

3. SHAKESPEARE BEYOND THE BORDERS

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RUSSIAN RACINE'S *HAMLET*: “MODERNIZATION” OF W. SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY IN RUSSIAN LITERATURE OF THE 18TH C.

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INTRODUCTION

The second third of the 18th century in Russian literature was marked by the emergence of the aesthetics and genre system of classicism. One of the leading places in the development of theoretical foundations, the creation of samples of different genres works belongs at that time to Alexander Petrovich Sumarokov. He wrote epistles, odes, satires, parables, songs, but above all the contemporaries appreciated his dramaturgy; not without a reason was he so proud of the title of Russian Racine.

The active search for model Western European authors, whose works his plays could be based on, attracted his attention to the great English playwright. It had been long known, that he was the first Russian writer in 1747 to mention the name of a great playwright in the poetic tractate *Epistola on Poetry writing*: “Shakespeare, though ignorant”¹, and in 1748 he wrote the play *Hamlet*², which was first staged in 1750. It was the author's second tragedy, and it stood out in his literary heritage. Other plays, written in the late 1740s – early 1750s, focused on events and names drawn from the history of Ancient Russia. This fact, on the one hand, was motivated by the concept of its antiquity, on the other, this concept proved and stated the possibility to draw inspiration and plots from his own country.

¹ Сумароков А. П. Эпистола II (о стихотворстве). *Русская поэзия XVIII век*. Москва, 1972. С. 663.

² Сумароков А. П. Гамлет. Трагедия. Санкт-Петербург, 1748. URL: <mailto:bmn@lib.ru>.

The question that it was Sumarokov who introduced Shakespeare in the “thesaurus of Russian culture” has already been a subject of consideration. Researchers, reviewers and critics (from A. Pushkin and S. Glinka, V. Lebedev, P. Florensky, L. Vygotsky and N. Yevreyinov, to Y. Stennik, V. Lukov, N. Zakharov, Y. Levin³, and others) often write that in the tragedy *Hamlet* Sumarokov “perfected” “barbarian” Shakespeare and adjusted his work following the requirements of the French classicist tragedy. The fact that it was a Russian literary work is rarely mentioned. Even rarer, perhaps only in Yu. Stennik’s⁴ works, we can find the opinion that the play by Sumarokov fits into the general socio-cultural context of Yelizaveta Petrovna’s reign and corresponds to the level of Russian literature development, which gradually was turning

³ Пушкин А. С. О народной драме и драме «Марфа Посадница». *Пушкин А. С. Полное собрание сочинений: В 10 т.* Ленинград, 1978. Т. 7. Критика и публицистика. С. 149; Глинка С. И. Очерки жизни и избранные сочинения Александра Петровича Сумарокова: в 3-х частях. Ч. 1–3. Санкт-Петербург, 1841; Выготский Л. С. Психология искусства. Москва, 1986. 573 с.; Евреинов Н. Н. Ложноклассический театр в России и его главнейшие деятели. *История русского театра.* Москва, 2011. С. 9–373; Алексеев М. П. Первое знакомство с Шекспиром в России. *Шекспир и русская культура.* Москва – Ленинград, 1965. С. 9–69; Стенник Ю. В. Драматургия петровской эпохи и первые трагедии Сумарокова (К постановке вопроса). *XVIII век. Сборник 9.* Ленинград, 1974. С. 227–249; Стенник Ю. Сумароков-драматург. *А. П. Сумароков. Драматические сочинения.* Москва, 1990. С. 62–65. URL: http://az.Hb.ru/s/sumarokow_a_p/text_0250.Shtm; Стенник Ю. В. Драматургия русского классицизма. Трагедия. *История русской драматургии XVII – первая половина XIX века.* Ленинград, 1982. С. 58–82; Луков Вл. А., Захаров Н. В., Гайдин Б. Н. Шекспировские штудии IV: Гамлет как вечный образ русской и мировой культуры. Москва, 2007. 86 с.; Захаров Н. В. Рецепция Шекспира в творчестве Сумарокова. *Тезаурусный анализ мировой культуры: Сборник научных трудов. Выпуск 13.* Москва, 2007. С. 74–78; Захаров Н. В., Луков Вл. А. Шекспир и шекспиризм в России. *Знание. Понимание. Умение.* 2009. № 1. С. 98–106; Захаров Н. В., Луков Вл. А., Гайдин Б. Н. Гамлет как вечный образ мировой культуры. *Тезаурусный анализ мировой культуры.* Москва, 2008. Вып. 16. С. 15–28; Захаров Н. В. Концепция шекспиризма в русской классической литературе. *Знание. Понимание. Умение.* 2011. № 2. С. 145–150; Захаров Н. В. Начало культурной ассимиляции Шекспира в России. *Знание. Понимание. Умение.* 2010. № 3. С. 144–147; Захаров Н. В. Шекспиризм в русской литературе. *Знание. Понимание. Умение.* 2007. № 3. С. 175–180; Захаров Н. В. Вхождение Шекспира в русский культурный тезаурус. *Знание. Понимание. Умение.* 2007. № 1. С. 131–140; Левин Ю. Д. Шекспир. *Русско-европейские литературные связи: Энциклопедия.* Санкт Петербург, 2008. С. 244–247.

