“In double trust”

Shakespeare in Central Europe

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Edited by
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Editor´s Introduction

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Part I: HORIZONS

1

Polonia est divisa in partes tres: Shakespeare in the Polish Culture of the 19th Century

Marta Gibińska

Shakespeare's early presence in Polish culture means first of all his plays in theatre. The earliest traces take us to the early 17th century when English companies visited rich Hanseatic cities, among them Gdańsk. Polish kings, Sigismund III and Ladislaw IV were particularly hospitable to English comedians in Warsaw (Limon). However, Swedish wars later in the same century brought chaos and ruin to the country. Until late 18th century Shakespeare did not figure on the Polish cultural horizon. The last Polish king, Stanislaw August Poniatowski was a generous patron of arts. During his reign Polish periodical *Monitor* offered (in 1766) critical essays on Shakespeare's plays, repeating Dr Johnson's ideas from his famous Introduction, while Polish playwrights, towards the end of the century took to adaptations of Shakespeare's plays. Wojciech Bogusławski, the most eminent man of theatre of the time was the first to try to translate Schroeder's adaptations (notably *Hamlet* in 1797), soon Jan Nepomucen Kamiński followed with his translations, so at the threshold of the 19th century the theatre in Warsaw, as well as provincial theatres and touring companies offered Shakespeare's plays; the great tragedies, mostly translated from German adaptations, *Hamlet, Macbeth or King Lear* were wel-

come with great applause in Warsaw, Vilna, Cracow and Lvov. The French adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet* was also widely popular.

The first quarter of the 19th century was also the time of new critical attention paid to Shakespeare in press, while the University offered enthusiastic lectures on Shakespeare as part of the course in European literature. If Bogusławski's and Kaminski's theatrical productions produced gothic and melodramatic Shakespeare according to the prevailing fashion in German theatres, theatrical critics adopted the neo-classical vantage point and recommended first of all French tragedy. However, enthusiastic opinions about Shakespeare's art and serious attempts to discuss Shakespeare productions as they appeared were not infrequent. Shakespeare's presence in Poland of the time was also cultivated in the fashion of English bardolatry by Polish aristocrats who, like the Countess Isabella Czartoryska or Graf Jan Tarnowski, brought from their voyages sundry 'shakespeare objects'.

The great Romantic movement in Poland is witness to the growing cult of Shakespeare. Adam Mickiewicz mentioned in his letters reading Shakespeare with a dictionary in hand; we owe to him some immortal phrases which are his translation of Hamlet's lines, "Frailty, thy name is woman' and "Methinks I see… in my mind's eye"[1]. His rival, Juliusz Słowacki quoted and paraphrased Shakespeare in his letters, and in the 1830s, while in London, went regularly to the theatre to see Shakespeare's plays. Both translated bits and pieces, Mickiewicz from *Romeo and Juliet*, Słowacki from *King Lear* and *Macbeth*; many plays by Słowacki are strongly influenced by Shakespeare's in their ideas and in characterization. Cyprian Kamil Norwid, another great poet, translated passages from *Hamlet* and *Julius Caesar.*

However, until the second half of the 19th century it is difficult to discuss Shakespeare as a real presence in Polish culture. To understand the slow progress of full appropriation we must turn to the political situation of the country. Poland partitioned among the three powers of Russia, Prussia and Austria for 123 years (as from

[1] „Kobieto, puchu marny" and „Zdaje mi się, że widzę… przed oczyma duszy mojej".

1796) was from the point of view of political geography a paragon of non-existence. The three partitions meant three different systems of law and administration, and oppression. From the very beginning the acceptance of subjection and of being second-class citizens was a major problem of middle-class Poles (at the beginning of the century that meant mainly *szlachta*, i.e., gentry); three military uprisings mark the history of partitioned Poland, all three great failures: the first one was the Kosciuszko Uprising 1796: its failure sealed the final (third) act of partitioning; the second of 1830 brought about considerable tightening of repressive measures especially in the Russian partition; the most tragic uprising took place in 1863; it was the most widespread territorially and socially, costing the society not only loss of blood but also loss of hope, energy, and belief in any military resistance in all three partitions. Also, that last uprising brought about large changes in the demographic structure of the society as well as its considerable impoverishment. Yet, the language, the shared traditions, and the expectations of freedom in some dim future united the three partitions into one history of Poland; in all other aspects in which history of a nation is gauged things went along three different paths.

The fall of the 1830 millitary coup in Warsaw brought about a period of an unbelievable political and spiritual stagnation coupled with repressions. In the Russian partition Polish universities in Warsaw and Vilna were closed down, and the Western part of the former Polish territories under Russian occupation, including Warsaw, were under particularly strengthened control of the police and local government. However, the territories to the East of the rivers Vistula and Bug, covering the area of Lithuania, Belaruss and Ukraine, which had been inside the Polish borders prior to 1772, were much less controlled and the measures against Poles there were not so strictly implemented since the lands were not recognized as ethnically Polish. Polish population was more than ⅓ of the people living in the Eastern area, so it was natural that whatever Polish cultural activity was allowed under the Tsar, it could take place more freely there. Thus, until 1863 ex-Polish Eastern provinces enjoyed relatively vivid Polish theatrical life, though in

style and scope quite provincial, old-fashioned, and looking back to the models of the late 18th century. A considerable number of regular touring companies performed in bigger towns, very often repeating the same play in Polish and Ukrainian or Russian.

Against all expectations, in Warsaw the theatre, unlike the university, was allowed to play – and to play in Polish. If one looks at the theatre in Warsaw as an institution one may even be impressed. Apart from the significant change of the name – formerly National, now Warsaw Theatre – nothing seems to show cultural stagnation: the enterprise is state owned, has its presiding committee whose president has large prerogatives and funds. The committee and the presidents are Russian, of course, but they seem to care for their institution and it grows. In 1833 the largest and most impressive building of the town theatre in Europe is opened in Warsaw with much acclaim; three years later in one of the wings opens the other stage of the enterprise, a continuation of the earlier tradition, the Variete Theatre. The Great Stage is used for operas and ballets, the Variete for regular plays. In the 1850-ies the Warsaw Theatre seems to be doing very well, with well stabilized companies and regular seasons.

But behind the successful light repertoire the economy of the state-owned theatre was an instrument of submission and correction: the audiences were offered a stately palace where they got what was safe from the point of view of the occupant, safe and elegant, a cultural dish of air. The almost complete absence of Shakespeare is a most telling sign: he was considered subversive alongside with the romantic Hugo and patriotic Słowacki, and could not be shown. In comparison with the time before 1830 very little of Shakespeare could be shown: in Vilna the earlier provincial 1844 *Hamlet* (i.e. in a garbled, poorly translated version) was shown again in 1853; in Warsaw *The Taming of the Shrew* in 1836 – a telling choice of the company playing mostly comedies and melodrama; one single tragedy, *Othello*, in 1862, significantly, a tragedy where no king is killed.

The degree of state control over theatrical activities in Warsaw is even more evident when compared with what was going on in the

Eastern provinces with their touring Polish troupes. Though artistically rather poor, they did things which were absolutely unthinkable in Warsaw, like smuggling parts of Mickiewicz's most subversive play *Dziady* (*The Forefathers*, a national, Romantic, revolutionary, and anti-tsarist classic, which, by the way, was also considered subversive by the communists in Poland of the 20th century!) .

Still, the theatre became a steady feature of Warsaw life in the way of entertainment; there had been a continuity of acting traditions, and a developing interest in European dramatic novelties (even though limited in nature) and in the acting and staging techniques. Besides, all productions were in Polish, so the theatre kept the language of the non-nation alive, as well as the cultural habit of an evening in theatre with well known, if not beloved actors. Something to build upon after the next political catastrophe of 1863, even though the quality of the plays had been less than ambitious.

The Austrian part of Poland with two large cultural centres Cracow and Lvov enjoyed a different history. Since the 1830 uprising did not constitute an upheaval comparable to what happened in the Russian partition, the measures of the Austrian empire did not become a particularly oppressive reality. Until 1846 Cracow enjoyed the status of free city. In 1843 a new comparatively modern town theatre was opened with modest subsistence from the municipal funds; a year earlier private funds of a magnate ensured opening of a new theatre in Lvov. Obviously, the new theatres were opened because there was cultural demand large enough to secure profits. The demand had grown out of the vivid and energetic growth of theatrical life in the early 19th century, with much German and Austrian influence when it came to staging Shakespeare (Gibińska 62-65).

The end of the free state of the city of Cracow marked the convulsions of the "Spring of Nations" 1848. In the region of Poland under Austrian occupation a lot of social and political unrest was triggered, culminating in the 1848 Cracow uprising. The resulting loss of free status went hand in hand with some tightening of the anti-Polish policy: the language of administration and higher education became German, but in theatrical life it meant no more than

German competition, however, well subsidized. Since 1853 there existed a regular German theatre in Cracow. The Polish repertoire after 1848 brings to the stage Słowacki's tragedy *Mazepa* and Part III of *The Forefathers* by Mickiewicz, two sparks of the ambitious Polish cultural life in the otherwise not the most vigorous period in this respect. As for Shakespeare, we know of *Hamlet* in Kamiński's adaptation produced in Cracow in 1840. 12 years later a production of *Hamlet* (along with the first production of *Mazepa*) was taken by the Cracow actors to Poznań. It is difficult to speculate what kind of adaptation it was and whether the production had anything to do with that of 1840. But the scarcity of Shakespearean titles after 1830 in Cracow suggests that an adaptation of *Hamlet* must have been in use. Shakespeare had more luck in Lvov than in Cracow though slightly later: *Macbeth* appeared there in 1859, while *Richard III* in 1864.

The Polish theatrical life in the Western Polish territories under Prussia was most limited. The chief centre of Polish culture was Poznań, however, the effect of the 1830 uprising was quite devastating. The Prussian authorities closed all public activities in Polish for eight years. The town had no building in which to install any regular company. So what happened was that after 1838 only visiting companies came to play, mostly the players from Cracow. In the years 1844-1859 they visited the Prussian partition 10 times, touring also the smaller towns, and occasionally playing in Silesia as well.

The political catastrophe of the 1863 uprising sealed the end of the early Polish theatre: the audiences changed radically. From an essentially gentry oriented institution (even though in towns) the theatre now was to cater for town dwellers of a decidedly *bourgois* or *petit bourgois* kind (Raszewski 129). The change of social structure must have had an impact on the profile of the stage, yet the changes were not the same in the three parts of Poland, and of course they evolved with time. To illustrate the matter in short: the tsarist regime took very strong measures and punished Poles, especially the educated gentry, by, a/ taking their lands and leaving them destitute, and b/ sending large numbers to Siberia. This was a

heavy blow directed against what then constituted a sort of middle class and Polish intelligentsia. Some of those destitute came to live in big towns, especially Warsaw, many emigrated to the Austrian part where Poles were relatively left in peace.

In Prussia, the anti-Polish measures were extremely hard, but the blow was directed against language and education. The effect was that gentry, mostly staying in the country, and particularly women, were responsible for clandestine private education of the young in their language, literature and history. Theatre came as a great ally: the Prussians left a loophole in their law whereby a theatre company could be registered as a private enterprise. The fate of Poles in the Austrian part was tied up with the changes in the Empire: Galicia – this was the name of the ex-Polish territory, gained a form of autonomy where Polish language, Polish institutions and Polish cultural activities were allowed. From the heights of Vienna, Galicia was hopelessly provincial and very poor. But from the heights some details seem trifles and may not be duly recognized: demographic changes and migrations changed Lvov and Cracow into strongholds of Polish culture which, together with Warsaw, paradoxically, against all Russian expectations, ensured survival of the national identity and continuity of cultural growth. Shakespeare was at the very centre of this process.

The most important process concerning appropriation of Shakespeare into Polish culture took place at that time: translations from Shakespeare's texts (that is, from contemporary English editions) rather than from German and French adaptations. By the end of the 1860s there came out quite a few volumes of new translations by various translators, but the impact to rapid growth of Shakespeare in Polish belongs to Józef Paszkowski who began publishing single plays in translation in the 1850s. They were destined to become the classical standard and the beloved, well known, and much quoted version of Polish Shakespeare until today. They were immediately recognized by the theatre as beautifully 'playable'.

Soon there appeared more really good translators and Collected Works edited by an important author of the time, Józef Krasze-

wski, contained texts by Józef Paszkowski, Leon Ulrich and Stanisław Egbert Koźmian. The three volumes appeared in 1875-1877 and became available in Polish bookshops and libraries. So one of the ways in which Shakespeare became a political presence in the latter part of the 19th century in non-existent Poland was by becoming a strongly internalized text, next to the national tradition of the great Romantic bards, Słowacki and Mickiewicz. The three mentioned translators were by no means the only ones. One should mention at least four other important and skilled translators (Placyd Jankowski, Józef Komierowski, Gustaw Ehrenberg, Adam Pług-Pietkiewicz). In 1897 a new edition of Shakespeare's works with a new selection of Polish translations was brought forth by Henryk Biegeleisen in Lvov. This process of internalisation or acculturation of Shakespeare went together with rapidly growing number of his plays in theatres of the three parts of (non)Poland. Again, there were differences in the ways the process grew and developed in each of them.

The theatre of Cracow deserves the first place in our discussion of the period after 1865. The directorship of Stanisław Koźmian in the years 1865 – 1885 marked twenty years of unprecedented growth of the Cracow theatre in its artistic dimension. Koźmian had excellent education and very good connections. In the late 1850s, before settling down in Cracow, he spent a season in Parisian theatres, then in the theatres in Berlin and Vienna. He became an ardent admirer of the work of Heinrich Laube and learned a lot from him, particularly in matters of theatre management, actors' training and play directing. So, when coming to the small provincial theatre in Cracow, he had a set of well-defined concepts and ideas formed on his experience of great capital theatres, and a great ambition to use them in order to create a centre of national culture. He succeeded. During the twenty years of his almost incessant directorship, the Cracow Theatre became a place which emanated a powerful influence on the cultural life in Galicia, and with comparable force in the Russian and Prussian parts of Poland. This was his dream: in 1875 he would write of his ambition,

> "[My actors] were expected to pour new life into Polish theatre, whether staying in Cracow or moving on to other national theatres (…) and bring back or introduce to the stage the works of the immortal masters: Słowacki, Mickiewicz, Shakespeare, Schiller, Goethe, Molière, Beaumarchais, Musset, Sheridan, even Racine and Aristophanes." (Koźmian I, 276)[2]

He worked with the deep conviction and great clarity towards giving Poles a guarantee, a model, and a rich source of national cultural identity – a theatre of great repertoire played by competent and talented company of actors. In that repertoire Shakespeare was the crown of excellence.

Koźmian created in his theatre what was known as 'the Cracow School': he demanded a concerted team work, condemned any attempt at star acting; he expected from his actors a serious study of the text, a realistic, psychological interpretation of characters, taught them assiduously to remember that every single moment of action had to align itself to everything that follows, thus constructing a continuous motivation for the characters. Even the smallest bit-parts were material for serious acting: to ensure this he often put his leading actors to play only small incidents. It is in such theatre that Shakespeare's plays became part of the national cultural canon. In the opinion of an eminent Polish theatre historian, "In the course of the 200 years of Polish theatre history we cannot find another such cultural phenomenon (…) A considerable part of the modern Polish theatre practice has its source in the Cracow School of Stanislaw Koźmian" (Got 190).

Altogether Koźmian produced 18 plays of Shakespeare, of which 7 were shown for the first time in Poland, the other 11 were in most cases shown in new translations. By the time Koźmian started building his theatre, the general consciousness of the importance of translating Shakespeare from English had already developed. In his own family there had been a tradition of Shakespeare translation: his uncle Stanislaw Egbert Koźmian belonged to the best translators in the 19th century. The first Polish edition of Shakespeare's Works edited by Józef Kraszewski appeared 1875, in

[2] All translations of Polish quotations are mine.

the middle of Koźmian's great period. Although Shakespeare in Kraków did not necessarily charm the audiences in the best translations of the time, Koźmian, highly conscious of the importance of the word in theatre, with the ear well tuned to poetry, did what he could to improve those translations which came into his hands and cooperated with his friend Józef Szujski, a historian and intellectual with literary inclinations, well known in Cracow.

As a director, he put great stress on rehearsals– a thing mostly neglected in provincial theatres. Shakespeare's plays were prime examples in his arguments. "Honestly", he writes, "one cannot accept a new masterpiece a week as a rule for a successfully growing stage". To draw audiences and fill the house "one needs to rehearse *The Marriage of Figaro* for two months, *King Lear* for three, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for six". And then he adds humbly in a postscript: "Machiavelli, when he sat down to read Roman historians used to put on his Sunday best. Theatre directors should do likewise when staging Shakespeare or Beaumarchais" (Koźmian I, 65-66). Not only did he insist on numerous and serious rehearsals, but often invited professors of the University of Cracow to ensure the best possible understanding and interpretation of the rehearsed plays (Got 195).

In his first season (1866-67) Koźmian introduced *The Merchant of Venice* and *Much Ado About Nothing*. Helena Modjeska, by that time already noticed as a particularly gifted young actress was, characteristically, given the parts of Portia and Hero: one leading, the other (in Koźmian's eyes) marginal. The third comedy premiered somewhat later in the season was *The Taming of the Shrew*. All three plays stayed in the repertory during the next twenty years, though with improvements in translation, changes in the adaptation to the staging conditions, and, of course, with changes in the cast.

Presenting his ideas about Shakespeare in general, about theatre and its cultural mission, about theatrical interpretation, directing, actors, etc., Koźmian proved the incisive quality of his theatrical reading of Shakespeare, worth quoting *in extenso*:

> "We would advise actors who take up Shakespearian parts to remember that each, even the smallest bit-part, has its own individuality, and so they should forget about the marginality of the character they play, instead trying to create that individuality, remembering that words are means to achieve the aim and not the aim itself". […] "In the moments of greatest tension Shakespeare is extremely economical with words. The act (deed) and the situation are all, words do not paint the action, but follow from it. Without the intelligent, creative work of the actor, without the ability to read between the lines, there will be no true Shakespeare on the stage." (Koźmian I, 134-147)

In another essay he makes an interesting political observation. While discussing with enthusiasm Dogberry-and-Verges incidents as the essential comic vehicle of the denoument in *Much Ado About Nothing*, he sighs over the Galician beaurocracy:

> "How many things would be easier to settle if not for the Autonomy [i.e., Austrian Galicia, MG] ! If not for our Dogberrys and Vergeses, dully serious, awkward and incompetent, and yet so satisfied with themselves! (…) We would be happy if the members of the local Polish government, our aldermen, and all authorities of the Autonomy paid good attention to our Dogberry so well done by Mr. Zamojski." (Koźmian I, 160)

We get here one of the earliest glimpses of a truly "Polish Shakespeare", a Shakespeare who explains the Polish experience of the day.

If the 1871 *A Midsummer Night´s Dream* was his great success, *Macbeth* proved a traumatic failure. The play in full was produced only once in December 1869. Koźmian used here, unfortunately, a clumsy translation of his father. This is what he writes in one of his anonymous reviews: "One of the cardinal sins of the management was the production of *Macbeth* which brought harm to the actors and the theatre" (Koźmian II, 5). His company did not have actors suitable to take the parts of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Besides, Koźmian had only a week to get the play. He confessed contritely:

> "to put up Macbeth in 7 days, yes, only 7 days and 3 rehearsals, is sheer barbarity, it means slighting the art, Shakespeare,

> and oneself. (…) This fatal attempt should be a lesson to the director, and a memento that to treat Shakespeare superciliously must bring on *Nemesis*." (Koźmian II, 26)

He would never return to *Macbeth*. The trauma must have been extreme.

Koźmian played an important role in forming the beginnings of modern directorship. His great merit was to teach Polish audiences to enjoy Shakespearean comedies, *A Midsummer Night's Dream, Twelfth Night, As You Like It* , which became great hits alongside the Polish comedies of Fredro and the French plays by Musset. Politically, Koźmian was free to act as nobody in the Russian or the Prussian partitions of Poland, but he had his own political agenda (in politics, unlike in theatre, he was a confessed conservatist) which allowed him to steer away from the rocks of Austrian politics or Polish patriotic euforia onto the wide waters of artistic issues. It was in this theatre that Helena Modjeska made her name.

The ideas of Cracow radiated in all directions. Warsaw, the magnetic place for actors, drained Cracow of some of the best names, e.g., Modjeska. The style of acting and producing in Warsaw was dominated by the star system. The actors from Cracow easily accepted the star positions, but they also did their best to convince Warsaw that Shakespeare was indispensable for any great theatre. Altogether a different impact had Cracow on the theatrical life of the Prussian part of Poland. In the years 1866-1869, the Cracow company regularly visited Poznań bringing their plays to audiences who in those years had access only to German theatre. When in 1870 it appeared that the anti-Polish law was not extended to registration of free enterprise, the Poles immediately registered an acting company. Five years later they managed to obtain their own building, and so in the midst of Bismarckian repressions the Polish Theatre began to operate. After 1882 they were strong enough to tour the region of Wielkopolska, made occasional tours down south to Silesia and up north to Danzig.

The artistic prominence was low in comparison to Cracow or Warsaw. But the Cracovian standards were known and Shakespeare

did stand strong there. The Cracow Company brought to Poznań *Hamlet, King John, The Merchant of Venice, Taming of the Shrew, Romeo and Juliet, Richard III, A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In the 25 years after the theatre in Poznań was opened, its audiences could see the productions of *King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, As You Like It, Merry Wives of Windsor, Twelfth Night, Much Ado About Nothing.* The presence of Shakespeare in the Prussian partition was perhaps more of an obvious thing than in Warsaw because of the German cult of the playwright. The political significance of his plays there depended chiefly on the fact that they appeared in the new attractive Polish translations. Shakespeare became, like in the Russian part, the vehicle for the Polish language, the source of identity shared with Poles all over their (non)state. Shakespeare became also *ours*, not only *theirs*.

In the Russian part, the geography of Polish theatrical activities changed radically: after 1865 there was practically no possibility for small touring companies to move around Ukraine, Belaruss or Lithuania as before. Logically, though paradoxically, they moved east, following large numbers of Poles exiled into the depth of Russia. In Warsaw, the theatre kept growing as a successful institution: by the 1880-ies it had 7 different stages sitting up to 6000, 5 regular companies, two orchestras (Raszewski 146). Apart from this official giant, as from 1868, Warsaw was filled with a number of thriving 'garden theatres' which operated only in summer. The state-operated and controlled theatre offered steady wages and good contracts, even some social security, no wonder then, that the best Polish actors came there in great numbers. They in turn became great magnetic force for large audiences. In the political void of the time when no political views or activities were allowed other than loyal and obedient citizenship, theatre filled the void and offered an antidote: the audiences were divided into parties of fans and followers of particular actors and actresses, their cult grew to an unusual exultation of stardom and absorbed social energies which thereby were chanelled into safe (from the point of view of the authorities) ways.

But, of course, there was this other side to the cult of star actors. They played in the repertoire which was more seriously licensed than anything that was printed (and no book could appear without a censor's approval). The word which attracted crowds had to be watched. The word was dangerous because it was Polish: posters were printed in Russian and Polish, fortunately, on the stage it was exclusively the Polish language. Anything the stars did to enhance the artistic and ideological content of the Warsaw repertoire must be understood as political achievement.

The president of the State Theatre Committee in the years 1868-1880, a Russian official Serge Mukhanov, was a highly cultured man who seriously cared for the development of ambitious programme. His partner in greatness, Maria Kalergis, a pianist and an intellectual of wide connections and notorious reputation, seconded him in bringing to the Warsaw theatre such repertoire that mattered: both Shakespeare and Słowacki had become a noticeable presence there. Shakespeare did better than our Polish playwright who figured as a mysterious J. S. the author of two licensed plays . (The full name appeared on the poster only in 1906, Żurowski: 30.)

Not without struggle against censorship, though. *Othello* was passed in 1873 on condition that Cassio will not be referred to by the title of '*namiestnik*': the word the translator used for 'the ancient' is in Polish identical with the title of the tsarist governor of Warsaw; the text of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* had to be purged of any allusions to the cruelty of kings or to walls 'willful to hear without warning' (V.i.211); *The Winter's Tale* was forbidden on the grounds that it subverts the law of monarchy; in *Antony and Cleopatra* all lines considered to be immoral or expressing weakness of the monarch had to be cut; *Macbeth* was not allowed until 1878, while *Hamlet* could be produced only when Madame Kalergis persuaded the censors that all assassinations in the play are in fact a private affair of the Hamlet family (Secomska 307). But the main strictures of censors were directed first of all against the national spirit and the sense of history and identity. The censors kept their eye on the theatre's repertoire to make sure it did not grow into a Polish institution, thus the real treasures of Polish drama

had little chance to get through. Therefore, the function of Shakespeare's plays was all the more important.

The presence of Shakespeare on the Warsaw stage was also closely connected with the star cult. Helena Modjeska came to stay in Warsaw in 1871, but had visited as a guest star earlier too, and very energetically fought for Shakespeare's plays, in many of which she had played the leading roles in Cracow and Lvov. Her victorious battles in Warsaw brought to the stage the first productions in new translations: *Romeo and Juliet* (1870), *Hamlet* (1871), *Othello* (1873), *Much Ado About Nothing* (1876). The theatre historian A. Żurowski (32) offers statistics: in all her appearances on the Warsaw stage, Modjeska played 86 times Shakespeare, 48 times Dumas the Son, 48 times Korzeniowski and 37 times 'anonymous' Słowacki . Interestingly, she appeared the same number of times in *Hamlet* and in Słowacki's tragedy *Mazepa*.

One must not exaggerate the political motivation of Modjeska. In the star theatre of Warsaw she became the brightest of all of them, especially in her interpretations of Shakespearean ladies which she brought along from Koźmian's school: Juliet, Ophelia, and Desdemona. She knew the potential of the parts, and her success in Warsaw was the easier in comparison to Cracow because the ensemble work was so poor in Warsaw. Modjeska was an intelligent reader of Shakespeare and fought for *Hamlet* and*Mazepa* his presence also because she was convinced of the great and unique artistic value of his plays. She had to fight not only against the censors but also against the public who did not quite understand the appeal of, e. g., *Much Ado* or *As You Like It* (in the latter she failed at first: a woman in hose would not do! The play appeared only in 1891). But her efforts had a measurable political effect as well: by 1890 fifteen plays by Shakespeare, against 2 tragedies by J. S. and 7 plays by Schiller shaped the programme of the most influencial Polish institution in Warsaw in spite of fierce russification in schools, universities and administration. Shakespeare's new Polish word seconded Fredro's rich and juicy language (23 plays in the same period), and together with Schiller filled the gap of Słowacki's striking semi-absence thus

ensuring some continuation of the romantic rebellious spirit in the age of complacent positivist ideals.

The choice of plays needs some discussion as well to justify the thesis of political Shakespeare in Warsaw. 15 plays is less than half of Shakespeare's output translated and published by the end of the 1880-ies in Poland. The absence of some plays in Warsaw forms a telling index: such explicitly political plays as *Julius Caesar* or *Coriolanus*, *Richard II* or *King John*, even *Richard III*, did not find their way to the stage in Warsaw. *Hamlet* 1871, *Macbeth* 1878, and *King Lear 1879* did not figure at the top of the favoured list, and strikingly less so in comparison to Cracow and Lvov, or even Poznań. *Antony and Cleopatra* 1880 was relatively late and politically correct with the help of censorship; of the great tragedies prominence was given to *Othello* largely due to star appearances: not only Modjeska as Desdemona, but repeatedly Ira Aldridge (the first "black" actor playing Othello in Britain and touring afterwards around Europe) immensely successful as Othello (1862-67 in various towns). We may assume that politically the play did not contain any threatening points from the censor's point of view.

The wave of Shakespearean tragedies in the repertoire of the Warsaw Theatre in the late 1870-ies owes much to the visit of the Italian star Ernesto Rossi who came to Warsaw in 1877 and 1878; on the second occasion he brought the 'politically dangerous stuff' of *Macbeth* and *Coriolanus* (Sivert 105). Following Rossi's visit the first Polish *Macbeth* was produced in December of the same year. After 1879 *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *Romeo and Juliet* were regularly shown.

Great comedies were almost all there: *The Merchant of Venice* 1869, *Taming of the Shrew* 1873, *Much Ado About Nothing,* 1876, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 1884, *Twelfth Night* 1885, *As you Like It* 1891. Such cursory look at the titles offers an insight into what was unacceptable to the regime and what, with time, became the staple diet offered to the Warsaw audiences: the comic and the melodramatic was perceived as politically more tame and therefore acceptable. Tragedies made a rather precocious appearance after some

archness of argument with censorship, but the plays containing an explicit political debate were definitely barred.

Sivert (120) sums up the Warsaw Theatre repertoire until 1890 as undistinguished in the propagation of the Polish national cause. But the ideas of liberation and revolutionary feelings were largely burnt out after 1863. The public opinion sympathised with the idea of "organic work" and political conformity; the former propagated ideas of economic growth and development, the latter opposed any open confrontation with the authorities as potentially dangerous for the prospects of prosperous society. Why should then theatre fight – it worked "organically" for the cultivation of the Polish language and for the general cultural education, too, and, as Sivert himself aptly states (93), it " brought hope and comfort amid general inertion, ignorance and hollowness of public life and manners". A large share in this exacting task of keeping up the language and the cultural tradition, of ensuring continuous public education and refinement of taste in drama and literature goes to Shakespearean plays, newly and successfully translated in the middle of the 19th century, increasingly present in the life of Poles, in their language, in their cultural identity, in spite of political nonexistence. When in early XX century liberation and political reintegration into an independent state became an issue, Shakespeare was the obvious text from which a new generation learned how to understand their new ideas.

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2

Uprooting Shakespeare. A Historical Survey of Early to Institutionalised Hungarian Shakespeare Translation

Márta Minier

"tied to the business of producing nation"
(Fischlin and Fortier 2000, p. 11)

Shakespeare's Hungarian acculturation started at a time when a modern Hungarian literature and national identity were in the process of being established, and Shakespeare was a major driving force in that process. This article gives an (incomplete and short) overview of the early and the more formalised second stage of Hungarian Shakespeare translation. This outline will be set in a cultural and historical context and the context of broader translation principles and language policy.

The business of literature and language reform was organised and programmatic during the Hungarian Enlightenment; the central figure of the movement, an 'establishing father', was Ferenc Kazinczy, the first Hungarian translator – or rather adaptor – of *Hamlet*. However, as Péter Dávidházi emphasises, Shakespeare found renown even before he was 'available' either on the stage or on the page in Hungarian. He was first mentioned in Latin and French sources. György Alajos Szerdahely makes reference to him in his *Aesthetica* (1778) and in his *Poesis Dramatica* (1784). The

very first occurrence is in a transcript of his lectures from 1776. Ferenc Bessenyei, an outstanding figure of the Hungarian Enlightenment, also refers to him in 1777 in a letter written in French (cf. Dávidházi 1989, p. 72). It was not only the allure of 'shakespeare' (a shortcut for European values, liberty, democracy) that was of great significance at the time but so was the nation from whence he came. The English were also looked upon as a model, since they had well-established charities, they had achieved a high level of public education, and they appreciated their own intellectuals (including providing financial support for them).[1] The Transylvanian philosophy professor Mihály Benke's inclusion of two references to Shakespeare in his 1805 aesthetics study guide is also among the first significant allusions to Shakespeare (see Bartha 2010, pp. 67-72).

The Transylvanian scholar Elemér Jancsó (1966) distinguishes between different kinds of cultural mediators who contributed to establishing Shakespeare's reputation and cult among Hungarians in Transylvania. An important group consisted of (mainly Protestant) peregrinating students and travellers who visited Holland, Switzerland, Germany and Britain, and had a chance to see Shakespearean performances. In the last three decades of the 18th century, a few of them mentioned Shakespeare in their diaries, memoirs or correspondence. The army intelligentsia constituted another group. This fragmented group served in the army in different cities of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and thus encountered various other cultures. These army officers often attended theatrical performances; they came across Shakespeare too, and some of them, for instance, János Kótsi Patkó, the first Hungarian actor to assume the role of Hamlet, were inspired to engage in the establishment of Hungarian theatre. Enlightened members of the upper aristocracy also came across Shakespeare when travelling or studying in Britain, France, Switzerland or Germany. A prominent aristocrat who was on the fringes of the foundation of a permanent company in Kolozsvár was Miklós Wesselényi Senior. Some of his ideas owed

[1] The anonymous article discussing these issues, and pointing to England as "the very pinnacle of civilization" appeared in the periodical *Mindenes Gyűjtemény* [Miscellanea] (Dávidházi 1998, pp. 111-112).

a debt to Shakespeare, and he contributed to the formulation of the artistic policy of the Hungarian theatre in Kolozsvár. If not a Shakespeare cult, then at least an almost unconditional respect for Shakespeare and what his name represented started before the appearance of Hungarian versions of his texts.

Péter Dávidházi, studying the history of Hungarian Shakespeare bardolatry in terms of a literary cult which works in the manner of a quasi-religion[2], distinguishes between five phases of the history of "this special code of social behaviour" (1989, p. 108): initiation (~1776-1840), mythicising (~1840-1864), institutionalisation (~1868-1923), iconoclasm (~1923-1960) and secularisation (after 1948).[3] Later on, he gives less clear dividing lines between these periods: 1770s-1830s (initiation), early 1840s-1864 (mythicising), 1860s-early 1920s (institutionalisation), 1920s-1950s (iconoclasm), 1960s up to the present day (renamed as 'secularization *and cultic revival*')[4]. The more recent classification might imply that the periods are not so homogeneous, there can be dissenting voices in every period that challenge the dominant way of thinking; the various attitudes characterising each of these stages can intermingle.

The Enlightenment: Shakespeare in Hungarian garb

As pointed out before, the main priority of the programme of the Hungarian Enlightenment was twofold: to establish a modern Hungarian literature (and drama) mainly by inspiring authors with foreign models; and to enrich the language, often via through-translation from other languages.[5] As a result, the first phase of the translation history of Shakespeare in Hungarian was characterised by cultural adaptations of his plays. Striving for philologi-

[2] *"Isten másodszülöttje"* ["God's Second Born"]

[3] The Hungarian names given by Dávidházi for these phases are 'beavatás', 'mitizálódás', 'intézményesülés', 'bálványrombolás', and 'szekularizálódás'. Dávidházi (1989, pp. 73-76).

[4] Dávidházi, *Shakespeare Yearbook* (1996, pp. 1-9), Dávidházi, *The Romantic Cult of Shakespeare* (1998, pp. 108-110).

[5] For the term through-translation (loan translation or *calque*) see Rozhin 2000, pp. 141-142.

cal correctness and linguistic equivalence were not crucial factors in practice. As Frigyes Riedl notes, "A hevenyészett fordítások és átdolgozások kora ez" [This is the time of hurried translations and rewrites] (Riedl 1916, p. 12). Therefore it comes as no surprise that the first Hungarian *Hamlet* – Kazinczy's –, translated mainly in prose from a German prose 'original', avoids Shakespeare's tragic ending, at least in the sense that the title character survives and ascends the throne. The source was Friedrich Ludwig Schroeder's free adaptation, a version of which had also been directed by Goethe. Linguistic translation theory calls this method *pragmatic adaptation* (Klaudy 1997, p. 34). This strategy characterises the incipient stage of the Hungarian Shakespeare bardolatry. Péter Dávidházi warns against dismissing these adaptations, arguing that the role of translating Shakespeare at that time was different in Hungarian culture from what it is now, "[T]he ultimate function of translating was closely linked to the social function of the cult itself" (Dávidházi 1989, p. 131).

Kazinczy's *Hamlet* was not the first Hungarian translation of Shakespeare. In 1785 the Transylvanian György Aranka translated a few scenes in prose from *Richard II*, using Christoph Martin Wieland's adaptation. The first acculturated *Romeo and Juliet* in Hungarian, based on a reworking of the play in the vein of sentimentalism and in a middle-class setting by Christian Felix Weisse, appeared in 1786.[6] The first Hungarian *King Lear*, from Transylvania, is dated by Zsuzsánna Kiss (2010) to sometime before 1794 and is presumed to be prepared from a German source by the Calvinist theology professor József Sófalvi. Gábor Döbrentei in his 1812 *Macbeth* (no longer extant) reduced the number of the characters (in proportion to the number of actors available). Although he consulted German sources, too (Voss, Bürger and Schiller), he worked from an English original. In 1830, he completed his second translation of the play, on which he worked for twenty years. In this text – which was put to use as a stageplay in 1834 in Buda (see Bartha 2010, p. 95)– he produced metrical patterns as a novelty in the

[6] Weisse sought a balance between French and English influence(s) in his work. For instance, in his *Richard III* he experimented with the three unitites (cf. Thorlby 1969, p. 824).

Hungarian translations of Shakespeare. Döbrentei was planning to translate *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as well, but he did not manage to finish these. Kazinczy, too, translated *Macbeth*, relying on Gottfried August Bürger's translation as a 'source text'. Dávidházi's summary of the ideology underlying translation this time recalls the basic principle of the French school of *les belles infidèles* of Nicolas Perrot d'Ablancourt, which influenced a few Hungarian authors of the day, for instance, József Péczeli (cf. Dávidházi 1998, p. 121):

> [I]ts ultimate mission was to spread Enlightenment and revive a national ethos, two values thought to be indispensable to survival. For such purposes […] translations had to be beautiful rather than faithful. (Dávidházi 1998, pp. 131–132)

This was a period when the freedom exercised in rewriting was continuously informed by the constraints of creating an image of the nation and its culture for the sake of domestic as well as foreign prestige. Some Shakespeare plays were also adapted so that they promoted the integration of a mythical, prehistoric Hungarian past into the newly-formed modern European ideal. In such vein, King Lear is merged into the legendary figure of Szabolcs vezér (chieftain Szabolcs, who, according to King Béla's notary, was one of the leaders that took part in conquering the Carpathian Basin and settling the previously semi-nomadic Hungarians).[7] This adaptation was done by Sándor Mérey (1779-1848), a politician and the manager of the Budapest theatre. He was a well-read person, who translated from French, German and Italian and adapted some 16 plays from German, including *King Lear* and *Richard III*.[8] The latter, entitled

[7] Szabolcs, which is a name of unkown origin, was revived by Vörösmarty during the romanticist national awakening (Ladó 1990, p. 212).

[8] Such phenomena are not uniquely Hungarian, but rather characteristic of national awakenings in Europe. An interesting piece conceived in the same vein is also to be found in Finnish literature. In an 1834 adaptation of *Macbeth* (retitled as *Ruunulinna*) the names and the location (Eastern Karelia here) are entirely domesticated, and the plot is infused with the mythic Finnish past. The motives are very similar to the Hungarian ones, although the heyday of such adaptations in Hungarian was earlier. Paloposki and Oittinen see this "as an attempt not only at the improvement of the Finnish language or the enriching of Finnish literature, but at the creation of a history worthy of admiration on a national scale" (2000, p. 380).

Tongor, vagy Komárom állapottya a VIII. században [Tongor, or the State of Komárom in the 8th Century] is a rewrite of Weisse's German version. This play is also set in ancient Hungarian times. Even though both plays were staged at the time (*Szabolcs* in 1795, *Tongor* in 1794), both texts are untraceable.[9]

Although many literary and cultural historians of the time (for example, Bayer 1909, p. 136) claim that Hungarian writers saw the theatre as a means of getting their work – and thus, the renewed language – across to a wider public – which would imply a notion of theatre as subservient to literature at the time –, the role played by the theatre in both the introduction of Shakespeare to the general public and the spreading of 'new' (of course often 'derivative') Hungarian plays should not be underestimated. A pioneer in encouraging the foundation of Hungarian theatre was the first translator of *Hamlet*, Ferenc Kazinczy. So much so that he was planning to act in the first production of his translation. He is a rather controversial figure in Hungarian cultural history. Frigyes Riedl termed him a person with the finest 'anatomy' for persiflage and the most enthusiastic 'sponge' ("a legfinomabb szervezetű utánérző, a leglelkesebb felszivó", Riedl 1916, p. 5), while Czigány styled him "a dictator who preached diligent imitation" (1984, p. 120).

