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# Shakespeare's Plays in Russian Culture

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## **Introduction**

The object of my research is screen and theatre adaptations of Shakespeare's plays in Russian culture. Thus, works of Shakespeare are no longer the domain of only the British. Thanks to the adaptations and translations into different languages people in most corners of the globe are familiar with Shakespeare's body of work.

The purpose of this work is to explore the adaptations of Shakespeare's plays in Russian culture, the main features of their functioning on the theatre scene and cinema, and translations in the context of the epoch.

To achieve this goal in the thesis the following tasks should be resolved:

- examine, summarize and comment on adaptations of Shakespeare's plays;
- represent the creative interpretation of Shakespeare's legacy in the literary and historical context of the era in Russia;
- carry out a review by comparing translations of the original text and screen adaptations, to identify the similarities and differences of English and Russian texts; to define peculiarities of interpretation.

The resource of the thesis are films, based on Shakespeare's plays, theatre adaptations, the translations in the Russian language of Shakespeare, theoretical, historical and literary-critical works.

The first acquaintance of the Russian reader with Shakespeare was due to translations. Shakespeare has been translated into Russian over two hundred and fifty years. Early information about Shakespeare came into Russia mainly through the French and German press. Even at the beginning of the nineteenth century the works of Shakespeare shifted into the Russian language through the French classical adaptations of Jean-François Ducis.

For the first time in Russia the name of Shakespeare was mentioned in the *Epistle of versification* (1748) by Alexander Sumarokov among the names of famous poets of the past. He published *Hamlet* the same year – a classical tragedy, created on the basis of the French translation-paraphrase of Laplace (1745).

The romantic cult of Shakespeare in Russia at the beginning of the nineteenth century was entirely prepared by pre-romantic influence of European literature. Such Russian writers as V.K. Küchelbecker, A.S. Pushkin, A.S. Griboyedov, O.M. Somov relied on the example of Shakespeare and created a distinctive national literature, filled with the spirit of nationality. After the Decembrist uprising in 1825 dramas and historical chronicles of Shakespeare helped to understand the historical and political tragedy of the participants. Imprisoned V.K. Küchelbecker, translated *Macbeth* and historical chronicles from 1828 to 1832. He also wrote *Discourse* on eight historical dramas of Shakespeare and especially of *Richard III* (1832).

The most interesting representative of the number of Russian admirers was and remains Alexander Pushkin. “In a fateful coincidence, the Father of English literature was an important influence on the Father of Russian literature.” (John Givens) Russians refer to Pushkin as ‘our everything’, but Shakespeare has also captured the hearts and minds of Russian readers and authors for over two centuries. Following the Decembrists Pushkin worked on the creation of a national literature, and succeeded in doing it more than any other. The Shakespearism of the poet became something more than blind adherence to the literary fashion of the English playwright, which was widespread in Western Europe at that time. Pushkin considers Shakespeare to be romantic, understanding the true "romantic" art, corresponding to the spirit of the age and connected with people. Pushkin sought to develop a system of fiction Shakespeare, applied to the problems of his age. He considered objectivity, truthfulness of characters and real image of time the main feature of the Shakespearean manner. According to Shakespeare’s manner Pushkin based his

tragedy *Boris Godunov* (1825), whose objectivity of the image of era and characters of that time he borrowed from Shakespeare.

Though Russian literature was saturated by Shakespeare's influence, it took longer for Shakespeare to find a home in Russian theatre. *Hamlet* was one of the first plays to be performed in the mid-nineteenth century (there are stories about serfs adapting the tragedy and performing it for their masters), while stars from Europe and further afield brought Shakespeare's scripts to Russian audiences. One of the greatest was the African-American actor Ira Aldridge, who, unable to perform in his homeland, became a huge star in Russia, playing roles including Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Othello* in the 1850s, when he was decorated by Tsar Alexander II.

The 1930s marked the beginning of a love affair with the father of English literature in Stalin's Russia. By the 1934 Writers' Congress Shakespeare was proclaimed the proper inheritance of the proletariat. A large portrait of the bard even decorated the congress hall in recognition of the three hundred and seventieth anniversary of his birth. In nearly every speech on drama, delegates proclaimed their allegiance to the playwright and to Maksim Gorky as the two presiding muses of Soviet theater.

The number of complete translations of Shakespeare's plays in Russia is more than three hundred. The first attempt was made by I.A. Velyaminov in 1808. He translated *Othello* and three years later S.I. Viskovatov translated *Hamlet*. It should be mentioned, that N.M. Karamzin made the prose translation of *Julius Caesar* from the original in 1787. As important as Karamzin's translation was, even more noteworthy was the introduction he wrote to accompany it, which, according to Simmons, represents "the first adequate critical presentation of Shakespeare in Russia." He argued for a reassessment of Shakespeare's importance as a playwright and made a case for placing Shakespeare above Corneille and Racine as a dramatist. Karamzin's translation was ahead of its time, but did not meet positive response from readers, and in 1794 it was banned.

There is Shakespeare of Lozinski and Shakespeare of Shchepkina-Kupernik, Shakespeare of Pasternak and Marshak, which continues the idea of the functioning of the different translations as part of a mosaic picture of foreign language text in the field of Russian literature. The Shakespeare collection was published in separate editions in 1936–1941 and 1957–1960. The difficulties, encountered in bringing the editions to the Soviet public, included differences in approaches to translation and in who the intended audience of the collection should be. Gustav Shpet and Alexander Smirnov were editors-in-chief of the first complete Soviet collection of Shakespeare's plays. They developed instructions on how Shakespeare's plays were to be rendered in Russian. Translators were to observe a rhythmic equivalency in their work that strove for a strict correspondence between the number of lines in Shakespeare's original and that of the translation, both to preserve metrical and syntactic patterns unique to Shakespeare and to maintain the tempo of the characters' lines. I will analyze the advantages and disadvantages of these translations for screen and theatre adaptations.

The active functioning of the tragedy *Hamlet* in Russian art began in the forties of the twentieth century, thanks to the translation of Pasternak, which the Moscow Art Theatre became interested in. After a successful performance, on the basis of this translation G. Kozintsev created his famous movie in 1964, which received numerous international awards and nominations, among them Special Jury Prize of Venice Film Festival (1964), BAFTA Award for Best Film nomination (1966), Golden Globe for Best Foreign-Language Foreign Film nomination (1967), etc. Among all the Shakespeare plays it was *Hamlet* which had a triumphant position on the Russian scene throughout the century.

It is worth mentioning, that apart from triumph of *Hamlet* in the Russian theatre, the most popular foreign screen adaptations in Russia were *Romeo and Juliet* (1968) and *The Taming of the Shrew* (1967), both staged by Franco Zeffirelli. The first one was a

phenomenal success in Russia. It won Best Foreign Language film (1972), Olivia Hussey got Audience Award (1972) for a leading role.

At the end of the century other Shakespeare's film adaptations were noticeable in Russia. The first one is *Hamlet* (1990), received rather positive reviews from critics, especially for Mel Gibson's portrayal of the Danish Prince. Franco Zeffirelli directed again the film, based on Shakespeare's play. *Romeo + Juliet* by Baz Luhrmann and *Hamlet* by Kenneth Branagh both were released in 1996. They received mixed reviews in Russia, probably because of the fact, that the play's setting is updated to the nineteenth century in *Hamlet* and to the twentieth in *Romeo and Juliet*. Kenneth Branagh's film is notable as the first unabridged theatrical film version of the play, running just over four hours. That is why it was not released in cinema in Russia and was available only on VHS. On turn of the century *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1999) by Michael Hoffman was also released directly on VHS.

Among foreign screen versions of Shakespeare of the twenty-first century a moderate success in Russia has had *Coriolanus* (2010) by Ralph Fiennes and *Romeo and Juliet* (2013) by Carlo Carlei. Two theatre adaptations with National Theatre Live *Coriolanus* (2013) by Josie Rourke and *Hamlet* (2015) by Robin Lough were broadcast in cinemas around Russia. The latest screen version of *Macbeth* (2015) by Justin Kurzel was a success.

A whole group of very successful Russian films was created in the second half of the twentieth century. The first Russian film adaptation of W. Shakespeare's play became *Twelfth Night, or What You Will* (1955) by Yan Frid, followed by *Othello* (1955) by Sergei Yutkevich (Best Director Award of Cannes Film Festival (1956). *Hamlet* (1964) by Grigori Kozintsev was met with critical acclaim and commercial success around the world. It got many prestigious international awards and nominations, among which are Special Jury Prize of Venice Film Festival (1964), BAFTA Award for Best Film

nomination (1966), Golden Globe for Best Foreign-Language Foreign Film nomination (1967), etc. G. Kozintsev was devoted to Shakespeare's plays throughout four decades of his career. He staged *King Lear* in 1941 at Bolshoi Drama Theater (Saint Petersburg) after many years of preparations, then *Othello* (1944) and *Hamlet* (1954) at Alexandrinsky Theatre (Saint Petersburg). The pearl of his work became abovementioned screen version of *Hamlet* in 1964. His last film was again the play by Shakespeare *King Lear* (1970).

Other notable screen versions are *The Taming of the Shrew* (1961) by Sergey Kolosov, *Much Ado About Nothing* (1973) by Samson Samsonov, *Antony and Cleopatra* (1980) by Leonid Pchelkin.

Famous Russian composers of the twentieth century made some works, based on the plot of Shakespeare's plays, for example, ballets *Romeo and Juliet* (1938) by Sergei Prokofiev, *Othello* (1957) by Aleksandre Machavariani, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1942) by Victor Oranski. Shakespeare was also an inspiration to Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, whose fantasy overture to *Romeo and Juliet* (1880) transforms the play into a passionate and lovelorn symphonic poem.

## **Part I *Hamlet*: Translational and Staging Transformations of the Original for the Russian Scene.**

The tragedy *Hamlet* continues to remain the most popular and important of all of Shakespeare's plays published or performed in Russia. Since the eighteenth century, Shakespeare's tragedy has affected the work of writers, found a lively response from readers and theater audience. Hamlet's everlasting mysterious nature challenges actors, critics, directors, painters, musicians, artists to comment or interpret this character. Each new generation asks the eternal question: 'To be or not to be?' which puts the protagonist. The works of Russian writers and critics contain frequent references to the play over many decades. They continued to debate the play's meaning and what came to be known as Hamletism throughout this time, starting with the influential critic Visarrion Belinsky. *Hamlet* inspired a greater number of theories and explanations than any other Shakespearean character discussed in Russian criticism and elsewhere in the world. There is no theater director who does not want to stage *Hamlet*. But the very few venture upon this step. And the reason is clear. Only gifted actors under the guidance of an outstanding director are capable of playing Shakespearean passions on the big stage.

*Hamlet* as a cultural phenomenon has been employed in a great range of original works by Russian authors: A. Pushkin, F. Dostoevsky, I. Turgenev, B. Pasternak, V. Ivanov, etc. Apart from literature iconic character of Hamlet influenced all the cultural spheres of Russia. From a prominent production by K. Stanislavsky (1911) at Moscow Art Theatre, a triumphant performance by G. Kozintzev (1954) at Russian State Pushkin Academy Drama Theater, a controversial production by Y. Lubimov (1971) at Taganka Theatre and numerous performances of amateur and semiprofessional theatres to a superb cinematic adaptation by G. Kozintsev (1964), became also a feature of Mikhail Vruble's

painting *Hamlet and Ophelia* (1884) and a screen ballet *Hamlet* (1969) with the music of D. Shostakovich.

It should be noted, that Shakespeare has a special place in the musical heritage of Shostakovich. He wrote the music to Shakespeare's plays several times. The first was tragedy *Hamlet*, directed by N. Akimov at Vachtangov Theatre (1931-1932). He was also the composer of Kozintsev's famous spectacle and film *Hamlet* in 1954 and 1964 respectively. Shostakovich wrote the music to the last Kozintsev' film *King Lear* (1970).

Shakespeare's play *Hamlet* reached its full flowering in Russian culture in the twentieth century thanks largely to acclaimed translations, made by Pasternak, Marshak and Shchepkina-Kupernik. In spite of the fact, each new generation of translators tries to give a new interpretation of Shakespeare's plays and primarily *Hamlet*. Nowadays after almost two hundred and seventy years since the first appearance in Russia *Hamlet* "is still sparking a permanent interest among Russian audience."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Zakharov N. Productions of Hamlet on the Post-Soviet Stage in Russia. P.252

## 1. First theatrical attempts, the advantages of Pasternak's translation for the scene

Sumarokov's version of *Hamlet*, published in 1748 and produced in 1750, constitutes Shakespeare's debut on Russian stage, though the play is like Shakespeare's in name only, an outcome of the eighteenth-century practice of using titles and character names of well-known plays but matching them to new content. Sumarokov retained only five characters from the play (Hamlet, Gertrude, Claudius, Ophelia and Polonius). He also omitted graveyard scene, the play-within-the-play, and the duel; made Polonius the murderer of Hamlet's father and Claudius the wooer of Ophelia. He gave the play a happy ending in which Hamlet lives happily ever after with Ophelia as the rightful ruler of Denmark. Sumarokov's play was very popular and went through four editions by 1786.

After attending performances of *Hamlet* in 1837 with the mesmerizing Pavel Mochalov in the lead role Belinsky seized on his own and audience's reaction to the powerful performance as a hopeful sign that literature could engage the social as well as emotional sensibilities of the Russian public. According to him, Russia had found a national narrative, though it came from outside its borders, and this narrative spoke directly to Russians living under Nicholas I. Belinsky states in the essay of 1838 "Hamlet is you, I, each of us, that is, anyone who has suffered from incompatibility between reality and one's ideas."<sup>2</sup> In Nikolay Polevoy's translation the play conveyed the sense "of the individual's powerlessness in the confrontation with a strong but inert state machine".<sup>3</sup> This aspect of the play was not lost on P. Mochalov.

Simmons credits "the powerful and wholly natural interpretations" by the two great actors Pavel Mochalov and Vasilii Karatygin along with their use of "faithful texts and proper scenic effects" for winning Shakespeare's "a hitherto unexampled popularity

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<sup>2</sup> V.G. Belinsky, *Hamlet. Drama Shekspira. Mochalov v roli Gamleta. Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 13 vols., Ed N.F. Bel'chikov. Moscow: Akademia nauk SSSR, 1953.

<sup>3</sup> P. Holland. *More Russian than a Dane: the Usefulness of Hamlet in Russia*, in *Translating Life: Studies in Transpositional Aesthetics*, ed. Shirley Chew and Alistair Stead. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999. p.320

in the Russian theatre.”<sup>4</sup> V. Karatygin played Hamlet in Saint Petersburg later that year to equal acclaim. The next decade marked the height of Shakespeare’s popularity in Russia, with the growing number of translations and performances of his play. In 1840 Nikolai Ketcher was the first to begin translating Shakespeare’s complete plays, with accuracy as his main criterion.

Ivan Turgenev gave the most complete interpretation of Hamletism in the nineteenth century Russia in his speech *Hamlet and Don Quixote* (1860) at a public reading in Saint Petersburg. He compared Hamlet and Don Quixote as embodying “two contrasting basic tendencies, the two poles of the human axis”.<sup>5</sup> According to Turgenev, Hamlet is the far more common type of personality in Russia. He is above all, analysis, scrutiny and egotism – and consequently, disbelief. He is skeptic who pitilessly includes his own self in those doubts. In truth, Hamlets such as Turgenev described had long populated Russian literature in the form of the so-called “superfluous man” (*lishnii chelovek*), a term coined by Turgenev himself in his 1850 story *Diary of Superfluous Man*. The hero of new literature was “a member of tiny minority of educated and morally sensitive men, who, unable to find a place in his native land, and driven in upon himself, is liable to escape either into fantasies or illusions, or into cynicism or despair, ending, more often than not, in self-destruction or surrender”<sup>6</sup> – in a word Hamlet. The list of such characters includes Pushkin’s Eugene Onegin from eponymous novel (1833), Mikhail Lermontov’s Pechorin from *Hero of Our Time* (1840), as well as many of Turgenev’s own passive heroes, especially the protagonist of his first novel, *Rudin* (1856).

Russian painter Mikhail Aleksandrovich Vrubel during his studying at The Russian Academy of Arts in Saint Petersburg decided to participate in the competition of

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<sup>4</sup> Simmons, Ernest J. *English Literature and Culture in Russia (1553-1840)*. Harvard University Press; First Edition edition (1935). P. 232

<sup>5</sup> Ivan Turgenev. *Hamlet and Don Quixote*, trans. Moshe Spiegel. Chicago review. 1965. P. 92-109

<sup>6</sup> Isaiah Berlin. *Fathers and Children: Turgenev and the Liberal Predicament*. In his *Russian Thinkers*, ed. H. Hardy and A. Kelly. New York. 1984. P. 265

the Society for Encouragement of Arts Award and focused on the theme "Hamlet and Ophelia" in the Raphael realism style. In the picture *Hamlet and Ophelia* for the first time in the art of Vrubel appears the master's usual correlation of his generation with classic images of world literature, among which, of course, the greatest creation of the immortal English playwright William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Mikhail Vrubel, who was always interested in universal, philosophical themes, could not ignore the tragedy of the rebellious, strong-minded individuals. So the picture *Hamlet and Ophelia* appeared in 1884. The painting is a reflection on the favorite theme of the artist Demon and Tamara, only without the motive of seduction: the meeting of mad intellect with a naive and pure femininity.

Shakespeare had a formative influence on Fyodor Dostoevsky. As Lev Vygotsky put it, "Dostoevsky and Shakespeare are the very related phenomena. Reading both we feel the tragic abyss – not in the mind, but in the artistic sense. And here and there the question is fatal passions. In both we meet the full and complete picture of human passions, prevailed over the human will. No man owns them, they own him – and bear him, and drop, and raise him; and twist and throw the human will. Such is Hamlet, and Macbeth, and Lear. Such is Raskolnikov, Stavrogin, and Myshkin, and Karamazovs. All types of emotions, temperaments, deeds and crimes Dostoevsky found in Shakespeare, and studied all the varieties of human psychology in these eternal samples".<sup>7</sup> Dostoevsky treated Shakespeare with great reverence, as a teacher of humanity. In the drafts to the *Demons* (1871) Dostoevsky wrote about him: "Shakespeare – is a prophet sent by God to announce to us the mystery of the person, of the human soul."<sup>8</sup>

To a large extent, drama nature of Dostoevsky's narrative derives from Shakespeare by the concentration the maximum number of characters in some scenes, contrasting change of feelings and emotional states of the characters, abundance in their

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<sup>7</sup> Vygotsky, L.S. *Psichologia iskusstva*. M., 1968. S. 541.

