

## THE SPECIFICS OF THE INTERPRETATION. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET ON THE STAGE OF TATAR

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### ABSTRACT

The article deals with originality of stage director's conception in Tatar performances "Hamlet" (stage director Oleg Khanov, 2003) and "HAMLET. Scenes" (R.G. Zagidullin, 2014). It generalizes the comments and notices of theatre experts published in regional (the Republic of Tatarstan) and central press (Moscow). The articles from the magazines "Strastnoy bul'var", "Stsena", "Tatarica", (Tatarstan), newspapers "Biznes-onlain", "Respublika Tatarstan", "Izvestiya Tatarstana" are analyzed. The material on the history of translations of the play "Hamlet" by Shakespeare into the Tatar language has been presented. The key tendencies of the formation of the phenomenon of the Tatar "hamletism" has been elicited. It is concluded on the basis of comparative analysis that the Tatar theatre sees into "Hamlet" through the prism of psychological theatre. The material in translation becomes a field of view for originative experiment with a form. The article summarizes the observations about innovation of theatre set design of the performances. If O. Khanov in his performance develops the tradition of the Turkic nomadic culture, R. Zagidullin – "the idea of family". Tatar stage refers to Shakespeare in the period of the director's search, urging to give comprehensive identity. The performances put on play "Hamlet" went down in the history of Tatar theatre as great performances. The stage directors succeeded in revealing philosophical potential of famous literary work by Shakespeare and currency of his ideas today.

**Keywords:** Tatar theatre, Shakespeare, "Hamlet", R. Zagidullin, O.Khanov, G. Rakhim, N. Isenbet, Russian press.

### TERCÜME BİLGİSİ. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'İN HAMLET'İ TATARIN AŞAMASINDA

#### ÖZ

Makale, Tatar performanslarındaki "Hamlet" (sahne direktörü Oleg Khanov, 2003) ve "HAMLET" adlı sahne yönetmeni anlayışının orijinalliği ile ilgileniyor. Sahneler "(RG, Zagidullin, 2014). Bölgede (Tataristan Cumhuriyeti) ve merkez basında (Moskova) yayınlanan tiyatro uzmanlarının yorumları ve uyarılarını genelleştirir. "Strastnoy bul'var", "Stsena", "Tatarica", (Tataristan), "Biznes-onlain", "Respublika Tatarstan", "Izvestiya Tatarstana" gazetelerindeki makaleler inceleniyor. Shakespeare'in "Hamlet" oyununun Tatar dili içine çevirisinin tarihçesi üzerine materyal sunuldu. Tatar "mezhep" olgusunun oluşumundaki temel eğilimler ortaya çıkmıştır. Karşılaştırmalı analiz temelinde, Tatar tiyatrosunun psikolojik tiyatro prizması aracılığıyla "Hamlet" e baktığı sonucuna varılmıştır. Çeviri materyali, bir formla orijinal deneme için bir görüş alanı haline gelir. Makale, tiyatro set tasarımlarının inovasyonu ile ilgili gözlemleri özetler. Eğer O. Hanov yaptığı performansla Türk göçebe kültürünün geleneğini geliştirir, R. Zagidullin - "aile fikri". Tatar sahnesi, yönetmenin araştırması döneminde Shakespeare'e atıfta bulunarak kapsamlı bir kimlik vermeye çağırıyor. "Hamlet" oyununda yer alan performanslar, Tatar tiyatrosu tarihinde büyük performanslar sergiledi. Sahne direktörleri, ünlü edebi eserlerin felsefi potansiyellerini Shakespeare'in ve bugünkü fikirlerinin para birimi ile ortaya koymayı başardı.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Tatar tiyatrosu, Shakespeare, "Hamlet", R. Zagidullin, O.Khanov, G. Rakhim, N. Isenbet, Rus basını.

#### INTRODUCTION

The works in translation have exerted an enormous influence on formation and development of Tatar theatre. According to theatre expert N. Iglamov, Tatar theatre has gained its artistic victories partly owing to the translated works. To receive evidence that it is so, suffice it to mention the successful performances such as "The Tragedy of Othello", "The Moor of Venice" and "Hamlet" by M. Mutin, "King Lear" by V. Bebutov, "Romeo and Juliet" I. Sakayev and others. These are the stage directors' works that "have risen the stage culture of Tatar theatre and become a smithy of acting talents" [Iglamov, 2014].

Shakespeare, as Tatar literary critics E. Nigmatullin, R. Bekmetov note, “became the subject of the Tatar esthetic reception at the close of the nineteenth century” [Nigmatullin, 1978; Bekmetov, Safina, 2011].

