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Shakespeare on Russian Film and Television: The National and Global*

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The paper covers a special role of Shakespeare as a constant of Russian culture on national screen and television. The author examines a number of phenomena of contemporary Russian screen culture that somehow adapt and/or reference W. Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and "Othello" in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The author analyzes black comedy "Playing the Victim" (dir. K. S. Serebrennikov) with some obvious and cryptic allusions to "Hamlet", a modern adaptation of the great Shakespearean tragedy "Hamlet 21st Century" (dir. Yu. V. Kara), two episodes of children's comedy TV show "Yeralash" which allude to "Othello", episode 10 "Hamlet, Prince of Dacha" in comedy TV series "33 Square Meters" as well as an example of modern political satire — an episode of Russian TV show "Puppets" that depicts Boris Yeltsin in the 'situation' of Hamlet.

The author considers some cultural tendencies and the correlation between the national and global in the context of the reception of Shakespeare and his works on contemporary Russian film and television. In his opinion, the national is represented more and more often only on the verbal level, and the global is reflected usually on the visual level. The examples presented give yet more proof that Shakespeare's legacy is still a 'mirror' of Russian culture where we can see both problems it faces during unstable periods of changes and its specific traditions.

Keywords: W. Shakespeare, Shakespeare in Russia, "Hamlet", "Othello", Russian Shakespeare, Shakespearisation, neo-Shakespearisation, Russian film, Russian television, Russian cinematography.

The situation in contemporary Russian cinematography and particularly on television may seem horrible, especially in the eyes of those who remember the Soviet times. It is a commonplace opinion that the general cultural level of Russian population (mainly of new generations) is constantly dropping and phenomena of screen culture both reflect the decay of national culture and promote its decadence. It is obvious that the influence of Western cinema and eminently of Hollywood on Russian culture has been significant during the last 30 years. It is quite easy to find statements in interviews of Russian film-makers, TV producers, critics and other experts that nowadays Western clichés prevail on the national screen and television¹. Nevertheless, still many of them believe that the situation can be changed and that Russian audiovisual art can have its own way of development based on its specific traits and traditions.

In point of fact, not everything is so unequivocal on Russian film and television. The age of drastic sociocultural changes during unstable and depressed periods of history presumes

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the occurrence of a multitude of differently directed cultural tendencies. In this situation, art is inclined toward synthesis of various traditions, endless search and experiments, often of a chaotic character. Consequently, it is no wonder that, for instance, researchers find some evidence of the overcoming of postmodernism and relativism and return to the national traditions, in particular of Christian realism, in a number of works by modern Russian film-makers (see, for example: Breytman, 2004; Gasheva, 2010, 2011).

While reading interviews of people who are somehow related to Russian film and television, an impression arises that many of them understand that by merely copying Western cinematographic patterns the creators of such culture products will not rival Sergei Eisenstein, Andrei Tarkovsky or Grigori Kozintsev. Evidently, a film or TV show may kindle a profound interest and evoke a wide response not only of a bunch of critics, but also of mainstream audience in many corners of the world only if it is original and path-breaking.

Hereafter, I will examine this issue in the context of the reception of Shakespeare and his oeuvre on contemporary Russian screen and television.

On June 8, 2006 Kirill Serebrennikov presented his filmed version of a play by Oleg and Vladimir Presniakovs titled *Playing the Victim* («Изображая жертву»; “Izobrazhaia zhertvu”). In 2003 he staged it at the Chekhov Moscow Art Theater, and a few years later he decided to adapt it for screen.

The film shows a young man named Valya (Yuri Chursin) working in the militia (police) as a dummy who represents ‘crime victims’ during the video shooting of investigative experiments. He lives with his mother (Marina Golub) and it is clear that something has clouded their relationship. In his sleep or being delirious he sees the vision of his late father dressed in uniform of a naval officer. The blood brother of his father, uncle Petr (Fyodor Dobronravov) is definitely attracted to the protagonist’s mother. Valya has a girlfriend, Olga (Elena Morozova), who is dreaming of getting married to him. His uncle is trying to establish good relations with him, but in vain. On the contrary, he faces sharp and offensive comments addressed to him by Valya. In one of the dream sequences his deceased father tells him allusively that he has died unnaturally and that the uncle is implicated. In the end the protagonist feeds his mother, uncle and his fiancée with fugu, a Japanese dish that can be lethally poisonous if it has been cooked improperly. In such an extravagant way Valya launches his mother, uncle and girlfriend into eternity. Finally, he frankly tells his former colleagues about the homicide as a suspected person. His act looks like a ‘Russian roulette’ with a Japanese taste.

