

Acculturating Shakespeare: The  
tactics of translating his works under  
Stalin in the light of recent  
theoretical advances in translation  
studies

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# Abstract

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This thesis employs translation theory in order to analyse a translation of William Shakespeare's *Othello* by Anna Radlova, which was written and performed in Stalinist Russia. Radlova was the wife of Sergei Radlov, a respected theatre producer and director, who staged several productions of *Othello* in his wife's translation. Their partnership therefore provides a fascinating example for theatre translation research of a close working relationship between translator and director.

The thesis begins by discussing the elements of translation theory appropriate to such a task. Drawing on the theory identified, the next two chapters then set Radlova's work in context. Chapter 2 offers new perspective on the history of Shakespeare, and specifically *Othello*, in Russia by analysing how his assimilation into Russian culture was affected by developments and trends in the practice of translation, while Chapter 3 provides the social background to the Radlovs' work, assessing how their approach to Shakespeare was shaped by the tense political environment in which they were working. The close analysis of Radlova's translation choices in Chapter 4, alongside comparison with the translations of Pëtr Veinberg, Boris Pasternak and Mikhail Lozinskii which preceded and followed her work, allows an assessment of the methods she employed to bring a newly Soviet Shakespeare to her audiences. The incorporation of archival material and contemporary reviews in the final chapter enables an examination of the effects Radlova's translation tactics had on the play in performance.

The thesis thus makes a contribution to the knowledge and understanding of the work of the Radlovs, while the focus on translations of *Othello* and the reconstruction of Radlov's productions aims to add to the understanding of the Russian performance tradition of the play. The exploration of the reasons behind the popularity of *Othello* in the Stalinist period also provides insight into the potential for accommodation to the constraints of cultural politics under Stalin.

# Acknowledgements

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# Note

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Transliteration of Russian names adheres to the Library of Congress system, unless the name in question is that of an author who has already been published in English and transliterated in a particular format (eg. Mandelstam, Rudnitsky). Where previous publications of an author vary in their system of transliteration, the Library of Congress system is used (eg. Stanislavskii).

All quotations are reproduced with their original spelling and transliteration.

All translations from secondary sources are my own unless otherwise indicated. All back-translations from Russian to English of citations from primary sources are my own.

Archives visited and their abbreviations:

Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i isskustv, Moscow (RGALI)  
[Russian State Archive of Literature and the Arts]

Otdel rukopisei Rossiiskoi natsional'noi biblioteki, St Petersburg (RNB)  
[Manuscript department of the Russian National Library]

Sankt- Peterburgskii gosudarstvennyi muzei teatral'nogo i muzykal'nogo  
isskustva, St Petersburg (SPTM)  
[St Petersburg State Museum of Theatre and Music]

Teatral'nyi musei imeni A. A. Bakhrushina, Moscow (TMB)  
[Bakhrushin Theatre Museum]

Arkhiv Malogo teatra, Moscow (MT)  
[Archive of the Malyi Theatre]

Muzei Moskovskogo khudozhestvennogo teatra imeni A. P. Chekhova, Moscow  
(MAT)  
[Museum of the Moscow Art Theatre]

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# Introduction

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In 1939, in Moscow, the 375<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's birth was marked by a year of celebrations. Events included two conferences jointly organised by the All-Union Theatre Society and the Translator's Section of the Union of Soviet Writers. Since its formation in 1932, membership of this union was essential for a writer or translator in order to be able to publish their work. The gatherings brought together academics, critics, translators, directors and actors from all over the Soviet Union, in order to engage in debate and discussion on Shakespeare, and the staging and translation of his works. The first conference, held in April, featured papers on subjects such as the relevance of Shakespeare to Soviet society and the role of the director in a Shakespeare production.<sup>1</sup> When the resolution of the conference was subsequently published, the importance of Shakespeare to Soviet theatre was proudly proclaimed:

Шекспир является одним из любимейших драматургов советского зрителя. Пьесы его идут в многочисленных столичных и периферийных театрах братских народов, а также на клубной самодеятельной и колхозной сцене. Шекспир стал в Советском Союзе фактором огромного обще-культурного значения, способствующим росту творческой индивидуальности актера, режиссера и целого коллектива.<sup>2</sup>

Speakers at the second conference, in December, included Professor Mikhail Morozov, the renowned Soviet Shakespeare scholar, Kornei Chukovskii, a children's author and literary critic whose involvement in the *Vsemirnaia*

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<sup>1</sup> M. M. Morozov, ed., 'Shekspir – Biulleten' № 1' (Moscow: Kabinet Shekspira i zapadno-evropeiskoi klassiki, vserossiiskogo teatral'nogo obshchestva, 1939), pp.7-22.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p.36. [Shakespeare is one of the favourite playwrights of Soviet audiences. His plays are being performed in many metropolitan and provincial theatres of our family of nations, and also on the stages of amateur clubs and collective farms. Shakespeare has become a factor of enormous universal cultural importance in the Soviet Union, contributing to the growth of the creative identity of the actor, director and the whole company.]

literatura (World Literature) project<sup>3</sup> in the 1920s had made him a respected authority on translation, and the actor Solomon Mikhoels, whose performance in several Shakespearean roles, including Lear at the State Jewish Theatre four years earlier, had won wide him acclaim. However, on this occasion, there seemed to be only one topic of discussion, the translations of Shakespeare by St Petersburg poet-turned-translator, Anna Radlova. Her work was referred to by one commentator as ‘переводы, из-за которых «весь сырбор загорелся»’<sup>4</sup> (the translations which all the fuss is about).

Radlova had produced her translations of five of Shakespeare’s tragedies<sup>5</sup> between 1929 and 1938, and her translations had since been repeatedly used in anthologies of Shakespeare’s plays and performed in numerous productions.<sup>6</sup> However, at the conference, she was forced to defend her work against accusations levelled at her by Chukovskii, Morozov and others, who, over the course of their papers, listed a catalogue of faults in her work. Their charges included using unnecessarily coarse language, failing to convey the emotion in Shakespeare’s texts, and, through the frequent use of shortened and abrupt-sounding phrases, destroying Shakespeare’s syntax and the rhythms of his text. There was much disagreement over which elements of Shakespeare’s text were the most important to preserve. Interestingly, however, while Chukovskii and Morozov appear to have focused on the literary aspects of her translations, a defence of her work was mounted by those at the conference who were directly involved in the theatre. Mikhoels, for example, spoke in support of the techniques used by Radlova in producing a workable text for actors. Radlova’s translation choices were also defended by her husband, the theatre director, Sergei Radlov. Having used his wife’s translations in several of his own productions of Shakespeare, he argued that they were far more stageable than

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<sup>3</sup> The aim of ‘Vsemirnaia literatura’ had been to ensure that Soviet citizens had access to the best in world literature. Launched by the Commissar of Education, Anatolii Lunacharskii, and the writer Maxim Gorky, the project involved hundreds of writers and translators, whose task was to assess all existing translations of foreign literature, and then re-translate anything felt to be substandard. Chukovskii’s role ran parallel to this work: he had been involved in establishing a basis of scholarship and theory on which a “national school” of translation could be founded.

<sup>4</sup> K. Tomashevskii, ‘Kak perevodit’ Shekspir’, *Teatr*, 3 (1940), 142-146, (p.142).

<sup>5</sup> Radlova translated *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*, *Richard III* and *Hamlet*.

<sup>6</sup> A. D. Radlova, ‘Dogovory eë s izdatel’stvami na izdanie eë perevodov.’ RNB, f.625. d.575.

the translations of many of her predecessors and contemporaries. The conference failed to reach a resolution on the merits or the faults of Radlova's translations. However, delegates were in agreement that events such as this conference represented important opportunities for translators to be able to develop their skills, widen their ranks and work together to further the pursuit for a truly living Shakespeare on the Soviet stage.<sup>7</sup>

These conferences and their subject matter highlight a number of key points which are contributory to the content of this thesis. Firstly, the existence of events such as these conferences seem to support Roman Samarin's observation that '[t]he study of Shakespeare in the USSR has developed in close contact with the arts of the theatre and of translation.'<sup>8</sup> The fact that regular conferences on Shakespeare and translation were held in Stalinist Russia also attests to the fact that a great deal of importance was attributed to these two subjects at this time, something which is certainly indicated by the conference resolution cited above. While the centralised control of culture in Stalinist Russia through the formation of organisations such as the Union of Soviet Writers undoubtedly imposed many restrictions on writers and translators, events such as union congresses also seem to have enabled much closer collaboration between different disciplines within the arts. These increased levels of interaction suggest that the Soviet era is a rich period for translation research, and that examining the history of translation alongside that of Shakespeare in Russian culture may lead to a greater understanding of both topics.

Added to this heightened degree of interest in Shakespeare and translation is the second point for consideration: that Radlova, and many other creative members of her generation, were focusing on the translation of Western classics in the Stalinist period, rather than their own original writing. One article reporting on the conference proceedings proudly states that translators of Shakespeare could now count great poets such as Boris Pasternak amongst their number, which

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<sup>7</sup> Tomashevskii, p.146.

<sup>8</sup> Roman Samarin, 'Preface' to *Shakespeare in the Soviet Union*, eds. Roman Samarin and Alexander Nikol'yukin, trans. by Avril Pyman (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966), pp.7-15 (p.9).

could only serve to increase the prestige of Russian translations of Shakespeare.<sup>9</sup> However, the reasons behind this augmentation in the numbers of translators were not purely aesthetic. As Maurice Friedberg notes, there was 'a tendency for prominent victims of Communist thought control to seek refuge in translation when they were no longer allowed to publish original work.'<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, the fact that so many talented writers were forced to turn to translation in order to make a living again highlights the importance of translation in this period, and consequently its value for research.

Thirdly, as Radlova herself asked at the event, why did a conference dedicated to Shakespeare and translation become solely devoted to the discussion of her work, or rather, her mistakes? What was it about her translations which made them so divisive? December 1939 was not the first time that Anna Radlova's translations of Shakespeare had generated an unprecedented reaction. There had already been a furore in the press when her translations were first performed in Moscow in 1935. Many commentators expressed similar criticisms to those of Chukovskii and his colleagues, while others made unfavourable comparisons of Radlova's work with pre-existing translations. However, many had also spoken in favour of Radlova's work. Of particular interest is the fact that while many literary critics found fault with her style, the actors and directors who staged and performed Radlova's translations found her methods effective. This difference of opinion hints at the contrasting demands which are made of a translation when it is intended for performance, as opposed to reading, and suggests that Radlova may have used translation tactics more suitable for a translation meant for the stage. The fact that she was married to a theatre director who went on to stage her translations may well have influenced her approach to Shakespeare, and this close relationship between translator and director therefore provides a fascinating case study for theatre translation research.

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<sup>9</sup> Tomashevskii, p.146.

<sup>10</sup> Maurice Friedberg, *Literary Translation in Russia: A Cultural History* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), p.7.

This thesis will explore each of the key areas highlighted above. However, in order to explain the approach that will be taken, it is first necessary to consider the ways in which it contributes to existing research. As regards the controversial nature of Anna Radlova's translations, and the use of her work as a case-study, it is important to note that in spite of their eminence at the time, very little critical work on Radlova, her life and work (either her poetry or translations) now exists. The most likely reason for this lack of assessment is that like many other members of their generation, Radlova and her husband suffered arrest and imprisonment at the hands of the Stalinist regime, leading to a ban on the publication or discussion of their work which was to last for many years. Therefore, Radlova's collected works have never been published, and she is the subject of very little research, even based on published sources. By drawing on heretofore unexplored archival sources, Radlova's own articles on the practice of translation and contemporary reviews, this thesis provides a much more detailed assessment of Radlova's translations than has previously been available, therefore contributing to the knowledge and understanding of Radlova and her work.

Radlova's translations of Shakespeare make a particularly suitable case study for examining translation tactics under Stalin because, as Radlova began her work on Shakespeare in 1929, she was one of the first translators to undertake the translation of his plays in the new Soviet era. Her translations were performed throughout the 1930s, the period which saw the introduction of socialist realism as the only acceptable method for creative output. From its announcement at the first congress of the Union of Soviet Writers in 1934, all forms of art officially had a sole purpose: 'the ideological remoulding and education of the working people in the spirit of socialism.'<sup>11</sup> In order to preserve their membership of the Union, and therefore their right to publish, all writers and translators had to adopt this new credo. Shakespeare was posited by those in authority as an ideal dramatic model for Soviet writers to emulate, but in re-translating his works,

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<sup>11</sup> Andrei Zhdanov, 'Soviet Literature – The Richest in Ideas, The Most Advanced Literature', in *Soviet Writers' Congress, 1934: The Debate on Socialist Realism and Modernism in the Soviet Union* (London: Lawrence & Wishart Ltd, 1977), pp. 15-24 (p.21).

Radlova would still have had to ensure that her interpretations of the plays fitted within the boundaries of the new ideology. As Tom Cheesman argues in his recent study of the translation of *Othello* in Germany: '[s]tudying re-translations illuminates the history of the translating culture: its literary language, its canons of style and taste, and its ideological politics.'<sup>12</sup> By examining Radlova's translation choices in detail, this thesis will explore the different tactics which she used to acculturate Shakespeare to the new political climate.

The work of Radlova's husband, the director Sergei Radlov, has been more fully explored than that of his wife, most notably by the Russian academic David Zolotnitsky. His work includes a complete study of Radlov's directorial career, published in English in 1996 as *Sergei Radlov: The Shakespearean Fate of a Soviet Director*.<sup>13</sup> Radlov also features in studies of early revolutionary theatre, such as the work of Konstantin Rudnitsky.<sup>14</sup> However, the work of husband and wife has rarely been considered together, and so the working relationship between this translator and director of Shakespeare has never been fully explored.

In order to ensure appropriate depth for this thesis, a decision was taken to focus on the translation and performance of a single play. Given the debate at the All-Union Theatre conference regarding the more 'theatrical' nature of Radlova's translations, it seemed appropriate, in selecting a text for detailed analysis, to choose a play which was regularly performed and appeared popular with audiences. In his article, 'Shakespeare as a Founding Father of Socialist Realism: The Soviet Affair with Shakespeare', Arkady Ostrovsky notes that *Othello* was by far the most popular of Shakespeare's plays in the 1930s, with over one hundred more productions of the play than its nearest rival, *Romeo and Juliet*.<sup>15</sup> It seems that *Othello* fitted more easily within the new political

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<sup>12</sup> Tom Cheesman, 'Thirty Times More Fair than Black': *Othello* Re-Translation as Political Re-Statement', *Angermion*, 4 (2011) 1-52 (p.2.)

<sup>13</sup> David Zolotnitsky, *Sergei Radlov: The Shakespearean Fate of a Soviet Director* (Luxembourg: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> Konstantin Rudnitsky, , *Russian and Soviet Theatre: Tradition and the Avant-Garde*, trans. by Roxane Permar, ed. by Lesley Milne (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1988).

<sup>15</sup> Arkady Ostrovsky, 'Shakespeare as a Founding Father of Socialist Realism: The Soviet Affair with Shakespeare', in *Shakespeare in the Worlds of Communism and Socialism*, ed. by Irena Makaryk and Joseph G. Price (Toronto: University Press, 2006), pp.56-83, p.61.

boundaries for theatre. Discussing the Soviet novel, Katerina Clark notes that ‘The “positive hero” has been a defining feature of Soviet socialist realism. The hero is expected to be an emblem of Bolshevik virtue, someone the reading public might be inspired to emulate’.<sup>16</sup> On stage, it appears that as a respected soldier, Othello embodied these qualities more ably than some other Shakespearean heroes, notably Hamlet. The Danish prince was generally thought to be unpopular with Stalin ‘because he is a character who thinks,’<sup>17</sup> and performances of *Hamlet* were tacitly banned until after the leader’s death. This thesis will therefore focus on the analysis of Radlova’s translation of *Othello*, and the productions of the play directed by her husband in which it was first performed, at the Molodoi (Young) Theatre in St Petersburg in 1932, Radlov’s Theatre Studio, also in St Petersburg, in April 1935, and again, at the Malyi Theatre, Moscow in December of that year. Ostrovsky’s aforementioned article is one of the few pieces of existing scholarship which reflects, albeit briefly, on the effects which Radlov’s choice of his wife’s translation may have had on the Moscow production of *Othello*, and this study will extend this research. The thesis will include assessment of the Radlovs’ earlier work, enabling an examination of how their approach to Shakespeare was developed. Theatre translation theorists such as Patrice Pavis argue that in order to conceptualise the act of theatre translation, the entire creative team involved in the production should be consulted: the translator, director and actor.<sup>18</sup> Using contemporary reviews and accounts from those who were involved, the final section of this thesis will reconstruct Radlov’s productions, in order to present, as far as is possible, given the ephemeral nature of performance, an account of how the translation functioned on stage.

The translator and the Shakespeare play for analysis have therefore been established. However, the reasons behind the theoretical approach taken also

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<sup>16</sup> Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000), p.46.

<sup>17</sup> Irena R. Makaryk, ‘Wartime *Hamlet*’, in *Shakespeare in the Worlds of Communism and Socialism*, ed. by Irena Makaryk and Joseph G. Price (Toronto: University Press, 2006), pp.119-133 (p.120).

<sup>18</sup> Patrice Pavis, *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p.136.

need to be defined. As indicated by its title, this thesis employs modern translation theory in order to analyse Radlova's translation choices throughout her creation of a new Stalinist *Othello*. Sirku Aaltonen defines "acculturation" as 'the process which is employed to tone down the Foreign and to help identification with unfamiliar reality.'<sup>19</sup> Certain aspects of the translation theory used, such as the functionalist approaches of Katharina Reiss and Christiane Nord, Lawrence Venuti's theories of foreignization and domestication, and Gideon Toury's theories of operational norms are used to clarify Radlova's methods of acculturation within the target text itself, whilst other theories used provide a broader outlook, adding a different theoretical perspective to existing research.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given Shakespeare's popularity, chronological studies of the history of Shakespeare in Russia were completed by Soviet scholars. The two most prominent of these are *Shekspir i russkaia kul'tura* (Shakespeare and Russian Culture), edited by M. P. Alekseev, and published in 1965,<sup>20</sup> and *Shekspir i russkaia literatura XIX veka* (Shakespeare and Russian literature of the nineteenth century) by Iurii D. Levin, published in 1988.<sup>21</sup> As indicated by their titles, the focus of these works is on the ways in which Shakespeare was assimilated into Russian culture, and in particular, how key figures in Russian literature chose to interpret his work. In a highly restrictive political climate, analysing Shakespeare's influence on Russian literature was one of the few ways in which Soviet scholars of foreign literature were able to study Shakespeare, so these works were regarded as monumental for their time. However, though the work of the most seminal translators of Shakespeare and general trends in translation style are addressed, as indeed they are in another work by Levin, *Russkie perevodchiki XIX veka i razvitie khudozhestvennogo perevoda* (Russian Translators of the Nineteenth Century and the Development of Artistic

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<sup>19</sup> Sirku Aaltonen, *Acculturation of the Other* (Joensuu: Joensuu University Press, 1996) p.19.

<sup>20</sup> M. P. Alekseev, *Shekspir i russkaia kul'tura* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1965).

<sup>21</sup> I. D. Levin, *Shekspir i russkaia literatura XIX veka* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1988).



Translation),<sup>22</sup> all of these studies were completed without the benefit of modern translation theory. The same is true of George Gibian's unpublished PhD thesis from 1951, which is the first full study in English of Shakespeare in Russia in English.<sup>23</sup> Zdeněk Stříbrný's much more recent study, published in 2000, adds an assessment of how Shakespeare fared in the other countries of Eastern Europe to an updated account of the Russian situation.<sup>24</sup> Stříbrný's post-Soviet publication date also allows him to reflect on the Soviet treatment of Shakespeare with a greater degree of objectivity than the studies completed in that era, such as that of Mikhail M. Morozov, *Shakespeare on the Soviet Stage*, and Sof'ia Nel's' identically titled Russian work, *Shekspir na Sovetskoi stsene*.<sup>25</sup> A recent collection, *Shakespeare in the Worlds of Communism and Socialism*, edited by Irena R. Makaryk and Joseph G. Price,<sup>26</sup> also helps reassess the Soviet treatment of Shakespeare, containing several articles with many useful insights on productions throughout the 1930s-1950s. Once again, however, discussion of the translations in question is fairly minimal.

Alongside these studies of the history of Shakespeare, there have also been studies into the history of translation. The most significant of these is the first major study of translation in Russia, *Literary Translation in Russia: A Cultural History* by Maurice Friedberg, published in 1997. Friedberg's comprehensive history is particularly detailed when analysing the implications for translation during the political turbulence of the twentieth century. However, whilst reference is made to many of the most prominent translators of Shakespeare and their translations, they are understandably not discussed in detail.

The use of translation theory such as Itamar Even-Zohar's polysystems theory in this thesis, in conjunction with the complementary work of Gideon Toury and André Lefevere on the forces which control a cultural system, enables a

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<sup>22</sup> IU. D. Levin, *Russkie perevodchiki XIX veka i razvitie khudozhestvennogo perevoda* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1985).

<sup>23</sup> George Gibian, 'Shakespeare in Russia' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Harvard University, 1951).

<sup>24</sup> Zdeněk Stříbrný, *Shakespeare in Eastern Europe* (Oxford: University Press, 2000).

<sup>25</sup> M. M. Morozov, *Shakespeare on the Soviet Stage*, trans. by David Magarshack, (London: Soviet News, 1947); S. Nel's, *Shekspir na Sovetskoi stsene* (Moscow: Isskustvo, 1960).

<sup>26</sup> *Shakespeare in the Worlds of Communism and Socialism*, ed. by Irena R. Makaryk and Joseph G. Price (Toronto: University Press, 2006).

consideration of the history of Shakespeare within the context of the history of translation in Russia. This theoretical approach adds an appreciation of the effects of the different trends in translation style on the way in which Radlova chooses to acculturate Shakespeare. In order to clarify the influence or rejection of these trends, this thesis will offer a comparative analysis of Radlova's translation of *Othello*, assessing her work alongside not only her source text, but also against three other translations, that of Pëtr Veinberg, from 1864, which was still regularly being performed when Radlova began work on her *Othello*, and two translations which were completed within a decade from Radlova's, by Boris Pasternak, published in 1945, and Mikhail Lozinskii, licensed for performance in 1948. Incorporation of sociological approaches to translation, influenced by the work of Pierre Bourdieu, also allows the assessment of the role Radlova herself plays in the decision making process, as well as the influence of the environment in which she was working.

One existing study which does consider the translation and performance of Shakespeare in detail is Alexei Semenenko's *Hamlet the Sign: Russian translations of Hamlet and Literary Canon Formation*, published in 2007.<sup>27</sup> In this extensive work, Semenenko traces the entire history of *Hamlet* in Russia, in order to investigate which factors contribute to a translation obtaining canonical status. Of particular interest is his identification of two parallel canons of Russian *Hamlets*, one theatrical and one philological.<sup>28</sup> In contrast to the approach taken in this thesis, however, Semenenko rejects Even-Zohar's polysystems theory in favour of the work of semiotician Iurii Lotman. Whilst Lotman's concepts of cultural systems are undoubtedly contiguous to Even-Zohar's, Lotman was not a translation theorist, and therefore this present thesis offers a range of more specific perspectives on the relationship between the history of translation and the history of Shakespeare in Russia. As already discussed, translation theory also enables a closer analysis of the translation decisions within the text itself. Semenenko's work is one of several detailed studies

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<sup>27</sup> Alexei Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign: Russian translations of Hamlet and Literary Canon Formation* (Stockholm: University Press, 2007).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p.100.

focusing on the reception of *Hamlet* in Russia, a further justification as to why this thesis focuses on *Othello*, in order to broaden the understanding of the Russian Shakespeare tradition.<sup>29</sup>

The last remaining point highlighted by the debate at the 1939 Moscow conference is the fact that many of the translators working on Shakespeare in the Stalinist period were also talented writers and poets in their own right. As already noted, this context makes it a particularly fertile one for translation research. Boris Pasternak's translations of Shakespeare remain some of the most popular and performed in Russia, and as such have been the subject of several different studies in both English and Russian. Anna Kay France's *Boris Pasternak's Translations of Shakespeare*, offers a detailed assessment of Pasternak's work, focusing largely on his handling of the major characters and themes of the plays.<sup>30</sup> France argues that in a time of political repression, Pasternak used translation 'as a means of personal creative expression',<sup>31</sup> and therefore, in spite of their popularity, his work has also been subject to much criticism for the freedom he took in his approach. The most recent of these more critical assessments is N. A. Nikiforovskaia's *Shekspir Borisa Pasternaka*, (Boris Pasternak's Shakespeare) published in 1999.<sup>32</sup> Pasternak's free style of translation is often contrasted with that of Mikhail Lozinskii, who as a translator was an advocate of a far more literal approach. For example, in 1940, the poet Anna Akhmatova commented:

Жаль мне только, что пастернаковский перевод сейчас принято хвалить в ущерб переводу Лозинского. А он очень хорош, хотя и

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<sup>29</sup> Other studies include *Hamlet: A Window on Russia* by Eleanor Rowe (New York: New York University Press, 1976); and articles focusing on particular periods in the play's history, such as 'Wartime *Hamlet*' by Irena R. Makaryk, in *Shakespeare in the Worlds of Communism and Socialism*, ed. by Irena R. Makaryk and Joseph G. Price (Toronto: University Press, 2006), pp.119-133; and Spencer Golub's 'Between the curtain and the grave: the Taganka in the *Hamlet* gulag,' in Dennis Kennedy, *Foreign Shakespeare* (Cambridge: University Press, 1993) pp.158-177.

<sup>30</sup> Anna Kay France, *Boris Pasternak's Translations of Shakespeare* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1978).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p.6.

<sup>32</sup> N. A. Nikorovskaia, *Shekspir Borisa Pasternaka* (St Petersburg: Biblioteka rossiiskoi akademii nauk, 1999).

совсем другой. Перевод Лозинского лучше читать, как книгу, а перевод Пастернака лучше слушать со сцены.<sup>33</sup>

Akhmatova's reflection is in line with Semenenko's argument cited above regarding the dual canon of theatrical and literary translations of *Hamlet*. However, given the observations on the suitability of Radlova's translations for the stage, comparison of her work with translations constructed with such different approaches will clarify where her work fits into this equation, and will further understanding as to which tactics were most successful in creating a stageable Shakespeare for Stalinist Russia. Pasternak actually expressed admiration for Radlova's choice of style, and therefore this study will offer a different perspective on his translation of *Othello*, as well as providing further insight into the work of Lozinskii, which by comparison, has been under-researched.

## Structure of the Thesis

**Chapter 1** outlines the aspects of translation theory which are relevant to the analysis of Anna Radlova's translation of *Othello*, and which will therefore direct the approaches to be taken in subsequent chapters. Following previous studies in theatre translation, this thesis draws on the polysystems theory of Itamar Even-Zohar. His work allows translations to be viewed as a network of related elements, while the complementary theories of André Lefevere and Gideon Toury explore the controlling forces, both external and internal, which shape that system. The chapter also highlights the criticisms of Even-Zohar's approach, and in reflection discusses the influence of Pierre Bourdieu's work on translation theory: the encouragement of a more sociological approach which takes into account the shaping influence of the translator's working environment. The

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<sup>33</sup> Lidia Chukovskaia, *Zapiski ob Anne Akhmatovoi, tom. 1, 1938-1941* (Paris: YMCA Press, 1976), p.90. Maurice Friedberg provides the following translation: 'It is a pity that nowadays Pasternak's translation is being praised as superior to Lozinsky's. Lozinsky's rendition is very good, too, though quite different. Lozinsky's should be read like a book, while Pasternak's should be heard from the stage.' (Friedberg, p.163.)

chapter explores the ways in which the process of bringing a translation to the stage has been theorised, as well as discussing the issues surrounding the terminology to be used throughout the thesis such as 'version' and 'adaptation', and 'performability'. Finally, the chapter considers approaches taken by Shakespeare scholars working in translation, examining the benefits of re-translation, and the freedoms offered by performing Shakespeare in a foreign language.

**Chapter 2** establishes the historical context for Radlova's *Othello*. Guided by the framework established in the first chapter, it traces the history of Shakespeare in Russia within the broader context of the history of translation. Trends in translation style are identified in order to explore the ways in which Shakespeare became assimilated into Russian culture, as well as the effects of the canonisation of certain translations. Insights from theatre anthropology are employed in order to consider foreign influences on Russian performance and theatrical traditions. The effects of censorship on the translation of Shakespeare in Russia are examined, with particular reference to the implications for both Shakespeare and the practice of translation following the introduction of socialist realism in 1934. The chapter includes a discussion of exactly why *Othello* became the most popular of Shakespeare's plays during this period, and details the work of the translators who will feature in the comparative study below.

**Chapter 3** offers a more sociological perspective, analysing the effects of the environment in which she was working on Anna Radlova's translation practices. Drawing on archival resources and memoirs written by their contemporaries, the chapter provides essential biographical information on Anna Radlova and her husband Sergei Radlov, and investigates the social and cultural circles to which they belonged. It provides a brief assessment of the creative work they undertook before turning to Shakespeare, and examines how their approaches to Shakespeare were developed. The chapter considers the influence which one partner may have had over the other, and how their views on Shakespeare and translation will have been shaped by the surrounding political climate.

**Chapter 4** provides a comparative analysis of Radlova's translation of *Othello*. This does not entail a fully annotated presentation of Radlova's translation, but rather the examination of the elements of her work which are of particular importance to the context in which she was working, or are especially indicative of her individual translation style. Radlova's work is assessed not only alongside her source text, but is also compared with the 1864 translation of Pëtr Veinberg, which was the established favourite on stage at the time Radlova began translating, as well two translations which were completed within a decade from Radlova's, by Mikhail Lozinskii and Boris Pasternak. The chapter draws on further elements of translation theory to support and clarify the analysis: the functionalist theories of Katharina Reiss and Christiane Nord when examining how Radlova's principles of translation manifest themselves in her choices of language; Lawrence Venuti's theories of domestication and foreignisation when assessing whether her translation shows evidence of 'russification' and the influence of socialist realism; and Gideon Toury's theories on operational norms when exploring Radlova's tactics for dealing with the frequent sexual references and insults within the text. Conversely, the chapter also offers an assessment of the difficulties of using modern theory in order to analyse a translation from a particular historical and political context.

**Chapter 5** then presents an evaluation of Radlova's translation in performance. Adopting the same framework as Chapter 2, polysystems theory is used to establish the context for Radlov's productions, examining the Russian performance tradition of *Othello*, whilst the work of Patrice Pavis is incorporated in order to explore the influence of foreign performers. Contemporary reviews and accounts from the actors involved are then used in order to reconstruct Radlov's productions of *Othello* at his theatres in St Petersburg and the Malyi Theatre in Moscow. In particular, the chapter focuses on the ways in which the translation may have had a direct impact on the production, and on how the tactics of translator and director combined in order to produce a politically acceptable *Othello* for the Soviet stage.

In a recent publication, Lawrence Venuti laments the apparent present-day focus of current trends in translation studies:

The past decade has witnessed relatively few projects in which translations have been studied in specific cultural situations at specific historical moments, contextualized with the help of extensive archival research. [...] As a result, the use of the past not merely as a source of theoretical concepts and practical strategies but as a means of understanding and criticizing the present has been less and less pursued.<sup>34</sup>

This thesis argues the applicability of certain perspectives from modern theory to a translation in a particular historical and political context. Its focus on the Radlovs' acculturation of Shakespeare in Stalinist Russia increases the knowledge of their work and of the ways of negotiating cultural politics under Stalin. However, through its examination of the translations at the centre of the All-Union theatre conference in 1939, the thesis also provides more general insight into the importance of the relationship between translator and director when staging a translation, and adds to the understanding of the position of Shakespeare and the translator under a totalitarian regime.

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<sup>34</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), p.6.

# Chapter 1: Viewing the Russian Acculturation of Shakespeare through the Framework of Translation Studies

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## 1.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this thesis is to determine the ways in which modern translation theory can be used to support and clarify the analysis of Anna Radlova's translation of *Othello*. The purpose of this first chapter is therefore to outline the principal aspects of translation theory which are appropriate for such a task: the analysis of a translation of a canonised text intended for performance, which is written in historic English. The chapter will also include discussion of the terminology to be used throughout the thesis: specifically the much-debated term "performability", and the issues concerning the utilisation of terms such as "adaptation" and "version" when referring to translations intended for use in the theatre. The theorists whose work will be incorporated include Itamar Even-Zohar, André Lefevere, Gideon Toury, Susan Bassnett, Sirkku Aaltonen, Annie Brisset, Patrice Pavis, Pierre Bourdieu and Lawrence Venuti.

Translations for the theatre have often been viewed as an under-researched category within the discipline of translation studies. For example, in 1991, Susan Bassnett observed that '[i]n the history of translation studies, less has been written on problems of translating theatre texts than on translating any other text type.'<sup>1</sup> While in recent years, several published collections have sought to redress this balance,<sup>2</sup> studies which focus on the history of theatre translation

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<sup>1</sup> Susan Bassnett, 'Translating for the Theatre: The Case Against Performability', *TTR*, 4, (1991), 99-111 (p.99).

<sup>2</sup> These collections include *Stages of Translation*, ed. by David Johnston (Bath: Absolute Classics, 1996); *Moving Target: Theatre Translation and Cultural Relocation*, ed. by Carole-Anne Upton (Manchester: St Jerome, 2000); *Staging and Performing Translation*, ed. by Roger Baines, Cristina Marinetti and Manuela Perteghella (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) and *Theatre*



practice, as opposed to current translations and productions, often draw on insights from literary translation studies. Much of the discussion which follows therefore operates under the broader term of “literature”. However, the distinguishing features of drama, and therefore the requirements for a stage translation, will also need to be taken into account. As Bassnett suggests, ‘[t]he issues the translator of a play faces are complex.’ Through the actors’ performances, drama texts engage a different type of language, and so ‘the actual script is only one part of the total process which is theatre.’<sup>3</sup> The translation and performance of a foreign text will also involve the blending (or clashing) of theatre styles of the two different cultures, and if, as in the case of Shakespeare, the text is historical, then also the amalgamation of styles from different time periods. In order to be well-received, the translation will need to meet with the expectations of the host culture, aesthetically, socially and politically. As this thesis centres on a translation for performance within an authoritarian regime, this last set of requirements is of particular significance. Performances generally gather large groups of people together in one location, and any hint of subversion will be immediately obvious. Censorship of drama therefore tends to be even more stringent than that of literature, and therefore will have influence over a translator’s working practices.

In spite of the differences noted above, however, much can be drawn from the theory of literary translation to assist in the analysis of translated works for the theatre. As stated above, some of the most prominent studies in the history of theatre translation, such as those conducted by Sirkku Aaltonen on the translation of Irish drama in Finland,<sup>4</sup> Romy Heylen on the translation of *Hamlet* into French<sup>5</sup> and Annie Brisset on translated theatre in Quebec<sup>6</sup> choose to draw heavily on descriptive translation studies. The aim of such studies is not to

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*Translation in Performance*, ed. by Silvia Bigliuzzi, Paola Ambrosi and Peter Kofler (New York: Routledge, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Susan Bassnett, *Reflections on Translation*, (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2011), p.100.

<sup>4</sup> Sirkku Aaltonen, *Acculturation of the Other: Irish Milieux in Finnish Drama Translation* (Joensuu: University Press, 1996); *Time Sharing on Stage* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Romy Heylen, *Translation, Poetics, and the Stage: Six French Hamlets* (London: Routledge, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> Annie Brisset, *A Sociocritique of Translation: Theatre and Alterity in Quebec, 1968-1988*, trans. by Rosalind Gill and Roger Ganon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

evaluate whether particular translations should be judged as “good” or “bad”, but to examine the ways in which to understand the choices that translators make. Much of this work was formulated before theorists emerged who write specifically on drama translation, though as noted, translation specialists studying theatre still apply this theory to their research.

As will be outlined in Chapter 2, many translations of Shakespeare in Russia were initially written to be read rather than performed, and therefore can arguably be treated as literature. However, the translations which were performed often displayed different styles and characteristics, so the lack of distinction between literature and drama in descriptive studies will be compensated by the use of later work which does apply specifically to drama.

## 1.2 Polysystems Theory

The polysystems theory of Itamar Even-Zohar has proved to be a key tool for those theorists choosing to take this descriptive approach. Even-Zohar’s work allowed theatre and literary translation theorists to examine how the incorporation of foreign texts has shaped the repertoires of particular countries, bringing about a reconsideration of the importance of the role played by translation in literary development. As Bassnett comments, ‘[f]ar from being considered a marginal activity, translation was perceived as having played a fundamental part in literary and cultural history.’<sup>7</sup> Many of those studying theatre translations have therefore used polysystems theory as a starting point for their research. For example, in order to apply the systemic approach to the analysis of translations within the Finnish theatrical repertoire, Aaltonen states that she relies on the views of André Lefevere and Even-Zohar, who she suggests are the scholars to ‘have developed the systems approach most fully’.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Susan Bassnett, ‘The Meek or the Mighty: Reappraising the Role of the Translator’, in *Translation, Power, Subversion*, eds. Román Alvarez and M. Carmen Africa Vidal (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 1996), pp.10-24, (p.22).

<sup>8</sup> Sirkku Aaltonen, *Acculturation of the Other*, p.50.

The polysystems concept, which views literature as a network of individual elements which interact with one other, has been seen as a useful tool for investigating why translators behave in certain ways, and why some translations are more successful than others. It therefore seems highly appropriate for the investigation of the techniques and reception of the work of a translator operating in a particular historical context. Interestingly, the foundations of this theory were laid in the work of the Russian Formalists in the 1920s, the period when Anna Radlova was beginning to translate Shakespeare.

The idea of a system, as Theo Hermans describes, ‘invites us to think in terms of functions, connections and interrelations. Contextualization of individual phenomena is the key.’<sup>9</sup> Even-Zohar defines a system as ‘the network of relations that can be hypothesized for a certain set of assumed observables (occurrences/phenomena).’<sup>10</sup> He then uses what he terms “oppositions” ‘to investigate the internal workings of the literary system. The “oppositions” exist between the different positions of elements within the system, and are primarily divided into three groups: opposition between canonised and non-canonised products or models, opposition between the system’s centre and its periphery, and opposition between ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ activities.’<sup>11</sup> Even-Zohar describes primary versus secondary opposition as that of ‘innovativeness vs. conservatism in the repertoire.’<sup>12</sup> The most common pattern of “opposition” between primary and secondary activities is described as follows: ‘Typically, “primary” models arise in the less regimented periphery of a system and campaign to oust the comfortably entrenched models in the canonised centre.’<sup>13</sup> This competition prevents the stagnation of the repertoire, as under pressure from non-canonised challengers, the central elements of a repertoire cannot remain unchanged. For Even-Zohar, this opposition ‘guarantee[s] the evolution

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<sup>9</sup> Theo Hermans, *Translation in Systems* (Manchester: St Jerome, 1999), pp.32-33.

<sup>10</sup> Itamar Even-Zohar, ‘The “Literary System”, *Poetics Today*, 11 (1990), 27-44 (p.27).

<sup>11</sup> Itamar Even-Zohar, ‘The Relationship between Primary and Secondary Systems in the Literary Polysystem’, in *Papers in Historical Poetics*, pp.16-22 (pp.17-18).

<sup>12</sup> Itamar Even-Zohar, ‘Polysystem Theory’, *Poetics Today*, 11 (1990), 9-26 (p.21).

<sup>13</sup> Hermans, p.108.

of the system, which is the only means of its preservation.’<sup>14</sup> He argues that translated literature should be regarded as a system within the literary system, having its own canonised centre and periphery, and its own innovative and more established conservative models. In fact, Even-Zohar asserts that translated literature should be seen ‘not only as an integral system within any literary polysystem, but as a most active system within it.’<sup>15</sup>

Studies investigating the position of translated literature within different literary systems have generally indicated that ‘the “normal” position assumed by translated literature tends to be the peripheral one’.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, one of the key aspects of Even-Zohar’s theory has been to ascertain those situations where translated literature takes up a more central position. Even-Zohar identifies these as:

- a) When a literature is young, and therefore the polysystem has not yet been crystallised;
- b) When a literature is either “peripheral” (within a large group of correlated literatures) or weak, or both;
- c) When there are turning points, crises or literary vacuums within a literature.<sup>17</sup>

In all of the above cases, translated literature fulfils a need within the native literature of the home system, whether it is by helping a language develop and become ‘serviceable as a literary language’,<sup>18</sup> or by introducing new styles, models and techniques into a less varied native system.

As far as the current project is concerned, the global translation history of Shakespeare provides examples of each of these situations. In Germany during

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<sup>14</sup> Even-Zohar, ‘Polysystem Theory’, p.16.

<sup>15</sup> Itamar Even-Zohar, ‘The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem’, in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. by Lawrence Venuti (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp.192-197, (p.193).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p.196.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p.193.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p.194.

the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Shakespeare's plays provided a model which could be used by writers to experiment with new theatrical styles and develop their literary language:

The Germans did not discover in Shakespeare an archetypal Englishman; they discovered instead a revolutionary writer, whose works offered an opportunity to break the stranglehold of French classical theatre and could provide German writers with a new model of tragedy. Significantly, a large number of Shakespeare's plays were translated into German, Italian, Polish, Hungarian, Czech and other languages of those European peoples engaged in a struggle to assert their national identity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>19</sup>

Similarly, in the same era in Russia, as Maurice Friedberg describes, '[t]ranslations were a boon to Russian authors in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, serving as models for emulation to writers who were only beginning to create a secular Russian literature'.<sup>20</sup> As will be further discussed in Chapter 2, the Russian literary language was still in the process of being developed at this time. To cite a much more recent example of a classic being used as a qualifying standard for a language, in her work on translated theatre in Quebec, Annie Brisset demonstrates the function of translation in helping to establish the country's developing literary language: 'the aim of translating a canonical work into "Québécois" is to dedialectalize Québécois and to prove that it is a language in its own right.'<sup>21</sup>

Translations of foreign classics have also often been used to bridge the gap in the national literature following changes to a country's political situation, before more politically acceptable texts could be written, as indicated by Even-Zohar's third premise. For example, in Nazi Germany, 'Goebbels recommended the classics for an interim period, for as long as the new national steely romanticism

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<sup>19</sup> Susan Bassnett-McGuire, *Shakespeare: The Elizabethan Plays* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), p.3.

<sup>20</sup> Friedberg, p.17.