<sup>8</sup> Dostoevsky. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 30 v. L.*, 1971-1989. T. 11; S. 239

behavior theatrical and expressive gestures: kisses, slaps, spitting in a face, genuflections; or such acts like burning the money, breaking the icons. Constructing the plot Dostoevsky seeks the rapid development of the action in the shortest periods of time, what is also typical to dramatic works.

Among Shakespeare's dramas Dostoevsky most appreciated *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Hamlet* and *King Lear*, that is the plays of the most powerful tragic intensity. *Hamlet*, in particular, frames Dostoevsky's life. He read the play at age of sixteen and was much moved by it.

The play is also mentioned in *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) four decades later, where it is quoted at different times by Dmitry and Ivan Karamazov as well as the public prosecutor on the trial. The public prosecutor conducting the trial against Dmitri, Ippolit Kirillovitch speaks about contemporary young people who "shoot themselves without any Hamlet's questions: What will be there?"<sup>9</sup> Further discussing the fact that Dmitri Karamazov wanted to cover everything by the suicide: "I do not know whether Karamazov thought at that moment, what will be there, and whether Karamazov is able to think like Hamlet about what will be there? No ... Those have Hamlets, but we still have Karamazovs." That very moment, which mentions the public prosecutor, Dmitri Karamazov recalled Hamlet thought in Hamlet's way – but, did not think about what would be there, but felt in his heart, sadness of the edge, the mood of Hamlet in the graveyard, so well understood by Dostoevsky. Ready to die, he said: "I am sad ... Do you remember Hamlet: "I'm so sad, so sad, Horatio ... Ah, poor Yorick." May be I am Yorick. Here and now I am Yorick, and then the skull."<sup>10</sup> The similarity is striking: Karamazov feels like Hamlet, and the phrase of the prosecutor receives the sense of not opposition but comparison.

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<sup>9</sup>Dostoyevsky F. *The Brothers Karamazov*. Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2016. p. 283

<sup>10</sup> The same. P. 298

A similar mood arises from the same quotes of Rodion Raskolnikov, the protagonist of Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* (1866): "I feel a little bit dizzy, but it is not the point, the fact is I am so sad, so sad!" It resembles so much the words of Hamlet in the translation of Polevoy. Generally Raskolnikov, not distinguishing reality from sleep and delirium, mixed mystical and real, is very close to Hamlet.

*Hamlet* thus "accompanied Dostoevsky on his entire spiritual journey."<sup>11</sup> Dostoevsky cites it more frequently than any other work by Shakespeare.

The other giant of Russian literature, Leo Tolstoy, was of an entirely opposite opinion regarding the question of Shakespeare's value in the world culture. "What a coarse, immoral and senseless work *Hamlet* is"<sup>12</sup> he complained in 1896, a harsh judgement that he extended to nearly all of Shakespeare's plays. Tolstoy's distaste for Shakespeare, which dated from his youth, is the most prominent in his so-called post-conversion years (1880-1910), when he argued, in essays such as *What is Art?* (1897) and *About Shakespeare and Drama* (1906), that Shakespeare was bad theatre because it did not serve the higher function of art in society, which is to infect readers and spectators with simple feelings common to all men, helping to unite them. According to Andrew Dickson, Tolstoy's essay *About Shakespeare and Drama* "rails against everything from the implausibility of Shakespeare's characters to his supposed aristocratic sympathies".<sup>13</sup>

Russian society was changing, and so was the theatre. Conventional drama was ailing, and along with it, productions of Shakespeare. At the turn of the century a new kind of drama was introduced into Russian theatre by Anton Chekhov. He achieved it through his four major plays: *The Seagull* (1896), *Uncle Vanya* (1899), *Three Sisters* (1901) and *The Cherry Orchard* (1903), "charting a course away from Shakespeare and the ruling Russian playwright of the second half of the nineteenth century, Alexander

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<sup>11</sup> K. Stepanian. Dostoevsky and Shakespeare: Characters and Authors in 'Great Time'. 2014. p.54

<sup>12</sup> George Gibian. Tolstoj and Shakespeare. The Hague. 1957. p. 22

<sup>13</sup> Andrew Dickson As they like it: Shakespeare in Russia. The Calvert Journal

Ostrovsky.”<sup>14</sup> Despite the fact, that *Hamlet* is quoted in *The Seagull* and even structures its themes and action, Chekhov’s variety of drama is different from Shakespeare’s. Dramatic events are internalized in Chekhov’s theatre. As Stanislavski stated "Chekhov often expressed his thought not in speeches, but in pauses or between the lines or in replies consisting of a single word ... the characters often feel and think things not expressed in the lines they speak."<sup>15</sup>

The first accurate and idiomatic translation of the tragedy in Russian, but still shortened by a quarter from the original was made by Nikolai Polevoy. More likely Dostoevsky read *Hamlet* in Polevoy’s translation. It was shown in the MAT in 1912 and was a collaboration between Edward Gordon Craig and Constantin Stanislavski.

Craig and Stanislavski met in 1908, when the eccentric American dancer Isadora Duncan, who had a daughter with Craig, introduced the two to each other. After their meeting Stanislavski decided to invite Craig to help produce *Hamlet* for the Moscow Art Theatre. They began to plan the production. Rehearsals began in March 1909. In April, Craig returned to Russia, meeting with Stanislavski in St Petersburg, where the company was on tour. Together they analyzed the play scene-by-scene, then line-by-line, and devised a meticulous production plan, which included sound, lighting, and an outline of the blocking. The collaboration was somewhat stormy due to the very different creative visions of the co-directors. Craig, an English theatre practitioner, had garnered interest for the symbolist and simplistic designs. On the other end of the spectrum Constantin Stanislavski was creating a world of theatre based upon realism, the internal complexities of the mind, and the rise of psychology. Craig viewed the production as a stylized monodrama, a monodrama being a piece performed by a single actor, however Stanislavski was more focused on psychological motivation. Craig viewed the main character as the representation of a spiritual principle, caught in a mutually destructive

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<sup>14</sup> Givens, J. Shakespearean Tragedy in Russia: In Equal Scale Weighing Delight and Dole. p.769

<sup>15</sup> Reynolds, E., Stanislavski's Legacy, Theatre Arts Books, 1987. p.81

struggle with the principle of matter as embodied in all that surrounded him. Stanislavski saw Hamlet as an active, energetic and crusading character, he “emphasized the actor and his ability to create a realistic, psychologically compelling performance. Craig, on the other hand, wanted to turn actors into marionettes, whose movements and lines were subordinated to the aesthetic effect of the production.”<sup>16</sup> Despite this apparent opposition between Craig's symbolist aesthetic and Stanislavski's psychological realism, however, the two did share some artistic assumptions; the 'system' had developed out of Stanislavski's experiments with symbolist drama, which had shifted the emphasis of his approach from a naturalistic external surface to the inner world of the character's spirit. Both had stressed the importance of achieving a unity of all theatrical elements in their work. Stanislavski in a letter to Liubov Gurevich, written in February 1909, expresses the belief in the collaboration: “Of course, we have returned to realism, to a deeper, more refined and more psychological realism. Let us get a little stronger in it and we shall once more continue on our quest. That is why we have invited Gordon Craig. After wandering about in search of new ways, we shall again return to realism for more strength. I do not doubt that every abstraction on the stage, such as impressionism, for instance, could be attained by way of a more refined and deeper realism. All other ways are false and dead.”<sup>17</sup>

The duo tackled this project when they were at the peak of their influence but also still crafting new unconventional ways to bring life to the stage. At times this led to conflict between the entire cast and crew but eventually gave birth to one of the most unique, polarizing, and impactful productions of all the twentieth century. Since neither understood the other's language, they conducted their discussions in a mixture of English and German. This paired with the fact that Craig spent little time at rehearsal with the actors, caused the cast to say Craig was extremely difficult to work with. Craig spent more

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<sup>16</sup> Givens, J. Shakespearean Tragedy in Russia: In Equal Scale Weighing Delight and Dole. p.769

<sup>17</sup> Bablet, Denis. 1962. The Theatre of Edward Gordon Craig. Trans. Daphne Woodward. London: Methuen, 1981. P.135

of his time with a built-to-scale replica of the set, where he used woodcuts of the actors to devise blocking. They relocated to Moscow in May and worked together until the beginning of June, when Stanislavski left for Paris. In February 1910, Craig returned to Moscow. They planned to rehearse the company together until April, after which Stanislavski would rehearse alone until the summer. In August, Craig would return once more and the production would open in November 1910. As it was, Stanislavski was diagnosed with typhoid fever in August and the production was postponed until the next season; Stanislavski was unable to return to rehearsals until April 1911. The production was originally meant to be shown in the 1910 season, but due to Stanislavski being ill it was pushed back to the fifth of January 1912. The production placed the Moscow Art Theatre on the cultural map for Western Europe.

Vasilii Kachalov played the main role. His performance as Hamlet was praised as a genuine achievement and Russian critics hailed him as the new Mochalov, while Olga Knipper (Gertrude), Nikolai Massalitinov (Claudius) and Olga Gzovskaia (Ophelia) received poor reviews in the Russian press. In spite of mixed reviews, it became part of the MAT repertoire and even toured Europe and America during the Civil War that followed the Revolution. The performance attracted enthusiastic and unprecedented worldwide attention for the theatre, with reviews in Britain's *The Times* and in the French press that praised its unqualified success. MAT's *Hamlet* came to be regarded as a seminal event that influenced the subsequent history of production style in the theatre and revolutionized the staging of Shakespeare's plays in the twentieth century. As Bablet stated, it became "one of the most famous and passionately discussed productions in the history of the modern stage."<sup>18</sup>

Between 1918 and 1925, Shakespeare nearly disappeared from the stage, being considered by the Bolshevik cultural establishment "a nostalgic minstrel of the decaying

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<sup>18</sup> Bablet, Denis. 1962. *The Theatre of Edward Gordon Craig*. Trans. Daphne Woodward. London: Methuen, 1981. p. 134

feudal system and spokesman of a decadent aristocracy”.<sup>19</sup> The one notable performance in the 1920s – the Moscow Art Theatre’s production of *Hamlet* in 1924-1925, with great Mikhail Chekhov (nephew of Anton Chekhov) in the lead role – was criticized for failing to embody the ideals of contemporary reality.

The attitude to Shakespeare changed in the 1930s. He was proclaimed the proper inheritance of the proletariat by the First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934. Shakespeare’s portrait even decorated the congress hall on the occasion of the 370<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth. Nikolai Akimov staged *Hamlet* at the Vakhtangov Theatre in 1932. It was one of the noticeable performances of that period. Akimov staged the play in the grotesque way as a political intrigue, with drunken Ophelia, a plotting Horatio and a fat Hamlet. It turned the play into comedy and got extremely negative reviews, however a lot of people wanted to see it. The First All-Union Congress of Directors eliminated *Hamlet* from the theatre repertoire. The play disappeared from the majority of Soviet stages for more than twenty years.

*Hamlet* became the third after *Romeo and Juliet* (1934) and *Othello* (1935) and the last Shakespeare’s play, staged by Sergei Radlov of prewar time at Komissarzhevskaya Theatre (Saint Petersburg). Radlov’s acclaimed production of *Othello* set the tone for future performances of the play. Initially, he was offered to stage *Hamlet* at Maly Theater. Vera Pashennaya, played Emile in *Othello*, staged by Radlov, was preparing for the title role. However she was unable to repeat a bold experiment of Sarah Bernhardt. The theater did not take a risk and Radlov preferred more favorable creative atmosphere for him of his own theater. Work on the play began in the fall of 1936. Radlov invited the artist Vladimir Dmitriev and the composer Sergei Prokofiev. The translation of *Hamlet* carried out his wife Anna Radlova.

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<sup>19</sup> Miklos Szenczi. Shakespeare in Recent Soviet Criticism. Hungarian Studies in English. 1965. p. 37

During the preparation for the performance Radlov reviewed all previously seen Hamlets. Closest to his conception of Hamlet's image he called the performance of Paul Gaydeburov in Peredvizhnoi theatre (Portable theatre). He considered the play by MAT, 1924, with M. Chekhov to be wrong, "semi-mystical", setting of Akimov, 1932 at Vakhtangov Theater called "talented and witty, but fundamentally wrong and throughly formalist"<sup>20</sup>. Radlov saw Hamlet a man of the Renaissance ahead of his time, acting at the call of conscience and duty among friends and enemies. Hamlet's hesitation, he explained, immensely difficult task that lay on his shoulders.

The play, released in May of the anniversary 1938 for the theater, was unanimously recognized as a major achievement. Professor A. Smirnov, a famous Shakespearian scholar, was the first who responded. According to him, "the text of the brilliant tragedy read seriously and thoughtfully by S. Radlov and the actors of the theater, he heads. Before the audience clearly gets the basic theme of the tragedy: the struggle of Hamlet, a true humanist, free from all caste restrictions and prejudices with the world around him of meanness, predation and hypocrisy"<sup>21</sup>. Dmitry Dudnikov (Hamlet), he said, played great. The critic also noted great success in the disclosure of other Shakespearean imagery in their diversity and specificity. The similar opinion was expressed by literature and theater critic I.L. Altman, who called Dudnikov a talented and an intelligent actor, a wonderful performer of the role of Hamlet, and added that the play had "correct concept and director's wholeness"<sup>22</sup>.

Despite the almost universal approval, the director and performers continued to work on the performance. Radlov, not agreeing with the changes that Dudnikov spontaneously brought into the role, introduced a new artist – Boris Smirnov, played

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<sup>20</sup> Zolotnitski D. I. Sergei Radlov. Rezhissura sud'bi — S.-P.: Ros. In-t istorii iskusstv, 1999. — s. 205. — 348 s.

<sup>21</sup> Smirnov A.A. Gamlet v Teatre pod rukovodstvom S.E.Radlova // Krasnaya gazeta. — 1938. № 115. 21 maya. — s. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Altman I. Novyi shekspirovski spektakl Teatra pod rukovodstvom S.E.Radlova // Leningradskaya pravda. — 1938. № 124. 2 iunya. — s. 3.

initially Laertes. He, in turn, in the role of Laertes was replaced by Nikolai Kryukov. “Shakespeare's plays became the foundation of the repertoire of Komissarzhevskaya Theatre”, summed up D. Zolotnitsky, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello* and *Hamlet* staged here by Radloff, firmly established the Russian theatrical Shakespeariana of the thirties. These performances were inspired by the search for the living, human, not a textbook Shakespeare.”<sup>23</sup>

Jubilee 1938 for the theatre was marked not only by the success of *Hamlet*, but also by some changes in the theatre company. Dmitry Dudnikov came upon the stage in the role of Hamlet sixty times. After receiving his substitution – Boris Smirnov, he retired with his wife, actress A. Manuhova.

The first famous translator of *Hamlet* in the twentieth century became M. Lozinsky. The translation was published in 1933. He skillfully realized in practice his theory of direct, maximally accurate translation even though, according to some critics, characters' replies, translated by Lozinski, do not sound like a normal human speech. There is no air in these verses, and no space for words and thoughts. Lozinsky's translation is often compared to Pasternak's variant of the play, who made a huge contribution into development of Soviet Shakespearean tragedy. If to calculate the words in the translations it turns out that in *Hamlet* of Lozinsky were used 25.170 ones, while in Pasternak's just 24 000. However, Pasternak's variant is a little shorter (due to small cuts), but even taking in consideration this fact the translation of Lozinski is 'heavier' almost than a thousand words. It is interesting, that in both *Hamlet* there is almost the same number of symbols, which means that 'more accurate' translation of Lozinski outweighs by verbal 'trash', auxiliary words.

Thus, it turns out that to render Shakespeare with mathematical accuracy, even graphically reproducing the position of words in the line – it is not important. Later, Boris

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<sup>23</sup> Ocherki istorii russkogo sovetskogo dramaticheskogo teatra. V treh tomah. — M: AN SSSR, 1960. — T. 2. — s. 349. — 776 s.

Leonidovich (Pasternak) with his usual delicacy summarized this sort of ‘duel’: “matching of the text is too weak connection to provide the translation with self-dependence.”<sup>24</sup> According to him, a translation “must produce an impression of life, not of literariness”.<sup>25</sup> Pasternak translated six Shakespeare’s tragedies: *Hamlet* (1940), *Romeo and Juliette*, *Antony and Cleopatra* (both 1994), *Othello* (1945), *King Lear* (1949) and *Macbeth* (1951). They are considered to be the best translations of these plays into Russian.

In his article, *Boris Pasternak and the ‘Shakespearean Forces’ on the ‘Cultural Front’ of the Cold War*, Leonid Katsis reveals how contacts that Pasternak made in England are connected to his Shakespeare translations in the 1940s. Pasternak “tried to leverage his Shakespeare translations to break through both to his family in England and to the foreign reader.” Initially, Pasternak’s correspondence with British diplomats and intellectuals such as Isaiah Berlin, George Reavey and C.M. Bowra – whom Pasternak referred to as “certain forces of Shakespeare’s world” and who all praised his work on Shakespeare – helped him to advocate for publication and production on stage of his translations of *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and other plays in the post-war Soviet Union.

I will focus on the analysis of some aspects of the tragedy *Hamlet* in Pasternak’s version, in particular, Hamlet's soliloquy “To be or not to be”, the most popular passage, “the ideological and artistic integrity of which allowed translators to treat it as a separate product”.<sup>26</sup> The translations of the monologue, made by Pasternak, Vronchenko, Field, Kroneberg, Lozinski are considered to be the best.