Here one can find a real-life situation that resembles Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*: Valya (Hamlet) is in complex relations with his mother and uncle (Gertrude and Claudius). His attitude to Olya (Ophelia) is also very complicated: she is going into hysterics all the time, presumably because he does not want to marry her. On top of that, the Ghost of his father is constantly appearing to him in his sleep.

In reviews of the film, professional critics and ordinary viewers gave the following characteristics to Valya: imitator, simulacrum, “a superfluous hero of our time” (Malov-kino, 2012; hereinafter all translations from Russian are mine. — B. G.), “very ape — fugitive and versatile, as if made of gutta-percha” (Khlebnikova, 2006), “another Russian Hamlet of Mytishchinsky District, idiot, deranged”², “too disgusting”³, etc. Indeed, Valya-Hamlet can intimidate with his immense indifference, listlessness and lukewarmness.

Valya symbolizes the young Russian generation, whose childhood was during the watershed decades of the 1980s and 1990s. This post-Soviet anti-Hamlet is infantile, soulless, and cynical. Apparently, he does not understand the point of his life. It seems that his fear of his

father is much stronger than his love for him. The director raises most burning problems of contemporary young people: a low level of morality, cruelty, unbelief, estrangement, devil-may-careness, etc. Here is no place for a thoughtful and suffering Hamlet (a philosopher, scholar, humanist). On the other hand, a number of the worst traits which have ever been attributed to the Prince of Denmark, are quite appropriate here. These bad features may increase the effect on the viewers who are familiar with the centuries-long tradition of the interpretation of this iconic character in the world culture (misogyny, atrocity, cynicism, etc.). The absurdity of the entity is interwoven in the classical form. This intensifies the awareness of the tragicalness of contemporary human life.

In the climactic scene of the film, there is a monologue of the Captain (Vitali Khayev). His speech is full of strong and violent language. It seems that he cannot suppress the anger, indignation and horror at the absurdity of the existence people like Valya lead. Although maybe “Shakespearean allusions here are rather a postmodern mockery than a meaningful paraphrase” (Koretskiy, 2007), I assume that it is not accidental that the story of Russian anti-Hamlet of the early 21st century is put into the classic plotline. This enhances the feeling of the disastrousness of human life in the context of contemporary Russia.

Interestingly, Andrey Plakhov has compared this film directed by Kirill Serebrennikov with Aki Kaurismäki’s comedy drama *Hamlet Goes Business* (1987) in which the director converts “Denmark into Finland, having transformed the Prince of Finland into contemporary young man ‘with heart as hot as refrigerator’”⁴. In 1990 the Finnish director filmed *The Match Factory Girl*. The denouement of this motion picture coincides with *Playing the Victim* either. Critics also have compared Valya with Ivan from Karen Shakhnazarov’s *Courier*, Pechorin from Mikhail Lermontov’s *A Hero of Our Time*, and even with the Decembrists and Soviet Seventiers⁵.

Both professional film critics and common people have voiced different opinions about the film. The rating scale varies from complete admiration to absolute rejection. Nonetheless, *Playing the Victim* received a number of film festival awards (the Grand Prix of the Open Russian Film Festival “Kinotavr”, 2006; the Grand Prix of the Tel Aviv International Film Festival, 2006; the Grand Prix of the 1st Rome Film Festival, 2006; the Audience Award “Silver Gryphon” at the 14th St. Petersburg International Film Festival “The Festival of Festivals”, 2006; etc.).

In my opinion, in this film the national and global are intricately intermixed. There are quite a lot of global trends shown in the film. The problems the director states seem to be not only Russian. Probably because of this he adds the elements of some other cultures (e.g., Japanese).