⁴ Стенник Ю. В. Драматургия петровской эпохи и первые трагедии Сумарокова (К постановке вопроса). *XVIII век. Сборник 9.* Ленинград, 1974. С. 227–249; Стенник Ю. Сумароков-драматург. *А. П. Сумароков. Драматические сочинения.* Москва, 1990. С. 62–65. URL: http://az.Hb.ru/s/sumarokow_a_p/text_0250.Shtm.

to the European mainstream. One more important fact, but which is hardly taken into account in literary discourse, is that the play met the level of views, tastes and requests of Russian viewers, their aesthetic and political needs, and their national traditions.

It has long been believed, that the first Russian professional playwright knew this Shakespeare play only due to its French prose translation. In response to criticism of V. Trediakovsky, the future Russian Racine himself asserted: “My Hamlet, he says, I do not know whom I have heard it from, was translated from the French prose of the English Shakespeare tragedy, and he was mistaken. My Hamlet ... it is hardly, hardly resembles a Shakespeare tragedy”⁵. This A. P. Sumarokov’s quotation, repeatedly cited in various literary works, is not given due attention to, as it shows his acquaintance not only with the French prose translation but also with Shakespeare’s work itself. Modern scholars prove his familiarity with the English primary source by referring to the library list of books taken by the Russian writer, but this document, unlike *Otvet na kritiku* (*Answer to Criticism*), written and published in 1750, became known to scientists only in the early 21st century⁶.

The researchers drew attention to urgent political needs, a kind of political order for the work that legitimized in the eyes of society the reign of Yelizaveta Petrovna, and the reflection in two *Hamlets* of different worldviews, which greatly influenced the nature of the conflict, the development of the plot, the system of characters, etc. In the preface to the modern edition of Sumarokov’s tragedy, A. Amelin points out: “Shakespeare’s Hamlet follows the Protestant model of behavior, personally confronting the hostile world and perishing in this confrontation. Sumarokov’s Hamlet is an Orthodox one, considering himself to be only a punishing instrument in the hands of Providence, devoid of doubt and reflection, alien to inaction and reflection. The punishment of evil is predestined, and it only contributes to the execution of the heavenly sentence”⁷. However, generally accepted and verbalized, for example, in the work of Yu. D. Levin, has become the idea that in the middle of the 18th century. “... The Russian theatre has not yet matured enough for Shakespeare ...”. To my mind, it is important to note that it has

⁵ Сумароков А. Ответ на критику. *Критика XVIII века*. Москва, 2002. С. 297.

⁶ Амелин М. Александр Сумароков. Гамлет. Пьеса. Вступительная статья. *Новая Юность*. 2003, № 4 (61). С. 6. URL: http://magazines.russ.ru/nov_yun/2003/4/amel.html.

⁷ Ibid.

not matured, but it strained after; and the fact that Shakespeare's comedies influenced Catherine II's playwright testifies it.

In general, the causes and factors of such a free-spirited treatment of Shakespeare's tragedy by A. P. Sumarokov have not been the subject of separate research.

1. Literary canon and socio-cultural markers

Turning to the creative activities of the Russian playwright, one must constantly remember the socio-cultural context and place of this author in the Russian literary process of the mid-18th century: he was the first Russian professional writer for whom creativity became a matter of life, and the main tasks were to acquaint readers with the theory of classicism, to prove the idea that works of different genres can be written in Russian, to create a repertoire of Russian theatre, and to make this repertoire competitive in modern language terms. At the same time, all these efforts could have been wasted, since there was no reader and spectator in Russia prepared for the perception of classic literature in general, and dramaturgy in particular.

A. Sumarokov himself knew well the history of Russian dramaturgy of Peter I's times, he understood that to teach the viewer to perceive the tragedy is a difficult matter, since the public ("the watcher" – as Sumarokov himself called the viewers for a long time) was not prepared for the perception of a serious stage action; it enjoyed watching the interludes, related to current political news or well-known issues, and did not percept translated comedies at all and was not accustomed to classic tragedy. Such a situation is reproduced in A. Sumarokov's comedy *Rogonosets po voobrazheniyu* (*The Cuckold by Imagination*), which female main character came to watch the interlude, but found herself at the performance of A. Sumarokov's first tragedy *Khorev* and lost consciousness while watching because she decided that Osneld was poisoned in public.

In the preface to the tragedy *Dimitry Samozvanets* (*Dimitry the Impostor*), Russian Racine wrote: "You who traveled, who has been to Paris and London, tell me! Do they chew nuts there during the performance, and when the performance is in a full swing, do they thrash drunken quarreling coachmen to the dismay of the whole stalls, loges and theatre?"⁸. This is rather a painful reaction of the playwright to the level of the audience's culture. He was forced to some extent to adapt to the

⁸ Сумароков А. П. Избранные произведения. Ленинград, 1957. С. 457.

public, to its worldview and abilities to perceive certain topics, reflections, plots, which, along with the fascination with the theory of classicist tragedy, largely led to the transformation of Shakespeare's work. At the same time, A. Sumarokov thoroughly educated his audience (as for him "Theatre is a school for vagabonds along with man's life"⁹), instilling in it not only certain political preferences but also morality, nobility, and artistic taste.