Kazinczy convincingly argued that in order to produce good domestic works authors should be stimulated by translations. The purpose was not only to introduce literary models and patterns but ideas as well, and improve the taste of the public. In Kazinczy's view – or rather, in his practice from the 1790s onwards –, a good translation is a transplantation of the original into the receiving culture.[10] He does not insist on either word-for-word or sense-for sense translation; he claims that the craft of translating involves writing in the way the source text does, not necessarily reiterating

[9] See Bayer 1909 Vol. I, pp. 273-274, Császár 1917, p. 43 and Kántor p. 82 for *Szabolcs vezér*; and Bayer 1909 Vol. II, pp. 45-47 for *Tongor*.

[10] This did not affect his very early translation work, for instance, his 'rendition' of Gessner's *Idylls* published in 1788.

what it says ("az a mesterség, hogy úgy, nem hogy azt") (Radó 1883, p. 482).[11]

Yet, not everybody thought in similar terms. The emphasis on translation was not unanimously supported by Kazinczy's contemporaries (for example, the Debrecen school opposed it), but it managed to dominate this period of Hungarian culture. In József Kármán's view, the works translated should be sensitive to the Hungarian frame of mind; texts which were not in keeping with that should not be transplanted. He uses the fruit-metaphor to carry across his argument, from the perspective of the text:

> Erőltetett minden gyümölcs, melyet messze világról nálunk ültetünk, és izetlen vagy szagtalan termése bünteti meg ragadozóját, ki anyai földjéből kitépve, azt idegen ég alá szorította!
>
> [Every fruit that we plant here from far away is artificial; and its tasteless or odourless offspring will punish the prey-taker who tore it out of its mother soil and shoved it under a foreign sky!] (Radó 1883, p. 484)

Kazinczy's 1790 six-act *Hamlet* was the first publication in the series he entitled *Kazinczy Ferenc Külföldi Játszó Színje* [Ferenc Kazinczy's Foreign Stage]. It appeared in the same volume with *Stella* (after Goethe) and *Misz Szara Szampszom* (after Lessing). The text is a reworking of the Schroeder *Hamlet* with the Heufeldian ending. It featured a certain Oldenholm instead of Polonius, and a Gusztáv instead of Horatio. There were no counterparts to Reynaldo, Osric and Cornelius; and the duo of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern was only represented by the latter.

> Characters – even Hamlet – are provided with coherent and generally recognizable traits to the point of transforming them

[11] Kazinczy's theory of translation was more rigorous than his actual practice. His practical take on translation is close to József Péczeli's theory, who gives the translator a great deal of freedom (cf. Radó 1883, p. 484). His own *Bácsmegyeynek öszve-szedett levelei* [The Collected Letters of Bácsmegyey], for instance, is a Magyarised version of one of the numerous German imitations of Goethe's *Werther* (namely Kayser's *Adolfs gesammelte Briefe* from 1777); and there are a few more examples of domestication in his *oeuvre*. Interestingly, he had two versions of this; according to a broad historical account of early Hungarian translation history, Antal Radó (1883), Kazinczy's 1789 version was closer to the 'original' in terms of plot.

> into representatives of types, and their actions are limited to those with consistent political and emotional motivations […]. (Kiséry 1996, p. 18)

In the 1810s he started working on another translation of *Hamlet*, also from the German, but this time using Schlegel's translation as his 'source' and. striving for iambic metre. However, only the first act and a few scenes from the second were completed. Literary historians are still divided about this translation. Mária Szauder considers the second attempt an unsuccessful one in artistic terms (Kazinczy 1979, pp. 863-864). Frigyes Riedl claims that this was an improvement on his first translation, and a few of its lines reach the standard of Arany's translation (1916, p. 39). As Géza Képes (1969) notes, even in his first 'translation' Kazinczy often used 'literal' translation in a contrived spirit of authenticity. There is a striking, and to a certain extent, unresolvable, discrepancy between such a word-for-word understanding of fidelity on one hand, and passing off the Hungarian 'translation' of a heavily adapted German version as 'shakespeare's' *Hamlet*, on the other.

It is needless to say that it was not only the Shakespearean *oeuvre* that was hugely transformed and appropriated but that of other authors too (Tasso, Milton, Goethe, Schiller, Molière). The name of the author also had a crucial role in this period. Shakespeare's name was indeed a powerful one. There were some 'fake Shakespeares' in Hungary at the time, since his name was attached even to works without the slightest association to him, for the sake of gaining attention.[12] Curiously, Kotzebue's name may have been even more influential in certain cases (for a less educated audience at least) as there is evidence that his name was given to a play originally derived from Shakespeare – again, for the sake of saleability (Riedl 1906, p. 150).[13]

[12] These cases of playing with the author's name are mentioned in Riedl 1906, p. 150.

[13] On the importance of saleability in translating for the theatre (in a Catalan context but with general implications) see Espasa 2000.

Towards a more authentic Shakespeare

In the so-called Reform Era (c. 1825-1848) Hungarian self-assertion assumed a more institutional and organised form, while Hungarian culture flourished.[14] The main concerns were similar to those of the movement of 'neology' during the Enlightenment: Hungarian language, literature and theatre. István Széchenyi saw the Hungarian economy as one cause of the reform. Among the achievements of the period were bridges on the Danube, horseracing, stockbreeding associations, the Iron Gates on the Lower Danube, and the regulation of the River Tisza. This would have been impossible without the involvement of the aristocracy, who played a greater role than during the Enlightenment. Waking up their 'dormant national spirit' was the far-sighted Count István Széchényi.[15] At the Hungarian Diet of 1825 (convoked after a long hiatus since 1813) he offered the full annual income of his estates for the establishment of a Hungarian academy of sciences.[16] Other aristocrats from the Upper Chamber of the Diet followed suit, and the Academy – first named Magyar Tudós Társaság [Hungarian Scientific Society] – started its work in 1830. Széchenyi himself was a devotee of Shakespeare. The fact that he named his ship on which he cruised the Danube (and on which he was reading Döbrentei's translation of *Macbeth*) 'Desdemona' is expressive of how deeply ingrained Shakespeare had become in Hungarian culture.[17]

The Academy instigated research and translation of works of a scientific and literary nature, including Shakespeare. Even though the first collected Shakespeare only appeared under the aegis of the Kisfaludy Társaság [Kisfaludy Society] in the post-1849 period of political consolidation, it is important to note that the Academy is-

[14] The term 'Reform Era' or 'era of reform' (for the Hungarian term *reformkor*) is used in Lendvai 2003. On the period see Reich 1898, pp. 111-115, Lendvai 2003, pp. 191-205, Lázár 1993, pp.141-145.

[15] For a contextualisation of the term 'dormant national spirit' see Czigány 1984, p. 532.

[16] The ruler Francis II did not convoke the Hungarian Parliament for thirteen years. "The stagnation of parliamentary life in Hungary from 1813 to 1825 was almost tantamount to the stagnation of all other intellectual energies of the nation" (Reich, p. 115). See also Lendvai 2003, p. 194.

[17] About Széchenyi's achievements also see Horváth 1965, pp. 381-384.

sued a list of works by Shakespeare recommended for translation into Hungarian. In a circular letter issued following the assembly on 16 May 1831 the committee (consisting of Vörösmarty, Toldy, Bajza and Döbrentei, with Vörösmarty being the most influential member) recommended 22 plays of Shakespeare for translation (among 70 foreign plays altogether), not only for distribution to the members of the Hungarian Scientific Society. It is curious that the plays now considered without doubt canonical, such as *Othello*, *Coriolanus* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, were missing from the list.[18] The Hungarian Academy offered financial assistance to the translators; for instance, Vajda's *Hamlet* was prepared with the financial support of the Academy. However, the single Shakespeare translation that was published by the Academy prior to 1839 was Antal Náray's translation of *Romeo and Juliet*, which was not used in the theatre. Meanwhile, there were stage translations that did circulate, though they were not 'authorised' by the Academy via publication.

The establishment of a Hungarian national library (1802), now bearing the name of its patron, was facilitated by István Széchenyi's father, Ferenc Széchényi. The national theatre was being set up in the spirit of Széchenyi's passionate rhetorical question, "Should a national theater forever be denied to a people who, so to speak, possess nothing outside their own language?" (1831 cited Lázár 1993, p. 142, translation slightly modified). A permanent theatre company in Pest started working in 1837 in its own building.

Of the many priorities of the Reform Era in this context I will focus on the cause of the Hungarian language, which is a key issue with regard to the importance of translating Shakespeare at this time. As noted earlier, the Hungarian language was in need of domestic as well as foreign prestige at this moment. Several German thinkers predicted the imminent fall of the Hungarian nation and, as a consequence, the Hungarian language. The most famous is the so-called Herderian prophesy from his *Ideen zur Philoso-*

[18] The list included *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, *King John*, *Henry IV Part 1-2*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI Part 1-3* , *Henry VIII*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Tempest*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Twelfth Night*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *Comedy of Errors*.

phie der Geschichte der Menschheit (1784-1791): "Da sind sie jetzt unter Slawen, Deutschen, Wlachen, und andern Völkern der geringere Teil des Landeseinwohner, und nach Jahrhunderten wird man vielleicht ihre Sprache kaum finden" ("Here they are now, the minority of inhabitants among Slavs, Germans, Vlachs and other peoples, and after centuries perhaps even their language will have disappeared.") (633)[19]

Goethe and, more vehemently, the Austrian dramatist Grillparzer expressed similar views at various times, though in very different tones. In 1821 Goethe remarked about the Hungary of the day, "A country wonderfully rich in blessings. 'Tis a great pity it cannot progress" (Riedl 1906, p. 96). Franz Grillparzer's opinion echoes the Herderian prophesy, emphasising, unlike Goethe, a lack of intellectual or artistic potential:

> Hungarian has no future. Without links to any other European language and limited to a few million mainly uncultured people, it will never have a public, quite apart from the fact that the Hungarian nation has never shown any talent in science or art. (1840 cited Lendvai 2003, p. 200)[20]

Among Hungarians there was tremendous concern about this. The poet János Kiss shared some of this fear, as in a letter to Kazinczy he commented: "However sad it may be, I also prophesy the annihilation of my country" (Riedl 1906, p. 96).[21] Some of the Romantic poets – for example Vörösmarty– were greatly affected by the idea of *nemzethalál* [the extinction of the nation] (Czigány 1984, pp. 114-115 and 540). Despite this, Hungarian had become an official language in Hungary by 1844. Széchenyi's credo was that "Nyelvében él a nemzet" [A nation lives through its language][22] One man who was very preoccupied with this was the writer, translator and

[19] English translation borrowed from Lendvai 2003, p. 182.

[20] This was also recognised in retrospect by historians of the region: "Like the Czechs, the Hungarians were in danger of being swamped linguistically, spiritually, and they were fully aware and apprehensive of this" (Steinacker cited Lendvai 2003, p. 201).

[21] On the other hand, according to an anecdote, the novelist András Dugonics laconically challenged Herder's prophesy in a conversation with József Csehy as follows: "Don't believe that stupid Herder, he lies!" (Riedl 1906, p. 97)

[22] A more literal translation would be '*in* its language'.

teacher Péter Vajda who provided the first Hungarian translation of *Hamlet* that was based upon an English 'original', consulting the Schlegel-Tieck version at certain points.

It was in this intermediary period (from the perspective of Shakespeare translation) that Péter Vajda (uncle of the prominent poet of the second part of the 19th century, János Vajda) completed his translation of *Hamlet* (1839) and later also translated *Othello* (1842) and *Richard III* (1843) for the stage. The *première* of his Hamlet on 16 September 1839 was a benefit performance for Gábor Egressy. Until 1866 it had 41 performances in the National Theatre in Pest. It also gradually took the place of Kazinczy's *Hamlet* in the repertoire in other parts of the country. Hamlet's role in Vajda's translation served as a vehicle for generations of Hungarian actors, such as Gábor Egressy and Márton Lendvay. An aesthetically-minded and rigorous theatre criticism also came into existence as critics often viewed these performances with accentuated attention.[23]

When the text was first staged, Egressy praised the translation, stating that in terms of fidelity it need not be ashamed of itself in the company of German translations. It is, of course, noteworthy and unsurprising that German translations are assumed to be the yardstick against which other translations must be compared. Neither is his opinion entirely impartial as he was acting the role of Hamlet in the *première*, and he collaborated with Vajda on various other translation projects. Two of the Vajda manuscripts – the more corrupt versions – seem to be Egressy's heavily reworked promptbook versions. In 1856, however, the text was severely criticised by Greguss: "Ha borsót hányunk is a falra, meg nem szűnünk új fordítást, vagy a réginek revisióját sürgetni" [Even if it is like counting the grains of sand in the desert we cannot but urge the need for a new translation or the revision of the old one] (Bayer 1909, p. 219).[24]

[23] For instance, in Jókai's review of *Hamlet* with Lendvay in the title role (13 January 1848) the leading actor is criticised – albeit in a very covert way – for a histrionic style of acting (cf. Bayer 1909, pp. 204-206).

[24] The collocation used by Bajza 'literally' is 'even if we throw peas on the wall', meaning 'an absolutely futile effort'.

His criticism is directed at specific phrases and sentences from the translation that he deems foreign-sounding and artificial. Nevertheless, it should not be condemned, for the language reform involved borrowing phrases from other languages in the form of a through-translation, and that implies borrowing or learning from the way of thinking prevalent in that language. It could be argued, however, that the main factor underlying the foreignate nature of Vajda's translation, or certain phrases in it, is that he was not only coining new words but was also spreading and popularising words coined during the previous, main phase of the language reform.[25] Due to this, some of his writing was hardly comprehensible even to his contemporaries. This is another case of finding a previous – even very recent – idiom virtually foreign, though written in one's own language. Parenthetically, most of the words he made up and promoted did not integrate into the Hungarian language. Irrespective of this, his engagement in the renewal of the Hungarian lexicon impacted on his theatre translation (and probably contributed to its transience). As Bayer succinctly puts it, "Nyelve a kor színvonalán áll és irodalminak mondható" [Its language meets the standard of the age, and it can be called literary] (Bayer 1909, p. 191).[26]

Mihály Vörösmarty was also rather critical of the: "hűnek látszik; de egy kissé darabos és nehéz, mi színésznek felette nagy akadály" [it appears to be faithful, yet it is a bit clumsy and difficult, which is a very big obstacle for the actor] (Vörösmarty 1841, p. 191). He suggests that it is better than not having access to *Hamlet* in Hungarian at all, but stresses that more Hungarian writers should try and tackle this difficult work. Again, it needs pointing out – in Vajda's defence – that the Hungarian language was in the process of accelerated change at the time of codification, and Vajda was at the forefront of the renewal of the vocabulary. Gyulai also asserted in 1863: "Vajda Péter Hamlet-fordításánál, mely elég művészietlen és magyartalan, nincs jobb" [There is at present no better than Pé-

[25] Words coined by him include *bujdosó* (for 'planet'), *emlény* (for 'forget-me-not'), *hanga* (for 'music'), and *zenér* (for 'singing bird') – none of these took root in Hungarian.

[26] Bayer is not among those who dismiss the translation; nevertheless, he looks at it in retrospect, from a more tolerant perspective based on knowing Arany's work.

ter Vajda's translation of *Hamlet*, which is rather artless and not very good Hungarian] (Bayer 1909, p. 191). This implies a compromise to resort to this translation until a 'better' one appears on the scene; János Arany's work later on seems to have satisfied an urgent theatrical need.

Even though the heyday of blatant and almost systematic adaptation was almost over by the mid 19th century, there were still a few examples ofstill staged versions Magyarised from the German , such as *Ördögűző Fábián* [Fabian the Devil-chaser] (possibly a version of or even identical with the likewise German-based I*I. Gaszner kapitány* [The Second Captain Gaszner]), an adaptation of *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Az egymást bosszantók* [Those Who Annoy Each Other], a rewrite of *Much Ado About Nothing* with German-named characters.

The systematic, institutionalised translation of Shakespeare was urged in 1848 by the actor and translator Gábor Egressy, who was one of the most prominent actors to take on the role of Hamlet.[27] The call for translations entitled "Indítvány a szellemhonosítás ügyében" [Proposal in the matter of the naturalisation of the genius[28]] was published on 20 February 1848 in the periodical *Életképek*. This must have been done with Sándor Petőfi's agreement, who was a close friend of Egressy. Petőfi already informed Arany of his translation of *Coriolanus* being in press, and told him that the translation would come out under the series heading "Shakspeare összes színművei, fordítják Arany, Petőfi és Vörösmarty" [The Complete Plays of Shakspeare [sic!], translated by Arany, Petőfi and Vörösmarty] (Ruttkay in Shakespeare 1961, p. 353).

Meanwhile, Arany himself was planning on translating Shakespeare's entire dramatic *oeuvre* into Hungarian with his friend István Szilágyi. So was Lajos Kossuth, the leading figure of the revolution of 1848-1849. Emília Lemouton's translatorial venture (1845) was also concerned with Shakespeare's whole dramatic

[27] His *sobriquet* is the 'Hungarian Garrick'. On his importance in the establishment of the Hungarian 'stage Shakespeare' see Reuss 2002.

[28] More literally: 'spirit'.

oeuvre. These examples, incomplete projects as they may be, suffice to prove that Shakespeare (no matter how authentic the texts were under this name) was an emblem of European culture, and thus, his translation was a challenging intellectual activity for Hungarians concerned with national revival. It is also clear, despite single-handed enterprises, that there were attempts at and a need for the 'centralisation' and coordination of the translation of Shakespeare, and the vision of it as a collective national undertaking.

Lóránt Czigány asserts that in Eastern European literatures there exists a phenomenon of the national poet (the Hungarian phrase is *nemzeti költő*): "a major poet (e.g. Petőfi) who aspires to be an indisputable spokesman of 'the people'" (1984, p. 540). It needs emphasising, however, that it is not only their aspiration but also their canonisation – and often a widespread cult – that makes them into national poets. The phenomenon certainly has, in the East-Central European cases, much to do with national self-assertion in the Romantic period, and this is exactly how it links to the nostrification of Shakespeare.[29] It is by no means a coincidence that it were the already celebrated national poets of Hungary being encouraged to translate for the collected edition of Shakespeare. The romantic triumvirate – as they have become canonised – consisted of Mihály Vörösmarty, Sándor Petőfi and János Arany. Of these Petőfi is 'the' quintessential Hungarian poet. [30] Their choice of text (that is to say those that they completed) is not irrelevant. As Frigyes Riedl notes,

> "Their choice was in each case characteristic. Vörösmarty, the poet of melancholy and grand passion, translated *King Lear*, Petőfi chose the proud, defiant *Coriolanus*, and Arany, the contemplative *Hamlet*. "(1906, pp. 150-151)

The only work they managed to publish out of the planned series then was *Coriolanus*, translated by Petőfi. The story of *Coriolanus*

[29] See also the related concept of the 'prophet-poet' with relevance to Polish culture (Schultze 1993, p. 62).

[30] His status as a national poet is underlined by the fact that one of his epithets is 'the Hungarian Burns'. It is perhaps not accidental that the ground for comparison is a national poet from Scotland (where the assertion of national values was an issue at the time).

perhaps appealed to Petőfi as a translator because of his disappointment at not being elected a member of the new Hungarian Parliament. The Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of 1848-1849 put an end to the project fostered by Egressy.

The great 19th century enterprise: the collected edition

In the distressed decade – called the Bach period – after the defeat of the revolution, the interest in translating Shakespeare did not die out, though it lost some of its stamina.[31] Vörösmarty was planning to translate 6 Shakespeare plays, out of which he completed only two: *Julius Caesar* (1840) and *King Lear* (1853). After Vörösmarty's death in 1855 the cause of Shakespeare translation was sustained by a circle of friends around Arany (Tomori, Szász, Ács). Having received an appeal from Tomori, Arany agreed to do some Shakespeare translation, and contemplated *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In passing, he mentions valuable ideas with regard to translation, which later became the norms of the official artistic policy of the translation enterprise. More or less unwittingly, Arany, at the time a busy secondary school teacher in Nagykőrös, found himself entangled with the slowly evolving enterprise: "Akarva, nem akarva, ő az egész terv központja" [Whether he wants it or not, he is the centre of the whole plan] (Voinovich 1938, p. 79).

The patron of the translation project was the bishop and teacher Anasztáz Tomori, a commited Hungarian of Serbian origin – a so-called 'Hungarian by choice' – and Arany's former work colleague from Nagykőrös, who gave away much of his unexpectedly inherited fortune in order to support cultural enterprises.[32] With Arany's help Tomori began to manage the enterprise, which proceeded very slowly.

[31] The Bach period was a decade of totalitarianism in Hungary under Austrian rule, following the 1848-1849 war of independence.

[32] The phrase 'Hungarian by choice' is used in Lendvai 2003 (p. 201), in connection with the literary historian Toldy, who also developed a Hungarian identity; a symbol of this is his change of surname from the German Schedel to Toldy.

Tomori was ready to hand the organisation of the project over to the Kisfaludy Society and under its aegis the first Hungarian Shakespeare Committee was established in 1860. This body, consisting of János Arany, Károly Szász, the novelist Mór Jókai, the playwright Ede Szigligeti, the literary translator Móric Lukács and the critic and essayist Antal Csengery, took responsibility for various duties, including the coordination of reviewers. Tomori still continued to support the project financially, offering 200 pengő forints for each translation accepted. It is noteworthy that the publication of the collected works of Shakespeare was carried out under private patronage, albeit in an institutional framework. Little wonder that the enterprise came to fruition during what Dávidházi terms the phase of institutionalisation.

The first collected Shakespeare was printed between 1864 and 1878. It contained the plays in 18 volumes (two plays in each), while the 19th volume comprised the sonnets, "The Rape of Lucrece" and "Venus and Adonis". Arany cleverly wanted the volumes to contain one of the more famous plays in order to pull in readers[33] and one of the lesser-known plays. This was a clever idea to make the less famous plays better-known and more widely read by the general public.

The project had a rather explicit translatorial *credo* with norms and strategies made apparent. The committee opted for verse translation, despite the fact that Ferenc Toldy, the 'founding father' of Hungarian literary history (at the time a representative of an increasingly unfashionable approach, represented by the Toldy-Vörösmarty-Bajza critical triumvirate), proposed the maintenance of Kazinczy's ideals and the method of prose translation,

The artistic criteria introduced for the institutionalised translation of Shakespeare were announced by Arany. These objectives were in the process of being crystallised for decades before the committee was established, since a great deal of private correspondence and accounts of informal gatherings are indicative of a process of negotiation concerning translation strategies amongst potential and

[33] Arany uses the adjective *kolomposabb* [more bell-ringing].

actual translators. Arany stressed that verse should be translated as verse, preferably with the same number of lines. The translations should be true to the ideas, and the form of the original, yet they should be free (as opposed to servile). Footnoting should be kept to a minimum, that is to say, notes indispensable for the comprehension of the text. Arany emphasises the importance of readability and stresses: "A fordító ne csak a színpadot, de az olvasó közönséget is szem előtt tartsa: tehát hatályosság mellett választékos és correct igyekezzék lenni" [The translator should not only take the stage into account but the reading public too: thus, apart from being influential, it should strive to be elaborate and precise, too] (Ruttkay in Shakespeare 1961, p. 355). This argument already comprises the premise that the translation is primarily prepared for the stage.

The call for translations advertised in different periodicals on behalf of the Kisfaludy Society, also advised on translation policy. In it Arany appears to differentiate three types of public for the forthcoming translations: readers who, due to a lack of knowledge of English, resort to reading Shakespeare in translation; theatremakers; and readers who compare the translation with the 'original', though he was aware of the impossibility to satisfy all three. He stresses that the translation is primarily for the theatre as well as readers who cannot access the original. Arany also stresses a fidelity to the form and the material (anyag) or content (tartalom). His translation 'theory' – so to speak – seems to be a preliminary version of a formal and content-based equivalence championed by linguistic translation theory later. In this way his approach represents a finely balanced medium between a 'source-text'-based and a 'target-text'-based approach.

He confirms his antagonism to a 'castrated' Shakesperare (he uses the very word *kasztrált*), and he does not recommend omitting lewd or obscene passages, especially because in some cases almost entire plays (for instance, *Measure for Measure*) should be radically abridged if one used a strategy of purgation. Generally no cutting was recommended, but there was a suggestion to attempt to avoid scandal where possible by toning the text down. Discussing the

question whether or not to include the less accomplished plays such as *Titus Andronicus* and *Pericles*, the committee decided not to exclude these.

The vexed subject of the 'moral censorship' of Shakespeare translation had been touched upon earlier, when Zsigmond Kemény, the great novelist of the latter half of the 19th century, paid a visit to Arany's home, and they discussed the matter of Shakespeare translation. Kemény was worried about the faithful presentation of certain expressions of Shakespeare's language in the salons; he hoped that there would be only approximately 200 lines of Shakespeare that needed censoring in order to be accessible to the salon public.[34] However, Arany insisted on 'rendering' an unabridged Shakespeare rather than a 'purified' one. In his translational practice, nevertheless, Arany also noticed difficulties arising from a difference of taste between his day and Shakespeare's world.[35]

The *modus operandi* of the committee included commissioning individual translations from known authors as well as waiting for submitted work, as such a democratic process would left room for new talent to emerge. There were two reviewers appointed for each submission. Arany had three kinds of evaluation in mind: good, satisfactory, and poor. The reviewers approached the matter in a thorough and rigorous manner[36].

[34] About this discussion see Voinovich 1939, pp. 81-82.

[35] In the second half of the 19th century several critics engaged in the discussion of individual translations and adaptations as well as translation norms (see Császár 1897, Csengeri 1894, Heinrich 1885, Márki 1866, Radó 1883, Radó 1908, Radó 1909, Rácz 1904, Salamon 1865, Sebestyén 1897, Szarvas 1898, Szász 1871 and Zichy 1881).

[36] They rejected – for instance – the translations of *The Tempest* by Zalány and by Kornél Ábrányi, and two translations of *Twelfth Night* and *Much Ado*. They had István Fejes revise his translation of *Much Ado About Nothing* (the reviewers were Rákosi and Szigligeti). His translation of *Troilus and Cressida* was put under scrutiny by Bérczy and Lévay, who could not agree, so a third reviewer, Szász was involved. He eventually recommended the revised version of the text for publication.Arany himself reviewed five translations: Zsigmond Ács's translation of *The Merchant of Venice*, Károly Szász's translations of *Richard II* and *Macbeth*, Ágost Greguss's translations of *Measure for Measure* and *Timon of Athens*. Two of these, the *Timon of Athens* and the *Macbeth* review are no longer extant. Arany was a very conscientious and thorough reviewer.

When, in 1924, the modernist poet Mihály Babits prepared his guidelines for a new Shakespeare translation project, he gave even stricter guidelines (outlined in eighteen points) than Arany did (Babits 1973, pp. 54-56). This level of institutionalisation and critical rigour may be connected to the high standard Arany's and his contemporaries' example set.

To conclude, the inception of Hungarian Shakespeare translation during the Hungarian Enlightenment and Romanticism may be perceived to exemplify key insights from polysystem theory. In Itamar Even-Zohar's view, translation can be of primary importance when a literature is young, that is, in the process of being established; when it is peripheral or weak; or when it goes through a crisis or is at a turning point (Even-Zohar 1978, p. 24). Shakespeare translations, adaptations, tradaptations have contributed significantly to the establishment of a modern, enlightened national literature and theatre culture for Hungarians, as it has, as Stříbrný (2000) argues, in several other contexts in Central and Eastern Europe.

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3

From the *General of the Scottish Army* to a Fattish Beer-Drinker: a Short History of Czech Translations of *Macbeth*

Pavel Drábek

Professional actors' theatre has had, in a sense, a continuous presence in the Czech lands. From the first recorded activities of English travelling actors in Bohemia in the years around 1600 to the present day, there were professional actors performing in the region – though a thorough knowledge of the period until the mid-18th century is still hidden in the archives and the continuity is assumed rather than factually traced.[1] This assumed continuity is all the more problematic in that the plays performed haven't mostly survived as texts. Those that have been preserved (most luckily) give some evidence of what the practice was but their nature is far too complex to derive any historical continuities textually. In other words, the continuum has been rather in the social institution of the theatre – in the conventionalised encounters of performers and their audiences – than in any other concrete component of the theatre event.

One of the components that has had a continuous presence in the Shakespearean performances in Central and Eastern Europe since

[1] Pavel Drábek, "English Comedians in Prague, October 1602," *Notes and Queries* 53 (2006): 4: 499-500.

the late 18th century is great role for actors. Since the 1770s, actors have been drawn to rewarding Shakespearean roles – be they Hamlet, Ophelia, Othello, Desdemona or King Lear. This particular appeal of Shakespeare plays as actors' plays may explain seemingly striking appearances of otherwise little performed titles such as *Richard II* in Prague in 1777-78 or *Coriolanus* in Brno in 1785 and 1786.[2] These plays had received popular performances in London in the recent previous years – *Coriolanus* famously by John Philip Kemble in his first season in the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, in 1783/84. The great English Shakespearean David Garrick, Mary Ann Yates and their followers Kemble, Sarah Siddons and other actors and actresses corroborated Shakespeare's international renown: while for the German critic Lessing, Shakespeare still was a somewhat literary model, actors revived the dramatist's theatrical life – though mostly in reworkings and adaptations.

Among the most popular Shakespearean roles have been Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. In the Czech lands, this pragmatic aspect combined with the double-edged quality in the play – the repulsiveness of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth as human characters, tyrants, traitors and murderers on the one hand, and on the other, their positive sides: Macbeth's sincerity to the audience, and his and his wife's commitment, courage and the daring to usurp and transgress in the name of achieving their dreams and ambitions. The final act's outcome – righteously overcoming and killing the tyrant and restoring peace and order – seems to have played an important national and cultural role and resonated with the some of the political agendas in *Macbeth*'s audiences. While other nations in Central and Eastern Europe had *Hamlet* for their "national" Shakespeare tragedy – with a hero willing, or at least contemplating "to take arms against a sea of troubles, | And by opposing end them" (*Hamlet* 3.1.62-63) – the Czech national emancipation was not accompanied by Hamletian simulacra. From the tragedies it was *Macbeth* and from comedies, *The Merchant of Venice*, that were the central pieces of the canon. As for *The Merchant of Venice*, it was

[2] Alena Jakubcová and Matthias J. Pernerstorfer, eds. *Theater in Böhmen, Mähren und Schlesien. Von den Anfängen bis zum Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts. Ein Lexikon* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2013), 191-92, 42.

quite surprisingly understood as a religious tragedy on the background of a bourgeois comedy – with the crucial moment being the disenfranchisement of Shylock, his forced christianisation and the confiscation of his goods. The Czech cultural memory seems to have relived the forceful recatholicisation after 1620 – when two thirds of the Czech lands were Protestant, and either had to convert to Catholicism, or went the path of persecution – ending in exile, in hiding or in the executioners' hands.

Macbeth was the first play translated into Czech and every generation until the late -20th century had their own version, somehow symptomatic of what it was going through. In a sense this play may be perceived as synecdochal guide through the history of the Czech Shakespeare. This essay gives an outline of the play's fates in the Czech lands – from 1782 to the end of the millenium. This text does not claim to be exhaustive in treating the Czech Shakespearean history but argues that *Macbeth* is a convenient way into it – opening a window to each of the generations.

Makbet the General of the Scottish Army (1782)

The very first known Shakespeare play in the Czech language was an anonymous prose adaptation of *The Merchant of Venice* with the subtitle *Love and Friendship* (*Kupec z Venedyku aneb Láska a přátelstvo*), published in South Bohemia in Jindřichův Hradec in 1782, soon to be followed by *Macbeth*.[3] The full title of *Macbeth* is as follows:

> Makbet Wůdce Šottského Wogska | Z německé Komedye v Czeštinu přeložený; | V pěti Dílech, a osmnácte smutných Představeních vyobrazený. | S Povolením Cýsařsko=Královské Cenzury. | V Jindřicho=Hradcy, vytištěný u Ignácya Vojtěcha Hilgartnera. | 1782.
>
> [Makbet the General of the Scottish Army. Translated into Czech from the German Comedy; portrayed in five parts and eighteen sad shows. With the permission of the Emperor-Royal Censor. In Jindřichův Hradec, printed by Ignácyus Vojtěch Hilgartner. 1782.]

[3] Pavel Drábek, *České pokusy o Shakespeara* (Brno: Větrné mlýny, 2012), 87ff.

This chapbook (or *Volksbuch*) was published without the mention of Shakespeare's name. Hence the renown of the play derived solely from the popularity on the stage, and the motivation for the Czech publication is also of great interest. The anonymous author explains his objectives in the preface to *The Merchant*:

> […] se také douffá, že tento vydaný Kus (který z německé Komedye z nova v Češtinu přesazen, pro jeho rozličných Osob Představování) Čtení hoden, a za to uznán bude. Jsem tehdy té Náděje, že české Řeči Milovnícy toto Čtení mile přečtou, a s ním sobě zbytečný Čas tak ukrátějí, jakoby sami při té Komedyi (která ve velkých Městách s tim největším Zalíbením představovaná, a jak od Vyššího tak Nižšího Stavu oblibovaná byla) přítomni byli.
>
> [It is hoped that this published piece (which has newly been transferred from a German comedy into Czech for the multiple characters represented in it) is worth reading and will be deemed such. I am therefore of the hope that the lovers of the Czech language will be pleased to read this writing, spending their leisure time with it as if they themselves were present at the comedy (which is performed in great cities with the greatest pleasure, enjoyed by both the higher and the lower states).[4]

The preface to *Makbet* adds that

> Poněvadž ale všyckni Lide takové Komedyi přitomni býti nemohou (neb se nejvíce jen v Hlavních Městách představuje;) tak se to milým Česko=Čtenářům tuto představuje a podává.
>
> [Since not all people may be present at such a comedy (as they are performed mostly in the capital cities), therefore this is introduced and presented to the "Czecho-readers".]

Both the chapbooks derive from Franz Joseph Fischer's stage adaptations published in Prague in 1777. However, strictly speaking, these two adaptations are not pure prose narratives. They retain their dramatic origin in that they are divided into scenes and the

[4] Drábek, *České pokusy o Shakespeara*, ibid.

dialogues are mechanically retold in prose. The first part (act) and show (scene) of *Makbet* opens with a short synopsis, and after outlining the setting of the scene, the narrative slips into retold dialogues:

> y otázal se Makbeta, kteréby ty tři byli, ješto ani v Kroji, ani v Podobenství Vlastencům našým se nerovnají, a předcy v této Krajině se zdržují? Jste živé! řka on k ním, mohu se vás na nětco tázati? Ale jak se mi zdá, vy mně rozumíte, proto že vaše Prsty nad mou Otázkou na své Pysky kladete. To vidavše Makbet, aby mluvili, kdo jsou, přikázal; pročež všeckny tři jedna po druhé mluvily, a Makbeta takto pozdravili: Sláva tobě Makbete! Sláva tobě, svobodný pane z Klamis! a urozený z Kavdor! Sláva tobě! kterýž někdy Králem budeš!
>
> […whereupon he asked Makbet who were the three as they differed from our people both in their costumes and in their likenesses, and yet they lived in the country? Are you alive! says he to them, may I ask you something? But it seems to me you understand me and that is why you put your fingers on your lips at my question. Makbet having seen that ordered them to speak who they were; whereupon all three spoke, one after another, greeting Makbet thus: Hail to thee Makbet! Hail to the free lord of Klamis! and nobleman of Kavdor! Hail to thee! who will once be the King!]

Although these prose chapbooks may be dismissed as reading "for common folk and town daughters" (as Josef Dobrovský called them in 1786),[5] they were both extremely popular, with several publications until the late nineteenth century, and remain valuable documents of theatre history in that they render not only the textual component but also a sense of the theatre "in the capital cities". Mediating metropolitan theatre culture to people in the country, is a phenomenon surviving until nowadays in the entire region – not only in televised theatre performances but also in TV productions of classical drama, as is commonly done in Poland, for instance,[6] not to mention prose mediations of theatre in other cultures, such as the *Kyogenki* collections of the Japanese farce *Kyogen* published

[5] Drábek, *České pokusy o Shakespeara*, 88.

[6] See the research and publications of Jacek Fabiszak.

in Japan between 1660 and 1730 or, in Shakespeare's own time, George Wilkins' novella *The Painful Adventures of Pericles Prince of Tyre* (1608), which capitalised on the stage success of *Pericles*.[7] In the Czech lands, the fate of the prose versions comes full circle when *Kupec z Venedyku*, originally published in Jindřichův Hradec in 1782 was dramatised back again by the East Bohemian folk dramatist František Vodseďálek under the title *Komedie o dvou kupcích a Židoj Šilokoj* (A Comedy of Two Merchants and the Jew Šilok, c1815).

Thám's *Makbet* (1786) and its followers

In 1786, shortly after the Czech language theatre was licensed in Prague, one of its proponents, Karel Hynek (Ignác) Thám, published his translation of Franz Joseph Fischer's adaptation *Macbeth*. The educated Thám combined the theatre tradition with the intellectual Enlightenment aesthetics and presented the play not only as a theatre piece that "penetrates to the heart, moving it in a variety of ways, giving rise to good effects"[8] but also as a tragedy "composed by Englishman Šakespear in the English language, who exceeded all and rose over all authors in the composing of tragic heroic plays, causing himself an immortal fame in the posterity."[9] Thám's text was performed, in some fashion, in the so-called "Bouda" (or Hut) theatre on the main square in Prague (formerly Koňský trh, now Wenceslas Square). It is the only only known play by Shakespeare performed by the Patriotic Theatre Company (Vlastenské divadlo) at the time, though it seems likely that there was also a production of *Hamlet* (since a parody of *Hamlet* was played by the troupe). Several years later, Prokop Šedivý produced a text called *King Lear and his Ungrateful Daughters* (*Král Lír a*

[7] Drábek, *České pokusy o Shakespeara*, 90.

[8] "pronikají k srdcy, všeliká v něm vzbuzujíce hnutí, a dobré působujíce učinky" (quoted from Drábek, *České pokusy o Shakespeara*, 340).

[9] "Tuto smutnohru složil Šakespear Engličan v řeči Englické, an v skládání činoher smutných rekovných nadevšecky skladatele vynikl, a je převýšil, nesmrtedlnou sobě u potomstva způsobiv slávu" (quoted from Drábek, *České pokusy o Shakespeara*, 340).

jeho nevděčné dcery, 1792).[10] Little is known about the performance history of Thám's *Makbet* – apart from the fact that it was licensed only for performance, not for printing and the 1786 edition was confiscated and destroyed a few years later.

Among the actors of the Patriotic Theatre Company was Karel Ignác's brother Václav. When the Czech theatre company's activities in Prague came to an end in the early 1790s, Václav Thám and his wife joined a touring company and spent the rest of their lives performing for the aristocratic families throughout Central Europe. In connection with their activities at the court theatre of the Silesian Pszczyna near Katowice in the first decade of the nineteenth century,[11] Thám left behind his personal copy of Franz Joseph Fischer's *Macbeth* with his Czech inscriptions included.[12] This document establishes a direct connection between the performance practice in the Czech theatre companies and in the German ones, both in Prague and at the aristocratic court theatres.

Franz Joseph Fischer's adaptation represents a dramaturgy of the Enlightenment period, not dissimilar to that of Lewis Theobald's *Richard II*.[13] Quasi-operatic duets between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth are developed and Fischer's version even introduces several dialogues that are not in the Shakespearean original. These develop the potential of the relationship and are in keeping with the style of the period dramaturgy. In result the first third of the play consists predominantly of the dialogues between the two; all the other character are sidelined. In other words, Fischer's adaptation is conceived as a solo concerto for a heroic actor and an actress diva. This is also further evidence of Shakespeare's attractiveness

[10] Compare the repertoire with Andrzej Żurowski, *Prehistoria polskiego Szekspira* (Gdańsk: Literatura.net.pl, 2007).