In 2010 a four-part film *Hamlet 21st Century* («Гамлет XXI век»; “Gamlet XXI vek”) based on the W. Shakespeare’s tragedy came out (tentative title — *Hamlet: The History Repeats*). The director and script writer — Yuri Kara, camera man — Vadim Semenykh, art directors — Yuri Ustinov, Aleksandra Andreeva. The cast: Hamlet — Gela Meskhi, Claudius — Dmitry Dyuzhev, Gertrude — Eugenia Kryukova, Laertes — Danila Kozlovsky, Ophelia — Julia Kara, Polonius — Andrey Fomin, Horatio — Dmitry Beroev, Rosencrantz — Aleksandr Berdnikov, Guildenstern — Ilya Obolonkov, Osric — Viktor Sukhorukov, Ghost — Igor Lagutin, Gravedigger — Armen Dzhigarkhanyan; and others.

The slogan of the film — “Shakespeare’s mystical Gothicism is waking”. The director placed his bets on young actors, as, in his opinion, “the question *To be or not to be* is eternal, every new generation faces it. But one should pose this question much earlier than the heroes of Kenneth Branagh, Laurence Olivier or Innokentiy Smoktunovsky did — one should

begin to think over this from the tender nail” (Russkie novosti Kann ... , 2009). In one of the interviews, Yuri Kara stated that he was aspiring to show “a tragedy of contemporary educated person who is bent on murder. In Shakespeare’s times blood vengeance was justifiable, but whether a civilized person should go down so low as to become a murderer — that is the question” (Dmitrii Diuzhev ... , 2009).

Several hundred actors were trying out for the part of Hamlet, including Aleksey Se-rebryakov, Dmitry Dyuzhev, Maxim Matveev, and Konstantin Kryukov. There were even negotiations with a British actor, Jude Law, who was offered the part of Claudius, but he refused the proposal as he had already been holding rehearsals of *Hamlet* on the stage of London’s Donmar West End. The director decided in favour of a 23-year-old graduate of the Studio School at the Moscow Art Theatre (the class of Konstantin Raikin), Gela Meskhi. This was the actor’s debut on screen.

The characters of the movie dressed in the costumes of contemporary Gothic subculture with the specific make-up (bleached-out faces, mascaraed eyes, etc.) indulged in routine amusements of contemporary young people: dances of semi-naked crowds in nightclubs to loud music (Deep Purple, Tokyo), endless fireworks, sport car races, drugs, etc.

On the whole, the movie’s script is based on the fragments of classical Russian translations of *Hamlet* by Mikhail Lozinsky, Andrey Kroneberg, Boris Pasternak, Pyotr Gnedich, and Anna Radlova. However, there are some contemporary topical references. For instance: “That very playboy of Courchevel” — an allusion to the so-called Courchevel scandal; “They’ll do advertising for him in tabloids free of charge”; “One should control his image in order to make ways for promotion”; “I should not go down to the evil medieval rules of vengeance”; “Look, cold-hearted pope, my sister will fly to heaven like an angel, and you will fry in hell”; “You have been too much engaged in your races, girls, rock music and any other fuss”; etc.

From my point of view, such an approach of the director added a larger degree of ‘clip structure’ into the film. In the reviews one can find an opinion that the contrast between Shakespeare’s language and visual background attracts and makes the viewers “delve into the plot and picture on the screen” (Savchenko, 2011). Here is a tragedy of modern age: the screen picture is more important than the meaning of actors’ cues and lines.