The most important thing for Pasternak during the translation of the tragedy was to render not ‘the letter’, but the spirit of the work, to reproduce the ‘music’ of the tragedy, to catch the originality of its rhythm. He made much closer the dialogues of the

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<sup>24</sup> Pastrenak B.L. Ob iskusstve. *Ohrannaya gramota* I zamietki o hudozhestvennom tvorchestve. – M.: Iskusstvo,1990. – S.160

<sup>25</sup> Pastrenak B.L.Sobr. soch. v 5-ti t. T. 2. Stihotvorenia 1931 – 1959; Perevodi. – M.: Hudozh.lit., 1989. – S.143

<sup>26</sup> Zadornova V.Y. Vospriyatie i interpretazia hudozhestvennogo texta. – M.: Vyshaya shkola,1984. – S.23

characters to live natural speech, forced everyone to speak his own language. The most important goal of the text under translation for Pasternak had always been to create a work that would be read like a Russian. Working on the translations of Georgian poems, Pasternak wrote to S.Chikovani: "... I saw what had been done in this regard before ... An attempt to make a rhythmic combination of metaphrase with might and main had already been done, and it should not be repeated. It is necessary TO MAKE RUSSIAN POETRY, as I did from Shakespeare, Shevchenko, Verlaine and others, I understand my task this way".<sup>27</sup>

Pasternak's translation of *Hamlet*, was a great step forward in its time. This translation appeared on the eve of the war, and then, with numerous reprints, Pasternak constantly brought to the text editing, sometimes quite substantial. This process continued literally to the death of the poet. In the final version, taking into account all the corrections the play was published only in 1968 in the series "Library of World Literature". Since the publication, *Hamlet* of Pasternak began to press up the other translations.

It should be noted that at first the attitude to Pasternak's translations of Shakespeare caused polar assessment. After the translation of *Hamlet* in 1940, the critics differed in opinion. M.M. Morozov and N.N. Vilyam-Vil'mont greeted Pasternak's translation with the success that "grows out organically of the heart of the Russian language", renders "lively text fabric" of Shakespeare by extensive use of folklore, which Shakespeare based at his time. M. Alekseev and L. Reztsov saw 'impurity' and vulgarism in the colloquial language. There are many excursions from the original meaning, subjective collocations and images.

According to Zadornova, some verbs, used by Pasternak in *Hamlet*'s soliloquy 'to drag oneself' ('to bear' in the original), to expire ('to die') are stylistically out of tune

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<sup>27</sup> Pastrenak B.LSobr. soch. v 5-ti t. T. 2. Stihotvorenia 1931 – 1959; Pervodi. – M.: Hudozh.lit., 1989. – S. 646

with the rest of the vocabulary of the translation. The phrase “There’s the rub” in Pasternak’s version gets the opposite meaning –“Here is the answer.” Pasternak himself anticipated such accusations. He said in the preface to the tragedy that he had not translated the words and metaphors, but the ideas and scenes. According to the poet, his “work should be judged as the Russian original dramatic work.”<sup>28</sup> Pasternak cleared Shakespearean drama from euphemisms and excessive recitation. It made the play easier to perform, but also he changed the style of Shakespeare, subjected it to his Pasternak’s concept.

Speaking about the merits of the translation of *Hamlet*, made by Pasternak, it should concentrate on its functioning in the Russian theater and cinema. In 1938, Pasternak translated the two sonnets – 66 and 73, close to the meaning of Hamlet's soliloquy. Probably translations of the sonnets caught the attention of Vsevolod Meyerhold. In early 1938 Meyerhold’s theater was closed. Left without his theater, he decided to realize an old dream and stage *Hamlet*. The possibility of setting happened in Alexandrinka (Russian State Pushkin Academy Drama Theater (Alexandrinsky Theatre) in Leningrad. Several translations of the tragedy were known by 1938. Translation of Kroneberg was published in 1844 and reprinted many times. *Hamlet* in the version of the Grand Duke Konstantin Konstantinovich Romanov entered the collection of the works of Shakespeare, published in 1899-1901. Lozinskii published his translation in 1933, and A. Radlova in 1937. Meyerhold did not want any of these translations. The translation of Lozinski he considered ‘too dry and accurate’, Radlova’s one – ‘tasteless’, old translations – ‘anachronistic’. Meyerhold ordered the translation to Pasternak and asked to approach the text of the translation to Russian folk theater – theater of Apollon Grigoriev, Alexander Ostrovsky. He wanted the translated *Hamlet* to be as Russian original dramatic work, because aside from accuracy, the same length of line of translation and the original

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<sup>28</sup> Masterstvo perevoda.,1966. – M.,1968. – S.110

and other things, there should be more intentional freedom, without which there is no approximation to bigger things.

The translation of *Hamlet*, made for Meyerhold, was published in the journal *The Young Guard* in 1940. The text was Russified – with the introduction of the vernacular, focusing on the traditions of folk theater, in which Pasternak saw the Russian branch of the Shakespearean tradition. It speaks about a kind of translational anticipating of the place, which his work will take in the megatext of Russian literature, how a newly created Russian text of *Hamlet* will function on the basis of Russian literature.

In 1939 the Moscow Art Theatre became interested in the translation of *Hamlet*. The contract with the theater to stage the play was signed in September 1939 (with the right of first production until early January, 1942). Nemirovich-Danchenko had to stage the performance. In early November, 1939, Pasternak had read the first two acts of the Moscow Art Theatre. After hearing it Nemirovich-Danchenko terminated the contract with A.Radlova, whose translation was made purposefully at the commission of the Moscow Art Theater. Justifying his refusal, he wrote to Radlova in November 6, 1939: “I have received your letter the day after my acquaintance with the translation of Boris Pasternak. This translation is exceptional by its poetic qualities, it is undoubtedly an event in the literature. And Art Theater, staging its performances for many years, could not pass by such an outstanding translation of *Hamlet* ... I continue to consider your translation to be good, but if there is an exceptional one, MAT must accept it.”<sup>29</sup>

Pasternak read three remaining acts in the Moscow Art Theater on November 18, 1939. V.Y.Vilenkin, the head of the literary section, became the mediator between Pasternak and the theater in the name of Nemirovich and actors, requiring modifications of the text. “Pasternak willingly ... agreed with him, and was ready for more work from

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<sup>29</sup> Nemirovich-Danchenko V.I. *Izbrannye pis'ma*. T.2. – M.:Iskusstvo, 1979. – S.672

the very beginning – remembering Vilenkin – ... But sometimes he might get angry with the actors. The majority of the amendments he made with full willingness.”<sup>30</sup>

Rehearsals went on for one and a half year. At the request of the director and the actors Pasternak continued to make amendments to the text of the translation. It was published after all the changes in Goslitizdat in 1941. Pasternak preferred the first version. Handed in to the theater the rewritten text of *Hamlet*, Pasternak wrote to his father in February 1940: “For me, this work was the perfect salvation from many things, especially my mother's death, the rest you do not know and it would take a long time to tell it – I would be gone crazy without it. I have achieved the goal that set to myself: I translated the thoughts, the situations, the pages and the scenes of the original, rather than individual words and lines. The translation is very simple, fluent, clear from the first hearing and natural. During false rhetorical gorgeousness there is a great need for direct independent word, and I unwittingly obeyed it.”<sup>31</sup>

Pasternak longed to see *Hamlet* on stage. “My only consolation is Art Theatre”<sup>32</sup> – he wrote in November 24, 1940, considering that now editing of the text was over. But the correcting continued also next winter, when Pasternak went from Peredelkino in the morning to meet with Vilenkin twice a week and spent half a day in the theater. The work was carried out on the performance in MAT slowly. The outbreak of war interrupted it, and it was resumed in 1943, after the death of Nemirovich-Danchenko. The work was continued by V.Sahnovsky, but unfortunately, the performance of the Moscow Art Theater was not staged. Boris Leonidovich later bitterly recalled the termination of rehearsals. It rumored that staging of the play was banned by Stalin. But that was not the case, ‘the father of nations’ simply expressed bewilderment about the need to play *Hamlet* at the Moscow Art Theatre. Of course, this was enough to stop rehearsals immediately.

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<sup>30</sup> Vilenkin V.Y. Vospominania s kommentariem. – M.,1982. – S.85

<sup>31</sup> Pasternak E.B. Boris Pasternak: Materiali dlya biografii. – M.: Sovetskii pisatel', 1989. – S.543

<sup>32</sup> Pasternak E.B. Boris Pasternak. Peredelkino

Mayakovsky Theater in Moscow was interested in the translation too, but it was outstripped by the Moscow Art Theatre, which refused the translation of Anna Radlova. Michael Astangov, the actor of that time from Mayakovsky Theater, would like to play Hamlet, and even in the Moscow Art Theater acknowledged that it would be the best Hamlet. The contract with the Moscow Art Theatre delayed the staging of the performance throughout Russia. Only the Novosibirsk Theater “Red Torch” managed to possess a new translation. Actor Seraphim Illovayskiy played Hamlet (his letters to Pasternak are remained), but in the beginning of the war the actor went to the front, and the performance was stopped.

## 2. Triumph of Kozintsev's *Hamlet* on stage and on screen

After the war, many theaters took an advantage of Pasternak's translations. In the Bryantsev Youth Theatre in Leningrad the tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* starring Soshalskiy and Mamayeva was a great success. Pasternak's translations are responsible for one of the great glories of Russian Shakespeare, the spectacle and two films by Grigori Kozintsev that use them as screenplays.

Film director Grigory Kozintsev staged *Hamlet* translated by Pasternak on the stage of the Russian State Pushkin Academy Drama Theater in 1954. Bruno Freundlich played Hamlet, Mamaeva was as Ophelia, the artist of the play was Nathan Altman, music was written by Dmitri Shostakovich. In a letter, dated October, 5, 1953 Kozintsev wrote to Pasternak that “started the production of *Hamlet* ... and it is the immense satisfaction, that we are all working with your translation.” In his reply, Pasternak writes that “... I always considered the easiness, smoothness, fluidity of the text obligatory for myself, I always sought not bookish, but scenic perspicuity.”<sup>33</sup>

Kozintsev in his version of the play eliminated the part of Fortinbras, but later, in his famous movie, he returned to Fortinbras. Kozintsev saw the final performance in the following way: the tragedy is ending, the scenery is pushed apart, Hamlet appears and reads the sonnet 74 as his last monologue. Kozintsev asked Pasternak to translate the sonnet 74 of Shakespeare specifically for this case. Reflecting on the final of the tragedy in a letter to Pasternak in February 26, 1954, Kozintsev wrote that he “would like to finish it with the thought, which is so often repeated in the sonnets: the power of the noble human aspiration, the power of poetry, not wishing to accept meanness and humiliation of the century will survive the emblems of the leaders and the thrones of the kings. I really

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<sup>33</sup> Peregiska Grigirya Kozintseva i Borisa Pasternaka, posvyashennaya teatralnoi postanovke Gamleta, opublikovana v 1975 godu. Pasternak B. I Kozintsev G. Pis'mo o Gamlete // Voprosy literatury. 1975. №1. S.214

would like to transmit the pride of poetry, the eternal theme of ‘uncreated monument’ (the quotation from the poem by A. Pushkin) to the audience.”<sup>34</sup>

That was the time of the triumphant glory and recognition of grateful reader recognition of translations of sonnets made by Samuil Marshak. But Kozintsev, who chose for the performance a little-known translation by Boris Pasternak at that time, subtly felt the diversity of translation style and figured out how Marshak’s text does not ‘fit’ a particular language organization of Pasternak’s translation. He confidentially shared his plan with Pasternak and asked the poet to translate sonnet 74 “in the way closest to the structure of Hamlet’s monologues.”<sup>35</sup>

Pasternak reacted to the plans of the director with the same respect and understanding, with which he was sure the director has the right to edit the text. “Cut, shorten and cut again as much as you want – he allowed to G. Kozintsev. – I consider half of the dramatic text of any play, even the most eternal, classic and genius as the common remark, written by the author to introduce the performers as deeply as possible into the substance of the played action.”<sup>36</sup> The writer immediately proceeded to the ordered translation of sonnet 74. He admitted that his translation could be weaker than Marshak’s one, which he treated with deep respect, but firmly insisted on reading the sonnet in his translation, because only it could become an organic part of Hamlet, translated by him.

Thus, the translation of sonnet 74, created by Pasternak as a stage completion of dramatic work of Shakespeare, in a kind of creative polemics with Marshak, was felt by the author as artistic expression of his own translational position. Pasternak’s sonnet became not a song, or a romance, but a deep, tragically serious and dramatically intense monologue. Pasternak is much closer to the truly tragic intention of Shakespeare’s sonnet. Despite the simplicity of syntax and vocabulary, one must admit that graphically clear

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<sup>34</sup> Perepiska Grigoria Kozinzeva i Borisa Pasternaka, posvyashennaya teatralnoi postanovke Gamleta, opublikovana v 1975 godu. Pasternak B. I Kozintsev G. Pis'mo o Gamlete // Voprosy literatury. 1975. №1. S.218

<sup>35</sup> The same. S.218

<sup>36</sup> The same. S.216

laconism of this translation is closer to the original, not only by the content, also in lyrical pathos.

Marshak translated Shakespeare in the style of undoubted, recognized and loved masters of Russian classical poetry. Pasternak translated Shakespeare into literary environment, much less familiar to the ordinary reader, sometimes less clear, and sometimes less favorite. This is a completely different style – a style of his own mature writing manner. The discovery of the new Russian Shakespeare, furiously restless, passionately dramatic, occurred in this translational transformation. The famous poet, translator and literary critic, G. Kruzhkov was firmly convinced that Pasternak's translations without a doubt much better than Marshak's ones. He said: “It is impossible to explain what Pasternak does in his translations, but his work penetrates the heart to the depths.”<sup>37</sup>

After the staging of *Hamlet*, April 20, 1954 Kozintsev wrote to Pasternak that “the opportunity to work with your translation was a great pleasure for me, not only because I like your translation, but also I love your poetry for a long time. It is easier to live and work with it- and I considered the opportunity to be with you in this work a great honor.”<sup>38</sup>

Unfortunately, Kozintsev had to use in the play the sonnet, translated by Marshak. Despite the fact that the theatrical embodiment of the sonnet, translated by Pasternak was not realized, “graphically distinct dramatism, which the author laid as the basis of his translated version of the poem, it was quite design concept. ... Metaphorically complicated and dramatically intense Shakespeare replaced the classically clear Shakespeare, who was in the translation of Marshak.”<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Kruzhkov G. «Kak by rezvyasya i igraia» (Zzametki o tvorchestve Pasternaka) // *Novii mir*. – 1992. – №4. – С.171

<sup>38</sup> Perepiska Grigoria Kozinzeva i Borisa Pasternaka, posvyashennaya teatralnoi postanovke Gamleta, opublikovana v 1975 godu. Pasternak B. I Kozinzev G. Pis'mo o Gamlete // *Voprosy literatury*. 1975. №1. S.222

<sup>39</sup> Pervushina, E. A. (2010) *Shekspirovskie chteniia 2010* // *Shekspirovskie chteniia*. Nauch. sovet RAN «Istoriia mirovoi kul'tury» / otv. red. A. V. Bartoshevich. M. : Izd-vo Mosk. gumanit. un-ta. S. 111

Theatrical premiere of *Hamlet* was held on April 11, 1954. The play was a great success. From now on Pasternak's translation of *Hamlet* became to reign triumphantly on the national stage and in the screen.

After the April premiere at the Russian State Pushkin Academy Drama Theater ten years will pass before Kozintsev brilliantly carries out another idea – to shot his famous film *Hamlet* with a young legendary Soviet actor Innokenty Smoktunovsky in the title role. “Kozintsev’s intent was to show how the world could be seen through the lens of the play.”<sup>40</sup>

The film was released in 1964 to worldwide critical acclaim. Besides numerous international awards and nominations, it became the best film of the year in Russia, and Innokenty Smoktunovsky the best actor. According to The Russian Guild of Film Critics, the film ranks the fiftieth place of 100 Best Films.

Dmitrii Shostakovich’s score for the film *Hamlet* was his eighth and penultimate collaboration with Kozintsev. Shostakovich’s music reflects Hamlet’s desire to act, but also allows the character to have periods of doubt. The soundtrack to *Hamlet* was created to accommodate Kozintsev’s view that Hamlet is surrounded by people in the castle, yet still desolated. Although there are always people surrounding Hamlet, they are rarely heard. Consequently, there are few sound effects in the film, and much of the dialogue and digetic music seems to have been recorded live, also contributing to the ‘seen but not heard’ choice of Kozintsev. This is accomplished by placing the recording microphone in a single location and recording sound, rather than recording every excerpt of dialogue individually, and later mixing the soundtrack. The few sound effects in the film are foregrounded and obvious. In several places, the dialogue contains long pauses and rarely flows from scene to scene. The soundtrack as a whole tends to be texturally sparse and

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<sup>40</sup> Kirkman A. Contemplating Shostakovich: Life, Music and Film. P.97

empty, a style choice of Kozintsev made in order to demonstrate Hamlet's isolation within the castle.

Kozintsev chose again the translation of Pasternak. He began to work on the literary scenario in 1957. And, of course, unique poetic power of this text helped him to recreate in the film realistically clear and tragically deep perspective of the screen space. Strict simplicity of stylistic and intonational pattern of the text fit a concise precision of black and white movie frame of Kozintsev, which was similar to the graphical beauty of the book page. It is amazing that all this realistic clarity and simplicity were expression of truly Shakespearian endless tragic element. It must be admitted that the text of Pasternak was the original artistic impulse and defining basis. Thus, in the film, which became a classic of world cinema, in an amazing, perfect way the intonation of Pasternak's translation coincided with directorial style of Kozintsev.

The director was looking for an actor for the lead role for a long time, until he met with I. Smoktunovsky. The decision came at once: this is the actor, believed Kozintsev, able to play the character, whose main weapon is the thought. In Smoktunovsky was felt a serious spiritual and intellectual experience gained throughout his difficult biography: the sufferings experienced during the war in captivity, and throughout hard times of post-war years. Traditional in appearance, he nevertheless had an individual manner of acting, characterised by reserve as well as nervous intensity, which distinguished the film from other versions.

Many of the exteriors were filmed at the fortress of Ivangorod, in the village of Keila-Joa, twenty eight km from Tallinn on the border of Russia and Estonia. The layout of Elsinore castle was built on a cliff Türisalu at the sea. It took six months to construct the castle. Now this place called *The Rock of Hamlet* or *Cape of Hamlet*. Much of the film takes place out of doors. Apart from the backdrop of the castle, the imagery of the film is dominated by elements of nature. Kozintsev saw this as a vital way in which he could give

visual form to the text: “Strangely enough they have always sought to film Hamlet in studios, but it seems to me that the key to reincarnating Shakespeare's words in visual imagery can only be found in nature.”<sup>41</sup>

Seven years later Kozintsev's *King Lear* (1971) became another cinematographic experience. Both his films are among the finest adaptations captured on celluloid, in any language.