N. V. Zakharov, for example, noted that Hamlet of A. Sumarokov had "educational significance for the public in the sense that the characters of the play expressed the lofty ideas, prevailing in European literature at that time, about honor, duty, love of the motherland and the portrayal of passions was clothed in a refined and sophisticated form"¹⁰. This statement can be extrapolated to all drama works by A. Sumarokov. That is why, working in different genres, he chose the works of Racine, Corneille, Molière, Voltaire, La Fontaine, etc. as the model; A. Sumarokov is the first to introduce Shakespeare to the Russian reader and viewer, but in a form that could be understood at least by some of those who watched his plays. He was well aware of how different his "watcher" was, not only from his contemporary Western European public but also from those who saw Shakespeare himself on the stage.

The reduced number of characters attracted the attention of nearly everyone who turned to the consideration of Sumarokov's Hamlet, but no explanation can be found as to why the Russian playwright practically ignored many characters of Shakespeare's work. It seems to be not a simple desire to "correct" Shakespeare.

The analyzed plays have a different primary characterization of the characters, which is important for further interpretation of Sumarokov's tragedy. Claudius is immediately characterized as an "illegal King of Denmark", which is different from the simple statement "the King of Denmark". The attitude of the author to the character and the situation is initially imposed on the reader/viewer, and this characterizes the thought of Claudius maleficence, which has been a mystery to viewers of Shakespeare's work for some time.

In the flawless Russian translation of the Shakespearean tragedy, Hamlet, "Son to the former, and Nephew to the present King", the family

⁹ Письма русских писателей XVIII века. Ленинград, 1980. С. 121.

¹⁰ Захаров Н. В. Рецепция Шекспира в творчестве Сумарокова. *Тезаурусный анализ мировой культуры: Сборник научных трудов. Выпуск 13*. Москва, 2007. С. 75.

ties of the characters were revealed, with the first being a “son and a nephew” and then a social status that corresponded to the author’s concept of the hero. In Sumarokov’s work – “Hamlet, the son of Gertrude”. This is a dramatically different characteristic. The matter is not only, that in Russian play, Claudius is not a relative of Hamlet; he got the throne by marrying Gertrude. It is not said that Hamlet is the son of a previous king, it is emphasized that he is the son of the queen from a previous marriage. This is a change of place in the line to the crown, and therefore a possible fate of the character and the plot development. This view is confirmed by the characteristic of Gertrude. In Sumarokov’s work, she is “his wife” (referring to Claudius), not “the Queen of Denmark, Hamlet’s mother”. This is a fundamentally different characteristic, which has exclusively marital status and no social status. Consequently, the king has no legal right to power, and Gertrude and Hamlet are removed from it.

Polonius functions have been changed: in the tragedy by A. Sumarokov, instead of a chief advisor, he becomes the main confidant, who, according to the laws of the tragedy of that time, knows everything better than his ward, often directs his actions, and interferes in affairs and so on. More than that, it was Polonius, who kills Gertrude’s husband at the request of Claudius.

Thus, even the change in the primary characteristics of those Shakespearean characters who “remained” in the play by Sumarokov, testifies to significant changes in the interpretation of the plot, related not only to its formal “straightening”.

Even more significant is the absence of certain characters in the tragedy of Shakespeare. It is a signal to the attentive reader/viewer, as it is an important form of the work’s adaptation in another “cultural thesaurus” and a cultural code change in the process and for adjusting to a new environment¹¹.

Shakespeare’s tragedy has a friend and former Hamlet University mates, which is a sign of the particular intellectual and spiritual environment the character is associated with. This is also the background of Hamlet, who got a good education, who is familiar with the contemporary philosophy, culture, who saw the world outside Denmark and so on. It is symptomatic that the university mates are “former” and

¹¹ See more details: Павленко І. Я. «Гамлет» В. Шекспіра та О. Сумарокова: зміна культурного коду (деякі спостереження). *Ренесансні студії*. Запоріжжя, 2015. Вип. 23–24. С. 50–68.

not only because the university times have passed, but Horacio stays with him.

Sumarokov's Hamlet is completely lonely, he is out of any community, which deepens the tragedy of the hero; he is deprived of the past, that is why his genesis is left without the attention of the playwright and the viewer. At the same time, the Sumarokov's "reduction" of the hero's friends was caused by Russian realities: there was no habit of giving university education to the heirs to the throne, especially abroad. The first Russian university was opened in 1755, that is, after writing the play by Sumarokov, but the representatives of royal lineage did not study there. Thus, the motive of Hamlet's university education abroad for the Russian viewer was unusual and alien.