<sup>21</sup> Brisset, p.116.

had not yet taken on a satisfactory dramatic shape.<sup>22</sup> Amongst the classics, Shakespeare was awarded the highest status, so that even by 1939, when other foreign dramatists began to be excluded from the Nazi repertoire, ‘the Ministry of Propaganda made an explicit exception for Shakespeare; he was to be treated as a German author.’<sup>23</sup> Similarly, when the policy of socialist realism was introduced in Soviet Russia in 1934, translations of foreign works were also treated as important educational sources, with the proletariat proclaimed as ‘the sole heir of all that is best in the treasury of world literature.’<sup>24</sup>

Whilst widely accepted and adopted into many different studies of translation, Even-Zohar’s theory has also been criticised by several scholars, largely because of the lack of specificity of some of his definitions. Bassnett, describing them as ‘somewhat crude’, asked in 1998:

What does it mean to define a literature as peripheral or weak? [...] Is Finland “weak”, for example, or Italy, since they both translate so much? In contrast, is the United Kingdom “strong” and “central” because it translates so little?<sup>25</sup>

In his study of translations of *Hamlet* and literary canon formation in Russia published in 2007, Alexei Semenenko also rejects Even-Zohar’s approach on the basis that his definitions ‘can hardly be regarded as methodologically accurate, because the term “literature” is tautologically explained through “literary activities”’. Semenenko questions ‘What type of activities? What type of relations?’<sup>26</sup>

Semenenko instead advocates the theory of the Russian semiotician, Iurii Lotman, which he describes as ‘invaluable for an understanding of the

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<sup>22</sup> Werner Habicht, ‘Shakespeare and theatre politics in the Third Reich’, in *The Play Out of Context*, eds. Hanna Scolnicov and Peter Holland (Cambridge: University Press, 1989) pp.110-120, (p.111).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p.113.

<sup>24</sup> Zhdanov, p.22.

<sup>25</sup> Susan Bassnett, ‘The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies’, in *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 1998), pp.123-140 (p.127).

<sup>26</sup> Semenenko, p.20.

mechanisms of literary evolution.<sup>27</sup> Lotman's work, which, like polysystems, has its basis in Russian Formalism, is also employed by Rachel Polonsky, who utilises what she terms his 'typology of cultural interaction' in order to analyse the reception of nineteenth century English literature in Russia.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, it is possible to argue that these different theoretical approaches are closely linked: Even-Zohar has in fact described the semiotic approach as 'only one alley which opened at the juncture of polysystems thinking and hypothesized semiotic phenomena.'<sup>29</sup> Following Lotman, Semenenko defines a system as 'a methodological construction which allows us to describe literary phenomena in terms of period, different and opposing tendencies, etc. as well as analyze the relation between the main participants of the literary process.'<sup>30</sup> The use of polysystems theory by several scholars of literature and drama in translation would seem to indicate that the same is true of Even-Zohar's concept. Similarly, Polonsky highlights the fact that Lotman stresses the importance of asking in a comparative literary study not 'how the influence of one text upon another becomes possible, but rather 'why and in what conditions does a "foreign" text become necessary for the creative development of "one's own".'<sup>31</sup> As noted above, Even-Zohar does address the conditions in which foreign texts (and therefore translations) become important in the development of a country's literature.

However, other translation theorists have suggested that Even-Zohar's theory can only be applied to systems within certain types of cultures. Whilst acknowledging that '[p]olysystem theory, as a tool for studying the literatures from emerging nations, from developing countries, or countries undergoing radical change, is becoming increasingly indispensable', in the 1990s Edwin Gentzler also found fault with the polysystem approach, particularly with its applicability to cultural systems which are well established: 'While Even-Zohar

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p.13.

<sup>28</sup> Rachel Polonsky, *English Literature and the Russian Aesthetic Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>29</sup> Itamar Even-Zohar, 'Polysystem Theory and Cultural Research' in *Papers in Culture Research* (Tel Aviv: Unit of Culture Research, Tel Aviv University, 2010), pp.35-39 (p.38).

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.14.

<sup>31</sup> Polonsky, p.2.

observes that translations can function as primary or innovative in “young” literatures or in systems which are “weak”, he seldom observes such functioning in “strong” literary systems’.<sup>32</sup> Gentzler argues that Even-Zohar’s views are less convincing when applied to strong cultures such as the French, British, or Russian, which he states have ‘well-developed literary traditions’.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, in the case of the Russian literary and theatrical systems, it can be argued that the conditions which lead to translation forming a more central part of the system have occurred several times in the culture’s history. This situation is amplified by the fact that the text to be studied here is a translation of Shakespeare, a writer whose works have enjoyed canonical status in Russia, and throughout the rest of the world.

For Theo Hermans, however, despite the seemingly all-inclusive nature of polysystems theory, Even-Zohar’s terminology remains too abstract, and fails to take account of many of the outside influences on cultural systems.

[P]olysystems theory is aware of the social embedding of cultural systems but in practice takes little heed of actual political and social power relations or more concrete entities such as institutions or groups with real interests to look after. For all its emphasis on models and repertoires, polysystems theory remains thoroughly text bound.’<sup>34</sup>

The political and social power relations to which Hermans refers would have had a significant effect on the working practices of a translator working in Stalinist Russia of the 1920s and 1930s, such as Anna Radlova. In her book on the Soviet novel, Katerina Clark highlights the importance of considering the effect of external factors when examining the literary output of this period: ‘The problem of literature’s relationship to its political and social environment, and the dependence of meaning on factors external to the texts themselves, cannot be treated properly without introducing a historical or extratextual dimension.’

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<sup>32</sup> Edwin Gentzler, ‘Translation, Counter-Culture, and *The Fifties* in the USA’, in *Translation, Power, Subversion*, eds. Román Álvarez and M. Carmen-África Vidal (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1996), pp.116-137, (p.117).

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p.119.

<sup>34</sup> Hermans, p.137.



Clark argues that this contextual information ‘becomes especially important in the case of Soviet literature, because of the marginal importance of the aesthetic function in texts and the unusually great importance of politics and ideology.’<sup>35</sup> Whilst polysystems theory will therefore provide the central framework for the approach of the thesis, it also therefore seems imperative to refer to the work of other theorists who chose to extend polysystems theory, examining the elements which affect the literary system beyond the texts themselves.

### 1.3 Patronage, Poetics and Ideology

André Lefevere was receptive to polysystems theory, but also criticised it, devising his own categories and terms in the 1990s. However, Aaltonen argues that Lefevere’s approach can be seen as complementary to the work of Even-Zohar. She states that while Even-Zohar emphasises intra-literary relations, Lefevere concentrates on extra-literary links.<sup>36</sup>

Lefevere built on polysystems theory by examining the “control factors” which function both within and outside the literary system. Lefevere divides these control factors into two main groups, which for him manage the other elements which have influence over the literary system. He terms the first control factor “the professional”, by which he means critics, reviewers, teachers, and translators. For Lefevere, it is the professionals within the system who are responsible for ‘rewriting’ works of literature ‘until they are deemed acceptable to the poetics and ideology of a certain time.’<sup>37</sup> The second control factor is “patronage” – ‘the powers (persons, institutions) that can further or hinder the reading, writing and rewriting of literature.’<sup>38</sup>

According to Lefevere, ‘[p]atrons try to regulate the relationship between the literary system and the other systems, which, together, make up a society, a

<sup>35</sup> Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, p.xiii.

<sup>36</sup> Aaltonen, *Acculturation of the Other*, p.50.

<sup>37</sup> André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London: Routledge, 1992) p.14.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, p.15.

culture.’<sup>39</sup> They generally operate by means of institutions set up to regulate. Lefevre’s concept of patronage consists of three elements: one ideological, one economic and one which confers status. The ideological element of patronage determines what the relation between literature and other social systems should be. The patron or patrons will also ensure the writer’s livelihood, providing the economic element, whilst they can also confer prestige and recognition: the status component.

Patronage can be differentiated or undifferentiated. When it is differentiated, the three elements are separated, so that ‘economic success is relatively independent of ideological factors, and does not necessarily bring status with it’.<sup>40</sup> If a system’s patronage is undifferentiated, all three components are controlled by one person or institution, as would be the case under a totalitarian regime, such as there was in Stalinist Russia. As Lefevre describes, ‘[i]n systems with undifferentiated patronage, the patron’s efforts will primarily be directed at preserving the stability of the social system as a whole, and the literary production that is accepted and actively promoted within that social system will have to further that aim or, at the very least, not actively oppose [it].’<sup>41</sup> Again, this type of patronage certainly existed in Stalinist Russia, especially following the introduction of socialist realism as the only method of creative output in 1934. This situation will be explored in Chapter 2.

Lefevre’s concept of poetics consists of two components, one, ‘an inventory of literary devices, genres, motifs, prototypical characters and situations, and symbols’, and the other, a functional component, ‘a concept of what the role of literature is, or should be, in the social system as a whole.’<sup>42</sup> For Lefevre, this functional component is closely tied to ideological influences outside the sphere of poetics, and is therefore ‘influential in the selection of themes that must be

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p.17.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p.26.

relevant to the social system if the work of literature is to be noticed at all.<sup>43</sup> So, whilst a patron may prefer to delegate questions of style to the professional, their ideological concerns will still prove influential.

Lefevere also describes how the “codification” of a poetics ensures that it becomes the dominant poetics of a given time. Codification ‘implies both the selection of certain types of current practice and the exclusion of others.’<sup>44</sup> This selection leads to the canonisation of the works of certain writers, whose work is seen as conforming most closely to these ideals. Once a poetics has become dominant, its authority is asserted in a number of ways: ‘every poetics tends to posit itself as absolute, to dismiss its predecessors (which amounts, in practice, to integrating them into itself) and to deny its own transience or, rather, to see itself as the necessary outcome of a process of growth of which it happens to be the final stage.’ Each dominant poetics, therefore ‘freezes or certainly controls the dynamics of the system.’ Lefevere comments that this control is more easily achieved in literary systems with undifferentiated patronage.<sup>45</sup> After 1934 in Stalinist Russia, only texts which fitted with the ideals of socialist realism would have been able to gain entry into the literary system. This restriction was matched by the return of more traditional poetic forms in the 1930s; the severe consequences of falling foul of the regime meant that experimentation was seen as dangerous.

As far as translated texts are concerned, Lefevere also viewed the dominant poetics in a system as having an important influence on which foreign texts would be able to gain access to the literary system. ‘[A] changeable and changing poetics, established mainly by means of rewritings, will also dictate which original works of literature and which rewritings are acceptable in a given system, or rather, such a poetics will be the touchstone used by teachers, critics, and others to decide what is in and what is out.’<sup>46</sup> A host poetics will therefore have a great influence on what Lefevere terms the “interpenetration of two

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p.27

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p.35.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid, p.36.

literary systems”,<sup>47</sup> the selection of texts for translation, and the introduction of new styles and ideas into a literary culture. In Stalinist Russia, for example, authors considered ideologically unsuitable would not have been selected for translation. From 1929, the works of authors such as Edgar Allan Poe and Guy de Maupassant, and even at times Shakespeare, were purged from the shelves of public libraries.<sup>48</sup>

Lefevere lists poetics as one of two key factors ‘which basically determine the image of a work of literature as projected by a translation.’<sup>49</sup> However, Lefevere maintains that ideological considerations, whether those held personally by the translator, or that which is imposed upon them by a patron, will take precedence over the demands of a poetics, and that it is ideology which ‘dictates the basic strategy the translator is going to use’.<sup>50</sup>

## 1.4 Norms in Translation

Whilst Lefevere chose to extend polysystems theory by examining forces outside the literary system, Gideon Toury chose to identify and categorise the rules which governed the position which individual elements could achieve within the system, and ultimately affect translation decisions.

Toury took a behaviourist approach to the study of translation. For Toury, “translatorship” amounts first and foremost to being able to *play a social role*, ie. to fulfil a function allotted by a community – to the activity, its practitioners and/or their products – in a way which is deemed appropriate in its own terms of a reference.<sup>51</sup> Toury notes that translation ‘can be described as being subject to constraints of several types and varying degree’, and that translators operating under different types of constraints ‘often adopt different strategies, and

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> John Barber, ‘Working Class and Political Culture in the 1930s’ in *The Culture of the Stalin Period*, ed. by Hans Günther (London: Macmillan, 1990), p.7.

<sup>49</sup> André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, p.41.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Gideon Toury, ‘The nature and role of norms in translation’, in *The Translation Studies Reader* ed. by Lawrence Venuti (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp.198-211, (p. 198).

ultimately come up with markedly different products.<sup>52</sup> This point is important for this study, given the aim to investigate what a particular translation can tell us about working under a particular political regime.

Toury describes the constraints which society, and in this specific case, translators, operate under, as being along a scale, with absolute rules at one extreme, and pure idiosyncrasies at the other. “Norms” are in the middle of the scale, but these too form a graded continuum. Some are stronger, and are more like rules, whereas others are closer to idiosyncrasies. However, norms are also changeable: ideas and practices which begin as mere idiosyncrasies gain in popularity, and so become more like norms, while ideas which were once rule-like go out of fashion.<sup>53</sup>

For Toury, ‘[n]orms are the key concept and focal point in any attempt to account for the social relevance of activities, because their existence, and the wider range of situations they apply to (with the conformity this implies), are the main factors ensuring the establishment and retention of social order.’<sup>54</sup> At the time when Radlova was writing, non-compliance with norms could have extremely serious consequences.

Toury’s theories on translational norms began with the “initial norm”, which is essentially the choice of whether to prioritise the needs of the source text, or the target culture. ‘[A] translator may subject him/herself either to the original text, with the norms it has realised, or to the norms active in the target culture’.<sup>55</sup> An adherence to the norms of the source language and culture would lead to what Toury termed an ‘adequate translation’. Due to the translator’s close adherence to the source text, an ‘adequate’ translation ‘may well entail certain incompatibilities with target norms and practices’.<sup>56</sup> Conversely, if the translator subscribes to norms originating in the target culture, Toury terms the text they

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<sup>52</sup> Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (John Benjamins Publishing Co.: Philadelphia, 1995), p.54.

<sup>53</sup> Toury, ‘The nature and role of norms in translation’, p.199.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p.200.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

produce ‘acceptable translation’ though he notes that ‘shifts from the source text are inevitable.’<sup>57</sup>

Toury did acknowledge that these two types of translation represented the two extremes of the options which translators can choose to take, and that in reality, most translation decisions involve a compromise between the two. However, as already stated in the opening paragraph, the purpose of this study is not primarily to judge whether Radlova’s translation was good or bad, on the basis of how close her translation is to Shakespeare’s text, but to discover if, under the influence of her particular context, she has opted for certain choices of language or style. Toury’s “initial norm” is perhaps, therefore, not particularly relevant. However, he also detailed many other norms which affect every stage of the translation process, the recognition of which permits understanding of Radlova’s translation decisions and how her work was received.

Toury’s ‘preliminary norms’ determine the decisions which are taken before translations are undertaken. ‘Translation policy’ norms determine which types of text are selected for translation, whilst the norms dictating ‘directness of translation’ regulate whether translation via another, intermediary language is permitted, camouflaged, or even preferred.<sup>58</sup> Shakespeare was primarily introduced into the repertoire of many European countries, including Russia, through translations in French, and later German. These influential intermediary translations will be further discussed in Chapter 2, as will the effect of ‘translation policy’ norms which determined which of Shakespeare’s texts have proved most popular in Russia over time.

Toury’s ‘operational norms’ then direct decisions made during the act of translation itself, and govern the relationship between source and target texts. ‘Matricial norms’ determine the fullness of translation – omissions, additions and changes of location of target language material within the text. ‘Textual linguistic norms’ govern the selection of material in which to formulate the target text, or with which to replace the original textual and linguistic material. These norms

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p.203.

can be general, applying to all kinds of translation, or particular, applying to a single text type or mode of translation.<sup>59</sup> These norms, which affect the composition of the translated text itself, will be examined during the direct analysis of Radlova's translation in Chapter 4.

Toury acknowledges that norms are difficult to account for, 'because of their socio-cultural specificity and basic instability'. They are changeable, do not need to apply to all sectors within a society, nor will they necessarily apply across cultures.<sup>60</sup> He also suggests that there is often more than one set of norms at play within a cultural system:

it is not all that rare to find side by side in a society three sets of competing norms, each having its own followers and a position of its own in the culture at large: the ones that dominate the centre of the system, and hence direct translational behaviour of the so-called *mainstream*, alongside the remnants of *previous* sets of norms and the rudiments of *new* ones hovering in the periphery.<sup>61</sup>

It is evident here that Toury's theories on "norms" complement Even-Zohar's work on polysystems; norms are the conditions which determine which texts and translated texts are allowed access into the literary system and whether they are able to reach the canonised centre of the system.

However, it seems that the principal challenge with norms-based study is, as Toury observes, that norms are not really directly observable: '[w]hat is actually available for observation is not so much the norms themselves, but rather norm-governed instances of behaviour, or the products of such behaviour.'<sup>62</sup>

Nevertheless, there are two major sources for the reconstruction and investigation of translational norms: the texts themselves, which can be seen as immediate representations of translational norms, and then secondary sources,

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<sup>59</sup> Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, p.60.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*, pp.61-62.

<sup>61</sup> Toury, 'The nature and role of norms in translation', p.205.

<sup>62</sup> Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies*, p.65.

including criticism, reviews and statements made by those in the industry such as publishers or the translators themselves. Toury warns that these secondary sources should be treated with caution, as they are frequently biased.<sup>63</sup> In Soviet Russia, for example, critics were bound by the same rules of socialist realism as the writers themselves, and, in a society which was highly vigilant, they may have been keen to highlight the fact that someone was perhaps not adhering to Party rules as carefully as they should have been. Nevertheless, in the study of an existing translation, they provide essential information on the reception of the work in question, at the very least providing evidence of what society perceived many of the operational norms should be.

## 1.5 The Influence of Pierre Bourdieu

In 2005, Moira Inghilleri noted that over the previous decade, research into translation and interpreting had begun to draw on Bourdieu's sociological theory. As Randal Johnson explains, Bourdieu's work addresses 'such issues as aesthetic value and canonicity, subjectification and structuration, the relationship between cultural practices and broader social processes, the social position and role of intellectuals and artists and the relationships between high culture and popular culture, all of which have become increasingly prevalent in cultural debate since the 1970s.'<sup>64</sup> The application of his theory has assisted with the re-evaluation of descriptive and polysystem approaches, offering, as Inghilleri describes it, 'a more powerful set of concepts than norms and conventions to describe socio-cultural constraints on acts of translation and their resulting products.'<sup>65</sup> In his later papers, Even-Zohar himself refers to what he

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<sup>63</sup> Toury, 'The nature and role of norms in translation', pp.206-7.

<sup>64</sup> Randal Johnson, 'Editor's Introduction' to Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp.1-25, (p.1).

<sup>65</sup> Moira Inghilleri, 'The Sociology of Bourdieu and the Construction of the "Object" in Translation and Interpreting Studies, *The Translator*, 11 (2005), 125-145 (p.125).



describes as the ‘fascinating work’ of Pierre Bourdieu and the influence which it has had on the field of translation studies.<sup>66</sup>

In order to narrow the field of Bourdieu’s wide-ranging theories, it is circumspect to examine which elements of his work have been particularly valued by translation theorists. Amongst the key concepts from Bourdieu which have been adopted are ‘habitus’, ‘field’ and ‘capital’.

The concept of ‘habitus’ is central to Bourdieu’s approach to language and linguistic exchange, and is defined as:

systems of durable, transposable *dispositions*, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles of the generation and structuring of practices and representations which can be objectively “regulated” and “regular” without in any way being the product of obedience to rules, objectively adapted to their goals without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary to attain them.<sup>67</sup>

As John B. Thompson explains, the ‘dispositions’ which constitute the habitus are ‘acquired through a gradual process of inculcation’ from early childhood.

Through the training and learning of gestures and behaviours such as social etiquette, ‘the individual acquires a set of dispositions which literally mould the body and become second nature.’<sup>68</sup> These dispositions are durable, in the sense that they continue throughout the lifetime of the individual, as they are subconscious and therefore not easily modifiable, and structured, in that they inevitably reflect the social conditions in which they were acquired. Individuals with different class backgrounds, or, perhaps more crucially for this project, those brought up in different cultures, will acquire different dispositions.

Together, these dispositions make up an individual’s habitus, which provides

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<sup>66</sup> Even-Zohar, ‘Introduction’, *Poetics Today*, 11 (1990), 1-6. (p.3).

<sup>67</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. by Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p.72.

<sup>68</sup> John B. Thompson, ‘Editor’s Introduction’ to Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. by John B. Thompson, trans. by Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), pp.1-31 (p.12).

them with an understanding of how to act and respond throughout the course of their day-to-day life.<sup>69</sup> A translator working in a given society, for example, would develop an awareness of the types of text which were suitable for translation, and the most acceptable ways in which to translate them.

The second concept adopted by translation theorists, 'field', is defined by Bourdieu as 'a separate social universe having its own laws of functioning independent of those of politics and the economy.'<sup>70</sup> Applying this concept to literature, (the *literary* field) Bourdieu argues that in order to understand writers and their work, there is a need to understand the world in which they operate, and how the position of 'writer' is viewed by that world:

To understand Flaubert or Baudelaire, or any writer, major or minor, is first of all to understand what the status of writer consists of at the moment considered; that is, more precisely, the social conditions of the possibility of this social function, of this social personage.<sup>71</sup>

It is the effect of the relationship between the habitus (an individual's understanding of how they need to operate) and the field (the social context in which they act), which is key to Bourdieu's theory, and it is the relational nature of his thinking which has been utilised by translation theorists. As Jean-Marc Gouvanic describes,

With the key notions of field, habitus and capital [...] all of which are applicable to translation studies, Bourdieu develops a philosophy of action by constructing a fundamental relationship between the social trajectory of the agent (based on his or her incorporated dispositions, or *habitus*) and the objective structures (specified under fields). This is a "two-way" relationship: the social trajectory that constitutes the habitus

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid, p.13.

<sup>70</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. by Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp.162-163.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

contributes to the structuring of fields, which in turn structure the *habitus*.<sup>72</sup>

Gouvanic utilises ‘field’ and ‘habitus’ to investigate the role of translation in the development of the science fiction genre in French culture. For Gouvanic, Bourdieu’s concepts provide a powerful tool for analysing the reasons behind translators’ behaviour, and how translations are received by their target cultures.

[It] is always the *habitus* of a translator that influences the way translation is practised, and this *habitus* cannot be interpreted separately from its rapport with the foreign culture, which is endowed with a greater or lesser aura of legitimacy that is transmitted through translation and tends to dictate a new orientation in the receiving culture, a new social future.<sup>73</sup>

Daniel Simeoni also employs Bourdieu’s terminology in order to analyse and extend some of the translation theory already discussed. He uses the concept of ‘habitus’ to examine translation norms and their effect on translators’ decision-making processes. He argues that whilst the two approaches do have elements in common, ‘Toury places the focus of relevance on the pre-eminence of what *controls* the agents’ behaviour – “translational norms”. A habitus-governed account, by contrast, emphasises the extent to which translators themselves play a role in the maintenance and perhaps creation of norms.<sup>74</sup>

Recently, however, Lawrence Venuti has warned against what he sees as the over-reliance of some translation theorists on Bourdieu’s ‘habitus’, arguing that the concept oversimplifies the act of translation:

In the end, the recourse to the *habitus* strips the translator’s agency of the full complexity of human behaviour, which encompasses not only intended actions but also a self-reflexive monitoring in relation to rules

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<sup>72</sup> Jean-Marc Gouvanic, ‘A Bourdieusian Theory of Translation, or the Coincidence of Practical Instances’, *The Translator*, 11:2 (2005), 147-166 (p.148).

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, p. 164.

<sup>74</sup> Daniel Simeoni, ‘The Pivotal Status of the Translator’s Habitus’, *Target*, 10 (1998) 1-39, (p.26).

and resources (e.g. translation norms), not only a degree of consciousness but also an unconscious composed of unacknowledged conditions and unanticipated consequences.<sup>75</sup>

Nevertheless, Bourdieu's theory has been used to analyse translation within the Soviet context. Samantha Sherry employs the concepts of 'field' and 'habitus' to examine the different levels of censorship of foreign literature during the Stalin and Khrushchev eras. She comments: '[b]y conceiving of censorial agents as existing in a hierarchy within the Soviet cultural field, the relationship between the agents and their overlapping practices can be better illuminated.'<sup>76</sup> Sherry highlights the fact that while Bourdieu emphasises the autonomy of fields, he does accept the possibility of the influence of external factors, through 'refraction', which results in a change in the structure of the field.<sup>77</sup> She argues that '[e]xternal interference on the part of institutions can structure dispositions, instilling in the censorial agents a deeply held understanding of what may (or may not) circulate in the field.'<sup>78</sup> Given the authoritarian nature of Soviet society, the effect of external factors on the habitus and field of a translator is an important consideration for those examining Soviet culture. However, like Simeoni, Sherry uses Bourdieu's theory to demonstrate the importance of the individual's actions in shaping trends and boundaries within a given society: 'The habitus accounts for the actions of censors, since it is the habitus that defines the limit of the sayable in any given field.'<sup>79</sup>

It can therefore be argued that Bourdieu's concepts of 'field' and 'habitus' together provide a sociological alternative to polysystems and the complementary theories already discussed. They encourage the analysis of the role of translators themselves in the creation of translation trends as well as emphasising the importance of considering the social background in which the

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<sup>75</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything* (London & New York: Routledge, 2012) pp.7-8.

<sup>76</sup> Samantha Sherry, 'Censorship in Translation in the Soviet Union in the Stalin and Khrushchev Eras', unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2012

<<https://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/7586>> [4 November 2013], p. 49.

<sup>77</sup> Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, p.182.

<sup>78</sup> Sherry, p.49.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

act of translation is taking place. Living and working in Stalinist Russia, Anna Radlova would have had to have an excellent understanding of what was expected of a translator in order to continue practising, and indeed, as the situation became increasingly dangerous, in order to exist at all. The types of texts which were acceptable to translate, and the ways in which it was acceptable to translate them, would have been part of the ingrained knowledge she had to acquire as a member of her profession. However, by choosing to translate particular texts in particular ways, Radlova was also helping to shape the field in which she was working, and her actions would have affected those of other translators working in Soviet Russia.

The other concept of Bourdieu's which has been adopted by translation theorists and is particularly relevant to this study is that of 'capital'. Bourdieu advocates that aside from economic capital, (i.e. material wealth), other forms of capital also exist, for example, 'cultural capital' in the form of knowledge, skills and qualifications; and 'symbolic capital' (accumulated prestige or honour). It is the distribution of these forms of capital within a field which determine its structure and the relations between elements within it.

Linguistic exchange – a relation of communication between a sender and a receiver, based on enciphering and deciphering, and therefore on the implementation of a code or a generative competence – is also an economic exchange which is established within a particular symbolic relation of power between a producer, endowed with a certain linguistic capital, and a consumer (or a market), and which is capable of procuring a certain material or symbolic profit. In other words, utterances are not only (save in exceptional circumstances) signs to be understood and deciphered; they are also *signs of wealth*, intended to be evaluated and appreciated, and *signs of authority*, intended to be believed and obeyed.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, ed. by John B. Thompson, trans. by Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p.66.

Discussing the incorporation of foreign texts into the Finnish theatrical system, Aaltonen terms a particular mode of translation as “reverence”. If a source text is translated in full, Aaltonen argues, then ‘the attitude expressed through the agency of translation strategy is that of reverence’.<sup>81</sup> Reverence, as Aaltonen explains, indicates that the foreign texts are ‘held in esteem and respected.’<sup>82</sup> When such texts are translated, the ‘[t]ranslations are used as a way of increasing cultural capital in the indigenous system, which, among other qualities, determines the position which a culture holds in the hierarchy of cultures.’<sup>83</sup> Here, Aaltonen uses Bourdieu’s concept of ‘cultural capital’ in order to extend Even-Zohar’s theory on the moments when translated literature gains a more central place within the literary system. As an internationally renowned dramatist, Shakespeare’s work can be viewed as possessing a high amount of cultural capital, so any translation of his work in a developing culture has the potential for a certain amount of prestige. In addition to this high status, within the Soviet context, the high cultural capital of Shakespeare’s texts may also have accorded them a certain amount protection from the interference of those in authority.

The work of Pierre Bourdieu has therefore enabled theatre translation theorists to extend the use of the system approach to ensure that the social function of translators and their texts can be better investigated. As demonstrated, his work has also provided key terminology for theorists to use when discussing the reasons for the incorporation of translated literature and drama into home repertoires. Nevertheless, there are still many questions of terminology within theatre translation studies which remain unresolved. The following section will therefore discuss some of these disputed terms, and explain those used throughout this thesis.

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<sup>81</sup> Aaltonen, *Time-Sharing on Stage*, (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2000), p.8.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, p.64.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*.

## 1.6 Terminology in Theatre Translation Studies: Translation, Version or Adaptation?

The different choices of vocabulary which can be used to describe works of translation have generated much discussion and disagreement. As David Johnston has stated,

[i]t would be in the interests of all of those who work in the theatre and who sell their wares to the public to have a common definition of all these words – translation, adaptation, version – or at least to agree that one should always be open about the process used in bringing a particular play to the stage or even to the page.<sup>84</sup>

According to Bassnett, attempts at distinction are usually based on how much the target text diverges from its source: ‘if it seems so close as to be recognisable, then it can be classified as a translation, but if it starts to move away then it has to be deemed an adaptation.’<sup>85</sup>

However, this distinction is far from definitive. As Bassnett herself inquires, ‘how close do you have to be, and how far away do you have to move before the labels change?’<sup>86</sup> Another choice for consideration is the word ‘version’, described recently by one translator for the theatre, Ranjit Bolt, as ‘a much safer word’.<sup>87</sup> This is perhaps because it adds a degree of ambiguity. Bolt’s use of the word ‘safer’ suggests that ‘version’ implies that the work in question is not as far away from the original text as to be an adaptation, but perhaps contains enough differences from the original for the translator to want to avoid the scrutiny of a close, word-by-word comparison. Bassnett, on the other hand, suggests that the word version ‘implies that the translation has been radically revised for the

<sup>84</sup> David Johnston, ‘Theatre Pragmatics’, in *Stages of Translation*, ed. by David Johnston (Bath: Absolute Classics, 1996), pp.57-66 (p.66).

<sup>85</sup> Susan Bassnett, *Reflections on Translation*, p.40.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ranjit Bolt, *The Art of Translation* (London: Oberon Books, 2010), p.8.

target culture'.<sup>88</sup> She instead advocates taking the approach of André Lefevere, who chose to view all translations as “rewritings” of the original.

Radlova's *Othello* can certainly be described as a direct translation from English into Russian. However, this is not the case for many of the “re-writings” which are important to the history of Shakespeare in Russia. The historical aspect of this project gives an important dimension, because as Romy Heylen notes, ‘[a] text which functions as a translation today may not be called a translation tomorrow and may be named a “version” instead.’ It will always be important to consider how a particular translation is viewed by its target audience at the time it is translated, and this should perhaps determine how it should be described. Heylen continues, ‘[h]istorical changes and the socio-cultural context of the reception of translation determine a reader’s expectations, and form part of what his or her notion of what constitutes translation.’<sup>89</sup> Heylen’s reference to socio-cultural context here reiterates the importance of the descriptive and sociological approach: the conditions in which a translator is working need to be taken into consideration as well as examining the reasons why a translator has chosen to work in a particular style. The conditions under which Radlova was working, the necessity of complying with the requirements of socialist realism and the severe consequences if she did not, certainly would have affected her translation decisions.

## 1.7 Acculturation or Domestication?

‘Acculturation’ and ‘domestication’ are both terms developed by translation theorists in order to describe policies which may be adapted by translators to ensure that the “re-writings” of texts they produce are suitable for their intended target audience. As explained in the introduction, Aaltonen defines the term ‘acculturation’, as ‘the process which is employed to tone down the Foreign

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<sup>88</sup> Bassnett, ‘Translating for the Theatre: The Case Against Performability’, p.102.

<sup>89</sup> Heylen, p.4.



and to help identification with unfamiliar reality.’ She argues that plays which represent realities familiar to their audiences are more easily admitted into the theatrical polysystem, stating that the process of acculturation ‘makes understanding and, in consequence, integration possible.’<sup>90</sup>

In contrast, Lawrence Venuti has argued against the process of familiarising a literary text for the target audience, a process which he terms ‘domestication.’ He views it as the main element in what he sees as the ‘ethnocentric violence’<sup>91</sup> of translation:

Translation never communicates in an untroubled fashion because the translator negotiates the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text by reducing them and supplying another set of differences, basically domestic, drawn from the receiving language and culture to enable the foreign to be received there. The foreign text, then, is not so much communicated as inscribed with domestic intelligibilities and interests.<sup>92</sup>

Venuti’s concern over domesticating methods of translation is because he asserts that ‘translation wields enormous power in the construction of identities for foreign cultures’, and that it can therefore serve ‘an appropriation of foreign cultures for agendas in the receiving situation, cultural, economic, political.’<sup>93</sup> In order to avoid this inscription of domestic values into a foreign text, Venuti advocates instead the alternative method of foreignization:

Foreignization does not offer unmediated access to the foreign – no translation can do that – but rather constructs a certain image of the foreign that is informed by the receiving situation but aims to question it by drawing on materials that are not currently dominant, namely the marginal and the nonstandard, the residual and the emergent.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Sirkku Aaltonen, *Acculturation of the Other*, p.19.

<sup>91</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (London: Routledge, 2008), p.16.

<sup>92</sup> Lawrence Venuti, ‘Translation, Community, Utopia’ in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London: Routledge, 2000), pp.468-488, (p.468).

<sup>93</sup> Venuti, *The Translator’s Invisibility*, p.14.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, pp.18-19.

The method of translation which Venuti encourages here is not the deliberate inclusion of source language and culture elements within the target text, but rather the employment of non-standard language usage within the target language to alert the reader to the fact that they are in fact reading a translation. As Mona Baker describes, with foreignization, Venuti's aim 'is not to "preserve" the source text as such, but to disrupt dominant values within the target context,'<sup>95</sup> in order to draw the reader's attention to the fact that what they are reading is a translation.

Venuti seeks to challenge what he views as the translator's 'invisibility' in Western culture, and 'to question the marginal position of translation in contemporary Anglo-American culture'.<sup>96</sup> These aims may seem far removed from a translation of *Othello* in 1930s Soviet Russia, but use of his theories will present the opportunity to examine Radlova's word choices with regard to their particular significance to Russian culture. His policies of domestication and foreignization will therefore be referred to during the close analysis of Radlova's translation in Chapter 4.

In his latest collection of work published in 2012, Venuti has rebalanced his argument slightly, stressing the importance of recognising the hermeneutic nature of the translation process. Describing translation as 'the inscription of one interpretative possibility among others', he states that he now advocates a more flexible approach, which 'acknowledges the inevitable loss of source-cultural difference as well as the exorbitant gain of translating – cultural difference, a trade-off that exposes the creative possibilities of translation.'<sup>97</sup>

Selecting a different option to Aaltonen and Venuti, Brisset uses the term "imitation" in order to describe how theatre texts are adapted to better meet the requirements of their target audience:

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<sup>95</sup> Mona Baker, ed. *Critical Readings in Translation Studies*, (London: Routledge, 2009), p.65.

<sup>96</sup> Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p.viii.

<sup>97</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *Translation Changes Everything*, p.4.

Imitation is a radical form of adaptation [...] This type of re-writing also adapts the play to the new context in which it is produced, and presupposes that selected elements from the original will be re-arranged and combined with new elements.<sup>98</sup>

Brisset's description of the process of 'imitation' above refers to a situation where a translator felt it necessary to alter the original text in order to make it stageable in the target culture and accessible for their new audience. As she continues, '[a]ny translation must select along a cline between literal respect for the source text and the pragmatics imposed by the target milieu.'<sup>99</sup>

The issues created by the demands of the target language to which Brisset refers here are of course amplified when the translation in question is intended for a performance in a theatre. A theatre audience does not have the luxury of being able to interpret what they are watching 'at their own pace and in their own manner',<sup>100</sup> like the readers of other literary genres, but needs to be able to understand and follow the play instantly. As Aaltonen describes, this need for clarity often means that '[t]heatre translation is more tied to its immediate context than literary translation.'<sup>101</sup>

The immediacy of understanding which a translation for the theatre is required to generate has inevitably meant that translators have had to develop strategies in order to ensure that they do not alienate their audience by presenting them with a drastically unfamiliar-sounding text. Translation theorists have devised a variety of further terms to describe the techniques which translators might choose to employ during this process of familiarisation. For example, Brisset also uses the term 'reactualization' to describe instances where a translator provides the audience with an indicator, something familiar to their audience which will set the play in the new target context. She uses the example of Macbeth entering to the sound of the fiddle in a Quebecois translation of the

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<sup>98</sup> Brisset, p.12.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, p.5.

<sup>101</sup> Aaltonen, *Timesharing on Stage*, p.38.

play by Michel Garneau, rather than the original drum. Brisset describes instances of both spatial and temporal re-actualization in Quebecois translations, where names are changed to create more neutral settings, or archaic forms of language are used to locate the target text in a particular time period.<sup>102</sup> With his work on Shakespeare, Garneau was in fact responsible for coining another term for theatre translation, ‘tradaptation’, a mixture of both translation and adaptation.<sup>103</sup> This term has frequently been used by scholars to describe productions of Shakespeare where the translator, like Garneau, appears to use their translation in order to engage its audience in a particular political debate.<sup>104</sup>

Importantly, the translation theorists dealing with texts intended for the theatre do not view the process of adapting the language of a text to suit a target audience in such a negative light as Venuti. Their emphasis is admittedly on the ease of understanding for the audience rather than the preservation of the source text, but as with Brisset’s concept of ‘re-actualization’, the changes in the target text are viewed positively, as they allow the integration of a foreign text into a different country’s system. This greater element of positivity perhaps indicates that the term ‘acculturation’ implies less significant changes than the violent nature of domestication that Venuti described. Acculturation can be seen as the neutralising of any foreign elements within a text which are likely to cause confusion for an audience, rather than direct replacement of terms with domestic equivalents. Interestingly, neither Brisset nor Aaltonen address the concern that the audience may not be aware that they are watching a translation, but their difference of opinion from Venuti further emphasises the importance of distinguishing between literary translation and that of drama.

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<sup>102</sup> Brisset, pp.110-111.

<sup>103</sup> Leonore Lieblein, “‘Cette Belle Langue’: The “Tradaptation of Shakespeare in Quebec’ in *Shakespeare and the Language of Translation*, ed. by Ton Hoenslaars (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2004), pp.255-269 (p.255).

<sup>104</sup> For example, the term is also used by Tom Cheesman to describe the controversial 2003 translation of *Othello* into German by Ferdiun Zaimoglu and Günter Senkel, who employ modern ‘multi-ethnic underclass slang’ and alter the action of Shakespeare’s play in order to comment on European racial politics and the contemporary military occupations in the Middle East. Tom Cheesman, ‘Shakespeare and Othello in Filthy Hell: Zaimoglu and Senkel’s Politico-Religious Tradaptation’, *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 46 (2010)207-220 <doi: 10.1093/fmls/cqp165> [accessed: 24 July 2014].

## 1.8 The Question of Performability

In Bassnett's opinion, many of the difficulties which researchers in theatre translation studies have encountered are due to the much debated concept of "performability." 'Plays, we are informed, must be transformed, must be translated in order to be "performable", though nobody seems able to explain quite what performability is.'<sup>105</sup> On the one hand, 'performability' is often used 'to describe the indescribable, the supposedly existent concealed gestic text within the written.'<sup>106</sup> This quotation indicates the confusion around the term, as any translator or actor coming to the text would undoubtedly choose to interpret this undefined, hidden sub-text in a different way. On the other hand, as Bassnett continues, others have chosen to use performability as a term referring to 'the need for fluent speech rhythms within the target text.'<sup>107</sup>

Exploring the concept of the supposed 'concealed gestic text' to which Bassnett refers, Patrice Pavis views the process of bringing a foreign text to the stage as a series of steps, or 'concretizations.' For Pavis, theatre translation goes 'beyond the rather limited phenomenon of the *interlingual* translation' of the dramatic text. In the theatre, the translation will reach the audience by way of the actor's bodies, and therefore '[w]e cannot simply translate a text linguistically; rather we confront and communicate heterogenous cultures and situations of enunciation that are separated in space and time.'<sup>108</sup>

Pavis' concretizations move the text for translation through from the original text to the point when the translation reaches its audience. He terms the original text, the result of the author's choices and formulations 'T<sub>0</sub>'. This stage is followed by 'T<sub>1</sub> – an initial concretization.' Here, Pavis views the translator as 'in the position of a reader and a dramaturg'; they must perform a macrotextual translation, reconstituting the plot and characters, as well as the artistic features

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<sup>105</sup> Bassnett, *Reflections on Translation*, p.100.

<sup>106</sup> Susan Bassnett, 'Translating for the Theatre: The Case Against Performability', p.102.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Patrice Pavis, 'Problems of translation for the stage: interculturalism and post-modern theatre', in *The Play Out of Context*, eds. Hanna Scolnikov and Peter Holland (Cambridge: University Press, 1989), pp.25-44, p. 25.

of the source text. This is followed by T<sub>2</sub>, the ‘dramaturgical analysis’, when the spatio-temporal indications in the text must be considered, as well as the transfer of the stage directions. The third stage, T<sub>3</sub> involves testing on stage, or ‘concretization by stage enunciation.’ The text is received by its audience, who confirm whether or not it is an acceptable translation. Pavis’ final stage is T<sub>4</sub>, ‘recipient concretization or recipient enunciation’ when the spectators form their own interpretation of the text. Pavis notes that this final enunciation, and therefore the overall meaning of the translated text, ‘depends on the way in which the surrounding culture focuses attention and makes the characters (as carriers of the fiction) and the actors (who belong to a theatrical tradition) express themselves.’<sup>109</sup>

For the purposes of this study, Pavis’ work draws attention to two factors which are essential to consider when analysing a translation intended for performance. Firstly, it highlights the importance of the situation in which a translated text is performed, and the way in which the actors perform it, to the overall reception of the translation by its audience. The importance which Pavis accords to the latter stages of the translation-into-performance process emphasises the need to examine how Radlova’s text functioned on stage. Were the actors receptive to the text, and was it easy to work with? How was it received by contemporary audiences? These questions will be addressed in Chapter 5, with further reference to Pavis’ theories.

The second important concept, of which both Pavis and Bassnett are in favour, is that theatre translation should always be viewed as a collaborative process, of which the text itself is just one stage. ‘In order to conceptualize the act of theatre translation, we must consult the literary translator *and* the director and actor; we must incorporate their contribution and integrate the act of translation into the much broader translation (that is the *mise en scène*) of a dramatic text.’<sup>110</sup> Given Radlova’s close relationship with the director who staged her translations, and the fact that she was part of his theatre company, it is possible that she may

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid, pp.27-28.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, p. 25.

have been able to take a far more collaborative approach than many of the other Russian translators of Shakespeare of her time. It will therefore be instructive to examine to what extent this additional input may have affected her translation decisions.