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<sup>41</sup> Kozintsev, Grigori (1967). *Shakespeare: Time and Conscience*. Translated by Joyce Vining. London: Dennis Dobson. P. 257

### 3. Other remarkable Soviet and Post-Soviet performances

In 1971, another famous director Yuri Lyubimov stages *Hamlet* in the translation of Pasternak in the legendary Taganka Theatre, which became one of the world theater centers in the mid-seventies. The poet-singer-actor Vladimir Vysotsky played the main role, the role of Gertrude was performed by Alla Demidova. “I would say that we are witnessing the birth of a great tragic actress,”<sup>42</sup> said Sergey Yutkevich about the work of Alla Demidova after the premiere of *Hamlet*.

A production ran in repertory until 1980 (two hundred and seventeen performances in all), when the early death of Vladimir Vysotsky, who gave the production its special character, brought it to a premature end. In purely theatrical terms, Lyubimov’s *Hamlet* was noteworthy for the cinematic montage of the mise-en-scene and the presence of a dominant stenographic image – a ubiquitous, constantly moving curtain (designed by David Borovsky); but far more important was its cultural role and the spiritual power of its leading performer. When he took on Hamlet, Vysotsky was already well known as a troubadour of spiritual freedom – he was “the living soul and conscience of his time”. Pasternak’s great translation of *Hamlet* defined the character in Russian terms – serious, dedicated, self-sacrificing; he is a witness, even a Christ-like sufferer who “gives up his will in order to “do the will of him that sent him”. *Hamlet* is not a drama of weakness, but of duty and self-denial.” He has been allotted the role of “judge of his own time and servant of the future.”<sup>43</sup> His reality, as the poem suggest, is interwoven with that of the actor, in struggle with himself, putting himself on the line in order to explode the misrepresentations which produced moral failure in Soviet life. The visual and symbolic dominance of the Taganka’s mobile curtain was designed to carry the production’s

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<sup>42</sup> <http://www.demidova.ru/theatre/medea>

<sup>43</sup> Perepiska Grigoria Kozinzeva i Borisa Pasternaka, posvyashennaya teatralnoi postanovke Gamleta, opublikovana v 1975 godu. Pasternak B. I Kozinzev G. Pis'mo o Gamlete // Voprosy literatury. 1975. №1. S.222

distinctively Soviet meaning. Coarsely woven of wool, though appearing like macramé with ‘threads hanging in evil bundles’, the curtain controlled the action, falling from the ceiling after the opening song, moving around and between the actors, like a giant monster, setting the pace, and holding within its folds the symbols and tools of power – black armbands, swords, goblet, thrones edged with knives. It envelops Ophelia, intimidates Polonius, protects Gertrude, supports Claudius and threatens Hamlet. Finally it sweeps the stage clean and moves toward the audience as though to destroy it too.

The theatrical emphasis did not, however, transform the meaning of the play into an endless succession of mirrored images. Rather, it spoke of the theater’s power to construct for its public truth matters. Vysotsky’s style of playing fit in with this conception. His strategy was to maintain the distance between actor and role, not blending with the character but expressing his own personal relationship to it. Thus he remained the singer, the troubadour performing the part and communicating his relationship to Hamlet as a way of disclosing his own isolation, of establishing his own poetic voice, and most important of seeking a way to live. He began the run as rather ‘nihilistic’, but as his conception matured, his Hamlet became more attuned, more a searcher for possible answers to the ‘necessary question’ that he speaks of in his own poem called *My Hamlet*. The production, like the actor, came to speak for an affirmation of life in the face of curtain and grave. The play *Hamlet*, directed by Y. Lyubimov, became “one of the highest points of the Taganka Theater, one of the highest points of Lyubimov's direction and Lyubimov’s spirit.”<sup>44</sup> It was awarded with the Grand Prix at the international theater festival “Bitef” in Yugoslavia (1976).

Speaking about the fate of Shakespeare's plays on the Russian stage in the translation by Boris Pasternak I would like to quote prophetic words of M.M. Morozov, said in 1944 and relevant now, in the 21st century: “The meaning of Pasternak's

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<sup>44</sup> <http://www.teatral-online.ru/news/15134/> Bartoshevich, Alexey. Shekspir I sovremenniy teatr.

translations is determined not only by his talent – he correctly understood the very problem of theatrical translation. He did not start from the text, but from the characters and each of them began to speak with his voice. A. Popov once called Shakespeare ‘academy of dramatic art’. The actors, the whole theater groups study on the plays of Shakespeare. Meanwhile, many of our Shakespearean productions – in particular, this applies to the periphery – lack a living, particular perception, created by Shakespeare’s characters. In the first place supporting actors suffer from this lack – the roles on which our young people learn acting. To a large extent there is a fault of existing translations ... We seek to illuminate all the dark corners of Shakespeare's text, to overcome the cliches, to create not only the characteristics of the individual actors, but also find a living relationship between them. From this perspective Pasternak's translations will have a great help to the theater: they create one of the necessary conditions for the creative achievements of the theater in its work on ever new works of Shakespeare”.<sup>45</sup>

Andrei Tarkovsky, one of the most internationally recognized Russian filmmakers, also staged *Hamlet* in 1977. October 14, 1973 he met with Mark Zakharov, the Artistic Director of Moscow's Lenkom Theatre, who suggested Tarkovsky to stage something. From the very first meeting Tarkovsky did not like Zakharov’s attitude. “He does not have a program, has no idea of the theater, no prospects.”<sup>46</sup> Initially Tarkovsky tended to direct Shakespeare’s tragedy *Julius Caesar*, but Zakharov wanted *Hamlet*. May 27, 1976 Tarkovsky writes: “I stage *Hamlet* under necessity differently from the way the English have done – rejecting Shakespeare-poet. Any translation – moreover brilliant poetry – is impossible. In our production there is no Shakespeare-poet, it is regrettable.”

Lack of understanding between Tarkovsky and Zakharov’s theatre continues to increase, and Tarkovsky notices, that “there is some strange unspeakable hostility in the

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<sup>45</sup> Morozov M.M. Shekspir v perevode Borisa Pasternaka / Shekspir, Berns, Show: Sb.statei / Sost. I red. Y. Shvedov. – M.,1967. – S.235

<sup>46</sup> Tarkovsky A.A. Martirilog. Dnevnik. 1970-1986. M., Mezhdunarodni institute Andrey Tarkovskogo, 2008. 624 s.

theater, and it becomes unclear why Mark Zakharov has invited me to stage *Hamlet*? To fail?” After all the production was over and the date of premiere was settled on January, 21, 1977, but then due to some reasons it was pushed back to spring. There was a buzz around the spectacle, people wanted to see the product of two talented men. It was impossible to get a ticket. In spite of it the performance was not a success. It was taken off the repertoire next season. Zakharov wanted to introduce three new actors instead of Inna Churikova (Ophelia), Margarita Terekhova (Gertrude), Anatoly Solonitsyn (Hamlet), but Tarkovsky preferred to cancel the play.

As a background artist Vitaly Litvin recalls, the combination of the words “Lenkom”, “Hamlet”, “Tarkovsky” looked quite mysterious, and everybody wanted to see the first rehearsals, but the interest waned quickly. During the last performances it was rather hard to recruit six or eight background actors needed for the stage setting. Thinking about the staging, he recalls “... when from the five-act play make two-act, it is related indirectly to the original. As I understand the show was about the problem of choice ... the choice between “universal – or more exact, accepted in a given society – principles and personal – personal happiness, personal principles.”<sup>47</sup> About the performance he notices, Solonitsyn played almost without make-up, and when he bow-backed, baldish, a man of forty, turned to very beautiful Rita Terekhova, besides eight years younger, “Mom” ... it was the subject of jokes at rehearsals, which went on with difficulty. One of the reasons for failure of the performance, as he sees it, was extreme unfamiliarity of images – such an obnoxious Hamlet, ugly Ophelia, charming Claudius, Gertrude so loving, such a noble Laertes. Tarkovsky made so many efforts in this play but this theatrical experience brought him only bitter disappointments.

A few years later during the interview Tarkovsky probably found the answer about the failure of his staging of *Hamlet*. In 1984, during the speech in Riverside Studio

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<sup>47</sup> V.Litvin. Andrey Tarkovskiy. Gamlet — nemnogoe, chto pomnu.

in London one of today's compatriots of Shakespeare asked a puzzling question: "Why is the interest of Russians in *Hamlet* is so exaggerated? What's the matter?" And Tarkovsky replied: "In this case, I can only wonder of the absence of interest in *Hamlet*, the better dramaturgical and poetic works of world drama, from the English themselves! There is nothing more natural than this interest to me. For me personally, this play raises the most important question, reflects the most important problems, existed as in Shakespeare's time, and before and after him, always. Maybe that is why, because of the globality of intention, it is so hard to give a comprehensive interpretation on the scene. Many of its directors failed tremendously in a single combat with the dramaturgy of *Hamlet*. This play has a great mystery for me. Is it possible to unriddle it? I do not know ..."<sup>48</sup> Tarkovsky died with the dream of unrealized film *Hamlet*, he wanted to try again to get closer to the eternal mystery of the play.

The next version of play *Hamlet* at Lenkom Theatre, successful unlike the previous one, audience saw in 1986. The idea of staging *Hamlet* did not occur to Gleb Panfilov, internationally acclaimed Russian film director, suddenly. Like any theater director, he worked long and hard nurturing his dream to present the drama of Shakespeare in a completely new way. And the experience showed that the production of Gleb Panfilov's *Hamlet* was a clear reflection of the future changes in society. The stars of the theatrical scene were involved in the first cast. The role of Hamlet performed magnificent Oleg Yankovsky. The role of the mother of Hamlet, Gertrude, played inimitable Inna Churikova. In the image of Ophelia sophisticated viewers saw elegant Alexandra Zakharova. And the role of an ardent and passionate Laertes performed the magnificent Alexander Abdulov.

Despite the familiar story, many viewers were genuinely surprised by the highly original interpretation of Shakespeare's story. According to theater critics, Gleb Panfilov

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<sup>48</sup> O. Surkova. Gamlet Andrey Tarkovskogo. Besedy na Lomonosovskom.

succeeded not only to enhance the drama of the classic play, but to show the character of Hamlet in a completely different light in the spirit of changes. Now Hamlet is not a reflecting character, moving by inertia from one dramatic event to another. Having survived a suicide attempt, Hamlet becomes a completely different person. He transformed both externally and internally. Now not profound reflection on the meaning of life characterizes him, but clear actions in all his future steps. In order to achieve his goal Prince Hamlet does not scorn any means. He feels that the threat may come from any person. A certain fanaticism of actions and obsession of the protagonist really shocked audience of Lenkom. For the first time in the history of theatrical drama on stage it was presented Hamlet capable of acting without hesitation or remorse. The character is fully reconstructed. He took the rules of the game and started to act in accordance with the situation. It was a clear personification of time, wind of changes in society that Panfilov wanted to show in his version. Time when to talk is meaningless and one must act decisively.

As for the production of *Hamlet* by Primorsky Academic Drama Theater named after M. Gorky (director E. Zvenyatsky) in 1991, according to E. Pervushina, “it suddenly opened in the riot of colors of eccentric theatrical spectacle. The performance amazed with the richness of phantasmagorically expressive solutions, unexpected for classical tragedy the riot of carnival fantasies, avant-garde images. The stage space was filled completely unexpected objects of theatrical prop. It seemed to come alive in the changing rhythm of the play, which was defined not only by declamatory manner of performers and musical-choreographic accompaniment, but also a special sound plasticity of Pasternak's poetry. It quite organically wove into the colorfully eccentric power of emphatic

improbability, moreover they undoubtedly were a magnificent creative driving force and the center in it.”<sup>49</sup>

The abovementioned interpretations of *Hamlet* show how differently it ‘looks’ in various productions of tragedy. This again emphasizes the surprising polysemy of the Russian text of Pasternak's translation of *Hamlet*.

As for the history of theatrical production of Shakespeare's tragedies, including *Hamlet* in the former Soviet Union, is “the history of attempts to turn tragedy into an ironic tragicomedy.”<sup>50</sup> It is obvious, that the most part of the performances of *Hamlet* is carried out in this key in 1990-2000. One of the common features of these performances has become using of several translations of the play. After the final collapse of the Soviet Union on 25 December 1991, a period of economic contraction set in. During next twenty years Russians struggled to assess their past, forge a new national identity, and rebuild the country. Theatre, formerly controlled but also financed by the government, now had freedom and at the same time had to answer to the market, both in terms of consumer demand and fiscal responsibility. In spite of changes of economic and political conditions *Hamlet* – of all of Shakespeare’s plays – continued to appeal most to Russian directors wishing to speak to their times. Between 1994 and 1998 there were nine productions of the play in Moscow alone.

The most sensational was staged by the German director Peter Stein and featured a saxophone-playing Hamlet. Peter Stein staged *Hamlet* with Russian actors on October, 10<sup>th</sup>, 1998. He used five translations of Shakespeare’s tragedy. The locality in which the action proceeds is the boxing ring. Hamlet is in the single combat with the world around and with himself.

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<sup>49</sup> Pervushina, E. A. (2010) Shekspirovskie chteniia 2010 // Shekspirovskie chteniia. Nauch. sovet RAN «Istorii mirovoi kul'tury» / otv. red. A. V. Bartoshevich. M. : Izd-vo Mosk. gumanit. un-ta. S. 378–385.

<sup>50</sup> Bartoshevich, A. V. Teatralnie hroniki. 2010. S. 210

The performance caused a wide response among the public and theatre critics, who liked the idea and the director's vision. "It captivates by its uniqueness and you watch it in one breath. Three hours as five minutes, and you want, you want, you want to watch it again and again."<sup>51</sup> Some considered it very Russian with everlasting questions, while others – very German. One thing is undoubted, the skillful dramatic identification of Yevgeny Mironov in the lead role has provided him with the status of the leading theatre actor of his generation.

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<sup>51</sup> Dolzhanskij, Roman. Legko usvaivaemy Shekspir. Kommersant. 1998

#### 4. *Hamlet* in Russia of the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Speaking about the different vision of productions of *Hamlet* in Russia it is interesting to take into account the point of view of the professor of The Russian University of Theatre Arts Alexey Bartoshevich, who at the end of January, 2017 delivered a lecture *Shakespeare and Modern Theater* in the Voronezh Chamber Theater. In his lecture speaking about the topicality of Shakespeare's plays, noticed, that “Shakespeare is not the author of whom we remembered only due to anniversaries. He is a living author, is part of the Russian theatrical tradition, just as Chekhov is a part of the English theatrical tradition. Chekhov has become a British author and Shakespeare – Russian. Shakespeare's plays have become a part of us, and we turn to Shakespeare and to the classics, not only to understand how people of the sixteenth century thought and lived, but mainly in order to understand ourselves – who we are, by what we live, and how we should live.”<sup>52</sup>

As for modern interpretations of *Hamlet*, it is worth mentioning *Hamlet- lesson* – one of the latest works by Alla Demidova together with Greek director Theodoros Terzopoulos, who staged the tragedy translated by Pasternak in Athens. In Moscow, this performance was played two nights in a row, 25 and 26 June, 2001, during the International Theatre Olympics. *Hamlet-lesson* is included in the repertoire of Athenian theater Attis, where it is performed from time to time.

This event once again confirms the fact that Pasternak’s translation is appreciated abroad and performed on the stage already outside Russia. According to Eleanor Rowe, translations of six of Shakespeare’s tragedies by Boris Pasternak have been praised as better in some respects than their originals.<sup>53</sup> Perhaps only in Russia – Soviet or otherwise – could translations of Shakespeare be deemed superior to Shakespeare’s own texts. In

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<sup>52</sup> <http://www.teatral-online.ru/news/15134/> Bartoshevich, Alexey. Shekspir I sovremenniy teatr.

<sup>53</sup> *Hamlet: A Window on Russia* (New York: New York University Press, 1976) p.152

this instance, however, such Russian maximalism nevertheless also speaks to the abiding importance of the English playwright in Russian culture.

The director Yuri Butusov revived *Hamlet* at Moscow Art Theatre after Chekhov for the first time after a long hiatus in 2005. The performance caused mixed reviews. Butusov used the first variant of Pasternak's translation, made in the 1930s by the request of Meyerhold. Butusov singled out the line of Horatio. He rejected historicity and instead used clowning and buffoonery to both offset and augment the play's tragedy. The spectators were astonished by stage entertainment of the play.

Set designer Aleksand Shishkin located the action of the play in the Nordic landscape with the ice sea and the frozen Elsinore. Meyerhold at his time represented Hamlet among the sea and the sandy beach. The Sea of Butusov is made of metal trash, wire and empty cans. During his memorable soliloquy Hamlet carried a large, metallic riser onstage, which he tilted towards the audience, revealing a cross made out of white stag tape. According to the director the Ghost in silver armor had to go out to the viewer from the depths of the sea, fighting the quicksand. Standing with his back to the audience, Hamlet in a black cloak had to hide by it his chilled father and shows to the viewer his glittering armor. Then Black Prince and Silver King swap with each other.

Butusov in his version gets rid of the formulation and discussion of the famous mysteries and puzzles, there is a simple explanation of everything, without resorting to cynical irony to the classic. His performance has intermissive structure, includes a lot of themes, which the director leaves midway without developing.<sup>54</sup> Ironic Hamlet in his version chuckles over the death and after world. He chatted with his old father near the boat in front of the fire whilst Shakespeare's Prince freezes to death with fear of the infernal Ghost. It is an amiable conversation between the father and the son, rather than a dialogue with death in an atmosphere of sacred horror.

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<sup>54</sup> Zakharov N. V. Productions of Hamlet on the PostSoviet Stage in Russia. Pproblemi filologii, kul'turologii i iskusstvoznania. 2011. №4. S. 113

Butusov's *Hamlet* goes without attempts to get to know the secrets of existence and death. Nevertheless Butusov managed to come up with a lot of interesting details and fun situations, the majority of viewers and critics were satisfied with the action and entertainment and the performance of familiar actors. The performance was seven years in the theatre repertoire.

