loved by his father, she is also hated by her sisters. She has never committed an offence against them except being Lear's favourite daughter. But it all turns against her when she is asked to express her love towards Lear. She frankly despises her sisters when she hears what false and insincere words they use to convince their father that their love is the greatest. But she says nothing, which is characteristic word for her in the play. And when she is offered to earn the greatest part of the kingdom in exchange for her words she says:

CORDELIA: Nothing, my lord.

LEAR: Nothing?

CORDELIA: Nothing.

LEAR: Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again.

CORDELIA: Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave

My heart into my mouth. I love your majesty

According to my bond, no more no less. (Act I.1, 86-92)

This dialog is the beginning of the disaster of Lear's family. Although Cordelia loves Lear the most of the three sisters, she uses improper words to convince her father. Therefore she remains misunderstood and for the pleasure of her sisters, she has to leave.

Eventually she finds a shelter with the King of France, who as the only one admires her honesty and veracity. Although her father disclaimed her, her love and loyalty to him remains resilient. When she leaves all she asked from her sisters is to love their father but she already surmises their true intentions. Unfortunately her marriage with the King of France is rather unhappy. It may be due to the fact, that she is still worried about her father and his faith and cannot deal with the past. Although her father rejected her, she thinks about him all the time she is away from him.

When she learns that her sisters banished him from the kingdom, she immediately goes to find him and help him. But again her love and her pure intentions are rewarded by the death sentence which was an order given by her sisters. But she is very unselfish as we can see in the following extract:

We are not he first

Who with best meaning have incurred the worst.

For thee, oppressed king, am I cast down;

Myself could else outfrown false Fortune's frown. (Act V.3, 3-6)

She is able to deal with the cruel destiny she has, but she cannot stand the cruel destiny of her father. Before her death she eventually earns father's understanding and love, which is the greatest gift she could have ever got.

Both characters of Saburo and Cordelia could be described as honest, patient, unselfish and brave. Although their intentions were the purest of all, their destiny was really tragic. Their good nature and unswerving love and loyalty to their fathers caused their early death. The only solace before their death was the reconciliation with their fathers.



### 5.5. Lord Hidetora/Lear

The characters of Lord Hidetora and Lear are the most important as well as the most interesting. They both go through the transition from happy ruler with three loving children to the lunatic who has lost everything he loved. At the beginning of the story, Lord Hidetora appears as sane and conscious person. He realizes his old age and his fading strength; therefore he decides to hand over his rule to his eldest son Taro and spent the rest of his life wandering between all his sons. For the objective spectator this seems as a reasonable thing to do, but not for his sons. They shuddered by his decision and try to dissuade their father from such a resolution. But while Taro and Jiro submit to father's orders, Saburo insist on his opinion, that his father is making a big mistake:

You have spilled  
so much human blood you cannot  
measure it. You have lived without  
mercy or pity. But Father, we, too,  
are children of this degraded age  
of strife; you do not know what we  
may be thinking - "my dear  
children," you think. To me,  
Father, you are none other than a  
madman - a senile old madman. (*Ran*)

Lord Hidetora is by all means a very proud man. It is logical, that he cannot acquiesce such behaviour. Therefore he banishes his youngest and most beloved son. Unfortunately he does not anticipate that this decision is the beginning of the end of the Ichimonji clan.

Although Lord Hidetora is an experienced warrior and he knows best by himself that the desire for power has destroyed more than one family, he still has naive ideas about his own family. The detection of the reality has broken his heart. The lost of his youngest and most beloved son has hurt him a lot but it seemed as the right thing to do. But instead of suffering, Lord Hidetora decides to spread his attention among his other two sons, Jiro and Taro. Too early as well as too late he realizes that something has changed in the behaviour of his son Taro toward his father. The first indication of this change is the disrespect of Lady Kaede towards Lord Hiterora's wives. His suspicion is confirmed later that evening, when is he invited to the family meeting with Taro and his wife Lady Kaede.

Lady Kaede sits in higher position than Lord Hidetora which he considers as the greatest demonstration of Taro's and Lady Kaede's disrespect towards him. But it is not the end of his humiliation. Taro makes him to sign a contract about Hidetora handing over his absolute power and authority to Taro. This is another significant shock for Hidetora's spirit. But still, Lord Hidetora does not blame himself for banishing Saburo, but he blames himself for trusting Taro. Eventually Lord Hidetora leaves Taro to find consolation with his third son Jiro.