Yuri Kara mostly did not leave any secrets behind for his audience. For example, it is evident that Claudius tells Osric to dispose of Ophelia, because he is afraid that Polonius’s mad daughter can blunder something out, but the main reason is that Ophelia is probably pregnant, and the villain does not want to have another possible heir to the throne. The climax is also indicative: Hamlet and Laertes compete in a car race again. Claudius orders to damage the transmission of Hamlet’s car, but the Prince manages not only to survive, but also to gain a victory. Furious Laertes flies at Hamlet and they duel with swords, Hamlet kills Laertes (I note in parentheses that the scene of their mutual forgiveness is missing). Hamlet sees that it looks as if Gertrude has fallen asleep in the armchair, he cries over his mother; Claudius comes closer and stabs Hamlet with a dagger. The King scores his triumph, the crowd greets him, but Hamlet summons the energy to stab the murderer back. The evening comes; the Ghost of Hamlet’s father appears, and Hamlet at his last gasp tells the Ghost that he did not want to, but he had to descend to the level of murderers, but now his father is avenged. And the Ghost replies: “I just wanted you to rise above the people’s vanity and to understand that your fate was to rule the servants’ destinies and to be responsible for all the events that took place in the world”. Hamlet: “It is all over, my father. God be with you! Farewell! I see the rest is silence”. The Ghost: “Our kingdom has fallen”. Osric-Sukhorukov appears for several seconds. Apparently, he will succeed.

Some reviewers accuse Yuri Kara of stylistic plagiarism, “for the conception of screen adaptation of Shakespeare in Gothic entourage has already been used by director Julie Taymor” (Kazak, 2011). On the whole, the film follows the pattern of modernized adaptations of Shakespeare’s plays, where the background is shifted to our times [e.g., well-known *Romeo + Juliet* directed by Baz Luhrmann with Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes in the leading roles (1996); TV film *Othello* by Geoffrey Sax with Eamonn Walker (2001), adaptations of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Macbeth*, *Much Ado About Nothing* on BBC (2005), etc. (see, for instance: *The Cambridge Companion ...*, 2007; Lukov, 2009; Burnett, 2012)].

In one of the interviews, the director frankly confessed that he “had decided to modernize the text in order that it was interesting and comprehensible for young people” (Levit, 2011). Nevertheless, the film did not draw a wide public response. I see two possible reasons for that:

1. If Hamlet is a significant constant positioned in the center of the viewers’ cultural thesaurus, then such people probably cannot find a degree of profundity of the protagonist that could be significantly interesting for them. This interpretation of the image of Hamlet of the first decade of the third millennium is comparatively pale and poor in the comparison with the classical versions.

2. People who have the character of Hamlet at the periphery of their thesauri or who come to know this iconic hero in this interpretation for the first time ever, do not find anything that could set this film apart from thousands of other motion pictures with races, explosions and other stunts. The verbal content is not interesting for them and they do not pay much attention to it.

I believe that even the gorgeous Crimean sights could not help the director and the cast to add a larger degree of Hamletism into the film. Yuri Kara’s version of *Hamlet* can be ranged among numerous kitschy adaptations of classical literary works addressed to mass audience. It is difficult to rank a great part of this production among the masterpieces of the world cinema. However, these films fulfill an important function: they preserve the eternal images (iconic characters) in the cultural thesauri (at least, on their peripheries) of representatives of different generations, social classes, nations, etc.

Hamlet in Yuri Kara’s version of *Hamlet* speaks Russian, but I do not think he *is* Russian. It seems to me that this Romantic Gothic guy may live in any corner of the world.

Now let’s have a look at the situation on contemporary Russian television. In order to show the changes that have taken place since the fall of the USSR, I will compare two episodes of children’s comedy TV show *Yeralash* with evident allusions to Shakespeare’s *Othello: The Venetian Moor from Grade 6A* («Венецианский мавр из 6 “А”»; “Venetsianskii mavr iz 6 ‘A’”; 1987) and *Othello.ru* («Отелло.ru», 2009).

The plotlines of these two examples of comic rendition of the content of this Shakespeare’s tragedy are quite similar: a school amateur theater or drama group stages a scene from *Othello*. The actor who plays Othello comes to the stage and delivers the well-known line “Have you pray’d to-night, Desdemona?” (V, 2). But there is no response as the actress who plays Desdemona is not on the stage at all. So, the director asks the actor to play for time. Finally, an older male teenager appears dressed in frock. He asks what he should be doing on stage. It turns out that his sister has fallen ill and asked him to replace her in the performance. The absurdity and comicality of the situation are not only in the fact that ‘Desdemona’ is bigger and stronger than ‘Othello’, but also that the brother does not know the part supposed to be played by his sister at all. ‘Othello’, ‘Desdemona’ and the director end up in a dogpile.