## 1.9 Shakespeare in Translation Studies

The final branch of theory to be considered in this chapter is that of Shakespeare studies, or specifically, studies of Shakespeare in translation. The fact that the text under consideration is a translation of a play by Shakespeare adds further dimensions to this study. As canonical texts, well-known throughout the world, Shakespeare plays present a unique set of challenges for any translator or director. However, theorists have argued that staging Shakespeare in a foreign language accords directors far more freedom than those working with the text in its original language. As Bassnett describes,

[i]n languages other than English, however, Shakespearean productions are very different indeed. Freed from the constraints of the text, from having to speak every word of a classic text at all costs or be pilloried for desecration of a sacred play, non-English speaking actors and directors can continue the tradition of experimentation. In translation, the language of Shakespeare's plays is unleashed, it is decanonised and the inherent energy can be released.<sup>111</sup>

The additional energy to which Bassnett refers here may also be due to the fact that, as Aaltonen comments, '[a] theatre production is always closely tied to its own specific audience in a particular place at a particular point in time'.<sup>112</sup> Every translation, therefore, will bring about a natural process of updating, meaning that the language of the translation may be easier for its audience to digest than that of the original for an audience in the present-day UK. As John Russell Brown

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<sup>111</sup> Bassnett, *Shakespeare: The Elizabethan Plays*, p.4.

<sup>112</sup> Aaltonen, *Timesharing on Stage*, p.8.

describes, ‘Sometimes an actor performing in translation is able to reanimate suggestions which must remain obscure or dormant in the original text.’<sup>113</sup> The sometimes potent effects of this reanimation are demonstrated by an interesting example of back-translation explored by Tom Cheesman in his work on translations of *Othello* in Germany. When Feridun Zaimoglu and Günter Senkel’s German ‘tradaptation’ of *Othello* was performed with an accompanying English translation of the script at Stratford in 2006, the offence taken at the modern slang used to convey the strength of Iago’s insults was so great that all subsequent foreign language productions were obliged to use surtitles featuring only the words of Shakespeare himself.<sup>114</sup>

In many foreign productions, it seems that it has often been suggestions of a political nature which have been reanimated. As Dennis Kennedy notes,

Greater political stability in the UK and the US has robbed Shakespeare of some of the danger and force that other countries have (re)discovered in his texts. [...] Some foreign performances may have a more direct access to the power of the plays. In this respect the modernity of translation is crucial.’<sup>115</sup>

Importantly for the current study, other critics have highlighted the fact that the political power of the plays becomes all the more potent in performances under a totalitarian regime. As Mark Hilský comments,

Shakespeare productions have always been the site of political and ideological pressures, but in a totalitarian regime these pressures and anxieties become more intense and more visible than in a liberal community. Any production of Shakespeare in a totalitarian state can be

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<sup>113</sup> John Russell Brown, ‘Foreign Shakespeare and English audiences’ in *Foreign Shakespeare*, ed. by Dennis Kennedy (Cambridge: University Press, 1993) pp.21-35, (p.27).

<sup>114</sup> Cheesman, p.207. Words used by Iago (the German Iago) in the opening minute of the play included ‘fucking’, ‘blow-job’, ‘sucked off’, ‘shit-fag’ and ‘wanker’.

<sup>115</sup> Dennis Kennedy, ‘Introduction’, in *Foreign Shakespeare* (Cambridge: University Press, 1993) p.5.



seen as a cultural and ideological battleground in which the ruling ideology attempts to appropriate Shakespeare.<sup>116</sup>

As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, the Stalinist regime adopted several of Shakespeare's plays which they believed fitted with the heroic ideals of socialist realism, whilst others which were considered unsuitable were removed. Interestingly, however, many of the plays approved by the Soviet establishment were also appropriated by the authorities in Nazi Germany, on very similar grounds.

Nazi propagandists and educators employed a considerable amount of intuition, especially when it came to sensing the plays' heroic qualities. For the *Volk* needed the compelling heroism of a leader. And did not Shakespeare's tragedies and histories celebrate the Germanic ideal of leadership and allegiance?<sup>117</sup>

Werner Habicht's observations here underline the ease with which the approbation of Shakespeare has been carried out by supposedly very different political regimes. Commenting on the early reception of Shakespeare's plays in Central and Eastern Europe, Zdeněk Stříbrný describes how their very nature seems to have eased their transition into foreign cultures: '[The] plays were unusually adaptable to any geographical location, staging condition, social milieu and religio-political situation.'<sup>118</sup> Once again, it seems that translation may have had a part to play in this high level of adaptability. The German translations of Schlegel and Tieck played an important role in introducing Shakespeare's work to the people of Eastern Europe, and, as Thomas Healy indicates, the fact that Schlegel may have omitted some of the finer details of time and place in his translations may have helped further ease the transition. '[T]he German Romantic tradition emphasised the placeless Shakespeare. [...] He [Schlegel] had

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<sup>116</sup> Mark Hilský, 'Shakespeare in Czech: An Essay in Cultural Semantics' in *Shakespeare and the New Europe*, (Sheffield: University Press, 1994) pp.150-158, p.150.

<sup>117</sup> Habicht, p.114.

<sup>118</sup> Stříbrný, p.23.

little concern with the original historical contexts, and worked to translate historically conditioned idioms into supposedly timeless ones.’<sup>119</sup>

Translations of Shakespeare’s plays across the world have therefore led to his work achieving the same revered status as in his native country. However, this canonical status has often resulted in the fact that any new translation is seen as a major cultural event in the target culture. As shown by Brisset, in countries where a literary language is still being developed, a translation of Shakespeare is often viewed as an opportunity to demonstrate that the language can cope with a text of such stature. Once the translation has been produced, however, the existing stature of the original can lead to the translation itself also becoming canonised. In Nazi Germany, for example, it was decreed in 1936 that only the translation by Schlegel and Tieck should ever be performed: ‘If Shakespeare’s status as a nationalised classic was to be maintained, the standardised German text must not be tampered with.’<sup>120</sup> The fact that translations can also be canonised means that any translator producing a new version of a text will not only face comparisons being drawn with the original, but with other translations, a risk if their work is markedly different from what has come before. The canonisation of a particular translation leading to newer translations struggling to be accepted could be viewed as an example of the power of Lefevere’s ‘poetics’. Exactly how Radlova’s translation fared against these types of comparisons will be examined in subsequent chapters.

The theory discussed in this chapter will direct the approach to be taken in the remainder of this thesis. Even-Zohar’s polysystems theory provides a useful framework for examining the position of translations within a literary or theatrical system. It emphasises the importance of assessing the relationships between different works of literature and theatre. The works of Lefevere and Toury provide different perspectives on the factors which control these relationships. In addition, the concepts of Bourdieu which have been adopted by

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<sup>119</sup> Thomas Healy, ‘Past and Present Shakespeares: Shakespearian approbations in Europe’ in *Shakespeare and National Culture*, ed. John J. Joughin, (Manchester: University Press, 1997), pp.206- 232, p.222.

<sup>120</sup> Habicht, p.113.

translation theorists more recently have helped ensure that the role of translators in shaping these controls and the social conditions in which they are working are also taken into account. If the translations of Shakespeare in Russia are viewed in a relational manner, as being part of their own system, it should be possible to suggest which factors have influenced the inclusion or exclusion of certain translations. In a society so restricted by its controlling regimes, the effects of the regime's patronage should be considered.

As the focus of this thesis is on a translation intended for performance, however, it is important to note that drama translation theorists view the translation of the source text as just one step in the process of bringing a translation to the stage. Viewing the drama translation process in phases highlights the necessity of examining the role of other contributors to the performance, such as the director and actors. The function of these fellow contributors is particularly important to the assessment of Radlova's translation of *Othello*, given her close relationship with the company which first performed it.

Informed by the theories detailed above, the following chapter will discuss the history of the translation of Shakespeare in Russia, with particular reference to translations, and, where appropriate, performances of *Othello*. This account will establish the context for Radlova and her work, describing the expectations of the system which her translation was to enter.

# Chapter 2: The History of Shakespeare Translation in Russia

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## 2.1 Introduction

When Anna Radlova began work on her translations of Shakespeare's plays in the late 1920s, she was very much aware that she was contributing to an already established and extensive tradition. Shakespeare had been part of the Russian cultural sphere since the 1740s, and had been adapted and translated for many different purposes. The influence of his works extended not just into literary reincarnations, but also into other branches of the arts such as opera and ballet. As Even-Zohar would term it, the 'polysystem', of Shakespeare translation in Russia, was well established. As will be explained in future chapters, Radlova was keen to express why she felt a new and different approach was required for the Soviet era. The task in this second chapter will be to outline the conditions within this existing system so that the differences in Radlova's style can be then be analysed.

Russian scholars have completed comprehensive chronological studies of the history of Shakespeare in Russia. These are *Shekspir i ruskaia kul'tura* edited by A. P. Alekseev, (1965) and Iurii Levin's work on the influence of Shakespeare on Russian literature, *Shekspir i ruskaia literatura XIX veka* (1988). Other scholars, for example Maurice Friedberg and Lauren G. Leighton, have explored the general history of literary translation in Russia.<sup>1</sup> As the focus of this thesis is to use translation theory to analyse a particular translation of the play *Othello*, the aim of this chapter is to combine elements from the approaches of the scholars above, identifying the key trends in the history of Shakespeare translation in Russia which will inevitably have played a part in the shaping of Radlova's translation practices. The theories discussed in the first chapter will provide

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<sup>1</sup> See Maurice Friedberg, *A History of Literary Translation in Russia* and Lauren G. Leighton, *Two Worlds, One Art: Literary translation in Russia and America*.

different perspectives from which to examine these changes and developments in translation trends.

*Othello* was just one of several of Shakespeare's plays which Radlova translated, and her decision to adopt a different method for her work was based on her assessment of the translations of her predecessors of many different plays.

While this chapter will take a general approach to the history of Shakespeare translation in Russia, specific reference to translations and performances of *Othello* is made where appropriate.

## 2.2 Translation Through Intermediary Languages

As discussed in the previous chapter, one of the translation trends identified by Gideon Toury in his study of translational norms is the 'preliminary norm' of the 'directness of translation.'<sup>2</sup> That is, whether a translation is made directly from the text in the source language, or by referring to a translation of the source text in another language. This practice of translating via another language will be the first trend in translation style to be examined, as many of the first translators of Shakespeare into Russian worked not from the English text, but from a French or German translation.

### 2.2.1 The Influence of French Neoclassicism

The first appearance of a complete play in Russian which can be connected to one of Shakespeare's texts is Aleksandr Sumarokov's *Gamlet*, which was published in 1748 and first performed in 1750. In light of the discussion of terminology used to describe translations in the previous chapter, Sumarokov's work perhaps should not be referred to as a 'translation', because, as Marcus C. Levitt points out, 'nowhere in the published version of his play did Sumarokov explicitly acknowledge a connection with Shakespeare', and that 'were it not for

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<sup>2</sup> Toury, 'The nature and role of norms in translation', p. 203.

the characters' names, and the two plays' basic point of departure, one might hardly connect them.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, following an accusation of borrowing by his arch-rival, Vasilii Trediakovskii, Sumarokov wrote in his answer to the criticism,

Гамлет мой, говорил он, [Trediakovskii] не знаю от кого услышав, переведен с Французской прозы Аглинской Шекспировой Трагедии, в чем он очень ошибся. Гамлет мой кроме Монолога в окончании третьяго действия и Клавдиева на колени падения, на Шекспирову Трагедию едва, едва походит.<sup>4</sup>

Sumarokov therefore clearly wished his play to be viewed as an original work rather than a translation, or even an adaptation. However, his decision to write a play called *Hamlet* does follow a trend often adopted by writers and translators of his time. As Levitt describes,

By choosing to call his play “Hamlet” Sumarokov was following common eighteenth century practice of adopting well-known titles and character names but informing them with new content. He was not “copying” the works of other authors so much as announcing his appropriation of those works for his own uses, thus often signalling a competition with them.<sup>5</sup>

Sumarokov seems to have considered Shakespeare as a writer with whom he could compete and on whom he could even “improve”, given the assessment he makes in his work *Dve epistol'ny (Two Epistles)*: ‘Шекеспир, аглинский трагик и комик, в котором и очень худова и чрезвычайно хорошева очень много.’<sup>6</sup> In expressing this view, Sumarokov echoes the opinion of Voltaire, whom he greatly

<sup>3</sup> Marcus C. Levitt, ‘Sumarokov’s Russianised *Hamlet*: Texts and Contexts’, *The Slavic and East European Journal*, 38 (1994) 319-341 (pp.320-321).

<sup>4</sup> A. P. Sumarokov, *Polnoe sobranie vseh sochinenii v stikhakh i v proze*, Vol. X, p.117, (Moscow, 1781-2) quoted in Levitt, p.320. Levitt provides the following translation of Sumarokov’s words: My Hamlet, he says, and I do not know from whom he heard it, was translated from a French prose [version] of Shakespeare’s tragedy – in this he is very much mistaken. My Hamlet, apart from the Monologue at the end of the third act and Claudius’ falling down on his knees hardly resembles Shakespeare’s tragedy whatsoever.

<sup>5</sup> Levitt, p.321.

<sup>6</sup> A. P. Sumarokov, quoted in M. P. Alekseev, ‘Pervoe znakomstvo s Shekspirom v Rossii’ in *Shekspir i russkaia kul'tura*, ed. M. P. Alekseev (Moscow and St Petersburg: Nauka, 1965) pp.9-69 (pp.19-20). [Shakespeare, an English tragedian and comedian, in whom there is a lot that is very bad and very much that is extraordinarily good.]

admired. Voltaire considered Shakespeare too crude for the French stage, and felt that his plays needed much adaptation in order to make them acceptable to polite society.<sup>7</sup> His discussion of Shakespeare and English tragedy is contained in his *Lettres philosophiques*, (Letter 18, published 1733-34) where he also endeavours, as Levitt describes it, 'to render the uncouth Englishman's rough blank verse into acceptable French alexandrines',<sup>8</sup> and produces his own version of Hamlet's 'To be, or not to be' soliloquy. In spite of his protestations to the contrary, Sumarokov appears to have taken a similar approach to the entire play. In order to illustrate the use of alexandrines, below are the opening lines of the first scene:

Смутился духъ во мнѣ. О ночь! о страшный сонъ!  
 Ступайте изъ ума любезны взоры вонъ!  
 Наполни яростью, о сердце! нѣжны мысли,  
 И днесъ между враговъ Офелію мнѣ числи!<sup>9</sup>

As Zdeněk Stříbrný comments, throughout the play, 'The influence of French neoclassical drama can be seen not only in the use of alexandrines, but also in the strict observance of the unities of time, place, and action, as well as in the conflict between love and duty, passion and reason.'<sup>10</sup> By adopting these methods, as Lefevere would term it, to "re-write" Shakespeare's text, Voltaire and his follower Sumarokov were taking a typically neoclassical approach towards the practice of translation. As Friedberg describes, neoclassicists believed that:

translation is not the reconstruction of a foreign literary work in a new language, but rather the creation of an *impersonal* new work seeking ever more closely to approach the ideal form, though of course without ever

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<sup>7</sup> Friedberg, p.26.

<sup>8</sup> Levitt, p.322.

<sup>9</sup> A. P. Sumarokov, *Gamlet*, (St Petersburg: Imp. Akad. Nauk, 1748)

<<http://lib.ru/SHAKESPEARE/hamlet8.pdf>> [accessed 15 February 2010].

<sup>10</sup> Stříbrný, p.27.

attaining it. This attitude, in turn, allowed the translator freely to revise the text of the original, in his view, such revisions “improved” it.<sup>11</sup>

Sumarokov’s “improvements” include cutting the number of characters in the play from seventeen to eight so that there are just four main figures: Hamlet, Ophelia, Claudius and Gertrude, who, with the inclusion of a typical neoclassical device, each have a confidant/e. Many key details of the plot are also simplified. As Levitt explains, ‘all those things considered improper from the point of view of neoclassicist dramaturgy [are] expunged.’<sup>12</sup> Hamlet no longer feigns madness; the play within the play is deleted, as is Ophelia’s madness and suicide. Any supernatural details such as the ghost are also omitted. Crucially, the play has a happy ending, as both Hamlet and Ophelia survive.

Sumarokov knew little English, and so the sources for Sumarokov’s work are, as already implied, somewhat disputed. In spite of the author’s protestations, it is generally understood that he referred mainly to Pierre Antoine La Place’s French version of *Hamlet*, published in his *Le Théâtre anglois* in 1745. La Place’s *Hamlet* was not in fact a complete version of Shakespeare’s play, as he only translated what he felt were the most striking passages, and then linked them together with plot synopses, so his works were never intended for performance. Like Voltaire, La Place also translated Shakespeare’s blank verse into alexandrines.<sup>13</sup>

Alekseev cites La Place’s text as Sumarokov’s main source: ‘[М]ы будем считать наиболее вероятным, что основным источником русского драматурга был сокращенный прозаический перевод Лапласа.’<sup>14</sup> However, in addition to La Place’s text, Levitt also argues that ‘Sumarokov also made repeated and very specific use of Voltaire’s version’,<sup>15</sup> borrowing particular phrases and images which are not present in either the original or in La Place. Importantly, Levitt also reveals the fact that Sumarokov borrowed the fourth folio edition of

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<sup>11</sup> Freidberg, p.30.

<sup>12</sup> Levitt, p.321.

<sup>13</sup> Heylen, p.26.

<sup>14</sup> Alekseev, ‘Pervoe znakomstvo s Shekspir v Rossii’, p.24. [We consider it most likely that the Russian dramatist’s main source was the abridged prose translation of La Place.]

<sup>15</sup> Levitt, p.322.



Shakespeare in English from the library of the Academy of Sciences just at the time when he was writing his *Gamlet*, and suggests that he may have asked an acquaintance to interpret the text for him, as ‘there are a few individual words that might indicate direct borrowing from Shakespeare; words which appear in Shakespeare but not in Voltaire or La Place.’<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, Levitt, as with other scholars before him, concludes that ‘[t]here does not seem to be sufficient reason to overturn the traditional wisdom that for his basic acquaintance with the play and monologue Sumarokov was indebted to La Place.’<sup>17</sup>

It is clear then, that while he may have had limited access to the original text, Sumarokov chose primarily to refer to French translations of Shakespeare’s play, which meant that his own work was shaped not by English Elizabethan culture and theatrical customs, but by the French neoclassical traditions of La Place and Voltaire. As Friedberg explains, the approach which Sumarokov and other writers, influenced by the neoclassical viewpoint, took towards foreign texts meant that many of the individual specifics which made a writer’s style distinctive were lost:

Eighteenth century Neoclassicism as applied to translation theory and practice is sometimes defended as creating a kind of cosmopolitan poetic diction that made all the great poets converse in one language. However, this deprived individual literary works of the attributes specific to the time and place of their creation and the author’s artistic individuality.<sup>18</sup>

This loss of the specifics of Shakespeare’s writing in Russian versions of his plays because of the use of intermediary translations continued well into the next century. The work of another French author was to become a very important point of reference for translators working to transfer Shakespeare’s works into Russian.

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<sup>16</sup> Levitt, p.323.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Friedberg, p.26.

Jean-François Ducis' versions of Shakespeare were published across the last three decades of the eighteenth century, from 1769-1792.<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, Ducis himself did not actually have any knowledge of English, and therefore was also working from the intermediary translations of La Place, and later those of Pierre Letourneur (1776). Ducis published his adaptations as 'inspired by' or 'imitations of' Shakespeare.<sup>20</sup> Like Voltaire, Ducis translated into alexandrines. In contrast with previous French versions of Shakespeare, however, Ducis' plays were extremely successful on stage. His version of *Hamlet*, for example, 'became the most frequently produced eighteenth-century drama at the Comédie Française after the works of Voltaire.'<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps because of their popularity on stage, Ducis' translations were used by several Russian translators of Shakespeare in the early nineteenth century, as well as providing the basis for the first translations of Shakespeare's plays into many other European languages.<sup>22</sup> N. I. Gnedich's *King Lear*, published in 1808, S. I. Viskovatov's *Hamlet*, published in 1811, and P. A. Korsakov's unpublished version of *Macbeth* from 1815 all counted Ducis' versions of the plays as their primary source. However, as Levin explains, those working with intermediary translations were beginning to recognise the value of referring to the original text as well. 'Но и Дюсис не был для них непрекаемым авторитетом. Они и с ним поступали вольно и могли кое в чем даже вернуться к Шекспиру.'<sup>23</sup> In spite of this reference, however, they still considered it appropriate to attempt improvement of Shakespeare's lines wherever they felt necessary: 'переводчики

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<sup>19</sup> Ducis' works included "imitations" of *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *King John* and *Othello*.

<sup>20</sup> P. R. Zaborov, 'Ot klassitsizma k romanticizmu', in *Shekspir i russkaia kul'tura* (Moscow & Leningrad: Nauka, 1965), pp.70-128 (p.88).

<sup>21</sup> Heylen, p.4.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p.29. Heylen states that Ducis' version of *Hamlet* was the key source for the first Italian version of the play in 1772, the first in Spanish in 1772, the first Dutch version in 1777, as well as the first Swedish *Hamlet*.

<sup>23</sup> Levin, *Shekspir i russkaia literatura XIX veka*, p.243. [But Ducis was not an unquestioned authority for them. They treated him freely and even could return to Shakespeare in places.]

сами дописывали и изменяли трагедии, когда им казалось, что они могут их улучшить.<sup>24</sup>

As far as the focus of this study is concerned, Ducis' work is of particular importance because his 'imitation' of *Othello* also provided the basis for the first Russian version of the play, published by Ivan Alexandrovich Vel'iaminov in 1808. Vel'iaminov was in fact a military man by profession, serving in campaigns in the early 1800s and afterwards becoming Governor-General of Western Siberia. Interested in literature from a young age, his *Otello* was his first published work.<sup>25</sup>

Vel'iaminov translated mainly using Ducis' version, but occasionally referred to the older, more literal translations of La Place and Letourneur. However, Vel'iaminov actually considered himself completely independent from his predecessors, and followed them only when he felt that the French versions suited Russian literary and theatrical traditions. His method seems to have been to follow Ducis, referring to Letourneur occasionally, and if neither of these were quite suitable, he made his own alterations. As noted above, by this time translators of Shakespeare were beginning to recognise the value of referring to the original English text, and Vel'iaminov was no exception. For the characters' names he chose to revert to Shakespeare's originals where they have been altered by Ducis, except in the case of Iago, who remained "Pezarro", like the "Pézare" of the French version. In spite of the continued change of name, however, Vel'iaminov's Pezarro does seem to be far closer to the character of Iago in Shakespeare's original text than the character in Ducis' French 'imitation,' as P. R. Zaborov notes: 'Скрытый, по замыслу Дюсиса, от глаз зрителя почти до конца трагедии, Пезарро становится в адаптации Вельяминова персонажем значительным и даже колоритным.'<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid. [Translators added to and changed the tragedies themselves when it seemed to them that they could improve them.]

<sup>25</sup> Zaborov, p.88.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p.89. [Hidden from the view of the audience almost until the end of the tragedy in Ducis' plot, Pezarro becomes a significant and even colourful character in the adaptation of Vel'iaminov.]

The influence of the French neoclassicism of Ducis' work is still present, however. Vel'iaminov's play, like Ducis's, lacks the complexity of Shakespeare's play: the passions displayed are the direct emotions portrayed in classical versions of tragedy. Nevertheless, Vel'iaminov's reference to the original text is also evident. In his 'imitation' of the play, Ducis had changed the ending of the tragedy, believing, as Catherine O'Neil indicates, that the smothering of Desdemona with her own bridal sheets was 'too intimate a slaying for genteel sensibilities'.<sup>27</sup> Initially, Ducis' Othello stabbed his young wife instead, but even this proved too much for the audiences at the first performances, leading Ducis to alter the ending even more drastically, so that the villainy of Pézare (Iago) is discovered in time and the tragic events of the final scene are averted. In contrast to this rather extreme adaptation, Vel'iaminov preserves the original events of Shakespeare's final scene. His 're-writing' of *Othello*, as O'Neil notes, 'was performed in Russia to thunderous applause throughout the 1820s'.<sup>28</sup> As noted by Zaborov, the popularity of Vel'iaminov's translation ensured that it played an important role in the assimilation of *Othello* into Russian culture, as his version of the play was still used on stage up until the 1830s: 'Тем не менее перевод этот сыграл важную роль в усвоении русской литературой и театром «Отелло», и ещё в 1830-е годы столичные и провинциальные актеры обращались к нему в поисках приемлемого сценического варианта знаменитой трагедии Шекспира.'<sup>29</sup> The translation's prevalence in the repertoire also meant that for many key Russian literary figures, such as Aleksandr Pushkin, Vel'iaminov's *Otello* provided their first access to the play.

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<sup>27</sup> Catherine O'Neil, *With Shakespeare's Eyes: Pushkin's Creative Appropriation of Shakespeare* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2003), p.106.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Zaborov, p.88 [Nevertheless, the translation played an important role in the assimilation of *Othello* into Russian literature and theatre, and even in the 1830s, actors in the capital and the provinces still turned to it when in search of a suitable stage version of Shakespeare's famous tragedy.]

## 2.2.2 The Onset of German Romanticism

In spite of the continuing influence of French neoclassicism, however, the eighteenth century also witnessed the start of the use of German as an intermediary language in Russian translations of Shakespeare. This influx of yet another culture into Russian 'rewritings' of Shakespeare brought about a gradual change in attitudes towards the source text in the process of translation.

Catherine II was a ruler who recognised the importance of theatre and saw it as a means to educate her subjects and promote her political perspectives. She wrote over two dozen plays and operas herself, some of which she published anonymously. In 1786, she read the translations of Shakespeare by J. J. Eschenburg, which were published in Zurich across thirteen volumes from 1775 to 1782. Catherine wrote to her correspondent Friedrich Melchior Grimm that she "gobbled up" Eschenburg's translations, which seem to have been the primary source for her own works which followed.<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, as with the plays of Ducis mentioned above, Eschenburg's work was also the result of his augmentation of an existing translation in his own language, the prose translations of Christoph Martin Wieland, which had been published and staged in Germany in the 1760s.

Catherine completed three plays 'in imitation of Shakespeare.'<sup>31</sup> These were *The Beginning of Oleg's Reign*, which was operatic and modelled on English chronicle plays, and *From the Life of Riurik*, a historical spectacle. Their similarities to Shakespeare were primarily structural, in that the action of each play took place over a long period of time. Most important, as far as this study is concerned, was *Vot kakogo imet' korzinu i bel'e* or *This 'tis to Have Linen and Buck Baskets*, which Catherine herself described as a 'вольное но слабое переложение из Шекспира'<sup>32</sup> of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and was thus the first Russian play to formally credit Shakespeare's influence on its title page. The play was

<sup>30</sup> Lurana Donnels O'Malley, *The Dramatic Works of Catherine the Great*, (London: Ashgate, 2006) p.122.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p.12.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.121. ['A free but feeble adaptation from Shakespeare'].

published in St Petersburg in 1786, and premiered there in 1787 and then in Moscow in 1788. Throughout the 1780s, Russian interest in English fashions, language and literature was steadily growing and replacing the former domination of French culture. According to O'Malley, Catherine's decision to emulate Shakespeare was highly significant:

Catherine's rejection of the French model, by imitating Shakespeare rather than Molière or Racine, was an act with both cultural and political connotations. The approbation of Shakespeare had the potential to simultaneously express pro-English and anti-French sentiments, all in the name of Russian cultural pride.<sup>33</sup>

Catherine's decision to interpret this English play through a German translation would seem to further strengthen her anti-French stance. In addition, she alters several of Shakespeare's characters in order to promote her anti-French theme. Falstaff, for example, is transformed into Polkadov, a womanising Francophile who mixes French phrases into his speech and brags about his fondness for French products. Whilst remaining a comic character, Catherine's version of Falstaff is punished for his excessive Gallomania and his lustfulness.<sup>34</sup>

Catherine also took care to make her 'arrangement' accessible and relevant to her Russian audiences. Characters' names were changed to make them sound more Russian, and the setting was relocated to St Petersburg. Meanwhile any mention of places and practices specific to England were cut and replaced with non-specific nouns. Ironically, however, some of these changes actually brought her 'imitation' of Shakespeare closer to the traditions of the culture she was perhaps trying to reject. The neutralisation of the specifically English elements of the play meant that it gained a universality in tune with the neoclassical style and it also enabled her to emphasise the instructive elements of the plot: a comedy set in Russia about Russian characters would have had more of a didactic effect than a play about the foibles of foreigners. Therefore, as O'Malley describes, '[d]espite her conscious attempt to follow a Shakespearean model while

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p.123.

satirizing Francophilia, Catherine instead crafted a typical neoclassical comedy, still strongly influenced by the French mode. While seemingly rejecting the French neoclassical model, she remained safely within its boundaries.<sup>35</sup>

Nevertheless, Catherine's balancing of "Russianness" with French neoclassicism is regarded as a turning point for Russian drama. As O'Malley summarises, '*This 'tis* reflects a complex historical moment: the intersection of Enlightenment secularization, a new Russian cultural identity, and the older French playwriting style.'<sup>36</sup>

A rather more successful attempt to move away from the influence of French neoclassicism was made by Nikolai Karamzin, who in 1787 published what is acknowledged by some as the first translation of a Shakespeare play undertaken directly from the English original. Once again, however, there is some dispute amongst scholars as to the sources for his work. Levin states that Karamzin used the same German translation as Catherine II,<sup>37</sup> whereas others maintain that for the most part, Karamzin 'relied on Shakespeare's original text'.<sup>38</sup> Their evidence for this comes from the preface which Karamzin wrote to accompany his translation, where he explained his translation methods: 'я наиболее старался перевести верно, стараясь притом избежать и противных нашему языку выражений [...] Мысли автора моего нигде не переменял я, почитая сие для переводчика непозволенным.'<sup>39</sup>

The preface demonstrated that Karamzin's attitude towards the translation of Shakespeare was very different from those previously expressed by his contemporaries. Even if he was also referring to a German intermediary translation, he was clearly trying to convey Shakespeare's ideas and words as directly as possible, and if he felt that he had strayed too far from his source, he quoted Shakespeare's original text in the accompanying commentary and added

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p.139.

<sup>37</sup> Levin, *Shakespeare i russkaia literatura*, p.243.

<sup>38</sup> Stříbrný, p.33.

<sup>39</sup> N.M. Karamzin, 1787, quoted in Levin, p.243. [I tried to translate most faithfully, though trying to avoid unpleasant expressions in our language [...] I did not change the ideas of my author anywhere, honouring the fact that translators are not allowed to do this.]

a literal translation to show the extent of the departure.<sup>40</sup> Karamzin also defended Shakespeare against the criticism levelled at him by Voltaire and his supporters, arguing that Shakespeare's imagination could not be bound by neoclassical prescriptions, and that there was no need for the "improvements" which had been made by his contemporary dramatists.<sup>41</sup>

The more respectful attitude towards foreign dramatists which Karamzin expresses in his preface demonstrates a move towards the view of translation which became prevalent with the onset of Romanticism.

Romanticism brought with it a more respectful attitude toward other cultures, including those that earlier had been considered "uncivilized" [...] Neoclassicism's arbitrary "adjustments" of foreign writing in translation to suit its own notions of beauty and decorum were inconsistent with the new Romantic creed.<sup>42</sup>

One of the most prominent advocates of this new Romantic attitude was the German writer and translator August Wilhelm Schlegel, whose translations of Shakespeare were published between 1791 and 1810.<sup>43</sup> As Simon Williams describes, Schlegel's work did much to establish Shakespeare's reputation as a dramatist in Germany, 'through both his essays and translations [Schlegel] guaranteed a permanent home for the plays in the German theatre and greatly increased people's understanding of them'.<sup>44</sup> Whilst translators were now beginning to work from original texts, the influence of the style and techniques used by Schlegel and his compatriots spread right across Europe: '[п]еревод

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<sup>40</sup> Stříbrný, p.33.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p.34.

<sup>42</sup> Friedberg, p.27.

<sup>43</sup> Simon Williams, *Shakespeare on the German Stage, Volume 1: 1586 – 1914* (Cambridge: University Press, 1990) p.150. According to Williams, Schlegel had intended to translate the complete dramatic works of Shakespeare, but after translating sixteen of the plays, his interests changed and he felt unable to resume the project. With Schlegel's approval, his publishers gave Ludwig Tieck the responsibility for the collection's completion, but he lacked the stamina to finish the project singlehandedly. The translations were eventually completed by Tieck's daughter, Dorothea, who translated five of the plays, and Wolf von Baudissin, who translated 12. In spite of this collaboration, Williams states that the translations are regarded as remarkably uniform in style, and that as a whole, they remain close to Schlegel's original intentions for the work.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p.147.



Шлегеля-Тика сыграл большую роль в популяризации Шекспира и долгое время служил образцом для переводчиков разных стран, в том числе в России.<sup>45</sup>

Schlegel argued for the need to reproduce a text faithfully, transferring the literal meaning whilst also conveying something of the spirit and feel of the piece.<sup>46</sup> Structural features of the plays such as the alternation of prose and verse were to be strictly observed, and he also spoke against translators making additions or corrections to original works they were translating.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, as Williams describes, Schlegel did make some adjustments to the text, meaning that as with French Neoclassicism before it, German Romanticism left its mark on translations of Shakespeare of that period.

In his concern to prove Shakespeare's consummate artistry, Schlegel had failed to translate one crucial aspect of the plays [...] their roughness. Shakespeare wrote for a popular theatre, and while Schlegel understood this critically, his translations frequently seem directed towards creating the image of Shakespeare as a harmonious writer whose language is designed never to offend the sensibilities of his audience.<sup>48</sup>

As will be demonstrated in detail in Chapter 4, Russian translators of Shakespeare influenced by the German Romantic tradition also felt the need to temper some of the 'roughness' of Shakespeare's language in their own translations. This was one element of their work which Anna Radlova identified as problematic.

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<sup>45</sup> Levin, *Shekspir i russkaia literatura*, p.18. [The translation of Schlegel and Tieck played a big role in the popularisation of Shakespeare and for a long time served as a model for translators of different countries, including Russia.]

<sup>46</sup> Williams, p.77.

<sup>47</sup> Yuri Levin, 'Russian Shakespeare Translations in the Romantic Era', in *European Shakespeares. Translating Shakespeare in the Romantic Age*, eds. Dirk Delabastita and Lieven d'Hulst (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1993) pp.75-90 (p.77).

<sup>48</sup> Williams, p.152.

## 2.3 Assuming a Position in the Literary Polysystem

As has been discussed in Chapter 1, in polysystems theory, Even-Zohar asserts the fact that translations of foreign works assume a more central role within a literary system when a literature is under-developed, or when there are literary vacuums within a literature. He argues that the input of foreign literature can serve as a useful tool to aid the formation of a developing literary language, and can be viewed as a means of introducing new styles and techniques into the literary system. Schlegel's writing on Shakespeare was to influence not only those in Russia who were interested in translating his works, but literary figures who were keen, as in Even Zohar's model, to introduce new styles of writing into their own work.

### 2.3.1 The Influence of Shakespeare Translation on Russian Literature

Perhaps the most important of these literary pioneers was Aleksandr Pushkin, who, as Levin describes, has played a significant role in both the development of Russian literature and the assimilation of Shakespeare into Russian culture. 'В истории русского шекспиризма, как и вообще в истории новой русской литературы, Пушкин – центральная фигура.'<sup>49</sup>

Pushkin began studying Shakespeare in the 1820s. His knowledge of English was limited, so like the translators discussed above he also referred to an intermediary translation, that of Letourneur. At the same time, he read Schlegel's lectures on drama and literature. As Tatiana Wolff notes, 'Pushkin had long ago rejected the principles of neo-classic tragedy and had been anxious to break the hold of the French on the Russian theatre'.<sup>50</sup> In 1825, he began writing *Boris Godunov*, and in a draft article written on completion of the tragedy, he wrote: 'я расположил свою трагедию по системе отца нашего Шекспира и принесли ему в жертву пред его алтарь два классические единства и едва

<sup>49</sup> Levin, *Shakespeare i russkaia literature*, p.32. [In the history of Russian Shakespearianism, and in the history of the new Russian literature in general, Pushkin is a central figure.]

<sup>50</sup> Tatiana Wolff, ed. *Pushkin on Literature* (London: The Athlone Press, 1986) p.104.

сохранив последнее.<sup>51</sup> Pushkin's intention to introduce a new style into Russian drama was therefore clear, and as Wolff describes, he 'made full use of all the flexibility and freedom from neoclassical restrictions which Shakespearian drama affords.'<sup>52</sup> He follows Shakespeare's practices in a number of ways: the play covers a long period of time, and contains constant scene changes from public to private spaces, such as from square to garden, or contrasting locations such as from court to monastery. Pushkin's handling of humour within the play is particularly Shakespearian, as rather than forming separate subplots, the comic scenes within the play are directly connected to the main action of the tragedy. Pushkin also alternates prose with blank verse, with prose for the comic scenes and blank verse reserved for tragedy.<sup>53</sup> Wolff also notes that there are 'Shakespearian echoes' in the handling of the character of Boris Godunov.<sup>54</sup> This similarity again marks Pushkin's departure from the use of the French style. In agreement with Schlegel, Pushkin felt that French theatre, and in particular the work of Molière, presented simple "types", whereas in Shakespeare's work, as noted by Victor Terras, 'the typical is wed to the individual, producing characters instead of types.'<sup>55</sup>

Some of Pushkin's contemporaries, such as Vilgel'm Kiukhel'beker, the Decembrist poet, followed Pushkin's example, and began to fashion their dramas on Shakespeare's plays. Through reading a translation and incorporating Shakespeare's style into his own work, Pushkin introduced a new type of theatre to Russia. As Terras describes, 'Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* launched the Russian historical drama on a long streak of dominance on the Russian stage. Along with it came Shakespeare and plays in the Shakespearian manner, Schiller's in

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<sup>51</sup> Pushkin, quoted in M. P. Alekseev, 'A. S. Pushkin', in *Shekspir i ruskaia kul'tura*, ed. M. P. Alekseev, (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), pp.162-200, p.173. Wolff provides the following translation in her edited volume of Pushkin's writing, 'I ordered my Tragedy according to the system of our Father Shakespeare; and having sacrificed two of the classical unities on his altar, have barely kept to the third.' (*Pushkin on Literature*, p.221.)

<sup>52</sup> Wolff, p.106.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p.105

<sup>55</sup> Victor Terras, *A History of Russian Literature*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1991), p.183.

particular, all of which rendered the Russian tragic stage of the 1830s and 1840s thoroughly romantic.<sup>56</sup>

Many later Russian writers followed Pushkin's example and drew on Shakespeare in their own work. As detailed in the introduction to this chapter, the general influence of Shakespeare on Russian literature has been documented in detail by Russian scholars, and falls outside the boundaries of this study, which focuses on the translation of Shakespeare. However, Pushkin is an important figure as far as the history of *Othello* in Russia is concerned, because his interpretation has proved so influential within the Russian reception of the tragedy. In her work of the influence of Shakespeare on Pushkin, Catherine O'Neil notes that 'Pushkin's "personal" hero from Shakespeare was Othello.'<sup>57</sup> He was drawn to the character because of his ancestors; his great-grandfather on his mother's side was African and had been a prominent figure in the court of Peter I. Most importantly for this study, however, unlike his contemporaries and predecessors, he does not view jealousy as the central feature of Othello's character. For Pushkin, 'Отелло от природы не ревнив – напротив: он доверчив' [Othello is not jealous by nature, but trusting],<sup>58</sup> and it is the manipulation of this trusting nature by Iago which provokes Othello's jealousy. The implications of Pushkin's interpretation of the character of Othello, both in nature and appearance, on subsequent translations and productions will be discussed in Chapter 5.

## 2.4 Establishing the Norms of Translation Practice

To return to translations of Shakespeare rather than the assimilation of his work into literature, many early nineteenth century translators or "re-writers" of Shakespeare in Russia were also keen to introduce readers and audiences to the merits of the English writer, as they felt his works offered the opportunity to break away from the influence of French neoclassical traditions.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p.282.

<sup>57</sup> O'Neil, p.26.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p.135.

### 2.4.1 Direct Translation from Shakespeare: a Change in the Norm

In accordance with Schlegel's stance on the importance of fidelity to the original text, attitudes of Russian translators towards their original source texts began to change, and the norm concerning the directness of Shakespearean translation gradually began to alter. As Levin describes, 'By the mid-1820s Russian men of letters keenly felt a lack of reliable Shakespeare versions.'<sup>59</sup> In 1827, the writer Mikhail Pogodin wrote, in some indignation, '[н]е стыд ли литературе русской, что у нас до сих пор нет ни одной его [of Shakespeare's] трагедии, переведенной с подлинника?'<sup>60</sup> These concerns brought about a change in translation practice, and led to the production of 're-writings' of Shakespeare's plays which, as Levin notes, resembled more closely 'our modern notion of faithful translation'.<sup>61</sup>

### 2.4.2 Literal Translation: Unsuitable for the Stage?

Pogodin's words indicate that Shakespeare's growing status in Russia meant that the composition of direct translations of his works into Russian was beginning to be viewed as an important priority. As noted in Chapter 1, translation theorists such as Annie Brisset have demonstrated how the translation of Shakespeare has been used to test and demonstrate the capabilities of a developing literary language, and increase its 'cultural capital'.

In the years following Pogodin's observation, a number of Russian translators independently embarked on the task of translating Shakespeare's works from the original English text. From 1828-1832, whilst in prison, Wilhelm Kiukhel'beker translated *Richard II*, *Macbeth*, *Henry IV Part One*, the first two acts of *Henry IV Part Two* and *Richard III*. He also later began, but never completed, translations of *The Merchant of Venice* and *King Lear*. At the same time, the military geographer and amateur translator Mikhail Vronchenko embarked on

<sup>59</sup> Levin, 'Russian Shakespeare Translations', p.76.

<sup>60</sup> Pogodin, quoted in Levin, *Shakespeare i russkaia literatura*, pp.243-244. Levin provides the following translation of his words: 'Shame on Russian literature! We still haven't got a single tragedy of his translated from the original!' (Levin, Russian Shakespeare Translations, p.76).

<sup>61</sup> Levin, 'Russian Shakespeare Translations', p.75.

translations of *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*. Vasilii Iakimov, an assistant and later lecturer at Kharkov University, then set out with the intention of translating all thirty-seven of Shakespeare's plays. However, only two of his translations were ever actually published, *King Lear* and *The Merchant of Venice* in 1833.

These new translators of Shakespeare took a very scholarly approach to their work, studying their source texts and the literary criticism about them in great detail. Unfortunately, however, the target language into which they were attempting to translate presented Vronchenko and his contemporaries with many difficulties. As Levin describes, '[b]y the 1820s the Russian literary language had not yet developed the means and the flexibility needed for the conveyance of foreign textual forms, and specific literary styles had not been defined well enough.' The means by which the translators chose to try and tackle these deficiencies in the Russian language resulted in what Levin terms 'a period of naïve romantic literalism.'<sup>62</sup>

All three of the translators listed above took a very similar approach to Shakespeare. In the introduction to his translation of *Hamlet*, Vronchenko summarised his translation principles, stressing the need to introduce new styles and phrasing into the Russian language in order to translate the complexities of Shakespeare's text in full:

Переводить стихи стихами, прозу прозою, сколько возможно ближе к подлиннику (не изменяя ни мыслей, ни порядка их), даже на счет гладкости русских стихов, не приобвыкших заключать в себе частицы речи, для простоты непринужденного, неотрывистого Шекспирова слога необходимые [...] Переводя почти всегда стих в стих, часто слово в слово, допуская выражения малоупотребительные, я старался доставить моим соотечественникам сколько возможно точнейшую копию Гамлета Шекспирова; но для сего должно было

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p.77.