There are no characters related to any mentioning of foreign events since during the work on the play the issues of home political life deeply disturbed Sumarokov. For him, the principle of dynastic throne inheritance, the transfer of power in the family, was important, so the appearance of Fortinbras, the Prince of Norway, who eventually becomes the King of Denmark, was simply impossible in a play written during the active struggle for the Russian throne. The Russian viewer should have realized that the only legitimate heir to the crown could have been the direct descendant of the assassinated king, hence Elizabeth Petrovna's crowning was natural since she was the only one entitled to Peter's inheritance. Not accidental in the play are "slips of the tongue", which the researchers did not pay attention to Hamlet's father is sometimes called the King, Hamlet is often called the Prince. Gertrude in repentance says to Claudius:

*Ты в ненависти, Князь, мой сын любим в народе,
Надежда всех граждан, остаток в царском роде*
*Ты в ненависти, Князь, мой сын любим в народе,
Надежда всех граждан, остаток в царском роде*¹².

There is no Laertes (the son of Polonius and the brother of Ophelia) in the tragedy by Russian Racine. His absence became possible because in the Russian way of life the main role in a girl's fate was played by the father; a duel with an heir to the throne was simply impossible in any case, and therefore the presence of such a character was optional.

The refusal of Laertes' image is a sign of irrelevance of family values for Sumarokov, the marginalization of the universal ones, the

¹² Сумароков А. П. Гамлет. Трагедия. Санкт-Петербург, 1748. URL: <mailto:bmn@lib.ru>. The following is a link to this source.

manifestation of the state-centricity characteristic of Sumarokov and all Russian culture of his time, since his focus is the idea of the state and the transfer of power, and the love conflict is a secondary one. The protection of the honour of a common, uncrowned person and family is irrelevant for Sumarokov.

In Shakespeare's play, Laertes is disturbed by the violent death of his father, the failure to perform burial rites, which is essential in traditional culture. He tries to avenge Polonius' death and, due to these attempts, becomes Hamlet's counterpart.

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, three characters – Hamlet, Laertes, Fortinbras – find themselves in a close situation: their parents are killed and they need revenge. Sumarokov's Fortinbras and Laertes do not exist because in some way the situation is reversed, which generates branching of the plot and deviation from the unity of action, which, according to the Russian playwright, is unacceptable. In his *Hamlet* options for the development of the situation disappear (Laertes, unaware of reflection, is eager to revenge, Fortinbras refuses it). Getting rid of "counterparts" Hamlet of Sumarokov is also deprived of the possibility of choice (and hence the motive "to be, or not to be"), his revenge and victory over the murderers of his father become inevitable.

The absence of actors in the characters list, and therefore the motive of the theatre is symptomatic. For Shakespeare, "the whole world – theatre". All the characters in the play are well-acquainted with the theatre. Polonius praised highly the actors who came to Elsinore: "The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited"¹³. He names theatrical genres and their varieties, which the Russian audience has not even been unaware of. In Shakespeare's play, theatre is a form of entertainment, an intellectual life, a sign of culture, a creator of new meanings, a form of communication with the viewer, a literary technique. Hence the correlation of life and scene, the performances in the play and the stage reality. Besides, characters often deliberately play a certain role, wearing a mask and becoming hypocrites in ordinary life. For Sumarokov such vastness is impossible, understanding of the theatre is radically

¹³ Shakespeare W. The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark. URL: https://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/views/plays/play_view.php?WorkID=hamlet&Scope=entire&pleasewait=1&msg=pl.

different. Each of his plays corrected the fate and educated his contemporaries, tragedies taught to subdue passions and reminded of the destructive power of feelings in human life.

In Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, performance is a part of a system of mirrors that reproduces a situation similar to the one in the Danish kingdom, and art helps to percept the reality, and verify pieces of evidence as for old Hamlet's death. The actors, without suspecting it, exposes the hypocrite, reveal the theatricality of his behavior. In the Sumarokov's tragedy, the theatre motive was removed, since the Russian audience was only about to be involved in this art, it could not yet watch the plays and perceive the underlying meanings in them; so the literary-theatrical allusions to which Shakespeare's Hamlet appeals for exposing Claudius turned out to be unnecessary.

The Russian playwright refused from the images of gravediggers, as well as from all the "cemetery" scenes and motives. Formally, this can be explained by the fact that Ophelia remains alive, by the attempt to preserve the unity of place, action and so on. But such a refusal led to the neglecting of certain philosophical motives of Shakespeare's play, such as the motive of uncertainty and changeability of everything that now seems significant and grand, the equality of everyone before death and general laws of being.

Scenes on the cemetery, which were similar to Shakespeare's ones, could not have been in Russian works of the time. For the West European culture, clearing the place on a cemetery for new burials was a common case that could not embarrass or scare anyone. In the Eastern Slavic tradition, it was forbidden to ruin the graves, even very old ones, to remove and throw away human remains. Singing and talking at the cemetery would be considered as sacrilege, blasphemy by Russian viewers. So this change was largely determined by the nature of audience reception.

The attention of Shakespearean scholars and Russianist has been often drawn to the fact that Sumarokov's play lacks the ghost of Hamlet's father. This is interpreted differently. For example, one of the best historians of the Russian theatre, N. Yevreyinov thought that the refusal from supernatural in Sumarokov's work was connected with the fact that the classic drama abandoned it and it became the purely epic sphere, that is why "the Spirit, at the request of pseudo-classicist tragedy, Sumarokov changed into a fancy, a dream"¹⁴. Modern expert on Russian historical

¹⁴ Евреинов Н. Н. Ложноклассический театр в России и его главнейшие деятели. *История русского театра*. Москва, 2011. С. 121

drama V. Bochkaryov writes: "... the story about the prophetic dream appears in the tragedy *Hamlet*, replacing the scene with the Ghost of Hamlet's Father, which A. Sumarokov, who was brought up in rationalist philosophy of the eighteenth century, considered impossible to include in his play"¹⁵, explaining the changes by author's worldview peculiarities. A researcher of Shakespeare's reception in Russian literature said: "The Ghost of Hamlet's Father is represented by a trivial dream"¹⁶.