Nevertheless, some distinct differences can be found. The ways the kids behave and their attitudes to the production and Shakespeare are not similar at all.

If in the 1987 episode the audience is enthusiastic then in the 2009 remake the children are booing and showing negative attitude (“Shakespeare is such a drag”). Only the director tries to inspire the actor (“Shakespeare is state-of-the-art. Show more temper! You are... you are black”).

The ‘Othello of the 2000s’ uses more colloquial words combining them with a kind of classical phrases in ‘Shakespeare’s style’ (“Maybe you haven’t heard the question or you are listening to a player?”; “My spouse, Desdemona, where are you? I’d like to choke you off now”; “O Desdemona, where are you messing around?”, “Hey, attendants! Find Desdemona! Or call her on the mobile phone! Otherwise I don’t know what to say”; “You fool, it is me who must choke you!”).

If in the Soviet version the actor fills in time with ‘classical’ impromptu trying to find ‘Desdemona’, then in the latest one the actor decides to spit a rap (“Hey you, listen to my story. My wife, blonde Desdemona lost her handkerchief and Iago, a green-eyed creep, tattled that she had been messing around with my faithful companion. And she gave her handkerchief to him as a do-rag for the top of his head and a memento of her mean adultery... And I, black Moor, believed in this nonsense as a child of tender years. And I decided to kill the pangs of jealousy and to strangle Desdemona at night”). The audience likes the ad lib much (“Cool! And you say that Shakespeare is a yawn!”). The final awkward fighting of the actor and director against ‘Desdemona’ makes the spectators even more enthusiastic and crazy (“Shakespeare is kick-ass!”; “I’m a fan of Shakespeare”).

Yet another difference is that in *The Venetian Moor from Grade 6A* the brother who covers for his sister has at least some knowledge of literature, although he confuses Desdemona with Anna Karenina (“Where should I throw myself under a train?”) and Shakespeare with the Russian playwright Alexander Ostrovsky (“I know! A ray of light in the realm of darkness”)⁶. In *Othello.ru* the brother seems to know nothing at all. Even the name ‘Desdemona’ he pronounces as “Desdemanya”.

Finally, if the 2009 episode ends with a scuffle then there are much more elements of dramatic art in the 1987 version. It seems that the actor gets into the character to such an extent that his Othello begins to choke Desdemona so realistically that the director has to try to pull him away. Only the physical superiority helps ‘Desdemona’ not only to escape being suffocated but also to make ‘Othello’ and the director take the curtain call as naturally as possible.

Therefore, in *Othello.ru* the amateur but almost classical acting and the theme of the Russian classical literature are substituted for acting in a postmodernist key and reference to hip-hop subculture.

Another block of comic television programs using the Shakespearean images has a political subtext: real political figures are put into situations akin to those of Shakespeare’s characters. The mixture of contemporary political affairs with eternal themes of power, treachery, corruption, etc. may convince us again that nothing has changed much since Shakespeare’s time.

On January 28, 1995 an episode of Russian TV show of political satire *Puppets* («Куклы»; “Kukly”); produced by Vasily Grigoryev, scripts were written by Victor Shenderovich) entitled *Hamlet* was shown on the Russian TV channel NTV. This satirical television program was a Russian version of the French satirical puppet show *Les Guignols de l’info* (*The News Puppets*). The episode presents the first President of Russia Boris Yeltsin in the ‘situation’ of Hamlet.