At Jiro's castle, we learn new information about Lord Hidetora's past as a warrior. This new information concerns his cruelty. The castle used to belong to Lady Sue and her family. But Lord Hidetora murdered her family except Lady Sue's brother, whom he made blind and banished from his castle. Consequently he has forced Lady Sue to marry his son Jiro. But from his current visit of Jiro's castle we learn that his relationship towards Lady Sue has changed a lot. As soon as he gets to the castle, he does not want to see his son Jiro, but he insists on seeing Lady Sue first. He deeply regrets what he has done to her family and urges her to hate him. He would bare her hate better than her smile and kindness, because he realizes what terrible things he has done to her. But Lady Sue refuses to satisfy Lord Hidetora's wishes because she finds her conciliation in the praising of Buddha. Lady Kaede as well as Buddha has reached the liberation from sorrow. This information makes Lord Hidetora very angry, because he feels betrayed by Buddha. Unlike Lear, Lord Hidetora is devoted to religion, which is characteristic for Japanese culture. He understands the disloyalty of his sons as a failure of Buddha's commitment and he loses his faith. After meeting Lady Sue, Lord Hidetora finds his son Jiro. In hope to gain his sympathy, Lord Hidetora tries to explain him what happened between him and Taro. But Jiro interrupts him and explains that Taro has already explained him everything. Further he claims that the behaviour of his father and his knights is inexcusable and it cannot be tolerated. Suddenly Lord Hidetora realizes that even his last son has turned against him and his life has lost meaning.

This is enough. I understand.  
You are not in the least different  
from Taro. You, too, want to get  
rid of me. (*Ran*)

Now is the time, when Lord Hidetora starts to realize, that he trusted to the wrong sons and he rejected the only son who had good intentions with him. The lost of his three sons is the cause of his lunatic behaviour. Lord Hidetora refuses to visit the Third castle which was supposed to belong to Saburo, since he is afraid of Saburo's knights. He rather stays hungry in wilderness with his suite. The proof of his lost mind is his refusal of the food, which was brought by Tango. The last remains of his sanity is proven by his consciousness about his situation, he even calls himself a fool. Thanks to Tango, Lord Hidetora also learns about Saburo's protectiveness of him. But instead of finding hope in this piece of information, Lord Hidetora falls into even deeper depression. Eventually Lord Hidetora decides to go to the third castle. There he finds out that he is encircled by Taro's and Jiro's army and with the cognition that he has nothing else to loose, he waits for the death. Suddenly he finds out his last remains of self-preservation and he manages to escape. The knights leave him to go freely, since they are terrified of his appearance. Going out of the burning castle, Lord Hidetora looks like a ghost. His transmission into a lunatic person has been completed.

In the following parts of the movie, Lord Hidetora behaves like a lunatic. He does not realise what is the reality and what is his only imagination. He is hunted by Saburo's ghost, he sees them all dying. There is a storm outside in which Lord Hidetora would have probably died, but Tango and Kyoami find a shelter for them. Their shelter, a small cabin, belongs to Lady Sue's brother. The brother, which has lost his sight because of Lord Hidetora. It is ironic that Lord Hidetora has been all the time saved by people whom he hurt, while his own sons have turned against him. Another irony is that after the storm he finds the shelter in the castle which was burned down because of Lord Hidetora's order. He still does not realise the reality. He survives only thanks to the presence of Kyoami, whose loyalty to Lord Hidetora is unswerving. While Tango goes for Saburo, Lord Hidetora remains in the ruins of the castle. He describes the ruins as: "nothing but empty space above the walls." (*Ran*) It is more than probable, that this statement belongs more to his condition than to the condition of the castle.

At the final part of the movie, Lord Hidetora is saved by Saburo. When he sees him, he thinks he is death, but suddenly he realises that this is reality and he runs away from Saburo. He has no idea how to deal with this situation, he feels so ashamed for his former behaviour.

I wish you to forget my cruel

attitude toward you. I hope you can  
forgive me. I was a stupid old  
fool! (*Ran*)

Eventually it comes to reconciliation between him and Saburo. Lord Hidetora feels happy again and sees a new hope in his future. He has lost all signs of his former lunatic behaviour. But on their way home, Saburo is killed. Lord Hidetora's heart cannot stand such a sorrow and Lord Hidetora dies because of grief on the corpse of his youngest and most beloved son.