сохранить красоты, почти неподражаемые, — а в сем-то именно  
нельзя и ручаться.<sup>63</sup>

Levin notes that Vronchenko followed these principles very carefully in practice, and concedes that ‘as a rule, he succeeded in his aim to give the Russian reader a more or less representative idea of Shakespeare.’<sup>64</sup> However, he also maintains that Vronchenko’s devotion to achieving equilinearity throughout his translation meant that his lines had a very complex syntax, ‘sometimes to the point of incomprehensibility.’<sup>65</sup> Both Kiukhel’beker and Iakimov adopted similar principles to Vronchenko while carrying out their translations, which brought about similar results. Levin notes that Kiukhel’beker renders Shakespeare’s images ‘with all possible verbal precision, however unusual the result in the target language’, and that Iakimov ‘often renders Shakespeare’s metaphors word for word, even if the result turns out to be incomprehensible.’<sup>66</sup> Unsurprisingly, all three translators were faced with criticism for the heaviness and difficulty of their language. Their pioneering work was overshadowed by the more accessible translations that followed, so that as Semenenko describes, ‘[b]y the middle of the nineteenth century readers and spectators would not remember Vronchenko as the first translator of *Hamlet*’,<sup>67</sup> whilst much of Kiukhel’beker and Iakimov’s work was not published until much later, or in some cases, not at all. However, these three translators should be credited with introducing a new concept of translation, however imperfect their means of achieving it. As Levin describes, in the view of the Russian translators of Shakespeare of the late 1820s, ‘[a] literary translation

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<sup>63</sup> Mikhail Vronchenko, ‘Ot perevodchika’, preface to *Gamlet*, tragediia v piati deistvie V. Shekspira, perevod s angliiskogo M. V. (St Petersburg: Tipografii meditsinskogo departamenta ministerstva vnutrennikh del”, 1828) <<http://www.lib.ru/SHAKESPEARE/hamlet9.pdf>> [accessed 26 June 2013]. Levin provides the following translation: ‘Verse should be translated into verse, prose into prose, as closely to the original as possible, without changing either the thought or the order in which the author chose to express it – even at the expense of the felicity of Russian verse, which is not attuned to the kind of phrasing needed to represent Shakespeare’s simple, unconstrained, unbroken style [...]. By nearly always rendering verse for verse, and often word for word, and by introducing phrases not in common use in Russian, I have striven to offer my countrymen as exact a copy of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* as possible. To achieve this aim would involve preserving almost inexpressible beauties, and whether I have succeeded in this cannot be guaranteed.’ (Levin, ‘Russian Shakespeare Translations’, p.77).

<sup>64</sup> Levin, ‘Russian Shakespeare Translations’, p.79.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid, pp.80-81.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, pp.83-84.

<sup>67</sup> Semenenko, p.77.

could no longer be perceived as an autonomous and self-sufficient work of art: it had to be a maximal and strictly subordinate reproduction of the original.<sup>68</sup> Perhaps more importantly as far as the central aims of this study are concerned, however, is the fact that the contrast between these translations and the translation of *Hamlet* which immediately followed raises questions regarding the different requirements for translations intended for reading, and those intended for performance.

### 2.4.3 New Translations for the Theatre

As has already been indicated, however good the intentions of Vronchenko and his contemporaries, these scholarly translations were largely intended for reading, and were considered completely unsuitable for the stage. Consequently, as Levin describes, ‘until the mid-1830s Shakespeare had continued to be staged in Russian versions of Ducis’ neoclassical adaptations.’<sup>69</sup> The Russian Imperial Theatres continued to be a stronghold of neoclassicism. However, as in literary circles, the lack of performances using translations made directly from Shakespeare’s original texts began to rest uneasy with many theatre practitioners. In 1836, for example, the actor Iakov Brianskii actually insisted that the production of *Othello* he was starring in was advertised as a performance from a translation from the English original, rather than the French of Ducis as it was in reality.<sup>70</sup>

As the translations available at this time which could cite Shakespeare as their source author were considered unperformable, actors themselves began to get involved with the translation of Shakespeare and with the promotion of new versions of his work on stage. In 1835, the actor Aleksandr Slavin produced a version of *The Merchant of Venice*, while in the following year Ivan Panaev published a prose, as opposed to verse, translation of *Othello*. Also keen to perform Shakespeare on stage, the renowned St Petersburg actor Vasili

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<sup>68</sup> Levin, ‘Russian Shakespeare Translations’, p.78.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, pp.84-85.

<sup>70</sup> Levin, *Shekspir i russkaia literatura*, p.244.



Karatygin published prose versions of *King Lear* (1837) and *Coriolanus* (1841). In spite of these actors' desire to bring the "real" Shakespeare to the Russian stage, however, Levin notes that their translations were all extremely free. 'As these actor-translators were mainly concerned for the immediate needs of the contemporary theatre, they had no scruples about compositional changes and all kinds of abridgments.'<sup>71</sup> He does acknowledge, however, that their work remained closer to the originals than the 'imitations' of Shakespeare by Ducis.

The translations of Slavin, Panaev and Karatygin were all performed, with Panaev's translation of *Othello* replacing Vel'iaminov's as the one more frequently staged.<sup>72</sup> However, the translations of these actors had relatively short stage-lives, and so, as Levin indicates, 'their part in establishing Shakespeare on the Russian stage was not decisive.'<sup>73</sup> The next really significant event was Nikolai Polevoi's 1837 translation of *Hamlet*. The translation was important for two principal reasons: firstly because Polevoi's translation style, unique for its time, generated some of the first significant debate about the principles of Shakespeare translation, and translation in general; and secondly, because its tremendous success on stage helped further cement Shakespeare as an intrinsic part of Russian culture.

As Levin describes, Polevoi took a very different approach towards translation from his predecessors Vronchenko and Iakimov, whose first aim had been fidelity to the original text.

Faithful reproduction of the original did not rank very high in Polevoy's order of priorities. He cut *Hamlet* by a quarter and shortened most of the monologues. For the sake of easy comprehension he simplified complex imagery, eliminated references to mythology, and omitted any detail he thought might need explanation. The translator aimed at producing a natural sounding colloquial text, which lent itself to performance on the

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<sup>71</sup> Levin, 'Russian Shakespeare Translations', p.85.

<sup>72</sup> Levin, *Shakespeare i russkaia literatura*, p.261.

<sup>73</sup> Levin, 'Russian Shakespeare Translations', p.85.

Russian stage and allowed the actors to portray living people whose ways and motives would be clear to the audience.<sup>74</sup>

The freedom with which Polevoi translated Shakespeare's text allowed him to ensure that his text had particular political significance for his Russian audiences. Working under the stifling military regime of Nikolai I, Polevoi, Levin notes, 'created a Hamlet in his own image and wanted to express the miserable lot of his generation through Hamlet's sufferings.'<sup>75</sup> Here, his modifications to Shakespeare's text proved extremely useful. As Anatoly Altschuller notes, 'Denmark is very seldom mentioned in the translation; often the word 'fatherland' [отечество] is substituted, so that there is an implication that it is not Denmark which is a prison, but Russia.'<sup>76</sup> The appropriation of Shakespeare's plays for political purposes is significant, and will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. However, Polevoi's personal interpretation of *Hamlet* was further aided by the actor who made the leading role his own. Pavel Stepanovich Mochalov chose to use Polevoi's translation for a benefit performance in January 1837. His Hamlet was, as Altschuller continues, 'no weak and uncertain ditherer, but rather a fierce and heroic avenger. Instead of a suffering and meditative hero, this Hamlet was someone full of vitality and energy'.<sup>77</sup>

Altschuller describes Mochalov's performance as 'a triumph.' The actor's success was further publicised by the prominent literary critic, Vissarion Belinskii. In his article, "'Gamlet", Drama Shekspira, Mochalov v roli Gamleta' (*Hamlet, Shakespeare's Drama, Mochalov in the role of Hamlet*), Belinskii analysed Mochalov's performance and stated that he had not fully understood the tragedy until watching Mochalov in the role. In addition to his assessment of the performance, Belinskii wrote a further article, 'Gamlet, Prints Datskii' (*Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*) this time discussing Polevoi's translation, and comparing his work with Vronchenko's earlier and more literal translation.

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, p.86.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, p.85.

<sup>76</sup> Anatoly Altschuller, 'Actors and acting, 1820-1850', in *A History of Russian Theatre*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1999) pp.104-123 (p.109).

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

Belinskii described Vronchenko as a man with poetic talent and a great love for Shakespeare, whose work deserved respect. However, he concluded that his translation had been unsuccessful with the public because it was a far too literal translation, difficult to understand, which did not capture the spirit (дух) of the play. For Belinskii, capturing the ‘spirit’ of the original was the key aim for a translation. ‘Близость к подлиннику состоит в передании не буквы, а духа создания.’<sup>78</sup> In contrast to his negative assessment of Vronchenko, Belinskii praised Polevoi for using everyday language, and yet still managing to make his translation sound like poetry: ‘Скажите – не тот ли это язык, который вы ежедневно слышите около себя и которым вы ежедневно сами говорите? А между тем это язык высокой поэзии’.<sup>79</sup> Comparing the works of Vronchenko with those of Polevoi, Belinskii provided the definition of two different types of translation: ‘художественный’ (artistic) and ‘поэтический’ (poetic). He stated that the aim of an “artistic” translation was to render the text as fully as possible, with no changes, deletions or additions, a complete version of the original in a different language. He argued that Vronchenko had translated with this goal in mind, but that at the present time, Shakespeare’s language remained largely inaccessible for the Russian public. On the other hand, a translator working to produce a “poetic” translation could be more original, attribute more importance to the demands of his readership or audience, and accordingly alter his translation to suit them. In this way, a translator could attempt to ensure that the overall meaning and “spirit” of a text is conveyed. He placed Polevoi’s translation of *Hamlet* in this category.<sup>80</sup> As Friedberg describes,

‘[e]ager to popularize Shakespeare among newly literate Russian readers, Belinsky sanctioned such translations as temporarily justified, believing

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<sup>78</sup> Vissarion Belinskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, tom 2, ed. N. F. Bel’chikov, (Moscow: Izd-vo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1953-1959) p.429. [Closeness to the original is in the transmission not of the letters, but the spirit of the work.]

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p.432. Levin provides the following translation: ‘Isn’t this the language we all hear around us every day, the language you yourself speak every day? And yet it is also the language of lofty poetry.’ (Levin, ‘Russian Shakespeare Translations’, p.87).

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, p.427.

that with the growth of literary sophistication among the Russian public they would be supplanted in time by more literal renditions.<sup>81</sup>

For Belinskii, the need to educate the masses in the 1830s meant that presenting Shakespeare in a manner which was accessible for members of the Russian public was of greater importance at that time than replicating the metre and exact syntactical structures of Shakespeare's language. 'Если бы искажение Шекспира было единственным средством для ознакомления его с нашею публикою, - и в таком случае не для чего б было церемониться; искажайте смело, лишь бы успех оправдал ваше намерение.'<sup>82</sup>

Levin views the concepts which Belinskii put forward regarding the process of translation as a critical stage in the development of Russian literary translation in the nineteenth century.<sup>83</sup> His defence of Polevoi's free translation style on the basis that it produced a more accessible text was supported by the fact that Polevoi's *Hamlet* was performed on stage well into the twentieth century, and so had a stage life far longer than any other translation of its time.<sup>84</sup> It will therefore be important to consider whether the translation history of Shakespeare in Russia provides further examples which indicate that a less literal translation, which is not so constricted by the demands of the source language, is more suitable for performance on the stage.

As Semenenko describes, 'the period of the 1820-30s was the turning point in Shakespeare reception in Russian culture.'<sup>85</sup> His plays were beginning to form an important part of the Russian theatrical repertoire, whilst many Russian writers were incorporating elements of his writing into their own work. The remainder

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<sup>81</sup> Friedberg, p.47.

<sup>82</sup> Belinskii, pp.427-428. [If the distortion of Shakespeare was the only means by which our public could become familiar with him, then in this case, do not stand on ceremony: distort fearlessly, if only to justify the success of your intention.]

<sup>83</sup> Levin, *Russkie perevodchiki XIX veka i razvitie khudozhestvennogo perevoda*, p.104. The popularity of Polevoi's translation of *Hamlet* led to his work also having an important influence on Russian literature: quotations from his translation of Act III Scene 4 were used by Anton Chekhov in *The Seagull*. See Richard Peace, 'Chekhov into English: the case of *The Seagull*', in *Chekhov on the British Stage*, ed. Patrick Miles (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp.216-223.

<sup>84</sup> Levin, 'Russian Shakespeare Translations', p.87.

<sup>85</sup> Semenenko, p.76.

of the nineteenth century was to witness the establishment of more carefully defined translation principles which would further strengthen Shakespeare's position in the Russian literary and theatrical canon.

#### 2.4.4 The Demand for Greater Accuracy

Though the initial reaction to Polevoi's translation was, as described, extremely positive, by 1840, opinions were beginning to change. Following his writing and publication of an unfavourable review of Nestor Kukol'nik's play *Ruka vsevyshnego otechestvo spasla* (The Hand of the Almighty has Saved the Fatherland), Polevoi's journal, *Moskovskii telegraf*, was closed on the personal orders of Tsar Nikolai I, and his professional reputation was ruined.<sup>86</sup> Criticisms of his work began to escalate. The journalist and translator Andrei Kroneberg, a colleague of Belinskii, published an article entitled '«Гамлет», исправленный г-ном Полевым' (*Hamlet*, corrected by Mr. Polevoi) in which he accused Polevoi of distorting the original text. Implying that Polevoi had taken a somewhat neoclassical approach towards the translation, and had sought to improve on the original text, he declared: 'что перевод г. Полевой не только хорош, но что он стоит далеко выше своего подлинника'.<sup>87</sup> Belinskii also revised his opinion, condemning Polevoi as a reactionary journalist, and from that point there were hardly any positive reviews of the translation until after Polevoi's death in 1846. Semenenko acknowledges that much of the criticism of Polevoi and his work may well have been personal, but states that 'those that did not focus on Polevoj's personality but on the text claimed there was a need for "accurate" translation.'<sup>88</sup>

Throughout the 1840s, several translators therefore decided to attempt to produce more accurate translations, whilst avoiding the unbending literalism of

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<sup>86</sup> Kukol'nik's play was set in the 'Time of Troubles' of the early seventeenth century, and showed how, by the will of God, the early Romanov rulers had brought harmony and control to Russia. It seems that without the camouflage which a translation of Shakespeare afforded, Polevoi's criticism of the regime could not go unheeded.

<sup>87</sup> Kroneberg, quoted in Levin, *Shakespeare i russkaia literatura*, p.265. [Mr Polevoi's translation is not only good, but far above the original].

<sup>88</sup> Semenenko, p.82.

the translators of the 1820s. One of these was Andrei Kroneberg, who following his criticism of Polevoi's work, completed his own translations of four of Shakespeare's plays: *Twelfth Night* (1840), *Hamlet* (completed in 1841 but not published until 1844), *Macbeth* (1846), and *Much Ado About Nothing* (1847). As Semenenko explains, when working on his version of *Hamlet*, Kroneberg was able to take advantage of the criticism levelled at his predecessors: 'He saw, on the one hand, how unpopular Vrončenko's literalist translation was, and, on the other, being one of the critics of Polevoj's "too liberal" rendition, he realized the necessity of finding a compromise between these two opposing tendencies.'<sup>89</sup>

Semenenko argues that Kroneberg sought to achieve this compromise by creating a *Hamlet* which was 'less *foreign* than Vrončenko's text and more *faithful* than Polevoj's.'<sup>90</sup> In order to make his text more understandable for potential readers and audiences, Kroneberg followed Polevoi's lead and rendered Shakespeare's texts into contemporary Russian, simplifying Shakespeare's original with what Semenenko describes as 'the help of contemporary poetic clichés'. Unlike Vronchenko, he avoided the use of alienating archaic expressions, though he did add his own embellishments to the text where he deemed it appropriate. These alterations frequently led to the disruption of Shakespeare's poetic structure. However, Levin argues that compared with the works of his contemporaries, Kroneberg's translations represented an important step forward in the development of Russian Shakespeare. His works demonstrated a thorough knowledge and understanding of Shakespeare's text, whilst his use of language free of archaisms made his work accessible: 'Рядом с «Гамлетом» Полевого, на фоне переводов Вронченко они не только выглядели, но и действительно являлись точными, с одной стороны, и легким и изящными, доступными широким кругам читателей, с

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid, p.83.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

другой.<sup>91</sup> Kroneberg's translations established a new standard, introducing new principles which future translators of Shakespeare would adopt and develop:

Две шекспировские трагедии и две комедии в интерпретация  
Кронеберга стали не только каноническими для XIX в., но в известной  
мере и нормативными для принципов русского стихотворного  
перевода Шекспира.<sup>92</sup>

## 2.5 Establishing the Centre of the Polysystem: Formation of the Nineteenth Century Canon

By the mid-nineteenth century, therefore, the principles of Shakespeare translation were beginning to be determined. Different approaches had been trialled and assessed and a preference for the use of accessible, familiar language had come to the fore. The volume of people involved in the practice and criticism of translation had also brought about a change in its status. As Friedberg notes, '[a]fter 1840 translation ceased to be viewed as primarily a literary activity, but rather as part of commercial publishing. Translation became a profession.'<sup>93</sup>

However, whilst translation practice itself had taken on new prominence, the 1850s represented a brief dip in Shakespeare's popularity. Whilst patriotic feeling roused by the Crimean War (1853-1856) will have played its part in this decline, questions also began to be raised regarding Shakespeare's aesthetic qualities. The 1850s saw the beginnings of the anti-Shakespeare movement which eventually came to fruition with the publication of Lev Tolstoi's article 'O Shekspire i o drame' ('On Shakespeare and on Drama'), which was published in 1906. As Levin indicates, writers such as Tolstoi and Chernyshevskii were searching for a new and different type of realism, which seemed entirely absent

<sup>91</sup> Levin, *Shekspir i russkaia literatura*, pp.279-80. [Next to Polevoi's *Hamlet*, and against the backdrop of Vronchenko's translations, they not only looked, but really were accurate on the one hand, and light, elegant and accessible for a wide circle of readers on the other.]

<sup>92</sup> Ibid, p.277. [Two Shakespeare tragedies and two comedies in Kroneberg's interpretation became not only canonical for the nineteenth century but, to a certain extent, normative for the principles of Russian verse translation of Shakespeare.]

<sup>93</sup> Friedberg, p.38.

from much of Shakespeare's work: 'Метафорическая образность языка его героев, выражающая иной, поэтический строй мышления и метод типизации, казалась несовместимой с современной эстетикой, требующей изображать жизнь как она есть.'<sup>94</sup>

### 2.5.1 Classic Translations

In spite of this criticism, translations of Shakespeare's works were still being undertaken. Aleksandr Druzhinin was a prose-writer, literary critic and journal editor, who did much to popularise English literature in Russia in the mid-nineteenth century. However, it is his translations of four of Shakespeare's plays for which he is best remembered. His translation of *King Lear* was completed in 1856, then *Coriolanus* (1858), *Richard III* (1860) and *King John*, which was published posthumously in 1865.

Druzhinin never supported Tolstoi's views publicly, though he did admit in his diary that he struggled to appreciate Shakespeare's comedies.<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, his translation methods do suggest that he at least agreed in part with the detractors. As Levin describes, he regarded certain aspects of Shakespeare's style as only superficial decoration. 'Дружинин ошибался, когда считал метафорическую образность Шекспира внешним элементом, который может быть устранен без существенного ущерба для целого.'<sup>96</sup> However, this was a common perception in the mid to late nineteenth century. For Druzhinin, the most important function for a translation was to create the same effect as the original, an attribute which many future translators would also try to emulate. 'В переводческих установках Дружинина принципиально важным было требование, чтобы перевод производил то же впечатление на

<sup>94</sup> Levin, *Russkie perevodchiki*, pp.147-148. [The metaphorical imagery in the language of his characters expressed another poetic system of thought and method of typification, which seemed incompatible with contemporary aesthetics that demanded the depiction of life as it really is.]

<sup>95</sup> Ibid, p.148.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid, p.151. [Druzhinin was mistaken when he thought that Shakespeare's metaphorical imagery was a superficial element, which could be removed without considerable damage to the work as a whole.]



русского читателя, что и оригинала – на английского.<sup>97</sup> In order to achieve this he followed the norm established by Kroneberg, using more modern language to ensure his reader would understand the text.

Though in places it was quite different from the Shakespeare's text, Druzhinin's translation of *King Lear* remains his most lauded. When beginning his own translation, Boris Pasternak commented that Druzhinin's *Lear* had entered deep into the Russian consciousness.<sup>98</sup> The canonisation of this translation was aided by the appearance in the 1860s of a new concept, the anthology. Shakespeare's collected works in Russian, with translations of thirty four of the plays, was edited by Gerbel and Nekrasov, and first published in 1865-8. It went through a further four editions throughout the remainder of the century.<sup>99</sup> In addition to Druzhinin's *Lear* and *Richard III*, the volumes contained translations by Kroneberg, N. M. Satin, Sokolovskii and Aleksandr Ostrovskii's *Taming of the Shrew*. The collection also included eight translations by Pëtr Veinberg. Importantly for this study, these eight included Veinberg's translation of *Othello*. It had been his first translation of Shakespeare, and was first published in the journal *Sovremennik* in 1864.

Veinberg is viewed by Russian critics as not only an important figure in the history of the translation of Shakespeare, but in the history of translation in Russia in general:

В истории русской переводной литературы XIX в. ни один переводчик ни до, ни после Вейнберга не пользовался таким авторитетом, не получал такого общественного признания и почета, какими был окружен он в конце своего творческого пути. Среди своих

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid, p.151. [In the translation aims of Druzhinin, of principal importance was that the translation produces the same impression in the Russian reader as the original does for the English.]

<sup>98</sup> France, p.78.

<sup>99</sup> George Gibian, 'Shakespeare in Russia', p.339.

современников Вейнберг стяжал славу лучшего переводчика, а его переводы долгое время признавались образцовыми.<sup>100</sup>

Like Druzhinin, he viewed the translation of foreign works as an opportunity to enhance the education of his readers. In addition to Shakespeare, he translated a lot of poetry, including works by Byron, Shelley and Hugo. For Veinberg, the most important function for a translation was to provide full understanding of the content of the original, and he did his best to communicate the meaning of each individual word. This necessitated a great deal of explanation and expansion, resulting in the fact that Veinberg's translation of *Othello* is, in word count, almost an entire act longer than the original Shakespearean text.<sup>101</sup>

He did not, however, attach any meaning to Shakespeare's poetic form, so in many places, the dramatic effect of Shakespeare's monologues is greatly altered. He also devotes much attention to correct versification – carefully alternating masculine and feminine endings, making sure stress and meter are correct. But this rigid structure he imposes is, for the most part, completely independent from his source text, and his devotion to form in fact leads to multiple inaccuracies in word choice. Levin cites the example of Othello's final line, 'And smote him - thus' (Act V Scene 2) which finishes abruptly, disrupting the rhythm of the blank verse as Othello performs his final suicidal act. Veinberg corrects this irregularity, lengthening the line to the correct number of syllables. 'И заколол его - вот точно так...'<sup>102</sup>

George Gibian also notes that Veinberg, influenced by the expectations of the society at the time, was embarrassed by the "coarseness" of *Othello*, changing Desdemona's ballad from Act IV Scene 3 into a romantic, sentimental song, and translating the word "whore" 'by five different biblical or elegant periphrastic

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid, p.261. [In the history of Russian translated literature of the nineteenth century, no translator before or after Veinberg commanded such authority, nor received such public recognition and honour as surrounded him at the end of his career. Amongst his contemporaries, Veinberg enjoyed fame as the best translator, and his translations were for a long time recognised as exemplary.]

<sup>101</sup> Levin, *Shekspir i ruskaia literatura*, p.308.

<sup>102</sup> Vil'iam Shekspir, *Otello, venetsianskii mavr*, perevod Pëtra Veinberga (V.2).

<[www.lib.ru/SHAKESPEARE](http://www.lib.ru/SHAKESPEARE)> [accessed: 23/10/2012]. [And stabbed him – just like that...]

Russian words'.<sup>103</sup> The differences between this approach and Radlova's treatment of the bad language and sexual references within *Othello* will be explored in Chapter 4.

In his work on translation and canon formation, André Lefevere emphasises the role of the anthology in providing an 'image' of a literature. He states that anthologies can wield much power in the formation of a literary or dramatic canon, because they can often provide the only experience of certain texts for many readers.<sup>104</sup> Where translations are concerned, this can then become problematic for newly-produced translations because the canonised ones become viewed as the 'correct' versions of the plays in the target language. As Levin describes, certain quotations from Veinberg's translation of *Othello* became extremely well known amongst the Russian public. 'Шекспировские выражения стали крылатыми в русском языке в интерпритации Вейнберга: «Она за муки полюбила, А я её за сострадание к ним»'.<sup>105</sup> The critical reaction when Radlova decided to differ from this popular version will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

As well as their prevalence in popular anthologies, Veinberg's translations, in particular *Othello*, were also regarded as some of the best versions to stage during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He had a great love of theatre, which may have aided him in the production of translations which Levin describes as 'обычно благозвучны, удобны для декламации' (usually harmonious and easy to recite).<sup>106</sup> Konstantin Stanislavskii elected to use Veinberg's translation in both his 1896 and 1930 productions of *Othello*, meaning it would not have been too far from the memories of many audience members viewing Radlova's new translation for the first time in 1935.

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<sup>103</sup> Gibian, 'Shakespeare in Russia', p.343.

<sup>104</sup> André Lefevere, 'Translation and Canon Formation: Nine decades of drama in the United States', in *Translation, Power, Subversion*, eds. Román Álvarez and M. Carmen-África Vidal (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1996) pp.138-155 (p.139)

<sup>105</sup> Levin, *Russkie perevodchiki*, p.285. [Shakespearean expressions have become popular sayings in the Russian language in Veinberg's interpretation] Levin then cites Veinberg's translation of the lines 'She loved me for the dangers I had passed/And I loved her that she did pity them' (I.3.167-8).

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

The translators of the mid to late-nineteenth centuries created target texts which, though far from exact replications of their source texts, were versions of the plays which were easily accessible for their readers and audiences. As Friedberg describes, 'All of these Russian translators tended toward compromise between a literal and free method. To create a smooth and graceful effect, they simplified Shakespeare's language, replacing unusual or complex images with more familiar ones.'<sup>107</sup> Kroneberg, Druzhinin, Veinberg and their contemporaries attempted to blend the best elements of those translations which preceded their work. It was these translations which were still established at the centre of the Shakespeare polysystem when Radlova began her work on the plays, and against which her translation style would be judged.

The end of the century saw further changes in attitudes towards Shakespeare, and the practice of translation. Rachel Polonsky notes that knowledge of the English language amongst the Russian population increased considerably during the 1870s and 1880s, and that the late nineteenth century witnessed a renewed "anglomania",<sup>108</sup> similar to that which had existed one hundred years previously. However, in spite of this renewed interest, Polonsky comments that Russian readers at that time were drawn primarily to English prose fiction. The Symbolist movement, which began in the 1890s, saw the introduction of much European poetry and drama into the mainstream of Russian culture,<sup>109</sup> but there were also growing concerns over what kind of effect all these imports would have on the native language and creative works. As Polonsky states, the turn of the century period was:

characterized by an appetite for, interwoven with an intense fear of, translation. [...] Anxiety about Russia's place in the history of the peoples, and the effects of foreign influence on national cultural development, reveal themselves in Symbolist writings about the art of translation.<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Friedberg, p.51.

<sup>108</sup> Polonsky, p.24.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, p.188.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid, p.74.

This unease over the influx of foreign culture is perhaps one of the reasons why no new translations of Shakespeare plays appeared until after the Revolution, and why the work of Veinberg and his contemporaries remained at the centre of the system.

### **2.5.2 Foreign Influences on Russian Shakespearean Performance**

As has been demonstrated, over the course of the nineteenth century, the translation of Shakespeare in Russia underwent many significant developments. However, as this is also a study of a translation in performance, it is important to note that developments in Russian Shakespeare in this period were not solely confined to the page. As noted in Chapter 1, theatre translation theorists such as Patrice Pavis have identified that the text is just one element of a performance, and that there are many other means of expression involved. In addition to this line of research, scholars and practitioners in the field of theatre anthropology have identified the differences in the means of expression used by people in their everyday lives, and those used by performers, and the role which culture plays in shaping them.

In his guide to theatre anthropology, Eugenio Barba argues that in an organised performance situation, 'the performer's physical and vocal presence is modelled according to principles which are different from those of daily life.'<sup>111</sup> He terms the result of these principles 'extra-daily techniques'. Whereas 'daily' body techniques are used to communicate and are generally designed to obtain a maximum result with minimum effort, Barba maintains that 'extra-daily techniques' lead to information, and are based on the wasting of energy, putting the body into an artistic but believable form.<sup>112</sup> Importantly for this study of acculturation, Barba posits that these techniques are culturally determined. He states that in daily life, 'body technique is conditioned by culture, social status,

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<sup>111</sup> Eugenio Barba, *The Paper Canoe: A Guide to Theatre Anthropology*, trans. by Richard Fowler (Routledge: London & New York, 1995), p.9.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid*, pp.15-16.

profession’, and that ‘[d]ifferent cultures determine different body techniques’, such as whether people carry things with their head or their hands, or kiss with their lips or their nose.<sup>113</sup> Whilst he views ‘extra-daily techniques’ as being common to all performers, Barba contends that performers’ profiles are also shaped by the theatrical traditions and cultural context in which they have grown up and developed their art.<sup>114</sup>

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were several visits by foreign actors to Moscow and St Petersburg which enabled Russian theatre practitioners to learn from these different theatrical traditions and cultures. The impact of the tours undertaken by the African-American actor Ira Aldridge, in 1858 and 1860, the Italian actor Tommaso Salvini in 1882, the Meiningen Players from Germany in 1885 and 1890 and finally the British director, Edward Gordon Craig, in 1911-12 was to be far-reaching, shaping many different aspects of Shakespearean productions on the Russian stage.

Whilst today, as Barba observes, performers often travel outside of their own cultures in order to engage in the exchange of ideas and techniques,<sup>115</sup> Ira Aldridge was one of the first touring actors many members of Russian public had had the opportunity to see. His performances proved extremely popular, and his success paved the way for many more foreign actors to visit Russia. However, in line with Barba’s observations, Gibian states that Aldridge also ‘deserves credit for introducing the tradition of Garrick, Kemble, Kean, and Macready into Russia.’<sup>116</sup> He was able to present interpretations of Shakespeare’s characters shaped by the source culture, and performed in English, rather than in a Russian translation. His portrayal of Othello was of particular significance to the Russian tradition, as will be explored in more detail in Chapter 5.

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid p.15.

<sup>114</sup> Barba posits that the profile of any performer is fused together from three distinct levels of organisation: the performer’s unique personality (his sensitivity, artistic intelligence and social persona); the use of what he terms the ‘extra-daily techniques’ common to all performers; and lastly, the characteristics of the theatrical traditions and the historical-cultural context through which the performer’s unique personality manifests itself. Barba, p.10.

<sup>115</sup> Barba, p.14.

<sup>116</sup> Gibian, ‘Shakespeare in Russia’, p.351.

The techniques learnt from foreign performers were to extend beyond that of the interpretation of character, however. In his autobiography, *Moia zhizn' v iskusstve (My Life in Art)*, Stanislavskii notes how impressed he was by the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen's troupe when they visited in Moscow in 1890: 'Их спектакли впервые показали Москве новый род постановки – с исторической верностью эпохе, с народными сценами, с прекрасной внешней формой спектакля, с изумительной дисциплиной и всем строем великолепного праздника искусства.'<sup>117</sup> As will be addressed in Chapter 5, Stanislavskii was keen to incorporate some of the elements of this new kind of theatre into his own work. However, Stanislavskii was also impressed by the company's working methods and attended rehearsals in order to learn more about the process. Whilst he did not rate the talents of many of the company's actors especially highly, he was struck by the key position assumed by the director, Ludwig Chronegk, and felt that he shared this weight of responsibility within his own company, the Society of Art and Literature:

Мне казалось, что и мы – режиссеры-любители – были в положении Кронека и мейнингенского герцога. И мы хотели создавать большие спектакли, вскрывать великие мысли и чувства, но, за неимением готовых актеров, должны были отдавать все во власть режиссера, которому приходилось творить одному, при помощи постановки, декораций, бутафорий, интересной мизансцены и режиссерской выдумки. Вот почему деспотизм мейнингенских режиссеров казался мне обоснованным.'<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Konstantin Stanislavskii, *Moia zhizn' v iskusstve* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1972), p.159. Jean Benedetti provides the following translation: 'Their productions gave Moscow its first view of a new kind of theatre – period authenticity, crowd scenes, visually beautiful staging, amazing discipline, a festival of art in every respect.' Stanislavski, *My Life in Art*, trans. by Jean Benedetti (London & New York: Routledge, 2008), p.113.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid*, p.160. Benedetti provides the following translation: 'It seemed to me that we amateur directors were in the same situation as Chronegk and the Duke. We, too, wanted to put on major productions and reveal great thoughts and feelings but in the absence of trained actors, the director had to take charge of everything, had to work on his own, using the staging, the scenery, the props and interesting moves, and his own ingenuity. That is why the Meininger director-dictator seemed to me essential.' (Stanislavski, p.114).

Stanislavskii describes how he felt Chronegk's composure and control in rehearsals to be extremely effective, and that over time, he, like Chronegk, became a 'режиссер-деспот' (a director-dictator). He maintains that other directors then began to imitate him, as he had imitated Chronegk, which led to the creation of a whole generation of "dictators" within the theatre. This observation would seem to indicate that the Meiningen company introduced the modern concept of the all-controlling director to Russia. However, Stanislavskii also expresses a note of caution, stating that many of these new-style directors lacked Chronegk's talent, and were therefore ineffectual.<sup>119</sup> Nevertheless, as Nick Worrall notes, after he founded the Moscow Art Theatre, Stanislavskii continued to follow conventions he learnt from the German visitors.

In addition to surface detail and atmosphere, the Art Theatre also adopted the Meiningen troupe's strict adherence to company discipline. The Meiningers were the first to adopt the practice of collective play-reading and to institute rehearsal periods which lasted for months rather than weeks. They were also the first to hold dress rehearsals and "closed previews" – a practice which the Art Theatre took over.<sup>120</sup>

The final instance of foreign influence on the Russian Shakespeare tradition to be discussed in this section is a production which generated very different reactions in Russia and the West. In 1911, Edward Gordon Craig was introduced to Stanislavskii by the American dancer, Isadora Duncan, and was invited to direct a production of *Hamlet* at the Moscow Art Theatre. Interestingly, as Laurence Senelick notes, whereas Craig's production was 'considered a qualified failure' in Russia, in the West it 'quickly won a reputation for brilliance.'<sup>121</sup> However, it is important to this study for two principal reasons: firstly, because it established an ideological and design concept of *Hamlet* which was to be both emulated and

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid, p.162. Benedetti provides the following translation: 'I liked Chronegk's control and sangfroid. I imitated him and with time became a dictator-director, and other Russian directors began to imitate me just as I had imitated him. A whole generation of dictators was born.' (Stanislavski, p.115.)

<sup>120</sup> Nick Worrall, *The Moscow Art Theatre* (London & New York: Routledge, 1996), p.23.

<sup>121</sup> Laurence Senelick, *Gordon Craig's Moscow Hamlet* (London: Greenwood Press, 1982), Preface.



contradicted by future directors worldwide,<sup>122</sup> and secondly, because it provides an important example of the differences a translation can make to the interpretation of a play.

Dennis Kennedy argues that at the dawn of the new century, a new style of theatre was needed for Shakespearean productions: 'What was needed was an entirely fresh approach, one that could revitalize the content of the plays by transforming the nature of their representation.'<sup>123</sup> Senelick comments that 'Shakespeare was not in fashion among the Russian youth of the time',<sup>124</sup> so it seems that this need was also felt in Russia. In Kennedy's view, Craig was one of the theatre artists whose work brought about this required change.<sup>125</sup> In contrast to theatre sets like those of the Meiningen company, which were detailed and historically accurate, Craig's designs involved simple structures, large open acting spaces, and he made use of beams of light. As Kennedy describes, '[h]is visual intention was to abandon the premises of Realism in order to free the spectator's imagination'.<sup>126</sup>

Stanislavskii gives an enthusiastic account of his first discussion with Craig in *My Life in Art*. He felt that they had much in common, particularly with their mutual dislike of the current methods used in staging and scenery. 'Он, как и я, стал ненавидеть театральную декорацию. Нужен более простой фон для актера, из которого, однако, можно было бы извлекать бесконечное количество настроений, с помощью сочетания линий, световых пятен и проч.'<sup>127</sup>

Stanislavskii describes how Craig wanted to create a new 'искусство движения' (art of movement), and that he in fact envisioned a theatre without actors, but with puppets and marionettes. Craig believed that works of art should be created from natural, inanimate matter - stone, marble, bronze, canvas - and that they

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, p.186.

<sup>123</sup> Dennis Kennedy, *Looking at Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.43.

<sup>124</sup> Senelick, *Gordon Craig's Moscow Hamlet* p.22.

<sup>125</sup> Kennedy, *Looking at Shakespeare*, p.43. Kennedy states that Adolphe Appia was the other.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid, pp.45-47.

<sup>127</sup> Stanislavskii, *Moia zhizn' v iskusstve*, p.378. Benedetti provides the following translation: 'He, like me, had started to hate theatrical sets. What he needed was a simple background for the actor, out of which occasionally to draw an infinite number of moods, using lines and spots of light, etc' (Stanislavski, p.287).

should be permanently fixed in their artistic form, which rendered constantly moving actors' bodies unsuitable for creative works.<sup>128</sup>

Senelick comments that the innovations of the two men differed 'in direction but not intent.'<sup>129</sup> Although the initial discussions seem to have gone well, however, the production was beset with problems. Craig travelled to Moscow several times, and was to provide the concept, designs and outline for the direction, which Stanislavskii and his assistant could then execute. But the practicalities of putting Craig's designs into practice caused many difficulties, not least because much of the work had to be done in Craig's absence. As an example of one of the problems, a central idea of Craig's was the use of screens as opposed to more traditional backdrops:

Craig's famous screens [...] placed flat against the upstage wall, were his major innovation in setting. As he envisioned them, they were a dynamic and living element, arranged in new shapes and angles to reflect the shifting emotional content of Hamlet's mind as well as to solve the practical problems of shifting the twenty scenes of the play.<sup>130</sup>

The screens were simple flats, made from canvas stretched onto wooden frames. Unfortunately, however the screens manufactured in Moscow were weightier than those Craig was used to, and were too heavy to be practical. In keeping with the notions expressed above, Craig wanted them to be moved quickly in full view of the audience. However, the screens fell over during the dress rehearsal, which meant that they had to be weighted down for the performances, necessitating that the curtains had to be dropped instead. When Craig heard of this change, he did not believe the reasoning behind it and was furious. Senelick notes that eventual use of the screens was more like the construction of realistic sets, rendering Craig's concept ineffective.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid, pp.377-378.

<sup>129</sup> Senelick, 'Preface' to *Gordon Craig's Moscow Hamlet*.

<sup>130</sup> Kennedy, *Looking at Shakespeare*, p.52.

<sup>131</sup> Senelick, *Gordon Craig's Moscow Hamlet*, p.180

Unfortunately, the difficulties were not confined to the visual effects of the production. As discussed, Barba highlights the way cultural and theatrical traditions shape the work of performers. Some of the problems Craig and Stanislavskii experienced in their collaboration highlight the role translation plays in the formation of those shaping traditions. One of the central reasons behind the disagreements between Craig and Stanislavskii was because, as Senelick explains, ‘they had grown up with widely divergent traditions’,<sup>132</sup> and therefore could not agree on an interpretation of *Hamlet*. The Russian tradition had been much shaped by Mochalov’s interpretation of the 1820s, which, as already discussed, was based on Polevoi’s less than accurate translation. Mochalov had played Hamlet ‘as an impassioned temperament, given to soul-searing outbursts and flamboyant gestures’.<sup>133</sup> Stanislavskii and Craig were using the translation by Kroneberg, which although closer to the source text, was still found to be insufficient in conveying the full entirety of Shakespeare’s text:

при чтении первой же страницы пьесы выяснилось, между прочим, что русский перевод очень часто неправильно передает не только тонкости, но и внутреннюю суть шекспировского текста. Круг доказывал это с помощью целой английской библиотеки о «Гамлете», привезенной им с собой. На этой почве неверного перевода происходили часто очень крупные недоразумения.<sup>134</sup>

Stanislavskii goes on to describe how these misunderstandings led to many differences in their interpretation of character, and how working with Craig helped him to broaden the scope of Hamlet’s mind.<sup>135</sup> Craig’s concept of the play began with the notion that ‘Hamlet is a monodrama, that the universe of the play should be shown through the eyes of the central character.’<sup>136</sup> Even allowing

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid, p.78.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Stanislavskii, *Moia zhizn’ v iskusstve*, p.380. Benedetti provides the following translation: ‘Even after reading the very first page it was clear that the Russian translation often poorly conveyed not only the nuances but the substance of Shakespeare’s text. Craig demonstrated this with a whole library of English books he had brought with him. This frequently inaccurate translation led to many misunderstandings.’ (Stanislavski, *My Life in Art*, p.289.)

<sup>135</sup> Stanislavskii, *Moia zhizn’ v iskusstve*, p.381/ Stanislavski, p.290.

<sup>136</sup> Kennedy, *Looking at Shakespeare*, p.50.

for the differences in the Russian and British traditions, however, Senelick stresses that Craig's interpretation 'jarred with traditional versions of the play'. This discrepancy led Stanislavskii to claim on occasions that Craig's ideas were 'un-Shakespearean'.<sup>137</sup>

Stanislavskii's readiness to accept Craig's concepts of the play were sincere, as he recognised that they would ensure that the Art Theatre kept abreast with theatrical fashion.<sup>138</sup> In practice, however, the disparity between concept and realisation was too great. Nevertheless, Senelick states that '[w]hatever its shortcomings, the production consolidated Craig's reputation, disseminated his ideas, and revolutionized the staging of Shakespeare in this century'.<sup>139</sup> Craig toured England and Ireland with an exhibition of his ideas for the production, whilst directors in Russia such as Vsevolod Meierkhol'd, who were already beginning to experiment with similar ideas, began to champion Craig's work. The effects of Craig's ideas on the staging of future productions of *Othello* will be discussed later in the chapter on performance.