All attempts to compare the tragedies of the two playwrights were carried out in the context of the literary perception of the era, but one must also take into account the traditional one, connected with the informal culture, which was largely present in everyday life, relationships, predetermined daily behavior, and often this very culture was dominant in the non-official spheres of life.

The refusal of the Ghost's appearance on stage is predetermined by both the genre canon, which the playwright was directed by, the views of the author, and the fact that there were no ideas about ghosts in Russian traditional culture. According to the traditional knowledge of the viewers, Sumarokov "moved" the image of Hamlet's father from the stage reality into the dream of the hero, actualizing the traditional for the Eastern Slavic culture image of prophetic dream and the secret knowledge that comes while sleeping, the idea of "undead".

Thus, the creation of Sumarokov's version of a well-known in Europe plot was determined by several factors: the need to "straighten" and "polish up" Shakespearean drama following the requirement of classical theatre, to bring the content of the play closer to the viewers' worldview and to educate them, to interpret the current events in Russia of that time and to warn the Queen veiledly against false steps.

2. Characters and the throne in Sumarokov's tragedy

An illustrative story of the work preparation for publication. It is known that for the deviation from the unity of action in the first tragedy *Khorev* A. P. Sumarokov was subjected to sharp and meticulous criticism of his constant rival – opponent V. K. Trediakovsky¹⁷. *Hamlet*,

¹⁵ Бочкарёв В. А. Русская историческая драматургия XVII – XVIII веков. Москва, 1988. С. 135.

¹⁶ Захаров Н. В. Рецепция Шекспира в творчестве Сумарокова. *Тезаурусный анализ мировой культуры: Сборник научных трудов. Выпуск 13*. Москва, 2007. С. 71.

¹⁷ Тредиakovский В. К. Письмо, в котором содержится рассуждение о стихотворении, поныне на свет изданном от автора двух од, двух трагедий и двух

from the point of view of classic aesthetics, can be blamed by the same fact.

Before the publication, the author had to show the work to M. Lomonosov and V. Trediakovsky, which he did, however, giving them only one day each for studying and reviewing. The reviewers treated *Hamlet* rather loyally, that for some reason were not mentioned by the researchers, and didn't pay attention to a clear branching of the plot and "two untying, ... of two knots, and hence not the single, but a double representation"¹⁸. This can hardly be explained by the lack of time, according to M. Amelin¹⁹, a modern researcher and the publisher of Sumarokov's *Hamlet*. They read the play carefully, as V. Trediakovsky made a few comments about style, and M. Lomonosov burst out with a famous epigram about the incorrect, in his opinion, use of the word "trogat" ("touch")²⁰. It is impossible to see such things at a cursory reading. However, the violation of one of the glorious three unities did not bother them. It may have happened because the play was necessary not only for Sumarokov, as it raised questions that were of concern to the whole community.

The problem of power and its dynastic inheritance in the after Peter I reign became more urgent than ever and runs through all the 18th century Russian culture, which was clearly state-centric in nature. While Shakespeare's play focuses on a character, a person, a personality, Sumarokov focuses on the interests of the state and the legitimacy of the throne that is why viewers regarded the play as an affirmation of the legality and justice of the throne inheritance by Elizaveta Petrovna. Obviously, the tragedy was intended not only to assert the legitimacy of rising to power (through a military coup) of Peter I's daughter but also to warn of the danger of a morganatic marriage that could lead another impostor to the throne. Probably, this is what made M. Lomonosov and Trediakovsky agree to its publication and staging, and "not see" the obvious drawbacks. The allusions to reality and the desire to teach the empress a lesson proved to be stronger than the aesthetic principles and concern about the preservation of the genre canon.

эпистол, писанное от приятеля к приятелю. *Критика XVIII века*. Москва, 2002. С. 100.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Амелин М. Александр Сумароков. Гамлет. Пьеса. Вступительная статья.

²⁰ Ломоносов М. В. «Женился Стил, старик без мочи...». *М. В. Ломоносов. Избранные произведения*. Ленинград, 1986. С. 258.

Somewhat surprisingly, Sumarokov's *Hamlet* became consonant not only with recent and current events (for Sumarokov at the time of writing) but also with those that occurred later: the coming to power of Catherine II. For contemporaries, she initiated the removal of her husband from the throne. The idea that they killed Peter III at her behest, or with her tacit consent, entrenched in the public consciousness. Too long regency, practically absolute power, gave reasons to associate Paul, who had lost his father and was sidelined from the crown for a long time, with Russian Hamlet²¹. According to Ye. K. Makarenko, "... the Shakespearean plot of Hamlet in the Russian culture of the late eighteenth century, because of the current historical and political situation, was related firmly to the theme of imposture. Sumarokov's tragedy also acquired a different sound and meaning in comparison with the time of its creation by the author"²². Sumarokov's play seemed to foresee the future, so after first performances, it could be neither published nor put on stage for a long time.