[11] Adolf Scherl, "Václav Thám a zámecké divadlo v Pštině," *Divadelní revue* 8 (1998): 4: 34-41.

[12] The text is deposited in the Wrocław University Library (Universytet Wrocławski, biblioteka, sign. 258/1587 R, BVW 304 254). I am grateful to Dr Adolf Scherl for drawing my attention to the document.

[13] It is a matter of further research to establish clearer genealogies of the Enlightenment influences and text migrations.

for theatre practitioners rather than for Enlightenment and Pre-Romantic ideologists looking for a prototype of solitary genius.

The Czech National Museum in Prague owns a peculiar undated manuscript translation of the play, entitled *Makbet, dle Šekspíra zčeštěna truchlohra v 5ti jednáních H. Kuklou* (*Makbet, a tragedy in 5 acts Czeched after Shakespeare by H. Kukla*). The manuscript, which cannot be dated more precisely than c1790-c1810, starts off as a copy of Thám's translation but gradually changes the phrasing and adds the omitted scenes on the basis of Christoph Martin Wieland's German prose translation.[14] This rare manuscript testifies to the popularity of *Macbeth* as a play, unmatched by any other Shakespearean drama. The picture becomes even clearer with a view to the fact that, apart from the three versions of *Macbeth*, the first fifty years of Czech Shakespeare yielded only the above mentioned prose version of *The Merchant of Venice*, a translation/adaptation of *King Lear* (Prokop Šedivý, 1792), and a literary version of the Plautine play *The Comedy of Errors* (*Omylowé* by Antonín Marek, 1823).

Romantic *Macbeth*

The Czech lands of the Napoleonic wars and the following years of the Holy Alliance between Russia, Prussia and Austria (1815) were not productive in bringing Shakespeare to Czech audiences. The English dramatist, propagated by German intellectuals, became so closely associated with the revolutionary ideology of the French and the German, which was perceived as dangerous and subversive to the Holy Alliance, that Shakespeare's plays became wholesale *libri prohibitorum*; when Josef Linda published excerpts from Shakespeare's plays in his journal *Vlastenský zvěstovatel* (The Patriotic Announcer) in 1822 and 1823, he did so with a lavish amount of apologies and justifications. In 1823, Antonín Marek published his translation of *The Comedy of Errors* under a russianised pseudonym (Bolemír Izborský), though his own book of

[14] A critical edition of the manuscript is included in Drábek, *České pokusy o Shakespeara*, 365-99.

logic was printed with his name on the title page. Associating with Shakespeare was seen as a dangerous matter.

Shortly after a new generation of theatre translators appeared on the Prague stage, a Slovak intellectual Michal Bosý published several extracts from *Macbeth* in the *Květy* magazine under the name Bohuslav Křižák. His *Wýgewy kauzedlné z Makbeta, tlumačeného od Bohuslawa Křižáka* (Magical Scenes from Macbeth, translated by Bohuslav Křižák) appeared in two issues of *Květy* in 1841. They were not received with great enthusiasm: many of the words were seen as a "impure" in being derived from a Slovak dialect; they were printed with a somewhat patronising tongue in cheek. However, Bosý had translated *Hamlet* about a decade earlier (which remained in manuscript until the late twentieth century) and later also published extracts from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. It may be read as symptomatic that Bosý decided to offer extracts from *Macbeth* to the Prague journal rather than parts of his *Hamlet* – as if it were the former play that would resonate more in the Czech lands.

In 1835, Josef Kajetán Tyl made his translation of *King Lear*; however, that was not from the original but from a Viennese adaptation (with a happy ending, as was the custom). A year later, his extracts from the First Part of *King Henry IV*, translated for a *quodlibet* performance, also remained only in manuscript and were performed without properly advertising Shakespeare. It was only on 20 January 1839 that Tyl's rival translated and performed his translation of *Macbeth*, advertised in the theatre with Schiller's subtitle: *Macbeth, or The Witches' Prophecy* (*Macbeth, aneb Proroctví čarodejnic*). Kolár worked from English but with a view to Friedrich Schiller's Weimar version (which, for instance, reworks the Porter scene; Schiller's Porter sings a song).

Kolár later reworked his translation according to the full English original for publication; it was issued in 1868 as the twenty-first volume of the collected works of William Shakespeare, published by the Czech Museum between 1855 and 1872. This series was the first collection of Shakespeare's complete works published in a

Slavic language. It was a team collaboration of five translators – Josef Jiří Kolár, Jakub Malý, František Doucha, Jan Josef Čejka and Ladislav Čelakovský – and was edited with utmost care including a two-fold peer reviewing of all the translations.[15] Kolár contributed with his *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Hamlet*; all of these translations had been directed by him at the Estates Theatre between 1839 and 1853. These translations survived on the stage for the rest of century and played a crucial role in the formation of what was known as Shakespeare in Czech. The Museum Shakespeare (as the 1855-1872 series became known) was modeled on the Schlegel-Tieck German translation not only being a team work of five authors but also in that it was trying to cater for both the literary needs and for the stage.[16]

Kolár's popularity was emulated later by his former co-actor and co-translator Jakub Malý, who produced his own translations of *Hamlet* (1883) and *Macbeth* (1885). Kolár was offended by recognising several of his passages in Malý's *Hamlet* and expressed it in his own sarcastic fashion in the newspapers. What followed was one of the first translators' conflicts on the translation originality and authorship in the Czech culture. This conflict, however, was the wake of their generation; in 1885, Jaroslav Vrchlický was calling for a new translation of Shakespeare, and Josef Václav Sládek, the proponent of the following era who had been interested in Shakespeare since the mid-1860s, had his first translation (*King Henry IV Part I*) performed at the National Theatre in Prague as early as 1888.

Josef Václav Sládek and the Ghost of J. J. Kolár

In 1894, Sládek's translation of *The Taming of the Shrew* was printed, replacing Kolár's. Two years later, *Macbeth* appeared only to be

[15] The project had both its ups and downs. For a detailed account based on the archival records see Drábek, *České pokusy o Shakespeara*, Ch. 4, p. 121-45.

[16] Dirk Delabastita, "Notes on Shakespeare in Dutch Translation: Historical Perspectives." In *Translating Shakespeare for the Twenty-First Century*, edited by Rui Carvalho Homem and Ton Hoenselaars (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2004: 99-116), 111.

welcomed by a critical remark by Jan Voborník in the *Národní listy* (National Papers, 13 March 1896):

> Once again, a Shakespeare in a new Czech garb! Shakespeare! Despite the unquenchable sun of his glory he is nowadays somewhat obscured by the hazes of modernity. How different were the times when those little greenish booklets were published by the Czech Foundation with a translation here by Doucha or there by Kolár etc. And that was a paper Shakespeare. Even better were the times when his heroes shone on the Czech stage and in the festive procession of the Umělecká beseda – those days are long gone by. And today? What's Shakespeare for today's generation? His cothurn somehow does not taste any more. A new translation might bring some refreshment to the poetry.
>
> […] It is obvious why Sládek felt the need and possibility of a new and better translation. He was lead mostly by the requirements of smooth verse and a finer taste of a truly poetic nature. […] Especially the tragic monologues and the passionate scenes of action are successfully done. It is of interest to compare the two translations, which appeared twenty years apart. Kolár's translation has retained some of the very valuable qualities: namely the natural and unconstrained speech which is to be spoken on stage. Kolár's translation shows signs of a theatre practitioner. Sládek's smooth sentences could be an obstacle to the actors in easy delivery and energetic declamation.[17]

[17] *Národní listy*, 13 March 1896, p. 4: "Tedy zase Shakespeare v novém rouše českém! Shakespeare! Přes nehasnoucí slunce slávy své jest přece dnes jaksi pozastřen mlhami modernosti. Jak jiné to byly časy, když vycházely ty rozmile nazelenalé sešity z nákladu Matičního s překladem tu Douchovým, tu Kolarovým atd. A to už jsme zastali přece jen papírového už Shakespeara. Lepší doba, kdy se hrdinové jeho skvěli na českém jevišti a ve slavnostním průvodě Umělecké besedy, ta už minula i nám. A dnes? Co je Shakespeare dnešnímu pokolení? Jeho kothurn už jaksi nechutná. Nový překlad snad něco přispěje k novému osvěžení té poesie.
[…]je zjevno, proč uznal Sládek potřebu a možnosť nového lepšího překladu. Šel na svou práci hlavně s požadavky uhlazenosti verše a jemnějšího vkusu opravdu básnického. […] Zvláště pěkně jsou vypracovány tragické samomluvy a vášnivé scény činu. […]Zajímavo je, srovnati dva překlady o dvacet let od sebe vzdálené. Ukáže se, že si překlad Kolarův zachovává některé přednosti velmi cenné. Především přirozenosť a nenucenosť řeči, která má býti na jevišti přednášena. Překlad Kolarův jeví divadelního umělce výkonného. Uhlazené věty Sládkovy hercům by někde vadily v nenuceném přednesu a rázné deklamaci."

Sládek's reaction to Voborník's somewhat patronising critique was motivated by other impulses – most importantly by Sládek's anxiety of influence and his anxiety for overcoming the domineering ghost of Kolár. A week later (20 March 1896), he prints a reaction in his own journal *Lumír*:

> Professor Voborník does not compare my translation with the original but with the translation by Kolár. And that only in the finicky details. That was waste of space.
>
> Our "Old Mister" with his *Macbeth* and all his other Shakespeare translations! – Hats off! – In his clear attack, profound tone, colour of words, power of expressions – let anyone try to rival that after the Old Mister! But Old Mister was Old Mister! – he was a Kolár and he could afford to throw to Shakespeare's magic cauldron some of "the bottom of the dead carcass's paunch; the excrement of a newt's fodder; a drunken luna" – all things that Shakespeare's Witches never dreamt of.
>
> I don't rebuke him for it, by no means; I am sure that Shakespeare – in Hades or in Elysium – welcomed our Old Mister with saying: "Well done, old boy! But you know, – Josef, Jiří, here and there, there's not so much of myself, William Shakespeare." – And our Old Mister sneered: "William Shakespeare! But there's of myself, Josef, Jiří Kolar!" And they went on hand in hand like old friends.[18]

Sládek's translation was critically observing the letter of Shakespeare's text, attempting to recreate its poetic qualities as well as the imagery. The two or three decades that elapsed between the

[18] *Lumír* 24: 18 (20 March 1896), p. 216: "Pan profesor neporovnává můj překlad s originálem, ale s překladem Kolárovým. A to zase jen ve shora uvedených muškách. Na to bylo škoda místa.
Náš „Starý pán" se svým *Makbethem* a svými ostatními Shakespearovskými překlady! – Smeknout! – V jasném úderu, v hlubokém zvuku, v barvě slova, síle výrazu, – ať to vůbec někdo po Starém pánu udělá! Ale Starý pán byl Starý pán! – byl Kolár a on si mohl dovolit hoditi do čarodějného kotle Shakespearova leckterý ten z „chcíplé mrchy zpodek pupku; trus z mločí píce; sťatou lunu", samé věci, o kterých se ani Čarodějnicím Shakespearovým nezdálo.
Nevytýkám mu to, nikoliv; jsem jist, že Shakespeare v Hadu nebo v Elysiu našemu Starému pánu řekl na uvítanou: „Dobrá, starý brachu! Ale víš, – Josefe, Jiří, někde v tom tak nejsem já, William Shakespeare." – Starý pán se ušklíbnul: „Williame Shakespeare! Ale jsem v tom já, Josef, Jiří Kolar!" A šli spolu dále jako dobří kamarádi."

Museum generation and Sládek's first published translations were a crucial breaking point, experiencing a moment of redefining the literary canon and allowing for a possibility of shifting critical perspectives. Sládek's was truly the first *retranslation* in the sense propagated by Jan Willem Mathijssen in his study of retranslations as *artistic differentiation*.[19] Sládek managed to translate over thirty plays by Shakespeare, and although he became a near-monopolist translator of the *fin de siècle*, his versions had to compete with the previous generation's canonical versions, which had had a start not only on the stages in the metropolis and in the country but also in the hearts of the Czech readers.

Modernist *Macbeth*

As early as 1905, the first critical voice appeared calling for a new translator of Shakespeare to supplant Sládek, who – for some – became old-fashioned and ossified. The anniversary year 1916 saw the publication of the two Czech "national" Shakespeare plays – *The Merchant of Venice* by the theatre entrepreneur and *enfant terrible* Antonín Fencl, and *Macbeth* by Otokar Fischer, accompanied by his impressive study "Macbeth in the Czech lands". Fischer was a professor of literature at Charles University and later became artistic director of the dramatic section of the National Theatre. He was renowned as an intellectual and translator and his *Macbeth* was received – as if naturally – very well, though its onstage life was somewhat limited – receiving its first production only in 1926.

Despite the reservations that Fischer's *Macbeth* raised in the following years, this text inspired a whole new generation of translators, mostly from among his and Václav Tille's students. Bohumil Štěpánek, the prominent Shakespeare translator of the late 1920s and the 1930s (while he himself was in his twenties and early thirties), saw his own work as complementary to Fischer's and as a

[19] Jan Willem Mathijssen, *The Breach and the Observance: Theatre retranslation as a strategy of artistic differentiation, with special reference to retranslations of Shakespeare's* Hamlet (1777-2001). Unpublished PhD thesis (Utrecht University, 2007). Available at <http://www.dehamlet.nl/BreachandObservance.pdf>.

pronounced reaction to Sládek's new Shakespeare canon. Even later translators – such as Erik Adolf Saudek, who started in 1936, Otto František Babler, who translated *Macbeth* in 1947, and Václav Renč, who started off in an adaptation of Fischer's translation – measured their work against Fischer's.

In March 1939 the Nazi Germany announced the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and occupied what remained of the former Czechoslovakia. In October 1939, less than two months after the September outbreak of the World War II, *Macbeth*, once again, managed to play a crucial role in the suppressed Czech culture, as is documented by actor Ladislav Boháč in his memoirs. The premiere of Jan Bor's production of the play in Fischer's translation was set – certainly not by accident – for the 28th October, the anniversary of the 1918 establishment of Czechoslovakia:

> Several days before the date, the atmosphere in Prague was explosive. People in trams and in the streets were strangely reticent, the air was scintillating with tension. The more October 28 was approaching, the more obvious this became. And then: from early in the morning that day crowds started to assemble on Wenceslas Square, with groups of people streaming in from the side streets. In the afternoon, demonstrations burst out with unprecendented strength, spreading into the outskirts of the city. The Germans reacted with incredible brutality. […]
>
> The premiere went in an agitated atmosphere, both in the auditorium and on stage. As if good old Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* for today: that is how the story of a desire for power reached even by crime, by murdering all standing in the way. The silence in the audience was immense. It lasted till the fourth act, to the scene of Malcolm and Macduff, who have lost all – Macbeth even had Macduff's entire family butchered. And when Macduff (acted by Karen) uttered –
>
> O nation miserable,
> With an untitled tyrant bloody-scepter'd,
> When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again?
>
> – I felt as if an electric spark went through the audience. Everyone sat up. When concluded the scene [in the role of Malcolm] with the words –
>
> Receive what cheer you may:

> The night is long that never finds the day.
> – the curtain went down to utter silence. And then, like a hurricane, the applause and shouts came; people waving and many wiping tears from their eyes. The actors pronounced that in which everyone believed at the bottom of their souls.
> In days that are critical for the nation, only such art makes sense which lives through the same pains, desires and thoughts as all people, and yet knows how to encourage and add strength.[20]

Despite the sentimental tone and the obvious retrospective fashioning that Boháč imbues his account with, the core of the episode remains intact – reaffirming the position of *Macbeth* as a play positioned at the core of what was understood as the Czech national identity.

Since World War II

As has been mentioned, the first two decades after the end of World War II saw only three new translations of *Macbeth* – all of them

[20] Ladislav Boháč, *Tisíc a jeden život* (Praha: Odeon, 1981), 146-47: "Už několik dní před tím datem vládla v Praze výbušná atmosféra. Lidé v tramvajích i chodci na ulicích byli podivně mlčenliví, ovzduší bylo nabito napětím. Čím víc se blížil 28. říjen, tím to bylo zřetelnější. A skutečně: od časného rána onoho dne se začaly na Václavském náměstí shromažďovat zástupy, ze všech přilehlých ulic sem proudily davy lidí. Odpoledne propukly demonstrace nebývalé síly a přenesly se i do odlehlých čtvrtí. Němci vystoupili s neuvěřitelnou brutalitou. […]
Premiéra probíhala ve vzrušené atmosféře. V hledišti i na jevišti. Jako by starý dobrý Shakespeare psal „Macbetha" pro dnešek: tak působil příběh o touze po moci, které se dosahuje i zločinem, vyvražďováním všech, kdo stojí v cestě. Ticho v hledišti bylo nesmírné. Trvalo až do čtvrtého aktu, do scény Malcolma s Macduffem, kteří ztratili vše – Macduffovi dokonce Macbeth vyvraždil celou rodinu. Už když Macduff – Karen pronesl:
> …Ó, bědný národe,
> jejž v krvi dusí samozvaný tyran,
> kdy opět uvidíš své šťastné dny?

jsem cítil, jako by obecenstvem projela elektrická jiskra. Každý se napřímil. Když jsem ukončil scénu slovy:
> …To aspoň potěš nás:
> byť sebedelší noc, den svitne zas!

šla opona do naprostého ticha. A pak jako uragán začal potlesk a volání, lidé mávali a mnozí si utírali slzy. Herec za ně vyslovil to, v co každý v hloubi duše věřil.
V dobách pro národ kritických má smysl jen takové umění, které žije týmiž bolestmi, tužbami a myšlenkami jako všichni lidé, a přitom umí povzbudit, dodat síly."

somehow atypical. Otto František Babler published his version with a private press in 1947; his *Macbeth* seems to have been commissioned for Julius Lébl's production in the Czech Theatre in Olomouc (České divadlo v Olomouci), premiered in December 1946. It is likely that Lébl's production was rooted in the recently overcome suppression of the Nazi occupants, and *Macbeth* played its traditional cultural role. This translation by Babler, together with his *King Lear*, published in Kladno in 1954 and completed several years before, were his only two known translations of Shakespeare; recently his manuscript translation of *The Tempest* was discovered (dating from about 1953). In a letter to Shakespearean scholar and editor Otakar Vočadlo, in whom Babler confided and with whom he shared a world view – both of them were expelled from the public life for their political opinions – Babler expresses his doubts about translating Shakespeare. He asks Vočadlo:

> I should be *happy* if you would give me your comments on this translation [of *The Tempest*] sometime and tell me categorically if my translations of Shakespeare are perhaps not an error and a love's labour lost; I have great doubts about them at times.[21]

Vočadlo clearly did little to encourage Babler in his efforts, and his Shakespeare translations have remained a specialty for the bibliophile. The polyglot Babler earned renown for his translations of Dante's *The Divine Comedy* as well as other canonical text; in his large corpus of works, *Macbeth* and *King Lear* are decorations rather than central pieces – though the leading Czech director Hana Burešová worked with Babler's *Macbeth* for her production of the play at the Vinohrady Theatre in Prague in 2004; the appeal of Babler's translation was, for them, in its "poetic pathos, riveting rhythm as well as a kind of medieval rawness" (these are the words of dramaturg Štěpán Otčenášek).[22]

[21] O. F. Babler's letter to Otakar Vočadlo, 1 May 1953: "Budu šťasten, podáte-li mi někdy své poznámky k tomuto překladu a řeknete-li mi zásadně, nejsou-li mé překlady ze Shakespeara omylem a marným lásky snažením: mám o nich chvílemi veliké pochybnosti." Deposited in the Czech Museum of Literature (Literární archiv Památníku národního písemnictví), collection Otakar Vočadlo. Reproduced in Drábek, České pokusy o Shakespeara, 216.

[22] Quoted from Drábek, *České pokusy o Shakespeara*, 215.

A similar fate befell František Nevrla.[23] As a *persona non grata* – not politically or ideologically but rather socially – he was ignored by all and his work was played down as a product of an amateurish graphomaniac. Still, Nevrla was the first to translated the entire Shakespeare canon into Czech, not to mention other works such as Jonson's *Epicoene*, Milton's *Comus*, Schiller's dramas or Heinrich Heine's *Book of Songs*. His *Macbeth* remained in manuscript and has never been properly analysed since – with the exception of two peer reviewers (both pensioned university professors) who carefully vetted all his translations.

Nevrla, Babler as well as a host of others were living in the shade of the domineering translator genius as well as politically agile manipulator Erik Adolf Saudek, who managed almost to eradicate all his translator rivals from the late 1930s until his death in 1963, and even in the years to follow. He translated *Macbeth* in 1957 for Karel Palouš's production in the Zdeněk Nejedlý Realistic Theatre in Prague (Realistické divadlo Zdeňka Nejedlého); in the same year, the play was published simultaneously in two editions – both in up to 100,000 copies. As was the nature of his activities, Saudek's choices of what to translate dictated what is to be performed on the Czech stages – as the critic and Shakespearean translator Milan Lukeš put it.[24]

Saudek's translation did even more than that – as Milan Lukeš himself could have testified. Even though many directors found faults with Saudek's renderings, which at times could have been manneristically convoluted and self-indulgingly witty, hardly anyone dared to commission a new translation. The way out was to create a production retouch – a trick which is used shockingly often even now.[25] As early as 1946, Milan Pásek "improved" Saudek's recent translation of *The Taming of the Shrew* with Bohumil

[23] For more on Nevrla, see Pavel Drábek, "František Nevrla's Translation of *Hamlet*." *Brno Studies in English* 31 (2005), 119-27, or Drábek, *České pokusy o Shakespeara*, 217-27.

[24] This was in a lecture he delivered at the Janáček Academy of Performing Arts in Brno in 2004.

[25] For some of the legal implications see Sirkku Aaltonen, *Time-Sharing on Stage: Drama Translation in Theatre and Society* (Clevendon: Multilingual Matters, 2000), 106-109.

Štěpánek's "dated" version.[26] Half a century later, in 1996, Eva Tálská fleshed out Saudek's *King Lear* with passages from Josef Václav Sládek's and Milan Lukeš's version; the latter originated, in turn, as a production retouch of Saudek's translation. Naturally, the credits and royalties all went to Saudek and his heirs in all these instances. The poet Václav Renč, only recently released from a Communist *gulag*, was commissioned by director Jiří Svoboda to retouch Saudek's translation for his 1964 production in Olomouc. Renč did so, although he retained much of Saudek's wordings; however, it was only Renč's name that was given on the credits of the production and of the mimeograph print of 1963.[27] Paradoxically, overcoming Macbeth in the play was distantly related to overcoming the cult of E. A. Saudek and his infamous impact on the culture of translating Shakespeare.

In August 1968 Soviet-led armies entered Czechoslovakia, occupying it for the following two decades as a way of securing that pro-USSR ideology and economy are observed. This period, covering basically 1970-ies and 1980-ies is known as Normalisation – the propaganda called for a return back to the "normal life" and chastised as well as prosecuted all that had aberrated towards the more liberal version of Communism in the 1960s. This meant, in effect, another wave of debilitating suppression of initiative, creativity and intellectual freedom. From the mid-1970s, a new wave of *Macbeth* translators appeared, among them Jana Hálková, the first female translator of Shakespeare in Czech. Her translation of 1977 was made for Jiří Fréhar's production in the E. F. Burian Theatre in Prague; it was Milan Lukeš who was first commissioned to translate *Macbeth* for Fréhar. Lukeš was a renowned theatre critic, Shakespeare scholar, dramaturg and later the first post-1989 Minister of Culture. However, in 1977, Lukeš missed the deadline and failed to deliver the translation in time, so Fréhar approached the wife of Václav Hálek, composer of the production's incidental music. Jana Hálková was a linguist teaching at Charles University and

[26] For details see Drábek, *České pokusy o Shakespeara*, 200.

[27] For a critical discussion see Kateřina Kotačková, *Václav Renč, life, translations of Shakespeare and the translatological heritage of Otokar Fischer.* Unpublished Bachelor's thesis (Brno: Masaryk University, 2005).

produced the translation in a record time.[28] The production, however, faced severe opposition from Josef Větrovec, actor and artistic director of the E. F. Burian Theatre, who motivated the actors to boycott Fréhar's efforts; *Macbeth* was not a play to be produced and it was meant to break Fréhar's neck. The outcome of the production was, however, successful and the actors warmed to the show.

Fréhar's *Macbeth* was inspired by a provocative production of the previous year: in 1976, Stanislav Jirsa translated *Macbeth* for Jan Schmid's production in the Studio Y in Liberec; the translation could have originated in an adaptation of Josef Václav Sládek's version. Shortly afterwards, in 1979, the renowned Shakespeare scholar, dramaturg and the first post-1989 Minister of Culture Milan Lukeš produced his own rendering of the play – which he considered his best Shakespeare translation.[29] The Normalisation years (until 1989) saw eight productions of *Macbeth*, which were based on new translations (Lukeš's was produced three times), on Fischer's and on Saudek's (two productions). As such, it ranked among the most performed Shakespeare plays in the period.[30]

Another version of *Macbeth* from the Normalisation period is worth mentioning[31]. Dramatist Pavel Kohout, one of the suppressed authors, who, after a visit in Austria, has been denied to enter Czechoslovakia and thus became an unwilling exile, wrote *Play Makbeth*, a 5-actor adaptation of the play. This version was performed in the Apartment Theatre in Prague, a secret venue in the flat of the actress Vlasta Chramostová and her husband Stanislav Milota as one of a series of small productions. Those were mostly performed by artists from the verge of the official scene and the dissent. *Play Makbeth* was secretly filmed, smuggled out of the

[28] My thanks for the information go to Mrs Veronika Bervicová, Jana Hálková's daughter, to Mr Václav Hálek and to Jiří Fréhar. These details were given to me on 13 August 2013.

[29] For a detailed analysis see Pavel Drábek, "'A Štěstěna, ta povstalecká děvka, se na něj zubila': shakespearovské překlady Milana Lukeše." *Theatralia* 15 (2012): 1, 48-64.

[30] Vlasta Krautmanová, *Dramaturgie českých divadel v období tzv. normalizace 70. a 80. let 20. století (1969/70–1989/90)*. Unpublished PhD thesis (Praha: DAMU, 2003), 136.

[31] My thanks for drawing the attention to this production go to Jana Bžochová-Wild, Bratislava.

country and, in 1979, broadcast by the Austrian TV channel ORF. Kohout's play and Chramostová's production inspired Tom Stoppard to write his *Cahoot's Macbeth*.[32] This special production testifies to the centrality of this tragedy in the Czech "national dramaturgy".

The interest in Otokar Fischer's "modernist" translation was revived in 1983, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth. At the conference at Charles University in Prague, Martin Hilský – even before starting to work on his own Shakespeare translations – dedicated his paper to Fischer's *Macbeth*, comparing it critically with Saudek's and Lukeš's translations.

Only two more recent translations were created: Martin Hilský's of 1997 and Jiří Josek's of 2004. Both were published and produced on stage. Despite the appeal the plays had for their audiences in the actors' performances – namely in Boris Rösner's performance in the title role in 1998 (Rösner was also director of the production) or the intimate production at the Divadlo u stolu Theatre in Brno, directed by František Derfler – the play lost its social, cultural and political connotations. In the past quarter of a century, it has been "down to the actors" once again – a matter somewhat complicated given the inachievability of heroism on the recent Czech stage. *Macbeth* was appealing in its ruthless heroism – humans, who become traitors and murderers, and yet are committed, courageous and disarmingly sincere – this mode, however, seems to be difficult to achieve in the current climate.

It is strikingly so, when compared to outstanding productions, such as Czech director Vladimír Morávek's Slovak production with Marián Labuda in the title role and Adela Gáborová as Lady Macbeth (Andrej Bagar Theatre, Nitra, 1999), which combines Morávek's characteristic cynicism, defeatism and hedonistic media postmodernity, and yet portrays Macbeth – the fattish beer-

[32] Hana Worthen gives a thorough outline of the production; see Hana Worthen. "Within and Beyond: Pavel Kohout's *Play Makbeth* and its Audiences". In *Shakespeare Worldwide: Shakespeare and the Idea of an Audience*. Edited by Tina Krontiris, Jyotsna G Singh and Maria Schoina. A special issue of *The Journal of Theory and Criticism* 15 (2007). Thessaloniki: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2007, 111-132.

drinker who has been wasting his time in front of the TV screen – with his equally nauseating Lady Macbeth as heroes of the everyday: the brutality, cruelty and ruthless ambition is present today as ever.[33] This has been the thread resonating with Czech productions of *Macbeth* since the late eighteenth century. Perhaps a new production is now being prepared to revive this motif; and perhaps the motif is now obscured by other, more immediate concerns, better resonating in other Shakespeare plays.

[33] For several production photographs and the full cast, see http://www.dab.sk/sk/hry/77/.

4

"Now, [...] what is your text?"[1] Translating & Publishing Shakespeare in Slovak

Jana Bžochová-Wild

The impetus and inspiration for this paper was provided by a book of Slovakia's outstanding translation theorist Libuša Vajdová entitled *Sedem životov prekladu*[2] (*Seven Lives of Translation*). Vajdová is concerned with the stimuli of cultural studies, while significantly transcending the traditional view of the text. She proposes to understand translations as phenomena not on the bipolar axis of original and translation, but in "the space in between, on transitional territory"[3]. Shifting from linguistic analysis to the examination of texts in their cultural and social contexts and their changing connections, she provides an approach that allows us to comprehend many new, marginalized or neglected aspects of foreign literature's existence in the receiving environment.

Vajdová's impulses resonate with those of Renaissance and Shakespeare studies[4], which have proved that the image of Shakespeare

[1] Shakespeare, W.: *Twelfth Night*, I.5.211. All quotes from Shakespeare refer to The Oxford Shakespeare, The Complete Works, ed. S. Wells, G. Taylor, 1988, unless indicated otherwise.

[2] Vajdová, Libuša: *Sedem životov prekladu*. Bratislava: Veda 2009.

[3] ibid, s. 8. All translations from Slovak into English here and further on are mine.

[4] Stephen Greenblatt´s *Renaissance Self Fashioning. From More to Shakespeare*, University of Chicago Press 1980. Dollimore, J., Sinfield, A.: *Political Shakespeare. New essays in cultural materialism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985.

is formed not only by language and its significations, but also through the way he is facilitated, re-produced and re-constructed by cultural institutions. These challenges have led me to reconsider and recompose the puzzle of Slovak culture from the point of view of its reception of Shakespeare and the way Slovak culture has re-constructed his image.

The reception and reproduction of Shakespeare have basically taken place in two parallel lines where his plays were understood either as theatre or as literature. Over the last 400 years, the co-existence of these "two households, both alike in dignity"[5] was neither harmonious nor symmetrical. In the Slovak culture Shakespeare first emerged as literature because of the absence of professional theatre[6]; in the middle of the 20th century, however, he was moved exclusively onto the theatre agenda.

We will survey the printed translations of Shakespeare's plays, focusing on the 20th century, for there were no plays published in Slovak before 1903. The published translations take an important part in the re-producing of his image. "Not only what has been said or written belongs to a translation, but also what is not said, unspoken, what remains in the background, [...] what exists in the text beyond the words"[7], but what at the same time is part of every communication process. To this effect, we can look at the Slovak translations of Shakespeare from the pragmatic point of view and examine their printed published versions – beyond their linguistic aspect.

Vajdová proposes to reflect the institutional basis, as well as the "physical aspect of translations as books"[8] (their look, layout and editing), and to contextualize the broader publishing strategy during a specific period[9]. The book editions of Shakespeare's plays

5 Shakespeare, W.: *Romeo and Juliet*, Chorus, 1.

6 The company of the first professional theatre (National Theatre) was established 1920 in Bratislava and remained de facto the only one for more than 20 years to come.

7 Vajdová: 15 – 16.

8 ibid., p. 16.

9 ibid., p. 19.

comprise a significant part of social and cultural practice. Reviewing them and their development will disclose not only the shifts between literature and theatre, but also how representation and reproduction of Shakespeare in Slovak culture has been manipulated – by and with the participation of different cultural institutions and – surprisingly – individuals, too.

André Lefevere, to whose pivotal approaches Vajdová refers to, pointed out the importance of cultural institutions. Lefevere's term *rewriting* covers e. g. "translation, editing and anthologisation of texts [...] and the production of the kind of criticism"[10] reaching a wider readership. Rewriting works as an instrument to create "images of a writer, a work, a period, a genre, sometimes even a whole literature"[11]. "Rewriting manipulates"[12], for it is always produced within a particular literary and social system and "patronage"[13] that shapes and determines the authors in terms of ideology, economy and status[14]. "The works of literature canonized will be the same, but the rewriting by means of which they are presented to the audience differ, sometimes radically".[15] Shakespeare published in Slovak is a remarkable case of rewriting, too.

Our focus will be on questions of practice and tendencies of book editions of Shakespeare's plays in Slovak, such as: what functions they fulfill in society; what values they facilitate and create; how do they interpolate their literary or theatrical status; to what extent they support or suppress foreignness; what audience they address and with what purpose; what they are missing and what cultural deficits this particular absence indicates. Broadly speaking: what construction of Shakespeare do they generate in Slovak culture?

10 Lefevere, A.: *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London, New York: Routledge 1992, p. 4.

11 ibid., 5.

12 ibid., 9.

13 ibid., 15.

14 ibid., 17.

15 ibid., 20.

1903 – 1945: "It is in us to plant thine honour....."[16]

From the beginning of the 20th century to the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic (1918), only two translators published three complete translations of Shakespeare's plays in Slovak: the poet Pavol Országh Hviezdoslav (*Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) and, at his urging, Ján Smetanay (*Merchant of Venice*). In the 1930s, a new one appeared: Vladimír Roy (*Comedy of Errors*, *Macbeth*, *Twelfth Night*); and during World War II one translation was done by Ladislav Dzurányi (*King Lear*) and the duo of Vladimír Reisel and Ján Rozner (*Much Ado about Nothing)* respectively.

Of these eight plays, only six had appeared in print by the year 1945: first there were repeated printings of *Hamlet* (1903, 1931, 1938, 1941), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1905, 1941) and a single of *Merchant of Venice* (1908), as well as of *Comedy of Errors* (1932), *Macbeth* (1933) and *King Lear* (1944). The comedies *Twelfth Night* and *Much Ado about Nothing* were performed in the national theatre[17], but did not come out in print[18]. Though those editions are modest, a closer examination of them may reveal a differing reproduction of Shakespeare and differing functions his plays were meant to fulfil in Slovak culture at that time.

Hviezdoslav (1849 – 1921) was the "national poet" par excellence and everything he touched was perceived as a guarantee of good taste and quality. Literary scholars were already waiting impatiently for his *Hamlet*: having this work translated into Slovak verse meant "giving testimony to the fact that Slovaks have the right to an independent cultural and political life"[19]. Thus, the translation and publishing of *Hamlet* was perceived as an act of national emancipation.

All the plays published before 1945 (besides *King Lear*) had come out in Turčiansky Sv. Martin (now Martin). Since the 19th century, this town was the centre of many national literary and theatrical

[16] Shakespeare, W.: *All´s Well that Ends Well*, II.3.157.

[17] *Twelfth Night:* 1928, 1936 and *Much Ado about Nothing:* 1944.

[18] *Much Ado about Nothing* was published later in 1952 as mimeograph.

[19] V. Turčány: *Hviezdoslav a Shakespeare*. Slovenská literatúra, 11, 1964, č. 3, s. 236.

activities. In support of a rich scope of amateur theatre productions, many plays were published within special theatre series such as "Slovenský divadelný ochotník" [The Slovak Theatre Amateur] (1871 – 1931), "Divadelná knižnica" [The Theatre Library] (1889 – 1914; 1931 – 1950) and "Javisko" [The Stage] (1943 – 1950). The series published domestic plays and translations of foreign playwrights, too.

Hviezdoslav's *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* however, were never released in any of these theatre series, but first as separate publications of the journal Slovenské pohľady (1903 and 1905); then in the 1930s *Hamlet* was issued twice in the book series entitled "Čítanie študujúcej mládeže" [Reading for Studying Youth] (1931, 1938); finally, in the 1940s, both plays were published in the 13th volume of "Hviezdoslavove sobrané spisy básnické" [Hviezdoslav's Collected Works of Poetry] (1941, 1949). This fact is remarkable and sheds some light on the position of theatre, literature and Hviezdoslav himself, as well as on the building up of Shakespeare's status in Slovak culture during that period.

The series Reading for Studying Youth[20] (RSY) was established in 1921. In accordance with the national educational curriculum, it published primarily works by Slovak writers and later on, translations as well[21]. Its inclusion of a play suggests that the play was assigned as a text to be read (as opposed to be performed) by the young school generation. A play published in such a context implies universal literary values; it is recommended that young people become acquainted with these values at a young age, for they are considered a part of the obligatory intellectual equipment of educated people. Interestingly, almost a half century before Reading for Studying Youth (sometimes the word "Slovak" was added) was founded, the leading critic Vajanský used exactly these words when calling on to read *Hamlet* (available in Slovak language

[20] Until 1947 the "Čítanie študujúcej mládeže" (RSY) issued 147 volumes. The series of the same name has been established in the late 1960s in the publishing house Tatran Bratislava.

[21] Besides Hviezdoslav´s Shakespeare they published also Čechov´s *The Cherry Orchard* (1933) and Gogol´s *The Government Inspector* (1937), both translated by Mikuláš Gacek.

only 30 years later): "Study, read, Slovak youth, [this arch-work of poetry...]"[22]. So it is clear that Shakespeare's oeuvre, and mainly *Hamlet*, had already been promoted by Slovak scholars for several generations as the greatest of *literature* and as required *reading* for the *young generation*. The appeal proclaimed by Vajanský in 1873 – rather platonically – was included verbatim in 1930s in the same RSY book series where *Hamlet* was published.

The assignment of *Hamlet* to youth was, of course, driven by nationalist-enlightenment aspirations, but there was a dose of paternalism in it, too. Putting Hviezdoslav's *Hamlet* onto a list of required school reading also suggests a paternalistic gesture (the authority of both English and Slovak "classic" poets). Neither other plays nor translators were bestowed such literary authority; translations by Vladimír Roy came out in print during the same period, but within a theatre series determined for performing, not in a RSY series for reading, and that of Smetanay (1908[23]) as well.

These cultural circumstances contributed to the shaping of the Slovak image of Shakespeare. Hviezdoslav's renderings were perceived as literature from the beginning[24]. In contrast to this, some 25 years later the professional National Theatre in Bratislava commissioned Vladimír Roy (1885 – 1936), also a renowned poet, to translate Shakespeare. Roy's texts were published in theatre series after their staging – apparently as inspiration for further productions, i. e. for *performing*.

The different approach of publishers to Hviezdoslav on the one hand, and to Roy and Smetanay on the other, reflected their differing relationship to a) Shakespeare's plays (*Hamlet* = the greatest of literary works), b) to the translators (Hviezdoslav = the greatest of poets); their publishing served other cultural purposes (anniversaries of Hviezdoslav's death, 1931 and 1941), they were meant for different audiences and thus expressed differing ideas of cultural

[22] Vajanský, S. H.: *Shakespeare*. Národnie noviny, IV, 1873, p. 126.

[23] The only staging of *The Merchant of Venice* rendered by Smetanay was in Bratislava by Robotnícky divadelný krúžok [Proletarian theatre company] 1913.

[24] The only staging of his *Hamlet* was 10 years after his death, 1931 in the National Theatre.

values. Presumably, in the public consciousness of that time, the value of literature was higher than that of theatre. The RSY series was supported by the Ministry of Education and National Enlightenment and its books were printed in many copies. Apparently, the category of "required reading" kept them in permanent public circulation – appropriate for gems and classics: *Hamlet* and Hviezdoslav were part of this treasure.