Opera paraphrase of Shakespeare's tragedy *Hamlet (Danish) (Russian) Comedy* was staged in the postmodernist key. The libretto is based on A. Zastyrez's satirical play *Hamlet. Eccentric Comedy in Five Acts*. The music was composed by V. Kobekin. The performance was staged by A. Titel on the scene of The Stanislavski and Nemirovich-Danchenko Moscow Academic Music Theatre in 2008. In the opera there are no hot political allusions unlike most of modern interpretations of Shakespeare, "absurd, the mixture of poetic speech, heroic iambus and abstinent invectives reign on the stage."<sup>55</sup>

Director Valery Fokin's 2010 *Hamlet* at the Alexandrinsky Theatre in St Petersburg revived the play as a vehicle for political commentary. In the grotesque stage design of Alexander Borovsky Denmark's population are football fans. The action takes place in a complex structure of a soccer stadium, patrolled by guard dogs and soldiers in camouflage who threw dead bodies either shot dissidents or crushed soccer fans into a giant pit. Hamlet was a drunken, dissolute youth; Horatio a hitchhiking student; Laertes a star soccer player. Gertrude becomes the coldblooded mastermind and organizer of Hamlet's father's murder. The image of the monumental Gertrude is a key one in this play. She despises men, keeps Claudius in a state of terrified obedience and hides from a dangerous son.

An extremely nervous Hamlet, played by Dmitry Lysenkov, too strung-up, hysterical, whiny, rushes across the stage and the auditorium, then, conversely, apathetic and depressed. He commits not just the murder of Polonius in a frenzied fit of temper, but

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<sup>55</sup> Zakharov N. V. Productions of Hamlet on the Post-Soviet Stage in Russia. *Problemi filologii, kul'turologii i iskusstvoznania*. 2011. №4. S. 114

literally guts the body of an old man with a kitchen knife and furiously drags his corpse (doll) on the stage. Fokin tried to identify the features of the modern Hamlets with their frantic desire for truth, the rejection of fathers falsehood, unwillingness to continue their journey. It seems that he sympathizes with them, taking on him parental responsibility for the fact that these boys have become so evil. The performance gave a ruthless analysis of the current state of Russian society, gave an uneasy portrait of today's youth. According to J. Givens, "Fokin's *Hamlet* confronted the deceit and hypocrisy of the powers-that-be in a way that evoked other Russian and Soviet performances of the past 200 years that also dared to speak the truth to power".<sup>56</sup>

Dramatic adaptation of Levanov, used the translations of N. Polevoy, M. Morozov, B. Pasternak and M. Lozinski gives the text a radical non-academic sense. He distanced from the original text, so that the post-modern tragicomedy by Fokin somewhere gets a shade of grotesque absurdity. At the end of the play neatly combed, clean, but completely indifferent teenager Fortinbras enters the scene, who will replace furious, madding Hamlet. The new ruler does not sympathize with the victims, does not mourn the man, from whom he inherited the power, and commands dryly to get rid of the corpses. His obedient servants immediately meet the order of the new owner, and the dead bodies are sent to the pit. Modernization of the Danish Kingdom begins.

Valery Fokin's *Hamlet* largely broke the traditional idea of how to stage Shakespeare's plays. It caused a fierce debate about the inconformity of the performance to Shakespeare's text, and allusions to the common themes of contemporary Russian politics. According to Bartoshevich, "*Hamlet* again performed its usual – at least for Russia – mission: to be a mirror of the historical moment, the instrument of self-

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<sup>56</sup> Shakespearean Tragedy in Russia: In Equal Scale Weighing Delight and Dole. John Givens. pp. 761-776 The Oxford Handbook of Shakespearean Tragedy Oxford University Press, 2016. P. 775

knowledge of the national fate”.<sup>57</sup> Post-Soviet *Hamlet* inherits the traditions, existing in Russia from the first A. Sumarokov’s remake in 1748.

Above mentioned tendencies of the modern performances of *Hamlet* touched upon the spectacles of well-known theatres, with a good finance support of the state, sponsors and mass media. Meanwhile the experiments of no less interest and sometimes even more brave happen on the underground scene of amateur and semiprofessional theatres. Among them the performance, directed by Vitaly Poplavsky, who is not only a member of Shakespearean committee of Russian Academy of Sciences, but also the translator of *Hamlet* (2001). The premiere was held during cultural program of International scientific conference *Shakespearean Readings 2010* (September, 26-30, 2010), organized by Shakespearean committee of the Russian Academy of Sciences, National Institute of Art Studies with financial assistance of Russian Humanitarian Science Foundation. V. Poplavsky involved the actors of the theater-studio *Horizon*, affiliated with Moscow Municipal Teacher’s Club.

It seemed, the performance, based on the version of Stepan Viskovatov (1786-1831), the remake of the French adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* was foredoomed to failure initially for the following reasons: the burden of conventionality of classical dramaturgy, a laborious style of the outdated language and happy end (Hamlet and Ophelia survive). However actors created amazing atmosphere of topicality of Shakespearean play. They performed Viskovatov’s version of *Hamlet* in the spirit of psychological theatre of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for the first time in two hundred years. They “amazed everybody with the incredible ability to recite an ancient text, clearly intended for pompous declamation, so naturally, simply and heartfelt, that the audience

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<sup>57</sup> Bartoshevich, A. V. *Teatralnie hroniki*. 2010. S. 216

completely lost the feeling of archaic nature of Viskovatov's work. On the contrary, lively beauty of these old words was opened."<sup>58</sup>

On the whole, I can conclude that the post-Soviet productions of *Hamlet* have not excelled the performances of previous years. As A. Bartoshevich stated "Our time, at least in Russia, is not for this play".<sup>59</sup> However, *Hamlet* still causes the interest of Russian public, the directors continue to stage it, and each self-respecting actor dreams to play the Danish prince on stage or in a movie. Time, public taste, economic reforms and political situation have no power over this eternal play.

Similar experiments with archaic, the first attempts of the perception of Shakespeare on the Russian scene are rather rare. Several years ago, the students of a Russian lyceum staged A. Sumarokov's adaptation of *Hamlet* (1748). It should be noted, that such low-budget drama experiments are of a very important and significant potential. They make it possible to reproduce a historical period when Shakespeare for the Russian theater and the reading public did not become the cultural idol, who he certainly is nowadays, when he was a novelty and did not always correspond to the original. These performances allow the audience to experience the evolutionary process, that tragedy *Hamlet* took place in the Russian cultural and aesthetic perception.

As for the recent production of *Hamlet*, it should be mentioned Valeriy Sarkisov's at The Yermolova Theatre in 2013. The idea of staging of the play *Hamlet* came to him after meeting with the young actor Alexander Petrov. The theater's artistic director Oleg Menshikov saw Hamlet in him. He corresponded with their image of Hamlet. The performance arose around him. A story about a young man, knocked out with circumstances appeared. He is an individual, who exists in an environment where betrayal, life and death interwoven. Hamlet is trying to answer a simple question with every step,

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<sup>58</sup> 20. Pervushina, E. A. (2010) Shekspirovskie chteniia 2010 // Shekspirovskie chteniia. Nauch. sovet RAN «Istoriia mirovoi kul'tury» / otv. red. A. V. Bartoshevich. M. : Izd-vo Mosk. gumanit. un-ta. S. 381

<sup>59</sup> Bartoshevich, A. V. (2010) Gamlety nashikh dnei // Shekspirovskie chteniia. Nauch. Sovet RAN «Istoriia mirovoi kul'tury» / otv. red. A. V. Bartoshevich. M. : Izd-vo Mosk. gumanit. un-ta. S. 211

every action: “Why, why have I come into this world?” Before our eyes, the personality grows and develops, the boy becomes a man, a warrior, a man capable of doing. The premiere took place on December 20, 2013.

According to Vera Kopilova, “this is a real success, undeniable and obvious. The performance deserves an attentive audience, applause and thunder of applause and theater awards. Although the role of Hamlet - a very young and yet unknown actor Alexander Petrov, a performance should be spoken, as an important event.”<sup>60</sup> The director Valery Sarkisov demonstrated an amazing sense of taste, harmony, proportionality and the ability to make a good performance. In Sarkisov’s *Hamlet* everything is real and without modernizing, which is very unusual for current productions. Alexander Petrov became an ideal Hamlet, a man of action, with ability to evaluate his own behavior and others'. The director used the translation of *Hamlet*, made by Andrey Chernov in 2003.

On the new stage of the Bolshoi Theatre March 11, 2015 the ballet *Hamlet* to the music of Shostakovich was premiered. The creators of the performance choreographer Radu Poklitaru – choreographed opening and closing ceremonies of the Olympics in Sochi; and director Declan Donnellan – the winner of the prizes *Golden Mask* and *Crystal Turandot*. His constant collaborator a British theatre designer Nick Ormerod also took part in it. More than ten years ago, at the Bolshoi Theater, they staged their version of the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, this time a creative union directed again Shakespeare’s play. Half a dozen of theaters released *Hamlet* for the anniversary of Shakespeare last year. And now came the turn of the Bolshoi Theatre. Artists of the Bolshoi under the impression: the half of rehearsal time they spent with a director – one of the greatest specialists in Shakespeare, an Englishman Declan Donnellan.

For the world ballet theatre *Hamlet* is not a new theme, it was developed in the genre already since 1788. A Polish dancer and choreographer Bronislava Nijinska

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<sup>60</sup> <http://ria.ru/> Gamlet v Teatre Ermolovoi: tochka sily

addressed to it for the Paris Opera in 1934, a French ballet dancer Serge Lifar in 1957, also Maurice Béjart, John Neumeier. A Soviet ballet dancer and choreographer Rudolf Nureyev also performed the role of Prince of Denmark. Maris Liepa took part in the ballet-film to the music of D. Shostakovich. But the absolute champion for the number of Hamlets is Mikhail Baryshnikov: played the title role in the ballet of Konstantin Sergeyev, Maurice Béjart, John Neumeier.

There was also a variation to the Shakespeare's play at the Bolshoi theatre a ballet called *Russian Hamlet* by Boris Eifman. It was about tsarevich Pavel – the future Emperor Pavel I, whose contemporaries found a lot with the fate of Shakespeare's character.

It took three years to create the libretto of the ballet *Hamlet*. As a result, ballet story turned out much wider than Shakespeare's. It begins with the childhood of Hamlet. All the motives and reasons for the further development of events and experiences are hidden in it – they are more important for this performance. “Everyone is asking me, whether I felt the lack of words. The answer is – I'm so happy to finally work without them! All the great writers – Pushkin, Chekhov, Shakespeare – know that words do not actually work. We do not retell this tragedy here, through it with the help of dance we pass the emotion which just is not limited”, said Declan Donnellan.

Searches for the score took a long time. It is now Declan Donnellan says the connection between Hamlet and Shostakovich has always existed for him. Both of them lived in the "suppressed and concealed" era. Initially, the idea was even to order the music. They chose Shostakovich's Fifth and Fifteenth Symphonies, according to the choreographer Radu Poklitaru, the absolutely genius music is exactly in line with the libretto. The main focus of the story – the theme of loss. The ballet dancers had to not just dance eight deaths during two hours, but to survive. In *Hamlet*, according to Donnellan, Shakespeare raises global problem: the study of losses, which a man experiences during

his lifetime. The new ballet is really about losses: the hero loses the promised paradise – his own childhood, father, mother, loved ones, and in the end life.

Paul Yashenkov notices the magnificent performance of Denis Savin (Hamlet) and absolutely all the actors engaged in the play – Anastasia Stashkevich (Ophelia), Anna Balukova (Gertrude), Yuri Klevtsov (Claudius), and Alexander Petukhov, Igor Tsvirko, Denis Medvedev, Viktor Barykin, Evgeny Sazonov, Yuri Ostrovsky. As always, superbly Poklitaru excellently directed crowd scenes, reflecting the emotional state of the court: servility, subservience, animal fear of the rulers.<sup>61</sup>

The experienced Russian audience saw *Hamlet*, dancing on the stage, for the first time. The ballet received generally positive reviews. This proves once again that directors continue to rethink Hamlet, to recreate his story, the audience still looks at him, sympathizes him. And in cinema, and in ballet and modern dance Hamlet remains Hamlet.

Speaking about *Hamlet* in Russia of the 21<sup>st</sup> century one epoch-making event should be noticed. In May, 2014 when a troupe of British actors stepped off a plane in Moscow, a piece of history was made. It was the first time Shakespeare's Globe in London brought a show to Russia — a pitstop on the theatre's adventurous Globe to Globe tour, in which the company attempted to take *Hamlet* to every single country in the world between 2014 and 2016, marking 400 years since Shakespeare's death. It also inaugurated the start of the first UK–Russia year of culture (2016).

At the end of the first chapter of my research I will make an attempt to recreate the most complete chronological chain of functioning of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in Russian culture. Tragedy, found the reflection in all kinds of Russian art, and thanks to which the new masterpieces were born. The period of this functioning is a huge time span from 1837 to the present time.

**1837 – Maly Theatre (Moscow)**

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<sup>61</sup> Pavel Yashenkov. *Gamlet uhodit v tonnel*. Moskovski komsomolez. 13 marta, 2015

- The Alexandrinsky Theatre (Russian State Pushkin Academy Drama Theater)
- 1884** – Mikhail Vrubel' painting *Hamlet and Ophelia*
- 1911** – The Moscow Art Theatre (directed by Konstantin Stanislavski)
- 1924** – Moscow Art Theatre
- 1932** – The Vakhtangov Theatre (directed by Nikolai Akimov)
- 1938** – Komissarzhevskaya Theatre (Saint Petersburg) (directed by Sergei Radlov)
- 1954** – Russian State Pushkin Academy Drama Theater (directed by Grigori Kozintsev)
  - Mayakovsky Theater (directed by Nikolay Okhlopkov)
- 1964** – Grigori Kozintsev's film
- 1969** – Ballet film (directed by Sergei Evlahishvili, Victor Kamkov)
- 1971** – Taganka Theatre (directed by Yuri Lyubimov)
- 1976** – Moscow's Lenkom Theatre (directed by Andrei Tarkovsky)
- 1986** – Moscow's Lenkom Theatre (directed by Gleb Panfilov)
- 1989** – Gleb Panfilov's telefilm
- 1991** – Primorsky Academic Drama Theater named after M. Gorky (directed by Efim Zvenyatsky)
- 1998** – The Central Academic Theatre of the Russian Army (directed by Peter Stein)
- 2001** – *Hamlet-lesson*, directed by Theodoros Terzopoulos
- 2005** – Moscow Art Theatre after Chekhov (directed by Yuri Butusov)
- 2008** – Opera paraphrase *Hamlet (Danish) (Russian) Comedy* at The Stanislavski and Nemirovich-Danchenko Moscow Academic Music Theatre (directed by Alexander Titel)
- 2010** – Alexandrinsky Theatre (Saint Petersburg) (directed by Valery Fokin)
- 2013** – The Yermolova Theatre (Moscow) (directed by Valeriy Sarkisov)
- 2015** – Ballet, directed by Declan Donnellan (The Bolshoi Theatre)

## **Part II Popularity of some foreign screen adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* among the Russian audience.**

The first translations of *Romeo and Juliet* appeared almost a century later than *Hamlet*'s ones. The translation of the tragedy made by I. Raskovshenko in 1839 is considered to be the first. In many cities of Russia tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* was already staged in the nineteenth century. In the Maly Theatre in Moscow the play was in translation of A. Sokolowski. The main roles were played by Alexander Ostuzhev, Alexander Lensky, Mary Yermolov, Glikeriya Fedotov, Pavel Mochalov (also a famous performer of *Hamlet*) they were all the leading actors of the theater.

One of the most remarkable performances was at the stage of Komissarzhevskaya Theatre (Saint Petersburg). The premiere of *Romeo and Juliet*, directed by S. Radlov was held April 28, 1934, A. Radlova made the translation. "Despite the actor immaturity of some characters, we can say that this show – event in Soviet Shakespeare Theatre and an example of how Shakespeare can be read in a new way".<sup>62</sup>

Sergei Prokofiev composed the ballet *Romeo and Juliet* based on a synopsis created by Adrian Piotrovsky, who first suggested the subject to Prokofiev, and Sergey Radlov, in September 1935. Their scenario followed the precepts of drambalet (dramatised ballet). The ballet's original happy ending (contrary to Shakespeare) provoked controversy among Soviet cultural officials. The ballet's production was then postponed indefinitely. Prokofiev reused music from the ballet in three suites for orchestra and a solo piano work. Suites of the ballet music were heard in Moscow and the United States, but the full ballet premiered in the Mahen Theatre, Brno in Czechoslovakia, on 30 December 1938. It is better known today from the significantly revised version that was first presented at the

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<sup>62</sup> Kostarev Nikolai. Shekspir u molodih // Leningradskaya pravda. — 1934. № 108. 9 maya. — S. 3.

Kirov Theatre in Leningrad on 11 January 1940, with choreography by Leonid Lavrovsky and with Konstantin Sergeyev and Galina Ulanova in the lead roles.

Film-ballet *Romeo and Juliet* (1954), directed by Lev Arnshtam, was created on the base of Sergei Prokofiev's ballet. The main roles were performed by the soloists of the Bolshoi Theater – Galina Ulanova, Yuri Zhdanov, Sergei Koren', Alex Ermolaev. It was entered into the 1955 Cannes Film Festival and won Palme d'Or.

The first Russian film adaptation of W. Shakespeare's play was *Twelfth Night, or What You Will* by Yan Frid in 1955, which became very popular. The same year *Othello* by Sergei Yutkevich was released and received Best Director Award of Cannes Film Festival (1956). Each decade Russian directors film Shakespeare's different comedies and tragedies. It is an interesting fact, that *Romeo and Juliet* was never screened in Russia before or after F. Zeffirelli's iconic film.

## **II Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (1968) as the worldwide acclaimed adaptation of Shakespeare's timeless love story.**

The film *Romeo and Juliet* by Florentine director Franco Zeffirelli became the undisputed favorite in Russia among all the foreign adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. Franco Zeffirelli directed this excellent version of Shakespeare's classic tale of romance and tragedy in 1968. It is a beautiful interpretation of Shakespeare's enduring, classic yet tragic love story of 'star-crossed lovers'. Zeffirelli put the passion of the play into his film. The romance is believable, exciting, and heartbreaking. It was the most commercially successful Shakespeare film and its most entertaining, refreshing and natural rendition – a passionate celebration of young love. Promoted from an Italian TV production to a cinema movie when Paramount climbed aboard and helped provide a big budget, it was honored to be chosen for the 1968 Royal Film Performance.