The absence of the tragedy in the repertoire of Russian theatres during the reign of Catherine II is symptomatic. The Queen proclaimed: "The theatre is a folk school; it must be under my supervision, I am a headteacher in this school and for the morals of the people, I'll be answerable to God"²³. Sumarokov's *Hamlet* was not part of this school curriculum.

The work that could support the thought of the illegality and criminality of Catherine II reign, the tragedy of her son's fate, and the ever-present danger of a new tyrant coming to power through a morganatic marriage, was expelled from the scene and only returned after the Empress died when Ya. B. Knyazhnin, M. P. Nikolev, V. O. Ozerov, and others were ruling in the theatre; only then the play became a frequent spectacle, the "watcher" changed, and Shakespeare came to the viewer and the reader in Russian translations. In two issues of the magazine *Moscow Telegraph* headed by M. O. Polyevoy in 1827 the fragments of *Hamlet* translation, made by M. Vronchenko were published, and a year later the full text of the translation was published in a separate edition. As

²¹ Жилкин В. С. Русский Гамлет. URL: <http://www.russdom.ru/2004/200410i/20041012.html>.

²² Макаренко Е. К. Роль шекспировского театра в формировании русской исторической трагедии. *Вестник ТГТУ (TSPU Bulletin)*. 2014. № 7 (148). С. 172.

²³ Quoted from the book: Дризен Н. В. Материалы к истории русского театра. Москва, 1905. С. 98.

a result, there was no sense in the staging of Sumarokov's *Hamlet* anymore. The tragedy was mentioned very rarely and was referred to as the first unsuccessful attempt at the reception of Shakespearean dramaturgy in Russia. It was judged from the perspective of that time, but not of Sumarokov's era in dramaturgy. The work was banished from the mainstream of Russian literature.

The motive of banishment also appears in the work itself, which is associated with heroines whose images are dramatically re-interpreted. The characters live a completely independent life, in which the motives and plot situations of Shakespearean drama are inherited unusually. The lines of Gertrude and Ophelia in the play by Sumarokov practically do not intersect; they never appear on stage at the same time. Gertrude does not mention Ophelia, and she, in turn, believes her father that his wife killed the eldest Hamlet.

Depending on the requirements of the time, the conflict of sense and feelings, duty/honor and passion are at the heart of Sumarokov's tragic plot. The author's conception of passion as a force destroying but equal to sense and honor is obviously the only motivation of Gertrude's behavior. Judging by individual remarks, it is passions that govern her actions, which Claudius made use of, inflaming her jealousy and distrust to her husband, and then self-love. Under the influence of destructive feelings, she becomes Claudius' wife and grant him admittance to the throne.

Lyubov' proizvelo vo mne tvoye zlodeystvo!

Supruzhestvo moye s tobou – prelyubodeystvo”.

“Kak chest' moyu lyubov' skverneysha poglotila,

A ya tebya na tron monarsheskiy pustila”

“Любовь произвело во мне твоё злодейство!

Супружество мое с тобой – прелюбодейство²⁴.

Как честь мою любовь сквернейша поглотила,

A я тебя на трон монаршеский пустила²⁵.

This way, the favorite idea of Sumarokov-dramatist is realized. He considers that passions destroy the person and his destiny, encourage crimes, so it is necessary to subject them to common sense.

Gertrude feels guilty under the influence of the son, whom she loves most and is afraid to lose. The mother's feelings are intensifying, as

²⁴ Сумароков А. П. Гамлет. Трагедия.

²⁵ Ibid.

she is disappointed in Claudius, as he, having become the King, sees no more reason to be hypocritical wearing a mask. If the Shakespearean female lead tries to reconcile her new husband and Hamlet, then in Sumarokov's play the Queen turns her back on her husband when she realizes his crime, his detrimental effects on her, the threat to herself and her son. It awakens her common sense that leads to remorse and reflect on honor and duty.

Since these thoughts haunt Gertrude, who, after the death of her husband, is to preserve the throne for her son and be a worthy regent, the words about just and wise rule are not accidental to the heroine:

*Tsar' mudryy yest' primer vsej oblasti svoey,
On pravdu pache vseh podvlastnykh nablyudayet
To pomnya zavsegda, chto kratok smertnykh vek,
Chto on v velichestve takoy zhe chelovek.
Царь мудрый есть пример всей области своей,
Он правду паче всех подвластных наблюдает
То помня завсегда, что краток смертных век,
Что он в величестве такой же человек*²⁶.

The play by Sumarokov is Gertrude's tragedy that killed the husband and allowed the tyrant to ascend to the throne; later she understood her crime, repented, and reflected about the atonement of sins²⁷.

Shakespeare's Hamlet, disappointed in his mother, and hence in all women and humanity, advises Ophelia to go to the monastery. For him, a monastery is a way of preserving purity, a form of eternal exile, an opportunity not to multiply the sinfulness of the world. In the play by Sumarokov, Armand invites Gertrude to seclude herself for redemption.