Tatar theatre referred for the first time to Shakespeare’s plays in 1921-1922. Those were the performances put on plays “Hamlet” and “Othello”, where Mukhtar Mutin (1886-1941) played the main roles. According to memories of contemporaries, he was “obsessed” by Shakespeare: everywhere he carried the slim volumes by the English playwright and often performed the monologues from his plays in Russian and Tatar [Safiullin, 2007]. In the theatre museum there were preserved the sketches of theatre set and costumes to the performance “Hamlet” (1921), made by avant-garde artist K.K. Chebotarev (1892-1974). According to art historian R. Sultanova, the displays, are indicative of the Tatar “Hamlet” to be avant-garde staging [Mamayeva, 2013].

In 1930s, 1940s, 1980s, 1990s, as theatre expert I. Ilyalova points, “a Tatar spectator saw Othello again, then Romeo, Lear, Anthony and Cleopatra”. In 21<sup>st</sup> century Tatar theatre referred to Shakespeare because of 450 centenary of the famous English dramatist’s birth. There were put “Romeo and Juliet” on the stage of Al'met'evsk Tatar State Drama Theatre (stage director Iskander Sakayev), “Hamlet” on the stage of Tinchurin Tatar State Drama and Comedy Theater (stage director Rashid Zagidullin), “Richard III” on the stage of Galiaskar Kamal Tatar State Academic Theatre (stage director I. Zayniev) [Ilyalova, 2015].

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS.**

The bibliography of the works devoted, in varying degree, to the reception of “Hamlet” in Russia is voluminous. But the number of sources of the phenomenon of “the Tatar Hamlet” is not great. The purpose of our study is to give thorough interpretation of the character of Hamlet on the stage of Tatar theatres. We will try to analyze the history of entry of this character into thesaurus of the Tatar culture, systematize information about Tatar translators of the legendary play of the English dramatist. We used descriptive, cultural and historical, historical and typological methods in investigating our topic.

## **RESULTS.**

Writer, literary critic G. Rakhim (1890-1943) was first who translated “Hamlet” into the Tatar language. It was a prose. Yu. Safiullin assumed that Tatar writer, specialist of folklore N. Isenbet (1899-1992) started with the very that variant in his translation [Shakespeare, 2007].

In the 1930-1950s “Hamlet” was not claimed by the Soviet theaters, as Stalin did not like the play. This probably explains the fact that N. Isenbet had been working on the translation without haste for 10 years. It is believed that he finished his work in 1947. Getting his work ready for the print in 1952, N. Isenbet admitted that he was guided by an English original, and when editing text he relied on M. L. Lozinskiy (1886-1955) [Safiullin, 2007].

Analyzing the quality of translation of Shakespeare in the Tatar language, R. A. Ayupova states that N. Isenbet translated a large number of phraseological units from Shakespeare. Of the 32 set phrases, translated by him, 8 were translated via phraseological units, 5 – by means of calquing, 12 – through description and 4 – using descriptive method with the figurative elements known to the Tatar reader [Ayupova, 2011].

The Tatar writer, adapting the non-national text to the national tradition, used iambic hexameter in “Hamlet” instead of unrhymed iambic pentameter. The translator explains it in his note to the play by the fact that iambic hexameter is mostly associated with the Tatar folk-speech culture. “For the Tatar readers - wrote N. Isenbet - it is quite natural, because in our folk songs there are a lot of examples of it” [Shakespeare, 2007].

For many decades the translation by N. Isenbet has not been claimed by theaters. For the first time he was approached by the director of Tuymazy Tatar State Drama Theater Oleg Khanov (the Republic of Bashkortostan). The premiere took place on November 7, 2003. The performance was favourably received by the audience and excited interest in the theater critics.

Oleg Khanov develops his version of “Hamlet” within the boundaries of the usual provincial character, dramatically elevated, with “noble passions” boiling, with the mad eyes rotating, with the “ominous whisper” of the villains, with tragic intonations and booming laughter. At the same time the desire of the director to get out of a groove (episodes with reasons of the Queen) is obvious. The steps and costumes of the characters bear the imprint of the stage director’s work by an actor in “Satyrikon”.