On the contrary, the books published in theatre series had rather a pragmatic focus: they were intended for prompt distribution among theatre companies. *Macbeth* and *Comedy of Errors* issued by the theatre series "Divadelná knižnica" [Theatre Library – TL] in the 1930s were of a somewhat smaller size than those by RSY. The layouts and material used by TL and RSY, though, were quite similar and both produced good quality paperbacks.

One important difference, however, was the educational focus of the RSY series provided by epilogues to the text. The author of "Notes" on *Hamlet,* Andrej Mráz[25], underlines that Shakespeare himself "experienced much indigence and penury"[26] in his life – and despite having only an elementary education, he "expanded and deepened his knowledge through self-education"[27]. In these words we hear a hidden appeal to the target young readership. Mráz strives to create a connection to the modern Slovak reader. He does this also by pointing to the moral message of the play, which is "seeking truth"[28].

The "Vocabulary"[29], developed by the editor Ján K. Garaj to accompany the second edition only explains Hviezdoslav's neologisms (many of which are colloquial today). The most detailed are the

[25] A. M.: Poznámky. In: Shakespeare, V.: *Hamlet, kráľovič dánsky*. Preklad P. O. Hviezdoslav. Martin: Matica slovenská, 1931 (and 1938, 2nd ed.), s. 148 – 151. The text is dated by September 1931. Literary and theatre historian Andrej Mráz was dramaturg of the National Theatre Bratislava (1930).

[26] ibid., 148.

[27] ibid., 149.

[28] ibid., 151.

[29] J. K. G.: Slovníček. In: Shakespeare, V.: *Hamlet, kráľovič dánsky*. Preklad P. O. Hviezdoslav. Martin: Matica slovenská, 1938 (2nd ed.), 153 – 156.

phrases from botany for which Garaj provided Latin names and a plethora of synonyms.

These two accompanying texts locate *Hamlet* in two different spaces. While the critic Mráz strives to anchor the foreign author in the historical context of the sending culture and, at the same time, to find a connection to the receiving readers' environment, Garaj's "Vocabulary" approaches the text as a work of domestic culture and does not contain even the slightest mention that *Hamlet* would relate to foreign contexts and circumstances, too.

At a time when Shakespeare was only slowly and gradually entering Slovak culture, the publishers in Martin were already giving clear cultural signals to the public, such as: Hviezdoslav's Shakespeare is different from Roy's; Hviezdoslav's Shakespeare is offered for reading and education, while Roy's (and Smetanay's) is intended for the theatre. In the 1930s, these signals were understood as pointing to differing cultural values.

Looking closely even at each of the Hviezdoslav's printed Shakespeare, we may note subtle differences. While in the 1930s RSY series his *Hamlet* was presented as a work of foreign literature, targeted to young Slovak students, the same *Hamlet* (along with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*) published in the 13th volume of "Hviezdoslav's Collected Works of Poetry" in the 1940s represents a different act of constructing and re-producing of cultural values and of appropriation. In this collection, the Renaissance author figures as part of the Slovak literary and poetic discourse; reading the plays in this volume, we read rather "our" Hviezdoslav than the "foreign" Shakespeare. These editions of Hviezdoslav´s collected works are representative books of Slovak literature: they demonstrate the broad scope of the national poet and present the richness of the Slovak language he brought into literature.

Whereas the 1930s student RSY editions of *Hamlet* suggest an aim to transplant a foreign work into the receiving culture (by the way, Vajanský used the same word when he praised Hviezdoslav for having "transplanted" Shakespeare "into the lovely Slovak garden"[30],

[30] Vajanský, S. Hurban: Literárna udalosť. In: Národnie noviny, 3. 12. 1903, p. 1.

1903), the context of the 1940s collection emphasizes rather a value that has already been accepted, and presents the plays as a "product of Slovak culture" and a monument to it. The author of the 1940s collection is Hviezdoslav, not Shakespeare. The edition of 1949 even states Hviezdoslav as the only author[31] and does not mention Shakespeare at all. Both *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night´s Dream* enjoy equal status with the other works in the collection, which include Hviezdoslav's own poetry as well as his translations (e. g. plays of Schiller and Goethe, volume 14), and are published without notes: a work of poetry by a great Slovak writer for the reader's delight.

It was beyond the established circles of Martin and Bratislava where the young Ladislav Dzurányi operated, when he published his translation of *King Lear* in Bratislava's EOS publishing house (1944) under the pseudonym Ladislav Orlov. It was issued in "Edícia mladej generácie" [Series of the Young Generation]: "young" could refer both to the author/translator and/or to the readership. In any case, it sounds less authoritative than the RSY edition from Martin. Dzurányi's translation remained a forgotten solitaire; almost nothing is known about its author, who died the same year in the Slovak National Uprising before the age of 25. The publishing house shut down after the war.

What is remarkable, however, is the EOS' orientation towards young literature: in 1938 the publisher released the first collection of Slovak surrealists *Áno a nie* [*Yes and No*], and in the 1940s several poets had their debut here. The books suggest the equal status of original and translated works: *King Lear* is perceived as a remarkable work by a young person, and it is his poetical achievement in Slovak that is meant to be valued, not the Renaissance playwright. The connection of the play to the contemporary receiving culture is stressed by a cover that shows a picture by Ernest Zmeták, an outstanding young Slovak artist of the time.

Apparently, the young poet translated and published *King Lear* outside of any pragmatic public interests. Such Shakespearean ac-

[31] Hviezdoslav: *Hamlet. Sen noci svätojánskej.* Martin: Matica slovenská, 1949.

tivities were not repeated ever again in Slovak culture (although Valentín Beniak in the 1950s probably did so as well, but he was not allowed to publish at least half of what he had completed).

1945 – 1948: "some sparks of better hope"[32]

After 1945, there was a fundamental turn in translating and producing of Shakespeare in Slovakia. It was connected with the founding of many new professional theatre houses in Slovakia. A set of state-funded resident theatre companies was established and needed a systematical build-up of repertory and audience. This generated a growing demand for "classic" plays. The appeal for translating Shakespeare, which had already been uttered in the 1930s by dramaturgs of the national theatre, became even more urgent. A range of new translations emerged. After 1948, however, the new Slovak Shakespeare moved exclusively into the theatre, while his plays disappeared from literature until 1963.

Between 1945 and the expansion of the autocratic communist regime in 1948, three new translations were published[33] – *As You Like It, Richard III* and *Hamlet* – all commissioned by Jozef Felix, then dramaturg of the Slovak National Theatre (SNT) with the intention to stage them. And all of them were issued as books as well.

Very soon after the war a tandem of Ján Šimko (philologist, Anglicist) and Zora Jesenská (writer, translator from Russian) set out to translate Shakespeare[34]. Their first (and last) common completed and also the first post-war translation – *As You Like It* – was performed in SNT 1946. The book edition was issued in Martin 1948 within the theatre series "Javisko" [The Stage], dedicated to classic

[32] Shakespeare, W.: *Richard II*, V.3.21.

[33] In addition, Matica slovenská repeated its unchanged and reverent edition of *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night´s Dream* within Hviezdoslav's Selected Works of Poetry (1949, the 100th anniversary of his birth).

[34] In 1947-1949, Šimko had stayed in London, and after returning, he did not translate Shakespeare anymore. Jesenská, who did not understand English very well at that time, soon became a dominant translator of Shakespeare, co-working with translator from English Ján Rozner.

works of foreign playwrights – as an indication of special value it bore an illustrated brand showing a mask, a lyre and a laurel.

The activities of two other publishers were also remarkable:

Tranoscius in Liptovský Mikuláš represented a kind of competition and challenge for the more traditional Martin. The series called "Dramatická tvorba Tranoscia" [Dramatic Works of Tranoscius] brought out domestic and translated plays, mostly by modern authors and leading translators[35], following or accompanying their staging at SNT[36] from 1941 on. These plays, easy to read paperbacks of A5 size were printed in large numbers[37] and also contained brief historical and critical introductions to the plays. Although the more or less parallel performances at the SNT were never mentioned in the books, they established a natural connection between theatre and literature and broadened cultural horizons. *Hamlet* in a rendering by Zora Jesenská, 1948, was the last book of this ambitious series. The problematic question of authorship of the translation is still the subject of debate today[38].

On the front inner jacket, there is a long quotation of I. S. Turgenev on *Hamlet* (1860). Tranoscius was not oriented toward Russian literature as Javisko in Martin was, so quoting of Turgenev looks like a concession to the strongly emerging Russophilia. It is as if this edition of *Hamlet* was trying to link two tendencies present in

[35] M. Gacek, J, Felix, M, Rázusová-Martáková, E. B. Lukáč, J. Poničan, J. Kostra, V. Mihálik etc.

[36] H. Ibsen, A. P. Čechov, F. Schiller, G. Büchner, G. Hauptmann, S. de Beauvoir, M. Begović etc.

[37] *Hamlet* was printed in 2,200 copies, Čechov´s *The Seagull* and *Oncle Vanja* even 2,700 copies during the war!

[38] Šimko was commissioned by Jozef Felix to prepare a verbatim translation into prose, of which he handed over only the acts 1 and 2. And there was the Czech translation by E. A. Saudek, whom Jesenská copied illegitimately in many instances. The book mentions neither Šimko nor Saudek. They are not mentioned in the printed programme of the Slovak National Theatre´s staging of Hamlet 1950 either. The published edition 1948 aroused a huge discussion between Šimko and Jesenská in the press. The discussion and the translation are closely commented in Bžochová-Wild, Jana: 1998, p. 101 – 103, as well as in Maliti-Fraňová, Eva: *Tabuizovaná prekladateľka Zora Jesenská*. Bratislava: Veda, Ústav svetovej literatúry 2007, p. 156 – 170. According to Maliti-Fraňová, Jesenská payed to Saudek a part of her royalties (Maliti-Fraňová, p. 159).

Slovak culture since Romanticism: cultural orientation toward the West with that toward Russia.

Another rather enigmatic post-war Shakespeare is *Richard III* translated by the poet and then theatre critic E. B. Lukáč, issued by the publisher Orlovský in Bratislava (1948) as the first and apparently last book of the "Drama Series" in a pocket size. The cover shows the Chandos portrait of Shakespeare, which was neither famous nor widely known and which usually associates the author – roughly speaking – with plebeian rather than with aristocratic origin (as Droeshout's or the recent Cobb's portraits do). In a strange tension to this picture is the name underneath: SHAKESPEARE. Omitting the given name renders the author a mythical and monumental status.

In a brief introductory note, the translator writes that "The National Theatre has put *Richard III* on its program"[39], though it was never performed there. The note ends rather cryptically: "[The play] shows Shakespeare who shed light on horrors of the past which continue to cast their shadows on people's path until today. How long?"[40] The publishing house had to shut down after 1948 and the poet never returned to Shakespeare again.

These three new translations, which were perhaps still taking shape in 1948 as a promising start to a new era, ended up representing the residue of the independent book production of Shakespeare's plays. After the communist coup in February 1948, many publishing houses were banished and the cultural traditions ruptured.

Translating and publishing of Shakespeare in Slovak language started up very slowly. In the 1940s the spectrum of book editions began to vary, showing differing reasons, various ways of editing and targeting different audiences, thus emphasizing different cultural values. In plays published until 1948, several tendencies are evident: national monumentalisation (Hviezdoslav), theatre pragmatism (theatre series), education (RSY), bibliophilia (*King Lear,*

[39] Lukáč, E. B.: Shakespearova kráľovská tragédia…. Shakespeare, W.: *Richard III*., preklad E. B. Lukáč. Bratislava: Orlovský, 1948. p. 2.

[40] Lukáč, ibid.

Richard III) and even slight attempts at individual or critical approaches. Before the desired diversification could develop, however, the communist regime quickly broke it up.

Despite differences in focus, the material quality of the literary series editions did not differ very much from those published within the theatre series: both were produced as valuable cultural objects. A close look at the period that followed shows how deep a decline next period brought and how long the recovery took.

1948 – 1963: "Who lets so fair a house fall to decay?"[41]

The subsequent period of the 1950s, under the strong and only gradually loosening ideological pressure of Stalinism, saw the appearance of several new translators of Shakespeare: the tandem Zora Jesenská with Ján Rozner, Stanislav Blaho, Ján Boor, Valentín Beniak and M. Mittelmann-Dedinský[42]. Jesenská and Rozner asserted their position the most energetically – the lesser stature of the others was often due to political as well as personal reasons[43].

The (re-)production of Shakespeare moved to the theatres. Although many new translations appeared, neither new nor old ones were published as books until 1963. That is, if we do not take into account the typed copies from theatrical agencies, which held copyrights. One of their roles was to provide theatres with plays. Even in comparison to the simplest pre-war booklets of the theatre series, these mimeographed copies were a significant step down: they were of A5 and later A4 size booklets with low quality thick paper, mostly produced in barely legible typewritten form. They served as nothing more than short-term working scripts. From the

[41] Shakespeare, W.: *Sonnet 13*. The first line of this sonnet is almost identical with the first line of Hviezdoslav´s *Sonnet 13* (!): „Kto zapríčinil tento úpadok?" [„Who ever caused this decay?"], In: *Krvavé sonety,* 1919. [Blood-red Sonnets]. E-text: http://zlatyfond.sme.sk/dielo/112/Orszagh-Hviezdoslav_Krvave-sonety.

[42] He translated *The Taming of the Shrew* from the Czech translation by E. A. Saudek.

[43] Nonetheless, the silencing of the poet Beniak as translator of Shakespeare was by force – not only on the part of institutions, but of his energetic rival translators as well, and has still not been sufficiently dealt with.

1950s until the end of the 1980s, thousands of them were issued: ranging from contemporary Slovak authors to all sorts of foreign translations. These copies, intended for internal distribution in theatres, never possessed nor were designed to possess a cultural value. But, since they were released by an official publisher, they are included in bibliographies as published translations – which is de facto misleading.

As a result, until the mid-1960s, only theatre performances of Shakespeare were assigned cultural value. The translators were degraded to the role of mere "Slovakizers". The Stalinist period was obsessed with the contemporary, and apparently, if a "classic author" was performed, it did not suit the ideological interests to bring out and distribute his texts to the public. Books are, in a way, preserved memory – and memory was the last thing the Stalinist period was interested in (as the decline of archives, old architecture etc. shows).

This approach had far-reaching effects. Translations of Shakespeare, limited to theatre, reached only a small public audience. Not available for reading, they did not stimulate visits to the theatre and vice versa – theatre-goers had no hope to continue at home by reading the text. Nevertheless, the permeability between theatre and literature is fundamental for their free development and mutual enrichment.

This raises the question to what extent this publishing practice influenced the approach of translators toward their text and its quality, how binding it was for the theatre, and so on. Perhaps here lie the roots of carelessness of the Slovak theatre and acting with regard to verse and Shakespearean text as such. It is a paradox, though, that Slovak theatre was, and its mainstream still is, deeply anchored in the literary tradition.

The book culture in terms of plays in the 1950s was oppressed by blunt, autocratic style and strict regulations, which led to radical decline in the craft and minimizing of cultural demands on behalf of state institutions. And any private initiative would have been illegal. In the consciousness of the Slovak public, from 1948 until

1963, Shakespeare was an author to be watched and listened to, but not to be read: some 30 different productions were performed in Slovak professional theatres at that time. The poor quality mimeographed copies of translated plays did not get into public distribution. Shakespeare as an author of literature stumbled into the periphery. We have been feeling the consequences of this approach until today.

1963 – 1970: "Tis brief"[44]

From the year 1956 on, there was a slow process of destalinisation in Czechoslovakia, which saw its climax in 1963. The mid and late 1960s were a period of political thaw and of extensive cultural boom. In 1964 and 1966, there were two major anniversaries of Shakespeare (1564 – 1616). At that time, a considerable number of his plays had already been translated into Slovak and some projects were launched to promote new stagings and publishing. This promising development, however, was stopped again by political events: the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact forces in August 1968. A strangulation of freedom followed and was confirmed in 1970 by so-called "normalisation", which meant heavy political repression by the totalitarian regime for two more decades.

In the 1960s, Shakespeare again found his place in literature. The SVKL[45] publishing house in Bratislava (later known as Tatran) launched a project to publish a collection of Shakespeare's plays in five volumes within the series "World Classics". First, in 1963 the volume *Tragedies*[46] was released, in 1964 *Comedies*[47] and in 1968

[44] Shakespeare, W.: *Hamlet*, III.2.146.

[45] Slovenské vydavateľstvo krásnej literatúry.

[46] *Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth*. For the full bibliographical entry of all volumes see the attached „Bibliography".

[47] *The Merchant of Venice, Twelfth Night, The Merry Wifes of Windsor, Measure for Measure, The Tempest*.

Roman and Greek Plays[48]. For political reasons, *Comedies II*[49], published later in 1970, had only a limited distribution, and *Histories*[50] never came out at all. A separate edition of *Hamlet*, ready to go to print in 1971, was not released either. The reason: political and civil persecution of the translators Jesenská and Rozner for their overt protest against the events of 1968. Of 20 plays in four published volumes, 11 were translated by Jesenská in cooperation with Rozner (55 percent).

Earlier translations were revised for this collection. Those of Jesenská[51] and Boor[52] in particular, less so for Blaho[53], enjoyed popularity with theatres and were considered as modern. Also, a new translator – Jozef Kot[54] – was introduced in the 3rd volume. The representative selection of a "classic" writer was embedded into the context of the receiving culture as a visible summing-up of the most recent achievements in translation, a worthy piece in the mosaic of modern Slovak culture.

These four volumes were outstandingly equipped. For the first time in the history of Shakespeare publishing in Slovakia they included extensive notes and comments on the plays, as well as epilogues. Since there were no Slovak experts, all the accompanying texts were written by the Czech Shakespearean Alois Bejblík. He took rather a positivist approach based on the modern British editions[55].

[48] *Troilos and Cressida, Julius Caesar, Coriolanus, Timon of Athens, Antony and Cleopatra.*.

[49] *The Taming of the Shrew, A Midsummer Night´s Dream, Much Ado about Nothing, As You Like It, The Winter´s Tale.*

[50] *Henry IV, 1- 2, Richard II, Richard III.*

[51] *Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth*, *Twelfth Night*, *Coriolanus, Antony and Cleopatra*, *A Midsummer Night´s Dream*, *As You Like It*, *The Winter´s Tale.*

[52] *The Merry Wifes of Windsor*, *The Tempest*, *Timon of Athens.*

[53] *The Merchant of Venice*, *Measure for Measure*, *Julius Caesar, The Taming of the Shrew, Much Ado about Nothing.*

[54] *Troilos and Cressida.*

[55] He analyzed sources and dating of the plays, as well as the Renaissance context, while linking the philological to the theatrical aspects. Despite some rather vulgar Marxist points, many of his ideas are inspiring even today.

The ornamental lettering of the standardized cover design was a clear indication: this is a "classic" piece of work. While the first volume contained illustrations by the famous British illustrator John Gilbert, the second and third volumes were illustrated by Theodor Schnitzer and Vladimír Tesař. The contribution of domestic artists indicates an interest for a wider cultural appropriation of Shakespeare. Similarly, the brief texts on the book jackets linked the Renaissance author with modern fashionable writers such as Dürrenmatt, Anouilh or Sartre.

These four volumes, containing a selection of more than half of Shakespeare's plays, suggested an accommodation for several types of readers: their plain texts offered "untroubled" reading, though a more demanding audience could study and reflect on them based on the commentaries at the end of the book. Such an editorial work looks like a reasonable compromise for that time.

To a certain extent, this selection compensated for the absence of Shakespeare's plays until then. However, the number of copies produced in no way corresponded with actual demand from readers: 3,000 of *Tragedies*[56], 5,000 of *Comedies*, 2,000 of *Roman and Greek Plays* and only 1,500 copies of *Comedies II*. Unfortunately, these figures also reflect the project's official political support, which decreased significantly after 1968.

Oddly enough, the Slovak publishers in the 1960s seemed satisfied with the idea of a representative five-volume project and did not foster any other single editions of Shakespeare's plays. This strange unwillingness may have come from a belief that plays must "deserve" to be published as books. To achieve this, their authors had to be generally accepted as "classics". After that, their plays would be published in a collection, accompanied by a critical epilogue. Thus, the spectrum of cultural requirements for plays – at least from the official institutions – was narrow, even in the "golden" 1960s. There were (still) either mimeographed copies internally distributed by agencies, or the plays were straightforwardly located

[56] Ján Vilikovský wrote: "3,000 copies were out of stock within three weeks", In: Vilikovský, J.: *Nad slovenským Shakespearom*. Slovenské pohľady, 80, 1964, Nr. 4, p. 61.

among the classics (living or dead) with an explanatory epilogue. Needless to say: translations of plays published merely in representative volumes provide a limited impetus for vivid interaction.

Coming back to Shakespeare: as a consequence of the political persecution of Jesenská[57] (she died in 1972) and Rozner, all their works became taboo in the following two decades. It was prohibited to perform their translations in theatres. And the Shakespeare volumes ceased to exist and were made to disappear from the public as well.

1971 – 1989: "I see the business"[58]

During the years of so-called "normalisation" (the 1970s), the Anglicist Jozef Kot established himself as a translator of Shakespeare. In his new position as Director of the Department of Art at the Slovak Ministry of Culture (1971 – 1989) he was the ideologue and executor of all sorts of repression in culture. Translating Shakespeare, Kot secured for himself a monopoly, eliminating the politically inconvenient translators from the past while also suppressing potential new ones. Based on his high political position, he was the chief authority to all the publishers and theatres alike and placed his Shakespeare abundantly in both of these "two households". They had no choice.

For almost two decades Kot translated more than half of the canon[59]. Presumably, it was mostly in his personal interest for the

[57] Jesenská was one of the three Slovak writers (with Milan Hamada and Jozef Bžoch), taking part in the funeral of Ján Palach in January 1969 in Prague: Palach was a 20-year old student who committed suicide by self-immolation as a political protest against the 1968 invasion and its consequences in Czechoslovakia. See: Hamada, Milan: „Začnem in medias res...", In: Bžochová-Wild, Jana, Bžoch, Adam (eds.): *Osemdesiat Jozefovi Bžochovi*. Bratislava: Petit Press 2006, p. 44 – 45.

[58] Shakespeare, W.: *King Lear*. I.2 .169.

[59] *Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth*, *Troilos and Cressida* (1960s), *Antony and Cleopatra, Julius Caesar, Titus Andronicus, Richard II, Richard III, Henry IV - I, II*; *All´s Well That Ends Well, Comedy of Errors, Love´s Labour´s Lost, Measure for Measure, A Midsummer Night´s Dream, Pericles;* 2007 he translated *Cymbeline* for the theatre in Trnava.

plays to be published. What had been impossible for more than a quarter century since 1948, suddenly became not only possible, but resulted in an entire series – the publishing house Tatran began to issue separate books of Shakespeare's plays.

Jozef Kot was closely acquainted with editorial practice: 1968 – 1971 he was editor in chief in the same house, Tatran, and since the 1960s he had published numerous translations from English, there and elsewhere, among them e. g. the first James Bond[60] in Slovak.

From 1975 – 1985, translations of single Shakespeare's plays appeared in a pocket hardback series with standardized cover design (paraphrasing the well-known Elizabethan Swan Theatre). Out of 15 plays[61] issued, 13 were Kot's translations. Significantly, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in the extremely popular rendering by Ján Boor, was not included, though the same Boor was charged with writing the epilogue for *Hamlet* (1977). Even more significant – Kot´s *Hamlet* was issued twice during this time by the same publisher, though never within the Shakespearean "Swan" series.

All the plays in the "Swan" series were provided with commentaries and epilogues, written again by the Czech Alois Bejblík. These texts, relegated to the end of the book, were mostly so disorderly and unprofessionally edited (lacking page numbers for citations), that to the reader, they are completely useless. As if they were but an annoying formal obligation which nobody would expect to be read.

Nevertheless, Kot´s *Hamlet* was issued differently: the first edition was a bibliophile, an oversized book illustrated by the famous Dušan Kállay (1975), printed in 5,250 copies (a record number for a Shakespeare play in Slovak so far). Only two years later, the same play was produced within the RSY series [Reading for Study-

[60] Fleming, I.: *Doktor No*. Translated by Jakub Bond [Jozef Kot]. Bratislava: Slovenský spisovateľ, 1968.

[61] 1975: *All´s Well That Ends Well, Comedy of Errors, King John*; 1976: *King Lear, Love´s Labour´s Lost*; 1977: *Romeo and Juliet*; 1978: *Othello*; 1979: *Macbeth*; 1980: *Twelfth Night*; 1981: *Richard II*; 1982: *Titus Andronicus*; 1983: *Henry IV, 1-2*; 1984: *Pericles*; 1985: *Richard III.* The tandem E. Castiglione and I. Mojík, (*King John*, *Twelfth Night*) is of marginal importance.

ing Youth, revived by Tatran in the late 1960s] (1977). Though the pocket hardback books of the RSY series were of the same size as those of the "Swan" series, the difference was in the editorial approach (an epilogue instead of commentaries) and – the most important – in the number of copies printed, which reached 10,000[62] (quite incomparable to the "Swan" series with 1,000 to 2,500 copies of each play).

Considering all the consequences, we could ask how the legal contracts between the publisher and translator were. Did the translator acquire a special status depending on the number of printed[63] copies (similarly to the royalties he would get by number of performances shown in the theatre)? Or should we mention a phenomenon of the pre-digital era, obsolete by now: the dubious "standard page"? For until the early 1990s, there was a flat fee per standard page, i. e. a typewritten page with 30 lines, regardless of the number of signs. The translators of texts in verse (which have shorter lines – e. g. blankvers) enjoyed a notorious advantage compared to those who translated prose. If these considerations sound unusual, let us mention the translation theorist Lawrence Venuti, who drew attention to the phenomenon of royalties and to many related ethical and social questions[64].

The RSY series, again, meant a reading list for schools in terms of manipulative patronage (Lefevere), keeping the chosen works (and their translators) in circulation. The eligibility of *Hamlet* for this reading list is beyond any doubt. However, it is legitimate to ask who put certain works of literature onto the RSY list (i.e. into the canon of eternal classics), why he did it and how this list was adjusted to (politically) suitable translators.

[62] Oddly enough, *Hamlet* (1977) is the only book of that period that does not state the number of printed copies at the end of the book. The comparable edition from the RSY-series issued the same year – Schiller´s *William Tell* – was printed by 10,000 copies: presumably *Hamlet* was about of that quantity.

[63] We say „printed", not „sold", for in the period of planned socialist economy there existed no regards to the real market nor demands.

[64] Venuti, L.: *The Translator´s Invisibility*. London, New York: Routledge 1995, p. 11 – 12 ff.

The hardback "Swan" series dropped any connection to the contemporary public. The static lifeless cover picture[65] (paraphrasing the Swan Theatre) suggests a cold classic missing the most important thing: the human aspect. The detachment and foreignness of this Shakespeare was reinforced by the translator, who never gave his view on his work nor Shakespeare publically[66] – unlike his predecessors Hviezdoslav, Jesenská and Rozner, or later Feldek[67]. Direct interaction with the public is surely part of "rewriting" and, even though strongly manipulative, it may serve as an instrument of approximation of the foreign to the receiving culture.

The translators of the "Swan" series look invisible, as if they were unimportant. Kot's share, though, is more than 87 percent. Invisibility hiding a perfect monopoly, pretending naturalness – though based on a position that had excluded the others. Whereas the four volumes of the 1960s provided a certain rounding off of the Slovak Shakespearean tradition – in a variety, even in terms of generations[68], the "Swan" series of 1975 – 1985 (altogether with the RSY *Hamlet*) indicates rather a monolith – as does the collection to come in 1989.

After 1985, the pocket "Swan" series was stopped. But four years later, in 1989, the publisher issued a three-volume collection from Shakespeare: *Tragedies. Romances* (I.)[69], *Comedies. Sonnets* (II.)[70]

[65] The author of the cover illustration was the long-year graphic and stage designer of the SNT Čestmír Pechr.

[66] He gave a single interview for a Czech journal Scéna in Prague. Procházková, J.: *O Shakesperaovi, překládání a divadle s Jozefem Kotem.* Scéna 4, 1979, Nr. 6, p. 1.

[67] Hviezdoslav wrote a lot on this topic in his letters, notes and published a triple-sonnet *Prekladajúc Hamleta* [Translating Hamlet, 1903]; Jesenská and Rozner published notes, articles in theatre programms, interviews, took part in discusssions in various journals; Feldek, the most eloquent critical rewriter of Shakespeare so far, broadened his spectrum since 1990s also to TV, radio and internet.

[68] Jesenská (1909 - 1972), Boor (1915 – 2002), Rozner (1922 – 2006), Blaho (1925 – 1965), Kot (1936).

[69] *Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth, The Tempest.*

[70] *Comedy of Errors, Love´s Labour´s Lost, A Midsummer Night´s Dream, The Merry Wifes of Windsor, All´s Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure, Sonnets.*

and *Histories* (III.)[71], 4,000 copies each. Kot's share in the plays was more than 89 percent – only two out of 19 published plays were rendered by Ján Boor[72] (dated back to 1954 and 1961).

The actual domestication of Shakespeare was enhanced by the preface of Ján Vilikovský "Shakespeare and his plays in Slovakia"[73]. The collection served formal representative purposes: it contained plain texts without any commentaries. Any challenge to a reflective nonlinear reader was missing. Placing tragedies as the first volume (also in 1963) suggests that they were considered to possess the top, basic and identification value of Shakespeare (though in Slovak theatre comedies were staged much more often). This opinion, probably deeply rooted in the public consciousness, goes back to the classicist and Aristotelian division between high and low genres.

Summarizing this period: the visible progress in publishing (single plays, finally!), as well as the number of printed copies, arouse gratification. This is doubted though by learning that the new strategy was determined by the personal interests of a single translator. Too bad his indisputable business talent and publishing strategies developed during the communist regime, which enabled him easily to eliminate any competitors and content itself with low requirements to editorial details and translations as such. Had there been a democratic situation, the cultural profits from rewriting Shakespeare could have been much greater and more enduring, even from the rewritings of Jozef Kot.

The publishing of Shakespeare during the 1970s and 1980s fits perfectly into the framework drawn by André Lefevere. Hence, the rewriting of literature is always realized in a social system with a "patronage" in terms of "the powers (persons, institutions) that can further or hinder the reading, writing and rewriting of literature"[74].

[71] *Richard III, Richard II, Henry IV, 1 - 2, Julius Caesar, Troilos and Cressida, Antony and Cleopatra*, all by Jozef Kot.

[72] *The Tempest, The Merry Wifes of Windsor.*

[73] Vilikovský, J.: *Shakespeare a jeho hry u nás*. In: Shakespeare, W.: *Tragédie*. Bratislava: Tatran 1989, s. 7 – 69.

[74] Lefevere, p. 15.

Lefevere would distinguish between differentiated and undifferentiated forms of patronage: "Patronage is undifferentiated when its three components, the ideological, the economic, and the status components, are all dispensed by one and the same patron"[75]. The undifferentiated patronage – surely covering the period of Jozef Kot's monopoly – would indicate that the patron is interested in preserving the stability of the social system and that any "other" literature is banished to dissent or disrespected and marginalized[76]. The production of (translated) literature would be reduced to a more or less small "coterie operating within the orbit of the patronage group that is in power"[77].

Besides the translator Jozef Kot, during the 1970s and 1980s there neither appeared nor developed any personality dealing with Shakespeare systematically. Both university professors Ján Vilikovský (1937) and Ján Boor (1915 – 2002) who wrote on his plays did it rather occasionally; Boor's three translations dated back to the 1950s or 1960s. The duo of Eduard Castiglione and Ivan Mojík with their two plays served mainly as front men to hide the actual monopoly. Some rare others who tried their hand with Shakespeare were cautiously directed to do that exclusively for a single theatre or TV production and made rather one-way "tradaptations"[78].

Presumably, the cultural and social (not linguistic) novelty of the rewriting of Shakespeare during the "normalisation" period is to be found in the recognition, connecting and exploiting of a whole range of advantages: the objective cultural demand; the absence of a stronger tradition; the copyright-free author; "two-housholds" outlet; the quantitatively "short" verse text; politically and professionally weak competitors and an undifferentiated patronage. A

[75] Lefevere, p. 17.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Blahoslav Hečko rewrote the older text of S. Blaho (*The Taming of a Shrew*, 1972), Alexandra Ruppeldtová „tradapted" *The Tempest* (Trnava, 1978), Štefan Moravčík with Štefan Cifra *A Midsummer Night´s Dream* (Martin, 1985) and Ľubomír Feldek translated into prose *Othello* (1972, TV).

pragmatical calculation with these circumstances led to a monopoly and to an unchallenged monologue.

After 1989: "O brave new world"[79]

After the fall of communism in 1989, the opening of the society brought a number of remarkable activities and the re-production of Shakespeare changed as well. Apart from some retro-editions[80], the main innovation came with the new publisher and the new translator. From 2005 on, there is a new Shakespeare book series, systematically built up and "reader friendly", producing indeed a new Shakespeare. Paradoxically, again by monopoly… As Lefevere put it: "undifferentiated patronage need not to be based mainly on ideology […]. The economic component, the profit motive, may well lead to the re-establishment of a system with relatively undifferentiated patronage"[81].

The new Slovak Shakespeare is dominated by Ľubomír Feldek (1936), a well-known writer, poet and translator. Commissioned by the national theatre (SNT) to translate some of the plays in the 1990s, he (himself not an anglophone) started to do so in cooperation with Ľubomíra Hornáčková. So far, he has translated 19 works, including the *Sonnets*.

To begin with, his texts were printed in the programme-booklets for the theatre productions at the SNT. This proved to be rather a mixed blessing: though diminishing the barriers between theatre and literature, the audience that obtained these texts was very limited, for the distribution did not exceed the space and time of the actual performance.

[79] Shakespeare, W.: *The Tempest*, 5.1.186.

[80] Shakespeare, W.: *Hamlet*. Preklad Jozef Kot. Bratislava: HEVI 1994. Shakespeare, W.: *Romeo a Júlia.* Preklad Zora Jesenská a Ján Rozner. Bratislava: Nestor 2001. Translations by Hviezdoslav are available online: http://zlatyfond.sme.sk/dielo/5000/Shakespeare_Hamlet-kralovic-dansky, http://zlatyfond.sme.sk/dielo/5001/Shakespeare_Sen-noci-svatojanskej.

[81] Lefevere: 19.

Finally, since 2005, the plays have been published singly by the commercial publisher Ikar. In nine years Ikar has released 16 books[82], all rendered by Ľubomír Feldek. The series is targeted to young people; the books boast a recognizable cover layout with conspicuous colourful illustrations by Peter Uchnár, who draws attention to the most famous (clichéd) scenes of the plays stressing their dramatic swirl.

The series follows The Arden Shakespeare as source texts. Nevertheless, the Slovak books do not publish footnotes, only short endnotes, prologues and epilogues written by the translator himself. What a pity: the editorial practice in Slovakia still does not allow Shakespeare's plays to be studied – only to be read linearly as homogenous texts and not as hetereogenous, intermittent, fragmentary, intertextual. As if footnotes would discourage the public from reading. What is expected is mere "delightful" reading in terms of the romantic formula uttered 1891 by the critic Vajanský: we should "receive the impressions by a fresh soul which is not dandled by reflecting"[83].

Nevertheless, some of the translator´s endnotes explain the chosen linguistic solutions while quoting and commenting on others' (Slovak and/or Czech, older and/or new alike). By doing so, they point to the "non-definitiveness" of this as of any rewriting. This aspect, too, is new in Slovak translating. Though it is arguable whether the presenting of a non-anglophone translator as the chief commentator on Shakespeare is based on serious cultural considerations or rather on his status as media star.

The back cover, publishing a couple of lines from the play in Shakespeare´s original as well as their translation, indicates that the target public is supposed to be familiar with or at least to have

[82] 2005: *Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night´s Dream, Twelfth Night*; 2006: *Antony and Cleopatra, Hamlet, As You Like It*; 2007: *Sonnets, Othello*; 2008: *The Tempest, The Taming of a Shrew*; 2009: *Macbeth*; 2011: *The Winter´s Tale*; 2012: *King Lear*; 2013: *The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Measure for Measure, Much Ado about Nothing;* going to print: *Coriolanus, The Merchant of Venice, The Merry Wifes of Windsor.*

[83] „prijímať dojmy sviežou, premýšľaním nepokolimbanou dušou". Vajanský, S. Hurban: *Nové kritické pohľady na Hamleta*. In: Národnie noviny, XXII, 1891, 82.

some knowledge of English. That could be the first step towards bilingual editions, which have not existed in Slovak so far.

The new Shakespeare sells at a profit[84]. The monopoly, though, is rather upsetting. The triple alliance of commercial publisher, state subsidized theatres and one of Slovakia´s most covered writers in media is difficult to compete with. Once again, the diversification takes place only in terms of "tradaptations" done mainly by students for their studies. So for the Slovak Shakespeare, there is still a long way to go…

P.S.: And yet: "the weighty difference"[85]

This survey of 110 years of publishing and re-production of Shakespeare in Slovak is, from the point of view of reception, only partial, providing so to say only the active input of Slovak institutions and persons. For at the passive agenda (and this might be a singularity of Slovak culture) there is a steady continuity in reception of the Czech editions and translations of Shakespeare. There existed side by side two cultures with closely related languages; and fortunately, many of the negative consequences from the Slovak literary and book production could be counterbalanced by the Czech one, which now has seven generations of Shakespearean translators and a multitude of published texts. This provides a certain relief. The continuity is still there: today, the Czech Shakespeares, especially by the two contemporary translators Martin Hilský and Jiří Josek, are still a firm part of the Slovak reception. Thus, as always, reality is more colourful – the reception still widely exceeds the actual production.

Translated by Janet Livingstone and Jana Bžochová-Wild

[84] The figures of copies sold by September 2013 (year of publishing in brackets): *Romeo and Juliet* (2005): 9,532; *Hamlet* (2006): 8,366; *Twelfth Night* (2005): 3,384; *The Taming of the Shrew* (2008): 2,376; *Othello* (2007): 2,500; *A Midsummer Night´s Dream* (2005): 4,318; *As You Like it* (2003): 2,276; *The Tempest* (2004): 1,787; *Measure for Measure* (2013): 371; *Macbeth* (2009): 2,301; *King Lear* (2012): 689; *The Winter´s Tale* (2011): 1,331; *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (2013): 185; *Sonnets* (2005): 2,583.

[85] Shakespeare, W., Fletcher, J.: *All is True* (*Henry VIII*), III.1.57.

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1945 – 1948

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Part II: SPOTS

5

"In the furnace of experience". Shakespeare's Plays in the Textbook of Gábor Egressy[1]

Lilla Szalisznyó

The publication of the first Hungarian textbook on acting is connected to the beginning of institutional actor training, to the foundation of Színi Tanoda (School of Actors) in 1865. Gábor Egressy (1808–1866), the leading actor of the National Theatre and one of the teachers of the school wrote the textbook entitled *A színészet könyve*[2] (The Book of Acting, 1866). Egressy accomplished a task assigned almost thirty years earlier – the first plans to urge the writing of a textbook for actors appeared in 1838.

After the opening of Pesti Magyar Színház, later Nemzeti Színház (Hungarian Theatre of Pest, later National Theatre) in 1837, the writers, poets, men of letters who took part in the shaping of the

[1] I thank here Mária Zentai for her help in translating the paper. This research was supported by the European Union and the State of Hungary, co-financed by the European Social Fund in the framework of TÁMOP 4.2.4. A/1-11-1-2012-0001 'National Excellence Program'. A longer version of the paper was published in Hungarian in Lilla Szalisznyó, *"Nem volna jó a Kisfaludy-Társaság kérdésére felelnünk?": A Shakespeare-t játszó és tanító Egressy Gábor*," in *Médiumok, történetek, használatok*, ed. Bertalan Pusztai (Szeged: Szegedi Tudományegyetem Kommunikáció- és Médiatudományi Tanszék, 2012), 107–127.