The program is opened with a slightly changed quotation from Soviet film comedy *Beware of the Car* directed by Eldar Ryazanov that also has many references to Shakespeare's great play. Hamlet-Yeltsin soliloquizes: "To be or not to be — that's the question". Nevertheless, only Shakespeare's form and plot is used. The content of monologues and dialogues here reflects the political climate of those years. Hamlet-Yeltsin mulls over his situation and possible further actions specifying surnames of the real figures of the Russian political Olympus of the 1990s and mentioning the events in Chechnya. He opens a small volume of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and reads: "Denmark is a prison". After this he declares: "Well, he (Shakespeare. — B. G.) has not lived in Russia even for a minute". Another well-known reformer of the period, economist Yegor Gaidar appears as 'Ophelia'. Ophelia-Gaidar gives the decree of her/his appointment as the Prime Minister back to the 'Prince' as well as other "presents" and "promises". Gennady Zyuganov, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, is presented as the 'Ghost' (literally "the Ghost of Communism"). He urges Hamlet-Yeltsin to have revenge for his "villainous murder", but his "Boren'ka, son"⁷ obviously does not want to do this. The 'Ghost's' attempts to recall him that he has also begun his career in the Communist Party. But Hamlet-Yeltsin replies: "But I'm like Phoenix, I've burnt away and rejuvenated! <...> That's it, dad, forsake your cares evermore". A cock cries. The 'Ghost' has to fade away: "Adieu, son! <...> Remember me!" A "market-oriented scientist" Grigory Yavlinsky appears as 'Horatio'. Hamlet-Yeltsin: "Maybe I should really take vengeance for communism? Should I call Anpilov and his friends and withdraw for a walk? <...> It's too bad! I've not been able to decide for the fourth year in a row. Here it is, you know, Russian Hamletism! Doubts on the very throne..." Horatio-Yavlinsky: "We'll see whose the throne will be in a year when the people come to the polling stations" (Exeunt). Hamlet-Yeltsin: "There are enemies round and round. Each and all wish me hell. Here, you know, I should be on my toes. Who is there behind the arras? Aha, got you, rat!" The 'Prince' kills Vyacheslav Kostikov, his former spokesman, and decides to "bury him in Vatican". (It is a hint at the fact that Kostikov was sent as an ambassador to the Holy See and the Order of Malta after his resignation.) Then again through the arras Hamlet-Yeltsin kills Viktor Gerashchenko, the Chairman of the Central Bank of Russia ("An unexpected resignation!"). The Defence Minister Pavel Grachev emerges: "Save yourself, Prince!" He alerts that "the son of a lawyer" Vladimir Zhirinovskiy is coming and "going berserk". Laertes-Zhirinovskiy appears with a sword in his hand: "Where is he? Yo-ho, bring him here! I'll tear everyone apart who'll interfere! And I declare as a liberal that soon there'll be no democrats here!" Hamlet-Yeltsin and Laertes-Zhirinovskiy fight with swords and stab each other. Laertes-Zhirinovskiy: "Let us forgive wrongdoings of each other, brother!" Dies. Hamlet-Yeltsin: "Now, who will the electorate follow?" Falls dead. Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin (Fortinbras) and Interior Minister Viktor Yerin (probably First Ambassador) enter. Fortinbras-Chernomyrdin: "Yes, by the way, we should place the combat troops on alert, and in the meanwhile I'll be the 'caretaker'". In the end he answers the questions "How long?" and "What next?": "What next? Far and by, generally speaking — silence!"

Consequently, we may state that the iconic character of Hamlet is often used when one needs to present (often in a comic and satirical light) an image of a vacillating and doubting politician. Interestingly enough, there is a short film *Hamlet* (2002) based on Leonid Filatov's play of the same title where Vladimir Putin is depicted as the Prince of Denmark and Boris Yeltsin as the Ghost.

There are also another 'Shakespearean' episodes of TV show *Puppets* entitled *Othello* («Отелло», 1995) and *King Lear, Second Version* («Король Лир, вторая редакция»;

“Korol’ Lir, vtoraiia redaktsiia”; 1998). Here again the Russian political figures of the 1990s are shown in a satirical key and the scripts are more or less based on the plotlines we can find in Shakespeare’s tragedies. In *Othello*, Boris Yeltsin is shown as the ‘Venetian Moor’ who believes in gossips (his bodyguard Alexander Korzhakov spreads rumors like ‘Iago’ and dreams of power). The President decides to strangle Yury Luzhkov (Desdemona), the Mayor of Moscow, because of the political betrayal. In *King Lear, second version* the first President of Russia is an actor playing the part of King Lear in a theater. When he finds out the dénouement of the Shakespeare’s play he arbitrarily refuses to follow the Shakespeare’s story line. He prefers not to divide his ‘state’ into parts and disbands the theater company. Thus, Shakespeare’s works are still quite popular among Russian script writers when they aim to show Russian political landscape and make the viewers laugh through tears.