R.Zagidullin, chief stage director of Karim Tinchurin Tatar State Drama and Comedy theatre was hatching the idea of staging “Hamlet” for 10 years. The premiere “HAMLET. Scenes” took place on May 21, 2013. It was based on the text by M. L. Lozinsky and Tatar translation by N. Isenbet. The modern Tatar language is significantly different from N. Isenbet’s language of the 1950s. While working on the staging, the director faced with the need of adapting the translation of Shakespeare. Here we are talking primarily about language semiotics and theater semiotics [Bikchantayev, 2014]. As a result, the text of one hundred pages was shortened to 60 pages.

According to the stage director, the core concept of the play was “the idea of family”. In an interview, R. Zagidullin commented his concept: “Global issues of humanity disturb me through the family - says the stage director. - If the family breaks up, when a person loses hope and support of the family... he loses himself. Hamlet’s tossing is associated with it. The matter was not even in the fact his father died but why his mother was quick ... to get married. But there is another family - of Polonius. Polonium is in the family - his father, and mother. For example, in my staging, he is preaching to Ophelia while braiding her hair as if weaving every thought in her head. Why is Ophelia going mad? Polonius is killed, and she loses her footing. I go to the author’s philosophy through life.

The third family is a family of artists who come to Elsinore. Drunken father, an artist, who was kicked out of the theater, the mother- little women – babe and a sick child, who was dragged into acting. At the end of the first act, playing the death the father- actor dies, and he is taken away. It is the anticipation of those deaths that are in the second act” [Mamayev, 2014].

The performance was warmly received by the audience and sparked interest among the critics. A. Bartoshevich came to see the performance. In his interview the Shakespeare scholar spoke of the staging: “This is a modern performance that is put on in the language of the modern stage that speaks of the home. Of the home as the supreme value of being, which is now under threat. Of the home as a symbol of a normal happy human life. Of the home as the center of the big world, the Universe. And of the destruction of this home - the greatest disaster, an indication of how the century dislocates. “HAMLET. Scenes” is a real spectacle of a wondrous modern theater, on which one can congratulate Kazan” [it is too easy to yell Shakespeare, 2014].

“Ophelia - Reseda Salyakhova is playing the harpsichord the music of Bach under high arches. The voice of the ghost of Hamlet's father - Shamil Farhetdinov who came from the world to appeal for justice is echoing. Like the authenticity of the stone, which suddenly turned the theater building in Gorky Street into Elsinor castle with dark gravity, hanging over the palace doors opening time and again , which led to a secluded nooks, the actors’ feelings of becoming genuine” - believes Alsu Valiullina [Valiullina, 2015].

The stage director has emphasized the rituality of the actors’ acts. In the beginning there is a serious Polonius (Z. Kharisov), who checks up the readiness of the stage. The rhythm of mise en scene is set either by handclap or tinkle. The actors’ movements are graceful, they move with the army step very quickly and on the fixed floor lines. The servants bring the chairs in and line them in the middle of the playing area. The actors are dispassionate, their movements are quiet. Polonius reveals himself in this scene as a headwaiter-household manager who manages domestic servants.

R. Zagidullin in the next mise en scene as if immerses in the atmosphere of the Tatar biste (Sloboda). Family line is shown to be stirring and sharp. The character of the Tatar father who lives in children appears to playgoers. Polonius in Kazan play comes dressed in the apron, slippers. This character having thrown off the mask of a statesman ... An interesting line of sight allowing to approach the Shakespeare's characters to the present. Polonius in front of the audience is preparing sandwiches for the departing Laertes, checking his suitcase, entertaining sweets to Ophelia. According A. Bartoshevich, “it's just a wonderful discovery”, [It is easy to line out the Shakespeare, 2014].

Very sharp assessment to the title character was given by I. Ilyalova “Time and again Hamlet has seen Polonius who is played by young, energetic, sincere and very modern Artem Piskunov. The audience are watching with bated breath how the Danish prince is changing. Silent grief over the death of his father ... as a collision with a betrayal, stirred up his whole being, with baseness, “sea of troubles”, turn into the world

sorrow. He does not understand how it is possible “to live with a smile and be a villain with a smile”. His youth tender state of being radiant gave place to the tragic reflections. The reason to live for him is to believe in the person, and it has been destroyed by the uncle and mother. Internally, Piskunov’s Hamlet now becomes active, sensitive to lies and hypocrisy. This Hamlet is quite ironic, sarcasm. To Claudius’s ingratiating question: “And you, my Hamlet, dear nephew?”, his answer sounds as if shot: “Nephew though, but certainly not sweet”. He is searching painfully after answers to the questions, trying to understand why there are so much evil and meanness in the world why a person bears humiliation. Hence Piskunov’s Hamlet logically comes to his famous meditation - the monologue “To be or not to be” [Ilyalova, 2015]. Shakespeare’s Hamlet is a forty-year experienced husband, ready to take responsibility for the country.