In spite of its difficulties then, the Stanislavskii-Craig *Hamlet* would therefore seem to highlight the benefits of cross-cultural collaboration in the theatre. However, the influx of foreign influences on Shakespeare performance in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provides stark contrast to the years following the Revolution and Stalin's era. There was a change of emphasis, and the focus became one of taking ownership of Shakespeare and creating a truly Soviet version, appropriate for the new political climate.

## 2.6 Political Translation and Censorship

The translation theory employed so far in this chapter has assisted the examination of the position of Shakespeare translations within the Russian cultural system, as well as that of how the trends in translation practice have

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<sup>137</sup> Senelick, *Gordon Craig's Moscow Hamlet*, p.63.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*, p.71.

<sup>139</sup> Senelick, 'Preface' to *Gordon Craig's Moscow Hamlet*.

changed over time. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, Lefevere argued for the need to investigate the effect of the controlling forces outside the literary system, namely the patrons ensuring the ideological suitability of translations produced as well as the financial survival and status of the translators. The history of Shakespeare in Russia has certainly been shaped by the country's controlling regimes, firstly by Tsarist rule, and then by Soviet ideology.

### 2.6.1 Examples of Censorship Under the Tsars

This chapter has so far demonstrated that by the beginning of the twentieth century, Shakespeare had become fully assimilated into Russian culture. Adaptations and translations of his work had been used to educate and aid in the development of new literary styles, whilst the performances of his roles on stage had served to establish the careers of many of Russia's most famous actors. However, from his earliest introduction into the Russian cultural sphere, the political nature of his plays has often led to controversy. As illustrated by the case of Polevoi's translation of *Hamlet*, actors and translators used Shakespeare's status as a foreign, classic writer to make statements about their own situation, though this has not always led to the avoidance of censorship. To cite the very earliest example, the reception of Sumarokov's *Gamlet*, Victor Borovsky comments that it would not have been difficult for audience members to draw parallels with real-life people and events. For this reason the play was taken off the stage.

The political sensitivity of the play inevitably affected its stage life. In the 1750s [*G*]amlet was successfully performed in many theatres, but afterwards it disappeared from the stage for a long time, because it coincided too closely with the actual course of events in the country. After the assassination of Peter III (1762) and Catherine II's accession to

the throne, a number of unexpected and undesirable parallels became evident.<sup>140</sup>

In 1794, Nikolai Karamzin's translation of *Julius Caesar* was also censored in dramatic fashion when, at the height of the revolution in France, the 'republican tragedy' was burned along with other 'revolutionary literature' on the instructions of Catherine II.<sup>141</sup>

Stříbrný notes that in the mid-nineteenth century, whilst many new translations were being published, they were not all allowed to be performed, as several of the plays were considered to be incendiary by the Tsarist regime. Throughout the 1840s and 1850s, productions of *Henry IV*, *Richard III*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Cymbeline* and *Julius Caesar* were all suppressed.<sup>142</sup> This censorship was made possible by the strict laws which required plays to be granted special permission for performance which was separate to that for being published.<sup>143</sup> The fact that it contained a regicide meant that *Macbeth* also had a chequered history in Russia in the early nineteenth century. The play had first suffered the effects of censorship back in the late 1820s, when the publication of Mikhail Vronchenko's translation was delayed until 1836, while it was not actually approved for performance until 1861, and only then with considerable cuts. Perhaps because of its focus on a more personal, domestic tragedy, however, the play at the centre of this study escaped notable censorship throughout the nineteenth century. *Othello* regularly appeared in the repertoires of the Malyi and Alexandrinskii theatres from the 1840s until 1917.

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<sup>140</sup> Victor Borovsky, 'The Organisation of the Russian Theatre 1645-1763', in *A History of Russian Theatre*, eds. Robert Leach and Victor Borovsky (Cambridge: University Press, 1999), pp.41-56 (p.51).

<sup>141</sup> Stříbrný, p.35.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid*, p.45.

<sup>143</sup> Cynthia Marsh, 'Realism in the Russian theatre, 1850-1882', in *A History of Russian Theatre*, ed. by Robert Leach and Victor Borovsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.146-165 (p.147).

## 2.6.2 Shakespeare After the Revolution

As the central focus of this thesis is a translation from the 1930s, however, it is important to take into account that the most significant changes in the patronage of Shakespeare in Russia occurred after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, and then with Stalin's rise to power. These changes did not bring about a more stable position for Shakespeare's works, however, as their position in the Soviet literary system continued to be volatile. As Irena R. Makaryk describes, in Soviet Russia,

Shakespeare took on various, often contradictory, guises: as representative of "bourgeois" artistic traditions; as indispensable classic; as alien, foreign text; as Renaissance precursor of the new Soviet society; as valuable box office draw; as dramatic master; and as outmoded sympathizer of aristocratic circles.<sup>144</sup>

The Bolsheviks recognised that culture was a vital 'means of extending their influence'.<sup>145</sup> Culture was to be used to educate the Soviet people, in order to enable them to participate fully in bringing about the aims of the Revolution. The theatre was a tool of particular importance in this education. Eighty per cent of the population were still largely illiterate, and so, as Konstantin Rudnitsky identifies, theatre performances became unusually important in people's lives: 'the theatre and only the theatre could serve as primary school and newspaper for the masses thirsting for education, enlightenment and knowledge.'<sup>146</sup>

Foreign culture was also to play an important part in this educative process.

Susanna Witt notes that '[o]fficial attitudes towards to translation were initially positive [...] Translations should give the masses access to the cultural heritage of

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<sup>144</sup> Irena R. Makaryk, 'Introduction – When Worlds Collide: Shakespeare and Communisms', in *Shakespeare in the Worlds of Communism and Socialism*, ed. by Irena Makaryk and Joseph G. Price (Toronto: University Press, 2006), pp.3-10, (p.4).

<sup>145</sup> Nick Worrall, *Modernism to Realism on the Soviet Stage: Tairov-Vakhtangov-Okhlopkov* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p.6.

<sup>146</sup> Rudnitsky, p.41.

all nations and contribute to a sense of solidarity with workers and peasants of other countries.<sup>147</sup>

To this end, the ambitious translation project *Vsemirnaia literatura* (World Literature) was launched, with Lenin's full support. It was overseen by the Commissar of Education, Anatolii Lunacharskii, who represented the government, and the writer Maxim Gorky, who acted as spokesperson for the authors and publishers.<sup>148</sup> The task was to evaluate all the existing translations of world literature, and to assess which were worth preserving and which would need to be redone (The number of translations included 2000 pamphlets and 800 volumes of Western and American writing, which was later extended to 1500 volumes in order to include Oriental Literature).<sup>149</sup> Alongside the assessment and production of the translations, a secondary element of the project was to construct a base of scholarship, theory and criticism on which a "national school" of translation could be established. As noted in the introduction, this task was assigned to the children's writer and literary critic Kornei Chukovskii.<sup>150</sup>

As Leighton describes, one of the overall intentions of the project was also 'to support and encourage writers during the civil war and ensure that the revolution established close intellectual and cultural contact with the world and among the peoples of the new union.'<sup>151</sup> As well as establishing a new studio for the training of literary translators, this 'support and encouragement' meant recruiting vast numbers of writers from the former intelligentsia. Friedberg describes how the unlucky members of this enterprise were paid in worthless paper money, whereas the more fortunate translators received grain and salted fish for their work.<sup>152</sup> Sustenance payments were particularly welcome in this period, when many were starving due to the food shortages caused by war and

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<sup>147</sup> Susanna Witt, 'Totalitarianism and translation in the USSR', in *Contexts, Subtexts and Pretexts*, ed. Brian James Baer (Amsterdam: John Benjamin's Publishing Co, 2011), pp.149-170 (p.155).

<sup>148</sup> Friedberg, p.4.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Lauren G. Leighton, *Two Worlds, One Art: Literary Translation in Russia and America*, 1991, p.8.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid, p.7.

<sup>152</sup> Friedberg, p.4.



poor harvests. This ambitious project would therefore seem to be a clear example of Lefevre's 'undifferentiated patronage',<sup>153</sup> with the Soviet government ensuring ideologically-correct output whilst providing appropriate status and financial support.

As translation of foreign literature gained initial approval under the new regime, Shakespeare's works also enjoyed early popularity on the stages of the new Soviet Russia. Whilst no new translations were produced in the years immediately following the revolution, stage productions of his works were extremely successful. Aleksandr Blok was one of the key literary figures responsible for this popularity. He became one of the directors of the "Theatre of Tragedy, Romantic Drama and High Comedy", which was set up in Leningrad in 1918, and, convinced by the 'value and ultimate victory of the classics of drama', posited that Shakespeare should feature prominently in its repertoire. *Much Ado About Nothing* was one of the two plays with which the theatre opened in December of that year, and *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Twelfth Night*, *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth* all featured over the course of the next three years.<sup>154</sup> Rudnitsky notes that *Macbeth*, so frequently censored during Tsarist times, was in fact staged more frequently than Shakespeare's other plays directly after the revolution, because 'it was easily interpreted in the spirit of "consonance with the Revolution", as anti-monarchical.'<sup>155</sup>

However, this early prospering of literary translation and Shakespeare under the new Soviet regime was not to last. Foreign literature remained popular in the mid-1920s; studies of the reading habits of the users of Moscow trade-union libraries between 1926 and 1928 reveal that nearly a third of all fiction borrowed was foreign.<sup>156</sup> By the end of the decade, however, the authorities tried to steer people away from fiction towards what they considered to be more "useful" reading matter, such as technical or political literature. As mentioned in Chapter 1, from the end of the 1920s, politically 'suspect' literature, including works by

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<sup>153</sup> André Lefevre, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, p.17.

<sup>154</sup> George Gibian, 'Shakespeare in Soviet Russia', *Russian Review*, 11 (1952), 24-34 (p.25)

<sup>155</sup> Rudnitsky, p.110.

<sup>156</sup> Barber, p.7.

Tolstoi, Poe, Maupassant, and most importantly, Shakespeare, was routinely removed from public libraries.<sup>157</sup> The popularity of his works sharply declined. Echoing Tolstoi's criticism at the beginning of the century, the view that Shakespeare's works had an aristocratic tendency became dominant and it was argued that their author 'despised the common people and held reactionary feudal views'.<sup>158</sup> Literary critic Vladimir Friche was one of the most ardent supporters of this view. He posited that only an aristocrat could have written Shakespeare's plays. Influenced by the publications of the Belgian socialist politician and writer, Célestin Demblon, who argued that Roger Manners, the 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Rutland, had been the true author, Friche's views commanded a growing support in Russia throughout the 1920s. Even Lunacharskii expressed the view that it was unlikely that an actor born in a small town could have produced such works of art.<sup>159</sup> Critics such as Aleksandr Smirnov opposed Friche's view, arguing that whilst Shakespeare may have been a bourgeois writer, he was in fact critical of the greed and philistinism of his own class, who were unable to properly understand his work.<sup>160</sup> Nevertheless, Gibian notes a 'lull' in Shakespeare productions during this time, whilst Rudnitsky comments that productions of Shakespeare were rare compared to those of Russian dramatists such as Ostrovskii, who was staged by nearly every Russian director in the 1920s.<sup>161</sup>

The *Vsemirnaia literatura* project was also short-lived. The enterprise closed in 1927, partly due to the emigration of many of those involved. Leighton argues that in spite of its short existence, *Vsemirnaia Literatura* nevertheless laid the groundwork for its ambitious programme which was eventually realised, whilst it provided an example for future state publishing enterprises to follow.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Gibian, 'Shakespeare in Soviet Russia', p.27.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid, p.28.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid, p.29.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, p.31, Rudnitsky, p.174.

The popularity of Ostrovskii's work with directors in this period was also due to "Back to Ostrovskii!" campaign instituted by Lunacharskii on the hundredth anniversary of the playwright's birth in 1923. Lunacharskii called on writers and directors to follow Ostrovskii's example in realistically depicting everyday life. His works also were viewed as politically appropriate as Ostrovskii was critical of the 'bourgeois' society of his time (Rudnitsky, p.116).

<sup>162</sup> Leighton, p.8.

However, Friedberg notes that from the point of closure onwards, ‘Soviet translations – at least of poetry [...] began to decline in importance.’ Whilst at the time this decline was attributed to the fact that the Soviets no longer had need for foreign verse, Friedberg argues that the more likely explanation was Stalin’s rise to power, which had ‘immediate repercussions in literature’, and in all areas of cultural life.<sup>163</sup>

Stalin made clear his views on written culture in 1930, when in an article for the Party journal *Bol’shevik*, he declared that nothing contrary to the Party view should be ever be published.<sup>164</sup> As far as he was concerned, all intellectual and cultural activity was to be channelled into fighting the battle for socialism. As Lefevere describes, patrons seeking to control the relationship between the literary or cultural system and society usually operate by the means of institutions set up to regulate.<sup>165</sup> Stringent controls were put into place by the Stalinist regime to ensure that the politically educative function of culture remained dominant.

As already stated, the instructive power of the theatre had long been recognised by the authorities. However, even though censors always attended dress rehearsals of upcoming public performances,<sup>166</sup> the limitations of the control that could be applied pre-performance meant that it was still dangerous for the regime. Therefore, in 1927, a conference on theatrical activity was held by the Department of Agitation and Propaganda attached to the Central Communist Party. Following the conference, faculties and courses were set up at theatre institutes for the training of theatre managers, so that Party members could be equipped with knowledge of the theatre and the stage. All theatres were now to have confirmed Party members as their General Managers. The General Manager therefore served as political monitor on behalf of the Party, controlling the theatre’s resources so that only “acceptable” shows were staged. In addition

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<sup>163</sup> Friedberg, p.112.

<sup>164</sup> Martin McCauley, *Stalin and Stalinism* (London and New York: Longman, 1995), p.34.

<sup>165</sup> Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, p.15.

<sup>166</sup> Herman Ermolaev, *Censorship in Soviet Literature 1917-1991* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), p.7.

to this insider censorship, compulsory study groups, artistic councils and activists groups were created for theatre professionals. Actors and directors had to have a “social load”, seemingly leaving them with far less free time for creative, independent thought.<sup>167</sup>

Further changes for the Soviet cultural system were to come with literary reform in 1932, which as Boris Schwarz describes, ‘redirected the Party’s cultural policy.’<sup>168</sup> This act did away with revolutionary organisations like Proletkul’t and The Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP). As Gleb Struve explains, in place of numerous different artistic groups, ‘a homogenous writers’ organisation pledged to support the domestic and international policies of the Soviet government’<sup>169</sup> was created, the Union of Soviet Writers. Within the Writers’ Union was the Translators’ Section, membership of which was ‘de facto obligatory’ for anyone wishing to publish a translation.<sup>170</sup> Like the Vsemirnaia Literatura project before it, the Writers’ Union provided financial support for its members, along with many other benefits.

[W]riters became one of the most privileged categories of the population in the Stalinist thirties. A new system of (greatly enhanced) royalty payments were introduced, a differentiated system largely based on ideological criteria. The Writers Union now treated its members to dachas, a high-class restaurant in their headquarters, new apartment blocks, and subsidized vacations in choice locations.<sup>171</sup>

Amongst all these changes to the controlling forces of the literary system, Shakespeare received endorsement from an important literary figure and was once again posited as a writer from whom much could be learnt. In his 1932 article on dramaturgy, ‘O p’esakh’, whilst arguing the importance of the class-

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<sup>167</sup> N. A. Gorchakov, *The Theater in Soviet Russia*, trans. by Edgar Lehrman (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p.283.

<sup>168</sup> Boris Schwarz, *Music and Musical Life in Soviet Russia 1917-1970* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1972), p.205.

<sup>169</sup> Struve, p.276.

<sup>170</sup> Sherry, p.73.

<sup>171</sup> Katerina Clark, *Moscow: The Fourth Rome* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), p.127.

character for every Soviet play, Maxim Gorky called on all Soviet playwrights to draw on Shakespeare's expertise.

Вот этот учитель, деятель, строитель нового мира и должен быть главным героем современной драмы. А для того, чтоб изобразить этого героя с должной силой и яркостью слова, нужно учиться писать пьесы у старых, непревзойденных мастеров этой литературной формы, и больше всего у Шекспира.<sup>172</sup>

The endorsement of Shakespeare can be seen as a shrewd choice on Gorky's part: Marx and Engels' previous praise of Shakespeare meant that he was a writer with whom Stalin was unlikely to quarrel, and yet he was a highly emulated writer who could be very productive as a theatrical model. Gorky's approval brought about a resurgence in Shakespeare's popularity. As Alexey Bartoshevitch describes, the negative critique of the 1920s 'gave way to the concept of Shakespeare as the poet of the rising class, infinitely excited by the coming of the life-affirming age of discoveries and great inventions, and shaking up the feudal world at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.'<sup>173</sup> This concept of Shakespeare was of particular importance in the work of Sergei Radlov, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters. However, Gorky's emphasis on the importance of the "class-character" indicates that under the Stalinist regime, Shakespeare's plays were only to be interpreted within very specific boundaries.

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<sup>172</sup> [This teacher, leader, this builder of the new world must be the main character in contemporary drama. And we must learn how to portray this character with the needed strength and clarity, to learn how to write plays from the old, unequalled masters of this literary form, especially from Shakespeare.]

Maxim Gorky, 'O p'esakh' in *Sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh* (Moscow: Goslitizdat, 1949-55), XXVI, pp.409-426 (p. 426).

<sup>173</sup> Alexey Bartoshevitch, 'The Forest of Arden in Stalin's Russia: Shakespeare's Comedies in the Soviet Theatre of the Thirties', in *Shakespeare in the Worlds of Communism and Socialism*, ed. by Irena R. Makaryk and Joseph G. Price (Toronto: University Press, 2006) pp.104-113 (p.106).

### 2.6.3 A Socialist Realist Shakespeare?

The first congress of the new Writers' Union took place in August 1934. This meeting marked the moment when socialist realism was formally approved as 'the basic method of Soviet artistic literature and literary criticism'.<sup>174</sup> The government representative at the congress was Andrei Zhdanov, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. In his opening speech, Zhdanov outlined the statute to which members of the new union were now bound:

Comrade Stalin has called our writers engineers of human souls. What does this mean? What duties does the title confer upon you? In the first place, it means knowing life so as to be able to depict it truthfully in works of art, not to depict it in a dead, scholastic way, not simply as "objective reality," but to depict reality in its revolutionary development. In addition to this, the truthfulness and historical concreteness of the artistic portrayal should be combined with the ideological remoulding and education of the working people in the spirit of socialism.<sup>175</sup>

Zhdanov stressed the need for literature to be political, arguing that in a time of class-struggle, no other kind was possible. Significantly, in terms of the translation of foreign works, he departed from the earlier calls of Proletkult, which had argued for a complete break from the art and culture of the past, and for the creation of new art forms stemming solely from the working class, and proclaimed the proletariat as 'the sole heir of all that is best in the treasury of world literature'. Foreign culture was not to be dismissed, but learnt from. As noted in Chapter 1, this approbation of foreign literature following political change would seem to be an example of a situation where translations take a more central position in the literary polysystems, as posited by Even-Zohar. However, Zhdanov's next words made it clear that the process was to be selective, with each work read within certain boundaries: 'The bourgeoisie has

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<sup>174</sup> Zhdanov, pp.21-22.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, p.21.

squandered its literary heritage; it is our duty to gather it up carefully, to study it and having critically assimilated it, to advance further.<sup>176</sup>

It was clear from the Congress that within the “treasury of world literature”, Shakespeare held a primary position. As Arkady Ostrovsky describes, the fact that a large portrait of the Bard decorated the congress hall was ‘physical proof that Shakespeare had been assimilated into the ranks of Soviet writers.’<sup>177</sup>

Further to this pictorial tribute, in the same year the Theatre Union of Russia set up a special Shakespearean department, providing consultation for directors. Jeffrey Brooks notes that jubilees and memorials of Russian cultural figures such as Pushkin were important in the 1930s.<sup>178</sup> In spite of his foreign origins, Shakespeare was deemed worthy of the same treatment – his birthday was celebrated on the scale of a national holiday, with annual conferences marking the occasion. By 1939, as Ostrovsky comments, ‘mass Shakespearization was in full swing.’<sup>179</sup>

Ostrovsky sees two main reasons for this outstanding popularity. Firstly, Soviet intellectuals of the 1930s liked to see their culture as a direct heir of the Renaissance, so parallels between the two periods were often drawn. Shakespeare was viewed as ‘the first messenger of the Renaissance,’<sup>180</sup> ensuring that it was his plays, particularly those which were set in that period, which were performed as opposed to the works of other foreign dramatists. Secondly, Ostrovsky argues that the revival of interest in Shakespeare in the 1930s ‘was dictated by the feeling of exuberance, ebullition, and energy in the country.’<sup>181</sup> While the 1930s was largely a decade of tremendous hardship for the Soviet people,<sup>182</sup> 1934 to 1936 represented three good years in industry, where higher living standards, the end of rationing and a series of better harvests, together

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid, p.22.

<sup>177</sup> Ostrovsky, p.57.

<sup>178</sup> Brooks, *Thank you, Comrade Stalin! Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton: University Press, 2000), p.119.

<sup>179</sup> Ostrovsky, p.58.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid, p.61.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, p.60.

<sup>182</sup> Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.41.

with a more relaxed atmosphere produced a more positive mood.<sup>183</sup> Stalin's claim that 'Life has become better, comrades; life has become more joyful' needed to be reflected in the theatre of the time. As Ostrovsky argues, 'the force, emotional power, and vitality of Shakespeare's plays answered the mood of the country.'<sup>184</sup> As the decade continued, however, with the onslaught of the purges of the Great Terror, Shakespeare's status as an endorsed classic increasingly represented an element of safety for actors and directors. Worrall therefore asserts that '[i]n the conservative atmosphere of the mid 1930s [...] Shakespeare's popularity lay as much in his uncontroversial status as in the intrinsic merits of his work.'<sup>185</sup> The fact that he was a foreign writer provided an additional element of security; any 'political mistakes' could be excused on this basis.

Whilst the interest in Shakespeare in the 1930s is unquestionable, this popularity did not apply to the entirety of his works. It is important to consider exactly how the dogma of socialist realism affected the practice of Soviet theatre in the 1930s and 1940s. Socialist realism became the main factor shaping the 'dominant poetics' of the system, and it therefore dictated the selection of Shakespeare's plays for inclusion in the repertoire. As Inna Solovyova observes, the values of the theatre were:

no longer private but public and open. Its distinguishing marks were clarity, truth-to-life, moralism, hard-line didacticism and a striving for clear-cut simplicity. Adjectives like elusive, oblique, fluid, rare, sensitive, mutable, airy, melting are no longer part of the critical vocabulary. All these qualities had practically disappeared from the stage, which was distinguished by its power, vitality, its pictorial and emotional energy. Artists were attracted by the clearness, the openness of the world. No

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<sup>183</sup> Barber, p.9.

<sup>184</sup> Ostrovsky, p.60.

<sup>185</sup> Worrall, *Modernism to Realism on the Soviet Stage*, p.12.



one, apparently, was attracted by its hidden side. Tragedy was something that arrived from elsewhere.<sup>186</sup>

These concepts are reflected in those plays which were most popular at the time. Ostrovsky notes that directors showed a preference for the southern tragedies and comedies: *Othello*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. Othello, the soldier, who fights for his adopted country and the woman he loves, was a more recognisable hero than Hamlet the philosopher. Characters such as the ghost of Hamlet's father or the witches in *Macbeth* also did not fit with the new insistence on truth-to-life. Most important, however, as Solovyova has indicated, the nature of tragedy within the chosen plays had to be very specific. As Ostrovsky explains, '[t]he source of tragedy in the 1930s could be an accident, a misunderstanding, or a mistake as in *Othello* or *Romeo and Juliet*, but not the innate conflict or guilt of the protagonist as in *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*.'<sup>187</sup> Othello again emerges as the most fitting hero within this concept of tragedy – he is manipulated by Iago rather than being innately capable of wrongdoing himself. As Solovyova summarises, '[e]vil is something that comes from the outside, it is not revealed from within.'<sup>188</sup> Viewing the plays in this way, it is perhaps unsurprising that *Othello* was by far the most performed Shakespearean play during the late 1930s. In 1938, there were 100 productions staged in the Soviet Union, and by 1941 there were a further 143. *Romeo and Juliet* was the second most popular play, but this was performed considerably less, with 35 productions in 1938 and another 78 in the course of the next three years.<sup>189</sup> There is also the fact that much of the play's plot hinges on the need for evidence and untruthful reports of events, something which may have struck a chord with audience members living through the terrifying purges of the 1930s.

Aydin Dzhebrailov suggests a further reason for the popularity of *Othello*; a direct connection with Stalin himself. He notes that in order for a play of this time to be

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<sup>186</sup> Inna Solovyova, 'The theatre and Socialist Realism, 1929-1953', trans. Jean Benedetti, in *A History of Russian Theatre*, eds. Robert Leach and Victor Borovsky (Cambridge: University Press, 1999) pp.325-357 (p.338).

<sup>187</sup> Ostrovsky, p.62.

<sup>188</sup> Solovyova, p.338.

<sup>189</sup> Ostrovsky, p.61.

successful, it had to ‘touch the leader’s heart.’ As already discussed, the image of the ‘ideal hero’ had to be created, ‘who would embody not only the fundamental myths of Stalinist ideology, but also the official image of the great leader himself.’<sup>190</sup> He argues that *Othello* lent itself more readily to this kind of reading than any other Shakespeare play, as there are numerous instances where Othello might be identified with Stalin and his times. Dzhebrailov lists history and genealogy of the two figures – living in exile, escaping from jail and slavery, their character and habits – living a frugal and nomadic life, and the importance which each man put upon loyalty and matters of state and power as areas where Stalin could perhaps identify with Shakespeare’s hero. Dzhebrailov also notes both Stalin’s and Othello’s lack of faith in their public speaking abilities. Throughout the play, Othello frequently comments on his lack of eloquence: ‘Rude am in my speech/And little bless’d with the soft phrase of peace’ (III.3.82-3); ‘Haply, for I am black/And have not those soft parts of conversation/That chamberers have’ (III.3.266-268). For Dzhebrailov, this anxiety may have been something which Stalin could relate to:

Stalin too was not known for his verbal elegance. His limited vocabulary, poor public speaking style and strong Georgian accent may well have caused him feelings of inadequacy, especially when surrounded by such brilliant speakers as Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin and Lunacharsky.<sup>191</sup>

The final similarity which Dzhebrailov posits is Stalin’s “blackness”. The leader was also ‘a “foreigner” [from Georgia] who had made it to the top in “white” society.’<sup>192</sup> Dzhebrailov counteracts these observations with the statement that these comparisons should not be taken too far, and that in fact, Stalin can be seen to have rather more in common with Iago. The dictator is apparently supposed to have approved of Shakespeare’s villain, remarking after one performance, ‘[t]hat chap Iago’s a fine organiser.’<sup>193</sup> But Dzhebrailov also

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<sup>190</sup> Aydin Dzhebrailov, ‘The King is Dead. Long Live the King! Post-Revolutionary and Stalinist Shakespeare’, translated by Cathy Porter, *History Workshop*, 32 (1991), 1-18 (p.12).

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p.14.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> Y. Borev, quoted in Dzhebrailov, p.14.

suggests that Iago can be compared to figures such as Yagoda, Yezhov, and Beria, 'organisers' who conducted the blame away from Stalin, so that he could always maintain the 'aura of the popular hero.'<sup>194</sup> Solovyova's observation, that 'evil did not come from within' characters on the Soviet stage, also had to apply to the leader himself.

Similarly, it can also be argued that Stalin's personal tastes were also reflected in the absence of certain plays from the repertoire. From the beginning of the 1940s, *Hamlet* disappeared from the Soviet stage and was not to be seen again until after the leader's death. Writing in 1947, and therefore still subject to the rigours of Stalinist censorship, Mikhail Morozov tries to explain the absence of the play from the Soviet stage by suggesting that *Hamlet* was held in such high regard by Soviet actors and directors that many working in the theatre did not feel themselves worthy of staging such a production. He comments apologetically that before considering taking on the play which 'forms an important part of some of the most treasured traditions of the Russian theatre,' any theatre company considering including *Hamlet* in their repertoire would question whether they had the right to put on the play considered 'the pinnacle and crowning glory of world theatre.'<sup>195</sup>

With the benefits of hindsight, however, it is possible to see there may have been other factors affecting the exclusion of *Hamlet* from Stalinist theatre repertoires. Eleanor Rowe explains that in Spring 1941, an 'offhand remark from Stalin' put an end to rehearsals for an impending production of *Hamlet*.<sup>196</sup> His displeasure was such that the staging of the play was subsequently implicitly banned. It was widely known that Stalin detested Hamlet, because, as suggested in the introduction, 'he is a character who thinks'<sup>197</sup> rather than a man of action. Rather than serving Stalin's self-image, as it can be argued Othello may have done, Irena R. Makaryk argues that aspects of Hamlet's character such as his intelligence and ironic questioning of authority would have displeased the

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<sup>194</sup> Dzhebrailov, p.14.

<sup>195</sup> Morozov, p.44.

<sup>196</sup> Rowe, p.134.

<sup>197</sup> Irena R. Makaryk, 'Wartime *Hamlet*', p.120.

leader, whilst the Prince's wit and polish would have added further insult, as they were characteristics which Stalin feared he lacked.<sup>198</sup> In addition to the possibilities of unflattering self-reflection for the Soviet leader, however, there is the more obvious fact that both *Hamlet* and the similarly unpopular *Macbeth* both contain regicides, surely an unpopular subject for the leader of a totalitarian regime. Similarly, Morozov notes that apart from *Richard III*, none of the history plays had yet been performed on the Soviet stage by the end of the 1940s.<sup>199</sup> Once again, these plays may have contained uncomfortable lessons from history on the fates of autocratic rulers, which Stalin and his government may have wanted to avoid.

#### 2.6.4 Socialist Realist Translation

Whilst the Shakespeare canon on the Soviet stage may have been limited to certain boundaries, the Stalin era witnessed the creation of many new translations of the majority of his works. As will be explained in Chapters 3 and 4, translators like Anna Radlova expressed a desire to create a new Shakespeare suitable for the Soviet era, free from nineteenth century romantic embellishments. However, this need for the political re-interpretation of Shakespeare's works was perhaps only part of the reason for the resurgence of new translations in 1920s-40s.

Echoing the educative intentions of projects such as *Vsemirnaia literatura*, translators initially chose to keep their "re-writings" of Shakespeare as close to the original as possible. As Friedberg describes, 'Literalism flourished in Soviet Russia in the 1920s [...] In retrospect, it appears that this early Soviet literalism was a reaction against the excesses of free translation in the prerevolutionary period'. Similarly, the excessive "improvements" of the neoclassical approach had led to a period of literalism in the early nineteenth century.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Morozov, *Shakespeare on the Soviet Stage*, p.58.

<sup>200</sup> Friedberg, p.87.

The translators of the 1920s and 1930s paid particular attention to the structural aspects of the texts they were translating. According to Lauren G. Leighton, the new enthusiasm for literal translation led to the creation of what was viewed as an entirely new approach to translation:

In the Soviet school, [of translation] extreme formalism – the belief that once the meter, rhyme scheme, stanzaic articulation, and such other technical features as alliteration and rhythmicity are conveyed, the translation is complete and perfect – encouraged a method called scientific. The theorists of the scientific method emphasized such notions as equilinearity, equimetrics, and equirhythmicity, and proclaimed their method a revolution in art.<sup>201</sup>

Anna Radlova and Mikhail Lozinskii were both translators who employed these literalist techniques in their translation work. In the preface to his translation of *Hamlet*, first published in 1932, Lozinskii states that he has translated the play with two ideals in mind. Firstly, he strived to achieve ‘точн[ое] воспроизведени[е] смысловой ткани подлинника’ (exact reproduction of the semantic fabric of the original text); here he included elements of Shakespeare’s stylistics such as his vocabulary, the artistic structure of his speeches, and the representation of his characters. Lozinskii’s second aim was to achieve ‘поэтическ[ая] равноценност[ь] каждого русского стиха стиху подлинника’ (poetic equivalence of every Russian line with each line of the original). With this point he argued his belief that poetry should be treated almost as a living creature. He therefore stressed that each individual line of Shakespeare’s poetry was like a gesture, and that the gestures of the translation should match those of the source text.<sup>202</sup>

It could be suggested that Lozinskii sets practically impossible standards here. Nevertheless, Friedberg argues that the literalists’ emphasis on closeness to the

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<sup>201</sup> Leighton, pp.64-65.

<sup>202</sup> Mikhail Lozinskii, ‘K perevodu “Gamleta”’, in V. Shekspir, *Tragediia o Gamlete, printse datskom*, perevod M. Lozinskogo (Moscow, 1937), cited in I. Chekalov, ‘Perevody “Gamleta” M. Lozinskim, A. Radlovoi i B. Pasternakom v otsenke sovetskoi kritiki 30-x godov’, in *Shekspirovskie chteniia*, ed. A. Anikst (Moscow: Nauka, 1990), pp.177-200 (p.178).

originals certainly increased the scholarly understanding of foreign texts.<sup>203</sup> However, by the 1930s, arguments against literal translation were gaining strength. Critics such as Chukovskii (formerly of the *Vsemirnaia literatura* project), and Ivan Kashkin, a leading theoretician of socialist realist literary translation, advocated a freer method of translation, arguing the impossibility of conveying an exact copy of a text in another, very different language. However, it is also clear that there were political implications for the official approval of non-literal translation.

As Friedberg indicates, whilst original Soviet writing was subject to extremely stringent controls, in contrast literary translation 'was traditionally viewed as a non political activity.'<sup>204</sup> As explained in the introduction, once the boundaries of socialist realism were firmly established, many writers who were viewed as politically questionable by the regime were forced to turn to translation as a means of making a living. In this way, Friedberg suggests, 'Soviet authorities approved of the existence of translation as a purgatory for authors in disfavour.'<sup>205</sup> Boris Pasternak, Anna Akhmatova, Osip Mandelstam and Mikhail Zoshchenko were some of the most prominent writers who fell into this category, becoming translators out of necessity. However, whilst the promotion of a freer approach to translation facilitated a means of creative output for many otherwise restricted writers, it also helped to veil the routine censorship of many 're-writings' of Western literature. As Friedberg describes, '[t]he philosophy of non-literal translation both justified and facilitated minor censorship of foreign literature. Passages objectionable for political or moral reasons could thus be deleted inconspicuously.'<sup>206</sup> These clear political advantages meant that by the end of the 1930s, literal translation was 'held in nearly universal disrepute', and remained out of favour in the Soviet Union until glasnost' in the late 1980s.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> Friedberg, p.87.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid*, p.7.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid*, p.79.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid*, p.84.

## 2.7 *Othello* in Stalinist Russia: Three Soviet translators

The number of writers now working as translators evidently contributed to the large number of new Shakespeare translations produced in this period, and the dominance of *Othello* on stage in the Stalinist period ensured that its popularity was matched amongst translators. Three new translations of the play *Othello* therefore emerged within two decades of each other: Anna Radlova's translation was commissioned in 1929; Boris Pasternak's in 1945; and Mikhail Lozinskii's in 1948.

As will be documented and analysed in the following chapters, Anna Radlova's translations generated much debate over the "correct" way to translate Shakespeare. In order to assess fully the difference in Radlova's style, and the significance of her work to the canon translation of Shakespeare in Russia, it will be necessary to analyse her work not only in comparison with what preceded her translations, but with those which followed her 're-writing' of *Othello* into the polysystem of Russian Shakespeare. Specific comparisons of the three translations of *Othello* will be reserved for the analysis in Chapter 4, but this final section of Chapter 2 will provide an overview of the translational approach of Radlova's two contemporaries.

### 2.7.1 Mikhail Lozinskii

Mikhail Lozinskii was an eminent translator in the Soviet period, regarded by many as 'perhaps the best Soviet translator of verse.'<sup>208</sup> As well as his translations of Shakespeare's plays (*Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*), he translated works from French, Italian, German and Armenian, and also wrote many articles on the practice of literary translation.

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<sup>208</sup> Ibid, p.87.

As a theoretician, Lozinskii was an advocate of literalism. Addressing the First All-Union Conference of Translators in 1936, Lozinskii identified two ways to translate a literary text. The first he called “reorganizational” (перестраивающий) translation, where the translator reshaped the work to suit his literary tastes and ideological predilections. The second, which he called reproductive (воссоздающий) translation, was described as a maximally faithful replica of the form and content of the original. Lozinskii stated that only the second type could truly be called a translation.<sup>209</sup> In a different article, Lozinskii identified two basic functions for translated works: either aesthetic (as a work of art) or educational (familiarizing the reader with another country, another era, another culture). He argued that a translation should therefore provide a clear view of the original, and that a translator should not try to alter the language with any of their own idiosyncrasies or inclinations: ‘язык перевода должен быть чем-то вроде прозрачного окна, которое позволило бы увидеть подлинник незамутненным и неискривленным.’<sup>210</sup>

In the period when the ‘scientific method’ was at its height, Lozinskii’s devotion to accuracy was frequently praised. One reviewer, for example, commented that ‘[o]ne of the principal merits of Lozinskij’s translation [of Dante] is equilinear exactitude’.<sup>211</sup> In spite of the fact that free translation had become the established norm, Lozinskii was awarded the Order of Stalin (1<sup>st</sup> degree) in 1946 for his translations of the Italian poet. However, because of the formal and technical literalism of his work, Lozinskii’s translations were also criticised for using over-complicated language which is difficult for actors to use in performance.<sup>212</sup> This aspect of his translation style is particularly evident when his translations are compared to those of Pasternak, whose freer approach to translation enabled him to use more contemporary language and expressions. This contrast once again poses the translation question first highlighted by the

<sup>209</sup> Lozinskii, ‘Iskusstvo stikhotvornogo perevoda’ [1936] reprinted in *Druzhba narodov*, no.7, [1955]:160) cited in Friedberg, *Literary Translation in Russia*, p.87.

<sup>210</sup> Lozinskii, *Mysli o perevode* (Leningrad, 1955) quoted in Chekalov, p.177. [the language of a translation should be something like a transparent window, which allows a clear and undistorted view of the original.]

<sup>211</sup> Vera Sandomirsky, ‘The New Russian Dante’, in *Italica*, 18:3 (1941), 117-119 (p.118).

<sup>212</sup> Leighton, pp.198-199.



conference described in the introduction, and by the nineteenth century translations of *Hamlet*: that a different style is required when a translation is intended for performance.

### 2.7.2 Boris Pasternak

Pasternak translated seven of Shakespeare's plays: *Hamlet* (1940), *Romeo and Juliet* (1943), *Antony and Cleopatra* (1944), *Othello* (1945), *Henry IV - Parts I and II* (1948), *King Lear* (1949) and *Macbeth* (1951). In addition to his work on Shakespeare, he also translated works by Jonson, Byron, Shelley and Keats, German writers such as Goethe and Schiller, and with the aid of an intermediary translation, the work of the Georgian poet, Titsian Tabidze. It has been suggested that this latter undertaking may have won him some favour with Stalin.<sup>213</sup>

As has already been indicated, Pasternak was a writer who was forced to turn to translation whilst unable to publish his own work.

Pasternak's translations served him as a means of personal creative expression, through the very choice of subject and through changes introduced into the wording of the original text, at a time when other avenues of artistic self-expression were closed to him, when he could not express himself freely or hope to have his own work published in the Soviet Union.<sup>214</sup>

Perhaps because of the restrictions imposed upon the production of his own creative work, but conveniently in line with the theoretical leanings of the establishment, Pasternak took a very free approach to translation, arguing the case for his principles in articles and prefaces to his work. In his view, strict adherence to the original text was only one concern among many for the translator: 'Работу надо судить как русское оригинальное драматическое произведение, потому что, помимо точности, равнострочности с

<sup>213</sup> Henry Gifford, *Pasternak* (Bristol: The Bristol Press, 1977), p.11.

<sup>214</sup> France, p.6.

подлинником и прочего, в ней больше всего той намеренной свободы, без которой не бывает приближения к большим вещам.<sup>215</sup> For Pasternak, a translation had to have the capacity to be appreciated as a work of art in its own right. 'Переводы мыслимы: потому что в идеале и они должны быть художественными произведениями и, при общности текста, становиться вровень с оригиналами своей собственной неповторимостью.'<sup>216</sup> The latitude which Pasternak believed should be allowed to a translator enabled him to render the plays into modern Russian, making them more accessible for both audiences and performers. As Henry Gifford indicates, Pasternak's Shakespeare 'has ceased to be Jacobean. Gone is much of the complexity in Shakespeare's metaphorical language [...] The general effect of Pasternak's translations from Shakespeare is to thin out the original, so that it becomes an autumn wood with fewer leaves and with the outlines showing more clearly.'<sup>217</sup> Pasternak was of course a considerable poet in his own right, so there was a creative strength in his use of language.

Pasternak's translations were given much attention, and as Anna Kay France advocates, 'the very frequency with which they have been published and performed attests to their popularity and wide acceptance.'<sup>218</sup> However, his work has also attracted much criticism, as many did not agree with the freedom he took in his approach to his source texts. In one of the more recent assessments of his work, N.A. Nikiforevskaja goes as far as to state that his "rewritings" cannot truly be described as translations: 'сличение переводов Пастернака с подлинником позволяет без труда убедиться, что эти переводы очень далеки от Шекспира и вообще не могут быть названы переводами в

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<sup>215</sup> Boris Pasternak, 'Gamlet, prints datskii' in *Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh*, ed. A.A. Vosnenskii (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1989-1992), VI, pp.385-386, (p.386). [The work needs to be judged as an original Russian dramatic work, because in addition to accuracy, equilinearity with the original, et cetera, above all there has to be an intentional degree of freedom in it, without which one cannot get close to bigger things.]

<sup>216</sup> Boris Pasternak, 'Zametki perevodchika' in *Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh*, ed. A.A. Vosnenskii (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1989-1992), VI, pp.392-395 (p.393). [Translations are conceivable because ideally they should be pieces of art, and through the harmony of the text, become as unique as their originals.]

<sup>217</sup> Gifford, pp.150-151.

<sup>218</sup> France, p.9.

строгом смысле слова.<sup>219</sup> With particular reference to Pasternak's translation of *Othello*, scholars have commented on the changes in character which the differences in his 're-writing' have brought about. France draws attention to the lack of power which Iago exhibits in Pasternak's interpretation:

the persuasiveness and cunning with which Iago works upon his victims is conveyed ineffectively by Pasternak. His Iago is often as blunt and lacking in subtlety as the other characters in the play would expect "honest Iago" to be, and he is less convincing as a manipulator because of this. Throughout the play, the power of self-assertion, the will to dominate and control, the readiness and the ability to use other people, is weakened by Pasternak's Iago.<sup>220</sup>

Nikiforovskaya also adds a negative assessment of the portrayal of Desdemona:

'Перед нами предстает совсем не та Дездемона, какую мы видели в трагедии Шекспира. У Шекспира Дездемона благородна, скромна и красноречива, у Пастернака она вульгарна, развязна и косноязычна.'<sup>221</sup>

Further attention will be paid to the differences in the translators' interpretation of characters, including Desdemona, in Chapter 4.