Episode 10, *Hamlet, Prince of Dacha* («Гамлет, принц дачный»; “Gamlet, prints dachnyi”) in comedy TV series *33 Square Meters* («33 квадратных метра»; “33 kvadratnykh metra”; season 2, 1999–2000) is a comic interpretation of *Hamlet*. The script was written by Dmitry Zver’kov, Maksim Tukhanin and I. Filippov. The cast includes Sergey Belogolovtsev as Sergey Gennadievich Zvezdunov, the head of the family; Tatiana Lazareva as Tatiana Yurievna Zvezdunova, his wife; Andrei Bocharov as Andrei Zvezdunov, their son; Pavel Kabanov as Klara Zakharovna, Sergey’s mother-in-law and lieutenant/captain of militia Megro; Mikhail Shats as Tofik, their profiteering neighbour.

The series is about everyday life of the Zvezdunovs. Andrei, the son, has to repeat a year in school, because he could not answer a question what *The Tragedy of Hamlet* was about. His father, Sergey Gennadievich, scolds him, because in his opinion, it is clear that *Hamlet* is about Hamlet. His mother-in-law mistakenly thinks that *Hamlet* is a painting by Smoktunovsky rather than a film starring him. The head of the family declares that in their family there is “no *Hamlet* — only ‘Crocodiles’”⁸. He starts looking for a book entitled *Hamlet*. His profiteering neighbor Tofik comprehends that *Hamlet* is a book about a real man, an Armenian named Hamlet (Hamlet actually is a very popular name in Armenia). Sergey Gennadievich decides to find the book in the library, but it is closed. He decides to enter illegally, but he does not remember the author of the book. He asks Tofik, but the neighbor says that he has no idea: “Am I Pushkin?” Sergey Gennadievich understands it literally, i. e. that the great Russian poet, Alexander Pushkin is the author. Then lieutenant/captain of militia Megro arrests Sergey Gennadievich for breaking into the library. Andrei mourns that his father has flown off on a mission (his mother cries and tells him that Sergey Gennadievich is a polar aviator), but his main grief is that they have not gone fishing. Suddenly he sees an image of his father in the photo. The ‘Ghost’ laughs at him and tells him the truth. Thus, Andrei is sure that it is Tofik who has put his father behind the bars. He decides to have his revenge. Tofik is carrying on a flirtation with his mother. In the end Tofik (Claudius) and Andrei (Hamlet) are competing in a badminton game for the honour to take Tatiana Yurievna (Gertrude) to the movie theater. Tofik has put laxatives into one of the wineglasses. Tatiana Yurievna incidentally drinks from this glass. She runs away. So does Andrei. Tofik celebrates his triumph, but all of a sudden, Sergey Gennadievich comes back and makes him drink the “poison” too.

There are many other allusions to *Hamlet*. The characters use many (modified) lines from the Shakespeare’s text. The funny and foolish Andrei is put in Hamlet’s disposition, but the events develop in accordance with the canon of ‘low comedy’, so the tragic foundation becomes a comic farce. The comedy is based on classical clichés of this genre: the conflict does not lead to the death of the characters, the struggle between Andrei (Hamlet) and Tofik

(Claudius) is not for 'high' ideals, but for achieving 'low' goals, etc. (see, for instance: Mokulskiy, 1931: 407).

Therefore, this is a good illustration of how the plot of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is used just for entertainment. *Hamlet, Prince of Dacha* is a typical example of Hamletization. Here we can find only the outline of the classical plot, but 'Hamlet' here has no philosophical or aesthetic background. The characters are in situations similar to those in the Shakespeare's play, but only formally: the content of the episode is disparate from the Bard's great tragedy.