[2] Gábor Egressy, *A színészet könyve* (Pesten: Nyomatott Emich Gusztáv Magy. Akad. Nyomdásznál, 1866).

program and of the repertoire of the theatre and also worked as critics took the initiative to have a book written on the theory of acting. The Kisfaludy Society in which the most influential writers were organised announced a competition on 6th February, 1838, for writing a Hungarian textbook of acting for the sake of further vocational training of actors.[3] They argued that the new institution representing Hungarian culture demands highly qualified actors. The work should be of scientific value but also should contain practical advices about interpretation, acting, performing, accentuation, costumes, poetics, dramaturgy. Competitors should rely on "1. Lessings *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*, 2. A. W. Schlegel's *Dramaturgische Vorlesungen*, 3. Tiecks *Dramaturgische Blaetter*, 4. Fr. Schinks *Dramaturgische Fragmente*, 5. W. Cooke's *Grundsaetze d. dramaturgischen Kritik*, 6. Wötzel, *Theaterschule*, 7. Thürnagel, *Theorie der Schauspielkunst*, 8. Engel's *Ideen zur Mimik*, 9. Lebruns *Handwörterbuch der Seelenmalerey*, 10. Dorat: *La déclamation théatrale*, 11. Seckendorfs *Vorlesungen über Declamation*, 12. Spalart's *Versuch über die Costume der vorzüglichsten Völker.*"[4]

I will not dwell on the Hungarian reception of German dramaturgical and theoretical works but I'd like to call attention to the fact that in 1838 no Hungarian work was available on the field. In order to fulfill the demands of the competition, German theatrical works were recommended to the participants. It is also telling that the initiative was taken not by actors but by writers who were deeply interested in and in many ways connected to the theatre but were not theatrical people themselves. Acting was not regarded as an independent discipline yet. The announcement neither prescribed the length of the work nor specified which dramas should be used for discussing role interpretations. As the call was not answered by the deadline (20th November, 1838), it was repeated but the topic was restricted to a practical manual for reciting poetry.[5] This time two works were handed in but the jury found neither of them suitable for being used as a textbook.

[3] *A Kisfaludy Társaság Évlapjai* (Budán: A M. Kir. Egyetem Betűivel, 1841), I, 25–26.

[4] *A Kisfaludy Társaság Évlapjai*, 25–26.

[5] *A Kisfaludy Társaság Évlapjai*, 154.

Gábor Egressy wrote about the failure in his 1846 article *Színház és nemzet*[6] (Theatre and Nation). In his view the main problem was the lack of a good quality work on Hungarian linguistics which could have been relied on in matters of accentuation and intonation. His main concern was not any more the further training of the actors of the National Theatre but the establishing of systematic institutional actor training.[7] The textbook should serve the needs of the school – he argued – and the National Theatre should announce a new competition for writing it. He could not get support to his plans, and for decades neither the textbook nor the school of acting was realised. But Egressy himself became preoccupied with the thought of writing a book on acting. When in 1864 the opening of the School of Acting was at last drawing near, Sámuel Radnótfáy, the intendant of the National Theatre asked him to write a textbook. Egressy's letter in which he accepted the task shows that presumably he was given carte blanche, he decided about the contents on his own.[8]

Why did he rely heavily on Shakespeare's plays when he compiled the syllabus? We can find answers to this question in his written legacy, publications and manuscripts alike. First he proposed the idea to use Shakespeare's plays in teaching in his 1848 article *Indítvány a szellemhonosítás ügyében*[9] (Proposal for Spiritual Naturalisation). According to his family correspondence,[10] the idea was kept alive throughout the 1850s. Egressy was convinced about the plausability of his conception and his conviction was strengthened by the subsequent events in the process of Shakespeare's reception in Hungary. In 1864 Shakespeare's cult was just getting into the phase of being institutionalised. As Péter Dávidházi writes, in 1864

[6] Gábor Egressy, "Szinház és nemzet," in *Egressy Galambos Gábor emléke. Saját műveiből síremléke javára rendezték fiai* (Pest: Nyomatott Emich Gusztáv Magy. Akad. Nyomdásznál, 1867), 25.

[7] Egressy, "Szinház és nemzet," 41.

[8] "Gábor Egressy to Sámuel Radnótfáy, July 21, 1864. Pest," in *Egressy Galambos Gábor emléke*, 423.

[9] Gábor Egressy, "Indítvány a szellemhonosítás ügyében," Életképek 8 (1848): 227.

[10] Egressy's letters to his wife, Zsuzsanna Szentpétery, manuscript. Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, Manuscripts, Archives.

the first Shakespeare Committee was organised, a gala night was performed in the theatre celebrating the tricentenary of the British playwright, and the long process of translating the complete works of Shakespeare started (the series was published between 1868 and 1878).[11]

But Egressy's own acting experience offered an even stronger initiative when he built up his teaching material. In the history of the National Theatre, Egressy was the first actor to choose a Shakespeare play for his benefit performance. It was the title role of *King Lear* in the Pesti Magyar Színház in 1838. In 1839 *Hamlet*, in 1842 *Coriolanus*, in 1843 *Macbeth*, in 1845 *Henry IV* followed. Between 1837 and 1866 (that is, during Egressy's Pest career) *King Lear* was staged 32 times, *Hamlet* 39 times, *Coriolanus* 22 times, *Othello* 25 times, *Macbeth* 8 times, *Richard III* 14 times, *Henry IV* 11 times.[12] Egressy himself played *King Lear* 19 times, *Hamlet* 25 times, *Coriolanus* 17 times, *Othello* 9 times, *Macbeth* 3 times, *Richard III* 2 times, *Henry IV* 9 times.[13] Before the opening nights of *Hamlet* in 1839 and *Coriolanus* in 1843, he wrote and published his ideas about the staging and about the interpretation of the two characters. He translated *Macbeth* (from German) for the National Theatre, and collaborated in the translation of *King Lear*, *Coriolanus*, *Henry IV* and *The Comedy of Errors*.

He stated in several writings that "my ideas are filtered through my blood and hardened in the furnace of experience".[14] When he writes in *The Book of Acting* about "the forty years long fire-ordeal of experience"[15] he refers presumably to his decades of acting Shakespeare roles. So the textbook can be regarded also as the written, archived version of the actor's own interpretating art.

[11] Péter Dávidházi, *„Isten másodszülöttje": A magyar Shakespeare-kultusz természetrajza* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1989), 165–190.

[12] *A Nemzeti Színház műsorlexikona*, ed. László Hajdu Algernon (Budapest, 1944), I, 17, 29, 37, 41, 43, 44, 49.

[13] Pál Rakodczay, *Egressy Gábor és kora* (Budapest: Singer és Wolfner, 1911), II, 554–555.

[14] Gábor Egressy, *Párbeszéd Szebeklébi és Egressy Gábor között szinészeti dolgokról* (Budán: A Magy. Kir. Egyetem Betűivel, 1842), 28.

[15] Egressy, *A szinészet könyve*, 24.

The Book of Acting consists of two major parts. The first is General part and it surveys foreign theoretical books, among others *Das Schauspielwesen* and *Die Kunst der dramatischen Darstellung* by Theodor Rötscher, *Theorie der Schauspielkunst* by Emil Thürnagel, Cicero's orations, Aristotle's rhetorics, Hugh Blair's aesthetics. The turn towards professionalism in Hungarian dramatic art and the formation of the independent discipline of acting are mentioned as important phenomena. Egressy embeds his work in the context of European theatrical learning but he also emphasizes that in his theoretical ideas he is not merely adopting foreign works but leans on his own practice and experience.

The second unit of the book is Exhaustive part and it contains explanations and methods of stage performance. He recommends first place the lyrical poems of Hungarian poets Sándor Petőfi, János Arany and Mihály Vörösmarty to learn proper intonation and stress but he takes examples also from plays: *Bánk bán* by József Katona, and Shakespeare's plays *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. He relies mainly on tragedies when discussing the acting techniques for different characters. Scenes from Shakespeare's plays serve as basis for representing emotions (love, hatred, contempt etc.) and states of consciousness (dream, hallucination, madness, dying). King Lear, Juliet and Richard III help to learn how to play hallucination, Hamlet and Macbeth to ghost vision, Lear and Ophelia to madness. Romeo ("he dies with a firm will"[16]) and Othello ("he does not punish himself with death out of desperation but as a consequence of regained integrity"[17]) represent different death-scenes. Shylock from *The Merchant of Venice* stands for hatred, and Richard III and Iago for hypocrisy.

I discuss the Exhaustive part of the book, focusing on *Hamlet*, *Richard III* and *King Lear*. My main interest is the symbiosis of theory and practice, in other words, what sort of connection can be revealed between the actual acting of a role versus teaching-interpreting it.

[16] Egressy, *A szinészet könyve*, 141.

[17] Egressy, *A szinészet könyve*, 142.

Mid-19th century acting is out of our reach, only contemporary reviews can bring it closer to us. We have to be aware of two problems nevertheless. The number of reviews is influenced by the number of occasions: the more times Egressy played a role the more reviews we can expect so some disproportion is unavoidable. We have much more reviews about his *Hamlet* (played 25 times) than about his *Richard III* (played twice). The other problem is that reviews are more of evaluating than of describing-analysing nature, we get little insight into the actor's doings, gestures, mimics onstage.

In *The Book of Acting* Egressy deals with *Hamlet* in the chapters Disposition, Memorising and Soliloquy. He discusses minutiously the performance of the monologue and he also discusses the actor's movements, gestures, body language in the scenes when Hamlet meets his father's ghost, his mother, Ophelia or Polonius. Critics were interested in all these scenes but we get detailed descriptions only about the great monologue. Egressy himself wrote about the monologue already in 1839:

> „[…] in his solitude he reproaches himself bitterly because of his cowardice and indecision, he scolds the usurper and even more himself, he finds himself despisable because the murder of his father and the feeling of revenge cannot make him ready to act. – »Am I a coward?« – he asks himself – »would I let myself disgraced without revenge? Yes« – he tells reproving himself – »I am pigeon-livered, and lack gall / To make oppression bitter […]«. He stops himself again without conviction, absent-mindedly; he finds some excuse which calms him down for a short while […]. But the moment of peace is gone and he resumes self-analysing, he cannot stop it […]."[18]

According to this description, Egressy's idea about acting the scene was characterised by suggesting different states of mind, by showing different, even contradicting feelings, by changing the modality of his voice. József Bajza's review in 1841 proves in an indirect way that Egressy performed Hamlet's tormented state of mind exactly like this. Bajza argues that the monologue should be performed in

[18] Gábor Egressy, „Hamlet ismertetése," *Athenaeum* 40 (1839): 631–632. Italics mine. L. Sz. All the tanslations into English are mine.

a monotonous meditative way so we can assume that the actor did it in the opposite way: "I think the monologue should be simply told in a meditative contemplation and nothing painful or pathetic should be mixed in the mood."[19] In 1856 Ágost Greguss also expected Egressy to contemplate quietly during the monologue:

> „His scene with Ophelia is the peak of his acting […] but this peak is preceded by a grievous mistake before starting 'To be or not to be'. Here Hamlet is pondering suicide […]. He is lost in the ideas of life and death. His mood is discouraged, absorbed, doubtful; this mood cannot be expressed by the quick coming and going Egressy performs when preparing to start the monologue."[20]

Fifteen years passed between the two performances. Egressy started the monologue walking restlessly up and down the stage, then he told the monologue changing his tone and interrupting himself several times. We do not know whether he did exactly the same on each occasions but it seems pretty sure that he did not change his interpretation in the course of years, he did not perform the monologue quietly, imitating contemplation. His 'restless walking' seems to have been a permanent element of his performance, in 1856 János Vajda also objected to it in his review and remarked that "it is generally disapproved".[21] The instructions in *The Book of Acting* show that the 'restless walking' before the monologue was deliberately chosen: "(Hamlet) […] goes quickly to the middle of the stage; there he suddenly stops. […] and he puts his hand slowly on his sword as if pondering to kill".[22] The monologue itself is described through metaphors of life and death just like in the review of Greguss. But the critic speaks about discouraged, pensive mood while Egressy thinks just the opposite:

[19] József Bajza, *Dramaturgiai írások*, ed. Ferenc Badics (Budapest: Franklin-Társulat, 1900), 308.

[20] Ágost Greguss, *Tanulmányai, II, Szini birálatok – vegyes cikkek* (Pest: Kiadja Ráth Mór, 1872), 153.

[21] János Vajda, *Színibírálatok és színházi tárgyú glosszák*, ed. Kálmán Bene (Budapest: Orpheusz, 2000), 176.

[22] Egressy, *A színészet könyve*, 181.

> „Hamlet's monologue […] is far from being mere meditation as many may think. It is a real life-and-death fight between heart and reason; that is, it is the battle of »the native hue of resolution« against »the pale cast of thought«. He expresses himself in torments of thought […]. In monologues ideas appear suddenly and electrify our mood, our self-esteem soars high, then another idea comes as a terrifying premonition and strikes us down […]. On stage each should get its true expression in the body language, too."[23]

We can assume that Egressy used those acting techniques already in 1841 and 1856 which he taught in the school later.

A more detailed description about Egressy's actual acting can be found in Sándor Petőfi's review about *Richard III* in 1847. It was the first performance of the play with Egressy in the title role in the National Theatre.

Petőfi highlights two elements: the hypocrisy of Richard and the dream-monologue. In *The Book of Acting* Egressy deals with Richard III in the chapters Dream, Hypocrisy and Characterisation.

> Petőfi: „Terrible face with those small smiling eyes and big hungry mouth. […] It is the glance of the anaconda which lures the bird into the mouth of the snake. […] And this is only the face and the smile; when he laughs it is a non-human voice! a rusty door creaking, a tiger clearing its throat […]. His speech is fragmented, broken, he spits out the words one by one […]."[24]

> Egressy: „Hypocrisy means to hide one's real feelings which are contrary to his words, and to make the appearance look true and real. […] In heedless moments words will be belied by the eyes and lips […] Richard's voice and gestures should show strong passion in order to convince and to gain Anna, still this passion must differ from pure and deep feelings."[25]

[23] Egressy, *A színészet könyve*, 197–198.

[24] Sándor Petőfi, „III. Richárd király színbírálat," in *Petőfi Sándor összes prózai művei és levelezése*, ed. András Martinkó (Budapest: Szépirodalmi, 1974), 264. Italics mine. L. Sz.

[25] Egressy, *A színészet könyve*, 152–153. Italics mine. L. Sz.

Petőfi recognises the utmost importance of facial expression in playing hypocrisy, and he points out that the glance in itself should indicate pretence heightened by laugh and speech. More important is that his suggestive metaphors are able to make Egressy's mimics palpable. In the textbook Egressy emphasises the same elements, the cooperation of eyes, lips, body language and speaking.

The dream monologue is a crucial moment of the play. No wonder it caught Petőfi's attention and he devoted more space to discuss it:

> Petőfi: „I was curious of that scene in the last act when Richard wakes up suddenly after the ghost-nightmare; […] Egressy […] fell down as he jumped up from the bed, he crawled a few yards on the floor then grabbed a chair as if it was some living being protecting him. Here, half-lying he told or rather whispered the monologue with faltering breath."[26]

> Egressy: „(The vision) can be the aftermath of a terrible storm in the soul. For example Richard III experiences it after his dream. […] There is a dreamlike state of the soul when it is lost so deeply in memories that it forgets about himself and his surroundings and gets into a state of dream-awake. […] The position of the body should express that he is submerged, his mind is turned inside himself. […] A dark keynote should be felt in the speaking."[27]

Petőfi's review helps to visualise Egressy's ideas about acting scenes of dream and vision. He recalls the scene step by step. His description about the actor's staggering and stumbling corresponds to Egressy's description of the half-conscious state; delivering the monologue in a half-lying position is what Egressy proposes in *The Book of Acting* to express the state of the unbalanced tormented soul, and whispering is the dark keynote suggesting dreaminess. Petőfi himself had some acting practice, he is not simply expressing his opinion about the performance but professionally comments the finely elaborated acting of Egressy. He had seen Egressy in different roles since 1839[28] so it is probable that he already had a pre-

[26] Petőfi, *III.Richárd király színbírálat*, 264.

[27] Egressy, *A színészet könyve*, 134–135.

[28] Ferenc Kerényi, *Petőfi Sándor élete és költészete* (Budapest: Osiris, 2008), 56.

formed opinion about his acting style. Petőfi was a rare critic who not only understood Egressy's interpretation but he himself knew the expressive value and significance of the actor's gestures.

From Egressy's aspect the harmonising texts prove that in the 1860s he teaches this character exactly in the way he played it twenty years earlier. His portrayal of the king as a monster can be seen in the context of a theatrical program in which Shakespeare's plays were regarded as vehicles of political ideology.[29] But it is also a model, a paragon of the art of the actor.

In the case of *King Lear* critics were interested in the overall impression Egressy managed to achieve in playing Lear's complex and contradictory character. In 1860 the magazine Hölgyfutár wrote:

> „Egressy expressed grumbling, anger, shock, cursing, desperation which turns into laughing on its highest point, madness and remorse with equally strong artistic power and yet with a variety of means. […] His Lear was oldest in the first scene where he showed an aged weakling, in the latter scenes he looked less old."[30]

The critic notices that Egressy builds his portrayal on Lear's age. This is a deliberate choice of the actor as we can see in *The Book of Acting*. In the textbook Egressy uses the figure of Lear when he discusses how to demonstrate age:

> „If we see an aged man in a life-and-death fight against his fate we do not want to feel pity for a helpless broken man who meekly subjugates himself and goes to meet his death; no, we want to see a spirit filled with heroic will and even in old age has firmness and defies ill fate. King Lear is [...] like the majestic ruins of bygone heroic days. In this old man's voice, firmness of mind and gestures we see the continuation of the heroic past of his life. The self-respect of dignity gives his soul a sort of flexibility against vile mistreatment and his voice is that of a distant thunder. […] His broken spirit speaks in broken voices but it is not the wailing of a coward but that of a broken valiant heart trying to regain his integrity again and again."[31]

[29] Ferenc Kerényi, *A régi magyar színpadon 1790–1849* (Budapest: Magvető, 1981), 383.

[30] Anonymous, "Jan. 13. Hamlet – Shakespearetől," *Hölgyfutár* 125 (1860): 999–1000.

The reviewer of Hölgyfutár knew Egressy's style well and was prepared to see carefully elaborated acting: "Egressy always gives the old Lear with true art. It is obvious that he studied the role in every detail and he knows how to present different dispositions and moods".[32] János Vajda is a similarly well prepared critic when he writes about Egressy's Lear versus that of Ira Aldridge in 1858 and compares their interpretations:

> „Egressi [Egressy] is a more poetic figure, almost mythological. He shows the ruins of royal dignity, his gestures are pathetic. His stubborn whimsicality and lust for powerplays seem to be inborn rather than the consequence of dire circumstances. So his Lear is less heartbreaking, evokes less pity. Still Egressi is consistent in this great role."[33]

Both reviews analyse Egressy's interpretation. Both are of the opinion that Egressy managed to give integrity to his Lear meanwhile he was also able to show the wildely differing sides of the character without breaking it up to fragments. Vajda understood the most important part of Egressy's interpretation, too: to give dignity even to the figure in ruins.

In the history of Shakespeare's reception in Hungary Egressy's book on acting has not been touched upon yet. It is worth of further investigations though because Egressy executed a twofold task in it: on the one hand the book archived his ways of playing Shakespeare roles, on the other it started a new chapter in the reception, the chapter of discussing Shakespeare's characters from the actor's point of view. Contemporary reviews prove that he was playing the characters according to his analysing them in articles and in the textbook. He is the first actor whose interpretations can be reconstructed relying on two groups of sources, that is, his own

[31] Egressy, *A színészet könyve*, 130.

[32] Anonymous, "Okt. 15. Lear király," *Hölgyfutár* 125 (1860): 999.

[33] Vajda, *Színibírálatok és színházi tárgyú glosszák*, 300.

writings and critical reviews. Later textbooks on acting[34] show methods similar to his. *The Book of Acting* started a tradition of using Shakespeare's plays in the syllabuses for young actors, a tradition alive in the 20th century, too.

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[34] For example, *A szinészet rendszere* by Pál Rakodczay (1884), *Festett világ* by Ákos Egressy (1906).

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6

Variations on the Play Metaphor: Shakespeare's *Theatrum Mundi* and its Hungarian Perspective

Ágnes Matuska

The present day fame of the idea that the world is a stage comes undoubtedly from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, and specifically Jacques' monologue on the seven ages of men.[1] The lines are recited by a figure described as melancholy in the list of characters, who in the famous *locus* seems to be mostly concerned with the fact that humans are entrapped by an inescapable theatrical situation through their lives. Jacques' monologue does not contain the explicit opposite of mere ephemeral playing, but Sir Walter Raleigh's poem expanding precisely the same play metaphor does.[2] According to Raleigh, we are players throughout our worldly lives; the tiring house is our mother's womb, and the graves will hide us when the play is done. The stage of life on earth, however, in Raleigh's understanding, is enclosed by a larger, cosmic reality, where God oversees the comedy of our lives. Jacques' monologue lacks this cosmic or divine perspective. Still, his speech has been interpreted both as a refutation of anti-theatricalist charges against theatre, as

[1] Tibor Fabiny, "*Theatrum Mundi* and the Ages of Man," in *Shakespeare and the Emblem*. ed. Tibor Fabiny (Szeged: Department of English, Attila József University, 1984)

[2] *English Poetry I: From Chaucer to Gray*. Vol. XL. The Harvard Classics (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909–14); Bartleby.com, 2001. www.bartleby.com/40/.

well as the celebration of the unique power of theater and its play.[3] This contradiction can be resolved by taking into account the consequences of the unique moment in history, when the interpretation of the image was diversified not only by its heterogenous roots, but also by the unique and revolutionary role theatre started to play with the appearance of popular theatres in Elizabethan England.

In this paper I would like to highlight, as a first step, the diverse traditions of the metaphor and the way these inform critical interpretations of Shakespearean drama and theatre. The next step will be the presentation of a Hungarian perspective of the same. Which are the understandings of the image that surface in the Hungarian reception of Shakespeare, and which are the interpretations of Shakespearean drama and theatre that they result in? I cannot promise to give a complete, overall picture of the Hungarian scene, rather, I will highlight some examples that are revelative of the curious ways that interpretations juggle the sometimes contradictory traditions of a readily available metaphor with a seemingly obvious explanatory potential.

Jacques' passage, as well as Raleigh's example, are variants of the *vanitas* understanding of the topos which was the dominant understanding in Elizabethan times.[4] Stage versions of the same, however, complicate its meaning for obvious reasons. Theatre may claim or carve out a reality for itself, as it is done, for example, in Shakespearean prologues and epilogues that try to negotiate their own ontological status as theatrical play with their audience. The mere paradox of the theatrical self-reference, with which theatre stigmatizes itself as vanity but celebrates its unique power at the same time aligns well with the logic of naming a theatre "the Globe", or allegedly choosing for its motto "Totus mundus agit histrionem".[5]

[3] Cf. *As You Like It*. The Arden Shakespeare, ed. Juliet Dusinberre (London: Thomson Learning), 227n.

[4] Lynda Christian, *Theatrum Mundi: The History of and Idea* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1987), 22.

[5] Tiffany Stern, "Was *Totus Mundus Agit Histrionem* ever the motto of the Globe Theatre?" *Theatre Notebook 3* (1997), 122-127; Richard Dutton, "*Hamlet, An Apology for Actors*, and the Sign of the Globe," *Shakespeare Survey,* 41 (1989), 35-43.

Presenting an alternative to the tradition of the *theatrum mundi* as *vanitas*, Elizabethan theatre in several ways models itself not based on the earthly stage, but rather the cosmic one. Apart from the fact that the stage includes the entrance to Hell through its trapdoor, and features "Heavens" with its balcony, two important traditions have been explored that provide explanations for the continuity between the cosmic image of the *theatrum mundi* and the Elizabethan stage. The world is not *merely* a stage, and therefore separate from the entirety of the divine universe, just the opposite: the chance for us to join in the entirety of the cosmic scheme is precisely *through* theatre. Yates traces back the classical heritage for the structure and design of the Elizabethan theatre to a Roman source.[6] Stevens, on the other hand, stresses the medieval roots of playing, and the fact that the heritage of Elizabethan drama included mystery cycles as well, together with their strongly ritualistic function.[7]

When comparing the representational logic of medieval mystery plays with Renaissance drama, it is frequently stressed by critics that the charge of the illusion of playing so familiar from puritan opponents of the theatre does not apply to earlier plays precisely because in ritualistic playing the events presented stand for the eternal truth and eternal reality, as opposed to the everyday of the audience.[8] It is possible to see the function of playing in this earlier, medieval context as a tool that elevates the everyday to the level of the divine, imbues it with the eternity of Biblical time and divine presence. Ritualistic playing turns the playspace – whether the marketplace or the whole medieval city – into the cosmic stage, allowing both its players and audience to participate in its cosmic reality. In Stevens' understanding, thus, the playspace becomes a

[6] Frances Yates, *The Theatre of the World* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul,1969), 109.

[7] Martin Stevens, "From Mappa Mundi to Theatrum Mundi: The World as Stage in Early English Drama" in *From page to performance: essays in early English drama*, ed. John A. Alford (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1995), 25-49.

[8] Cf. Ann Righter, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1967), Briggs op.cit; Jean Cristophe Agnew, *The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1986); Attila Kiss, *The Semiotics of Revenge. Subjectivity and Abjection in English Renaissnace Tragedy* (Szeged: JATE Press, 1995).

theatrum mundi due to the power of ritualistic playing. This tradition, in his opinion, also informs passages with references to the play metaphor in Shakespearean and other contemporary drama. It should be pointed out, however, that Stevens and Yates use the term not as a rhetorical figure, but rather as a *concept*, an idea for the cosmic design of the theatre, which later influenced specific uses of the metaphor, including the Shakespearean examples.

Focusing on the verbatim trope *per se*, Lynda Christian stresses that there is actually a huge hiatus in the use of the metaphor between its last appearance in the 12th century by Salisbury and its reappearance in the writings of the Neoplatonists in the 15th, where its dominant meaning included the parallel between macrocosm-microcosm, In Pico della Mirandola's understanding man (especially the creative artist) and God are both creators, as well as audiences contemplating the world as stage. Christian offers the most plausible reason for this hiatus: in the Middle Ages there were no theatrical institutions or buildings to which the metaphor describing the world as stage could have been connected.[9] Thus, from a perspective different from what Stevens or Yates propose, no *theatrum mundi* could exist during the Middle Ages. This latter argument is expanded by Anne Righter: the world can be equated with the stage, and thus make the play metaphor possible only *after* the moment the actors and the audience are separated, and play ceases to have a ritualistic function.[10] This viewpoint clearly excludes the cosmic interpretation of the *theatrum mundi*, and rather than anchoring the power of playing in a metaphysical resemblance between macrocosm and theatre, it celebrates the overall and practical social applicability of the latter.

Combinations of these backgrounds appear within the Hungarian critical scene in connection with the *theatrum mundi* as a Shakespearean device. The story, however, begins with a curiously steady nonobservance specifically of the best known Shakespearean example of the topos, namely Jacques' relevant speech of the world as

[9] Christian, *Theatrum Mundi: The History of and Idea*, 69.

[10] Righter, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play*, 59.

stage, described in detail by Péter Dávidházi.[11] The first Hungarian version of Jacques' notable passage appeared in translation in 1860 among the poems Károly Bulcsú, a pastor and schoolteacher with literary affinities. His collection of poems was read and reviewed in 1861 by János Arany, at that time yet to be an ultimately canonical translator of Shakespeare into Hungarian. Although the translation of the dramatic passage indeed could seem like an original and free-standing poem, in its title, *Ages of men [Életkorok]* it included its own clue, specifying that it was "after Shakspere" (sic). The reviewer was mislead by neighboring texts, and took the one in question as a poem inspired by the Shakespearean original, rather than the Hungarian rendering of the Shakespearean text. Although being a conscientious philologist himself, Arany has not checked the source, as he admits it in his review. Even more curiously, neither subsequent monographs, nor the critical edition of Arany's work published in the 1960s offer an explanation to this seemingly self-explanatory puzzle; though the editor of the latter tries to solve the crux, he picks up the wrong clue and looks for the original among Shakespeare's poems. Scholars dealing with Bulcsú and his critical reception were not familiar with Shakespeare's oeuvre, nor did they approach peers familiar with English literature. As Dávidházi points out, the reason can be found in the painful isolation of Hungarian English studies within the domestic circles of literary academia of the time – a situation arguably unchanged since then. The issue also reflects on the dilemma of any academic dealing with a corpus written in a foreign language and wandering about the proper audience of their research.

Before moving on to reflect on specifically literary interpretations of the *topos* in Hungarian Shakespeare criticism, I would like to consider a remarkably modern theatrical example from the early 20th century. Sándor Hevesi, playwright, translator and director of the national theatre (producing eight cycles of Shakespeare's plays during his career) staged *Hamlet* in 1911, following a concept that aligns perfectly with the idea that the Shakespearean stage is a cosmic one. An essay he wrote in 1917 reveals his cosmic vision of the theatre.[12] He considers the Shakespearean stage as the stage of infinite possibilities due to its lack of elaborate props and scenery, allowing for the poet to populate this microcosm with what he creates through the *word*. "The word is all," says Hevesi, a surely brilliant person of the theatre, to describe the creation of the Shakespearean world on stage. The image of the artist-playwright as creator of worlds through the word reflects the Neo-Platonic tradition of the *theatrum mundi*, but in order to describe the microcosmic idea, Hevesi draws on the tripartite division of the Elizabethan stage, encompassing heaven, hell and earth, and calls it medieval heritage. He does not seem to be concerned about the fact that the *idea* may be medieval only, not its theatrical realization. Hevesi's production of *Hamlet* proved inspiring for contemporary critics as well, resulting in interpretations picking up the idea of the topos, more specifically the version that celebrates play on a theatrical stage as parallel to playing on the cosmic stage.

Dezső Kosztolányi, a seminal writer, poet and translator of the time praises Hevesi's simple *mise-en-scene* of *Hamlet* in 1911, noting that it looks like one simple, three-storey structure inserted on the real stage, a theatre within a theatre, the effect of which is that the audience is aware of the artifice throughout the drama, but the illusion of the play is maintained.[13] The art historian Arnold Hauser, also in 1911, praises several productions of Hevesi, especially his focus on emphasized comic action [Hauser's key word and theatrical ideal is movement and action], since in his mind "the whole thing should be comedy, nothing else," as this seems to be the device to help the audience reflect on (and thus distance themselves from) their own role-play, their acted pathos as theatre audience.[14] Hauser and Kosztolányi, inspired partly by Hevesi's staging, both seem to put

[11] Péter Dávidházi, "'Shakspere után'. Egy rejtélyes műfordítás nyomában," *Filológiai Közlöny* 3-4 (2005), 197-206.

[12] Sándor Hevesi, "Az igazi Shakespeare," in *Magyar Shakespeare Tükör* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1984), 312-316.

[13] Dezső Kosztolányi, "Hamlet shakespeare-i színpadon" in *Magyar Shakespeare Tükör* (Budapest: Gondolat, 1984),345-346.

[14] Arnold Hauser, "A Nemzeti Színház Shakespeare-ciklusa: Shakespeare és a modern színpadi művészet problémája," in *Magyar Shakespeare Tükör* (Budapest:Gondolat, 1984),335-339.

their finger on what we could call metatheatrical self-reflection, or even *Verfremdung* in Brecht's terms, turning the whole world into a stage by making the audience acknowledge their own questionable roles and playing in a social setup.

Regarding text-oriented interpretations after Hevesi's theatrical one, I would like to highlight, as a first step, instances where critics use the *theatrum mundi* idea rather as an inspiration or a cursory remark than an explicit basis of an elaborated analysis. Finally, I will present two examples, both of which are fully fledged explorations of the topos, attentive to its heterogenous potential of its interpretation.

It may seem curious that Dezső Mészöly, poet, dramaturg and translator of several Shakespearean and other Elizabethan dramas, finds what he calls Shakespeare's "dream world"[15] alive up to the present because in his opinion it subsists upon the reality of Elizabethan times. Paradoxically, this sense of reality remains a key issue in Mészöly's appraisal of *The Tempest*: he considers Prospero's island a "Theatrum Mundi", "The Stage of the World, not only the world of the stage."[16] Although he refers to the topos as medieval, his understanding does not include the idea of the macrocosmic resonances of the stage of ritualistic playing representing the entirety of biblical times or of the pilgrimage of the allegorical human being. In Prospero's island he sees "the Shakespearean drama of human society: a senseless and merciless fight for power [….where] human ignobility is revealed in several ways throughout the plot".[17] Mészöly's *theatum mundi* in Shakespeare, thus, is about revealing false illusions and vile ambitions for power, the vain roles of sinful humans. He sees the end of the play, with the conflation of Shakespeare-Prospero who gives up play, as a resigned exit from both stage and life. Jacques's melancholy ruminations, the Christian/Stoic *vanitas*-understanding of life as a futile race for mundane success, as well as the idea of the microcosmic stage all find their way into Mészöly's take on the *theatrum mundi*.

[15] Dezső Mészöly, *Shakespeare új tükörben* (Budapest: Magvető Kiadó, 1972), 86.

[16] Mészöly's interpretation relies heavily on Jan Kott's analysis of the play, with both ideas and pages long paraphrases of Kott's text. Jan Kott, "Prospero's Staff," in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary* (London: Methuen, 1964), 244-261.

[17] Translations of Hungarian passages are mine.

Zoltán Szilassy, a university professor of English and Shakespeare critic relies, in turn, on Mészöly's article in a study exploring traditions for iconographic interpretations of *The Tempest*.[18] The last section of this text is entitled "The tempest and the state after the tempest in the 'Theatrum Mundi'". He stresses that public stages in Shakespeare's time modeled themselves after the presumed structure of the macro- and microcosm, and supports this idea with Prospero as master of ceremony, directing not only the plays within, but creating the world of the drama. Interestingly, however, due to his interest in symbolic and iconographic *tableau*s, he ends his essay with the following idea: despite the fact that *The Tempest* displays a highly complex theatrical play, it is still chasing time, and remains a representation, thus freezes moments into images. This conclusion (which follows the above quotation from Mészöly) is curious since no matter how diverse the understandings of the *theatrum mundi* can be, all versions involve a crucial sense of performance, and merge playing on the theatrical (sometimes ritualistic) stage with the social stage (which may be corrupt in the lay versions) or with the cosmic (and thus divine and eternal) stage. In other words, connotations generally evoked by the topos involve dynamic action, Szilassy's view is unique in considering the *theatrum mundi* a static image and combining it with an element from Mészöly's interpretation, echoing Raleigh's melancholy. Prospero's, Shakespeare's and our play ends with death as an exit from the stage which is confined to the earthly one, and despite the reference to the *theatrum mundi,* seems ultimately uninfluenced by the cosmic potentials of playing.

A contrary interpretation stressing is provided by István Géher, professor and poet, and a prominent Hungarian Shakespeare critic of the second half of the 20th century, in a seminal book analysing all 37 plays that it attributes to Shakespeare. [19] The analysis in

[18] Zoltán Szilassy, "Adalékok *A vihar* ikonografikus értelmezésének lehetőségeihez," in *A reneszánsz szimbolizmus*, ed. Tibor Fabiny et al. (Szeged: JATEPress, 1998), 91-102.

[19] István Géher, *Shakespeare-olvasókönyv* (Budapest: Cserépfalvi Könyvkiadó, 1991).

question is of *As You Like It*. Géher gives special importance to Rosaline's logic of multiple playing, and connects it both with the first line of Jacques's monologue, as well as with the supposed "*Totus mundus…*" motto of the Globe. Dodging the *vanitas*-aspects of Jacques's speech on the seven ages, his reading of the play suggests that the world is a theatre in the sense that the play-aspects of reality and the real-aspects of playing intermingle; reality is made questionable and relative through the power of play, which is, in turn, capable of shaping it. Ann Righter in her quoted monograph formulates a similar idea when she claims that the play metaphors (in her definition the comparison of the world with the stage), among others, "used within the 'reality' of the play itself, […] remind the audience that elements of illusion are present in ordinary life".[20] However, while Righter thinks this idea as incompatible with medieval drama, Géher includes the discussion of the medieval Theatrum Mundi in the introductory chapter of his book on Shakespeare's theatre as an important influence,[21] although he does not make an explicit connection between this reference to the topos and his interpretation of the *theatrum mundi* in *As You Like It*.

My last example takes us back to what Dávidházi referred to as the unfortunate isolation of English studies in Hungary. The essay in question, written by Tibor Fabiny is a fully elaborated, and highly inspiring essay providing an overview of the understandings of the *theatrum mundi* metaphor in its relation to Shakespeare,[22] as well as the emblematic traditions shaping its reception. The study, however, is the odd one out in the series of my examples, since it is written by a Hungarian scholar not in Hungarian but in English. The essay is completed with an analysis of *Richard III*, in which Fabiny provides us with a detailed account of the diverse aspects of Richard's play. Aware of both the mundane and the cosmic versions of the *theatrum mundi* ranging from the pagan, through the Christian and the renaissance understandings, for some reason,

[20] Righter, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play*, 78.

[21] Géher, *Shakespeare-olvasókönyv*, 20.

[22] A similar overview is done by Dávidházi in the study quoted above – also in relation to Jacques' monologue, which is the missing link in the plot he depicts. Dávidházi, "'Shakspere után'. Egy rejtélyes műfordítás nyomában", 204.

however, Fabiny combines the metaphor (which he analyses as an emblem) with another one, "the wheel of time". This combination, ultimately, frames his rich interpretation of Richard's play, and thus evades what I consider the ultimate crux of the *theatrum mundi* on Shakespeare's stage: what Richard does as director and player of his own play is not simply a creation of an illusory and thus false world (as Fabiny seems to believe), but also a way to celebrate the metaphor not unlike the way Shakespeare's Globe celebrates it with its name and supposed motto. Once the function of playing is addressed on the stage of the Elizabethan theatre, it cannot be illusion confined to an institution allowing fictitious play, but will appear rather as a model of a larger scheme, be it social, cosmic or divine. So perhaps not surprisingly, in a less precise but more widespread sense, the uses of the topos display the combination of all these – at least in the Hungarian reception of the Shakespearean contexts of the metaphor.

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7

"Be patient till the last": The Censor's Lesson on Shakespeare[1]

Anna Cetera

We have found ourselves in the most embarrassing situation when the dramaturgy of the whole world, from Aeschylus and Shakespeare to Brecht and Ionesco, is a collection of references to the Polish People's Republic.

Leszek Kołakowski, 1968[2]

When speech is censored, Muses play the classics. Indeed, there is hardly a diagnosis that delineates better the paradox of both strict control and amazing topicality of the Polish theatre under the Communist regime than the one quoted above, and verbalized in the spirit of heated political debate. Mistrustfully screened and pruned of political innuendos, the theatre armed itself with classical drama, and excelled in the employment of ambiguity, silence and subversion. The risky game with the censors was played on and off the stage, and judged by one of the most watch-

[1] A slightly abridged version of this paper appeared first in *Shakespeare Worldwide and the Idea of an Audience*, GRAMMA Vol. 15., edited by Tina Krontiris and Jyotsna Singh, Thessalonica: Aristotle University Press, 2007, 133-151.

[2] A speech delivered at the gathering of the Polish Writers' Association, rebuking censorship, quoted in Fik, *Kultura polska* 419. This and all subsequent translations of the Polish texts are mine, unless indicated otherwise.

ful, observant and politically-minded European audiences of the post-war period. Apparently, there was no playwright who would match this dissenting mood and temper more fittingly than the timeless, classless and unsettling Shakespeare.

In defiance of common sense, the 1970s were the Golden Age of the Polish theatre. Censorship, which effectively paralyzed public life, granted the theatre the privilege of a relatively autonomous space where dissident meanings could thrive and multiply, providing that they were well-disguised and did not provoke civil disobedience. In curious consequence, the predominance of controlled speech forged the belief that truth, if any, must not be plain and simple, but veiled, concealed, and thereby protected. Thus, inadvertently, it was the censor's lesson to install the habit of vigilant listening, reading in-between the lines and interpreting pauses. Ironically enough, watching Shakespeare's performances under censorship was both intellectually and ethically satisfying, as it was brisk intelligence which allowed the audience to share in dissident disapproval.