Interestingly, many of the critical interpretations of Pasternak's work deal with his translation in print, and do not assess their performance on stage. In spite of the criticism, however, there is no doubt that Pasternak's translations of Shakespeare's tragedies remain extremely prevalent in the Russian cultural sphere, and are still regularly published and performed. Many believe this is because as Rowe describes, Pasternak used his translations 'to reflect Russian life'.<sup>222</sup> Vladimir Markov suggests that Pasternak's use of contemporary vocabulary is actually a form of Aesopian language which would have resonated

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<sup>219</sup> Nikiforovskaia, p.7. [Comparison of Pasternak's translations with the original easily enables the realisation that these translations are very far from Shakespeare and cannot be called translations in the strict sense of the word.]

<sup>220</sup> France, p.60.

<sup>221</sup> Nikiforovskaia, p.92. [The Desdemona who appears before us is not the same Desdemona we see in Shakespeare's tragedies. Shakespeare's Desdemona is noble, modest and eloquent; in Pasternak's version she is vulgar, overly familiar and inarticulate.]

<sup>222</sup> Rowe, p.152.

politically with his readers and audiences. In effect, Markov argues, Pasternak's translations should be viewed not only as translations, but also as his attempts 'to tell the truth about his own life, discuss problems of his generation, engage in polemics with authorities.'<sup>223</sup> In her study on the effects of censorship on Pasternak's *Hamlet*, Aoife Gallagher takes Markov's argument a step further, suggesting that far from using translation simply as an available means of personal expression, Pasternak sought 'to maintain lines of communication with his readers',<sup>224</sup> and, in the guise of Shakespeare, engaged in 'active, dangerous, indirect communication.'<sup>225</sup>

Both Markov and Gallagher focus on Pasternak's translation of *Hamlet*, which appears to have resonated most strongly with Soviet audiences: 'Russians love it because they understand that Pasternak offered them a humane *Hamlet* profoundly re-interpreted to express their anxieties during the Stalinist period'.<sup>226</sup> It will be important to assess to what extent this view can be applied to his translation of *Othello*, and whether the same can be said of the work of Radlova and Lozinskii, also writing for audiences living under the Stalinist regime.

Whilst Pasternak made his own intentions in translation practice extremely clear, he also acknowledged the achievements of his contemporaries. He praised Lozinskii's translation of *Hamlet* for its close adherence to the original: 'В смысле близости в соединении с хорошим языком и строгой формой идеален

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<sup>223</sup> Vladimir Markov, 'An Unnoticed Aspect of Pasternak's Translations', *Slavic Review*, 20 (1961), 503-508 (p.508)

Markov uses a section of Hamlet's soliloquy from Act III Scene 1 as a specific example: For who would bear the whips and scorns of time, | Th'oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely, | The pangs of despised love, the law's delay, | The insolence of office, and the spurns | That patient merit of the unworthy takes'. Pasternak's translation of these lines reads as follows: 'А то кто снес бы ложное величье | Правителей, невежество вельмож, | Всеобщее притворство, невозможность | Излить себя, несчастную любовь | И призрачность заслуг в глазах ничтожеств'. Markov back translates these lines as: 'Or else who would bear the phony greatness of the rulers, the ignorance of the bigwigs, the common hypocrisy, the impossibility to express oneself, the unrequited love and illusoriness of merits in the eyes of the mediocrities.'

<sup>224</sup> Aoife Gallagher, 'Pasternak's *Hamlet*: translation, censorship and indirect communication', in *Translation and Censorship : Patterns of Communication and Interference*, eds. Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin, Cormac Ó Cuilleánáin & David Parris (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009), pp.120-131 (p.121).

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid*, p.125.

<sup>226</sup> Leighton, p.199.

перевод Лозинского'.<sup>227</sup> In Radlova's work, Pasternak valued the liveliness of her dialogue ('живость разговорной речи'), and her knowledge of the theatrical requirements of the text: 'У нее абсолютный сценический слух, верный спутник драматического дарования, без которого нельзя было бы передать прозаические части диалога так, как справилась с ними она.'<sup>228</sup>

Pasternak has here highlighted some of the key differences between his style and those of Radlova and Lozinskii. One of the fundamental points which this study of the history of Shakespeare in Russia has emphasised is the different requirements for a translation intended to be read, and one which is intended for performance. Interestingly, Pasternak views Radlova's knowledge of theatrical requirements as one of the paramount advantages of her work. In the analysis of her life and work which follows, the extent to which this knowledge governed her translation decisions will be assessed. The other important trend which has been brought to light by this chapter is that a period where a literal style of translation is preferred is frequently followed by a reaction against it, which produces a number of much freer translations. An important consideration will be to assess where Radlova's translations fit in to this cycle.

This chapter has established the context in which Radlova was working, forming a clear picture of the polysystem her translations were to enter, as well as the external controlling forces which shaped it. The following chapters will assess to what extent Radlova's translations were able to enter and remain in that system, and what factors prevented or promoted this process.

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<sup>227</sup> Pasternak, 'Gamlet, prints datskii', p.386. [In the sense of closeness, {to the original} in conjunction with good language and strict form, the ideal translation is Lozinskii's.]

<sup>228</sup> Ibid. [She has an absolutely scenic pitch, a true companion to dramatic talent, without which it would be impossible to reproduce parts of the prose dialogue as she has managed to.']

# Chapter 3: A Translator of Shakespeare and her Director

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## 3.1 Introduction

While the framework of polysystems theory has proved effective for establishing the historical context of Anna Radlova's work, Chapter 1 highlighted the concerns regarding its lack of emphasis on the effects of the social and political conditions within a system on the texts themselves. In answer to these concerns, the work of Pierre Bourdieu has been employed by translation theorists in order to analyse the shaping role of the environment in which the translator operates, and how their actions are affected by the way in which their position is viewed by their society. Other theorists have chosen instead to focus on the actions of translator. In his discussion of the 'violent' effects which a strategy of domestication in translation can have, Lawrence Venuti emphasises the importance of the role of the translator in influencing translation choices. '[T]he freelance literary translator always exercises a choice concerning the degree and direction of the violence at work in any translating.'<sup>1</sup> Venuti is referring to the modern Western publishing market here, naturally a very different environment from the stringently controlled world in which Radlova was working, where writers, dramatists and translators had to ensure that their work portrayed life 'not simply as "objective reality,"' but rather that it depicted 'reality in its revolutionary development.'<sup>2</sup> However, in accordance with Venuti's views, other theorists have also highlighted the importance of the role of the translator in creating an ideologically-suitable target text. Annie Brisset emphasises the importance of the translator's role in ensuring that the translation meets with contemporary ideological demands. She argues that translators 'construct an intelligible representation of the original text from a

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<sup>1</sup> Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p.15.

<sup>2</sup> Zhdanov, p.21.

particular discursive position. The transformation of the text is constructed or deconstructed in terms of a particular point of view. [...] Through manipulation of point of view, a translator can ensure the ideological relevance of the foreign text within the target society.<sup>3</sup>

Before presenting the detailed analyses of Anna Radlova's translation of *Othello* and of how her text fared in performance, it therefore seems imperative to examine the social context of the Radlovs, in order to establish how their 'point of view' may have been shaped by the society in which they lived. The task in this chapter is therefore to provide biographical information on husband and wife, and use the available sources in order to establish the position which they occupied in the Soviet cultural sphere of the 1920s and 1930s. The motives and themes of their earlier work will be examined, including any key influences on their artistic development and style. Most importantly, given the analysis of Radlova's translation of *Othello* and her husband's subsequent productions of the play which are to follow in the final two chapters of this thesis, the Radlovs' approach to Shakespeare will be examined, with particular reference to their interpretation of *Othello*.

As detailed in the introduction to this thesis, the critical work which exists on Anna Radlova, her life and poetry is extremely limited. Many of the published sources which refer to her are difficult to locate, and as one commentator writing in the 1980s described it, finding them requires researching 'В археологических слоях' (in the archaeological layers) of the biggest city libraries available.<sup>4</sup> The fact that the considerable literary talents of many other members of her generation may have outshone her own is one possible reason for this absence of information. However, there were members of the St Petersburg cultural elite who championed Radlova's poetry, such as Mikhail Kuzmin, himself a critic, poet and translator, and therefore she does appear in some commentaries on Russian poetry of the early twentieth century, and in some more recent encyclopaedias of Russian writers. There are also brief references to

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<sup>3</sup> Brisset, p.159.

<sup>4</sup> A. Mikhailov and A. Kravtsova, 'Anna Radlova', *Smena*, 25 October 1989, p.1.

her in memoirs written by other members of the intelligentsia of the 1920s and 1930s. The second and likely more significant reason for the lack of academic discussion on the Radlovs is that like so many other creative members of their generation, they suffered arrest and imprisonment at the hands of the Stalinist regime. This led to a ban on the publication or discussion of their work for many years to come. As Olga Muller Cooke describes, '[w]hile many writers from her generation enjoyed rehabilitation after Stalin's death, the fate of Anna Radlova and her husband, Sergei Radlov, took another thirty years to be redressed. As a result, very little of her poetic legacy survived.'<sup>5</sup>

The work of Sergei Radlov, however, has received greater attention in both Russian and English than that of his wife, though as Konstantin Rudnitsky describes, his work is now also 'less well known' than that of many of his contemporaries. Nevertheless, as noted in the introduction, there is assessment of his work in several commentaries on the theatre of his time, such as that of Rudnitsky (1988) as well as full-length study of his work by David Zolotnitsky, published in 1995. For the purposes of this thesis, however, it will be important to understand Radlov's development as a performer and director in order to try and establish how far his approach towards theatre and Shakespeare may have shaped his wife's approach to her translation, or whether they had conflicting views. The scholarship on Radlov offers a way through to greater understanding of that of his wife. The work of the Radlovs has not been examined in this way before, and this chapter incorporates the use of previously unexplored archival material.

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<sup>5</sup> Olga Muller Cooke, 'Anna Radlova' in *Russian Women Writers*, Volume II, ed. by Christine Tomei (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999), pp. 753-761, p.753.



### 3.2 Anna Radlova: Life before translation

Anna Dmitrievna Darmolatova was born on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1891 in St Petersburg. Born into what has been described as a ‘дворянская семья,’<sup>6</sup> (a family of the landed gentry) she was one of three sisters who through their work and their marriages were fully involved in the St Petersburg cultural scene of the early twentieth century. One of her sisters married Evgenii Mandelstam, the brother of the poet Osip, whilst the other, Sarra Darmolatova, became a respected sculptor and was married to the artist and illustrator Vladimir Lebedev.

The references made to Radlova in memoirs must of course be treated with caution, containing as they do personal opinions which have been recorded long after the events which they describe took place. Nevertheless, the works of Nadezhda Mandelstam, *Vtoraia kniga* (Second Book, titled *Hope Abandoned* in English) and Irina Odoevtseva, *Na beregakh Nevy* (On the Banks of the Neva) do provide some understanding of the Radlovs’ standing within St Petersburg society, with whom they associated and what their beliefs were. Odoevtseva makes several references to Radlova’s appearance, describing her as a reputed beauty. However, she does this in a rather negative fashion, using the adjective ‘тяжеловатый’ (heavyish, ponderous) on several occasions. ‘Анна Радлова славится своей несколько тяжеловатой но бесспорной красотой.’<sup>7</sup> We also learn that the Radlovs lived on Vasil’evskii Island. Perhaps more important than these details, however, is that we discover a little about the Radlovs’ social connections. Odoevtseva describes attending a gathering of cultural figures which was held at the Radlovs’ home, and notes that Mikhail Kuz’min was a supporter of Anna Radlova’s work: ‘Кузьмин в наилучших отношениях с Анной Радловой, покровительствует ей литературно и проводит у нее уютные вечера за чаем с булочками.’<sup>8</sup> Once again, this comment could be taken as a

<sup>6</sup> Mikhailov and Kravtsova, p.1.

<sup>7</sup> Irina Odoevtseva, *Na beregakh Nevy* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1988), pp.291-292. [Anna Radlova was famous for her somewhat ponderous but undeniable beauty]

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p.292. [Kuz’min is on the best terms with Anna Radlova, he protects her literary interests and enjoys cosy evenings at hers with tea and buns.]

little suggestive, and Odoevtseva implies that she does not particularly want to attend the evening at Radlova's, perhaps indicating a certain level of animosity. However, she is nothing like as critical as her fellow memoirist.

Indeed, in spite of being related to Radlova by marriage, Nadezhda Mandelstam seems to have been one of her harshest critics. It is Mandelstam who refers to the rivalry which existed between Radlova and her close friend, Anna Akhmatova, terming Radlova 'друг[ая] Анн[а]' (the other Anna).<sup>9</sup> She describes how Radlova would frequently criticise Akhmatova, often resorting to remarks on her appearance and private life, and states that if one were a guest at Radlova's house, then criticism of Akhmatova was positively encouraged; so much so that friends of Akhmatova ceased visiting. Like Odoevtseva, Mandelstam also refers to the cultural gatherings which took place at the Radlovs' flat. However, this is also reflected in an unfavourable light, with a description of Radlov boasting that the cultural elite were gathered in his home: 'Сергей Радлов, режиссер, с полной откровенностью объяснил Мандельштаму, что все лучшее в искусстве собрано за его чайным столом.'<sup>10</sup>

### 3.2.1 Radlova's Career as a Poet

Radlova received a university education, and she began her career as a poet publishing in the journal *Apollon*, as early as 1915. She later published three volumes of poetry: *Soty* (Honeycomb) in 1918, *Korabli* (Ships) in 1920 and *Krylatyyi gost'* (The Winged Guest) in 1922. Radlova's only play, *Bogoroditsyn korabl'* (The Ship of the Virgin Mother), was published in 1923.<sup>11</sup> Her final work, *Povesti o Tatarinovi* (Tales of Tatarinova) was written in 1931, but not published

<sup>9</sup> Nadezhda Mandel'shtam, *Vtoraia kniga* (Moscow: Olimp Astrel', 2001), p.331.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.89. [Sergei Radlov, the director, told Mandelstam frankly that the best in art were gathered around his tea table.]

<sup>11</sup> Muller Cooke, 'Anna Radlova', p.754.

until 1996. Consequently, the editor of this latest collection, Aleksandr Etkind, describes it as a 'forgotten text'.<sup>12</sup>

As noted by Odoevtseva, Mikhail Kuz'min was one of the main supporters of Radlova's poetic career. For example, in his collection of essays *Uslovnosti*, (Conventions) first published in 1922, Kuz'min devotes considerable attention to Radlova's work. In 'Golos poeta', an essay devoted entirely to discussion of Radlova's collection *Ships*, he states that her second volume of poetry has elevated her to the same status as other great poets of her generation: 'Книгой «Корабли» А. Радлова вступила полноправно и законно в семью больших современных лириков, как Ахматова, Блок, Вяч. Иванов, Мандельштам и Сологуб.'<sup>13</sup> However, whilst noting the influence of Akhmatova, Mandelstam and the Muscovite poet Maiakovskii on Radlova's work, he also compliments her on her originality: 'Анна Радлова избрала смело и гордо путь одиночества.'<sup>14</sup> He singles out the distinguishing feature in her work as her 'poetic reflection of the present' — 'поэтическое отражение современности.'<sup>15</sup>

Another reviewer and supporter of her work, D. S. Mirsky, also groups Radlova in the St Petersburg school of poets, though he notes a distinct difference in style between Radlova and her compatriot Akhmatova. 'Опять все черты Петербургской школы – мужество и строгость. Но в противоположность Ахматовой Радлова, несмотря на все, сохранила восторг и высокое напряжение жизни.'<sup>16</sup> He also praised Radlova for her individuality, and for developing her own style from the founding principles of the St Petersburg school:

<sup>12</sup> Aleksandr Etkind, 'Predislovie' (Preface) to Anna Radlova, *Bogoroditsyn korabl'. Krylatyi gost'. Povest' o Tatarinovi* (Moscow: ITS-Garant, 1996), p.5.

<sup>13</sup> Mikhail Kuz'min, 'Golos poeta' in *Uslovnosti*, rev. edn. (Tomsk: Vodolei, 1996), pp.143-146, p.145. [With her collection *Ships*, Anna Radlova has legitimately gained full rights to enter into the family of major contemporary lyric poets, like Akhmatova, Blok, Viach. Ivanov, Mandel'shtam and Sologub.]

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p.143. [Anna Radlova has chosen a bold and proud path of solitude.]

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.145.

<sup>16</sup> D. S. Mirsky, 'O sovremennom sostoianii russkoi poezii' in *Uncollected Writings on Russian Literature*, ed. G. S. Smith (Berkeley: Berkeley Slavic Specialties, 1989), pp.87-117, p.113. [Again all the features of the Petersburg School are here – courage and severity. But in contrast with Akhmatova, despite everything, Radlova has preserved the delight and extreme tension of life.]

Радлова замечательна не только этой своей вещью живучестью, но и как продолжательница путей Петербургской школы: в ее поэзии еще дальше идет подчинение и использование логической стихии слова и совершенный отказ от иррациональных эмоциональных и музыкальных методов архитектуры.<sup>17</sup>

Other references to Radlova's poetic talents, however, are not so complimentary. Osip Mandelstam makes a scathing reference to her work in his critique of Moscow's writers, the essay 'Literary Moscow': 'As far as Moscow is concerned, the saddest symptom is the pious needlework of Marina Tsvetaeva, who seems to echo the dubious solemnity of the Petersburg poetess Anna Radlova.' Mandelstam continues with a more general attack on women writers, stating that their poetry is the 'worst thing' about Moscow's literary output.<sup>18</sup> This specific criticism of the work of women writers was continued by Leon Trotsky in his 1924 publication, *Literature and Revolution*.

One reads with dismay most of the poetic collections, especially those of the women. Here, indeed, one cannot take a step without God. The lyric circle of Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Radlova, and other real and near-poetesses, is very small. It embraces the poetess herself, an unknown one in a derby or in spurs, and inevitably God, without any special marks. He is a very convenient and portable third person, quite domestic, a friend of the family who fulfils from time to time the duties of a doctor of female ailments. How this individual, no longer young, and burdened with the personal and too often bothersome errands of Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva and others, can manage in his spare time to direct the destinies of the universe, is simply incomprehensible.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid. [Radlova is excellent not only in her prophetic vitality, but as a follower of the Petersburg school, in her poetry she goes further still in the submission and use of the logical elements of speech and the complete rejection of the irrational emotional and musical practices of architecture.]

<sup>18</sup> Osip Mandelstam, 'Literary Moscow' in *Osip Mandelstam: Selected Essays*, trans. by Sidney Monas (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977), p.134.

<sup>19</sup> Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, trans. by Rose Strunsky (Michigan: Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1960), p.41.

Though Radlova was not the only poetess to be criticised here, according to Olga Muller Cooke, it was Trotsky's attack, which followed soon after her third collection of poetry was published, which 'paved the way for Radlova's abandoning poetry in favor of translating.'<sup>20</sup>

In her entries on Radlova in two reference volumes from the 1990s on Russian women writers, Muller Cooke is in agreement with Radlova's contemporaries regarding the influences on her work, stating that her poems share 'a close affinity with Acmeism, more than any other school of poetry.'<sup>21</sup> She notes that Radlova 'employs archaic diction and rhetorical flourishes in subtexts recalling classical and biblical motifs.'<sup>22</sup> The degree of reference to classical literature and mythology, as well as the carefully researched knowledge of historical events which Radlova's work displays certainly demonstrates that she was highly educated, and therefore well positioned to tackle the translation of a writer such as Shakespeare. However, the use of archaic language in her poetry would seem to be in sharp contrast to her translation style, where, as will be demonstrated later, she wanted to render Shakespeare in much more contemporary Russian. Muller Cooke also notes that Radlova's poetry reveals an adherence to 'the principles of precision and harmony',<sup>23</sup> something which is certainly reflected in her strict reproductions of Shakespeare's poetic form, and her disregard for translators who did not apply these principles.

Muller Cooke offers an assessment of some of the reasons behind much of the criticism that Radlov's work received, noting the changes of theme over the course of the three volumes, 'Whereas *Honeycomb* is punctuated by an obviously personal feminine voice, the second and third volumes read as

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<sup>20</sup> Muller Cooke, 'Anna Radlova', p.754.

<sup>21</sup> Muller Cooke 'Radlova, Anna Dmitrievna' in *Dictionary of Russian Women Writers*, eds. Marina Ledkovsky, Charlotte Rosenthal and Mary Zirin (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1994), pp.524-526, p.525. The Acemist school of poetry was formed as a breakaway movement from Russian Symbolism in 1910. Drawing on the beauty of the natural world, its members sought to reject what they viewed as the excessive mysticism of the Symbolist movement, in view of obtaining a new ideal of clarity. The leading poets in the Acmeist school included Anna Akhmatova, Nikolai Gumilev and Osip Mandelstam and Mikhail Kuzmin. Michael Wachtel, *The Cambridge Introduction to Russian Poetry* (Cambridge: University Press, 2004), p.8.

<sup>22</sup> Muller Cooke, 'Anna Radlova', p.754.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

universal denunciation of the Bolshevik revolution.’ The increase in violent imagery in her writing is perhaps unsurprising, given that Radlova’s three volumes of poetry were published throughout the course of the Civil War. For example, her second volume, *Korabli* (1920), from which the poem below is taken, ‘is strewn with images of violence and wholesale bloodshed.’<sup>24</sup>

### *Петербург*

Улицы пустынные, как поля,  
 Под горячим асфальтом притихшая земля,  
 Дома, разрушенные людьми и пламенем –  
 Как пролетал над городом, вселенской тревогой дыша,  
 Огнекрылил, огнеликий Ангел Мятажа,  
 Как слепил он глаза испуганным и раненым,  
 Как побеждали, как падали под крылатым знаменем  
 Утучненная смертью не помнит земля,  
 Только острее запахи весной тополя  
 И солнечный бык златорогий,  
 Почуявший запах крови,  
 Оставил аравийские, оставил сицилийские знойные чертоги  
 И, отданный новой Пазифаиной любви,  
 Встал над столицей, пронзает ее все дни и все ночи,  
 Память о прошлом сжигает и сына пророчит.<sup>25</sup>

St Petersburg is depicted here as the victim of nightmarish visions from the Bible and Greek mythology. The Angel of Rebellion swooping over the city bringing

<sup>24</sup> Muller Cooke, ‘Anna Radlova’, p.754.

<sup>25</sup> Anna Radlova, *Korabli*, (St Petersburg: Alkonost, 1920), p.20.

Muller Cooke presents the following literal translation of this poem: ‘The streets are desolate, like the fields,/Under the burning asphalt the land has grown silent,/Houses, destroyed by people and flames - /How the goldenwinged, goldenfaced Angel of Rebellion,/Flew over the city, breathing universal alarm,/How he blinded the eyes of the wounded and frightened/ How they conquered, how they fell under the winged banner/The land does not recall when enveloped in death,/Only the more pungent poplars have turned up in spring/And the goldenhorned solar bull,/Sensing the smell of blood,/Left his Arabic, his Sicilian sultry dens/And given over to Pasiphae’s new love,/He rises above the capital and pierces her day and night,/The memory of the past burns and prophesies the sun.’ Muller Cooke, ‘Anna Radlova’, pp.757-758.

pain and destruction is perhaps a reference to Revelation 12: 7-13, the war in Heaven, when there is a battle against Satan and his angels and they are cast out. The image of the bull in the poem appears to be a reference to Pasiphae, daughter of the sun, who is cursed by Poseidon to mate with a bull and therefore gives birth to a monster, the Minotaur. However, Radlova's description of the bull as 'solar' and 'golden horned' also connects it to another event in the Bible, Aaron's creation of the Golden Calf in Exodus 32: 1-6. Both these narratives contain themes of sin and worshipping inappropriate idols. For Muller Cooke, it was Radlova's moral viewpoint which ultimately led to her having to give up publishing her original writing. 'Because of her strong pacifist stance, her poetry must have fallen out of favor with the critics who sought a more boldly stated allegiance with the Bolsheviks.'<sup>26</sup> If, for example, the Angel of Rebellion is seen as a metaphor for the spirit of the Revolution sweeping through the city, bringing about Civil War, it is perhaps not difficult to envisage why her writing might have raised questions with the authorities.

As Nathaniel Davis notes, Marx and Engels had taught 'that religion was a symptom of oppression, an "opium" to dull the workers' outrage and convert their revolutionary zeal into passivity'.<sup>27</sup> Lenin had therefore embarked on a militant program of secularisation, including anti-religious propaganda.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, another feature of Radlova's work which cannot have endeared Radlova to the authorities was its religious intensity. Much of her work features references to secretive religious sects in Russian history, the Skoptsy and the Khlysty. Muller Cooke describes how her poetic drama, *Bogoroditsyn korabl'*, 'incorporates historical and religious elements, entailing false empresses, sectarian Khlyst rituals and miracles,' whilst the Biblical references continue

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<sup>26</sup> Muller Cooke, 'Radlova, Anna Dmitrievna', p.526.

<sup>27</sup> Nathaniel Davis, *A Long Walk to Church: A Contemporary History of Russian Orthodoxy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Boulder, Colorado and Oxford, Westview Press, 2003), p.6.

<sup>28</sup> David E. Powell, *Antireligious Propaganda in the Soviet Union: A Study of Mass Persuasion* (Cambridge, Mass.: M. I. T. Press, 1975), p.5.

throughout all her original writing. Muller Cooke notes that in her final collection of poems, *Krylatyi gost*, '[a]ngels pervade her verse'.<sup>29</sup>

Like many other writers of her generation, by the end of the 1920s, Radlova sought refuge in translation. Whilst providing these 'politically questionable' writers with a suitable profession, those in power could still heavily censor their output, whilst the mass production of re-writings of foreign literature provided the USSR with the added benefit of appearing international.

### 3.3 Sergei Radlov: Life Before Shakespeare

Sergei Ernestovich Radlov was born in St Petersburg in 1892, the son of Ernest Leopoldovich Radlov, who was an historian of philosophy, librarian and translator. As a university graduate, he was interested in antiquity and the Renaissance. In his youth, he translated and wrote poetry; whilst he was still in his late teens, his translations of poems by the German writer Stefan George appeared in *Apollon*, the same journal which featured the earliest publications of his wife.<sup>30</sup>

In 1913, Radlov joined the studio which the director Vsevolod Meierkhol'd had founded on Borodinskaia Street. According to David Zolotnitsky, students at the Borodinskaia studio could follow two different courses of study, one which focused on the "Grotesque" or the other which focused on the "Eighteenth Century." Radlov, was the leading member of this latter group, and was singled out by Meierkhol'd as 'gifted'.<sup>31</sup> The relationship between teacher and student was to be a turbulent one: though it began with mutual respect, by the mid-1930s they were engaged in an extremely public dispute writing highly critical articles on each other's work, as will be seen in their dispute over Radlov's productions of *Othello*.

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<sup>29</sup> Muller Cooke, 'Anna Radlova', p.755.

<sup>30</sup> David Zolotnitsky, *Sergei Radlov: The Shakespearean Fate of a Soviet Director* (Luxembourg: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995), p.3.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, p.4.



In 1918, however, Radlov was still keen to follow Meierkhol'd's example, and like his teacher, had joined TEO, (teatral'nyi otdel') the Theatre Department attached to the People's Commissariat of Education. Konstantin Rudnitsky notes that following the Revolution, '[t]he public's tastes and the new society's spiritual needs were not by any means defined immediately,' and that Radlov was one of the key directors who was 'actively setting the tone in the early stages'.<sup>32</sup> Like many of the TEO activists, Radlov worked 'in the mass cultural organizations of the Petrograd military district and the Baltic Navy.'<sup>33</sup> For Rudnitsky, these "'mass festivals" or "mass pageants" represent the most striking form of propagandist theatre,' and were 'a remarkable trend in the theatrical life of the first Revolutionary years.' They involved the participation of hundreds, sometimes thousands of people, 'not just actors but workers, soldiers and sailors as well, who not only appeared in them but also simultaneously, together with others, became its spectators.'<sup>34</sup> In the summer of 1920, Radlov staged the mass pageants "The Siege of Russia" and "Toward a Worldwide Commune", and in 1922, "The Victory of the Revolution."<sup>35</sup> He returned to staging mass spectacles several times during his career, directing festivals to mark special events such as the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution, and Party Congresses.<sup>36</sup> Working on the mass productions clearly afforded Radlov the opportunity to hone his skills in directing scenes with a large cast. Zolotnitsky notes that crowd scenes in his dramatic and operatic productions were frequently lauded by the press.<sup>37</sup>

Meierkhol'd's work at the Borodinskaia studio had focused on cultivating 'the methods of Commedia dell'Arte.'<sup>38</sup> As Rudnitsky describes, this exploration of different methods led Radlov to begin experimenting with his own styles of comedy:

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<sup>32</sup> Rudnitsky, p.8.

<sup>33</sup> Zolotnitsky, p.5.

<sup>34</sup> Rudnitsky, p.44.

<sup>35</sup> Zolotnitsky, p.292.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, pp.67-68.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p.80.

<sup>38</sup> Rudnitsky, p.57.

Meyerhold encouraged silent improvisation in gestures and even presented excerpts from *Hamlet* in mime. His student, Radlov, transferred the emphasis to verbal, textual improvisation. After Meyerhold left Petrograd to settle in Moscow, Radlov became the most noticeable innovator on the Petrograd theatrical scene and immediately steered towards a type of comedy where the actor would be entirely free to chatter ‘in his own words’, that is, towards a crude, clowning comedy.<sup>39</sup>

### 3.3.1 Radlov’s Theatre of Popular Comedy

In November 1919, Radlov formed his own modern, comic troupe of actors and performers. At first known as the Theatre of Artistic Experimentation, the group soon ‘became widely known as the Theatre of Popular Comedy’ (Teatr narodnoi komedii).<sup>40</sup> Building on the ideas of improvisation experimented with in Meierkhol’d’s studio, Radlov wanted to move away completely from the idea of the “set text” usually referred to in academic styles of theatre. He declared that it was necessary ‘to destroy that pernicious being, the armchair literary man who writes words for the theatre in the tranquillity of his flat.’<sup>41</sup> Instead, his experimentation ‘aimed at free contact between the performer and the audience,’<sup>42</sup> and the ‘main criterion for success lay in the audience response.’<sup>43</sup> As Rudnitsky describes, the working and performance practices of the Theatre of Popular Comedy allowed cast members to make their own original contributions:

He [Radlov] himself usually composed and directed the half-comedies, half-scenarios which encouraged actors’ improvisation. He proposed a chain of amusing situations to the actors, precisely designating the

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Mel Gordon, ‘Radlov’s Theatre of Popular Comedy’, *The Drama Review: TDR*, 19.4 (1975), 113-116, (p.113).

<sup>41</sup> Radlov, 1920, quoted in Rudnitsky, p.57.

<sup>42</sup> Zolotnitsky, p.8.

<sup>43</sup> Rudnitsky, p.57.

essential action, but only roughly indicating what kind of dialogue was desired and what kinds of tirades and banter were possible.<sup>44</sup>

Radlov's performers were allowed to say whatever came to mind, and to exchange topical jokes with the audience; interaction was positively encouraged. Rudnitsky notes that Radlov's insistence on verbal improvisation meant the employment of techniques such as compèring and clowning which had first been legitimized in the circus arts.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, to this end, Radlov invited professional circus artistes, such as the celebrated clown Georges Delvari and the aerial gymnast and acrobat Serge, into his troupe. He was in fact the first director to do this in Russia, though Meierkhol'd and Sergei Eisenstein (whose later projects included the films *The Battleship Potemkin* and *Ivan the Terrible*), were soon to follow suit. Radlov also invited the compère Konstantin Gibshman, who had previously worked with Meierkhol'd, and the singer Stepan Nefedov, a singer of satirical ballads. There were also trained dramatic actors in the company, but they were in the minority and initially often took on secondary roles.<sup>46</sup>

Performances of the Popular Comedy took place in the hall of a large club situated in a district of Petrograd where primarily workers and minor officials lived. The venue was known as the "Iron Hall" due to the fact that much of its metal construction work had been left exposed. Radlov liked the stark contrast which the bare, grey space provided with the loud, bright colours of the actors' costumes and boldly painted sets, and ensured that his performers were always the centre of attention.<sup>47</sup> The "Iron Hall" had a permanent stage constructed, a simple wooden platform without footlights, borders or wings. Zolotnitsky notes that the simple staging bore 'resemblance to Shakespeare's Globe',<sup>48</sup> whilst the audiences who came to watch the performances were perhaps of a similar social standing to those who would have stood watching Shakespeare's plays in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. 'The most ordinary, undemanding public

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<sup>44</sup> Rudnitsky, p.57.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Rudnitsky, pp.57-58.

<sup>47</sup> Rudnitsky, p.58.

<sup>48</sup> Zolotnitsky, p.9.

gathered in the hall – workers, who brought their wives and children; soldiers and sailors; caretakers; postmen; and stallholders from the neighbouring market'.<sup>49</sup> Radlov had a strong desire to ensure that his theatre appealed to this new audience, writing that '[t]he intelligentsia is alien to our theatre.'<sup>50</sup> Rudnitsky states that Radlov was quite intentionally creating a theatre which was 'orientated round the primitive taste of its unsophisticated and naive audience', a strategy which seems to have been successful, given that Zolotnitsky notes that his circus comedies were 'a success with the public.'<sup>51</sup> Whilst in his early career, Radlov was occupied in creating types of comedy very different from some of his later productions; his aim of making the theatre accessible for everyone were certainly reflected later in his approach to Shakespeare and in the translation choices of his wife.

In spite of the popularity with the general public, however, the critics were not so easily impressed with Radlov's theatre. Mel Gordon notes that his first productions were accused of being 'nothing more than up-dated *commedia dell'arte* scenarios performed in a circus style.'<sup>52</sup> However, Rudnitsky notes that while the dependence of Radlov's "circus comedies" on Meierkhol'd's variations on *Commedia dell'Arte* were striking to begin with, Radlov then began 'experimenting in the spirit of the detective thriller with the chases, investigators and other devices canonical to the genre.'<sup>53</sup>

Performances by the Popular Comedy gradually became more and more dynamic, with increasingly daring and sensational stunts. However, in the progressively more politicised climate of the 1920s, a further criticism targeted at Radlov's theatre was that his productions were 'far removed from both politics and contemporary life.'<sup>54</sup> Critics called for Radlov to address contemporary issues and use his works to engage in political satire. An opportunity to experiment with this type of comedy presented itself when

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<sup>49</sup> Rudnitsky, p.58.

<sup>50</sup> Sergei Radlov, quoted in Rudnitsky, p.58.

<sup>51</sup> Zolotnitsky, p.10.

<sup>52</sup> Gordon, p.113.

<sup>53</sup> Rudnitsky, p.58.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

Maksim Gorky, interested in the idea of improvisation, provided Radlov with a script. Gorky's play, *The Hardworking Slovotokov* 'provided Radlov with a good foundation for a witty, satirical improvisation with topical allusions.'<sup>55</sup> Radlov took on the project with enthusiasm, and the leading role of the official, Slovotekov, was taken by the clown, Georges Delvari. Gorky's satire was intended to correspond with the government campaign against revolutionary 'speak' over revolutionary action, but unfortunately, as Cynthia Marsh notes, 'the play appears not to have been received that way.'<sup>56</sup> Rudnitsky asserts that the slapstick techniques of Radlov's actors meant that the comedy became less of a satire and more of a farce, which left Gorky bitterly disappointed.<sup>57</sup> It has also been suggested that political figures who had watched the production had taken offence at the portrayal of the garrulous and ineffective official. It was cancelled after only four days, and proclaimed 'counter-revolutionary' by the newspaper *Krasnaia gazeta*.<sup>58</sup>

The failure of this production led Radlov to initiate a complete change of direction for his company, with a return to performances with a set text. As Gordon describes:

In a new statement of policy, published in *Zhizn iskusstva* (November 12<sup>th</sup> 1920), Radlov declared that he was searching for productions based on the great comic plays of the pre-capitalist past. The dramas of Shakespeare, Molière, Hans Sachs, and Calderon, Radlov felt, expressed the true popular aspiration of past-epochs; besides, the technical aspects of these plays and their production styles were of the highest order and still applicable for today's popular audience.<sup>59</sup>

Alongside his new statement of policy, Radlov argued that it was the influence of attitudes from the nineteenth century which had destroyed the concept of "the

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Cynthia Marsh, *Maxim Gorky Russian Dramatist* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006), pp.297-298.

<sup>57</sup> Rudnitsky, p.58.

<sup>58</sup> Marsh, pp.297-298.

<sup>59</sup> Gordon, p.115.

people's theatre".<sup>60</sup> In a spirit of contemporaneity, both Radlov in his productions of Shakespeare, and Radlova in her translations, strove to reflect what they believed was the true nature of Shakespeare's texts, unburdened by the more genteel interpretations of the nineteenth century.

One of the first plays to be staged under the new criteria of using a 'fixed text' provided Radlov with his first experience of directing one of Shakespeare's plays. The production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* still maintained elements of the Popular Comedy's original style, however, in that it was also 'a comedy combined with the circus.' The circus performers within the company were given the parts of the servants, and the actors often performed out in the auditorium. The performance also still involved elements of improvisation, as Radlov later described: 'Труппа, составленная наполовину из драматических, наполовину из цирковых актеров, разыгрывала главным образом сочиненные мною сценарии, импровизированно создавая текст в процессе репетиций. Честно говоря, она была к этому гораздо более приспособлена, чем к работе над шекспировской поэзией.'<sup>61</sup>

The change in direction for the Popular Comedy caused a change in the company's composition, as many of the circus artistes disliked having to take on minor roles, and so left to return to more traditional circus troupes. The theatre also began to struggle financially when the reforms of the New Economic Policy (NEP) were introduced in March 1921. The NEP permitted a certain amount of private trade and ownership, but imposed severe restrictions on the availability of state resources. Like the majority of theatres, the Popular Comedy was therefore no longer supported by state funding, and was now required to make a profit.<sup>62</sup> In spite of their best efforts to raise box office returns, it finally closed in

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Sergei Radlov, 'Kak ia stavliu Shekspir,' in *Nasha rabota nad klassikami*, ed. A. A. Gvozdev (Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1936), pp.11-70, p.16. [The troupe, half comprising of dramatic actors and half of circus performers, chiefly performed a script written by me, a text improvised and created in the process of rehearsals. Honestly speaking, the troupe was much more suited to this type of work than to working with Shakespeare's poetry.]

<sup>62</sup> Rudnitsky, p.89.

1922.<sup>63</sup> However, in spite of this setback, Zolotnitsky notes that circus arts were always 'highly valued' by Radlov. He was involved in several circus productions throughout his career, whilst many of his dramatic performances also incorporated circus elements.<sup>64</sup>

### 3.4 Anna Radlova: The Principles of Translating Shakespeare

Though it appears that her turn to the profession of translation was not an entirely free choice, it can certainly be argued that 'Radlova made her most notable contribution to Russian culture as a translator.'<sup>65</sup> Her translations of Shakespeare became the most prominent through her husband's use of them in his stage productions, but she also translated other European writers including Christopher Marlowe, Guy de Maupassant, Honoré de Balzac and André Gide. Whilst it may not have been her first choice of profession, Radlova had very clear views about how the process of translation should be conducted, and she was certainly not afraid to voice these opinions, writing articles and giving speeches at conferences to explain and justify her translation decisions. Chapter 4 will provide a theoretical analysis of Radlova's strategies in her version of *Othello*, but in order to establish the 'point of view' from which Radlova was operating, her general principles of translation will be discussed here.

Between 1929 and 1938, Radlova translated five of Shakespeare's plays: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Richard III* and *Hamlet*. She never explicitly stated the reasons why she chose only to focus on the tragedies, though the subject matter of her poetry would suggest she was more drawn to the tragic genre than comedy. Much would have depended on the commissions she was able to obtain, while she may also have been influenced by her husband's choices of plays to include in the repertoire of his company. The modern language with

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<sup>63</sup> Zolotnitsky, pp.23-24.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, pp.68-69.

<sup>65</sup> Muller Cooke, 'Radlova, Anna Dmitrievna', p.524.

which Radlova chose to re-write Shakespeare and the close adherence she maintained to the formal structure of his text were in sharp contrast to the older translations which were still in circulation at this time, and her translations therefore proved extremely controversial. They generated much discussion in the press following their publication and first performances in the mid-1930s, sparking a debate over the “correct” way to translate Shakespeare which was to continue for over a decade.

In her articles and speeches on her working methods, Radlova demonstrated an excellent knowledge of the translation history of Shakespeare in Russia. However, she argued that the new Soviet era necessitated a different approach to Shakespeare. She frequently refers to the fact that Shakespeare was first received in Russia in the eighteenth century through the use of French intermediary translations, and the fact that French literary traditions therefore influenced the Russian interpretations of that time: ‘XVIII в. переделывал Шекспира посвоему, меняя размер и даже самый сюжет, убирая «грубые» места, приписывая «возвышенные» сцены, сокращая и подчищая, затягивая шекспировскую «варварскую» музу в железный корсет расиновской жеманницы.’<sup>66</sup> She was extremely critical of translators from the nineteenth century, like Veinberg, who had elevated Shakespeare’s language and romanticised the more earthy nature of his imagery. Radlova wanted a return to a “realistic” Shakespeare, a return to the richness of everyday speech. ‘Мы будем драться за нефальсифицированного, за подлинного, нежного и грубого реалистического Шекспира.’<sup>67</sup>

Radlova was not alone in the belief that the “old” Russian translations of Shakespeare had many faults. The literary critic Osaf Litovskii, who was also head of the Main Repertory Committee, responsible for granting licences for the

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<sup>66</sup> Anna Radlova, ‘Kipiachennyi dukh’, *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 26 February 1933, p.3. [The eighteenth century altered Shakespeare in its own way, changing the scope and even the very subject, removing any “coarse” sections, adding “elevated” scenes, shortening and erasing, lacing Shakespeare’s barbarian muse into the iron corset of a Racinian prude.]

<sup>67</sup> Anna Radlova, ‘K diskusii o postanovke “Otello” v Malom teat’ RGALI, f.614, op.1, d.264, ll.1-8, l.8. [We will fight for the unfalsified, the original, tender and coarse, realistic Shakespeare.]



performance of plays,<sup>68</sup> defended Radlova's choice of more earthy language in her translation. Litovskii argued that the translators of the past simply avoided the rudeness of the plays for fear of upsetting their audiences, and instead conveyed Shakespeare's words using language more suited to that of a well-mannered and sentimental old spinster.<sup>69</sup> Meanwhile, the Shakespeare scholar, critic and editor Aleksandr Smirnov dismissed many of the old translations as being littered with mistakes, and accused past translators and editors of failing to carry out adequate research.