Lear as well as Lord Hidetora is the most manifold character. At the beginning of the play he appears as an old, trustful man, who really loves his daughters and he would do anything for them. As a proof of his love, he decides to divide his kingdom amongst them. In return he does not ask anything but the expression of their love towards him. He is convinced that this task is not difficult at all and his conviction increases when Gonerill and Regan fulfil this task according to his expectations. There is only one daughter left, his youngest and most beloved Cordelia, who is offered the greatest part of the kingdom in exchange for her love. But Lear's consternation of her answer is colossal. First he cannot believe what he had heard and he tries to inspire Cordelia for new answer, but unsuccessfully. His heart is broken and he decides to banish Cordelia.

Since that time he is decided to live for a while with Gonerill and then with Regan. His only wish is to keep his suite and to be provided with food and comfort of their castles. But soon, while living with Gonerill, he realises that something has change in the way people treat him. The servants do not treat him with great respect and he feels neglected which offends him:

Does any here know me? This is not Lear.  
Does Lear walk thus, speak thus? Where are his eyes?  
Either his notion weakens, his discernings  
Are lethargied - Ha! Waking? 'Tis not so!  
Who is it that can tell me who I am? (Act I.4, 221-225)

His only consolation is the Fool, but only until he starts to insult him because of banishing Cordelia. Lear starts to realise that the Fool's words are veracious but his pride does not allow him to admit it. Lear is concerned about Gonerill's permanent bad mood, but all he

hears from her is that he and his suite is the reason. His caring is rewarded by insult. His love is immediately turned to pure hate. His heart is broken for the second time but he still has naive idea that his last daughter Regan will stand for him. Therefore he leaves Gonerill to live with Regan.

But he even does not talk with Regan and he already feels another betrayal. It is because of the way how they treated his courier. As soon as he meets Regan he looks for understanding with her, but all he gets is disrespect and more insults. He tries to preserve last remains of his pride, therefore he decides to rather live outside without food and roof above his head. It is the beginning of his madness. "I have full cause of weeping; but this heart/ Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws/ Or ere I'll weep. O Fool, I shall go mad!" (Act II.4, 281-283) As Lear wanders through the wilderness in the storms, he turns his anger against the nature. Lear is not devoted to religion as Lord Hidetora, therefore he does not try to blame God from his sorrow. Nature is for him a sort of religion. He blames it for giving birth to all ungrateful persons. The Fool tries to persuade him to go back and apologise to his daughters, since the storm is getting really strong. But Lear feels more comfortable with the lightning than with his daughters who betrayed him. He already has signs of his madness and he feels that his life has lost purpose.

Lear wanders in the storm with the Fool and with Kent. The storm could be a metaphor for his mind which is stormy and inconsistent. Desperate Lear speaks nonsense and his monologs are full of regrets of having such cruel and ungrateful daughters. This time he is not angry at the Fool for calling him a fool, because he already realises that he really is one. He imagines himself a trial where he sentences his daughters for the betrayal. He does not know what the reality is anymore.

In the state of his greatest madness he meets with his daughter Cordelia, who came to save him. When he sees her, he thinks he is death and she is a ghost. He does not understand her appearance and her attends to save him, since he thinks she really has a reason to hate for what he has done to her. According to the behaviour of his other daughters, who did not have a reason to treat him the way they did, he does not expect Cordelia to forgive him.

Be your tears wet? Yes, faith! I pray, weep not.

If you have poison for me I will drink it.

I know you do not love me, for your sisters

Have, as I do remember, done me wrong.

You have some cause; they have not. (Act IV.7, 71-75)

Before Cordelia is put to the prison he asks her forgiveness and he realises that this is the end of everything. The cruelty of his other daughters has reached the top and now they are both sentenced to death. After Cordelia's death Lear realises that it is his entire fault. She was his only reason to live and now when she is dead he cannot stand the feeling that she is dead because of him. His grief is too great to live with it, therefore he dies.

As a result, Kurosawa preserves the character of Lord Hidetora in the same way Shakespeare created king Lear. Two old men, which have rejected their only children who loved them and have preferred children with bad intentions. Their expectations and naive ideas about them have made lunatic persons of them. Although it seemed that they will have their happy reconciliation with their youngest offspring at the end of the story, everything turned bad and they both died together with their beloved children.