Yet, with all its gratifying rewards, the experience required special and attentive patience of the kind mentioned by Brutus when he faces the Roman crowd in the Forum scene of *Julius Caesar*. The sophisticated, casuistic argument of Brutus needs time to unfold, and, therefore, it can be best verbalized in the seclusion of his orchard, with no audience at all. Aware of the inherent difficulty, Brutus repeatedly mingles humble request with proud ordering: "be patient", "stay silent", "hear me".[3] Thus, the success of the speech hinges on the authority of the speaker and the gracious consent of the audience to "stay patient till the last". Then, and only then, Brutus shall explain to them why Caesar was dangerous and had to die. (Incidentally, does he really say why Caesar was dangerous, or merely assures them that he was their enemy? For the purpose of anti-communist instruction, either one would suffice.)[4]

[3] Compare the whole passage: "Be patient till the last. Romans, countrymen, and lovers, hear me for my cause, and be silent that you may hear me. Believe me for mine honour, that you may believe. Censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses, that you make the better judge" (*Oxford Shakespeare* edition, 1988, 3.2.264-269).

[4] By way of analogy, in 1966, Konrad Swinarski, a leading Polish director of the time, while rehearsing *Hamlet* in Tel Aviv encouraged the Jewish actors to view Claudius's murder of Old Hamlet as a crime, and yet a political necessity, prompted by the aggravating conflict with Norway. There are killings which seem morally justified from the point of view of society, argued Swinarski, like the example of Khrushchev killing Beria. The ensemble willingly agreed (203-204). Lavrentiy Beria was in charge of the Soviet security system (NKVD) and responsible for the execution of Stalin's Great Purges in the 1930s, affecting also the Jewish population. Following the death of Stalin, he seized power but was arrested and executed in 1953, in a coup led by Lavrentiy Khrushchev. Khrushchev condemned the crimes of Stalinism and apparently initiated a new course in Soviet politics. In the 1960s, Beria was a symbol of the evils of Stalinism. Today the perception of this historical figure is less unambiguous.

The audience of the 1970s was tuned to the seditious analogies in the dramaturgy of all previous ages. What was this audience like? One of the publications documenting the history of the Stary Theatre in Kraków opens with a picture of the lobby packed with people, shortly before the commencement of a play in the early 1970s.[5] The faces reflect none of the cheerful relaxation of cultured intelligentsia awaiting evening entertainment. They are serious and solemn, with their eyes unvaryingly fixed on a female figure who stands, facing them, at the top of the auditorium stairs, blocking the entry. The woman leans characteristically to the right to pull her sleeve up more easily and read her wristwatch. The gesture might be simple and prosaic, and yet the pose appears exaggerated and histrionic, as it points to the existence of some higher authority which has set the hour, and therefore, shields her against the suspicion of a mere caprice of not letting people enter. The anxious mood of the audience reflects also something of the necessary foresight of customers queuing in long lines for basic supplies, as Socialism, in principle, guaranteed egalitarian access to goods, which, however, it often failed to provide. The people in the lobby are all set and eager, and yet their excitement has not taken over their respect for age, and the eldest are conveniently grouped around the stairs, whereas the teaming, disputant students fill up the back. For them, partaking in the political theatre, is a chance to subscribe to the tradition set by those standing in the front whose experience comprises the stormy theatre of the 1950s, which grappled with Stalinism and first positioned itself as a veiled alternative to the official worldview. It was the theatre which had earned trust and worked

[5] For the photography see Halberda et al. 17. The performance is *Forefathers* by Adam Mickiewicz, directed by Konrad Swinarski in 1973.

out the associative logic and interpretative code of historical transposition, without which characters and events remained fixed to their setting, and thus alien and irrelevant. It was a ploy the censors had to ignore, or else they would find themselves fighting with past fictions, and they would thus deepen the impression that the Socialist system was absurd.

Suppose we let our audience remain for a while in the lobby of the theatre in Kraków. The place is important, as it is the same theatre which in 1956 housed "the Polish *Hamlet* of the mid-century" so suggestively described by Jan Kott in *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*. Waiting for *Hamlet* in 1956 involved the same concentration and was built on a similar mood of contempt. What was different, however, was that the early postwar theatre scrutinized the classics, Shakespeare among them, in search of ethical guidelines. The theatre of the 1970s was already using the works of the past as a blunt insult thrown to discredit the system and humble the enemy. The key to the understanding of the theatre of the 1970s lies in interpreting its relation to the theatre of the 1950s. It is the latter which is the source of the former's vitality and political bias.

The 1950s

In the dismal realities of Stalinism, Shakespeare led a double life. One was cheerful and superficial, whereas the other meditative and precarious. The recollections of the first one, now rather rare, are predictable and unfailingly awkward, such as the English textbook approved by the Polish Ministry of Education in the early 1950s, which opened with a pastoral summary of Shakespeare's *Tempest*, followed by an imperative interpretative guideline:

> In his seminal study *Shakespeare*, the Soviet critic M. Morozov, describes *The Tempest* as a hymn celebrating humanity and its happy prospects. The play symbolizes human victory over nature and the eminent triumph of the positive element over the bestial. Prospero defeats the dark forces of nature embodied by Caliban … whereas the useful forces represented by the elemental spirit Ariel are forced to obedience by the power of his knowledge. The mature wisdom of Prospero paves the way towards happiness for the young generation, Miranda and Ferdinand. (Bastgen 18)[6]

The triumphant note resounding in this brief commentary and the reassuring vision of a blissful future harmonize with well-digested slogans of Communist propaganda boasting about human abilities to tame nature through the introduction of electricity into the countryside, for example, and the eradication of long-embedded superstition. Needless to say, the book abounds in joyful images of a workers' paradise which is conveniently interspersed with the gloomy narratives of the past such as "White Cotton and Black Skin", or "The Slave's Dream". (With all their prophetic foresight, the editors, like Morozov himself, clearly failed to establish the sympathetic connection between slavery and the postcolonial Caliban.) Hence the sustained appreciation for the Elizabethan playwright testified to the poised aesthetic judgment of the new regime, which while condemning the social injustice of the previous epochs, carefully sorted the wheat from the chaff to save the universal treasures of the early modern past.

The pragmatic approach to Shakespeare extended also to translation practices, and in 1947 a comprehensive list of obligatory references and readings was compiled for future translators aiming to improve on the quality of already existing versions. Soon afterwards, this somewhat old-fashioned idea was replaced by the recommendation to conflate the existing translations, and thereby create an improved and at last entirely adequate text (Borowy 19). The rectified approach clearly, though perhaps inadvertently, echoed the intensely propagated trust in the superiority of collabora-

[6] M. Morozov's *Shekspir* was published first in 1947, and the Polish translation appeared in 1950. In the review of Soviet Shakespeare criticism authored by George Gibian the book met with fairly warm praise, because except for a few references to Marx and Engels, it refrained from "speculations about class origins and the class interpretations" of Shakespeare's works (32-33). In the late 1940s Morozov's relations with the Western academic world rapidly deteriorated, and he attacked "the West and its bourgeois critics" for failing to see that the realism of Shakespeare's plays testified to the social injustice of his age and, if honestly admitted, would awake the masses and "liberate the people in capitalist countries" (34). This ideological credo only strengthened the dissemination of his former criticism in Eastern Europe.

tive efforts over the chimerical, selfish, and all-in-all detrimental labors of a solitary genius.

As if in defiance of official recommendations, the other life of Shakespeare was secluded and isolated, with a tint of escapism. Here, reading Shakespeare was almost always informed by the desire to find in his plays guidelines as to the proper intellectual and ethical stance, which would account for the atrocities of World War II and of the system which followed it. It was precisely the experience of sequential evil, one totalitarian crisis replaced with another, which made the East European audiences incurably distrustful of the reconciliatory epilogues in Shakespeare's tragedies. In these countries, the feelings of relief and euphoria born from the victory over Nazism were repeatedly employed to pacify and discredit resistance against Communism. Interpretations written in that time often reflect readings underlined by the simplicity of purpose bordering on naivety. Again and again, Shakespeare is treated as an authority, capable of providing unequivocal solutions to the dilemmas posed by contemporary life.

Significantly enough, in an essay written in 1952, Zbigniew Herbert, then an unknown poet, links the first climax of *Hamlet* with the Prince's decision to stage the Mousetrap.[7] What makes Hamlet visualize the crime before Claudius is not his desire to test the reliability of the Ghost. Hamlet needs no proof of Claudius's crime, argues Herbert. "The dumb show is the first bloodless revolt … It is an aesthetic revenge which Hamlet the artist must taste first"(60), concludes Herbert, thus envisioning the course soon taken by the theater of his own time. And yet art alone cannot set things right, and Claudius hides in his darkness without acknowledgment of his sins. The realization of the cynical persistence of evil against and despite art at last spurs Hamlet to his acceptance of the avenger's role. "There are situations when a man should afford to be able to

[7] Zbigniew Herbert (1924-1998) published his first book of poetry in 1956 and soon became an influential moral authority. Most of his writings evolve around the figure of Pan Cogito, an ironic, inquisitive intellectual pondering over the riddles of existence.

have no philosophy", reasons Herbert, and sees Hamlet's greatness in "his nihilistic impetus, ardent negation, and bitter skepticism" (60). For Herbert, Hamlet's victory over fate is complete when he chooses his weapon before the final duel. "When the time is right, we shall choose a heavier rapier, and a heavier death", promises Herbert emphatically in the concluding sentence of his essay. The pledge sounds histrionic, but the logic of Herbert's reasoning reflects well the maturing mood of Shakespeare audiences.

What for Herbert was a call to arms, for Roman Brandstaetter, a poet and a translator of Shakespeare, was a pessimistic anatomy of triumphant crime without, however, a suggestion of a compromise on any of the ethical principles of the victims.[8] In August 1956, Brandstaetter published an important essay wherein he juxtaposed Hamlet and Fortinbras, seeing the triumph of the latter as a symbolic and, in a sense, apocalyptic return of evil, extinguishing all hopes for a free Elsinore. Brandstaetter's essay presaged the politically evocative mood of the performance of *Hamlet*, based on his translation and within a month produced in Krakow, and then used by Jan Kott to elucidate his ideas of a contemporary Shakespeare.[9] Perhaps, speculated Brandstaetter, with time, the center of gravity of the play had been shifted, and now in place of a revenge tragedy, *Hamlet* was the tragedy of a man besieged with skeptical pessimism of his epoch. In contrast to the Prince, Fortinbras is a cool and unreflective *condottiere*, a ruffian winning over an intellectual.

For Brandstaetter, Hamlet's apparent passivity and indecisiveness stemmed from his obsessive and throbbing contemplation

[8] Roman Brandstaetter (1906-1987) was a playwright, poet and translator (notably of the Psalms). All his writings are permeated by a strong sense of Christian metaphysics. His translations of Shakespeare are *Hamlet* (1950), *Richard III* (1950), *The Merchant of Venice* (1952) and *Anthony ad Cleopatra* (1958).

[9] Kott, then largely ignorant of English and unable to read Shakespeare in the original, owned a lot to Brandstaetter's rewriting of the play. This is what he wrote in the first review of the performance: "The translation of Roman Brandstaetter deserves a separate study. It is lucid and sounds superb. The modern Hamlet would collapse with all earlier translations", Kott, Hamlet po XX Zjeździe.

of *misterium iniquitatis* of both *his* and *the contemporary* world. The spiritual tensions of the play had already been delineated by Brandstaetter in 1954, in his poem *Hamlet i łabędź* (Hamlet and the Swan), where images of a fictional Elsinore mingle with the nightmarish flashbacks of the first half of the 20th century: "charred bodies, trees burned down in the Hiroshima rain, women's bags made from human skin, houses built on graveyards, and flutes carved from tibiae". "To strike accurately in the back of the king who kneels in his chamber" – says Hamlet – "I must make my thought simple, my thought which is an intricate monogram of my life… But how can I do it, having lost faith in man?" (40). Elsinore is "a mad coffin spinning in the Cosmos". "Tear off the curtain – begs Hamlet in the final couplet – and save me from my doubts" (42). In 1956 the curtain must have remained drawn, as Brandstaetter insisted so that in performance the final entry of Fortinbars should be obscured by deep darkness. Absolute darkness.

The predominant mood of pessimism permeating the Polish readings of *Hamlet* in the early 1950s mirrors the political situation in the country. However, the death of Stalin in 1953 triggered reformist movements of which the most important was the XXth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party which raised hopes for the relaxation of the Soviet grip over Poland. These hopes were swiftly, if naively, translated into the Poznań insurrection bloodily crushed in June 1956. The social unrest continued until the Plenary Session of the Polish Communist Party held between October 19 and 24, 1956. This Session condemned the policies of Stalinism and gave power to Władyslaw Gomułka, a Communist activist previously deterred for seemingly right-wing inclinations. These changes initiated the so-called "Polish way to Socialism," which refrained from compulsory nationalization of farming, reaffirmed the autonomy of the Catholic Church, and introduced more lenient censorship, if judged against other Communist countries.

In January 1957 further changes followed, such as, for example, the consent of the Ministry of Culture for the decentralized management of theatres. As a result, the decision regarding the repertoire was delegated to local authorities. In the long run the new policy

resulted in a more varied choice of plays, informed also by certain ideological liberties. In January 1957, Warsaw hosted the first performance of *Waiting for Godot*, which augured the arrival of the "Western" existentialist theatre.

The succession of events in 1956 appears crucial for uncovering the logic and dynamics of the Polish attempts to shake off Communism. All of them stemmed from the promising interpretation of the Soviet internal frictions, involved the threat of civil war at home, and resulted in the conditional reaffirmation of the system for the price of replacing the discredited apparatchiks, which had apparently "deviated" from proper Socialism, with more liberal-minded party leaders.[10] The Polish tensions of 1956 found both their acute reflection and powerful stimuli in the theater. On September 30, 1956, a fortnight before the beginning of the first truly reformist Plenary Session of the Polish Communist Party, the theatre in Krakow staged *Hamlet* in a way which once and for all prohibited any possible alliances of Shakespeare with the ruling regime. Such an alliance was further denied in Jan Kott's recognized account of this performance:

> The *Hamlet* produced in Krakow a few weeks after the XXth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party lasted exactly three hours. It was light and clear, tense and sharp, modern and consistent, limited to one issue only. It was a political drama *par excellence*. 'something is rotten in the state of Denmark' – was the first chord of Hamlet's new meaning. And then the dead sound of the words 'Denmark's a prison', three times repeated. Finally the magnificent churchyard scene, with the gravediggers' dialogue rid of metaphysics, brutal and unequivocal. Gravediggers know for whom they dig graves. 'The gallows is built stronger than the church,' they say. … 'Watch' and 'inquire' were the words most commonly heard from the stage. In this performance everybody, without exception, was being

[10] An important aspect here is the relatively nonviolent resolution of the conflict, with substantial allowances on both sides. The parallel Hungarian Uprising from October 24 to November 10, 1956 involved heavy casualties, and was put down by the intervention of the Soviet Army. A similar pattern of social unrest and political concessions appeared in Poland in the 1970s, 1980s, and eventually in the 1990s when the Polish United Workers' Party lost in the free elections and handed over executive power.

> constantly watched … At Elsinore castle someone is hidden behind every curtain. … Everyone at Elsinore has been corroded by fear ... Politics hangs here over every feeling, and there is no getting away for it. All the characters are poisoned by it. The only subject of their conversation is politics. It is a kind of madness. (*Shakespeare* 48-50)

The suggestive, dense language of the report renders fittingly the political fierceness of the play staged in Krakow which, in turn, mirrored the rising wave of discontent which was overwhelming the country, and shortly afterwards, swept away the first of the post-war Communist governments. Thus, the *Hamlet* staged in Krakow in September 1956 was the first openly dissident *Hamlet*, the *Hamlet* "corroded by fear" and "poisoned with politics," and yet to some extent a winning *Hamlet* which by diagnosing the state might have prompted its remedy. It was indeed, wrote Kott, "the *Hamlet* of the Polish October" (*Szekspir* 85).

And yet, while introducing the thought of the political and contemporary Shakespeare to the Western audience, Kott, or perhaps his editors, soberly assessed the force of his argument and mediated meaning by banishing the original context. In the English edition of *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, *Hamlet* of the mid-century has become "the *Hamlet* staged a few weeks after the XXth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party" (48) or, more emphatically, "the Polish *Hamlet* after the XXth Party Congress" (51), a historical gloss entirely absent from the Polish text. Hence the appropriated *Hamlet* was conveniently inscribed in the historical framework which accommodated a better Western sense of Eastern politics, with the peculiarities of local politics shrunk into an irrelevant and rather inexplicable detail. For the Polish audience, the significance of the *Hamlet* in Krakow was anchored in its being "before the Polish October of 1956" rather than after the Soviet March of 1956, which is, for what its worth, longer than "a few weeks".

Ironically enough, this sinister testimony from behind the Iron Curtain made it possible to embrace again the utopian enthusiasm of *The Tempest*. In 2001, while commenting on the impact of Kott's criticism, R. S. White noted that the Polish critic heralded "a brave

new world of Shakespearian study", and led us "into the uncharted contemporary waters" (279), thereby clearly privileging the elucidating force of the newly forged parallels over their sinister dialectic implications.

For Poles, however, the key to the political Shakespeare became Fortinbras. As long as most of the subsequent stage designs of *Hamlet* projected a relatively compassionate image of the Prince, the status of Fortinbras became, as it were, a separate matter and a touchstone of the Poles' trust in the radicalism and effectiveness of political reforms promised by the successive governments. Significantly enough, the tendency to interpret the Norwegian Prince as cynical and deceitful intensified along with the growing disenchantment with the state policies which followed in the years to come. In a way, Fortinbras became a complex amalgam of political association recurrently employed to reflect on the nature of authority.[11]

Notwithstanding the critical fortunes of Fortinbras, in 1956 Shakespeare himself became a Polish dissident in a way which effectively ruled out any conformist appropriations.[12] By virtue of the recently secured, rather fragile and yet important liberties, the theatres boldly reached for a challenging repertoire charged with dark and desperate metaphysics and menacing political innuendos. Significantly enough, in the following decade, frequently referred to as the Theatre of Great Metaphor, Shakespeare became one of the most often staged playwrights, and the number of performances nearly tripled from 61 in the post-war period to 155 productions in the

[11] Fortinbras becomes the interpretative centre in Zbigniew's Herbert's *Tren Fortynbrasa* (Elegy for Fortinbras), Warsaw, 1957; Stanisław Grochowiak's *Król IV* (King the Fourth), Warsaw, 1975; and Janusz Głowacki's *Fortynbras się upił* (Fortinbras is Drunk), Warsaw, 1990. For a critical account of Polish appropriations of the character, see Kobiałka 199-202.

[12] Additionally, the dissident implications of Shakespeare criticism merged with the traditionally anti-Russian association of Shakespeare forged in the nineteenth century, during the period of the partition of Poland, when the Tsarist authorities banned all productions of Shakespeare due to the proliferation of the motif of regicide in these plays. The occupants feared such productions would incite subversive activities on the part of Polish patriots. Needless to say, the ban only strengthened the Romantic cult of Shakespeare.

years 1956-1965, with the number still increasing in the years that followed.[13] Needless to say, the association of Shakespeare with the nonconformist was further strengthened by the dissemination of Kott's criticism, though the reception of these influential essays in Poland was far more complex than it may appear from the outside.

Kott Our Contemporary

Indeed ever since 1961, the articulate writings of Jan Kott held an unquestionable sway over the Polish reception of Shakespeare, both in terms of critical discourse and stage practice.[14] The dogmatic assumption of the contemporariness of Shakespeare, the idea of the Grand Mechanism and the interpretative association with the Theater of the Absurd became an indispensable ingredient of text analysis. Kott's essays offered a harsh and unforgiving diagnosis of the nature of political power, and yet by emphasizing the notoriously cyclical course of history and the futility of individual choices, they constituted also a powerful intellectual alibi for refraining from active civil resistance, an excuse of special urgency for those tempted with secure ethical passivity. Hence, while being sulkily critical of the rulers, Kott's interpretations were also bitter, if not cynical, doubts about the abilities of the ruled to set things right.

The pessimism of Kott's interpretation and the liberties he took in stripping the text of its original context raised substantial objections. A recurrent opinion held that it was not Shakespeare who became the object of Kott's analysis, but rather the contemporary reality forced into a Renaissance costume and that Kott used Shakespeare to address the needs of contemporary readers, who were recovering from the shock of the Holocaust and the War (Nyczek viii-ix). While doing so, however, Kott did not reinterpret Shakespeare's plays in a way which would reflect contemporary traumas (which, after all, had been also attempted by others), but

[13] The numbers of Shakespeare productions are based on Żurowski (1982).

[14] The Polish discussion on Kott's volume *Szkice o Szekspirze* started in September, 1961 (Fik, *Kultura polska* 338).

exposed and elucidated the allegedly materialist backbone of the *real* Shakespeare – the poet that the previous ages, in their illusions of progress and providence, failed to identify, or feared to acknowledge. And yet the most vocal and unsettlingly personal objection was that the whole concept had a therapeutic effect of sorts which helped Communist intellectuals to come to terms with their disenchantment with Stalinism and their own role in the process.[15] In other words, by obsessively emphasizing the inevitability and absurdity of history, Kott set up an excuse for wrong ethical choices, or even more so, for abstaining from any choices at all (Surgiera 47). Above all, however, notwithstanding the intensity of dissident contempt, the logic of Kott's discourse was an impeccably coherent and yet evident permutation of existentialism and Marxist historical dialectics. If, in the West, this Marxist legacy stood a chance of being associated with a daring intellectual pose, or, at worse, innocuous leftist fantasy, in Poland it was an ideological axiom foregrounding real Communism and negating Christianity. Neither of the two could have passed unnoticed or be easily forgiven.

The presence of Marxist reasoning in Kott's interpretations repeatedly troubled and confused Polish intellectuals both at home and abroad. To some, like Gustaw Herling-Grudziński, Kott became a qualified member of "the Hegelian bite club", thereby playfully alluding to the long-awaited admission of Kott himself that "in justifying history the Hegelian bite proved to be most sinister".[16] Kott's criticism was also a subtext and a hidden target of ideological polemics. In 1965, Czesław Miłosz, while introduced Herbert to the American readership as a master of historical irony reflecting "the collative experience of the last decades," a critic for whom history

[15] Needless to say, this applied specifically to Kott himself whose long-standing involvement with the official policies in the Stalinist period was often held against him and used to undermine the credibility of his interpretations. Kott had been attracted to Marxism since 1930s and his commitment to Communist ideology after the War was consistent with his pre-war stance. An influential literary critic, he would repeatedly attack" the enemies of the system", devaluating various national myths embedded in the Polish literary canon. He left the (Communist) Polish Workers' Party in 1957.

[16] The anecdote is quoted in Fik, *Autorytecie* 134. Additionally, the Polish acronym of the club (ZUH) is roughly equivalent of the English "little scout", with an underlying suggestion of appreciation for child-like heroism.

was not, however, "a senseless repetition of crimes and illusions" (121). A similar sensitivity to ideological shifts resurfaces in Robert P. Merrix's summary of Kottian vulgate in 1979:

> His description of the "Grand Mechanism" sounds strangely like the medieval *de casibus* pattern, until we note that the events are determined not by Fortune or the character's moral choice but by a mechanistic absolute…Thus, in Kott, providence has been replaced by repetition; cause and effect by epiphenomenalism; individual choice by existential despair. Shakespeare has been condemned to freedom. (181-182)

And yet for the authorities, Kott's criticism was like a loose torpedo launched against all history and ready to hit against any material, or even more so, materialist target. The recognition of this potential was confirmed by putting Kott on the censor's list soon after his departure in 1968. Naturally, it was not the concern for the displaced and misinterpreted Shakespeare which motivated the ban, but the fear of breeding a compulsive habit of reading dissident meanings into old plays, as well as of projecting the pathologies of the feudal system in Shakespeare's plays onto the image of contemporary governments. In this sense, the influence of Kott's criticism on the audience seemed far more hazardous than the performances themselves. The censor's instructions insisting on deleting Kott's name from the radio, press and television, and from all publications of a non-academic nature, understandably affected the reviews also.[17] Thus on the surface of it, the policy effectively banished Kott from texts which either reflected or shaped the attitudes of the audience. Ironically enough, there was hardly a more whitewashing gift that could have been offered to Jan Kott than the irresistible appeal of the forbidden fruit. Perhaps the most

[17] For the censor's instructions on Jan Kott see *Z dokumentów cenzury w PRL,* 19-20. Kott was put on censor's lists in 1968, when he was already the US. The malice of the authorities was amplified by the events in 1968 when the wave of democratic demonstrations was first suppressed, and then followed by the attack on liberal intellectuals who apparently inspired the protests and were of Jewish origin. The ensuing outbreak of anti-Semitism forced thousands of Polish Jews to leave the country, whereas the oeuvres of writers of Jewish origin, such as Kott, was questioned and discredited. The political background of these developments included the Israeli-Arab war in 1967 and the Communist intervention in Czechoslovakia in the summer 1968.

balanced native reflection on Jan Kott came from Marta Fik, in 1997, who wrote simply: "There is no critic in Poland who would so radically changed, depending on his reading of literature, his understanding of man and history. We may presume, however, that he was sincere in this"(136).[18]

The 1970s

Despite the bitter aftertaste of the ideological implications of Kott's essays, the rebel nature of Shakespeare's plays became a fact. Implicitly exposing the hypocrisy of *contemporary* public life, Shakespeare's plays slipped out of the censors' hands due to their overtly Elizabethan costume and were immediately absorbed by the audiences, such as those waiting in the foyer of the Stary Theater in Krakow. There is little we can know about these people but for the suggestion of their faces. The view from above catches almost exclusively their heads, thus conveniently delivering us from the temptation to judge them according to their clothes. The prevailing mood is that of silent waiting, giving way (soon presumably) to the mood of silent watching. This vigilant attitude was nicely, if intuitively, caught by Konrad Swinarski, who directed Shakespeare performances in the Stary Theater in the early 1970s:

> The theatre and the actor live only if being watched. Theatrical silences during performance consist in the spectators' desire to comprehend, or in fact, the desire to submit themselves to something. To some truth, perhaps. (126)

To this audience Swinarski offered first *A Midsummer Night's Dr*eam in 1970, and then *All's Well That Ends Well* in 1971.[19] The success of these performances stemmed, at least in part, from the *genius loci* of the Theatre in Krakow, and they too have been ab-

[18] Translation by Aniela Korzeniowska.

[19] In 1974 Swinarski launched the rehearsals of *Hamlet* which, however, were discontinued due to his death in 1976, in a plane crash near Damascus. His other Shakespeare productions were directed abroad, usually in Germany. For the interpretative potential of Swinarski's productions see Fik "Teatr Orientadesa," *passim*, and "Teatr okrutny", *passim*; Sinko, *passim*; Swinarski 110-114, 130-144.

sorbed by the legend of the place. In this way, they were both an emanation, and, subsequently, an archetype of the Polish political theatre of the 1970s. All of them built on the unique relation with the watchful, patient audience, without which Swinarski would flee from foreign theatres without finishing the plays he started rehearsing there. It is also abroad that Swinarski found himself repeatedly crashing against the expectations of whatever the Western critics had come to understand as "Kottian" and therefore as synonymous with Polish.[20]

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Swinarski's technique is predominantly that of silent interpolation and framing. Without a single word added, Swinarski constructs a stage reality which is not only a menacing version of Shakespeare's Athens, but also an ominous metaphor of censored life and censored theatre, arrestingly crossing the footlights to embrace the spectators. Thus the list of characters increases by two mute and symmetrical nonentities, Orientades and Orientides, whose Eastern provenance is also half-jokingly insinuated by their grotesque fur caps. Their task is surveillance, and the two ever-present moles spy upon the court and the audience, and, with increased caution, upon Theseus himself. The parallel actions of the court and its secret service run in full view of the audience, with an overwhelming suggestion of controlled life, in and outside the theatre. With the commencement of the triple nuptials, Orientades and Orientides take their positions on the upper platform and spread out a stately ensign with lions, featuring also on the celebratory garments of Theseus. Those who rule and those who secure their rule are now prepared to meet the people, the "hard-handed men … which never labour'd in their minds till now" (5.1.72-73). In the atmosphere of strict surveillance, Quince's accentuated words reverberate against tense, dead silence:

> *If we offend, it is with our good will.*
> *That you should think, we come not to offend,*
> *But with good will…*

[20] Swinarski failed to finish his production of *Troilus and Cressida* and *Edward II* in Zurich and Vienna. For the full account of Swinarski's work in foreign theaters, see Walaszek 96-97, 98.

> *We do not come, as minding to content you,*
> *Our true intent is. All for your delight,*
> *We are not here…*
> *You shall know all, that you are like to know.* (5.1.108-117)

Alarmed, Orientades and Orientides rise and consult hastily. "This fellow doth not stand upon points", snaps angrily Theseus. "He knows not the stop", assents Lysander (5.1.118-120). The plebeian actors and the audience and now all on one side, the former forced to fall into clumsy grotesque to mislead the spies. The next crisis occurs when the inset play calls for a lion on stage, thereby infringing on Theseus's monopoly to represent the state. But the beast soon proves meek and gentle, saving its life by an ostensible display of fearfulness. With the reaffirmed authority of the state, the play-within-a play clumsily staggers towards its end, with Orientades and Orientides at last relaxed and idle. As if to counteract the overwhelming sense of failure, Puck teasingly plays with the spies and flees from their hands. His final speech sounds nothing like a conventional plea for applause. "We will mend", warns Puck, rising a clenched fist. The fictional Orientades and Orientides are momentarily outwitted, but can the real ones be? "It is a theatrical and interpretative masterpiece", concludes one of the critics, and adds soberly "the production has a revolutionary spirit, it juxtaposes the feudal court with its little aristocratic lords and ladies, with the common people" (Sinko 177). Does this reviewer happen to play his own game with Orientades and Orientides?

The interpretative strategy in *All's Well That Ends Well* relies also on interpolation, but here Swinarski does not superimpose a frame; he inserts isolated episodes, all, again, reduced to a dumb show. One such scene is the rape of a Florentine girl watched by drunken soldiers and, from their hiding, by the Widow, Helena and Paroles. The scene is brutal and the audience emotionally side with the victim. Given the obvious theatricality of the event, the spectators remain passive; but their passivity draws them also into an ethically uncomfortable alliance with the on-stage audience who are concealed and reluctant to interfere. This hint concerning the possibility of mute consent for evil (for fear of undesired involve-

ment) prepares them for the scene of Paroles's interrogation where the threat of life becomes an instrument of torture. Paroles is a spineless braggart, and the harsh lesson may appear an adequate remedy for his vices. His pleas, and lies, and confessions are a first-rate spectacle to Bertram and others, with whom part of the audience side throughout the whole scene. And yet with time, and for some, Paroles begins to overstep the comic convention. Exposed and scarred, Paroles is also entrapped, deceived and manipulated. His meanness is a fact, but what chances does he have to display virtue? With the appearances of cheerfulness still preserved on the stage, part of the audience become detached and serious. For them the comedy is already exhausted, whereas the others continue to laugh at the intimidated wretch. "These can understand nothing of the performance", laments one of the critics (Fik, "Teatr okrutny" 200-201). The climactic point of the play is Paroles's only monologue, abbreviated and set against an empty stage.

> *Captain I'll be no more*
> *But I will eat and drink and sleep as soft*
> *as captain shall…*
> *I'll after them.* (4.3.332-340)

And so he does, crawling, like a dog with its tail between its legs, begging for scraps. When he approaches Lafeu, the latter slaps his face, and the audience again display mixed attitudes. "It is a cruel spectacle. One of the cruelest I have ever seen", states one of the reviewers (Fik, "Teatr okrutny" 200-201).

The apparently happy ending does not cancel the moral dilemmas which arouse during the performance; nor does the production hit against any of the political axioms of the time. And yet by elucidating the unsettlingly familiar and dwarfish predicaments of Shakespeare's characters, it implicitly suggests that the revised ideology, as yet, has not bred a new race of men. To the contrary, the play repeatedly asks the audience to identify with the characters of whom none is innocent or heroic. In other words, it scrutinizes the limits of ethical compromise, with an underlying assumption that for many (for us?) life in shame is better than no life at all.

All exit

Following 1978, censorship became more lenient, in the vain hope of the theatre and literature acting as a safety vent against uncontrollable eruptions of social protest. The poetics changed, and the analogies became first straightforward, and then altogether forsaken. The social energy was absorbed by rallies, marches and strikes which culminated in martial law in 1981, and then the collapse of Communism. The most politically-minded audience went into the streets, and actors went after them, or locked themselves in dressing-rooms. Another aspect was the rise of religious enthusiasm, which is, for what it is worth, yet another argument for the affinity of performance and hierophany. The theatres, however, are hardly suited for the role of veterans, and before long they undertook the challenge of embracing a new type of vitality, more appropriate for the shrinking audiences of the 1980s. The fall in the number of spectators was indeed conspicuous. The climatic year was 1961 when the number of spectators reached 8.7 million annually in then a 30 million country, and remained approximately constant for the next twenty years or so. The falling tendency came only in 1978 and, significantly enough, coincided with the relaxation of censorship. In 1996 the number of spectators stabilized at the level of 3.6 million annually, which incidentally illustrates best the discrepancy between then and now[21].

The unparallel potential of interpretative twists and turns not only secured Shakespeare's place in the repertoire, but subjected him to continuous rewriting in the ever increasing number of translations. It is precisely the specificity of the time which made possible the unprecedented theatrical success of the so-called philological translations of Shakespeare thrived in the 1970s and 1980s which frequently, and rather unmercifully, followed Elizabethan communicative strategies, flamboyant rhetoric and imagery, as well as archaic word register, including time-bound bawdiness. In the 1990s, the comparison of the meticulous adherence of these translations with the spectacular liberties informing some new rewritings deemed the former utterly non-theatrical and, as it might have

[21] For the statistics of the Polish theater see Fik, ed. *Teatr. Widowisko.*

seemed, once and for all banished them from the stage.[22] However, it was not an updated understanding of the original which enforced new translation strategies but the change of cultural and political ambience of the time, as well as the gradual disappearance of an audience that would stay alert and "patient till the last". This rare and humble endurance was a fragile and short-lived gift. And in some measure, the censor's lesson on Shakespeare.

The turn of the millennium saw a new tendency in the Polish political theatre, reflecting the throbbing nostalgia for the times when spectators could not wait to enter the auditorium. The theatre went for the weird search of its lost audiences, and reached for the similarly abandoned remnants of factories and shipyards to turn them into the acting space. Thus, the legendary Gdansk shipyard became the Polish Elsinore in the production directed by Jan Klata (2004), and the equally central to the Polish history Warynski's factory in Warsaw represented Macbeth's Scotland in the production directed by Grzegorz Jarzyna (2007), the latter characteristic.[23] In *Hamlet*, the cold and ruined industrial spaces contrasted with the tiny figures of actors and furthered dwarfed their now largely irrelevant moral dilemmas. The audience witnessed silently the characters' agonies, free to join or leave at any moment. In *Macbeth*, the monstrous vastness of the place often contrasted with the intensity of modern mass media, when the proliferation of images of war and terror augmented the horror of the scenes to come. Thus the attention to the word has become largely lost and gone, and yet the theatre retained its ability to mirror the contemporary time. If only in its screaming loneliness.

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[22] I refer here to the philological translations of Maciej Słomczyński and to the translations of Stanisław Barańczak, which dominated the theatrical repertoires of the 1990s.

[23] The titles of both plays were altered to *H.* and *2007:Macbeth*, respectively.

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8

Polish Ophelias: Gender, Madness and the Question of Female Agency

Anna Kowalcze-Pawlik

For more than a thousand years sad Ophelia
Has passed, a white phantom, down the long black river.
For more than a thousand years her sweet madness
Has murmured its ballad to the evening breeze.

Arthur Rimbaud, *Ophelia*, trans. Oliver Bernard,
Collected Poems (1962)

In 1974 Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, an eminent writer and a translator of Shakespeare's plays, would write about the position of *Hamlet* in Poland:

> Is the Danish prince our national hero? It seems so, as we continually get superb acting creations based on William Shakespeare's immortal work. […] This kinship of Shakespeare hero with young guerrillas, rebels and clumsy revolutionaries is puzzling. It is puzzling and deeply troubling.
>
> How long will we be brothers with those "nonconformists" who cannot find their own place in the world, eternally froth-

ing with internal ferment; with those for whom whole Denmark is a prison; those who wonder: "'to be or not to be'?[1]

Indeed, as a play with an exceptionally rich Polish translation and production history, *Hamlet* seems to articulate with unique strength the anxieties of a nation trapped in its own inability to act openly and successfully against its aggressors.[2] Unsurprisingly, the main actor in Shakespeare's psychodrama of in/action would draw almost exclusive attention of those preoccupied with *Hamlet*, becoming the focus of theoretical reflection, stage production and theatrical criticism alike.[3] But what about Hamlet's "shadowy counterpart", Ophelia? What role does she have to play in the Polish reception history of *Hamlet*?

The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke is not an obvious critical choice when it comes to the discussion of prominent female characters in Shakespeare. Definitely, Ophelia is a figure that does not strike us as an embodiment of female power: from the very beginning of the reception history of *Hamlet* both Shakespeare scholars and directors would tend to dismiss her as a sweet, loveable and rather unimportant creature that does not merit a detailed analysis other characters in the play call for.[4]

And yet, this traditional interpretation has been challenged by a number of feminist critics. Even though Ophelia is a character that hardly seems to tap into the feminist discourses of independence, feminist criticism definitely opposes the prevailing interpretations

[1] Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz „Hamlet", *Twórczość* 4, 01-04-1974, no pp. If not otherwise indicated, all translations are mine own.

[2] See e.g. Trznadel, Jacek. *Polski Hamlet: kłopoty z działaniem* [Polish *Hamlet*: *Troubles with Action*], (Paryż: Libella 1988).

[3] Another character significant for the Polish interpretation for the play is Fortinbras, but Hamlet's importance remains indisputable.

[4] A place of prominence in this respect should obviously be given to A.C. Bradley, *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1985), 132-33. As Elaine Showalter succinctly argues: "For most critics of Shakespeare, Ophelia has been an insignificant minor character in the play, touching in her weakness and madness but chiefly interesting, of course, in what she tells us about Hamlet..." Elaine Showalter, "Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibilities of Feminist Criticism," in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman, (Methuen, 1985): 77.

of the play situating Polonius's daughter somewhere along the passive victim/harmless lunatic axis: within the emancipatory paradigm Ophelia's madness is valorised both negatively, as the outcome of the phallocentric oppression, and positively, as a site of resistance against the dominant patriarchal order.[5]

Indeed, for almost three decades much of the Western *Hamlet* criticism and theatrical practice has concentrated on the critical re-evaluation of the play, paying attention to the way in which Ophelia functions as a stubborn victim of the masculine hegemonic power. The question arises, however, how this trend in the analyses, contemporary adaptations and revisions of the play interacts with the position of Ophelia within the corpus of the non-English cultural practices, where the feminist agenda may not be as strong, as formidable and as firmly-rooted as in Western Europe.[6] Can the figure of Ophelia be read in terms of the discourse of empowerment characteristic for Elaine Showalter's interpretation, when Polonius' daughter is forced into a shadowy existence within the bounds of the Polish patriarchal culture? Does Ophelia's madness allow her to slip out of the trappings of the symbolic order, in which she functions only as an object of male fantasy? Is the contemporary Polish Ophelia in any way different from her Western counterparts?