“Having run to the mother - Gertrude (Dzhamilya Asfandiyarova) he does not only accuse her with bitterness, but tries to reason, to open her eyes to what is happening. The stage director and actress show Gertrude to be strong, iron lady who is stronger, smarter than his new husband Claudius. It is Gertrude who rather resembles with her being imperiousness Lady Macbeth, and the question arises, whether she is involved in the murder of Hamlet’s father by getting married to the treacherous but weak-willed Claudius to be shown by the director and the actor (Rinat Shamsetdinov), to become the sole ruler of the kingdom [Ilyalova, 2015].

The scenes of Ophelia’s madness came out as psychologically real and stirring. She dashes around the stage rushing from one to another in search for support. “Having mistaken Claudius for his father and clung to him, she suddenly pushes him away, then, having seen the brother stops short like a horse at full gallop - as if something sensible flashed through her mind – and she runs to him, embraces him, but then she starts to mutter something incoherent” [Ilyalova, 2015]. Musical background of the scene turned out to be very strong: to the song about Valentine, the girl goes to meet her death responding to the call of the father.

The character of Ophelia is strengthened by the image of a dried-up flower used as a bookmark. This symbolic detail allows the creator of the performance to nationalize the material. Since olden times the flower’s death in the Tatar folklore has been associated with human death, heavy fate.

“An example of a mother makes Hamlet display vigilance in relation to others. Because he is sarcastic, ironic with his bustling who is philoprogenitive but sly fox Polonius. He is alert, suspicious of duplicity Claudius. He is upset, angry with the betrayal of former friends - Gildestern and Rosenkrantz (Kharis Khusnutdinov, Bulat Zinnatullin). However, there is one important detail in the behavior of Piskunov’s Hamlet: he periodically shakes something off, as if cleansing himself from adhering mud to him - mud from the life around him. His winding plastique resembles the physical pain he feels being in a hostile environment” [Ilyalova, 2015].

The theme of family puts itself in the scene of the murder. Hamlet is taking the scissors out of his mother’s basket for needlework. A red rag in the hands of the character is compared to the area for Gertrude’s embroidery. In this way the mother’s being responsible for what is happening is visualized. The fencing scenes in the play to form a circle of the topic turned out to be rather spectacular.

A. Senchukova in her notice drew attention to the reflectivity of the states of Hamlet and Ophelia: “Hamlet in the beginning seems to be a little crazy, Ophelia is sane. The death of one father makes lose mind, and the specter of another father, on the contrary, returns mind. By the end of the play Hamlet and Ophelia are finally interchanged” [Senchukova 2014].

Performance “HAMLET. Scenes” has become a real marker in the development of Tatar theater. In 2014, Artem Piskunov was awarded with the Republican theater “Tintin” in the category “Best Actor” for the role of Hamlet and stage director R.Zagidullin won the award in the special category “For a modern interpretation of the classic” [Dashina, 2014].

## CONCLUSION.

The Tatar stage referred to the heritage of great Shakespeare during the director’s search. Tatar theatre for the first time turned to his works in the 1920-1930s., in the period of national self-determination, in the period of turbulent social changes, where much depended on the personal position of each. Hamlet, Othello by M. Musina, King Lear by H. Abzhalilova are the images that have become legendary in Tatar theater.

Smoktunovsky's Hamlet became a symbol of the thaw ... the last "Hamlet" by Shakespeare was popular in 1980., at the dawn of perestroika. As we know, theater is called for anticipating some socio-political events. This explains, perhaps, a surge of interest in "Hamlet" today.

The history of existence of the texts of "Hamlet" in the Tatar language is indicative of a sustained interest of the Tatar writers in foreign classics. If in 1920 it was only a prose translation of classical works (G.Rakhim), then close to the 1950s, the verse version of translation (N. Isenbet) was created. All this demonstrates the titanic work of translators seeking to make the world classic heritage of the Tatar people.

The theme of Hamlet is claimed today, as we are again going through a period of intensive search for identity, whether religious or national. "Hamlet" by Shakespeare reflects the picture of neglected interaction and breakup of relationships between all, it symbolizes a young generation trying to restore everything. If the oriental concept in the play by Oleg Khanov came to the reconstruction of the traditions of the nomadic civilization, Rashid Zagidullin's efforts came to the fact that "the theme of family" in "Hamlet" took Tatar sound.

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