### **5.6. Kyoami/The Fool**

The integral part of every court was from time immemorial the character of the fool. We can retrace the birth of this profession to the ancient Greek and Rome where the fool was important part of the theatre and his task was to amuse the audience. Subsequently the fools commenced to be hired by the court to amuse the king and his dependent people. But the role of the fool was not only to amuse the king, very often he also became an advisor, confessor, confidant and not infrequently a friend and conscience of the king. In pursuance of this the fool became an inseparable aide of every king who followed him everywhere even in the war. (Koláček)

The character of the fool belongs to the most interesting as in the play *King Lear* so in the movie *Ran*. The fool in *King Lear* is not the first and only fool which has Shakespeare created. This character appears in several of Shakespeare's play, e.g. *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet* etc. All fools and clowns in his plays are characterized by the similar behaviour and nature. They all are smart and very loyal to their lords. American writer Isaac Asimov wrote in his book *Asimov's Guide To Shakespeare*: "That, of course, is the great secret of the successful fool-that he is no fool at all."(18) But at the same time they are the only one not afraid to say the true even if it is unpleasant. Sometimes their arrogance knows no bounds and they are not afraid to insult their lord.

Contrary to Lear's Fool, Hidetora's fool named Kyoami appears at the very beginning of the movie and leaves at the end of the movie after Hidetora's death. Kyoami as well as Lear's fool is very loyal to his lord Hidetora but I have not noticed such essential connection between Kyoami and Saburo as it was between Cordelia and the Fool. In fact in the scene at the beginning of the movie Kyoami seems frightened by Saburo, when he goes with the sword to cut couple of branches to hide sleeping Hidetora from the sun. But Kyoami's loyalty to Hidetora is as tight as the Fool's loyalty to Lear. Although he insults him by calling him fool and telling him how unwise he was in making his decisions, he follows him anywhere he goes. Even when he is tempted to leave him, his feelings of love and care about Hidetora are stronger. There is a moment in the movie when Kyoami is left by Hidetora to stay only with Hidetora's counsellor Tango. And when it comes to reunification of these two characters, Hidetora's mental state is very critical. Although Kyoami makes fun of Hidetora's state, he takes care of him. Now their relationship could be described as between parent and child, where Kyomai is the parent and Hidetora is the child. But it is also the time when Kyoami's boldness culminates. The reason of Kyoami's words is not to insult Hidetora but to provoke him to be the man he used to be. The following extract is a suitable example of one of the Kyoami's speeches to Hidetora:

Heaven and earth have turned upside  
down. I was mad and made him laugh  
before. But now *he* is mad and makes  
*me* laugh. Come, do not be silent.  
Say something. You speak of  
nonsense; I speak of truth. Let us  
see if our conversation can  
continue smoothly. Now! (*Ran*)

The Kyoami's feelings to Hidetora culminate in the very moving scene where Hidetora dies because of grief over the death of his youngest son Saburo. Kyoami kneels crying beyond the corpse of Hidetora and he sees no point of living when the life is so cruel and unfair.

Among others Kyoami's very important function in the movie is the consolidator of the family. It was him who found Saburo and brought him back to his already lunatic

father. Thanks to Kyoami, Hidetora reconciled with Saburo and reached the peace in his mind, even though it was only for the time than Saburo was killed.

The Fool in King Lear is sort of mysterious character. He appears on the stage in Act I.4 and he disappears in Act III.6 and we do not know what happened to him, because it is not mentioned in the play. According to Lear's final statement: " And my poor fool is hanged!"(Act V.3), we can assume that he was killed. But this statement may also refer to Cordelia, since the Fool always appears in text with capital letter. Therefore the circumstance of the Fool stays shrouded in mystery. As I mentioned Cordelia, the relationship between her and the Fool was very warm. In this relationship we can find Fool's resilient loyalty to Cordelia, although they never meet on the stage at the same time. In fact these two characters were frequently performed by the same actor to emphasise the tight essential connection between them. (Hilský 31) We learn about the fool's loyalty to Cordelia from the statement of the Knight: "Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the Fool hath much pined away."(Act I.4 70-71) The Fool as well as Cordelia has quality called voraciousness. He is the only person who says the things as they are and he is not afraid of punishment. Insulting Lear is not an abnormal thing to him. Nevertheless it is not a matter of disrespect, but it is a matter of his loyalty and sort of desperation because his words are never being taken seriously. Therefore when Lear decides to divide his kingdom, the Fool expresses his disagreement and frequently calls Lear a fool and compares him to himself. A suitable example of one of his many similar speeches to Lear is the following extract:

FOOL That lord that counselled thee  
To give away thy land,  
Come place him here by me;  
Do thou for him stand.  
The sweet and bitter fool  
Will presently appear:  
The one in motley here,  
The other found out - there.

LEAR Dost thou call me fool, boy?