[5] Ophelia's case is symptomatic for the valorisation of insanity in western history and the stereotyped portrayals of female madness. See e.g. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979); Carol Thomas Neely, *Broken Nuptials in Shakespeare's Plays* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 103-4; Elaine Showalter, „Representing Ophelia: women, madness, and the responsibilities of feminist criticism" in *Shakespeare and the Question of Theory*, ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman (London: Methuen, 1985), pp. 77-94.

[6] Current translation theorists conceive of the project of translation as something that André Lefevere calls a „rewriting," in which translators and readers work together to create new versions of the source text. Lefevere fully develops his concept of translation in *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, London and New York: Routledge, 1992. Hence, in this study I use the interchangeably the terms re-writing and translation in the broad, cultural understanding of the term. On gender and translation in Shakespeare see e.g. Susan Bassnett „Engendering Anew: Shakespeare, Gender and Translation" in *Shakespeare and the Language of Translation*, ed. Ton Hoenselaars (London: Bloomsbury Publishing 2012).

This chapter provides a preliminary answer to these questions by outlining prevalent trends in the characterization of Ophelia in Polish metatheatrical commentary as well as the theatrical history of the play in Poland, while describing two contemporary re-writings of Ophelia's character that go against the grain of the mainstream Polish reception of *Hamlet*.

O phallos[7]: Polish Tra(p)daptations

It was the voice of mad seas, the great roar,
That shattered your child's heart, too human and too soft;
It was a handsome pale knight, a poor madman
Who one April morning sate mute at your knees!

Arthur Rimbaud, *Ophelia*, trans. Oliver Bernard,
Collected Poems (1962)

The critical attention given to Ophelia's stage presence in Poland and elsewhere concentrates on her slippage into the irrational and the consequent singing scene. And yet, her ballading has been traditionally dismissed, ridiculed or castigated, infantilized or deemed downright improper. As "objectionable ballads… childhood recollections of a nurse's songs", her unsolicited performance was seen as derivative, "discordant echoes of Hamlet's defection", either the outcome of witless automatisms or the direct result of her moral failure, in either case definitely "unbecoming to a maiden".[8] In the ballad scene she would demonstrate the uneasy or unpalatable "mixture of 'ideal' femininity and veiled sexuality, promoting the ambiguous nature of her appeal"[9] that would problematize her

[7] A reference to Lacan's statement: "I'm just surprised that nobody's pointed out that Ophelia is *O* phallos" („Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in *Hamlet*," in Shoshana Felman, *Literature and Psychoanalysis*, Johns Hopkins, Baltimore, 1982, 20).

[8] John Robert Moore, 'The Function of Songs in Shakespeare's Plays', *Shakespeare Studies by Members of the Department of English of the University of Wisconsin* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1916, 91-92; Harold Lundstrom, "The Lyrics of *Hamlet*'s Ophelia", *Desert News* July 10 1967, A17.

[9] Mary Floyd Wilson, "Ophelia and Femininity in the Eighteenth Century: "Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds," *Women's Studies* 21 (1992): 397.

relationship with Hamlet and add to the continuing popularity of that particular character in Western culture.

From the very first production of the play in 1798 way into the 21th century the existing Polish productions and translations of *Hamlet* have followed the same twofold pattern of interpretation, presenting Ophelia either as an embodiment of girlish innocence or, rather less frequently, as an emblem of female duplicity[10]. In one of the earliest commentaries on her stage presence Wojciech Bogusławski advocates censorship of St Valentine's Day song sequence, stating that "One can… leave out the rest of the lines during the staging of this tragedy, as they are less proper for the innocent and handsomely brought up Ophelia"[11]. Indeed, the bawdy passages were cut from many of the 19th century productions, or their meaning was neutralized. The highlight of Ophelia's acting became the visual aspect of her madness scene: it became so fashionable in the era of Romanticism that it was staged independently from the rest of the play.[12]

Unincidentally, as the daughter of *Polonius*[13] Polish Ophelia would not be fully instrumentalised by producers amending Shakespeare in the French manner à la Ducis who would have her cease to become her father's daughter, get an entirely different genealogy, and meet a more fortunate end by actually marrying Hamlet. Even

[10] This attests to the essentially gendered and political nature of translation as described by Lawrence Venuti, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak or Robert de Beaugrande: „institutions ... show a preference for a translation ethics of sameness, translating that enables and ratifies existing discourses and canons, interpretations, and pedagogies ... if only to ensure the unruffled reproduction of the institution" (Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation*, London: Routledge, 1998, 82). A comprehensive account of the Polish translations of the play can be found in e.g. Agnieszka Romanowska's Hamlet *po polsku. Teatralność szekspirowskiego tekstu dramatycznego jako zagadnienie przekładoznawcze* [Halmet *in Polish: Theatricality of Shakespeare's Dramatic Text As a Translation Issue*] (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka 2005).

[11] Wojciech Bogusławski, *Dzieła dramatyczne*, t. IV, Warszawa 1821, 132.

[12] More on that and the stage presence of Ophelia in the nineteenth century: Jarosław Komorowski, "Polska Ofelia", *Od Shakespeare'a do Szekspira* [From Shakespeare to Szekspir], ed. Jan Ciechowicz, Zbigniew Majchrowski (Gdańsk: Centrum Edukacji Teatralnej, 1993), 134-152.

[13] As Komorowski notes, in the 1870 translation of *Hamlet* by Krystyn Ostrowski Ophelia indeed becomes a Polish noble woman at Elsinore, with Laertes actually uttering at the sight of his deranged sister: "You poor Pole, my dear Ophelia" (139).

though some Romantic writers, such as Juliusz Słowacki, sympathised or even identified themselves with her, her reception history did not follow the pattern visible in France or Germany, where even as a supporting character she would draw considerably more attention. Instead, in the typical stage presentation she would be treated dismissively, and appear only to perpetuate the culturally established gender norm set for the female sex in the martyred country: she might suffer, she might go insane, but she had to remain chaste and pure of heart till the very end, as anything else would be tantamount to treason. Polish Ophelia would need to be faithful and die a tragic death, or be cynically treacherous and die a well-deserved death.

In the most influential modern Polish interpretation of *Hamlet*, *Studium o Hamlecie* [*Study of Hamlet*] Stanisław Wyspiański would trace this inconsistence in the portrayal of Polonius' daughter and allot it to the two incompatible versions of the drama, the "pre-hamlet" source and Shakespeare's own adaptation of the story:

> Shakespeare's Ophelia is Polonius' daughter and a naïve, noble-minded girl... Who would Hamlet come to? There was a Courtesan provided by the king and feigning love, or even loving, but entangled into a lie – that she was in his royal stepfather's service… Ophelia-Courtesan! It may be that she was Polonius' daughter, but it was another Polonius, that philosopher of a fool, Corambis… Some of the scenes with Polonius are the remains of that dangerously funny background that Hamlet could have and indeed had in the old theatre – which till this day has persisted in theatres, obliterating Shakespeare's idea – and which adds to the poor performance of this play…
>
> Ophelia-Courtesan is a girl, a lady-in-waiting in the Hamlets' castle that seduces the prince at Claudius' orders and with Polonius' aid… Anyway, this Ophelia lives rather loosely and without restraint…
>
> all the inconsistencies… have their beginning in the transformation of that court courtesan and flirt, of that deceitful and corrupt wench… - in her transformation into a child, SPRING'S BLOSSOM, a maiden who is driven to madness by true love when she is ordered to quench it and lie in its face by no one other but her father and brother.[14]

Wyspiański first ascribes a past to Ophelia and then takes it away from her, as it is incommensurate with his vision of Shakespeare's play. Ophelia's potential promiscuity is treated here as a fact, but a fact belonging to a less perfect reality that the *Polish play* has to eradicate in its moral quest for political independence. This structural inconsistence is inscribed into Wyspiański's portrait of Polonius' daughter, thorn by two opposing impulses, primeval sexuality, the feminine element, and the patriarchal fantasy of control over female nature. This inconsistence, finding its direct realization in Hamlet's utterance "Frailty, thy name is woman!" (1.2.146), becomes the signature mark of Wyspiański's Ophelia visible also in his later poem *Śmierć Ofelli* [*The Death of Ophelia*], where she is given voice only to become an *object* of poetic work annihilated in the project of phallogocentric writing.[15]

In the mainstream Polish culture Ophelias "stop being, start seeming", to use Simone de Beauvoir's familiar phrase.[16] Both on stage and in literary adaptations Polish Ophelias obey their fathers and brothers, and are forced into the rhetoric of modesty,[17] while undergoing sexual objectification. Ophelia in this context is presented either as a passive victim of the scheming traitors, an innocent pitted against the political intrigue that destroys her, or as a foolish tool in the hands of Polonius. In either case her identity is the frail outcome of male fantasy creating a very limited space for female social and literary roles. As "that piece of bait… linked forever, for centu-

[14] Stanisław Wyspiański, *Hamlet* (Wrocław, Warszawa, Kraków: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich-Wydawnictwo, 2007), 16-18, 71, 76.

[15] A detailed analysis of Śmierć Ofelli can be found in Anna Kapusta's book, *Gry w kulturę: gry w mit. Mitografia jako lektura* [Playing Culture: Playing Myth. Mythography as Reading] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2012).

[16] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Knopf, 1952), 22.

[17] It the understanding of the term as used by Patricia Pender in her study *Early Modern Women's Writing and the Rhetoric of Modesty* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

ries, to the figure of Hamlet",[18] Polish Ophelia would for a long time function as an *object* of others' action, never becoming its *agent*.

Stopping seeming, starting being: *White Ophelia* and the *Iconography of Madness*

> It was a breath of wind, that, twisting your great hair,
> Brought strange rumors to your dreaming mind
>
> Arthur Rimbaud, *Ophelia*, trans. Oliver Bernard, *Collected Poems* (1962)

The majority of mainstream renderings of *Hamlet* have shaped the character of Ophelia in accordance with the place that women occupy politically, economically and culturally in the Polish social landscape dominated by male fantasy of hierarchical order. Within this paradigm Ophelia's madness reasserts the patriarchal *status quo*; the romanticizing, aestheticizing message is that the ideal of femininity is expressed through the passive, angelic qualities of the wronged maiden, while what it truly reflects is a rigid set of norms and a stringent code of behaviour for women.[19] What is put to the forefront within the patriarchal specular economy that fashions women into sexual commodities, is Ophelia's appearance and her gendered behaviour – madness. This normative construction of weak womanhood has been repeatedly questioned by feminist critics, who since the 1980's have also been concentrating on Ophelia's madness, but would read it along different lines, as a sign of resistance and liberation from the patriarchal order, as an expression of female agency in the presence of overwhelming oppression by the hegemonic masculinity that rules the stage in the play.

Entanglement into gender matters, resistance to the normativity of imposed hierarchies as well as a persistent focus on those who have been pushed aside, into the margin, are the themes articulated by

[18] Lacan, "Desire," 11, 20.

[19] The 1852 idyllic picture of drowning Ophelia by John Everett Millais is representative for this mode of aesthecising representation.

two contemporary revisionist rewritings of *Hamlet* in two media characteristic for Ophelia's contemporary afterlife.[20] The first one is *Biała Ofelia* [*White Ophelia*], a novel published 2011 by a Polish author, Julia Fiedorczuk, and the other Zorka Wollny's 2012 performance *Ikonografia szaleństwa* [*The Iconography of madness*].[21]

Julia Fiedorczuk made her debut in 2000 with a volume of poetry *Listopadem nad Narwią* [*November upon the Narew River*]. *White Ophelia* is her first novel, set against the background of the post-communist Warsaw and at least on the surface detailing the story of two female characters that met in primary school at the end of the 1980's. Anna and Elisa are friends with penchant for poetry: Elisa is the active, attention-seeking element, whereas Anna remains enclosed in her world of dreamy visions, where language itself is alive and full of unexpected associations. They create for themselves a space in which they are the King and the Queen, and which provides them with an escape mode from the dreary reality of people who care but are not able to communicate meaningfully.

That world collapses when Elisa leaves Warsaw. They meet again after twenty years, when Elisa is already a famous writer, while Anna leads a solitary, shadowy existence of a graphic artist, whose only friends are books. They fall into the familiar pattern of An-

[20] Cf. *The Afterlife of Ophelia,* ed. Kaara L. Peterson and Deanne Williams (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2012).

[21] *The Iconography of Madness* was presented at the Art Museum in Łódź in 2012, and during the 17 Gdańsk Shakespeare Festival 2013; it will soon be available through the www.ninateka.pl website. The actresses involved in the performance played Ophelia in the *Hamlet* productions staged between 1960-2012: Iwona Bielska (dir. Jerzy Krasowski, the Juliusz Słowacki Theatre, Krakow, 1978), Monika Dąbrowska (dir. Jolanta Donejko and Piotr Borowski, Theatre Studium, Warsaw, 2005); Ewa Domańska (dir. Jan Englert, Polish TV Theatre, 1985); Gabriela Frycz (dir. Waldemar Śmigasiewicz, Nowy Theatre, Poznań, 2007); Anna Ilczuk (dir. Monika Pęcikiewicz, Polski Theatre, Wrocław, 2008); Marta Kalmus-Jankowska (dir. Krzysztof Nazar, Wybrzeże Theatre, Gdańsk, 1996, dir. Jan Klata, Wybrzeże Theatre, Gdańsk, 2006); Krystyna Łubieńska (dir. Andrzej Wajda, Wybrzeże Theatre, Gdańsk, 1960); Karolina Porcari (dir. Radosław Rychcik, the Stefan Żeromski Theatre, Katowice, 2011); Agnieszka Radzikowska (dir. Attila Keresztes, the Stanisław Wyspiański Theatre of Silesia, Katowice, 2012); Małgorzata Rudzka (dir. Andrzej Domalik, Dramatyczny Theatre, Warsaw, 1992); Bożena Stryjkówna (dir. Jan Machulski, Ochoty Theatre, Warsaw, 1985) see http://msl.org.pl/en/wydarzenia/zorka-wollny-en/.

na's blind adoration of Elisa, which finally leads Anna to a sad end when her lover leaves her.

Read literally, the novel is a melodramatic love story of Anna who, just like Ophelia, loses herself in maddening dependence on another person. And yet, with the development of the familiar seduction-attachment-abandonment plot the story seems to dissolve into a proliferation of individual threads, separate narratives and scraps of writing that create an impression that Anna, whose thoughts and dialogues are suffused with literary quotes, is the main character of Elisa's own story-telling.

Towards the end of the novel Anna loses her hold on reality – or the reality loses the hold on her – and in her last moments she seems to find freedom in becoming a pure function of language: language that "knows neither enclosure nor death… Her language does not contain, it carries; it does not hold back, it makes possible,"[22] it "passes to infinity, [...] can never be theorized, enclosed, coded".[23] Her voice is the voice of many, the voice of more than one body: of Anna drowned in the river, of Anna who says "when I was a little boy",[24] of Anna who has never met Elisa for the second time:

> It seems that Fiedorczuk's method relies on an individual, subtle modification of themes well-known to us from modern literature. Femininity seen in a different light, a new understanding of the eternal dualisms, a broadened interpretation of sexuality – all that determines *White Ophelia*'s separateness. At the same time it is a "modest" book, so to speak, that discreetly combines narration with lyrics; it is gently poetic and refrains from shocking the reader. Perhaps this is how Ophelia's voice should sound?[25]

[22] Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa" in *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, ed. Robyn R. Warhol, Diane Price Herndl, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997, 358.

[23] Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa", 353.

[24] Julia Fiedorczuk, *Biała Ofelia,* Wrocław: Biuro Literackie, 2011, 185.

[25] Katarzyna Lisowska, "Nowy głos Ofelii" [Ophelia's New Voice], *Przystanek Literacki* 1/2011: 19.

In *White Ophelia* Ophelia's voice is heard from afar, through the constellations of signs that refuse to mean only one thing. And yet, this dreamy, multifaceted narration sends one clear message: there is no one, definite ending and no one sense of female identity. In this phantom-like retelling of Ophelia's story filtered through Rimbaud's poem (which provides the direct pretext for the novel), Fiedorczuk proves the legitimacy of Elaine Showalter's basic claim: "There is no 'true' Ophelia for whom feminist criticism must unambiguously speak, but perhaps only a Cubist Ophelia of multiple perspectives, more than the sum of all her parts".[26]

The Iconography of Madness brings to the foreground the visual aspect of Ophelia's characterisation. It makes use of the iconic representations of mental disorder, visual and verbal signs attributed to different forms of psychopathology as well as the discourse of music, in order to create not only an *iconography* but also an *iconology* of a fragmented ego that through the multiplicity of voices and bodies creates a new, chaotic whole.

In Wollny's project the auto-echolalia and copropraxia of the eleven actresses who had played Ophelia in earlier Polish productions of *Hamlet*, are visible signs of distraction or dissociation from the body, the female body that is touched and discovered anew, amidst the viewers. Each of the Polish Ophelias plays out madness in their own unique manner, and this repetition with a difference opens up the space for alterity and heterogeneity of the female subject(s). This is Ophelia(s) repeatedly touching *herself*, fixed on *herself*, *her* own body and *her* own voice; this is Ophelia(s) who no longer obsesses with Hamlet.

The conventional iconography of Ophelia with dishevelled hair is still there, but the performance repeatedly fixes on these traditional attributes to the point when automatisms and mannerisms of the subject(s) represented by many different bodies and voices accrues the aura of universal uniqueness. Wollny's Ophelia(s) moves in the liberating space in-between a theatrical performance and a tableau, crosses the boundaries of time and space, transgresses ar-

[26] Showalter, "Representing Ophelia," 92.

tistic genres, ultimately breaking away from the "representational bonds"[27] between femininity and madness, while translating the private experience of actresses playing Ophelia into the fluid language of semantic excess and pure vocality. Madness becomes here the subversive power of self-expression: it opens the possibility for the present-action of the malleable self constructed and deconstructed while we watch Ophelia(s) from *within*. As a chaotic, fragmented structure, never absolutely interpretable, *The Iconography of Madness* denies an interpretative closure. Proliferated portrayals of individual Ophelias, whose performance cannot be controlled and watched from the outside, but always from the inside, reassert sexual difference and the language of the body. The force of performance finally belongs to it/her/them.

"To thine own self be true" (1.3.78): **speaking in *prima voce***

> Heaven! Love! Freedom! What a dream, oh poor crazed Girl! ...
> Your great visions strangled your words
> And fearful Infinity terrified your blue eye!
>
> Arthur Rimbaud, *Ophelia*, trans. Oliver Bernard, *Collected Poems* (1962)

Louise von Flotow claims that "translation has long served as a trope to describe what women do when they enter the public sphere: they translate their private language, their specifically female forms of discourse (...) into some form of the dominant patriarchal code".[28] *White Ophelia* and *The Iconography of Madness* take the work of cultural translation one step further, using the limiting constructions of female identity in the dominant patriarchal code and turning it against itself, so that the specifically female form of discourse is heard on its own terms. Both of these works employ Shakespeare's play in a subtle and yet dangerous

[27] Showalter, "Representing Ophelia," 80.

[28] Louise von Flotow, *Translation and Gender: Translating in the 'Era of* Feminism' (Ottwa ON: University of Ottawa Press, 1997): 12.

way, as a pre-text. In both the visual and the written medium are pushed it to the limit, which allows them to construe a new sense of agency for Ophelia and expose the constructed nature of all (gendered) identity. By providing a critical supplement to *Hamlet* and hijacking it away from its main character, they change the meaning of the play: crucially, they change Ophelia's fate, letting her perpetuate herself in a circular play of signifiers. In this way they topple the hierarchy of power relations observable in the original text and break the seemingly unbreakable bond between Ophelia and Hamlet, giving her the right to speak in her own voice. *White Ophelia* and *The Iconography of madness* perform then "a radical form of glossing – one that inverts the conventional hierarchy between text and commentary while offering the temptation of effacing that process of inversion by reconstructing a new primary text out of its supplement".[29] Ophelia becomes that dangerous supplement that, once reconstructed and deconstructed, threatens to efface the original hierarchy, glossing over the message of female insignificance, and ultimately transforming her mad lament into a new song, which may well become a song of newly-found strength.

Given its importance for the traditional Polish culture, the transposition of the text of *Hamlet* carries an ideological weight not to be ignored. Fiedorczuk's and Wollny's representations of Ophelia read Shakespeare's text against itself and treat this reading as a site of resistance and a contestation to the prevailing Polish cultural norm, creating through the character of Ophelia a performative space for challenging the dominant preconceptions of what is natural, what is properly feminine. The character of Ophelia in these two interpretations is, paradoxically, imbued with a certain liberating potential, a certain force that allows one to speak of a budding sense of female agency, going beyond the notion of femininity and reaching well into the sphere of the postfeminist, or even postgender. This endeavour to transform gender-related hierarchy observed in the patriarchal society indeed uses "every possible feminist translation strategy to make the feminine vis-

[29] Timothy Billings, "Caterwauling Caraians", *Shakespeare Quarterly* 51:1 (Spring 2003), 17.

ible in language. Because making the feminine visible in language means making women seen and heard in the real world. Which is what feminism is all about"[30]. Even though their "great visions" of *freedom* still strangle their words and "fearful Infinity" of *freedom* is still slightly intimidating, Polish Ophelias have finally spoken: they have done it *prima voce*, continuing to make women seen and heard in contemporary Poland.

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[30] von Flotow, *Translation and Gender*, 29.

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9

A Czech Shakespeare?

Jiří Josek

Shakespeare´s works as a source text for translation have their own characteristics. A play is a very complex structure of various aspects and features. It has two well-balanced levels: poetic and dramatic; it reflects the contemporary times and mores; it was performed in a particular fashion with an all-male cast; it is written in Shakespeare's Elizabethan English. All these aspects played a role in the original performance of a Shakespeare play. Any change within such a complex multi-layered organism has an impact on its effect. Obviously, as time goes on, changes are inevitable. Some words lose their meanings, others disappear altogether, Shakespeare's jokes and puns become stale by repetition, the tastes and knowledge of audiences are different, politics change. The author himself has turned into an icon; his plays have become canonical and as such show a high potential for additional meanings[1].

This leads to a pessimistic conclusion that a play written by Shakespeare can never function in the same way as it did in his time. However, Shakespeare is still the most frequently staged and most respected playwright, notwithstanding that his plays have to some extent ceased to be the same as those he actually wrote. Of course,

[1] See Ciglar-Zanic, Janja: 'shakespeare cross-cultural migrations: contentions, containments, contentments', in *British Cultural Studies: Cross-Cultural Challenges*. British Council, Croatia, 1998, p. 39.

Shakespeare depicts universal human passions, raises topics and asks questions that challenge human understanding today. At the same time, as is often noted, his non-dogmatic and unprejudiced capturing of the world enables each individual and every era to find its reflection in his plays. In this way, Shakespeare's plays, though deprived of many meanings from his own time, are enriched by new ideas, new attitudes and new meanings.

In English-speaking countries, paradoxically, this ability to reflect and to be nurtured by the current and the topical is less than in translations into other languages. Although many attempts have been made to modernize Shakespeare's plays in set designs or costumes, the text itself is mostly respected as sacred and, until recently[2] rarely changed (except for scholarly emendations). For a playwright this presents a great handicap. First, parts of the original text have become incomprehensible to contemporary audiences. From the lexical point of view, the rate of incomprehensibility in Shakespeare may be only 15 per cent if we are to rely on the calculations done by David Crystal[3] who counted the words in Shakespeare's canon that he considered unintelligible to the present audiences.

However, it is not only words in their denotative meanings that matter. For a work of art, changes in connotative meaning and stylistic value are even more important. Shakespeare's plays have an abundance of different stylistic registers. In an overly archaic text it is difficult to differentiate styles and registers, and the original richness of contrasted voices and characters is thus blurred. It is particularly problematic in drama, where everything is happening here and now, no time is left for us to think things over, and all that is said onstage immediately effects the viewer's perception. The most obvious evidence of the fact that these passages are felt as too dated is that they are often cut in modern productions.

[2] There have been efforts to modernize the text also. The most successful attempt seems to be the new editions of selected plays translated into modernized English by Walter Saunders (www.Shakespeare2000.com).

[3] Crystal, David, 'To modernize or not to modernize? There is no question' in www.penguinclassics.co.uk/nf/shared/WebDisplay/0,62049_1_10,00.html

Translating Shakespeare aspires to the same goal as does any new staging or filming or presentation of his work to today's audiences. The aim is to make Shakespeare function here and now, which is, after all, the prerequisite of a work of drama. There is a long history of attempts to recreate Shakespeare's plays according to the particular tastes and intentions of the artist. The problem is to delineate the boundaries within which a creative reproduction of the original is still a reproduction as opposed to a re-narrating, paraphrasing or scavenging of the defenceless author; how far can a recreator of the original go in order to serve the author instead of serving only his or her own creative needs? In my opinion, three main aspects govern the translator's work: language; the current translation norm; and the individual approach of the translator as reflected in his or her interpretation of the source text and the rendering into the target language.

The difficulty of translating Shakespeare into Czech lies in the disparity between the two languages. Czech is a highly inflected language with loose word order and fixed stress on the first syllable of a word, which makes its natural rhythm trochaic, unlike iambic blank verse. Czech words average 2.4 syllables against the 1.4 of English. As the semantic density of English is higher, it can be difficult to get the whole content of the original into a five-foot line of blank verse.

Historically, there were five distinctive waves of translating Shakespeare into Czech, on the bases of which the present translation norm has constituted itself[4] . In each of them some aspects of Shakespeare's work dominated over the others, with a direct impact on translation. The first rough translations of Shakespeare, rendered in prose from German adaptations in the late 18th century, were done for the needs of touring theatre troupes, and it was the plot of the plays and perhaps the reputation of the playwright that mattered. The second wave of translations, in which the ambition of translators was to test the reborn Czech language against the greatest poet, culminated in the ambitious work of Josef Vá-

[4] Josek, Jiří, 'Checking out Shakespeare' in *Cultural Learning: Language Learning, Perspectives,* Literaria Pragensia, Prague, 1997, pp. 112-113.

clav Sládek. Sládek, a poet himself, focused on the poetic qualities of the original. However, since Czech is lengthier than English, Sládek added lines[5] and his texts average one-third longer than the originals. After the Second World War, E. A. Saudek became the most prominent Shakespeare translator. His effort was to balance the poetic and dramatic qualities of Shakespeare and maintain as many formal aspects of the original as possible. His translations mirror the original quite closely, line for line, rhyme for rhyme, pun for pun. However, his translations present Shakespeare as a classical author with a unified, slightly archaic and mannerist style. In the times of the political thaw of the 1960s, theatre became a very important medium through which artists expressed their longing for freedom and change. No wonder that such an exquisitely political writer as Shakespeare served as a good vehicle for putting such messages across. Translations of that time often accentuated the dramatic and the topical.

Since the 1980s, translators have been trying to get back to the original and balance the poetic and the theatrical in Shakespeare's plays, so as to grasp Shakespeare in all his complexity, ambiguity and richness. They tend to preserve the formal aspects of the original, and mirror the rhythm, rhymes, puns, etc. Their aim is to be modern in expression and at the same time faithful to the author, following mostly the functional approach, according to which a translation should achieve an artistic effect equal to the original, even if it has to use alternative means of expression.

The translator, who meets the requirements of his language and complies with the translation norm, is free to decide what means of expression will achieve stylistic equivalence with the original. Here lies his or her responsibility and creativity. Let us leave aside the first stage of the translation process: comprehension of the source text. Although even in profusely annotated plays of Shakespeare there are still passages that inspire to a different reading than gen-

[5] In the first half of the 20th century, trying to make up for the higher semantic density of English, the translator of Shakespeare's Sonnets Jan Vladislav chose to translate five-foot iambic by alexandrine (which has one foot more).

erally accepted[6]. The creative process of translation stems from the second and the third phase, which are the interpreting and the restylizing of the original (formulation). While in interpreting the original the translator decides which aspects have priority, which feelings, ideas, tones are to be rendered, in restylizing he or she has to rely on his or her linguistic and artistic competence. In this sense translating can be compared to other forms of creative reproduction such as acting or playing a musical instrument.

In the following pages I would like to show some examples of the problems I have had when translating Shakespeare and instances in which I had to distance myself from the original text in order to express its meaning as faithfully as possible.

Such instances occur when, for example, the situation on the stage or words and expressions lack meaning for today's audience. The key word here is *function.* The translator should always be able to see the original not as a text to translate but as a complex multilayered structure in which some aspects are more important than others. Textual meaning is only one of many, and sometimes not the most important one; to stick to it could often be misleading.

Shakespeare himself was partly a translator. His method and the translation norm of his time was adaptation. He adapted old stories for his audience and did not pay much attention to the historic accuracy of his text. That is why there are so many anachronisms in his plays. The problem is that the translation norm has changed and sometimes what was quite acceptable in Shakespeare's days seems unusual or is hardly acceptable to the present audience. Yet, it would be nonsensical to correct all Shakespeare's blunders. The unhistorical clock in *Julius Caesar* should be left intact, as it plays an important role in the plot; however, there are ways to gloss over some anachronisms by using more general expressions. In my translation into Czech, in which I had to shorten the text anyway

[6] For example, many commentators accuse William Shakespeare of mistaking 'yesterday' for 'today' in *Merry Wives of Windsor* (Romeo, Prague, 2002; V.l.12). However, 'yesterday' may be correct, which means that Fastaff could have spent the night with Mistress Quickly in the Garter Inn. His lenient behaviour in the park scene supports this suggestion.

(for metrical reasons), the conspirators do not have the unhistorical 'hats pluck'd about their ears' and their faces 'buried in their coats' but they are 'wrapped in coats and their faces are covered'.

Sometimes the text requires a physical action, which makes no sense to the present viewer. Samson's biting his thumb[7] is a contemporary gesture of contempt used by the Capulet servant to irritate the servants from the Montague household. Since this gesture is entirely lost on today's Czech audience, I felt obliged to change it. In my translation Samson, instead of biting his finger, spits in front of Capulet's servants and thus triggers a chain of reactions leading to the death of the two lovers.

Some passages were felt as neutral ('unmarked') in Shakespeare's days, as the subject matter mentioned in them was familiar to the contemporary audience, such as topical allusions, reference to ancient mythology (in which the Elizabethan audience was well read), etc. When translated literally they become highlighted by their unfamiliarity to the present viewers and thus stylistically marked and non-equivalent. However, generalizing in translation in order to make the original text more comprehensible would deprive it of its flavour and richness. What the translator can do is to replace the unknown or lesser-known expression by a familiar one from the same or similar nest of references.

For example, lesser-known references to Greek or Roman mythology may sometimes be replaced by those that are more widely known. Instead of being 'pressed' by Falstaff[8], Mrs Page 'would rather be a giantess, and lie under mount Pelion'. The translation uses a more familiar mythical allusion: 'Instead of reaching for these grapes I would rather starve to death.' What is lost in this translation is the allusion to Falstaff's girth. Therefore I felt obliged to compensate for it in another part of the text. Sometimes an English word evokes a set of associations different from its Czech equivalent. As the expression 'turtle'[9] has a different connotation

[7] *Romeo and Juliet.* Romeo, Prague, 1999, 1.1.39.

[8] *Merry Wives of Windsor.* Romeo, Prague, 2002, II.1.70.

[9] ibid. II.1.71.

in Czech than in English and the phrase 'lascivious turtles' does not work, I rephrased the sentence: 'I will find you twenty lascivious nuns ere one chaste man'. In Czech 'potatoes'[10] are not considered to be aphrodisiac and so are replaced by 'celery', which is.

Instead of having Caesar[11] love to 'hear/That unicorns may be betray'd with trees/ And bears with glasses .. .', I have substituted these already obsolete similes by different ones which seem to express the author's intention more clearly: 'birds caught in nets and rodents lured by fat' (the latter is the Czech idiom meaning 'get limed'). Instead of referring to himself ironically as 'thine Ephesian' [12], the meaning of which is quite lost on today's viewer, in my translation Host calls himself by the culturally and functionally equivalent name of Sancho Panza. Heme[13] (Horn), the hunter, is replaced by 'rytíř Smil' (knight Baud), a mythical character of a horny aristocrat immortalized by one famous Czech poet of the nineteenth century in an erotic poem. Hortensio[14] reads with Bianca from Ovid's *Heroides,* which was a well-known text. As it does not 'ring a bell' in the ears of Czech viewers, I replaced Ovid by a different Latin text everybody knows: *Gaudeamus igitur.*

Although astrology is still popular today, the general public is not well read in astrological terminology any longer. When Parolles[15] says he was born 'under Mars. . . when he was predominant' and Helen retorts that he was 'retrograde', only a few people now can follow it. Therefore I chose to change the dialogue so that Parolles is born 'sagittarius', which in Czech is synonymous with 'shooter', 'marksman'. As 'a shooter' he is 'a soldier'. And he was shot in the backside because he turned his back to the enemy and ran away. I used similar explication when Hamlet calls Polonius 'fishmonger'[16], which has an additional meaning of 'procurer' and works

[10] ibid. V.5.19.

[11] *Julius Caesar.* Romeo, Prague, 2001, II.1.204.

[12] *Merry Wives of Windsor.* Romeo, Prague, 2002, IV.5.16.

[13] ibid. IV.4.27.

[14] *The Taming of the Shrew.* Romeo, Prague, 2000, III.1.27.

[15] *All's Well that Ends Well.* Romeo, Prague, 2000, 1.1.185.

[16] *Hamlet*. Romeo, Prague, 1999, 11.2.175.

in English in both meanings. I used the Czech expression 'spravce hampejzu', similar to 'the caretaker of a cathouse', where the Czech equivalent to 'cathouse' can mean both a brothel as well as a nasty, indecent place.

Often Shakespeare uses fashionable phrases of his days that imply more than what they denote. The pragmatic approach in translation is to look for expressions that put adequate meanings across. When Clown[17] says: 'O Lord, sir!', after having announced that this expression 'serves all men', one has first to read the commentary to find out that this was 'a fashionable phrase. It evades an answer to yes-or-no questions by appearing to deprecate either reply'[18] . I had to substitute an expression which conveys the same attitude: 'We shall see'.

Sometimes, I feel, the translator should be able to read between the lines and take into account the political or ideological atmosphere of the time when the play was performed. One can assume that the playwright was aware of the Queen's censors in the theatre. A line may sound quite innocent and yet convey a provocative meaning. I believe that in these instances the translator has a right to explicate, expressing the author's intention instead of mechanically translating the words. When Parolles[19] says: 'I'll take the sacrament on't, how and which way you will', in the time of religious turmoil such a statement was quite daring. The literal translation would not convey the additional meaning and would not correspond with the shocked reaction of the characters in the play. Therefore I felt entitled to expand the line: 'I'll take the sacrament on't. To Lord or Allah, just name it'.

There are expressions in language (like idioms or puns) where direct translation is simply impossible and the translator has to look for substitutions. In Shakespeare, there are often passages where a textual ambiguity develops a whole dramatic situation, in which a pun is a common denominator of subsequent exchanges. I believe

[17] *All's Well that Ends Well.* Romeo, Prague, 2000, II.2.40.

[18] ibid. *The Riverside Shakespeare,* 1974, II.2.42.

[19] *All's Well that Ends Well.* Romeo, Prague, 2000, IV.3.131.

that in these passages the translator has to translate much larger 'translation units' than words and sentences. What need to be rendered are the dramatic and aesthetic functions of that particular passage.

Sometimes it is possible to follow the original quite closely and match puns with puns, as in the case of Samson's[20] and Gregory's idle talk of the play's main themes: love and hatred from their vulgar attitude. The sequence of words 'coals', 'colliers', 'choler', 'collar', 'draw', 'moved', etc., on which the exchange is based, is replaced in translation by a similar string of similarly equivocal expressions (líbit, políbit, štvát, naštvat, tvrdej, natvrdlej) conveying the same lexical meanings.

However, sometimes the original is so rooted in the foreign ground and in the time of the play's origin that there is no way to transplant it elsewhere in the same form. Such is, for example, the scene where Mercutio, Benvolio and Romeo meet[21]. The wordplay, full of ambiguities with obviously sexual undertones, stems from expressions like 'counterfeit' = slip (meaning the coin as well as running away); 'strain courtsy' = transgress good manners and/or suffer from a venereal infection; 'pink' referring to flower as well as perforated shoes of the current fashion, etc. Much of this is lost on English audiences now. The former Czech translations that followed the original closely produced an almost surrealistic text, which in this last purely playful and humorous scene of the play was rather inappropriate. In this scene, trying to preserve mainly the dramatic function of the original, I ventured to distance the translation from the original and write a text of the same length expressing a similar mood and retaining the rapid fencing with words.

There are also special problems connected not so much with the shifts in meanings as with the discrepancies between the two languages. The different semantic density of Czech and English sometimes forces the translator to use fewer words (translation units)

[20] *Romeo and Juliet*. Romeo, Prague, 1999, 1.1.1-57.

[21] ibid. II.4.44-90. Cf. Josek, Jifi, 'Checking out Shakespeare' in *Cultural Learning: Language Learning, Perspectives,* Literaria Pragensia, Prague, 1997. pp 114-16.

in one line in order to observe the metre. This obviously leads to losses, e.g. if there is a number of monosyllabic adjectives in one line, the translator has to choose among them. On the other hand, the need to reduce the number of words prevents the translator from mechanically translating lexical equivalents, instead, he or she translates meanings, images, ideas, dramatic situations. For example in Coriolanus's speech to the Senate there are 167 words in the original, 118 in my translation. Even if we deduct the articles (15) it is clear that some words and their meanings are left behind. Therefore it is often necessary to take the gist of the meaning and, it is hoped, follow the intention of the author.

> This double worship, Where one part does disdain with cause, the other Insult without all reason, where gentry, title, wisdom, Cannot conclude but by the yea and no Of general ignorance, - it must omit Real necessities, and give way the while To unstable slightness: purpose so barr'd, it follows, Nothing is done to purpose.[22]

My makeshift gloss of the Czech translation is as follows.

> This double government
> Where some create and the others destroy [tvoří - boří]
> Where birth, title, wisdom mean nothing
> And nothing can be decided
> Until the ignorant people allow it
> Has an effect that all that is important
> Is neglected, only the trifles are paid attention to
> And nothing makes sense.[23]

Another problem connected with the language difference is that English is more abstract than Czech. An English homonym retains its secondary meanings, which remain in the background and may partake in the utterance. At times the specific meaning of a word in Shakespeare is not clear even to his commentators. However, when translating into Czech the translator often has to be concrete and express just one meaning.

[22] *Coriolanus*. The Oxford Shakespeare, III.1.145-152.

[23] *Coriolanus*. Romeo, Prague, 2004, III.1.141-62.

In the inevitable reducing of the text and having to make it sound more definite than the original there is always a danger of simplifying it. The translator has to be aware of that and compensate for the loss of ambiguity by other means, which would enhance the poetic qualities of the original. Here the translator's creativity is put to the test. The aim should be to produce a translation which is comprehensible as well as similarly poetic and dramatic. A good example can be the translation of metaphors.

Prospero's reference to the 'actors'[24] pertains, I think, to the preceding Spirits' scene as well as, metaphorically, to the theatre as such, Shakespeare's art and the futile nature of human existence. Therefore the images used in translation have to work on various levels: as a specific reference, general assessment, as well as an individual confession. However when Prospero says: 'our little life / Is rounded with a sleep ...' a verbatim translating of this abstract phrase would sound too vague in Czech. Therefore in my translation instead of using an equivalent to 'rounded' I transfer the image it evokes: 'A moment of life / is an island in the sea of sleep'. To make the translation poetic the translator must pay attention also to the sound of his verse, alliteration, etc. For example, the melodious 'Tomorrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,/ Creeps in this petty pace from day to day . . .'[25] should have in Czech an equally orchestrated sound: 'Zítra a zítra, zítra, zítra, zítra, / tak ze dne na den jeden po druhém'.

One of the most challenging tasks is translating those passages where Shakespeare distorts the language of his characters, mostly for comic reasons. As in the case of puns, a palpable proof and test of the translation's success is the laughter of the audience. This is again a field where the translator has to be creative and draw from the stock of his or her language. One of the most illustrative cases are characters in *The Merry Wives of Windsor,* where almost everybody has an individual idiolect. Whereas it is not so complicated to distort the language of the French doctor Caius, to make an appropriate equivalent in Czech to the Welsh English of Parson Evans

[24] *The Tempest.* The Arden Shakespeare, 1994, IV.148.