Hermitage in Orthodoxy is a cloistral separated and remote settlement from a monastery in a deserted area where laws are tougher and living conditions are more difficult than in conventional monasteries. Here, far from the vanity, people prayed for the remission of sins. Such exile life is perceived by the heroine as law, necessity, care for her soul, salvation from the possibilities of new temptations.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷This is partially covered in the article: Павленко І. Я. «Остави свѣтъ другим, и плачь в пустыняхъ въ вѣкъ», ... Гертруда: шекспірівські героїні в художній системі трагедії О. П. Сумарокова «Гамлет». *Ренесансні студії*. Запоріжжя, 2016. Вип. 25–26. С. 46–63.

She is ready for it because she must atone for her crimes and hopes for a moral rebirth. In the context of all the work, such a fate of the ruler, who also is not loved by the husband, is not accidental. In Russia, the monastery has repeatedly become a place of exile for the widowed queens or even for those queens who were not loved by their crowned husbands.

Sumarokov knew Russian history well, repeatedly referred to it in his creative activity; the evidence of it are his studies *The Brief Moscow Chronicle*, *The First and Chief Streletsky Rebellion*, *The Second Streletsky Rebellion*, *The Brief History of Peter the Great*. He knew about the fate of many Russian queens who could be sent to a convent for infertility or for being boring for their husbands; many of the queens died unexpectedly, often at the request of husbands, sometimes by the will of the nobles, which could have happened with the first and probably the only beloved wife of Ivan Grozny (Ivan the Terrible).

The motive of Gertrude's monastic life in the play is also motivated by the fact that her tyrant husband has considered marrying Ophelia. Numerous marriages with girls from boyar families were known in the history of Russian rulers, and the bride's choosing could take place when the official wife was alive and had been sent to the monastery in advance. History knew such marriages of Ivan the Terrible, the second marriage of Peter I, etc., so for the Russian viewer, it was a familiar, condemned, but quite a usual situation.

Gertrude's fate thus fits into the history of the Russian monarch families, however, in Sumarokov's work the queen herself longs for monastic life. The thought of hermitage haunts the heroine, but in a play setting limited by three unities, she doesn't leave the place, but only declares its intentions. Gertrude cannot distance herself from public affairs until the authorities return to their rightful heir, Hamlet.

Since, after the murder of Hamlet's father, she must become a regent, the only mother can and should transfer power to the real king. This is also a well-known situation in Russian history, as there were precedents of Elena Glinskaya, Natalia Naryshkina, Catherine I, and hence women's rule – the Regency did not surprise the Russian viewer. Moreover, the play was written during the reign of Peter I's daughter. Besides, rumors were spread about her morganatic marriage, so, there was a threat of seizure of power by her husband. Thus, the fate of the literary heroine is to some extent altered by historical realities.

In Sumarokov's tragedy Claudius' cruelty, hypocrisy and desire for boundless power is a natural phenomenon, that neither education nor breeding could overcome. He has nothing to do with the Hamlet dynasty, so he may be the husband of the queen, but not the king. Having no rights to the throne, he temporarily usurps and tries his best to retain power. His fate in the play is a symbolic and transparent enough warning to all who aspire to the hand of Elizabeth.

In the artistic time of the play, Claudius' extreme cruelty and craftiness are also caused by the fact that the stepson has learned the truth and become dangerous. Under the reign of Gertrude, Claudius is a legal co-regent. If she fulfills the threats and goes away to pray for forgiveness, he will completely lose his right to power, as the throne will be given to Hamlet, the legitimate ruler. That is why Claudius intends to kill Gertrude and stepson and remain the sole lord of Denmark. As the husband, he will inherit the fortune of his wife, which will not be the case if Gertrude goes to the convent and Hamlet remains alive.

Sumarokov's work has no motive of imaginative madness since Russian history has had "weak in the head" rulers and heirs to the throne. The motivation of Polonius – madness because love – is an impossible phenomenon in the Russian tsarist way of life: his wife was chosen, as a rule, to continue the dynasty. It was a state task; it was not about love.

It should be mentioned that the Prince of Sumarokov does not leave the place, and Claudius does not try to take him anywhere. They are trying to kill Hamlet at home, which also corresponds to the Russian reality of the time when unlucky heirs were imprisoned and take the monastic vows, whole families were sent to the North or Siberia, so sending somebody away to foreign lands to kill him was unclear to the viewer: you can do it at home. Everyone still remembered the fate of Sophia, from the family of Anna Leopoldovna, and, which is even more important, of Ioan Antonovich, the legal heir to the throne.

At the same time, the Prince, realizing Claudius' hostility, hopes for a while to avoid direct confrontation. He and Ophelia dream of leaving the city and living away from the atrocities of their stepfather. In difficult times of salvation, young people, whose parents and Claudius know about their love, see themselves in voluntary exile.

Lovers dream of the humble life of ordinary people, far from the city bustle and struggle for the throne, they are well aware of the

difficulties of life in which they will become different, even change names, but eventually, they will be happy. Such metamorphoses are avoided, but Ophelia faces the problem of exile. It is Hamlet's expulsion from her heart (something that the hero longs for, at least for a while), as her father is a tyrant's abettor.