FOOL All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou  
wast born with. (Act I.4, 137-147)



The main idea of the Fool's speeches is not to insult Lear but to arouse remorse in him and to make him realise what a mistake he has made. Here appears the Fool's function as Lear's conscience. However his intentions are to Lear's damage not comprehended. From the extract we can also see that the Fool do not speak in blank verse like the other characters, but he uses rhymes or speaks in prose.(Hilský 31)

In conclusion, it is possible to say that the characters of the Fool and Kyoami are almost identical. They are the closest friends of their masters. Their loyalty is confirmed. Even the attempts of their masters to spurn them are unsuccessful. Their main function is to protect their masters, without them, the death of Lear and Lord Hidetora would have come much earlier than at the end of the story.

## **6. Conclusion**

The general differences between *Ran* and *King Lear* are quite obvious. Therefore I devoted most of my thesis to the analyses of the characters. The further analyses of the main characters of *King Lear* and *Ran* revealed that most of the characters go through the same process during the plot. First, if we compare the development of Saburo and Cordelia, we come to the same result. They are the youngest descendants, hated by their siblings and loved by their fathers who eventually reject them and treat them unjustly. But their gentle character and undying love for their father lead them to reconciliation. But it does not save them from unfair and sad death. Secondly, it is possible to put Taro/Gonerill and Jiro/Regan on the same level. They all are ungrateful, greedy descendants, who prefer their own pleasure to the value of the family. Eventually their own evil causes the early death of all of them. Thirdly, the comparison of Lord Hidetora and Lear has proved that it is possible to describe these characters as identical or at least very similar. The only significant difference between Lord Hidetora and Lear is their attitude to religion. While Buddha is the symbol of religion for Lord Hidetora, Lear's symbol is the nature. The last identical characters are the characters of Kyoami and the Fool. They both are completely devoted to their masters and their loyalty is unflinching. They also serve as a sort of advisers. Their voraciousness leads them to insult their masters in many situations but eventually they would die for their masters.

My research has also proved that some characters in *Ran* are completely different from their equivalents in *King Lear*. First is the difference between Lady Kaede and her equivalent the Duke of Albany. While Lady Kaede is cruel and heartless women, always in

control over the men, the Duke of Albany is rather positive character. Lady Kaede's intentions are to destroy the Ichimonji clan, while the Duke of Albany rather tries to save the Lear's family. As I have already mentioned in the chapter about Lady Kaede and the Duke of Albany, the differences between them are mainly caused by their history with Lord Hidetora and Lear. The second significant difference between characters in *Ran* and *King Lear* is Kurosawa's omission of the Earl of the Gloucester's family in his movie. While the family of the Earl of Gloucester has very important part in the story of *King Lear*, the equivalents of this family do not exist in *Ran*.

As a result, the differences between *King Lear* and *Ran* are considerable. But if we focus only on the differences between individual characters, we discover that almost all characters in *Ran* correspond to their equivalents in *King Lear*. Although I was comparing two different media which are separated by several centuries, it is possible to put them both on the same level, considering their complexity and comprehensibility.

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## SUMMARY IN CZECH

Tématem mé bakalářské práce je obsáhnout přechod z divadla na plátna kin. Díky moderním technologiím, se podoba divadla během let změnila, ale divadla si i tak zachovala svůj původní účel. Zlepšení technologií dalo také vznik kinu, což je moderní podoba divadla. Ale je zde mnoho rozdílů oproti divadlu. V dnešní době již není neobvyklé, že se hry, které byly původně napsány pro divadelní ztvárnění, zpracovávají pro jejich filmové provedení. Já jsem vybrala příklad Shakespearovo tragédie Král Lear a její filmové adaptace Ran, režírované japonským režisérem Akirou Kurosawou. Má práce se týká porovnání této hry a její, již zmíněné, filmové adaptace.

Celá práce je rozdělena na čtyři hlavní části. V první části se zaměřuji na divadlo a jeho proměnu od alžbětinské doby do dneška. Zahrnula jsem zde také vznik prvního nemluveného a mluveného filmu. Dále zde popisuji hlavní filmové adaptace Krále Leara. V druhé části se zabývám genezí Krále Leara. Zaměřila jsem se na Shakespearovo hlavní zdroje a také jeho inspirace k napsání této slavné tragédie. Třetí část se zabývá hlavními rozdíly mezi hrou Král Lear a filmem Ran. Mezi tyto rozdíly patří hlavně zasazení příběhu, rozdílné inspirace obou autorů, jazykové rozdíly a rozdíly v ději. Poslední část se zabývá charakteristikou jednotlivých postav. Cílem této části bylo zjistit, jestli postavy mají shodné charaktery či ne. A nakonec v závěru jsem shrnula výsledek mé práce.