[25] *Macbeth.* The Arden Shakespeare 1994, V.5.19.

is a problem. In the previous Czech translations, translators used various dialects of Moravia, Bohemia, Sudeten, etc. or invented an artificial, distorted language. In my translation the Czech is distorted by an English speaker. Such a solution would have been impossible a few years ago. Only after 'the velvet revolution' when lots of English expatriates in the Czech Republic struggle with Czech, can this kind of language work onstage, especially when some hybrid phrases have entered the colloquial register (What is the matter? = Vo co go?).

Dubbing Shakespeare plays for TV or film brings about even more problems. An 'untranslatable passage' often cannot simply be replaced by a text rendering the function of the original because one also has to take the visual side into account. The translator not only has to follow the meanings and formal aspects of the original, but also has to translate all the actions, gestures, and, last but not least, the words in Czech must fit into a mouth articulating Shakespeare's English. The rule here is *compromise.* When Samson is actually biting his thumb on the screen, in my dubbing version I had to invent a dialogue which justifies this action, has the same courteous and simultaneously childish tone and is capable of instigating the quarrel.

The brevity of English compared to Czech is a greater problem in dubbing than in translating for theatre. Obviously, concern for articulation and other obstacles that dubbing brings limit the translator a great deal and make the translation process more difficult. However, dubbing highlights some other aspects of the original which could otherwise be neglected. In particular, it shows up the rhythm of speech, which especially in the theatre is a very important component. When translating into the very mouth of an actor, one may enhance the dramatic flow, the onomatopoeia and sometimes give the translation a more natural phrasing. For this reason I found dubbing enormously helpful and in many cases I used my dubbing versions to correct my final versions for the theatre.

Translating and dubbing Shakespeare raises many problems and the translator must dare to cut into the classic text and make it fit

a particular language and a particular time. On the one hand, it is almost a blasphemous endeavour and it cannot be done without a great deal of respect for the author and a feeling of responsibility towards the audiences. On the other hand, in order to meet with the author and make him live requires a great deal of the translator's individual creative independence. Translation as a creative process is a most intimate form of give and take, which allows the translator the pleasure of discovering him/herself in someone else's work. As such, however, it has its serious limitations, which might best be expressed by Goethe's words: 'You can see only what you know'. And I would add to that: 'You can say only what you have words for'. Although I have spent many years enjoying the happy privilege of translating Shakespeare, I am well aware of the fact that my translations are only my own readings of the Bard. In the same way as one actor cannot play Hamlet all his life and different actors can render Hamlet in different ways, the translator is also only one of those who give their minds and souls to the service of the author.

William Shakespeare is no longer responsible for the plays that are daily produced (and often abused) in his name all over the world. However, there is one consolation for him. Whatever effort and creativity the translator exerts, his or her work is 'such stuff/ As dreams are made on'. The translator can be sure of only one thing: that sooner or later his or her translation will be rejected and new ones will appear, whereas Shakespeare will live for ever[26].

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[26] This is an abridged version of a text published as chapter 7 in: Bassnett, Susan, Bush, Peter: *The Translator as Writer*. London: Continuum 2006.

10

Shakespeare, the Poet of Genius in Slovak Language

Ľubomír Feldek

1.

The history of Slovak literature begins with the arrival of Constantin and Methodius to our territory (863). The Byzantine brothers brought writing, so called Glagolitic alphabet, and the first translations of the biblical texts to Old Church Slavonic. Constantin also wrote the first original Old Church Slavonic poem (*Proglas*) – it is a foundation stone not only for our literature but also for those of the other Slavonic nations.

After that, five hundred years of cultural void follows, when Slovak language and the language culture survived only through oral tradition – without any written monuments. The first written Slovak words start arising only in 14th century as so-called slovakisms in Hungarian or Czech texts or sometimes as a scribe's joke ("lusus calami") in a Latin text. Soon afterwards complete Slovak texts start to appeare – and suddenly we find this story:

In the castle of Zvolen a nobleman Valentín Balaša was born – in Hungarian Balassi Bálint (1554 – 1594), duke from Ďarmoty and Modrý kameň. He grew up on the castle Liptovský Hrádok and

spoke very good Slovak. He died in the war against Turks at Ostrihom. His relics were brought to Slovakia and he is buried in Hybe (only one of his legs is told to have stayed in the battlefield in Ostrihom). He was not only a brave soldier but also an outstanding poet – and we admire not only the content of his poems, but also the elaborated form. His favored 9-verse strophe, rhymed a-a-b-c-c-b-d-d-b, is described in the dictionary of poetics as a Balaša/Balassi stanca. No wonder that Hungarians regard him as a founder of the Hungarian poetry – and the year 2004 was declared the year of Balassi. But of course, this poet also belongs to the Slovak poetry. In the *Fanchali codex* (1603 – 1604) not only his Hungarian, but also Slovak poems are preserved.

This story may seem not to belong to our essay. But yet – isn't it charming, that a poet, arising at the very beginning of the modern age Slovak literature, is a contemporary of Shakespeare? That he writes his poems practically in the same moment Shakespeare writes his plays and sonnets?

With this little remark about him I want to endorse the common and omnipresent European poetical tradition – and now let's get to the point.

2.

The first touches of Slovak literature with the work of William Shakespeare go to the 18th century. At the beginning stands the manuscript *Hamlet, syn denemarského krále (Hamlet, Son of the King of Denmark)*. We can't describe this anonymous, undated text, written sometime in the years 1790 – 1800, as a decorous translation, for it was translated loosely and not from the original text (published as late as 1964 in the revue Slovenské divadlo).

The first complete and correct translation of *Hamlet* on the territory of Slovakia appeared in the years 1810 – 1930 and his author was an evangelical priest Michal Bosý (1780 – 1847). (Parts of this translation were also publishedin Slovenské divadlo, 1964 and 1980). It is remarkable, that a correct translation of *Hamlet* appears

in Slovakia before the Czech one. This lead we obtained, paradoxically, thanks to our backwardness. While on the Czech territory there was a sprightly theatrical life, and theaters presented non-authentic adaptations of the play taken from German, in Slovakia theatres were missing but a decision to translate *Hamlet* properly was born here.

The translator commented on his translation: "U Šekspíre ovšem, i nejmenší slovíčko, jest výstrelek u korene nejhlubšího – tvoritelského ducha: a tlumač jeho, kdež co pretlumočiť nemuže – musí se snažit, – tohož ducha vyptat, – co by on v reči jiné, napríklad slovenské, na místo to byl položil."

The language of Bosý is still just a Slovakized Czech, but it is noteworthy, that Bosý himself already calls it Slovak language.

Unfortunately, nor the translation of Michal Bosý, neither the really Slovak, prosaic translation of Pavol Dobšinský *Hamlet, kráľovčík dánsky* (1850), nor the Hviezdoslav's *Hamlet, kráľovič dánsky* (1903), rewarded his translators with the pleasure of speaking to them from a stage. Hviezdoslav's text was staged in 1931 – the translator had been dead already for ten years then.

In spite of the fact these translations were not staged and often remained just manuscripts, with hindsight we realize, that the translation of *Hamlet* to Slovak was always a cultural event and helped the Slovak language (anytime it asked the question "to be or not to be") decide in favour of the "to be".

All these adventurous peripetia of Hamlet in Slovak are described in the book of Jana Bžochová-Wild *Hamlet: dobrodružstvo textu* [Hamlet: An Adventure of a Text, 1998] – the facts above I also extracted from her book.

3.

Correct (and really staged, or really prepared for publishing in a book) Slovak translation of Shakespeare's plays didn't appear before the 20th century. It was thanks to the rapid development of the

Slovak theatre and the Slovak book culture. They were gradually translated by Ján Boor, Stanislav Blaho, Zora Jesenská, Jozef Kot and me.

But nothing is born on itself. On itself, according to Shakespeare, only a jealousy is born. Also a modern Slovak translation of Shakespeare was born and is born out of the Slovak Shakespearian tradition. But not only the Shakespearian. It is also born out of the domestic poetic tradition. Without the original tradition adaptation of any foreign poet isn't possible – if he has to speak to the heart of a Slovak reader.

I know it from my own experience as translator.

When I was translating the most famous Shakespeare's Sonnet *66* and I was looking for the solution of the second verse "As to behold desert a beggar born", I wasn't satisfied until I thought of "Nech u dvier žobrať nevidím viac česť". That "u dvier žobrať" I borrowed from "Krivda za stôl sadla, pravda u dvier žobre", a couplet that every Slovak pupil knows by heart.

A very nice example of how tradition helps to domesticate foreign poetry we find also in the Slovak translations of *Hamlet*.

Prince Hamlet comes to the fortress of Elsinore castle to check, together with his friends, if the Ghost of his father really appears there. Before that he talks with Horatio about the late king. Shakespeare likes to joke even in the most serious moment and so when Hamlet, purely conversationally says "I see my father" ("Vidím svojho otca"), his friend is terrified. "Where, my lord?" ("Kde, môj pane?") ,Horatio exclaims. Hamlet calms him: "In my mind's eye." ("V oku svojej duše."). The Midnight didn't beat yet, the Ghost appears later.

The Czech translators are free here. In Saudek's translation Hamlet answers: "V své mysli, Horacio." Urbánek translates: "V duchu." Hilský: "Jenom ve své mysli."

But when we look up in the translation of Zora Jesenská, we find the "in my mind's eye" translated literary: "V oku mojej duše." Although Jesenská certainly knew it was better to say "v oku svojej duše" she preferred to use a germanism "mojej". Why?

It is not difficult to find out. A Slovak translator has to recall here, that he's translating the motto of *Marína* by Andrej Sládkovič, one of our most famous Romantic poets – and pays tribute to Sládkovič also by preserving the exact terms.

Had Sládkovič read Shakespeare? Maybe yes – maybe no. Not long ago, when the Ex tempore publishing house published *Balads and Romances* of Mickiewicz translated by Jozef Bánsky, I noticed that the same motto is the one of Mickiewicz's poem *Romantika* and I thought that Sládkovič might have borrowed it from his Polish colleague. And also Jozef Bánsky pays a tribute, he also leaves the exact terms of the motto of *Marína*, he also tries, through Mickiewicz, remind us of Sládkovič!

4.

But domesticating needs limits, too.

If a Slovak translator, in the Guildenstern's answer-back "On Fortune's cap we are not the very button" translates "button" as "pierko", it is nice, indeed, for it allows Shakespeare to wander to the Slovak countryside, but it can't stay so forever. Had the Slovak translator always domesticated everything at any cost, he wouldn't have a chance to bring anything new to the Slovak language and environment.

William Shakespeare is probably the most relentless poet ever born - he never rests. His plays are masterpieces not only from the macro view. His genius bursts out in every line and the translator, as soon as he solves a poetic problem in one line, stands in front of another one, in a new line. Except for the lines where he doesn't have one poetic problem to solve, but two or three. Allusions, malapropisms, wordplays, alliterations... And indeed, metaphors and rhymes... And different types of prose and verse...

This gives us the answer to why there are so many translations of Shakespeare's plays. It certainly isn't for the reasons of interpretation. As for understanding the original, there's nothing easier than that. Understanding of every Shakespeare's word is facilitated by a comment. Neither is it difficult as for the richness of the language or the prosodic characteristics of the original – modern Slovak is rich enough and prosodically a well suited language, able to cope with Shakespeare's prose and blank verse.

The reason why we need new translations is somewhere else. Indeed, the spectator changes, the language of every generation of the actors is different, too. However, I believe it is Shakespeare's poetry, that demands new translators. Shakespeare searches again and again for his congenial translator, who won't violate his word order or debilitate his metaphor. And primarily – who will always be careful where a wrong translation of a word or a mistaken interpretation of a metaphor could change the meaning of a whole scene, or a whole play in an undesirable way.

Again an example from *Hamlet*:

Hamlet – in the moment, when he says "Words, words, words" - seemingly depreciates the words. But we mustn't misunderstand him. Hamlet depreciates the words in the mouth of political careerists, (to whom Polonius undoubtedly belonged), but *Hamlet* himself, just like his author, is a master of words and is aware of it.

His brilliant rejoinders are a delicacy for a spectator and for a reader, and so the translator has to make and effort to preserve their original effect.

This concerns also the rejoinder in the 2nd scene of the 2nd act, where Hamlet explains his state of mind to Guildenstern and Rosencrantz: "I am but mad north-north-west. When the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handsaw." "Bláznim, len keď duje severo-severo-západný vietor. Ale keď podúva ten južný, rozoznám jastraba od ...." From what?

Before, the editors saw here a mistake of a transcriber, and sir Thomas Hammer corrected it to "hernshaw" (a kind of heron) already in 1744. Under his influence, for the first staging and the first edition of my translation of *Hamlet* I also translated "... jastraba od volavky".

However, I wasn't satisfied with it. The religious perseverance to "heron" didn't allow me an aliteration, although Shakespeare loves the aliteration and the translators should never give it up. (On the stage we finally replaced it for "... jastraba od jazveca".)

What particularly annoyed me was that I didn't believe in the extent of Shakespeare's register of metaphors. Why to be afraid of the literary meaning "handsaw"? Only because it is a nonsense? Isn't it England, where the poetical nonsense comes from? And didn't the elements of mannerism leak in the a little bit lingering English Renaissance poetry and remarkably enriched the English Renaissance metaphor? I admitted a mistake and in the following edition of my translation I gave preference to the solution without the aliteration "...rozoznám jastraba od ručnej pílky".

5.

Or a different example. Hamlet's monologue, first act, second scene begins:

> O that this too too sullied flesh would melt,
> Thaw and resolve itself into a dew…
>
> Bodaj by sa to pevné hriešne telo
> konečne rozpustilo na rosu!

In the Folio we find the word solid – pevný – in the quarto there is the word sallied, the editors read as sullied – poškvrnený – and gave it a preference. My translation uses both options. Why?

The physical taint Hamlet is aware of has to be understood in the period context. Hamlet and Shakespeare could have known something about the original sin that sullied Adam and Eve in the Paradise, they knew something about incest (in Renaissance a marriage with one's brother's widow was held for), but they knew nothing about the relations the psychoanalysis has studied.

It wasn't until the psychoanalysts discovered in Hamlet the Oedipus complex and the feeling of guilty arising from it that he became a sullied hero. This influenced not only the Lawrence Olivier's film by Shakespeare, but also many stagings and translations. The theatre directors often bring Hamlet to the bedroom to the key dialogue with his mother, although in the original we find closet – a room, which is not specifically the bedroom of the Queen, but it could be, and if this option is used, it strengthens the psychoanalytical interpretation. However, it does not exclude the possibility of other interpretations.

Two totalitarian regimes of the 20th century, the nazism and the communism, led the artists who opposed them to the knowledge that Hamlet is their ally in this fight – and a range of "political" stagings arose. In Hamlet there is really everything the humanity came through in the twentieth century. The feeling that the home country is a prison. Political murders. Constant monitoring and watching – Polonius even gives order to spy on his own son.

But whether it is the political, psychoanalytical or any other approach, it applies that it is not absolute. And in the least we can make a wrong step – in Slovak or any other target language – if we don't apperceive and translate Shakespeare above all as a poet of genius.

Translated by Anna Lara Feldeková

Notes on Contributors

1

MARTA GIBIŃSKA is Professor em. of English literature at the Jagiellonian University Cracow. Her scholarly interests and international publications cover Shakespeare's language, interpretation, reception and appropriations in Polish culture and translation. She is author of *The Functioning of Language in Shakespeare's Plays* (Cracow 1989), *Polish Poets Read Shakespeare. Refashioning of the Tradition* (Cracow 2000), co-author of *Shakespeare: A lexicon* [*Szekspir: leksykon*] (with J. Fabiszak, M. Kapera, Cracow 2003), *Shakespeare: History and Memory* (with A. Romanowska, 2008), *Kłamliwe posłanie. Lektury sonetów Shakespeare'a* (with A. Pokojska, Cracow 2005) and many others. Some of her recent international publications include papers in *Shakespeare without Boundaries* (eds. C. Jansohn et al., Newark 2010), *(In)hospitable translations: Fidelities, Betrayals, rewritings* (eds. M. Nicolaescu et al., Bucuresti 2010), *The Shakespeare International Yearbook*, vol. 7 (2007), *Four Hundred Years of Shakespeare in Europe* (eds. A. Luis Pujante, Ton Hoenselaars, Newark 2003). She is founding member of Polish Shakespeare Association, member of Deutsche Shakespeare Gesellschaft, European Shakespeare Research Association, International Shakespeare Association.

2

MÁRTA MINIER is Lecturer in Drama at the University of South Wales (UK). She holds a PhD from the Centre for Performance Translation and Dramaturgy at the University of Hull, UK. Her PhD thesis discussed the translation of Hamlet into Hungarian culture. Her main research interests include European drama with a special emphasis on Central and Eastern Europe; translation studies; adaptation studies; dramaturgy; stage and screen biography; children's culture; Shakespeare studies with an emphasis on Shakespeare reception. She is Assistant Editor of the *Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance* and one of the associate editors of the theatre studies journal *Symbolon*.

3

PAVEL DRÁBEK is Professor of Drama and Theatre Practice at the University of Hull (UK). His interests range from early modern drama and theatre in Europe, through drama translation, music theatre to theatre theory. He has published on translations of Shakespeare *České pokusy o Shakespeara* [Czech Attempts at Shakespeare] (2012), on John Fletcher (*Fletcherian Dramatic Achievement: The*

Mature Plays of John Fletcher, 2010), on 17th-century English comedy in Germany and on theatre structuralism and semiotics. As a theatre practitioner he has been writing and translating opera librettos (predominantly collaborating with composer Ondřej Kyas), and translating and writing plays. He is Artistic Director of the Ensemble Opera Diversa, a professional music and modern opera company based in Brno, Czech Republic (www.operadiversa.cz).

4

JANA BŽOCHOVÁ-WILD is professor of Theatre Studies at the Academy of Performing Arts Bratislava, teaching English and German drama, Shakespeare, theatre criticism, translating. Her publications include monographs in Slovak language: *Malé dejiny Hamleta* [A Short Cultural History of Hamlet, 2007], *Začarovaný ostrov? Shakespearova Búrka inak* [An Enchanted Island? Shakespeare´s „The Tempest" Otherwise, 2003], *Úvod do shakespearovského divadla* [Introduction to the Shakespearean Theatre, 1999], *Hamlet: dobrodružstvo textu* [Hamlet: an Adventure of a Text, 1998]. She edited a set of essays *Recepcia Shakespeara: od čítania žien k feminizmom* [The Reception of Shakespeare: from Women´s Reading to Feminisms] for the revue Aspekt (Nr. 2, 2001) and has been publishing papers in Slovak and Czech journals and collections. As visiting professor at BISLA (Bratislava School of Liberal Arts, 2007 and 2008) she has launched the course *Political Shakespeare*. Her book translations include *Shakespeare: The Essential Handbook* (2006) and novels of Christoph Hein and Elfriede Jelinek.

5

LILLA SZALISZNYÓ is a Jedlik Ányos Scholarship holder pre-doctoral student at the Department of Classical Hungarian Literature, University of Szeged, Hungary. Her field of research is the social history of Hungarian literature and theatre in the 19th century. In 2009 and in 2010, together with her supervisor Mária Zentai, she edited and published two volumes of the diaries of Count Lajos Gyulay. Since 2010 she has been leading seminars about 19th century Hungarian literature. She is working on her doctoral dissertation about *Gábor Egressy and the professionalisation of acting in Hungary*. Also she is preparing the family correspondance of Egressy for publication.

6

ÁGNES MATUSKA is associate professor at the Institute of English and American Studies, Faculty of Arts, at the University of Szeged, Hungary. Her main field of research is English Renaissance drama, particularly issues of the changes in the logic and ontology of theatrical representation at the Early Modern. Her

publications include essays written on metadrama, Vices and Vice-successors in Tudor plays and Shakespearean tragedies, traditions of the *theatrum mundi* metaphor in Elizabethan England, as well as contemporary cinematic adaptations of Shakespeare. Her articles in English and Hungarian appeared in diverse international journals and collections of essays. In 2011 she published the monograph *The Vice-Device: Iago and Lear's Fool as Figures of Representational Crisis* (JatePress Szeged).

7

ANNA CETERA is Associate Professor of English literature at the University of Warsaw. Her publications include two monographs: *Enter Lear. The Translator's Part in Performance* (Warsaw, 2008) and *Smak morwy. U źródeł recepcji przekładów Szekspira w Polsce* [Mulberry Taste. The Beginnings of the Polish Reception of Shakespeare in Translation] (Warsaw, 2009) and editing of the collection of essays entitled *Szekspiromania. Księga dedykowana pamięci Andrzeja Żurowskiego* [Shakespeare Mania. A Book Dedicated to the Memory of Andrzej Żurowski] (Warsaw, 2013). She has published the Introduction to *Richard II* (Warsaw 2009) and papers on Shakespeare and censorship, Shakespeare and war, and semiotics of drama in academic journals. She has also written the entry on the translation of Shakespeare for performance for the upcoming *Cambridge World Shakespeare Encyclopedia*. Currently she is editing a new series of Polish translations of Shakespeare by M. Kamiński (*Richard II* (2009), *Macbeth* (2011), *Twelfth Night* (2012), *The Tempest* (2012), and *The Winter's Tale* (forthcoming 2013).

8

ANNA KOWALCZE-PAWLIK, Ph.D. candidate at the Institute of English Studies, Jagiellonian University Cracow, also affiliated with the Centre of Advanced Studies in the Humanities. She is working on her two dissertation projects, *Anatomy of Monstrosity: From Grendel to Blade* and *The Voice of Vengeance: Women and Violence in Early Modern English Drama*. Her research interests encompass medieval studies, history of philosophy, gender and early modern drama, as well as translation theory and practice.

9

JIŘÍ JOSEK, until 2012 associate professor at the Institute of Translatology at the Charles University Prague, is translator, publisher, director. In his own publishing house Romeo he has been publishing his translations of Shakespeare in billingual English-Czech editions (25 plays by now). He translated many plays

of English and American playwrights (F. Beaumont and J. Fletcher, J. Ford, A. Ayckburn, P. Shaffer, A. Kopit, R. Bolt, R. Nash, B. Friel, S. Maugham, S. Stephens, N. Simon, E. Albee, W. Saroyan), poetry (A. Ginsberg, R. Browning, R. Ferlinghetti, P. McCartney), novels (W. Saroyan, J. Kerouac, E. L. Doctorow, Ch. and M. Lamb, O. Wilde), musicals (*Oliver! Oliver!; The Witches of Eastwick; West Side Story; Kiss Me, Kate; Cabaret; Hair; Spring´s Awakening*; *Funny Girl*; *Some Like It Hot; Mary Poppins)* as well as subtitles and dubbing texts for the films. He directed some of his translations in Czech theatres: *Antonius a Kleopatra* (2009), *The Merry Wifes of Windsor* (2006), *Much Ado about Nothing* (2004), *Hamlet* (1999).

10

ĽUBOMÍR FELDEK is writer, poet, translator, (screen-)playwright, dramaturg, editor. Since the 1990s he has been translating Shakespeare´s plays and poems into Slovak (18 plays by now, *Sonnets*, *Phoenix and Turtle*, *Lover´s Complaint*). His other translations include Russian and Czech literature (A. Gribojedov, A. Blok, D. Bednyj, V. Majakovskij, A. S. Puškin, B. Okudžava, J. Jevtušenko, V. Vysockij, S. Maršak, S. Jesenin, J. Brdečka, A. and V. Mrštík, K. and J. Čapek, V. Nezval etc) and in cooperation with other translators verse adaptations of R. Thakur, Sofokles, H. Heine, F. Schiller, Lautréamont, G. Appolinaire, B. Brecht, E. Rostand, I. Bergman, K. I. Gałczyński, Stefan Zweig, C. Morgenstern, J. W. Goethe, song adaptations in musicals (*West Side Story, My Fair, Lady, Kiss Me Kate, Greek Zorba, Nunns*) and operettas (*La Vie parisienne, Der Zigeunerprimás [Sari]*) and many others.

Zhrnutie zostavovateľky

Zbierku s témou a podtitulom *Shakespeare v Strednej Európe* sme nazvali citátom z Macbetha: „*In double trust*“. Pretože, ako ukazujú aj jednotlivé príspevky o kultúrach krajín Visegrádskej štvorky, v tomto geopolitickom regióne sme k Shakespearovi vždy pristupovali s akousi „dvojitou dôverou“: ako k umeleckej autorite a hodnote, ktorá je nesporná a univerzálna, a ktorá teda poskytne v každej situácii spoľahlivú oporu, a zároveň ako k médiu, ktoré nám dovolí prekročiť hranice vlastných obmedzení a mnohých vlastných nedostatkov.

Zatiaľčo v mnohých iných krajinách, napríklad v teritóriách bývalého britského commonwealthu, sa (importovaná) prítomnosť Shakespeara pociťovala často ako súčasť masívneho kultúrneho kolonializmu, v Strednej Európe zohrával Shakespeare – „prirodzene“ recipovaný – obrovskú vzdelávaciu, kultúrotvornú úlohu: ako „univerzálny“ klasik slúžil národným cieľom a bol dôležitou súčasťou národnobuditeľských a antitotalitárnych diskurzov. V krajinách a kultúrach V4 často suploval neexistujúcu alebo utláčanú národnú literatúru – na jeho jazyku sa učili spisovatelia, na hrách rástli herci a režiséri, kultivoval sa vkus publika, cibrili perá kritiky, rozširovali sa horizonty myslenia. V historickej perspektíve sa zreteľne črtajú predovšetkým dve konštanty: jednak malo Shakespearovo dramatické dielo v krajinách strednej Európy iniciačný význam pre zrod národnej literatúry a divadelnej kultúry (osvietenské, obrodenecké a romantické hnutia 18. a 19. storočia), jednak slúžilo ako politické médium, a to nielen v autokratických režimoch.

Kniha, zachytávajúca oblúk od 18. až do začiatku 21. storočia, ukazuje, ako sa cez rozličné „prepisovania“ a re-produkcie Shakespeara v našich krajinách tvoril jeho obraz, ako cez jeho prisvojovanie fungovala mocenská a vybavovala sa politická agenda, a ako sa cez obrazy, ktoré navrstvil v našich kultúrach, môžeme kriticky vzťahovať aj k vlastnej minulosti či prítomnosti. Oproti sumarizujúcej knihe českého shakespearistu Zdeňka Stříbrného *Shakespeare and Eastern Europe* (Oxford, 2000), ktorá pomyselne uzatvorila jedno

veľké obdobie východoeurópskych dejín do pádu železnej opony, sa príspevky v tejto zbierke zväčša usilujú opustiť pohľad cez reprezentačný vzorec, keď Shakespeare slúžil ako mriežka, cez ktorú sa poukazovalo na súčasnosť, a smerujú väčšmi k jeho kontextualizácii v prijímajúcich kultúrach, ako aj k dekonštrukcii mýtov a vžitých stereotypov.

Prvá sekcia – Horizonty – predstavuje apropriáciu Shakespeara v jednotlivých kultúrach V4 na väčšom časovom úseku. Nevyhnutnou podmienkou recepcie boli preklady do národných jazykov: autorky a autor reflektujú poľské, maďarské, české a slovenské prekladateľské aktivity a zasadzujú ich do širších kultúrnych kontextov.

Marta Gibińska (Jagiellonská univerzita Krakov) píše o prekladoch a inscenovaní Shakespeara v situácii Poľska 19. storočia rozdeleného medzi tri mocnosti – Rusko, Prusko a Rakúsko. Aj v podmienkach politického útlaku tu vo všetkých troch častiach krajiny fungovalo divadlo v poľskom jazyku. A práve divadlo pomáhalo udržiavať národnú identitu a kultúrnu kontinuitu. Domáci spisovatelia, najmä romantici Mickiewicz a Słowacki, neboli zo strany oficiálnych úradov vždy vítaní a vnímali sa, najmä v mestách, ako politické ohrozenie statu quo. Preto sa na na dlhé roky zdrojom budovania a uchovávania poľskej identity stal anglický autor Shakespeare: pre spisovateľov, divadelníkov, hercov, publikum.

Márta Minier (Univerzita South Wales, Veľká Británia) ukazuje, ako sa z ranej maďarskej recepcie Shakespeara, ktorú zabezpečovali najrozličnejší kultúrni mediátori, vyvinula v 19. storočí recepcia inštitucionálna. Aj v maďarskej kultúre sa cez Shakespeara budovala národná identita: najskôr išlo o adaptácie (napr. Kazinczyho *Hamlet*, hra, známa aj u nás z anonymného slovenského prekladu), ktoré prezentovali Shakespeara „v maďarskom rúchu"; neskôr v ére reformnej, keď preklady iniciovala a financovala národná Akadémia, sa s jeho menom spája známy literárny „romantický triumvirát": Vörösmarty – Petőfi – Arany. Prvé súborné vydanie, ktoré pod egidou Kisfaludyovej spoločnosti zo súkromných zdrojov realizoval Maďarský shakespearovský výbor, vyšlo v rokoch 1864 – 1878 v 18 zväzkoch. Jeho hybnou silou bol János Arany (s ktorého prekladmi pracoval neskôr

aj náš Hviezdoslav). Autorka reflektuje aj prekladateľské a vydavateľské zásady, ktorými sa riadil tento veľkolepý projekt.

Pavel Drábek (Univerzita Hull, Veľká Británia) sa zaoberá dejinami českého prekladania tragédie *Macbeth*. V kontroverznom manželskom páre Macbethovcov sa ponúkali veľké herecké príležitosti, a záver hry – potrestanie tyrana a nastolenie spravodlivosti súzvučal s politickou agendou viacerých dôb, z ktorých autor cituje najmä uvedenia z roku 1939, resp. 1978. *Macbeth* v každej zo siedmich českých prekladateľských generácií figuruje ako paradigmatická hra. Autor komentuje jednotlivé prístupy a kontexty. Od anonymnej ľudovej knihy o „wodci šottského wogska" (1777), cez osvieteneckého *Macbetha* K. H. Tháma (1786) sa dostáva k romantickému prekladu J. J. Kolára (1839) a prvému plagiátorskému sporu s J. Malým (1885). Prelomovo pôsobil prekladateľ J. V. Sládek (1896), po ktorom nasledovali ďalší: O. Fischer (1916), B. Štěpánek a neskôr V. Renč. Podobnosti so slovenským kontextom nachádzame vo viacmenej monopolistickom pôsobení E. A. Saudka (od konca 1930-tych rokov do 1963), vo vytesňovaní O. F. Bablera a F. Nevrlu, ako aj v prekladaní priamo pre divadlá (J. Hálková; S. Jirsa). Zatiaľ posledné pretlmočenia sú z pera M. Lukeša (1979), M. Hilského (1998) a J. Joska (2004). Autor naznačuje, že témy krutosti a bezohľadných ambícií, ktoré sa vinú českou recepciou *Macbetha* už od 18. storočia, rezonovali aj v cynickej postmodernej divadelnej verzii v Nitre (1999, réžia V. Morávek).

Zostavovateľka zbierky Jana Bžochová-Wild (VŠMU Bratislava) reflektuje slovenské preklady Shakespeara od začiatku 20. storočia z netradičného pohľadu: z hľadiska ich knižných vydaní, ktoré skúma ako súčasť dobových kultúrnych a spoločenských polí. Analýza ich vývoja ukazuje premeny vzťahov medzi literatúrou a divadlom, ale aj manipulácie s obrazom Shakespeara v slovenskej kultúre, na ktorých sa podieľali a podieľajú kultúrne inštitúcie, ale – prekvapivo – do veľkej miery aj jednotlivci. Štúdia odhaľuje prax a tendencie knižných vydaní: aké funkcie v spoločnosti spĺňajú, aké predstavy o hodnotách sprostredkúvajú a tvoria, nakoľko podporujú alebo naopak potláčajú „cudzosť", ako lokalizujú či interpolujú ich literárnosť, resp. divadelnosť, na aké publikum a s akými

zámermi sa obracajú, resp. čo je v nich neprítomné a aké kultúrne deficity táto neprítomnosť indikuje. Všeobecne povedané: akú konštrukciu Shakespeara v slovenskej kultúre generujú.

Druhá sekcia zbierky – Fokusy – prezentuje recepciu Shakespeara v krajinách Strednej Európy v detailných výsekoch. Viacmenej chronologicky radené štúdie reflektujú apropriáciu Shakespeara do začiatku 21. storočia, a to z hľadiska herectva, kritiky, réžie a publika, ako aj literárnych a prekladateľských prepisov.

Lilla Szalisznyó (Univerzita Szeged) sa pristavuje pri hercovi Gáborovi Egressym a jeho *Knihe o herectve* (1866), ktorá sa z veľkej časti opierala o jeho skúsenosti so shakespearovskými postavami. Súťaž na manuál pre hercov vypísali krátko po vzniku Peštianskeho, neskoršieho národného divadla (1837), ale zostavil ho až neskôr Egressy v súvislosti s novozaloženou Hereckou školou. Shakespearove hry mu slúžili ako základ pre stvárňovanie emócií a stavov vedomia. Egressy analyzoval komplexnú reč tela herca v interpretácii konkrétnych rol. Autorka štúdie jeho komentáre konfrontuje s dobovými recenziami (napr. S. Petöfiho) a odhaľuje, ako dôkladne Egressy pri písaní knihy vychádzal zo svojich vlastných starších i súčasných hereckých stvárnení – ktoré kritika nie vždy prijímala bez výhrad. Egressyho príručkou sa v maďarskom kontexte začala nová kapitola recepcie Shakespeara – a to z hľadiska hereckej interpretácie postáv.

Ágnes Matuska (Univerzita Szeged) sa zaoberá renesančnou metaforou *divadla sveta*, jej rozličnými tradíciami a spôsobom, akým tieto tradície ovplyvňujú kritické interpretácie shakespearovskej drámy a divadla. Komentuje rozličných kritikov, ktorí korene tohto trópu hľadajú v stredovekom, resp. antickom divadle. Poukazuje na jeho súvislosť so vznikom novovekého divadla, ktoré už oddelilo hercov a publikum, a tým sa aj vydelilo od rituálu. Ďalej sleduje, akým spôsobom sa topos *divadla sveta* vyskytuje v maďarských prekladoch Shakespeara, resp. v maďarskej literatúre, divadle a kritike.

Anna Cetera (Univerzita Varšava) analyzuje pôsobenie cenzúry na poľské divadlo a publikum. Odrazila sa od kritického citátu L. Kolakowského o tom, že sa zdá, akoby celá svetová dráma od antiky cez Shakespeara až po divadlo absurdity predstavovala zbierku odkazov na socialistické Poľsko (1968). V čase politického útlaku malo totiž divadlo – a to platí rovnako aj pre ostatné kultúry V4 – v klasickej dráme efektívnu zbraň proti cenzúre, pretože cez cudzie texty mohlo vyslovovať nepohodlné názory. Tým vlastne paradoxne cenzúra podnietila v publiku zvyk pozorne počúvať, čítať medzi riadkami a interpretovať pauzy. Shakespearovské divadlo v časoch cenzúry bolo intelektuálne aj eticky presvedčivé. Autorka podrobuje kritickej analýze dogmatické tvrdenia vplyvného kritika Jana Kotta o Shakespearovi ako našom súčasníkovi: jeho predstavu „veľkého mechanizmu“ odhaľuje ako intelektuálne alibi pre politickú nečinnosť, pričom cituje a komentuje aj viacerých jeho oponentov. Záverečná časť štúdie pojednáva o subverzívnych shakespearovských inscenáciách jedného z najväčších poľských režisérov Konrada Swinarského a komentuje dve uvedenia po roku 2000.

Anna Kowalcze-Pawlik (Jagiellonská univerzita Krakov) upozorňuje na zvyčajné stereotypné chápanie Ofélie ako pasívnej nežnej ženy a zároveň na impulzy západných feministických teórií, ktoré túto interpretáciu radikálne prelomili. Kladie otázku, nakoľko tieto podnety ovplyvnili shakespearovský diskurz iných krajín, kde má feministické myslenie slabšie zázemie. Autorka rekapituluje tradičné poľské čítanie Ofélie (Bogusławski, Słowacki, Wyspiański) a upozorňuje na dva súčasné prepisy, ktoré artikulujú témy doteraz v Poľsku obchádzané. Román *Biela Ofélia* (2011) Julie Fiedorczuk, ako aj performancia *Ikonografia šialenstva* (2012) v réžii Zorky Wollny prinášajú Oféliu, ktorá prestáva fungovať ako objekt a začína sama „byť“. Wollny vo svojom projekte na scénu uviedla 11 poľských herečiek, ktoré predtým hrali Oféliu, a tu znovu predviedli svoj výstup šialenstva. V tomto kontexte sa ich prezentácie javili ako realizácia pamäti vlastného tela: ich Ofélie tu už nie sú posadnuté Hamletom; ich individualita, ich telo a sexualita už nie sú kontrolované zvonku, ale len zvnútra nimi samými – a to znamená oslobodenie a vlastný hlas, vskutku *prima voce*.

Jiří Josek (Karlova univerzita Praha), prekladateľ Shakespeara do češtiny, ponúka detailný vhľad do svojej práce. K Shakespea-

rovmu textu treba pristupovať ako k mnohovrstevnému organizmu. Preklady do iných jazykov majú výhodu v tom, že texty môžu obohacovať novými významami. Prekladateľova práca sa podobá práci režiséra: musí Shakespeara „sfunkčniť", s neustálym vedomím hranice medzi kreatívnou reprodukciou originálu a jeho prerozprávaním či parafrázovaním, a zároveň dodržať rovnováhu medzi poetickými a divadelnými kvalitami. Autor pripomína niektoré lingvistické rozdiely medzi češtinou a angličtinou (prízvuk, slabičnosť, sémantická hustota, abstraktnosť). Prekladateľ pri interpretácii originálu musí dbať na jeho priority, pričom nie vždy je najdôležitejší textový význam. Preto sa preklad niekedy lepšie priblíži dnešnému publiku tým, že sa vzdiali od originálu. Autor uvádza viacero príkladov z vlastnej praxe (*Julius Caesar, Romeo a Júlia, Koniec všetko napraví, Veselé panie windsorské, Macbeth*), ako aj z prekladania pre filmový dabing.

Ľubomír Feldek (Bratislava), prekladateľ Shakespeara do slovenčiny, vo svojej 5-dielnej eseji pripomína viacero súvislostí. Napríklad, že na úsvite novovekej slovenskej aj maďarskej literatúry stojí šľachtic Valentín Balaša (po maďarsky Balassi Bálint, 1554 – 1594), autor slovenských a maďarských básní – a Shakespearov súčasník. Ďalej uvádza príklady udomácňovania Shakespeara, keď prekladatelia citujú alebo parafrázujú slovenských básnikov, napr. Sládkoviča – a spojivá nachádza aj s poľskými romantikmi, napr. Mickiewiczom. Iné príklady demonštrujú prácu prekladateľa so Shakespearovým metaforickým registrom a upozorňujú na možnosti politických a psychoanalytických interpretácií postáv a textu. Autor však pripomína, že nijaký z prístupov netreba absolutizovať a že najlepšie je Shakespeara vždy vnímať a prekladať predovšetkým ako geniálneho básnika.

Slovenskému publiku sa v príspevkoch kolegýň a kolegov zo susedných krajín odhalia mnohé frapantné analógie s našou recepciou, ale aj nemenej intenzívne odlišnosti. Príspevky však hlavne odkrývajú aj spoločné kontexty a celý rad vzájomných súvislostí, takže si aj takto – cez anglického klasika – plasticky a živo pripomíname, sprítomňujeme a uvedomujeme kultúrnu súnáležitosť krajín regiónu V4.

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„In double trust". Shakespeare in Central Europe.
Jana Bžochová-Wild (zostavovateľka)

Autori štúdií
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