Set in a fourteenth-century Renaissance Verona, the film was shot in different parts of Central Italy. Only a misty view of the city, opening film narrative is the view of real Verona. Palazzo Piccolomini, built between 1459 – 62 by Pope Pius II, in the city of Pienza, in Siena province served as the palace of the Capulets' scenes. The scene with hurrying to the ball friends of Romeo and Mercutio's speech about Queen Mab were filmed on the square before this palace. The interior church scenes were shot at a Romanesque church named St. Pietro in Tuscania, fifty miles northwest of Rome. The wedding and death of Romeo and Juliet were also set here. The iconic balcony scene was filmed at the Palazzo Borghese, built by Cardinal Scipione Borghese in the sixteenth century, in Artena, twenty miles south of Rome. The tomb scene was set in Tuscania. The first appearance of Romeo, the dueling scenes with swords and also the episode in Mantua were filmed in the old Umbrian town of Gubbio. The film also has some scenes filmed in Montagnana. The view of Verona square with a facade of the church and the town

fountain were created in the pavilion of the Roman film studio Cinecittà. The location for street scenes was Pienza and also Cinecitta studio, Rome. The ball scene was shot in the studio, in the magnificent scenery, designed by Renzo Mongiardino.

The first film adaptation of Shakespeare for Zeffirelli was not a tragedy of young lovers of Verona, but the comedy *The Taming of the Shrew* (1967). Thanks to his established theatrical glory, the director immediately received wide material possibilities for his Hollywood debut. Zeffirelli shot *The Taming of the Shrew* with Hollywood star couple Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. Zeffirelli was able to use the real talent of these actors and turn their temperament into the direction of Shakespearean passions and his directorial concept. Barton's performance of the role of Petruchio undoubtedly became one of the best his works, and Elizabeth Taylor, finally showed her talent of outstanding comedy actress.

Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* became the first major film adaptation of Shakespeare's tragedy, in which the main roles are performed by the actors of almost the same age with the characters of the play. The earlier 1936 MGM, George Cukor-directed version of the film, starring forty-two year old Leslie Howard and thirty-four year old Norma Shearer has much older, more mature lovers in the starring roles. As in most Shakespeare-based screenplays, Cukor and his screenwriter Talbot Jennings cut much of the original play, using around 45% of it. Among positive reviews was Frank Nugent's in New York Times: "It is a dignified, sensitive and entirely admirable Shakespearean—not Hollywoodean—production."<sup>63</sup> But on the whole, neither critics nor the public responded enthusiastically. More recently, scholar Stephen Orgel describes Cukor's film as largely miscast with a preposterously mature pair of lovers in Leslie Howard and Norma Shearer. The film nevertheless received four Oscar nominations and for many years was considered one of the great MGM classics.

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<sup>63</sup> Nugent, Frank S. (August 21, 1936). Movie Review – Romeo and Juliet. The New York Times.

Next 1954 British-Italian version of *Romeo and Juliet* by Renato Castellani with Laurence Harvey and Susan Shentall as the lovers was again with more older protagonists than Shakespeare's. The major supporting roles are vastly reduced, including that of the nurse. Castellani's most prominent changes related to Romeo's character, cutting back or removing scenes involving his parents, Benvolio and Mercutio in order to highlight Romeo's isolation. Laurence Harvey, as Romeo, was already an experienced screen actor, who would shortly take over roles intended for the late James Dean in *Walk on the Wild Side* and *Summer and Smoke*. By contrast, Susan Shentall, as Juliet, was a secretarial student who was discovered by the director in a London pub, and was cast for her "pale sweet skin and honey-blond hair."<sup>64</sup> She surpassed the demands of the role, but married shortly after the shoot, and never returned to the screen. This movie got warmer response from the audience and critics. The film won the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival, and was named the best foreign film by the National Board of Review, which also named Castellani as best director.

Taking into consideration "age" mistakes of the protagonists of the previous screen versions, Franco Zeffirelli chose the actors so young as Romeo and Juliet. He took a risk, inviting the young actors for the main roles. We can see why Zeffirelli did not want older actors. Experienced actors would not be able to play first love so real, innocence and passion that can only be experienced once in a lifetime. The love between Romeo and Juliet, and the physical passion that comes with it, are of that naive and hopeless intensity only those in love for the very first time can comprehend.

As stated in one of the first Russian film reviews of Zeffirelli's film in 1968: "In essence, Olivia Hussey and Leonard Whiting in the strong sense of the word can not be called actors. One could even assume that they will no longer be in the movies, or in any case will not reach the luck that accompanied them in this film. Here, in fact, they play

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<sup>64</sup> Brode, Douglas. *Shakespeare in the Movies: From the Silent Era to Today*. 2001. New York: Berkeley Boulevard. P. 51

themselves: their youth, passion, temperament. The word "skill" can not be used to the game of young actors, but other definitions: freedom, lightness, naturalness are fully applicable to them.”<sup>65</sup> Zeffirelli interviewed three hundreds of young actors and eight hundreds of actresses during three months audition before choosing sixteen year old English-Argentinian Olivia Hussey and seventeen year old English Leonard Whiting. The shooting started on his seventeenth birthday. The film became their screen debut. Franco Zeffirelli described his choice of Leonard Whiting from other young actors in the following way “He has an attractive face, a soft melancholy, sweetness, ideal type of a young man whom Romeo has to be.”

Shakespeare’s tragedy was filmed by Zeffirelli preserving the author's text and mostly very close to the plot, except for some small monologues and scenes. Zeffirelli’s aim was to create the version of *Romeo and Juliet*, close to the original, but understandable for his generation. He transformed all difficult for understanding moments in the dynamic action, decorated by a variety of explanatory remarks and scenes. In this story the director saw a parallel with today's life of contemporary youth, modern reality, where the sincere desire of young people to live and love sacrifices to obsolete values of the older generation.

The merit of Zeffirelli and the young actors in the lead roles, they breathed a new life into Shakespeare's lines. A famous American film critic and historian Roger Ebert said: “Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* is the most exciting film of Shakespeare ever made. Not because it is greater drama than Olivier's *Henry V*, because it is not. Nor is it greater cinema than Welles' *Falstaff*. But it is greater Shakespeare than either because it has the passion, the sweat, the violence, the poetry, the love and the tragedy in the most immediate terms I can imagine. It is a deeply moving piece of entertainment, and that is

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<sup>65</sup> Geideko, Valerii. O filme Romeo I Dzhulietta Zeffirelli. Sovetskii ekran. № 5. 1968.

possibly what Shakespeare would have preferred.”<sup>66</sup> The film has been recognized more than any of the previous adaptations of Shakespeare, despite the fact that Shakespeare is the most cinematized playwright in history.

Author's text was read by Laurence Olivier, who played Joseph of Arimathea in next Zeffirelli's film *Jesus of Nazareth*. Olivier made it free. As he said he participated in the film only out of love to Shakespeare. Laurence Olivier's involvement in the production was by happenstance. He was in Rome for the film *The Shoes of the Fisherman* and visited the studio where *Romeo and Juliet* was being shot. He asked Zeffirelli if there was anything he could do, and was given the Prologue to read, then ended up dubbing the voice of Lord Montague as well as other assorted roles.

A lot of fuss has been made about the brief, beautiful nude love scene. The Chicago Board of Education objected to the nudity and did not approve the film for educational use after its commercial run. R. Ebert became outraged of such an attitude and defended the scene, “Zeffirelli is so far ahead of them, so much richer and deeper, so much more inspired in his interpretation of our greatest poet, that the Board of Education cannot fly with him and must find excuses in half a dozen frames of a joyous film.”<sup>67</sup> Zeffirelli himself said according to this point, “When you come to the museum, do you turn away from the nude painting?..” In Russian theatrical distribution this “famous” scene was not deleted.

Among the obvious advantages of the film it should be mentioned not only a wonderful cast, masterfully set fights and dances, expressive musical arrangement, beautiful costumes and scenery, but also the exterior shooting, in particular, progressive for that time, technique using a portable camera. The balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet* is one of the most remarkable episodes in all of Shakespeare's plays. The text of the dialogue remained almost completely, and the young actors live in it, obeying to creatively and

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<sup>66</sup> Roger Ebert. *Romeo and Juliet*. Chicago Sun-Times. October 15, 1968

<sup>67</sup> The same.

emotionally exact design, proposed by the director. This scene, shot so perfectly by Zeffirelli, is one of the main associations, connected with this film. It should be also noted the presence of humor in the film, in spite of the tragic element of the story.

The film won four 41st Academy Award (1969) nominations for Best Picture, Director, Cinematography, and Costume Design. Pasqualino De Santis won an Oscar for his splendid work on the rich visuals as cinematographer and Danilo Donati won another for the colorful costumes, as well as the film's only Bafta Award. But Nino Rota's evocative musical score, including a period ballad *What is a Youth* was un-nominated. The film was also nominated for five Golden Globe Awards 1969 and won three of them – Best Foreign Film (English language), New Star of the Year – Actor (Leonard Whiting) and New Star of the Year – Actress (Olivia Hussey).

In the Soviet distribution the film was officially released in 1972, with some deleted scenes. It was preceded by the first premiere in August, 1968. In the Soviet film distribution Evgeny Gerasimov (Romeo), Anna Kamenkova (Juliet), Vasily Lanovoy (Tybalt) and other famous actors dubbed the film. While film dubbing two translations were used – B. Pasternak's and T. Shchepkina-Kupernik's. It was done for better matching of articulation. This film made a great impression as on ordinary audience, as the people of the art. *Romeo and Juliet* was a success on the screens of the USSR and became one of the most favorite Shakespeare's adaptations of all time. The film, “by its every shot furiously protesting against the devaluation of the feelings, against the spiritual meanness, against attempts to take away the original, high and significant meaning from the word "love",”<sup>68</sup> topped the questionnaire of a famous USSR illustrated magazine *Soviet Screen* in 1972.

Zeffirelli's film *Romeo and Juliet* was preceded by a stage version, which the director carried out very successful in 1960 in London's Old Vic Theatre, featuring John

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<sup>68</sup> Hloplyankina, T. Mnogo raz pro ljubov' o filme Zeffirelli Romeo i Dzhulietta. Sovetskii ekran. № 24. 1969. S.26.

Stride and Judi Dench. Romeo immediately appeared not in the disguise of a traditional lover, but as an impatient young man, almost a boy possessed by a thirst for love yet undiscovered. And the actress Judi Dench returns Juliet her real age. On stage appears a fragile girl, mobile, capricious, mischievous, gentle and also reaching to the forbidden fruit of love and also found the courage to pay with her life for the right to love and be loved. As a Soviet film director Sergei Yutkevich put it in 1973, “Without external modernizing the young Italian director managed, especially in the first half of the performance, with the undeniable power of his talent to bring Shakespeare's tragedy to our today, and in it his first and foremost merit before Stratford playwright and contemporaneity.”<sup>69</sup>

The follower of Luchino Visconti, a recognized leader and pioneer of Italian neorealist cinema, a young director Franco Zeffirelli got his start during the late '40s as Visconti's assistant on *La Terra Trema*. Before the spectacle *Romeo and Juliet* he successfully staged several classical operas, such as *La Traviata*, *Otello*. The classical play in an unusual interpretation of a little-known Italian director Franco Zeffirelli caused such a sensation in London, that one of the first performances visited the mother of the queen, surrounded by her retinue. The same performance he staged in Italy in Verona, then in Rome in 1964, and also showed on the Moscow stage in 1966. The Soviet audience was excited by the performance as well as at the London public. This fact indicated not only immortality of Shakespeare's genius, but also the indisputable victory of Franco Zeffirelli. In this production many features of the future legendary adaptation of 1968 were already noticeable.

Elated with success, the Italian film director turned to the cinematic interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet*, wishing to fix his staging plan. “And who, if not Italian, besides the master, versed in the drama of feelings, starts the immortal theme of love of these two

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<sup>69</sup> Yutkevich S.I. Shekspir po-italianski. *Ukroshenie stroptivoi i Romeo i Dzhulietta* Franco Zeffirelli. // Shekspir i kino. M.Nauka, 1973. S.123

young Italian teenagers, unchildlike mature and passionate, who did not want to give up on their love and betray their friendship, preferring death to the life without each other.”<sup>70</sup>

The director did not mechanically repeat his theatrical interpretation, but really tried to use all the on-screen possibilities of realistic interpretation of the play. Zeffirelli's intention was to link the tragedy of Shakespeare to the present day as close as possible, and he directly stated it: “In my understanding, the tragedy of young love, potency of the sense does the issue alive issue for young people. They are talked about a lot today, but no one really helps them to gain confidence in themselves. Shakespeare is the biggest friend of youth. No one, in my opinion, did not create such a fresh product, as *Romeo and Juliet*, written four centuries ago.”<sup>71</sup> And really what only was planning by the director in his theatrical version, in particular, the similarity of characters such as Mercutio and Tybalt with the young men of today's Soho, the film brought to an end. Mercutio with his company act as modern beatniks. They mock nurse with cynicism and buffoonery, passing into cruelty. Guitars in the hands of his friends are about, it seems, to sound as electric instruments of *The Rolling Stones*. According to Sergei Yutkevich, “all these could be convincing, if not a mistake in the choice of an actor for the role of Mercutio. In an effort to sharpen the image and bring it closer to the present, Zeffirelli chose the actor John McEnery, who was so sharp in the manner of acting that the moment of Romanticism completely vanished from the role, which so needed it.”<sup>72</sup> Another Russian critic Valeriy Geydeko has an opposite opinion: “The climax of the film suddenly becomes the death of Mercutio. It is exactly here the ideological and moral center of Zeffirelli's film...This episode, scantily represented in the tragedy, is significant and impressive in the film. The English actor John McEnery, playing the role of Mercutio, shares the success of it with

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<sup>70</sup> Sergeeva, O. *Film Romeo i Dzhulietta Franco Zeffirelli*. *Rovesnik*. №9. 1972. S.14

<sup>71</sup> The same. S.131

<sup>72</sup> Yutkevich S.I. *Shekspir po-italianski.Ukroshenie stroptivoi i Romeo i Dzhulietta Franco Zeffirelli. // Shekspir i kino. M.Nauka, 1973. S.131*

the director. His image, of course, evokes certain associations with the rebellious youth of today.”<sup>73</sup>

In Yutkevich's opinion the best director's solution is the episode of engagement. Each director is looking for his own interpretation of the scene, and Zeffirelli finds a new and consistent staging course for his concept. Throughout the film, he emphasizes not so much youth, but childishness of his characters, and here he brings their infantilism to the limit, treating the whole scene like a fun game of playful children. Ceremonial scene suddenly turns into a funny scene. And it must be admitted that it is staged by the director and played by the actors with a charming appealingness. Romeo and Juliet, as if they did not understand the seriousness of the ceremony, they want just kissing all the time and Lorenzo separates them as restless children. During the wedding ceremony Romeo pushes Juliet with his elbow, they wink, as the conspirators, they are impatient, careless, drunk in love, on which the shadow of the sin had not fallen yet. They have no reverence to God, neither his servant, nor to the ceremonial, there is nothing in the world for them except their feelings.

Nino Rota composed the music for the theatre version. Later his music was included in the soundtrack of the film. He added some new musical themes. The song on Rota's music with lyrics by Eugene Walter *What Is a Youth* soon got stand-alone popularity. Love theme from *Romeo and Juliet* was widely disseminated, notably in *Our Tune*, a segment of BBC disc jockey Simon Bates's radio show. In addition, various versions of the theme have been recorded and released, including a highly successful one by Henry Mancini, whose instrumental rendition was a Number One success in the United States during June 1969.

Nino Rota's music from *Romeo and Juliet* became an integral part of almost each figure-skating competition, one of the most popular kinds of sport and the significant

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<sup>73</sup> Geideko, Valerii. O filme Romeo I Dzhulietta Zeffirelli. Sovetskii ekran. № 5. 1968.

element of Russian culture and national pride. *Romeo and Juliet* by Nino Rota, *Boléro* by Maurice Ravel, *Carmen* by Georges Bizet are on top of the music for Russian figure skating.

Even in the twenty first century four decades after Zeffirelli's film figure skaters continue to dance to this wonderful music. In 2006, Russian sports couple Tatiana Totmianina / Maxim Marinin performed free skating to the music of *Romeo and Juliet* by Nino Rota. They took the gold at the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin. It is an interesting fact, that an American figure skater Sasha Cohen danced to the same music at the same Olympics. She took the silver. Ekaterina Pushkash and Jonathan Guerreiro at the 2009–2010 Junior Grand Prix performed free dance to the music by Nino Rota *Un Giorno Per Noi* (from *Romeo and Juliet*). Thirteen-year-old Julia Lipnitskaya won The 2012 Russian Figure Skating Championships with a free program to the music of Nino Rota. A Russian figure skater Evgeni Plushenko, four-time Olympic medalist, also worked with Japanese choreographer Kenji Miyamoto on his free skating in 2012 to the music by Nino Rota from *Romeo and Juliet* for the following season.

As any other screen version, Zeffirelli's one did not get only great reviews. The film was supported by the "big media" and the audience, but it was sharply criticized in special newsreels. As French critic Claude Beylie put it: "This endless fresco in the costumes of the epoch lacks simplicity and the truth. This anachronistic *West Side Story*, a primitive as a mockery of westerns ... No better way to humiliate a masterpiece than to reduce it to the level of a slush melodrama."<sup>74</sup> Another French critic Philippe Pilar also had a negative opinion: "Lyricism, poetic feeling are completely absent. There is no one moment of true poetry in this film ..."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Yutkevich S.I. Shekspir po-italianski. Ukroshenie stroptivoi i Romeo i Dzhulietta Franco Zeffirelli. // Shekspir i kino. M.Nauka, 1973. S.141

<sup>75</sup> The same.

The initial release was 149 minutes, but it was later cut to a more compact 138 minutes. A tremendous worldwide success, it took forty-two million dollars at the US box office. *Romeo and Juliet* returned to the cinema on May 20, 2016 restored and reissued as part of Shakespeare's Lives.

Before Zeffirelli's classic film, the story of Romeo and Juliet was refashioned in director Robert Wise's and Jerome Robbins' *West Side Story* (1961) as a tragic tale of conflict between two warring rival New York City gangs, with Richard Beymer and Natalie Wood. The film is an adaptation of the 1957 Broadway musical of the same name, which in turn was inspired by William Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*. Its ten Academy Awards make it the musical film with the most Academy wins, including Best Picture. This film went on in cinema in the Soviet Union almost twenty years later and did not receive a warm reception of the Russian audience.