Это, прежде всего, смысловые ошибки, нередко возмутительные, ибо иногда они грубо искажают образ или совершенно обесмысливают текст. Язык Шекспира, конечно, очень труден; однако существует целый ряд специальных шекспировских словарей, где все архаизмы и неясные места у Шекспира тщательно разъяснены. Но переводчики и редакторы брокгаузавского издания, по всей видимости, прибегали к этим словарям очень редко. Хуже то, что некоторые переводчики проявили нежелание или неумение пользоваться даже обыкновенным англо-русским словарем.<sup>70</sup>

On the other hand, as already noted in Chapter 2, the translations of Shakespeare from the nineteenth century were still very much in the public consciousness. Tatiana Shchepkina-Kupernik, herself a translator of Shakespeare's comedies, commented in her autobiography that in some cases, the work of translators like Veinberg could not be improved on: 'И в старых

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<sup>68</sup> Ermolaev, p.23.

<sup>69</sup> O. Litovskii, 'Posle spektaklia v Malom teatre,' *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 20 December 1935, p.4.

<sup>70</sup> A. A. Smirnov, 'O russkikh perevodakh Shekspira', *Zvezda*, 4, 1934, pp.165-172, p.166. [There are, first and foremost, distortions of meaning, not infrequently outrageous ones, because they sometimes grossly distort the imagery or render the text completely meaningless. The language of Shakespeare is of course very difficult, however, there are a great many special Shakespeare dictionaries in existence, where all the archaisms and ambiguities in Shakespeare are carefully explained. But the translators and editors of the Brockhaus and Efron publishing house apparently resorted to these dictionaries very rarely. Even worse is the fact that several translators display an unwillingness or inability to use even a standard English-Russian dictionary.]

переводах попадают, такие счастливые места, что лучше их не переведешь и не скажешь.<sup>71</sup>

However, for Radlova, the translator was first and foremost a communicator, a mouthpiece through which the great works of foreign literature and drama could speak to the Soviet people. She viewed this role as one which carried a huge amount of responsibility, and wrote of the importance of considering the target audience when translating, and the fact that the Soviet people had a right to be able to understand and appreciate Shakespeare. To this end, Radlova stated that she often made the simplest of word choices, opting for the word which did not require a lengthy technical commentary.

Переводчик Шекспира, работая должен представлять себе того, «к кому он обращается, своего «собеседника». Собеседником переводчика Шекспира должен быть современный советский зритель и читатель, который вправе ожидать от переводчика, чтобы он открыл ему реальное и реалистическое лицо Шекспира, а не затруднял его восприятие эвфемизмами и мифологией, требующими научного комментария.<sup>72</sup>

In addition to her concern for her audiences, undoubtedly because of her close involvement in a theatrical company, one of the most important principles of translating Shakespeare for Radlova was to ensure the 'сценичность' of the translation she produced, that is, its suitability for the stage. She was also anxious that her text was accessible for the actors who were to perform it. 'Мне хотелось, чтобы актеру, произносящему мой текст, его актерский труд был бы радостен и легок и чтобы он мог, вжившись в образ, произносить слова

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<sup>71</sup> Tatiana Shchepkina-Kupernik, *Teatr v moei zhizni* (Moscow and Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1948), p.380. [And in the old translations can be found such happy places that cannot be translated or said better.]

<sup>72</sup> Anna Radlova, 'O roli i otvetstvennosti perevodchika', *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 11 April 1934, p.4. [While working, a translator of Shakespeare should picture the person who he is addressing, his 'interlocutor'. The interlocutor for a translator of Shakespeare should be the modern Soviet audience member and reader, who has the right to expect that the translator will reveal to him the real and realistic face of Shakespeare, and not hamper his perception with euphuisms and mythology which require scholarly commentary.]

Шекспира как свои, не мучая свою память, язык и дыхание и не терзая уши зрителей книжной тяжестью стиха.<sup>73</sup>

In articles she published on the translation of Shakespeare, Radlova argued that because the Soviets have such a great respect for the cultural value of the past, the utmost accuracy is demanded from translations of the classics, in terms of both content and form. Once again, she berated translators of the past, like Veinberg, who had not followed Shakespeare's form and rhythm. For Radlova, perhaps because of her sensitivity to poetry, verse needed to be translated as verse, and prose as prose.

Переводчики очень часто рифмы не переводят, а иногда переводит рифмованным стихом то, что у Шекспира написано белым. То же происходит и с прозой, которую чаще всего сокращают, а нередко переводят стихами все это – лишь беглый перечень тех свойств старых переводов, которые делают их не только устарелыми, но по существу неверными, неточными и несценичными.<sup>74</sup>

Whilst most critics were in agreement with Radlova that the handling of Shakespeare's verse by the nineteenth century translators could be greatly improved, as will be demonstrated in a later section of this chapter, it was Radlova's devotion to reproducing the exact structure of Shakespeare's texts which was to generate some of the strongest criticism of her work.

In spite of her demands for accuracy, however, Radlova also criticised those commentators who appear to have gone through her translation line by line, analysing her translation choices for each individual word. She argued that literal, word for word translation was only possible for works of prose, and not

<sup>73</sup> Anna Radlova, 'O perevode' in *Leningradskii Gosudarstvennyi teatr pod rukovodstvom S. E. Radlova – "Gamlet"*, 1938, pp.23-30, p.24. [I wanted the work of an actor delivering my text to be enjoyable and easy, so that, getting accustomed to the character, he can pronounce the words of Shakespeare like his own, not taxing his memory, and so that his language and breathing do not tear the ears of the audience to pieces with the bookish heaviness of the verse.]

<sup>74</sup> Radlova, 'Kipiachennyi dukh', p.3. [The translators frequently do not translate rhymes, and sometimes translate in rhyming verse where Shakespeare's verse is blank. This also happens with prose, which is mostly shortened and frequently translated in verse. This is just a cursory list of those characteristics of the old translations which make them not only out-dated, but in essence incorrect, inaccurate and unstageable.]

poetry. A translator, she argued, should always strive to convey the overall meaning of a piece, and not become too constricted by the need to translate every single word, as some loss in translation was always inevitable. 'Всякий перевод, а особенно стихотворный, связан с жертвой – важно лишь жертвовать наименее существенным ради главного.'<sup>75</sup> In order to deduce which elements should be preserved and which sacrificed, Radlova argued that a translator working on any one of the plays should have a thorough knowledge of all of his works.<sup>76</sup> For Radlova, the elements of Shakespeare's work which were of primary importance were the poetic and theatrical essence of his work. Importantly, given the political climate in which she was working, however, she also argued for the preservation of the social core of his writing. 'Это главное - поэтическая и социальная сущность Шекспира и его театральная специфика.'<sup>77</sup>

Viewed in the light of modern theory, Radlova's principles of translation indicate that her approach was largely a target-centred one. Her focus was on creating a text which her audiences and readers could easily understand while her concern for the actors who were to perform her translation also suggests that she took care to consider the function which her text was to have in the target society. Given the prevalence of Bourdieu's theoretical concepts in the field of translation studies in recent years, however, it also seems circumspect to reflect on how the social situation in which the Radlovs were working may have shaped their concepts of Shakespeare and translation. Chapter 2 explained how Stalin had called on writers to become the 'engineers of human souls'. Culture needed to educate and inform the working people, and Radlova's desire to create an "accessible" Shakespeare would seem to fulfil that requirement. Her views regarding the role of translator as a mouthpiece for the greats of foreign literature correspond neatly with Zhdanov's statements on the proletariat being

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<sup>75</sup> Radlova, 'O roli i otvetstvennosti perevodchika', p.4. [Every translation, especially of verse, is connected with sacrifice, but it is important to only sacrifice the least essential elements in favour of the most important ones.]

<sup>76</sup> Radlova, 'Perevody Shekspira', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 4 December 1935, p.4.

<sup>77</sup> Radlova 'O roli i otvetstvennosti perevodchika', p.4 [This is the most important – the poetic and social essence of Shakespeare and his theatrical specificity.]

the heir to the treasures of world literature. Brisset's argument regarding the role played by the translator in the construction of a text from a particular ideological standpoint is important here: whether consciously or unconsciously, Radlova is arguing for socialist realist principles in the translation of Shakespeare.

From the personal letters stored in the Radlovs' archive, it is clear that the couple discussed their work on Shakespeare. In a letter to her husband dated 9 August 1929, Radlova describes the difficulties she is having in starting her translation of *Othello*, stating that she has spent one and half hours working on the first seven lines.<sup>78</sup> In later letters, Radlov describes to his wife how the productions he is working on are progressing.<sup>79</sup> However, it is difficult to discern whether the couple reached joint conclusions on an approach to Shakespeare and then translated and directed accordingly, or whether one partner's methodology may have shaped the other. Nevertheless, it is clear that many of their principles were extremely similar, and that their individual projects complemented each other. As Valerii Gaidabura notes, working on Shakespeare seems to have been central to their life together. 'Радлова имела право считать, что её союз с мужем скреплен Шекспиром.'<sup>80</sup>

### 3.5 Sergei Radlov: A Director's Approach to Shakespeare

Throughout the 1920s, Soviet theatre practitioners worked to understand the demands which the Revolution had placed upon them, experimenting with new approaches to theatre. As discussed in Chapter 2, the theatre now assumed a central part in Soviet cultural life, and was an important means of education for the millions of working people coming to terms with the complexities of their new political situation. In order to ensure that their work fulfilled this new function, directors considered it important to 'use a language comprehensible to

<sup>78</sup> A. D. Radlova, 'Pis'ma i telegrammy Sergeiu Ernestovichu Radlovu' (29 January 1929 - 30 August 1930), RNB, f.625, d.484.

<sup>79</sup> S. E. Radlov, 'Pis'ma, telegrammy i fototelegrammy Anne Dmitrievne Radlovoi' (1935-1936), RNB, f.625, d.681.

<sup>80</sup> Valerii Gaidabura, 'Tak rasskazhi pravdivo...', *Sovetskaia kul'tura*, 100 (1989), p.6. [Radlova had the right to believe that her union with her husband was fastened by Shakespeare.]

all',<sup>81</sup> and so many more popular forms of entertainment were incorporated. As with Radlov's Theatre of Popular Comedy, 'the theatre was "music-hallized", "circusized" and "cinematographized"'.<sup>82</sup> In spite of the apparent freedom of this experimental phase, however, there was also an increasing awareness of the importance of approval from those in authority. Founded in 1923, the Main Repertory Committee (Glavrepertkom) became an increasingly impeding presence. No play could be performed without the committee's permission, and the zealous nature of their officials meant that even plays which had been approved previously were often re-checked during rehearsals and banned until further censorial demands were met. This vehement attention to duty caused frequent delays in the staging of new productions.<sup>83</sup> As noted in Chapter 2, with Stalin's rise to power, censorship of Soviet culture became even more stringent.

Following the closure of the theatre of Popular Comedy, Radlov gradually established himself as one of the most prominent directors of the 1920s and 1930s. He founded several of his own workshops and theatres, but was also invited to direct at and manage State theatres such as the former Alexandrinskii in St Petersburg and the Malyi Theatre in Moscow. He also taught for many years at the College of Stage Arts. He received several honours for his theatre work throughout his career, including the Order of the Red Banner in 1939. Aside from his dramatic productions, Radlov also directed operettas, operas and ballets, most notably working with Prokofiev on his version of *Romeo and Juliet*. He was appointed Chief Artistic Manager of the Leningrad Academic Opera and Ballet theatre in 1931.

Radlov's first Shakespearean production, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, was to be his only venture into Shakespeare's comedies, as from this point on, he only ever staged the tragedies. He went on to present several different productions of *Othello* in 1927, 1932 and 1935; *Romeo and Juliet* in 1934; *King Lear* at the State Jewish Theatre (GOSET) in 1935; and *Hamlet* in 1938. Shakespeare was always to

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<sup>81</sup> Rudnitsky, p.56.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, p.91.

<sup>83</sup> Ermolaev, p.7.

be central to his company's repertoire, but it was *Othello* which seems to have been of primary importance to the director himself: 'Постановка этой пьесы была моей заветной мечтой.'<sup>84</sup>

Just as his wife had an excellent knowledge of the translation history of Shakespeare in Russia, and asserted that a translator of his plays should have an understanding of all of his works, Radlov had an extremely thorough knowledge of life in Shakespearean England, and of Elizabethan/Jacobean theatre. He argued that an understanding of the time from which the plays had originated was essential for ensuring that the true spirit of classic plays could be portrayed on the Soviet stage: 'Подлинно-советский постановщик классики непременно должен знать и чувствовать эпоху, когда возникла пьеса, которую он ставит, знать и чувствовать свою собственную эпоху, когда он ставит это произведение.'<sup>85</sup> For Radlov, Shakespeare's England was a place of great discovery; he speaks at length on the exploits of several different explorers, but also significant tension and danger, with the heads of executed criminals always prominently displayed, and threats of invasion such as the Spanish Armada.<sup>86</sup> This identification and portrayal of the conflict and apprehension in Shakespeare's world may have allowed Radlov to connect his productions with the tensions in the Soviet world more clearly, so that his work had greater resonance for his audiences.

In addition to an understanding of the era in which Shakespeare was writing, Radlov also argued the importance of remembering for whom Shakespeare created his plays, the ordinary Englishman, and for whom his own productions were intended. Very much in keeping with the ideals of socialist realism, he argued for the importance of making the classics accessible to working people. He wanted his productions to reflect what he saw as the "original" Shakespeare

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<sup>84</sup> Sergei Radlov, 'Kak ia stavlu Shekspira', in *Nasha rabota nad klassikami*, ed. A. A. Gvozdev (Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1936), pp.11-70, p.18. [A production of this play was my cherished dream.]

<sup>85</sup> Ibid, p.15. [A genuinely-Soviet director of the classics certainly must know and feel the era when the play which he is putting on came into existence, just as he knows and feels his own time when he stages the production.]

<sup>86</sup> Sergei Radlov, 'Voin li Otello', *Literaturnyi kritik*, 3 (1936), 110-117.

and for the workers in the audience to be able to understand it. 'Если сегодня рабочий зритель придет в театр, на афише которого стоит имя Шекспира, то его прежде всего интересует и он имеет право интересоваться тем, чтобы ему был показан Шекспир, не сверхиндивидуальная, сверхоригинальная трактовка данной пьесы'.<sup>87</sup> This was a principle which was certainly shared by his wife. However, Radlov also intended his words here as a criticism of directors such as Meierkhol'd, who perhaps offered more strikingly individual interpretations of classic plays. This difference of opinion will be further explored in Chapter 5.

Radlov viewed Shakespeare's language as an essential element in his productions, describing it as a fact of theatre in its own right.<sup>88</sup> The quality of the translation was therefore very important and he considered a good translation essential for any successful production. In agreement with his wife, Radlov believed that the translations from the nineteenth century were no longer sufficient, and he counted the eradication of some of the coarser aspects of Shakespeare's text as one of the major faults of the old translations:

Очень дурную и лицемерную сдержанность проявляли переводчики XIX века, вытравливая грубоватую простонародность в песенке Барвары, которую поёт Дездемона, или в безумных песнях Офелии. [...] Только теперь, когда мы имеем в своих руках гораздо более точные по смыслу и близкие по духу переводы, прежде всего М. Кузмина, М. Лозинского и А. Радловы, мы можем значительно ближе подойти в наших постановках к подлинному духу Шекспира.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> S.E. Radlov, 'Shekspir i sovremennost'', speech given to the *Tea-klub* (Theatre Club), 10 October 1933. Bakhrushin Theatre Museum Library, p.2. [If a working spectator comes to the theatre today, on the bill of which is the name of Shakespeare, then above all he is interested, and has the right to be interested in the fact that he has been shown Shakespeare, not a highly-individual, highly-original version of the given play.]

<sup>88</sup> Sergei Radlov, 'Rabota nad Shekspirom', *Teatr*, 4 (1939), 61-69 (p.67).

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. [The very bad and hypocritical restraint shown by the translators of the nineteenth century, destroying the somewhat coarse, common touch in Barbary's song, which Desdemona sings, or in the mad songs of Ophelia. [...] Only now, when we have in our hands the translations which are much more accurate in sense and closer in spirit, first and foremost of M. Kuzmin, M. Lozinskii and Anna Radlova, we can get considerably closer in our productions to the original spirit of Shakespeare.]



Radlov saw a modern translation as one of the key elements needed for a production to really engage the Soviet audience, and to move away from the romanticised ideals of the previous century. Like Radlova, he often spoke of fighting to preserve the true spirit of Shakespeare. ‘Здесь очень характерна попытка начать борьбу со слишком серьезным, сликом академическим и философским восприятием произведений Шекспира.’<sup>90</sup>

As already acknowledged, it is difficult to deduce whether the Radlovs worked together to form their interpretations of Shakespeare, or whether one partner had the greater influence on the other. Nevertheless, it is clear that their principles were exceedingly similar. Following Radlov’s defence of his wife’s work at the 1939 All-Union Theatre Society Shakespeare Conference, one commentator remarked that his justification of her concept of Shakespeare was hardly surprising, given that Radlov’s own concept was very much the same: ‘Признав тождественность его концепции в понимании Шекспира с концепцией А. Д. Радловой, он защищал не столько Радлову, сколько эти концепции.’<sup>91</sup> The Radlovs’ Shakespearean philosophy fitted comfortably within the boundaries of socialist realism, which should have enabled their work to enjoy considerable success.

### **3.6 Translation Principles: Further Controversy**

The discussion surrounding Anna Radlova’s translations which followed their performance in Radlov’s 1935 productions was not the end of the controversy. As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, in 1939, Kornei Chukovskii, having worked on a study of the different methods which had been used to translate Shakespeare over the years, was moved to write and present a reading from his forthcoming book on literary translation at the All-Union Theatre Society Shakespeare Conference. In addition to his reading at the conference,

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p.19. [Here is a very typical attempt to begin the fight against a perception of Shakespeare’s works which is too serious, too academic and too philosophical.]

<sup>91</sup> Tomashevskii, p.145. [Recognising the identity of his concept of understanding Shakespeare with the concept of A. D. Radlova, he defended not so much Radlova, as the concept itself.]

Chukovskii supplemented his polemic with the publication of several articles in prominent journals such as *Pravda* and *Teatr*, and questioned why Radlova's translations still seemed to be receiving preferential treatment from publishing houses and theatres across the Soviet Union.

Уже десять лет Анна Радлова переводит Шекспира. Это принесло ей немалую славу. Когда она перевела «Отелло» и «Ричард III», журналы празднично поздравили читателей. «Литературная энциклопедия» в восторге от этих переводов. «Шедевры переводческой работы» - громко восхищается она. Между тем стоит только бегло взглянуть на эти «шедевры», и всякому станет ясно, что они не передают ни поэтичности шекспировских стихов, ни их красоты.<sup>92</sup>

Much of Chukovskii's criticism focused on Radlova's translation of *Othello*, and many of the specific points which he makes regarding this text will be addressed in Chapter 4. However, he felt that many of the problems in Radlova's translation were endemic of the style prominent in the 1920s and 1930s which accorded highest priority to the principle of equilinearity (maintaining exactly the same number of lines in the target text as there are in the source). As stated, Chukovskii included a discussion of this phenomenon in the chapter on the translation of Shakespeare in his book on literary translation, *Vysokoe iskusstvo: Printsipy khudozhestvennogo perevoda* (*A High Art: Principles of Artistic Translation*), which was first published in 1941, with further editions in 1964 and 1966. He describes how this new rigid devotion to form came about as a reaction by a fresh generation of translators against the many liberties which nineteenth century translators had taken with Shakespeare's verse forms. Chukovskii refers to this method as "scientific" translation. 'Научность, по их убеждению,

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<sup>92</sup> Kornei Chukovskii, 'Iskalechennyi Shekspir', *Pravda*, 25 November 1939. RGALI, f.2861, op.1, d.215, ll.13-14. [It is already ten years since Anna Radlova began translating Shakespeare. This has brought her considerable fame. When she translated *Othello* and *Richard III*, the papers hailed their readers in celebration. *The Literary Encyclopaedia* was in raptures over these translations, admiringly proclaiming them as "masterpieces of translation." Meanwhile, one only has to take a cursory glance at the "masterpieces", and it will become clear to anyone that they translate neither the poetry of Shakespeare's lines, nor their beauty.]

заклучалась в объективном учёте всех формальных элементов переводимого текста, которые переводчик обязан воспроизвести с педантической точностью.<sup>93</sup> He argues that whilst close consideration of a source text's structural form can be valuable in some instances, if the policy is applied indiscriminately throughout a translation, it can be to the detriment of many other important aspects of a writer's original style.<sup>94</sup> As noted in Chapter 2, Mikhail Lozinskii was also a translator who often followed the scientific method. However, Chukovskii's criticism of Lozinskii is nowhere near as harsh, stating that if devotion to equilinearity causes problems for such a skilful translator as Lozinskii, then there is not much that can be said for the other translators who apply this policy.

Chukovskii's attacks on Radlova's work were so severe that she lodged a complaint with the Writers' Union.<sup>95</sup> Interestingly, however, she does later appear to revise her opinion on equilinearity. In a speech given at the Shakespeare conference in April 1939, she states that it was in fact the editors of the anthology commissioned in 1929 who insisted on the restrictions of equilinearity. 'Когда мы начали переводить Шекспира, Лозинский, Кузьмин и я, то мы были очень стеснены чисто формальными заданиями, которые были даны нам тогдашней редакцией Гослитиздата. Это было требование соответственного количества строчек.'<sup>96</sup> She maintains that she allowed herself more freedom in her later translations. Comparing her working methods for her translation of *Hamlet* as opposed to her earlier work, Radlova stated that whilst remaining as close to the source text as possible was important; she no longer regarded an equal number of lines as the highest priority: '[Я] не делаю

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<sup>93</sup> Kornei Chukovskii, *Vysokoe iskusstvo: Printsipy khudozhestvennogo perevoda* (Moscow: Avalon "Azбука Klassika", 2011), pp.244-245. Lauren G. Leighton provides the following translation: 'According to their convictions, a scientific translation consisted of an objective regard for all the formal elements of an original text, which the translator is obliged to reproduce with pedantic precision.' In *Kornei Chukovsky's A High Art*, trans. by Lauren G. Leighton (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), pp.174.175 .

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid*, p.257.

<sup>95</sup> RGALI, f.2861, op.1, d.215, ll.13-21.

<sup>96</sup> Morozov, *Shekspir – Biulleten' No. 1 Kabineta Shekspira i zapadno-evropeiskoi klassikov, Vserossiiskogo Teatral'nogo Obshchestva*, pp.22-23. [When we started to translate Shakespeare, Lozinskii, Kuzmin and I, we were very constrained by the purely formal tasks which were given to us by the then editor, Goslitizdat. There was a demand for a corresponding number of lines.]

из неё для себя фетиш, как делала в моих двух первых переводах («Отелло» и «Ромео»), когда подчинялась эквилинеарности как непреложному закону.<sup>97</sup>

Chukovskii's description of the "scientific" method of translation as a response to the styles which had come before it is in agreement with the identification made in Chapter 2 regarding the trends of free and literal translation style which appear to have followed each other in a cyclical fashion throughout the history of the translation of Shakespeare in Russia. By the end of the 1930s, it did seem as though Anna Radlova's style of translation was losing its popularity. Although Radlova's last translation from Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, had been used in her husband's 1938 production at his Studio Theatre, according to Evgenii Pasternak, her translation had in fact been specially commissioned by the Moscow Art Theatre. In spite of this agreement, however, after hearing Boris Pasternak read the first two acts of his new translation of the play, in 1939 Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko apparently tore up the contract he had established with Radlova, and wrote to her explaining the reasons for his decision for wanting to use Boris Pasternak's translation instead:

Перевод этот исключительный по поэтическим качествам, это, несомненно, событие в литературе. И художественный театр, работающий свои спектакли на многие годы, не мог пройти мимо такого выдающегося перевода «Гамлета»... Ваш перевод я продолжаю считать хорошим, но раз появился перевод исключительный, МХАТ должен принять его.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>97</sup> Anna Radlova 'O perevode' in *Leningradskii Gosydarstvennyi teatr p/r zasl. art. S. E. Radlova – Gamlet* (Leningrad: Leningradskii Gosydarstvennyi teatr p/r zasl. art. S. E. Radlova, 1938), pp.22-30, p.26. [I did not make it an obsession as I had done in my first two translations (*Othello* and *Romeo*), when I was subordinate to equilinearity like an indisputable law.]

<sup>98</sup> Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko, quoted in Evgenii Pasternak, *Boris Pasternak: Materialy dlia biografii* (Moscow: Sovietskii Pisatel', 1989) p.541. Michael Duncan provides the following translation: 'His translation is exceptional in its poetic quality and is, undoubtedly, an event in literature. Nor could the Arts Theatre, which has been responsible for its own productions for many years past, afford to pass over such an outstanding rendering of *Hamlet*... I continue to consider your translation a good one, but with such an exceptional translation becoming available the Arts Theatre had to accept the latter.' Evgeny Pasternak, *Boris Pasternak: The Tragic Years 1930-60*, trans. by Michael Duncan (London: Collins Harvill, 1990), p.116.

It seems that there was now a desire for a freer, more poetic style of translation, less concerned with preserving the exact structure of the source text. It could be argued that it was simply Pasternak's greater literary talents which were responsible for the fall in the popularity of Radlova's translations, though Chukovskii's reputation as the most prominent of Russian experts on translation, and the fact his book, with its critical chapter on Radlova's work, became a seminal text on Russian literary translation, cannot have helped Radlova's cause. However the tragic fate which was to befall the Radlovs following the outbreak of war must also be taken into consideration when analysing why the work of the Radlovs is now largely overlooked.

### 3.7 The Radlovs' Final Years

The Leningrad Soviet Theatre (or Lensovet, as Radlov's theatre was now known), continued working throughout the Second World War and the Leningrad Blockade. Productions of foreign classics were still performed, such as further stagings of *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*, Alexandre Dumas' *La Dame aux Camélias* (*The Lady of the Camellias*) and Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband*. There was, however, some danger in too much internationalism, so Russian classics were also included in the repertoire, with a production of Ostrovskii's *Bespridannitsa* (*Without a Dowry*). The company was often praised by the press for never closing their theatre, and for visiting army units and hospitals and giving performances in air-raid shelters.<sup>99</sup> Radlov frequently found himself taking on acting roles when his actors became incapacitated through hunger and illness, whilst Radlova continued to help with the training of troupe members.<sup>100</sup>

On orders from Moscow, the Lensovet Theatre was evacuated to Piatigorsk in March 1942. The company received a warm welcome in the city and initially established a successful repertoire. Zolotnitsky notes that 'Radlov's actors took an active part in the public life of the citizens of Pyatigorsk' and that they

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<sup>99</sup> Zolotnitsky, p.193.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid, p.199.

‘transformed theatrical life’ within the city.<sup>101</sup> However, in August 1942, rumours began to circulate that the Germans were soon to invade the city. There were still routes out available, and some members of the theatre company were able to escape, but the Radlovs were prevented from leaving due to Radlova’s poor health; she had recently suffered a severe heart attack. On the night of 9<sup>th</sup> August 1942, the Germans entered the city.<sup>102</sup> As Muller Cooke describes, ‘[t]hereafter began a nightmarish odyssey which took the Radlovs from one occupied territory to another.’<sup>103</sup> Their company performed in enemy prisoner-of-war camps in Southern Ukraine, Berlin and Paris. According to Gaidabura, some of Radlov’s ancestors had been German immigrants, and for this reason, the Nazis had offered Radlov German citizenship. Radlov declined the offer, stating that he would die a Russian: ‘Он ответил им, что умрет русским, любящим Родину.’<sup>104</sup>

The Radlovs’ son, Dmitrii, still lived in Russia, and at the end of the war the Radlovs willingly chose to return to their homeland. However, as Gaidabura describes, since their detention behind enemy lines, rumours regarding the Radlovs’ true loyalties had begun to circulate. ‘Отсутствие достоверной информации, особенно в военное время, порождает слухи, домыслы, извращенные толкования фактов.’<sup>105</sup> The Radlovs were met from the plane by

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid, p.200.

<sup>102</sup> Zolotnitsky, pp.201-202.

<sup>103</sup> Muller Cooke, ‘Radlova, Anna Dmitrievna’, p.525.

<sup>104</sup> Valerii Gaidabura, ‘Tak rasskazhi pravdivo...’, *Sovetskaia kul’tura*, 100 (1989), p.6. [He told them that he would die a Russian, who loved the Motherland.]

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. [The lack of reliable information, especially during wartime, gave rise to speculation, conjecture, and a distorted interpretation of the facts.]

According to Gaidabura, accusations that the Radlovs were traitors continued long after their rehabilitation. In particular, he notes the account of the dramatist Dmitrii Shcheglov, who in 1965, published a book, *Upolnomochennyi voennogo soveta (The Deputy of the Military Council)*, about his work interrogating people during the war. Shcheglov asserted that one former member of Radlov’s company had described how Radlov had deliberately kept his company behind in Piatigorsk, in order that they could then go and work in Nazi Germany. Gaidabura demonstrates that accounts from other members of Radlov’s company completely disprove this theory, and that Shcheglov’s rather fictional account should be viewed as a kind of revenge on Radlov for criticism which the director made of his work before the war. However, he also suggests that even by 1970, Radlov remained an extremely controversial figure. In that year, the Ukrainian dramatist Nikolai Makarenko published a book, *Dve zimy nadezhdy (Two Winters of Hope)* about the artists who continued performing in occupied territories. Makarenko initially planned to include a chapter on Radlov, but the editors of his Kiev publishing house decided that it was too

the authorities, and taken directly to the Lubianka. 'Как непатриотов Сергея Эрнестовича и Анну Дмитриевну Радловых судили в 1945 году, приговорив к девяти годом лагеря.'<sup>106</sup> They were sent to a camp near Shcherbakov, in the Iaroslavslavl' region, but were treated with rare generosity by not being separated 'неизвестно каким чудом, по чьему милосердию она оказалось с мужем в одном лагере, рядом'.<sup>107</sup>

The couple bravely continued with their work in the camp, establishing a company of actor-prisoners called the "Jazz" theatre. Their repertoire comprised works from Radlov's past, including *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello*, and as several famous dancers were also prisoners, ballet was also performed.<sup>108</sup>

Devotion to their theatrical work could not protect them from the harsh realities of camp life, however, and Anna Radlova suffered with kidney disease and further heart problems. She died, after three and half years of imprisonment, in February 1949. Radlov survived his term and was released from the camp in 1953, and rehabilitated a year later. Rather than returning to Leningrad, however, he relocated to Latvia, first to the town of Daugavils, and then the capital, Riga. He continued to work in the theatre, initially working as a producer, and then a director, staging further productions of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet*. He died on 27 October 1958.

For Zolotnitsky, '[t]he Soviet theatre knew no greater devotion to Shakespeare',<sup>109</sup> and it seems that Radlov's dedication remained with him until the end. Perhaps reflecting the injustices which he, his wife and so many other members of his generation had suffered through rumour and unfaithful reporting, his epitaph in the Riga cemetery is taken from the final scene of *Hamlet*:

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dangerous to print it. [Nikolai Makarenko, *Dve zimy nadezhdy* (Kiev: Radians'kii pis'mennik, 1970)].

<sup>106</sup> Ibid. [The Radlovs were tried as traitors {literally non-patriots} in 1945, and sentenced to nine years in a labour camp.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. [thanks to mercy as unheard of as a miracle, she found herself together in the same camp as her husband.]

<sup>108</sup> Zolotnitsky, p.224. Zolotnitsky refers to an article written by Radlov's grandson and namesake, Sergei Radlov, about his grandfather's theatre work in the Shcherbakov camp, entitled 'Jazz – The Theatre of the People's Enemies.'

<sup>109</sup> Zolotnitsky, p.243.

Пусть будет так. Горацио, я мертв.  
 А ты живешь - так Расскажи правдиво  
 Все обо мне и о моих делах  
 Всем, кто захочет знать.

Naturally, Shakespeare's words are inscribed in the translation of Anna Radlova.<sup>110</sup>

Viewed with the benefit of the translation theory which has since been developed, it is clear that the debates in the 1930s centred on issues which have always been central to the discipline of translation studies. The question of equivalence in translation, and which elements of a literary source text should be given first priority when creating the target text still occupy the minds of translators and scholars today. Radlova was one of the first translators to attempt a new style of translation for the Soviet period, and in collaboration with her husband, it can be argued that she succeeded in bringing a modernised Shakespeare to many of the Soviet people. Chapter 2 noted the cycle of literal and then free translation which has been rotating throughout the history of Shakespeare in Russia. The debate her translations generated may have been partly responsible for the production of the freer renderings of Shakespeare which followed her translations, such as those by Boris Pasternak. The style of these translations has also now been questioned, as it can be argued that they represent more about the translator than they do about the original text.

However, it does seem apparent that Anna Radlova suffered a certain amount of victimisation, firstly in the attacks on her poetry and then in the reaction to her translations. The evidence in memoirs does suggest a degree of animosity towards her, which was possibly of her own making, given the supposed difficulties caused by the "rivalry" with Anna Akhmatova. Chukovskii's criticism also appears to be quite personal in places, particularly when he refers to

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<sup>110</sup> Gaidabura, p.6. The lines from Shakespeare read: 'But let it be. – Horatio, I am dead;|Thou liv'st; report me and my cause aright|To the unsatisfied.' V. 2. 320-322). William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, New Swan Shakespeare Advanced Series, ed. by Bernard Lott (Harlow: Longman Group, 1968).



Radlova's apparent mobilisation of the majority of theatre critics against those who dared to criticise her work in 1935.<sup>111</sup> The final fate of the Radlovs seems to demonstrate that the old divisions and rivalries within the former intelligentsia still ran deep.

The creative partnership which the Radlovs established enabled them to contribute productions of Shakespeare to the Soviet repertoire which fitted with the political ideals of the time, whilst still remaining close to what they saw as the 'original spirit' of Shakespeare. Using *Othello* as a case study, the following analysis of Radlova's translation and the performances in which it featured will shed further light on how their working relationship affected translation and directorial decisions, and which elements of the text they focused on in order to achieve political approval.

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<sup>111</sup> Chukovskii, *Vysokoe iskusstvo*, pp.202-3.

# Chapter 4: A Comparative Analysis of Anna Radlova's Translation of *Othello*

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## 4.1 Introduction

In 1929, the Leningrad State publishing house (LENGIZ)<sup>1</sup>, commissioned Anna Radlova to produce a new translation of *Othello*, which was to be included in a new collected edition of Shakespeare's works. Only four new translations were commissioned for this collection, the majority of the plays being represented by older, existing translations. The other new translations to be included were *King Lear* by Mikhail Kuz'min, *Macbeth* by Solov'ev, and *Hamlet* by Mikhail Lozinskii. For Radlova, these new additions to the volume presented an opportunity to demonstrate how the translation of Shakespeare should now be undertaken in the new Soviet era.<sup>2</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2, the early 1930s witnessed a resurgence in Shakespeare's popularity, and the new translations in this collected volume represented the first step in the re-shaping of translation principles for Shakespeare in the Stalinist period.

The contextual analysis in Chapter 2 demonstrated the ways in which aspects of translation theory can be used to evaluate the history of Shakespeare in Russia: how translations first entered the Russian cultural sphere, the developments in translation style over time, and to what extent the history of Shakespeare in Russia has been shaped by the political changes which have occurred. Chapter 3 then provided a more personal and social context, with further detail on the environment in which Anna Radlova was translating, and its influence on her work. The aim of this chapter is now to present an analysis of her translation of *Othello*, in order to explore what effect these

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<sup>1</sup> Leningradskii gosudarstvennyi izdatel'stvo (Leningrad State Publishing house), known as Ленгиз (LENGIZ) from 1924 to 1933.

<sup>2</sup> Anna Radlova, 'Kak ia pabotaiu nad perevodom Shekspira', *Literaturnyi sovremennik*, 3 (1934), 138-145, p.139.

developments in style had on actual translation decisions, and whether it is possible to perceive the constraints imposed by the social situation in which a translator is working in their choices within the text. Over the course of the analysis, the chapter will demonstrate the ways in which modern translation theory can be used to assess translation decisions. The theory will be applied in order to evaluate whether her work is significantly different from the translations which came before and after her version, and whether or not her tactics led to the production of a more acceptable translation of the play for audiences in the Stalinist period. Conversely, this chapter will also offer an assessment of the limitations of modern theory when applying it to a particular historical, and indeed, political context.

The polysystems theory of Even-Zohar provided the framework for the foregoing analysis of the historical and political influences on Shakespeare in Russia. However, as this chapter will deal exclusively with translation decisions within the text itself, other theories are arguably more appropriate for examining the translator's individual choices with regard to language, form and cultural explanation. Functionalist approaches, such as those proposed by Katharina Reiss and Christiane Nord seem appropriate for considering how far Radlova's concept of the purpose of her work influenced her translation choices. In addition to their role as the controlling factors which shape the literary polysystem which has already been discussed, Gideon Toury's work on norms in translation will also be utilised in order to examine how Radlova's translation decisions within the text differ from her predecessors and contemporaries. Finally, Lawrence Venuti's theories on the influence of both source and target cultures on translators and their target texts, his policies of domestication and foreignization, will be employed in order to explore whether any elements of Russian and Soviet culture became incorporated into Radlova's version of Shakespeare's text.

#### 4.1.1 Methodology

Rather than provide a fully annotated presentation of Radlova's translation, this chapter will instead focus on the discussion of particular topics judged to be of most significance to Radlova's translation style and working environment. Prior to commencing the analysis of Radlova's *Othello*, a close study of Shakespeare's text was made in order to identify key areas for consideration during the analysis. Contemporary reviews of Radlova's work, and her own articles on Shakespeare and translation were also consulted. Topics chosen included the presentation of characters, and whether Radlova's translation choices affect them in any way, how the translator deals with references to foreign cultures and religion, and whether her decisions on verse structures reflect those present in Shakespeare's text. The translation was also examined for any evidence of how Radlova's version of the play might have been performed. Over the course of the analysis, it became clear which of the initial questions generated enough evidence in order to become a significant topic for discussion. Nevertheless, this chapter will discuss the findings on Radlova's translation decisions for each of the key areas identified, with reference to the appropriate translation theory from those cited above. In addition, the ways in which Radlova's own views on translation manifest themselves in her work will also be examined.

The analysis of the translation was carried out by comparing Radlova's text with Shakespeare's play line by line. Her translation was then also compared with other Russian versions, in order to assess whether the decisions Radlova had taken were dramatically different from those of translators working before and after her. In order to set Radlova's work in context, the translations used for the comparative analysis were Pëtr Veinberg's version of *Othello* from 1864, which was the most popular in Russia at the time Radlova's work was first published and performed, and then two translations which were published within two decades of Radlova's *Othello*, that of Mikhail Lozinskii, an advocate of literalism, which was licensed for

performance in 1948, and Boris Pasternak's much freer translation, written in 1945, but not staged until after Stalin's death.

#### 4.1.2 The "Original" Shakespeare?

In the many speeches and articles which the Radlovs contributed to the discussions on Shakespeare in the 1920s and 1930s, they make frequent reference to the fact that their aim is to stage the "original" Shakespeare for Soviet audiences. As discussed, their intention was to present a Russian Shakespeare which was free from the pretensions imposed by nineteenth century translators. However, describing their work as a return to the "original" Shakespeare is undoubtedly a rather problematic claim, particularly in the case of *Othello*, as three different versions of the play exist. The earliest printed editions of *Othello* were the *Quarto*, published in 1622, and the version of the play which appeared in the *First Folio*, the collection of Shakespeare's plays published in 1623. A second *Quarto* was then published in 1630.

There has been much debate amongst scholars as to the relationship between the *Quarto* and *First Folio*, exactly who was involved in putting these two texts together and what accounts for the differences between them. Suggested explanations have included the argument that the omissions in the *Quarto* text are due to the fact that it was transcribed from a prompt book, and that the missing sections indicate cuts which were made to shorten the play in performance.<sup>3</sup> Other commentators have maintained that the *Quarto* was transcribed from a rather illegible and confused rough draft, or 'foul papers' as it would have been known in Shakespeare's time, and that the

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<sup>3</sup> This view was put forward by Alice Walker in the 1950s, an idea seemingly supported by the fact that the *Quarto*'s stage directions are much more comprehensive. However, this argument was later dismissed by Nevil Coghill in 1964, whose study showed that the removal of these "cut" sections would shorten the play by only eight minutes.

mistakes and omissions are simply due to scribal errors.<sup>4</sup> However, in a comprehensive study published in 1996, E. A. J. Honigmann proposed the theory that there were in fact six early versions of the play:

Shakespeare (like other dramatists of the period) wrote a first draft or 'foul papers' and also a fair copy, and that these two authorial versions were both copied by professional scribes, the scribal transcripts serving as printer's copy for both the Quarto and Folio.<sup>5</sup>

Honigmann's findings included the possible identification of one of the scribes who worked on Shakespeare's texts, and new information on the publisher of the *Quarto*. He argued that the rather complicated arrangement described above meant that many of the discrepancies between the two texts can be explained by a combination of incompetence in scribal transmission, and compositorial error and alteration, all of which were caused initially by the complexities of Shakespeare's own deteriorating handwriting.

As far as the differences between these two texts are concerned, the *Folio* has approximately one hundred and sixty more lines than the *Quarto*. Among the additions considered of most importance are Roderigo's account of Desdemona's elopement, Desdemona's Willow Song, and Emilia's speech on marital fidelity.<sup>6</sup> The *Quarto* also contains some lines which are not found in the *Folio*, though these are generally thought to be largely due to errors. However, as Honigmann describes, 'More than fifty oaths, printed by the *Quarto*, were deleted in the Folio or replaced by less offensive words.'<sup>7</sup> Editors have assumed previously that this editing was due to the 1606 "Act of Abuses", which prohibited profanity and swearing. It is now understood that some scribes also chose to omit profanity for purely 'literary' reasons, leading to the purging of all kinds of different texts, including private transcripts.

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<sup>4</sup> William Shakespeare, *Othello*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, Updated Edition, ed. Norman Sanders, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p.205.

<sup>5</sup> E. A. J. Honigmann, *The Texts of Othello and Shakespearian Revision* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p.1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p.3.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*.

Therefore, Honigmann states, '[o]n the assumption that the profanity stems from Shakespeare, modern editors revert to the *Quarto's* reading',<sup>8</sup> and restore the oaths and swear words.

The stage directions in the *Quarto* and *Folio* are similar, although those in the *Quarto* are more detailed and therefore seem more complete. Honigmann explains that the *Folio* text 'lacks many directions that one would expect from a prompt book: sound effects, stage movement and lighting are all neglected.'<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, he also notes that the directions in the *Quarto* are sometimes vague, and in places omit essential equipment, such as Desdemona's bed. Both the *Quarto* and *Folio* divide the play into acts and scenes: the *Folio* numbers acts and scenes as in modern editions, apart from the combination of two scenes, (II.2 and II.3). However, though on first appearance the *Quarto* only numbers Acts II, IV and V and only one scene, (Act II, Scene 1), all the scene changes are marked with the usual 'Exeunt', and so this text has in fact initiated the divisions which have been adopted by all subsequent versions.<sup>10</sup>

Most modern day editors base their texts on both early editions, using the evidence before them to choose what they feel to be the most likely components of Shakespeare's initial text, and there are no notable omissions or additions in Radlova's translation to suggest that she had sole access to either the *Folio* or *Quarto* edition. The Radlovs' personal archive lists Russian translations of key critical works from the British tradition of *Othello* amongst their possessions, such as the essays of A. C. Bradley and G. Wilson Knight.<sup>11</sup> The fact that they had access to critical sources such as these suggests that the Radlovs would have had full knowledge of the history of Shakespeare's text, and would therefore have been able to make editorial decisions regarding the lines used, in the same way as their British counterparts.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p.4

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> RNB, f.625, d.179.