To sum it up, nowadays Russian culture is undergoing a transitional period of its development: there is an extreme variety of cultural phenomena, diversity of trends, endless experimentation, emergence of manifold pre- and post-systems, etc. As a result, Russian directors and scriptwriters tend to adapt Shakespeare's legacy and use 'Shakespeare's complex' in diverse ways, both looking back at the national traditions ('Russian Shakespeare') and paying attention to global trends ('global Shakespeare'). The national seems to be represented more and more often only on the verbal level (Russian translations of Shakespeare). The global is reflected usually on the visual level, but in many cases it has quite a massive impact on the whole philosophical and aesthetic conception of a film or TV product. Nevertheless, it does not mean that the national culture will never be able to win back the positions it has lost.

To my mind, the Shakespearean sphere (Zakharov, Lukov V., Lukov VI., 2012; Lukov et al., 2012; Lukov V., Lukov VI., 2014ab; Lisovich, Makarov, 2014; Gaydin, 2014) may be considered one of the most promising fields of interdisciplinary humanities studies as it gives many opportunities for conducting a complex research⁹ on various burning sociocultural issues of our time with the help of different approaches and methods.

ПРИМЕЧАНИЯ

¹ See, for instance, Sergei Solovyov's and Mark Rudinstein's opinions in: «Seansu» otvechait ... , 2004. See also: Zhabskiy, 1996; Shestakova, 2010.

² This is Pavel Kuznetsov's opinion. Cited in: «Seansu» otvechait ... , 2006.

³ Stanislav Zel'venskiy's point of view. Cited in: Ibid.

⁴ Cited in: Ibid.

⁵ Cf. points of view presented by Dmitry Saveliev and Pavel Chernomorskiy. See: Ibid.

⁶ I guess that the choice was not random. If Tolstoy is well known as a severe critic of Shakespeare (see, e.g., Sullivan, 2007) then some men of letters considered Ostrovsky the 'Russian Shakespeare' (see, e.g.: Zohrab, 2002: 315).

⁷ 'Boren'ka' is a pet form of Boris.

⁸ Here is a pun: he means both a copy of Hamlet and the character of Hamlet as well as the title of a satirical magazine Crocodile and his sarcastic attitude to his relatives.

⁹ See, for instance, my work on 'Hamlet's question': Gaydin, 2008.

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ШЕКСПИР В ОТЕЧЕСТВЕННОМ КИНЕМАТОГРАФЕ И НА ТЕЛЕВИДЕНИИ:
НАЦИОНАЛЬНОЕ И ГЛОБАЛЬНОЕ
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В статье анализируется особая роль У. Шекспира как константы русской культуры в контексте отечественного кино и телевидения. Рассмотрен ряд продуктов современной российской экранной культуры конца XX — начала XXI в., сюжеты которых так или иначе отсылают зри-

теля к пьесам «Гамлет» и «Отелло» английского драматурга: черная комедия «Изображая жертву» К. С. Серебренникова с прямыми и косвенными аллюзиями на «Гамлета», современная адаптация шекспировской великой трагедии «Гамлет XXI век» Ю. В. Кары, два эпизода детского юмористического киножурнала «Ералаш» с отсылками к «Отелло», 10-й эпизод «Гамлет, принц дачный» комедийного телесериала «33 квадратных метра», а также пример современной политической сатиры — 5-я серия российской телевизионной передачи «Куклы», в которой в «гамлетовскую ситуацию» попадает Б. Н. Ельцин.

Автор размышляет над некоторыми культурными тенденциями, а также о соотношении национального и глобального в рецепции Шекспира и его произведений в российском кинематографе и на телевидении. С его точки зрения, национальное все чаще предстает лишь на вербальном уровне, тогда как глобальное обычно получает визуальное отражение. Рассмотренные примеры в очередной раз свидетельствуют о том, что шекспировское наследие остается «зеркалом» русской культуры, в котором хорошо видны как проблемы, с которыми она сталкивается в периоды перемен и нестабильности, так и характерные для нее традиции.

Ключевые слова: У. Шекспир, Шекспир в России, «Гамлет», «Отелло», русский Шекспир, шекспиризация, неошекспиризация, российская киноиндустрия, российское телевидение, российское кино.

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