The revenge of Sumarokov's Hamlet is aimed at both Claudius and the executor of his will, Polonius, so he tries to change his attitude towards Ophelia, the enemy's daughter. In obedience to his duty, he is obliged to punish the offender and all his family members (in the 18th century Russia it was accepted to punish the whole family of the guilty in the crime against the throne). This fact Sumarokov uses as the explanation of Hamlet's emphasized cruel attitude to his beloved. At this time, she is threatened with real banishment – exile. However, Hamlet's feelings are opposed to common sense, he cannot turn his back on Ophelia.

Shakespeare's character considers his chosen one to be the daughter of Jephthah, who was sacrificed at her father's will. In Sumarokov's tragedy, the motive of child sacrifice is set in a classic conflict between feeling and obligation. Ophelia must sacrifice her fortune for the sake of her father, and such sacrifice is a difficult and costly one for her (she refuses to marry Claudius).

A rather interesting, partly mirroring, situation arises: Hamlet lives with the thought of revenge for his father, and this is what guides his attitude towards Ophelia. Polonius committed suicide because he could no longer resist Hamlet, but Ophelia did not think of revenge: her father was a criminal, and so he made his choice himself. He is punished by God, and so the daughter must mourn over him and bury.

After discovering all the evils of Claudius and the suicide of Polonius, all obstacles to the happiness of Ophelia and Hamlet disappear, and at the same time with the crown, the legal heir to the throne gets the opportunity to marry his beloved. Her path to the convent is tabooed: the family of the ruler must continue. The throne goes to the legal heir and must be passed on to his son. This is the logic of Sumarokov's tragedy.

Despite the laws of the genre, the play by Sumarokov lacks a tragic final; reason, justice, and a good win. In the process of plot development, the main character of Sumarokov gradually expands his idea about the duty. He must first seek revenge for his father's death. The father was the king, so it is necessary to return the throne and the

law to his country; so, the duty of the son is manifested not only in the revenge to Polonius and Claudius but also in the wise and lawful rule of the state. In Shakespeare's play, this motive is absent; moreover, after the death of all characters who could in any way claim the throne of Denmark, it is occupied by a representative of another dynasty. In Sumarokov's tragedy, following Russia's political situation at the time, a legitimate heir receives the throne. This is the justification of Elizaveta Petrovna's reign.

Happy-end contradicts the genre canon, but even the strictest critics – Lomonosov and Trediakovsky, apparently, for reasons far from literature, did not make any comment about it.

The allusions to reality turned out to be stronger than the genre canon.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the comparison of the tragedies by Shakespeare and A. Sumarokov *Hamlet* shows that one of the essential reasons for the transformation of the classic, already at the time, work, along with the desire to "edit" the work of "barbarian" under the traditions of the French tragedy of that time, was adapting the work to the cultural needs and abilities of the Russian viewer. Cultural code changing resulted in the changes of characteristics and actions of the characters, in reducing their number and, accordingly, in the loss of motives and storylines that were not clear to the viewer of a country whose professional theatre was had only been born; and the first Russian professional playwright was to form the audience along with the writing of plays.

The analysis of Shakespeare's motives in the Sumarokov's tragedy makes it possible to say that the problem of exile was manifested in the content of the work (the transformation of the convent motive and the need to remove Gertrude to the deserts for repentance, the possibility of Hamlet and Ophelia's escaping from the place, Hamlet's temporary attempt to forget Ophelia), and in the destiny of the work itself, which, under the influence of external circumstances (primarily political ones), was removed from the Russian theatre repertoire and was not staged for a long time. The dramatic transformation of Shakespeare's characters was motivated not only by the classic dramaturgical canon but also by the historical

and socio-cultural situation, as the Russian playwright hoped that the play would have an impact on the Empress.

Shakespeare and Sumarokov's plays were created during the reign of Elizabeth and Elizaveta Petrovna, but had different focuses. Sumarokov's goal was not to demonstrate the disharmony of the world and society but to affirm the legitimacy of Peter's daughter crowning.

SUMMARY

The article compares the tragedies of the same name by Shakespeare and A. Sumarokov and refutes the popular belief that the play by the Russian playwright was merely an attempt to "edit" the tragedy by Shakespeare according to the canon of French classic aesthetics. It is emphasized that the play Russian Racine corresponded to the level of Russian culture development and the formation of the contemporary playwright; more than that, it was, among other things, a way of educating the public. The analysis of the characters system in the Russian play proves its predetermination by the Russian socio-cultural and everyday realities, the system of allusions to socially significant events and phenomena, little known and unclear to the descendants, which led to the re-coding of the Shakespearean plot and heroes. It has been suggested that the transformation of the main characters' images and their fates is caused by the problem of throne inheritance in the post-Peter's era, by the attitude of the playwright to the reign of **Yelizaveta Petrovna**, and by the efforts to influence the Empress. Shakespeare's and Sumarokov's plays were in different directions. Sumarokov's goal was not to demonstrate the disharmony of the world and society but to affirm the coronation legitimacy of Peter the Great's daughter, which largely determined the content and form of his tragedy.

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