*Romeo and Juliet* was again remodeled with a radical, MTV-style and rock soundtrack in Baz Luhrmann's unconventional William Shakespeare's *Romeo + Juliet* in 1996, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes as the young lovers in a late twentieth century setting. Coincidentally or not, the film directed by Baz Luhrmann appeared when the 400th anniversary of the dramatic masterpiece was celebrated. It is interesting that making ultra-modern and fashionable external surroundings of the film, Baz Luhrmann did not change the Shakespearean text. This version was rather popular, but did not receive such love of Russian public like Zeffirelli's film. Luhrmann's film became the fifty-first screen version of Shakespeare's tragedy in a row. Leonardo DiCaprio won Silver Bear award at the 47th annual Berlin International Film Festival.

A kind of variation on the theme of Romeo and Juliet is *Shakespeare in Love*, a 1998 British-American romantic comedy-drama film directed by John Madden. The film is built by the plot, which turns around the still mysterious fate and identity of William Shakespeare, an imaginary love affair involving Viola de Lesseps, while he was writing

*Romeo and Juliet*, his first tragedy, - in effect, a secret history purporting to show that play was to a considerable degree autobiographical and based on Shakespeare's own doomed love affair.

In the late sixties of the XX century, his young compatriot Tom Stoppard achieved fame with the play *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, ironically and paradoxically created upon the exploits of two minor characters from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Thirty years later Tom Stoppard, modifying the original script of Mark Norman, repeated in a light and playful way his trick, composed for the classic the birth of his no less famous romantic tragedy. In 2005, the Writers Guild of America ranked this script the twenty-eighth greatest ever written.

There is also a Rosaline, with whom Will is in love at the beginning of the film. There are references to earlier cinematic versions of Shakespeare, such as the balcony scene pastiching Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*. In contrast to Luhrmann's interpretation *Romeo + Juliet*, Madden's *Shakespeare in Love* in its external visual variety, is classic, which was confirmed by the Oscar to Best Art Direction (Martin Childs and Jill Kuirtier) and Best Costume Design (Sandy Powell).

The film received the recognition of the audience and critics all over the world. It was on in cinema in Russia with original voices with Russian subtitles to give an opportunity to enjoy Shakespeare's language. It was one of the first cases in Russia, when the film was not dubbed for the theatrical release.

## 2. Russian variations on a theme of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Speaking about variations on a theme of *Romeo and Juliet* in Russia, I should mention a movie, directed by Ilya Frez *You couldn't dream of...* (1980). It was based on the short novel of the same name, written by Galina Sherbakova about sad love of Moscow students Roman and Yulia. In the book there is an evident parallel with the story of *Romeo and Juliet* – characters' names sound so similar not accidentally. The original version of the title was *Roman and Jul'ka*. For personal reasons, both teen mothers do not wish contact between families and to a greater or lesser extent, try to prevent the development of their relations. The young man dies in the story. This final was destined by the parallels with the tragic story of *Romeo and Juliet*, given by the writer. Later, in a television interview, Galina Sherbakova told about the final of her story the following. When the sheets of the story laid on the table of the main editor of the magazine *Youth* Boris Polevoy, he told her: "I passed the war, I'm not a coward, but I am afraid that after your story the boys will jump out of the windows. Soften the final, and I will publish the story in the next issue."<sup>76</sup> As a result of this advice the last lines of the story, published in 1979, talk about the tragic outcome of the Roman's fall less definitively, but do not eliminate it. Two months later the story was published.

The end of the film is more optimistic. The film is made in the spirit of cheerful teen stories, generally away from the tragedy and possibly loses a truly dramatic message. Otherwise it, more likely, would not be released in theaters. The screenplay was developed by Sherbakova and Frez considering touching childishness of the main characters, as they are given in the film. Due to narrative changes their names were distant from Shakespeare's associations, and a girl was named Katya. An allusion to the scene of

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<sup>76</sup> "Vam I ne snilos". Istoria odnoi povesti Galini Sherbakovoi.

physical intimacy of lovers was replaced on the screen by an innocent warming rubbing the character after he was drenched.

The final scene was shot in two cities – Moscow and Leningrad. The character of Nikita Mihailovski slips from the window sill in Leningrad, and falls to the ground in the capital. In the original story Roma intentionally jumps out of the window, in the film he stumbles trying to attract the attention of Katya standing in the street. If in the book he fell from the third floor, in the film, when Roma climbs on the window, it is seen that he is on the top floor. The final shot of the film shows that it is a six-storeyed house. Already during the making of the film the final of the screen version it was decided to change at the request of the readers. According to the new scenario, Roma slips from the window and falls into a huge snow-drift, which saves his life. Seeing this, Katya rushes up to him, trying to help to climb, but they eventually fall back together in the snow.

The film about love between two teenagers was a resounding success, similar to F. Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet*. They both are included in TOP 250 films in Russia. *You couldn't dream of...* became a cult film of the eighties. According to the survey of the magazine *Soviet Screen*, it was recognized as the best film of 1981 and won the prize at the film festival in Vilnius. According to the results of theatrical distribution of 1981, the film took the twelfth place. More than twenty-six million viewers watched this movie. The leading actors became national favorites. Tatyana Aksyuta was awarded an honorary diploma for the best performance of the main female role on the International Film Festival for Children and Youth Films in Tomar (Portugal). The film, moreover, sparkles with brilliant performances of mature actors (Tatiana Peltzer, Yelena Solovey, Lydia Fedoseyeva-Shukshina, Leonid Filatov, Albert Filozov). In the United States the film *You couldn't dream of...* was released in March 5, 1982 under the name *Love and Lies*.

The actor in a leading male role is Nikita Mihailovski at the time of filming was barely sixteen years old, the same age as Romeo. Tatiana Aksyuta was seven years older

than her partner, and had already graduated from The Russian University of Theatre Arts and was married, but the age difference between the actors is unnoticeable. The searches for the actor for the role of Roma Lavochkin were very long. Together with Galina Sherbakova, the director after audition of thousands of boys across the country, found a very suitable candidate Nikita Mikhailovsky in Leningrad. He went to school and, thus, had no acting education, except for a few children's roles in the films. During the audition Nikita won everybody by his naturalness, and he was immediately approved. "We were crying – he was perfect! It seemed that the young 16-year-old knows about love more than his married partner. He was not an actor, he just lived in the cinema shot, passing through all the emotions of his character, literally reborn in him,"<sup>77</sup> – G. Sherbakova remembers. The story *You couldn't dream of...* by Galina Shcherbakova remained her main work. The story about modern Romeo and Juliet became to the Soviet reader perhaps closer than the work of the classic of English literature.

Another fact, uniting the film with Zeffirelli's is a haunting music. Many fans of the film say that it hardly would be such a heartfelt, if not the music. Romantic relationships of Roman and Yulia bloomed on the screen to the wonderful music of Alexey Rybnikov. The song *The Last Poem* gained the fame and an unprecedented popularity in Russia. The author of the lyrics was an Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore, the music was written by Alexey Rybnikov. This song could be heard in two versions: Irina Otiyeva and VIA *Yalla*. Rybnikov is the author of music for the first Soviet and Russian musicals *Star and Death of Joaquin Murrieta* (1976) and *Juno and Avos* (1981) and for more than eighty Russian movies.

It should be noted that in the story of love of modern Romeo and Juliet there is no single kiss. The kiss of love in the film belongs to the mother of Katya and her young

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<sup>77</sup> "Vam I ne snilos". Istoria odnoi povesti Galini Sherbakovoi.

husband Volodya, played by Evgeny Gerasimov, who ‘presented’ his voice to Romeo in Russian dubbed version of Zeffirelli’s film.

Among other Soviet films to some extent echoing the plot of Shakespeare’s tragedy, it should be called the film by Yuli Raizman *It Might Be Love*, shot in 1961 and tells the very sad story of two high school students, Ksenya and Boris, whose love was rudely destroyed by adults. As a result, Ksenya tried to poison herself, but she was saved. Reizman’s film at the end gives a fragile hope for the revival of the relations between the characters in the future.

In 1985, the director Georgy Natanson filmed *Valentin and Valentina*, based on the play by Mikhail Roshchin about the rejection of the parents the love choice of their children. The mother of Valentina believes that her daughter deserves more promising groom, the mother of Valentine is not happy with his bride too. The film touches upon the social differences “preventing Romeo and Juliet of the Soviet way of life happily reunite and for the rest of their days love each other.”<sup>78</sup> After all, the young couple managed to defend their feelings.

Marina Zudina and Nikolai Stozkii played the roles of young lovers. One of the greatest Russian actresses Tatiana Doronina performed the role of Valentina’s mother. The following year she became the artistic director of the Gorky Moscow Art Theatre. *Valentin and Valentina* was released in theatrical distribution of 1986 in the country, which already began to change sharply in terms of Perestroika. G. Natanson’s film was in TOP 20 of the films in 1986, including foreign films.

One of latest variations of the twenty-first century on a theme of *Romeo and Juliet* can be considered Russian-Israeli television drama *Under Verona Sky* (2005). The film was shot in Italy, Russia and Israel. It covers the period from 1984 to the end of Perestroika in the Soviet Union.

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<sup>78</sup> Sergey Kudryavzev. *Valentin and Valentina*. 1998

The love story of a young man Andrei Mazurov, the activist of Committee of youth organizations in the USSR, delegated to Verona, and his *Juliet* Israeli girl Leah Gold, which happened in the same place with her father, rabbi, who arrived at a religious convention. The fate brings them a few fleeting encounters in the most romantic city of the world and then everyone must return home – Leah in Israel, Andrei in the USSR, the countries which did not have diplomatic relationship at that time. It seems that their parents, *Iron Curtain*, the political and cultural prejudices, separate them forever.

The film was directed by Vladimir Krasnopol'skii and Valerii Uskov, staged together many popular TV series, among which a Soviet 1973–1983 epic TV series *Eternal Call* by the eponymous novel of Anatoli Ivanov and *Yermak* (1986-1996). But unlike previous collaborative works and the romantic plot of the story, this television drama got rather cold response from the audience and critics in Russia.

## 2. The newest screen version of *Romeo & Juliet* by Carlo Carlei (2013)

Different adaptations of the same source material can be exciting. It is why we still perform and watch Shakespeare, and the story of Romeo and Juliet occupies a particular place in our hearts and minds. We know how it ends. If we want to be cynical, we can dismiss the entire thing as the foibles of two stupid teenagers who had just a first crush, and not a love worth dying for. But done right, the play is a testament to the power of drama to appeal to broad, earnest emotions, which make it irresistible to filmmakers and writers and endlessly challenging for those who keep trying to convey the beautiful foolishness of young love. Romeo and Juliet, silly as they are, are impossible to forget. Their proclamations of love are some of the most romantic lines an actor can deliver.

And today, when the works of the great English playwright throughout recent decades have been the object of so many staged experiments and directing stylizations, for the most part far from the historical specificity, in which Shakespeare dipped their characters, this new screen version of *Romeo and Juliet* (2013) by Carlo Carlei sounds with the especial freshness.

This film version is a far more purist interpretation of the original story than other retellings over the years, for example Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*.

The film was released in the ninety-year birthday of the maestro Franco Zeffirelli and the forty-fifth anniversary of his classical version of Romeo and Juliet of 1968. Eighteen-year-old actress India Eisley, the daughter of Olivia Hussey (who played Juliet in the film 1968) was also invited to the audition for the role of Juliet in a new film adaptation, but she refused. In April 2011, Hailee Steinfeld was said to be in talks for the lead role as Juliet in this new adaptation. The role of Romeo was found in June 2011 when Douglas Booth was cast, beating out three hundred other actors who were interested in the part.

Much of the material of the film was shot during the cold period of the year – in February and March of 2012, although the events of Shakespeare's happen in high summer – in late July. The romantic drama *Romeo and Juliet* was premiered in October 2013.

The new film about the saddest story in the world filmed by Italian director Carlo Carlei shot in a traditional style and gets in lane with his compatriot Franco Zeffirelli's adaptation of 1968. The current version features a more chaste love scenes and much mangled text source. Originally, there was nudity and sexuality planned during the post-wedding bedroom scene but was deleted due to Steinfeld's age. She was fifteen when filming started in February 2012. Initially, it was planned to give the role to an actress around twenty. Initially twenty-two year old Lily Collins was the main choice of Juliet's part.

Director C. Carlei and screenwriter Julian Fellowes, the winner of the Oscar for *Gosford Park* and author of the popular *Downton Abbey*, adapted *Romeo and Juliet*. They acted on the contrary in a way in regard to Baz Luhrmann, directed in 1996 one of the most original versions of Shakespeare's plays. B. Luhrmann left the entire text, while radically modernized the location and the characters look. Reasoning his idea, Fellowes says: "Shakespeare's play did not receive a traditional romantic on-screen incarnation for a long time. According to the Shakespeare the story took place in the Middle Ages. The only thing that we felt it necessary to bring in our film is to make it a little more understandable for the current generation. I would like those who will watch this movie to perceive it as an integral work, written by Shakespeare."<sup>79</sup> Specifying further, Fellowes said that he reduced the plot to fit into a standard two-hour duration of the film and rewrote a bit the texts, because themes of love are universal.

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<sup>79</sup> <https://www.vokrugtv.ru/> access from January 5, 2017.

J. Fellowes did not only shorten, but simplified Shakespeare's lines. This has led to a controversy, with several critics denouncing the film's advertising as misleading, and losing the essence of the play. As Richard Propes from *The Independent Critic* put it, "Fellowes takes tremendous liberties with Shakespeare's nearly perfect words and, in nearly all cases, he completely ruins the masterpiece that Shakespeare created".<sup>80</sup>

The play's most famous and memorable lines remain intact, or at least altered only minimally, for a more contemporary flow. But while the play's key moments were left sacrosanct, much of the connecting tissue has been streamlined or excised. Occasionally, Fellowes' replacement lines are complete clunkers, as when Friar Laurence (Paul Giamatti) wraps the play not with an agonized speech blaming himself for the tragedy he has just witnessed, and offering his life as recompense, but with a single muttered, sullen-sounding excuse: "Their own forbidden love did murder them." In this version, Juliet and her nurse (Lesley Manville) have a relationship that is warmer and more familial than in most previous depictions. Their dialogue, no longer in iambic pentameter, sounds appropriately conversational. But much of the material integrates inoffensively with Shakespeare's text, bringing 500-year-old language forward several centuries without pushing it into the realm of modern slang.

In the Russian dubbing the fragments from translations by Shchepkina-Kupernik and Radlova are used. The director of dubbing became a famous theater director Alexander Vartanov, attracted some very good artists. Philipp Bledny and Lisa Arzamasova, performers of the leading roles in the spectacle *Romeo and Juliet* by Sergei Aldonin's Theatre Company dubbed *Romeo and Juliet* in Russian version. But, as Lidya Maslova states, "even the leading figures of Russian stage can not save this mediocre English-Italian-Swiss product, the authors of which are in the sad belief that the current

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<sup>80</sup> Richard Propes. *The Independent Critic*. An Independent Voice for the Reel World.

peers of Romeo and Juliet is not able to perceive anything that does not look like the vampire saga *Twilight*.”<sup>81</sup>

Sixteen-year-old Hailee Steinfeld became a new Juliet. At the age of thirteen she performed the role of a strong and independent girl from Coen brothers' western *True Grit*, and was nominated for Oscar. But, as some Russian critics stated, Hailee Steinfeld is not Juliet.<sup>82</sup> She does not look like the girl who attracts attention when enters the room filled with dressed up young people. And for the plot of the play this is crucial. Obviously, the role of Juliet should not be performed stunning beauty, but she must have a sparkle, justifying Romeo's first reaction and his subsequent “balcony” admiration. And as all the young men in the picture are very handsome a new Juliet desperately fades on the background of male cast: beginning with Romeo (Douglas Booth), whose part could be performed by any supporting actor – Ed Westwick (Tybalt) or Christian Cooke (Mercutio).

Many other Russian and European critics consider casting of the main roles as the main disadvantage of the film. Susan Wloszczyna said that C.Carlei “is in way over his head, from several misguided casting choices to an intrusive score that sounds like Renaissance faire elevator music.”

More positive review to the protagonists gives Tasha Robinson, “Booth and Steinfeld make a pretty couple in pretty clothes, but their performances may play best to people their own age; to an adult audience, they look even younger than their ages, like a couple of kids more infatuated with the idea of romance than with each other.”<sup>83</sup> While the play is about love at first sight, headstrong youth, and the passion of infatuation, these Romeo and Juliet seem particularly naive and overeager. They have barely exchanged a few words and a few kisses before they are planning to get married the next day.

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<sup>81</sup> Lidia Maslova. *I tselogo Shekspira malo*. Kommersant. N 191. 2013. S.14

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.film.ru/> Ivanov, Boris. *Romeo i Dzhulieta. Lolita v Verone*. Access from 12 January, 2017

<sup>83</sup> Tasha Robinson. *Romeo & Juliet*. *The Dissolve*. October 10, 2013

Along with the miscast of a new version, some critics note the famous “balcony scene” is one of the weakest moments of the film. “The balcony scene ...is the movie's greatest disappointment.”<sup>84</sup> “... is as flat and stagey as a high school production. The actors recite their lines and kiss. It’s not just the fault of the actors, but of a director who infuses the scene with absolutely no visual character.”<sup>85</sup>

A few of the actors seem to have classical Shakespearean backgrounds. Damian Lewis as Lord Capulet laying down the law to Juliet when she balks at marrying County Paris “seems from another, more emphatic and caring, school of acting”. Ed Westwick, of *Gossip Girl*, plays Tybalt as “deep-throated and bombastic”. Then there is Stellan Skarsgard as the Prince of Verona, who seems stolid and crude; of course he does not have an English accent or put one on convincingly. And the same is about Paul Giamatti as Friar Laurence. Paul Giamatti as Romeo's confidant Friar Laurence and Lesley Manville as Juliet's nurse add much-needed authority and light-heartedness to their roles. The new version is “a collage of different nationalities and different acting styles”.<sup>86</sup> There are Italians too, including the well-known Laura Morante as Mrs. Montague.

According to Tasha Robinson, Carlei’s version takes a handful of unusual tacks.<sup>87</sup> Some are intriguing, like casting Kodi Smit-McPhee, another young actor from a movie, performed the role of Romeo's friend Benvolio. Though he is only around seventeen and looks younger, he plays with fluency and commitment – an actor of great natural gifts. Having such a wide-eyed, soft-faced young man in the role heightens the drama and tragedy of scenes where he repeatedly tries to keep the Montagues and Capulets from each other, only to be ignored, like the kid brother no one wants to get caught obeying, even when he is the only one making sense. Elsewhere, it is clear Benvolio idolizes Romeo, and trails along helplessly in his footsteps, more sensitive kid than bluff warrior.

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<sup>84</sup> <http://www.rogerebert.com/> Wloszczyna, Susan. Romeo and Juliet. Access from 25 January, 2017.

<sup>85</sup> John Michael Bell. How Not to Adapt "Romeo and Juliet". October 17, 2013.

<sup>86</sup> Chris Knipp. Another, prettier Romeo. August, 2013

<sup>87</sup> Tasha Robinson. Romeo & Juliet. The Dissolve. October 10, 2013

In this adaptation, we finally can see the mysterious Rosaline, Romeo's first love, this fleeting accidental shadow, mentioned by Shakespeare in the play. Her role is performed by twenty-year-old Nathalie Rapti Gomez, an actress of Colombian and Greek origin living in Italy.

The locations of *Romeo and Juliet* are authentic and lovely. This film uses the traditional setting of Verona and also the grotto Sacro Speco in Subiaco, Mantua as well as in Caprarola, Lazio, in Cinecitta, Rome. The views of the grotto Sacro Speco are breathtaking. They shot the film in real and regal Italian renaissance gardens, palaces that are distractingly gorgeous. Carlo Carlei visualized his version as taking place in Renaissance Italy, which let him use the era's lavishly ornate Italian architecture for his backdrops, assisting a lush production design and costuming with equally lush settings. The elegant costumes manufactured by Carlo Poggioli (*Cold Mountain*) and craftsmanship of the historical production design by Tonino Zera (*Miracle at St. Anna*) deserve to be recognized.

Carlei and Fellowes include the scene that both Zeffirelli and Luhrmann cut from their films: Juliet's grieving fiancée, Count Paris, sees Romeo approaching her tomb and challenges him to a duel. They fight, and Romeo kills him. It's unpleasant and unnecessary; it interrupts the momentum of the ending, injecting it with needless killing that has no sense of weight or the tragedy behind it.<sup>88</sup> The other alteration, made by Fellowes, was the elimination of the character Balthasar, servant to Romeo, but his words and actions are included in the role of Benvolio, Romeo's friend. Besides he added a new character Jack.

The final of the film deserves the special mention. If some previous famous scenes in the Carlei's version lack dramatic effect, the final compensates them. The director very touching filmed the scene in the tomb, differently from other versions. Dying Romeo after

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<sup>88</sup> John Michael Bell. How Not to Adapt "Romeo and Juliet". October 17, 2013.

drinking the poison sees Juliet awakening from the sleep. The dramatic effect is heightened by sumptuous affecting score by Abel Korzeniowski.

Music is one of the main components of any film. It should certainly pass the atmosphere of what is happening on the screen. And the task is much more difficult, when the music, associated with the story, exists throughout the several decades. The legendary soundtrack of Nino Rota is one of the pearls of the world cinematography. In October, 2012 it was reported, that James Horner (*Titanic, A Beautiful Mind*) was currently scoring Carlo Carlei's upcoming film adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*. For unknown reasons, Horner's soundtrack, recorded at the Abbey Road Studios in London, was replaced by Abel Korzeniowski's one.

The Polish composer received the offer to write the soundtrack to *Romeo and Juliet* at the end of April, 2013. He received recognition in Hollywood some years ago. He was nominated for Golden Globe Awards in 2009 in the Best Original Score category for critically acclaimed *A Single Man* by Tom Ford and for the film *W.E.* by Madonna in 2012. His original soundtrack received generally positive reviews. Korzeniowski won International Film Music Critics Award (IFMCA) 2013 in three categories – Film Score of the Year, Film Composer of the Year and the Best Original Score for a Drama Film, where among other nominees were Ennio Morricone (*La migliore offerta*) and John Williams (*The Book Thief*).

Composing for *Romeo and Juliet*, Korzeniowski did his best to forget how it ends, to really focus on the sweetness and agony of each moment as it is unfolding. In *Romeo and Juliet*, life and death serve merely as useful props, points of reference, eventually overcome and readily abandoned. It is a triumphant song of love reaching eternity. Their vows and promises, relentlessly exchanged, over and over again, like returning choruses of an endless love song – when Romeo and Juliet talk to each other, it already sounds like music, remarks A. Korzeniowski, at some point the extraordinary words serve their

purpose no more and rational meaning becomes irrelevant, and then... we can truly feel. My score is about that love story. As Jonathan Broxton for MOVIE MUSIC UK puts it, “A sweeping, soaring, romantic masterpiece that is easily one of 2013’s finest musical achievements. (...) the ultimate romantic score for the ultimate romantic story (...) Korzeniowski has yet again managed to write a central romantic theme of such grace and elegance, passion and emotion; virtually no-one working in film music today is writing music like this (...) some of the most moving and affecting music heard anywhere this year.”<sup>89</sup> “A brilliant successor to Nino Rota’s score, both spiritually and in terms of quality. (...) A beautiful work, infused with as much passion and emotion that you could expect from the greatest love story ever written.”

As a whole, *Romeo and Juliet* (2013) benefits from good music decision and lovely production values. The fact it is compared in some aspects to F. Zeffirelli’s version, means it deserves to be seen, even if the story does not feel inspired enough, considering this is supposed to feel like the most powerful tragic romance tale ever told. It is a respectable adaptation that most young and old moviegoers appreciated around the world.

*Romeo and Juliet* was released in Russia simultaneously with the United States and the United Kingdom in October, 2013, that was much earlier than other European countries. In Italy, for example, it was premiered on 12 February, 2015. The film grossed in Russia almost the same box office as in North America. Carlei’s *Romeo and Juliet* got rather warm response of Russian audience and became one of the popular foreign screen versions of Shakespeare’s plays.

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<sup>89</sup> <http://www.abelkorzeniowski.com> access from 7 February, 2017

#### 4. Branagh Theatre Live: *Romeo and Juliet*. Theatre +cinema

Immensely talented Kenneth Branagh is one of the leading Shakespearean directors of our time, and this production of *Romeo and Juliet* is the new evidence. In 1986, Kenneth Branagh already staged *Romeo and Juliet* at the theater Lyric Hammersmith with himself in the role of Romeo. Tired of interpretations of this work in light of the current politics, a young director returned to the basics and made the play, oriented primarily for the text of the play. Money for the staging was not enough, so each member of the very small number of the repertory company had to play several roles. Nevertheless, the critics and the audience liked the performance.

The production was a huge catapult for his career. He set up his Renaissance Theatre Company the following year and one of the first things they did was take Shakespeare's plays *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It* and *Hamlet* out on tour, directed by Judi Dench, Geraldine McEwan and Derek Jacobi. Kenneth Branagh's allegiance to William Shakespeare was rewarded with an honorary Doctorate in Literature from Queen's University of Belfast in 1990.

Besides his theatrical works on Shakespeare's plays, Branagh is known for his film adaptations of William Shakespeare, beginning with *Henry V* (1989), followed by *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993), *Hamlet* (1996), *Love's Labour's Lost* (2000) and *As You Like It* (2006).

In April 2015, Branagh announced his formation of the Kenneth Branagh Theatre Company, in which he would appear as actor-manager. With the company, he announced he will present a season of five shows at London's Garrick Theatre from October 2015 - November 2016. In September 2015 was announced that *The Winter's Tale*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Entertainer* will be broadcast in cinemas, in partnership with Picturehouse Entertainment.

Kenneth Branagh staged the timeless tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* on the stage of London's Garrick Theatre. It did not take long to find the actors for the leading roles. With Lily James (Juliet) and Richard Madden (Romeo) he worked two years ago on the new Disney's version of *Cinderella*. So the duet of young actors from the screen gradually shifted to the stage. Lily James also stars in a British-American six-part adaptation of Leo Tolstoy's novel *War and Peace*, distributed by *BBC*, as Natasha Rostova. As Lily James shared with Russian audience in the interview to *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* "I myself can not believe that I was lucky to embody on the screen and the stage these great literary heroines. To be honest, it's very scary. After all, I do not want to disappoint the true connoisseurs of classical literature."<sup>90</sup>

As for other cast, it was rather strange to see new "old" Mercutio. Branagh chose for this part his friend and colleague from Renaissance Theatre Company seventy-seven year old English actor Derek Jacobi. The age difference stands out, as the most imagines Mercutio as Romeo's contemporary rather than an elder. According to Lloyd Evans, the casting of Derek Jacobi as the young hothead Mercutio seems half-genius and half-prank,<sup>91</sup> ... Jacobi is so superb in fact that Mercutio's death upstages that of the lovers.<sup>92</sup>

Friar Lawrence, conversely, is youthful, but ardent and serious in all the ways Romeo is hormonally hasty. The part is excellently played by Samuel Valentine. Meera Syal is flirty and funny as the nurse.

The creators of the performance attempted to stylize the play to Federico Fellini's black-and-white movies of the sixtieth like *La Dolce Vita* (1960). The stylish setting evokes Italy in the early 1950s with men flaunting their tuxedos and sunglasses, and the ladies in each new scene appearing in a new dress, inspired by Fellini's heroines. The characters sing and dance a lot to groovy music on the well-known ball-masquerade.

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<sup>90</sup> <http://www.ng.ru/>

<sup>91</sup> <http://www.spectator.co.uk/>

<sup>92</sup> McKie, L. Jacobi Steals Show In Branagh's *Romeo And Juliet*. *Romeo and Juliet*, Garrick Theatre 2016

During the balcony scene Juliet cheerfully drink champagne, admiring by Romeo. Even some slang is contained in Shakespeare's text. The comedic interpretation of the story splits audiences and it is true that sometimes the humor is misplaced.

Patrick Doyle became the composer of a new *Romeo and Juliet*. Patrick joined the Renaissance Theatre Company as composer and musical director in 1987. In 1989 director Sir Kenneth Branagh commissioned Patrick to compose the score for *Henry V*, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle, and they have subsequently collaborated on numerous pictures, based on Shakespeare's plays including *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Hamlet* and *As You Like It*. Patrick and Branagh's collaboration within film and theatre has continued to this day, with performances worldwide that include Branagh's 2014 production of *Macbeth*, which ran at the Park Avenue Armory Theatre in New York.

To the Russian audience Patrick Doyle is known, first of all, thanks to Russian-French film *Est – Ouest* (1998), nominated by The Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2000, featuring Oleg Menshikov and Catherine Deneuve. *Sense and Sensibility* (1995) and a modernized version of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1997) with his music were also a success in Russia.

*Romeo and Juliet* was premiered in Russian cinemas like in other European countries in July, 7, 2016. In Russia it was as part of TheatreHD: Summer Theatre Festival 2016. TheatreHD is broadcast on the screens of cinema's the most famous performances of the best theaters in the world: the Royal National Theatre (London), Shakespeare Theatre *Globe* (London), the Royal Shakespeare Company (Stratford-upon-Avon), the Metropolitan Opera (New York), Bolshoi Theatre (Moscow), and others, as well as spectacles-nominees for the leading Russian theatrical prize *The Golden Mask*. The mission of the project is to enable each person to see the masterpieces of the world theater and visual art on the screens of cinema, without leaving the hometown. From July,1 to September, 30 2016 the cinemas of sixty cities of Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan

and Belarus screened premieres and hits of recent years: drama, comedy, opera featuring movie, theater and opera stars: Ralph Fiennes, Vanessa Redgrave, Lily James, Richard Madden, Mark Strong, Anna Netrebko, Roberto Alagna and many others. One of the highlights of the summer season TheatreHD became the premiere of William Shakespeare's immortal tragedy by Kenneth Branagh's theater company. Benjamin Caron directed the cinematic broadcast of *Romeo and Juliet* as well as the previous Branagh's *The Winter's Tale*.

It was on in cinemas in Russia in the original language with subtitles, the direct broadcast was without them. The production of *Romeo and Juliet* got mixed reviews from the Russian public and critics. Some disadvantages exasperated the viewer should be mentioned. The first was that the telecast of the performance was preceded by twelve minutes of pre-taped interviews with contemporary London teenagers, asking them questions about the play itself and about what life as a teenager is like. The purpose of this was to remind the audience that the title characters are very young. But was it necessary? The duration of the performance is already one hundred and forty-three minutes and another twelve minutes distracted from the play.

The other rather irritant was the decision that the telecast should be in black and white. Obviously the live audience, in the theatre, was not seeing the play in black and white. The sets and costumes could not be equally effective for an audience seeing them in color and a simulcast audience seeing them in black and white. The idea was artsy and artificial, and it was unclear to some viewers what the effect was supposed to be.

Comparing this version of *Romeo and Juliet* with previous ones, especially Zeffirelli's it is noticeable the lack of music, especially it is felt in the dramatic scenes. There is no one remarkable melody, associated with this adaptation. It would be better to shorten the number of musical numbers during the performance and to concentrate on so called "love theme" even if in a modern arrangement.

To sum up, *Romeo and Juliet* by Branagh Theatre Live is another chance to get acquainted with the new alternative reading of the immortal tragedy in the style of Kenneth Branagh, keeping worthily to reinterpret and experiment with Shakespeare's lines. Alongside with this performance, the productions, broadcast by National Theatre Live, such as *Coriolanus* (2013) with Tom Hiddleston and *Hamlet* (2015) with Benedict Cumberbatch found their audience in Russia.

## Conclusion

The research on Shakespeare's plays in Russian culture has shown an undiminishing interest in his body of work since the eighteenth century, thanks to the translations of Alexander Sumarokov, to the present day. The research also explains the reasons for his popularity in Russia in different periods. For example, in the nineteenth century Alexander Pushkin became one of the great admirers of Shakespeare. As for the twentieth century, the new wave of Shakespeare's popularity in Russia happened in 1934, when he was proclaimed the proper inheritance of the proletariat by the First Congress of Soviet Writers. I also analyzed his influence on Russian poets and writers, such as Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Turgenev and Pasternak and his place in their literary heritage.

The first part of the thesis "*Hamlet: Translational and Staging Transformations of the Original for the Russian Scene*" is devoted to the most significant Shakespeare's play. I observed the problems of literary translation and represented the position of Pasternak, developed his own translational conception, and contributed a lot to the acquaintance of the Russian reader with Shakespeare. Translation and reinterpretation in the Russian language of Shakespeare's plays is undoubtedly the pinnacle of Pasternak's achievements as a translator. The author's attention to the preservation of the national color, poetic picture of the poem, the use of colloquial expressions, as well as the correspondence to the norms of the Russian poetic language are the features of Pasternak's conception. Especially important is his merit as the translator of Shakespeare's plays for the stage and screen. The result of it became the worldwide recognition of Grigory Kozintsev's theatre (1954) and film version of *Hamlet* (1964). Such creative interweaving of names and forms of art is the proof of the unity of the world culture.

The research of theatrical productions of *Hamlet* showed that Pavel Mochalov set the pace by his performance of Hamlet at Maly Theatre (Moscow) in 1837. The twentieth

century became the most productive for *Hamlet* in Russia. Vasilii Kachalov, Innokenty Smoktunovsky, Vladimir Vysotsky and Yevgeny Mironov are among the best performers of Prince of Denmark in the twentieth century in Russia. Two versions of *Hamlet* – Nikolai Akimov’s at the Vakhtangov Theatre (1932) and Andrei Tarkovsky’s at Lenkom Theatre (1977) – failed.

Even now two hundred and seventy years later after the first appearance of Shakespeare’s play in Russia the directors and actors continue to search for new creative directions of embodiment of his masterpiece in Russian culture. For example, Valery Fokin’s 2010 *Hamlet* at the Alexandrinsky Theatre in St Petersburg in the grotesque key, where Denmark’s population are football fans or the ballet *Hamlet* to the music of Shostakovich on the new stage of the Bolshoi Theatre in 2015.

In this part I also examined the most remarkable theatrical and screen versions of Shakespeare’s tragedy to represent the most complete chronological chain of staging of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* in Russian culture.

The second part of the research “Popularity of some foreign screen adaptations of Romeo and Juliet among the Russian audience” is devoted to the films, based on immortal Shakespeare’s tragedy, received the popularity among the Russian audience.

*Romeo and Juliet* appeared in Russia much later than *Hamlet* in 1839. The most famous staging of Shakespeare’s tragedy found in theatre, in the spectacle, directed by Sergei Radlov in 1934 and in the ballet by Sergei Prokofiev in 1935 with the legendary Russian ballet dancer Galina Ulanova as Juliet.

*Romeo and Juliet* (1968) by Franco Zeffirelli received the worldwide public and critic recognition. It became the most popular film in Russia among all the screen versions, based on Shakespeare’s plays. It happened thanks to the talent of the director and the young actors in the lead parts. Magnificent music by Nino Rota from the movie became the separate masterpiece. Rota’s love theme upon the release of the film shifted to

Russian culture as the most popular musical accompaniment for figure skating and continues to inspire the sportsmen for new performances.

New screen versions of *Romeo and Juliet* continue to appear in the world cinematograph with different degree of success almost each year. B. Luhrmann's modernized adaptation of *Romeo + Juliet* got a huge popularity in the world. The newest performance by Branagh Theatre Live also became a newsmaker, but both versions could not compete with popularity of Zeffirelli's version among Russian audience. Relative success in Russia among new screen versions of *Romeo and Juliet* belongs to C. Carlei's film.

The peculiarity of Shakespeare's tragedy in Russia is that it has become the fruitful background for the creation of numerous variations on a theme of *Romeo and Juliet*. The most popular adaptation became the story *You couldn't dream* (1979) about sad love of Moscow students, written by Galina Sherbakova. *You couldn't dream of...* (1980), based on the eponymous story and directed by Ilya Frez, became the cult film in Russia of the eighties.

In conclusion I would like to say, that Shakespeare's plays as great works of art contain a set of different meanings that are revealed over time, so each new generation finds something new, exciting to its time, and this will continue to inspire directors to new films and performances.

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