## 4.2 Anna Radlova's *Othello*: A Functionalist Approach?

As outlined in Chapter 3, Radlova was determined that her translations of Shakespeare would enable the Soviet people to understand and appreciate his work. Though her opinions may have been shaped by the political demands of her time, Radlova's views on the translation process also bear resemblance to those of functionalist translation theorists. Radlova is advising Soviet translators of Shakespeare to ask themselves the question phrased by Katharina Reiss as 'to what end and for whom is the text translated?'<sup>12</sup>, and to keep the receivers of their text in mind at all times. Reiss argued that for a translator to take a functionalist approach towards translation, the text's function in both the source and target cultures needed to be identified and given preference in all translation decisions, in order for functional equivalence to be achieved. Reiss stated that for translation purposes texts could broadly be divided into three types: informative, (the communication of content) expressive, (the communication of artistically organised content) and operative (the communication of content with a persuasive character).<sup>13</sup> Shakespeare's plays would therefore fall into the second category.

There has in fact been much debate over whether literary texts and translations can be viewed as actually having a specific "function", but as Christiane Nord indicates, '[e]ven if a source text has been written without any particular purpose or intention, the translation is always addressed to some audience (however undefined it may be) and is thus intended to have some function for the readers.'<sup>14</sup> As far as Anna Radlova was concerned, in the articles that she wrote on translation, she made it clear that her main purpose in undertaking the translation of Shakespeare's plays was to make them accessible for all. 'И цель наша – не загромождать двери, за которыми живет Шекспир, а широко распахнуть их для миллионов,

<sup>12</sup> Katharina Reiss, 'Type, kind and individuality of text: Decision Making in Translation', in *The Translation Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp.160-171, p.170.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p.163.

<sup>14</sup> Christiane Nord, *Translating as a purposeful activity – functionalist approaches explained* (Manchester: St Jerome, 1997), p.83.



имеющих право войти.<sup>15</sup> Whilst it is perhaps problematic to argue that a translation produced more than three hundred years after its source text could claim to have the same function, by striving to make her translations easy to understand and readily performable, Radlova was, in one way at least, attempting to make her translations function in a similar way in Soviet society as they would have done in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, that is, as entertainment for everyone.

Naturally, however, Shakespeare's status in Soviet Russia as a classic writer, who was lauded by those in authority as someone to whom others ought to aspire, would also have led to a difference in function for the target text. Radlova also wanted to educate her audiences in understanding the literary genius of Shakespeare. However, in these "special cases" as Reiss describes them, when there is a difference between the original text function and the function of a translation, Reiss advises a translator to produce a target text with 'a form adequate to the "foreign function"',<sup>16</sup> and again cites the necessity of considering for whom the translation is produced. Radlova's concern for her audiences was paramount, but she also insisted that a translator of Shakespeare's plays needed to remember that they were translating primarily for the stage. 'Я думаю, что целью каждого перевода драматического произведения Шекспира, должно быть возможность не только его прочтения, но и реализация этого произведения на сцене'.<sup>17</sup> She felt that it was important that translators should not only keep in mind their intended modern Soviet audience at all times, but also the actors who would be delivering their translation. 'Основное, что должен помнить автор

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<sup>15</sup> Anna Radlova, 'O roli i otvetstvennosti perevodchika', p.4. [Our task is not to block up the doors behind which Shakespeare lives, but to throw them open wide for the millions who have the right to enter.]

<sup>16</sup> Reiss, p.170.

<sup>17</sup> Anna Radlova, 'Perevody Shekspira', p.4. [I think that the aim of every translation of a Shakespeare play should be the possibility not only that it should be read, but that it should be realised on stage.]

сценического перевода Шекспира – это то, к кому он обращается, через кого он к этому зрителю обращается.<sup>18</sup>

#### 4.2.1 'Rude am I in my speech': Translation of Form and Language

Radlova's concerns for the performance function of her translation and its accessibility for the recipients of her target text do seem to shape many of her translation decisions. She frequently chooses simpler language and explanations than are present in Shakespeare's text, making the lines easier for audiences to comprehend, and easier to deliver for the actors performing them.

Radlova employs several different strategies for simplification. Many of Shakespeare's phrases are updated, producing more modern and straightforward versions of the lines. For example, one of Roderigo's early insinuations to Iago, which begins 'Thou told'st me...'<sup>19</sup> is translated as 'Ты говорил...'.<sup>20</sup> Othello speaks of 'путешествиях моих'<sup>21</sup> in Act I, Scene 3, rather than his 'travailing history' from the source text. Desdemona's assertion in the same scene that she does not want to return to her father's house following her marriage 'I would not there reside'<sup>22</sup> becomes the simpler 'Я не хочу там жить.'<sup>23</sup>

On other occasions, Radlova's choice of translation provides an explanation of her interpretation of Shakespeare's apparent meaning, rather than a strictly

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. [The main thing for the author of a translation of Shakespeare for the stage is the audience he is addressing and those through whom he is addressing this audience.]

<sup>19</sup> William Shakespeare, *Othello* ed. by Michael Neill, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: University Press, 2006), I. 1. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Vil'iam Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi (Leningrad: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1939), <<http://www.lib.ru/SHAKESPEARE>> [accessed 27 July 2010], I.1 [you said...].

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, I. 3. [my travels]

<sup>22</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, I. 3. 240.

<sup>23</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, I. 3. [I don't want to live there]

literal, word-for-word translation. For example, in Act I, Scene 1, Brabantio's line to Iago,

BRABANTIO                    [...]and now in madness,  
    Being full of supper, and distempering draughts<sup>24</sup>

is translated as:

БРАБАНЦИО                    [...]Теперь, в безумье  
    За ужином упившись крепких вин.<sup>25</sup>

One of Othello's descriptions of his adventures in Act I Scene 3, 'Of moving accidents by flood and field',<sup>26</sup> becomes in translation: 'Опасностях на суше и на море'.<sup>27</sup>

At other points in her translation, Radlova goes even further with her explanations, replacing Shakespeare's original words with terms which she seems to have felt would be more familiar to her audience. This example is Iago's description of how he hopes Othello's feeling towards Desdemona will change:

IAGO [...] The food that to him now is as luscious as locusts shall be to him shortly as acerb as coloquintida.<sup>28</sup>

Radlova translates this description as:

ЯГО [...] которая для него сейчас сладче меда, скоро будет ему горше желчи.<sup>29</sup>

Honey ('мед') would make much more sense to a modern audience as a sweet and valued food, but it is also closely in keeping with the biblical

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<sup>24</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, I. 1. 99-100.

<sup>25</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, I. 1. [Now in madness, at supper drinking strong wine]

<sup>26</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, I. 3. 135.

<sup>27</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, I. 3. [Dangers on land and on sea]

<sup>28</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, I. 3. 41-43.

<sup>29</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, I. 3. [What is to him now as sweet as honey will soon be as bitter as bile.]

references to locusts and wild honey (Matthew 3: 4) to which Shakespeare was probably alluding.<sup>30</sup> Radlova also substitutes the much more familiar bile ('желчь') for 'coloquintida' (bitter apple).

It is important to acknowledge here that any translation of a text such as a Shakespeare play which is undertaken many years after the source was first composed will naturally involve an element of updating the language. If Radlova's translations of the lines above are compared with the nineteenth century translation of Pëtr Veinberg, and those of her contemporaries Mikhail Lozinskii and Boris Pasternak, it is clear that it is not only Radlova who has chosen to use simpler or more modern alternatives. Roderigo's line 'Thou told'st me...' (I. 1. 6) is similarly translated by Veinberg as 'Ты всегда | Мне говорил'.<sup>31</sup> Lozinskii and Pasternak choose to change the emphasis of the line slightly, opting for 'Ты клялся'<sup>32</sup> and 'Ты врал мне'<sup>33</sup> respectively. Veinberg's translation of Desdemona's line 'I would not there reside' (I. 3. 240) is identical to that of Radlova, 'Я не хочу там жить', demonstrating that even by the 1860s, translators were using more contemporary language and not necessarily trying to replicate the archaic nature of Shakespeare's text.

Radlova's explanatory translations of Shakespeare's lines are handled rather differently by the other translators. Veinberg translates 'distemp'ring draughts' more literally, as 'Напитков одуряющих',<sup>34</sup> whereas Lozinskii and Pasternak instead opt to have Brabantio simply describe Roderigo as having had far too much to eat and drink:

Lozinskii:       Раздутый ужином и пьяной влагой<sup>35</sup>

Pasternak:       Чёрт знает где напился и наелся<sup>36</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, editor's notes, p.237.

<sup>31</sup> Shekspir, *Otello, venetsianskiy mavr*, perevod Petra Veinberga, I. 1. [You always said to me]

<sup>32</sup> Vil'iam Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Mikhaila Lozinskogo, <<http://www.lib.ru/SHAKESPEARE>> [accessed 29 October 2012], I. 1. ['You swore']

<sup>33</sup> Vil'iam Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Borisa Pasternaka, in *Tragedii* (Moscow: Eksmo, 2010), pp.331-492, I. 1. [You lied to me]

<sup>34</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Petra Veinberga, I. 1. [Intoxicating drinks]

<sup>35</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Mikhaila Lozinskogo, I, 1. [Bloated with supper and intoxicating liquid]

These comparisons demonstrate that whilst Radlova is keen to simplify Shakespeare's language for her audiences, she does not choose to stray as far from the structure of the source text as would perhaps be possible.

Radlova's decision to translate the line in the last of the examples by using completely different words from those used by Shakespeare is an approach which is also adopted by Pasternak, but not Veinberg and Lozinskii. Veinberg provides a word for word translation of this line:

ЯГО [...] которая кажется ему теперь такую же сладкою, как **саранча**, скоро сделается для него горше **колоцинтов**.<sup>37</sup>

It could perhaps be argued that a nineteenth century audience and readership may well have been more able to recognise the reference to the Bible. However, Mikhail Lozinskii also chooses to translate the word 'locusts' literally, and though he does maintain the word meaning apple, the term he uses for 'coloquintida', 'чертова яблока,' is actually an archaic term for a potato.<sup>38</sup>

ЯГО Кушанье, которое сейчас для него слаще **акрид**, вскоре станет для него горше **чертова яблока**.<sup>39</sup>

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given his greater credentials as a poet as well as a translator, it is Pasternak who deviates furthest from his source text in translation, instead choosing more familiar horticultural terms.

ЯГО То, что ему теперь кажется сладким, как **стручки**, скоро станет горше **хрена**.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Borisa Pasternaka, I. 1. [God knows where you've been drinking and gorging.]

<sup>37</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Pëtra Veinberga, I. 3. [that which seems to him now so sweet as locusts, will soon become for him more bitter than coloquintida.]

<sup>38</sup> Definition found on a number of online sources.

<[http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/dic\\_synonims/196076/чертово](http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/dic_synonims/196076/чертово)> [accessed 4 November 2012].

<sup>39</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Mikhaila Lozinskogo, I. 3. [The dish which now for him is sweeter than locusts will soon become for him bitterer than potato.]

By using the term honey, Radlova's translation does at least maintain a link to Shakespeare's original source, again demonstrating her desire to remain close to her source text, and her purpose of giving the ordinary working person access to the beauty of Shakespeare's imagery.

Whilst she may have updated Shakespeare's wording by using more contemporary language in her translation, in other aspects of her work, Radlova strove to remain as close to her source text as possible. As well as reflecting on this approach, her desire to educate people about Shakespeare's writing also demonstrates that she recognises that the text's artistic qualities need to be reflected in translation, a text of the type which Reiss would later term "expressive".

In the articles she wrote on what she viewed as the correct way to translate Shakespeare, Radlova berated previous translators for their lack of respect for Shakespeare's linear and rhythmical structures.

Переводчики очень часто рифмы не переводят, а иногда переводит рифмованным стихом то, что у Шекспира написано белым. То же происходит и с прозой, которую чаще всего сокращают, а нередко переводят стихами все это – лишь беглый перечень тех свойств старых переводов, которые делают их не только устарелыми, но по существу неверными, неточными и нещеничными.<sup>41</sup>

In contrast to the modifications made by the authors of the 'old translations', Radlova believed that adherence to Shakespeare's structure was of paramount importance. She therefore consistently translated verse sections as verse and prose as prose, maintaining the deterioration of the grandiose

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<sup>40</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Borisa Pasternaka, I. 3. [That which to him now seems sweet as seed pods will soon become bitterer than horseradish.]

<sup>41</sup> Radlova, 'Kipiachennyi dukh', p.4. [Very often, translators did not translate rhymes, and sometimes translated rhyming verse when Shakespeare had written blank verse. The same happens with prose, which more often than not is reduced, and not infrequently all translated as verse. This is only a brief list of the properties which make the old translations not only outdated, but essentially incorrect, inaccurate and unstageable.]

nature of Othello's speech when he descends into jealousy. This devotion to the maintenance of the original structure of the text denotes a marked change in Radlova's translation style from that of her predecessors, as previous translators often willingly altered their versions of Shakespeare's lines to fit with the dominant poetic styles of their day. As previously discussed in Chapter 2, Iurii Levin has noted that Veinberg frequently devoted much attention to correct versification and metrical stress in his translations. Using his translation of Othello's final monologue as an example, Levin demonstrates how Veinberg carefully altered masculine and feminine endings, with pauses observed after the second foot of each line, a structure which has very little in common with the source text: 'Но делал это независимо от оригинала, конкретное строение, которого почти не принималось в расчет.'<sup>42</sup>

In sharp contrast to Veinberg, and many of her other predecessors, Radlova is very careful to maintain the correct meter, rigidly retaining iambic pentameter wherever it appears in Shakespeare's text. She follows the same rhyme scheme as Shakespeare, ending each act with rhyming couplets:

IAGO [...]Soliciting his wife. Ay that's the way:  
Dull not device by coldness and delay.<sup>43</sup>

ЯГО [...]Ее он будет умолять. Вот **план** –  
Без промедленья выполнить **обман**.<sup>44</sup>

LODOVICO [...]Myself will straight abroad, and to the state  
This heavy act with heavy heart relate.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Levin, *Shakespeare i russkaia literatura XIX veka*, p.309. [But he did so regardless of the original fixed structure, which is hardly taken into account.]

<sup>43</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, II.3.372-373.

<sup>44</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, p. 309. [He will implore her. That's the plan - | To carry out this deception without delay.] Transliterated, the final words in each line which provide the rhyme are 'plan' and 'obman.'

<sup>45</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, V.2.365-70.

ЛОДОВИКО [...]Плыву назад, и – горестный **гонец**  
Событий страшных сообщу **конец**.<sup>46</sup>

She also carefully keeps the same rhythms and rhyme schemes in the drinking songs which feature in Act II Scene 3:

IAGO And let me the cannikin clink, clink,  
And let me the cannikin clink,  
A soldier's a man;  
O, man's life but a span -  
Why then let a soldier drink.<sup>47</sup>

ЯГО А ну-ка, стаканами – **чок-чок!**  
А ну-ка, стаканами –**чок!**  
Солдат не *дурак*.  
А жизнь что? – *пустяк*.  
Пусть выпет вояка **разок**.<sup>48</sup>

IAGO King Stephen was and a worthy peer  
His breeches cost him but a crown,  
He held them sixpence all too dear  
With that he called the tailor lown.  
He was a wight of high renown,  
And thou art but of low degree:  
'Tis pride that pulls the country down,  
Then take thy old cloak about thee.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, V. 2. [I will sail back, and – a sorrowful messenger | Report the end of these terrible events.] Transliterated, the final words in each line which provide the rhyme are 'gonets' and 'konets'.

<sup>47</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, II. 3. 63-64.

<sup>48</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, II. 3. [Come on, with your glasses – clink clink! | Come on, your glasses – clink! | A soldier's not an idiot. | But life's what? – A trifle. | Let a soldier drink once more.] Transliterated, the aa,bb,a rhyme scheme is as follows: 'chok-chok!' 'chok'; 'durak' 'pustiak'; 'razok'.

<sup>49</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, II. 3. 81-88.



ЯГО   Король Стефан был славный **пэр**,  
           Штаны за крону сшил. *Потом*,  
           Найдя, что трата свыше **мер**,  
           Портного обругал *скотом*.  
           Король Стефан – герой во *всем*,  
           А ты – ничтожейший **болван**.  
           Мы роскошь почитаем *злом*,  
           Так старенький напяль **кафтан**.<sup>50</sup>

Radlova's translation of these songs demonstrate that while she attempts to convey Shakespeare's original meaning as far as possible, at places in her translation it is the text's structure and rhythm and rhyme schemes to which she seems to devote most importance. This aspect of her working practice led to criticism from some of her contemporaries, in particular from Chukovskii, as has already been noted. In one of his commentaries on her version of *Othello*, 'Astma u Dezdemony', Chukovskii discusses the elements in her style he finds difficult to comprehend, which he describes as the 'oddities' (странности) of her translation.<sup>51</sup> As noted in Chapter 3, one of Chukovskii's major criticisms was Radlova's devotion to the method he terms "scientific translation", in particular, her policy of equilinearity. Chukovskii argued that Radlova's determination to create a translation with an equal number of lines to Shakespeare's text had a derogatory effect on all other elements in her translation. In order to achieve equilinearity, Chukovskii claimed, many other crucial elements of Shakespeare's language were discarded, destroying Shakespeare's syntax: 'когда ей представляется выбор: либо

<sup>50</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, II. 3. [King Stephen was a glorious peer, | His trousers were sewn for a crown. Then, finding that the cost was beyond measure | He called the tailor a brute. | King Stephen was a hero to everyone, | And you are a contemptible idiot | We have the luxury of honouring evil | So pull on your old coat.] Transliterated, the a,b,a,b,b,c,b,c rhyme scheme is as follows: 'per', 'potom', 'mer', 'skotom', 'vsëm', 'bolvan', 'zlom', 'kaftan'.

<sup>51</sup> Kornei Chukovskii, 'Astma u Dezdemony', *Teatr*, 2, 1940, pp.98-109.

равностроичие, либо шекспировские мысли и образы, она всегда предпочтет равностроичие.<sup>52</sup>

Chukovskii's views do not reflect those of all Radlova's contemporaries. Nevertheless, they highlight one of the many difficult decisions faced by a translator of Shakespeare as to which element of his text to give priority. Radlova herself acknowledged that loss in translation, or "жертва" (sacrifice) as she terms it, was inevitable, particularly with the translation of poetry. However, she argued that it was the translator's responsibility to decide which are the least essential elements in the writing, so that these can be sacrificed in order to preserve the more important elements. Radlova maintained that despite the fact that a translator of Shakespeare would face many "трудные места" (difficult places) within the text, these difficulties could be overcome by conveying the overall meaning of the text, and not by translating the meaning of each individual word. According to Radlova, the way to achieve this was for the translator to have a good knowledge of all of Shakespeare's works, and not only the individual play on which they were working.<sup>53</sup>

The question of which elements of a source text are essential to preserve in order to achieve an acceptable translation, or rather, what constitutes "equivalence" in translation is a debate which has been central to the discipline of translation studies since its inception. In her task of re-introducing Shakespeare to the Soviet people, Radlova seems to be driven by the competing requirements of her target text: making Shakespeare accessible yet still educational. However, she will also have been guided by what she judged to be the expectations of her audiences and readers. At certain points in the text, "трудные места", as Radlova described them, an observation of the usual translation norms is helpful in order to analyse whether Radlova's translation strategy is significantly different from that of

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p.109. [When she is presented with a choice: either equilinearity or Shakespeare's ideas and images, she always prefers equilinearity.]

<sup>53</sup> Anna Radlova, 'Perevody Shekspira', p.4.

other translators. One area where this kind of analysis would seem to be appropriate is for the translation of insults and sexual references within Shakespeare's text.

#### **4.2.2 'I cannot say "whore": Translation of Insults and Sexual References**

In his study of the censorship of Soviet literature, Herman Ermolaev notes that in the 1920s, '[t]he puritanical censorship of literary works began simultaneously with the political one and was carried out with an equal degree of vigilance.'<sup>54</sup> This 'puritanical' censorship included the discarding of swear words and curses, obscenities associated with the parts and functions of the human body related to sex, and eroticisms. Ermolaev therefore describes Soviet literature as 'essentially prudish', even in the immediate post-revolutionary period.<sup>55</sup> While *Othello* was undoubtedly the most popular of Shakespeare's plays during the 1930s and 1940s, much of the language spoken by its characters would seem to be contrary to these new expected levels of purity. In particular, Iago is singled out by Pauline Kiernan as the 'filthiest-minded character in Shakespeare.'<sup>56</sup> She posits that almost every one of his 1070 lines, the largest part in the play, contains some sort of sexual pun.

It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that with her quest to present a 'realistic' Shakespeare to Soviet audiences, the 'грубость' or coarse nature of the language used by Radlova in her translation of *Othello* generated a lot of discussion and no small amount of discomfort amongst the critics. Iosif Iuzovskii, for example, stated that it was clear that Radlova had taken the decision to remove the genteel, philosophising influence of French and German translations from her work, and return some of the physicality to the

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<sup>54</sup> Ermolaev, p.42.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, pp.44-45.

<sup>56</sup> Pauline Kiernan, *Filthy Shakespeare: Shakespeare's most outrageous sexual puns* (London: Quercus, 2006), p.120.

language of the plays: ‘Ни риторический, ораторский, адвокатский Шекспир, а вся его плоть и кровь, его мясо и мускулы’.<sup>57</sup> Whilst Iuzovskii did acknowledge that Radlova’s achievements in her translation were considerable, he also felt that Radlova, and subsequently her husband, in the direction of his production, had unfortunately taken their “realistic” Shakespeare to extremes, leading to a translation almost too graphic to be staged: ‘И если прежние переводы и постановки возвеличивали умственное третировали физическое, как низменное и Радловы справедливо реабилитируют это физическое, то нельзя допускать обратного перегибы в постановке, как Радлова в переводе.’<sup>58</sup>

The work of Gideon Toury on the norms which shape literary systems and therefore govern the translation process has already been discussed in Chapter 1. However, in addition to the “preliminary norms”, which shape decisions regarding the types of text to be translated, and how this translation is then undertaken, there are also “operational norms”, which govern translation decisions at text level. Toury depicts operational norms as ‘serving a model, in accordance with which translations come into being, whether involving the norms realized by the source text [...] plus certain modifications or purely target norms, or a particular compromise between the two.’<sup>59</sup> As outlined in Chapter 1, Toury views “translatorship” as ‘being able to play a social role.’ In order for a person to be able to fulfil the role as a translator successfully, they must therefore acquire ‘a set of norms for determining the suitability of that kind of behaviour [translation], and for manoeuvring between all the factors which may constrain it’.<sup>60</sup> In order to use Toury’s concept of the norms of translation to examine Radlova’s translation

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<sup>57</sup> Iosif Iuzovskii, ‘Na spektakle v Malom teatre’, *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 69, 15 December 1935, p.3. [Not a rhetorical, oratorical, advocatory Shakespeare, but with all his flesh and blood, his meat and muscles.]

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. [And if previous translations and productions elevated the intellectual and unfairly treated the physical as vile, and the Radlovs have rightly rehabilitated the physical, the opposite extremes to which Radlova goes in her translation should never be allowed in a production.]

<sup>59</sup> Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, p.60.

<sup>60</sup> Toury, ‘The Nature and Role of Norms in Translation’, p.198.

of the insults and sexual references within *Othello*, it seems appropriate to examine how other translators dealt with this kind of language in the play.

The word “whore” appears thirteen times in Shakespeare’s text, once used by Emilia as a verb, to “bewhore” (to call someone a whore). As already noted in Chapter 2, previous translators of the play often studiously avoided using a direct Russian equivalent of this term, considering it too offensive for the sensibilities of their audience.<sup>61</sup> Radlova’s translation choices will therefore be examined to determine whether her decisions differ significantly from those of her predecessors and contemporaries, and thus how far she went against the established “norms” for translating Shakespeare in the period when she was working.

The *Oxford Russian Dictionary*<sup>62</sup> classifies the term ‘whore’ as archaic, and gives ‘проститутка’ as the equivalent term in Russian, listing both ‘шлюха’ and ‘потаскушка’ as alternatives. Both these terms are listed as colloquialisms, with ‘шлюха’ classified as a stronger, more offensive term. Radlova chooses to use ‘шлюха’ throughout her translation, whenever it appears in the original.

OTHELLO Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore! (III.3.361).

ОТЕЛЛО Полдец, ты должен доказать, что **шлюха**  
Моя любовь

In addition to her literal translations of the term, Radlova also uses the word ‘шлюха’ to translate the term “strumpet” when it is used by Othello in some of his final lines to Desdemona in Act V Scene 2.

OTHELLO Out strumpet!—Weep’st thou for him to my face? (V.2.79)

ОТЕЛЛО Вон, **шлюха**, предо мной о нем ты плачешь?<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Smirnov, p.169.

<sup>62</sup> *Oxford Russian Dictionary*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition (Oxford: University Press, 2007).

<sup>63</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, V. 2. [Out, whore, you cry for him in front of me?]

OTHELLO      Down, strumpet! (V.2.81)  
 ОТЕЛЛО      Смерть **шлюхе!**<sup>64</sup>

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term 'whore' as 'a woman who prostitutes herself for hire, a prostitute, harlot.'<sup>65</sup> 'Strumpet' is defined as 'a debauched or unchaste woman, a harlot, a prostitute.' 'Whore' is the older of the two words, originating from the Old English *hóre*, its first recorded usage listed as 1100, whereas 'strumpet' is from Middle English, of unknown origin, and was first used in the fourteenth century. In previous scenes, Radlova treats the term "strumpet" as a slightly weaker term, and translates it using the word 'девка' (tart, but also an old fashioned term meaning simply 'girl', or 'wench').<sup>66</sup> Modern dictionaries categorise this term as colloquial slang, whereas 'шлюха' is classed as a vulgarity. Perhaps as the words above are spoken by Othello when he is on the point of killing his wife, Radlova felt justified in choosing a stronger version of the term in her translation. Nevertheless, these additional usages of the term mean that 'шлюха' appears seventeen times in Radlova's version of the play, three more instances than her source text.

When Pëtr Veinberg was translating Shakespeare in the mid-1800s, the norms established for the translation of Shakespeare would have still been influenced by the ideals of French Neoclassicism and German Romanticism. As already indicated, translators of this period therefore refrained from shocking their audiences with language to which they were unaccustomed. Consequently, in contrast to Radlova's, the word "шлюха" does not appear in Veinberg's translation. Instead, he frequently chooses milder terms to describe the women in question. For example, for the first instance of the

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, V. 2. [Death to the whore!]

<sup>65</sup> *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, eds. J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>66</sup> For example, Othello's line 'Impudent strumpet!' in Act IV, Scene 2 is translated by Radlova as 'О девка!'.

word 'whore', Veinberg's Othello asks for proof of his wife's lechery, rather than using the direct insult.

ОТЕЛЛО        Мерзавец, ты обязан  
                 Мне доказать разврат моей жены<sup>67</sup>

This kind of language may well have been viewed as fairly strong by nineteenth century audiences, but it is not as blunt or vulgar as Radlova's translation. Similarly, in Act IV, Scene 2, Othello says of Emilia's defence of Desdemona:

OTHELLO        She says enough; yet she's a simple bawd  
                 That cannot say as much. This is a subtle whore,  
                 A closet, lock and key of villainous secrets;  
                 And yet she'll kneel and pray – I have seen her do't.<sup>68</sup>

Radlova translates these lines using the equivalent term in Russian, adding further emphasis to the term by breaking Othello's lines into two sentences and providing an exclamation mark.

ОТЕЛЛО        Наговорила! Да простая сводня  
                 Сказала б столько же. Лукава, **шлюха!**  
                 Она – замок и ключ постыдных тайн.  
                 А на коленях молится, сам видел.<sup>69</sup>

Once again, Veinberg omits a direct equivalent for the word 'whore' completely, instead translating Othello's insulting description as the far more neutral term "creation".

<sup>67</sup>Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Pëtra Veinberga, III. 3. [Scoundrel, you have to prove to me my wife's depravity.]

<sup>68</sup>Shakespeare, *Othello*, IV. 2. 20-23.

<sup>69</sup>Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, IV. 2. [She talked a lot! Why she said as much as a simple bawd could. A cunning whore! [She is the lock and key to shameful secrets. |But she prays on her knees – I have seen her myself.]]

ОТЕЛЛО        В защиту ей она сказала много.  
                   Да ведь и то - она простая сводня,  
                   Так говорить умеет хорошо.  
                   О, хитрое, лукавое **творенье**,  
                   Замок и ключ гнуснейших самых тайн!  
                   А тоже ведь колени преклоняет  
                   И молится - я это видел сам!<sup>70</sup>

Even at some points in the play when the term is used as a direct insult, such as Iago's line to Emilia, 'Villainous whore!',<sup>71</sup> Veinberg does not translate the term using a word of equivalent meaning in Russian. In this instance he translates "whore" using the adjective 'мерзкая', which means loathsome or disgusting. Whilst undoubtedly insulting, and strong language for the stage of the nineteenth century, particularly when used by a husband of his wife, Veinberg refrains from using a term with any sexual implications. Radlova translates this line as 'Негоднейшая шлюха!', meaning 'Worthless whore!'.

However, in Act IV, Scene 2, Othello questions Desdemona about her supposed infidelity, asking her directly whether or not she is a "whore":

OTHELLO        What, not a whore?

In the heated dialogue in this scene, it would be extremely difficult for any translator completely to avoid using terms with a similar meaning. Therefore, at this point in the play, Veinberg translates the instances of the word 'whore' in the text by using the words 'блудница' and 'потаскушка'. Modern dictionaries now classify the word 'блудница' as obsolete, and 'потаскушка' as colloquial, though derogatory.<sup>72</sup> Writing in 1934, the editor and literary critic Aleksandr Smirnov described Veinberg's choice of 'блудница' as

<sup>70</sup>Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Pëtr Veinberg, IV. 2. [In her defence, she says a lot, |Why, but then she's a simple bawd, so can speak well. |O cunning, crafty creation, |The lock and key to the most abominable secrets! |But she also kneels |And prays – I have seen it myself!]

<sup>71</sup>Shakespeare, *Othello*, V. 2. 228.

<sup>72</sup> *Slovar' russkogo iazyka*, ed. A. P. Evgen'eva (Moscow: Russkii iazyk, 1984).



‘благочинно библейски[й]’ (decently biblical).<sup>73</sup> It does therefore seem that Radlova’s choice of the translation ‘шлюха’ represents the most vulgar language used. This level of vulgarity would perhaps have been further heightened for Radlova’s audiences if they had become accustomed to the norms established by Veinberg’s translation, which contained rather diluted versions of some of the more explicit insults in Shakespeare’s text.

Comparing Radlova’s translation to the slightly later works of her contemporaries, Lozinskii and Pasternak, it is apparent that they also use stronger terms for the word “whore” than those which Veinberg considered appropriate. This indicates that the norms which govern translation production have been updated in the seventy year gap between the translations. Nevertheless, the word ‘whore’ is handled differently by both of the other translators. The word “шлюха” appears thirteen times in Lozinskii’s translation, exactly the same number as the word ‘whore’ in the source text. He then uses Veinberg’s terms ‘блудница’ and ‘потаскушка’ for the instances of the word ‘strumpet’ in the text.

Отелло

Докажи,

Несчастный, что моя любовь - **блудница!**<sup>74</sup>

Pasternak also uses the word ‘шлюха’ in his translation:

Отелло Так ты не **шлюха?**<sup>75</sup>

However, like Lozinskii, he does opt for other terms such as ‘блудница’, and at times, like Veinberg, he chooses not to translate with an equivalent term for ‘whore’ at all, and instead describes the situation in a different way:

<sup>73</sup> Smirnov, p.169.

<sup>74</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Mikhaila Lozinskogo, III. 3. [Prove, miserable wretch, that my love’s a loose woman!]

<sup>75</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Borisa Pasternaka, IV. 2, [So you are not a whore?]

Отелло   Мерзавец, помни,  
Её позор ты должен доказать!<sup>76</sup>

Interestingly, Anna Kay France observes that many of the direct allusions to sexual activity are modified in Pasternak's translation.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, whilst both her contemporaries do choose to use stronger language than Veinberg, Radlova's consistent use of the vulgar term 'шлюха' arguably means that her translation contains the strongest language. Given her policy of updating Shakespeare for the modern age, she may have considered some of the other choices used by Veinberg too archaic, but as they are both used by Lozinskii and Pasternak, it seems they would have still been understandable for her audiences.

In addition to the direct use of the word 'whore' in the play, characters in Shakespeare's original text use many other terms which have a similar meaning. Radlova's policy of simplification and updating the language may again have meant that her translation had a more shocking effect on its audiences than that of its predecessors. In Act I, Scene 3, for example, Iago states that:

IAGO   Ere I would say I would drown myself for the love of a guinea hen, I  
          would change my humanity with a baboon.<sup>78</sup>

In Shakespeare's day, "guinea-hen" was a slang term for prostitute, so Radlova translates this word as "hussy":

ЯГО    Прежде чем сказать, что я утоплюсь от любви к **потаскушке**, я  
          обменялся бы своим человеческим достоинством с павианом.<sup>79</sup>

In contrast, by choosing to translate the word literally as 'цесарке', Veinberg may well have left his audience unaware of the term's original meaning.

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, III. 3. [Scoundrel, remember, you must prove her shame!]

<sup>77</sup> France, p.55.

<sup>78</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, I. 3. 310-12.

<sup>79</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, I.3. [Before I said that I drowned myself for the love for a hussy, I would exchange my human qualities with a baboon.]

Lozinskii and Pasternak select different options here, with Lozinskii choosing the literal alternative 'индюшка' (turkey) and Pasternak the slightly derogatory though less offensive 'юбка' ('bit of skirt'). Radlova's translation could therefore again be viewed as using more "shocking" language.

However, there are also other occasions in the play where Radlova also translates insults literally, so that she too could have obscured Shakespeare's intended meaning from the audience. The word "fitchew" in Cassio's line, "Tis such another fitchew — marry, a perfumed one!"<sup>80</sup> means "polecat" in modern English. In Shakespeare's England, polecats had a lecherous reputation, and therefore the term was commonly used as another word for prostitute.<sup>81</sup> Radlova has translated this literal meaning for her audiences, but whether for them the term would have had the same associations is unclear. 'Вот еще **хорёк!** Чорт возьми! Надушенный **хорёк!**'<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, the fact that both Pasternak and Lozinskii have also translated the term literally, as 'хорёк' suggests that either none of the translators understood Shakespeare's intended meaning here, or that the word may well have had lecherous connotations, even for a twentieth century audience. The term 'polecat' is in fact used in Chekhov's play *Uncle Vanya*. In Act 3, Astrov provocatively calls Elena a '[К]расивый, пушистый хорёк'<sup>83</sup> (a beautiful, fluffy polecat) suggesting that the term does have a double meaning in Russian, though it is rarely translated into English with any suggestion of sexual innuendo.

Similarly, in one of her replies to Cassio in the same scene, Bianca exclaims angrily 'There, give it your hobby-horse'.<sup>84</sup> This term would also have had an equivalent meaning to 'whore' for Shakespeare's audience. Radlova translates the line as, 'Нате, отдайте его вашей **кобылке!**'<sup>85</sup> keeping the equine reference, but perhaps losing some of the original spite intended by the term.

<sup>80</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, IV. 1. 141-142.

<sup>81</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. Michael Neill, Notes, p.334.

<sup>82</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, Akt IV, tsena 1. [Here's another polecat! Oh damn! A perfumed polecat!]

<sup>83</sup> A. P. Chekhov, 'Diadia Vania' in *P'esy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, Act 3, p.97. (Moscow: Drofa, 2002).

<sup>84</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, IV. 1. 148-149.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. ['Here you are, give it to your filly!]

However, the fact that Veinberg felt it necessary to translate 'hobby-horse' entirely differently, as 'кукла' (doll) suggests that Radlova's translation implies enough of the original's meaning.

Moving away from the translation of the word 'whore' and its synonyms, Radlova also chooses to use somewhat more graphic language for some of the other sexual references in the play.

OTHELLO But this denoted a foregone conclusion<sup>86</sup>

ОТЕЛЛО Он обличает бывший блуд<sup>87</sup>

The meaning of 'conclusion' here is previous copulation, and Radlova chooses to translate this sense literally, perhaps making it far plainer than Shakespeare's original wording. In contrast, both Lozinskii and Pasternak choose a translation which leaves more to the imagination.

Lozinskii: Основанный на чем-то раньше бывшем.<sup>88</sup>

Pasternak: Но в каком!<sup>89</sup>

Pasternak's re-writing here is a further example of his freer style of translation, but this comparison of the translations also indicates why Radlova's choice of language could be seen as coarser than that of her contemporaries.

The translation of a sexual reference which generated a lot of debate amongst critics concerned Radlova's rendering of Iago's callous description of what probably going on between the newly married couple to the bride's unsuspecting father, Brabantio:

IAGO [...] Even now, now, very now, an old black ram

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<sup>86</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, III. 3. 429.

<sup>87</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, III. 3. [It {Cassio's dream} reveals previous fornication]

<sup>88</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Mikhaila Lozinskogo, III. 3. [Based on something which was before]

<sup>89</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Borisa Pasternaka, III. 3. [But in what!]

Is tugging your white ewe.

Radlova translated these lines using the accepted animal husbandry term, 'to cover'.

ЯГО [...] Сейчас, сию минуту, старый черный

Баран овечку вашу **кроет**.<sup>90</sup>

However, in his review of her translation, critic Ioann Al'tman berated Radlova for deviating from the translation used by Veinberg:

ЯГО Да, в этот час, в минуту эту черный

Старик-баран в объятьях **душит** вашу

Овечку белую.<sup>91</sup>

Perhaps in a further attempt to shield his audiences from the embarrassment of a rather graphic image of copulation, Veinberg chooses to use the verb 'душить', to smother or suffocate. In Al'tman's opinion, Veinberg's choice here is extremely important, as the image which Iago describes is a premonition of what happens between Othello and Desdemona in the final act. However, this metaphor is notably absent from Shakespeare's text. Radlova had no difficulty in defending her translation. In a speech to a conference of the translators' section of the Writers' Union, she commented that she was unsure what kind of zoological textbook Al'tman could have read, or collective farm he could have visited, to have witnessed the rather monstrous event of a ram trying to suffocate a ewe.<sup>92</sup>

Neither Lozinskii nor Pasternak seem to have considered Veinberg's metaphor to be worthy of preservation. Like Radlova, Lozinskii translates 'tugging' using

<sup>90</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, l. 1. [Now, this minute, an old black|ram is covering your ewe.]

<sup>91</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Petra Veinberga, l.1. [Yes, at this hour, at this minute a black|old ram is suffocating your ewe in an embrace.]

<sup>92</sup> Radlova, 'K diskussii o postanovke "Otello" v Malom teatre', Rech' na vsesoiuznom s"ezde perevodchikov (1936), RGALI, f.614, op.1, d.264, l.1-9.

the verb 'крыть' (to cover):

ЯГО [...]Вы - здесь, а вашу белую овечку

Там **кроет** черный матерой баран.<sup>93</sup>

Pasternak, however, selects a different option. The ram in his translation becomes 'evil' rather than 'old', and he 'dishonours' the ewe:

ЯГО[...]Как раз сейчас, быть может,

Сию минуту черный **злой** баран

**Бесчестит** вашу белую овечку.<sup>94</sup>

While the meaning here remains clear, Pasternak's choice is arguably more euphemistic, and a further example of his 'modification' of some of the sexual references in the play. France argues that the cumulative effect of the changes to the allusions to sexual activities, bestiality and monstrosity is drastic. As previously indicated in Chapter 2, she maintains that the character of Iago is seriously weakened in Pasternak's hands, altering the play's messages on human nature:

The most assured and articulate spokesman for a cynical and pessimistic view of humanity is deprived of much of his persuasiveness, vitality and power. The assertion that man is drawn by his inherent sexual nature to perversion, unnaturalness, bestiality, and often his own ruin is markedly weakened. The means by which one man attains power over others, and then uses it to destroy them, becomes less credible, little more than a dramatic convention.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Mikhaila Lozinskogo, I. 1. [You're here, but over there your white ewe/ is being covered by an old black ram.]

<sup>94</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Borisa Pasternaka, I. 1. [Just now, possibly,/this minute, a black, evil ram/is dishonouring your white ewe.]

<sup>95</sup> France, pp.76-77.

France uses Pasternak's translation of some of Iago's later lines from his exchange with Brabantio as further example of his use of euphemism. The lines from Shakespeare's text are as follows:

IAGO [...] you'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse, you'll have your nephews neigh to you<sup>96</sup>

Pasternak translates these lines by describing the situation slightly differently:

ЯГО [...] вам хочется, чтоб у вашей дочери был роман с арабским жеребцом, чтобы ваши внуки ржали<sup>97</sup>

His Iago suggests that Brabantio's daughter will have a love affair with the Barbary horse, rather than referring directly to the sexual act itself. Both Lozinskii and Radlova, on the other hand, translate the lines literally, using the perfective version of the verb to cover, 'покрыть'.

In her study of another of Pasternak's translations, *Hamlet*, France observes that the sexual references, in particular with regard to the character of Ophelia, are also bowdlerized.<sup>98</sup> She argues that, as with his *Othello*, these omissions significantly alter the play in translation, specifically the theme of the spread of corruption. It is important to consider the possible effects of censorship here. Ermolaev notes that 'in the 1930s the censors greatly increased their vigilance with respect to the sexual behaviour of Communist characters'.<sup>99</sup> Communist women were not allowed to be seen as sexually aggressive. Of course, Ophelia, or Desdemona, were not strictly communist characters, but Shakespeare was a writer whom others had been instructed to emulate, so the need to conform to these ideals may explain some of Pasternak's choices. However, in response to France's criticism of Pasternak's

<sup>96</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, I. 1. 110-113.

<sup>97</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Borisa Pasternaka, I. 1 [you want your daughter to have had an affair with an Arabian stallion, so that your grandchildren neigh].

<sup>98</sup> These include her most sexually allusive song in Act IV, Scene 5, which is omitted, and much of the sexual innuendo in the conversation between Hamlet and Ophelia before the play within the play in III. 2. France, p.33.

<sup>99</sup> Ermolaev, p.65.

translation, Aoife Gallagher argues that he was simply being selective, and prioritising the elements within the play which he felt most important for his readers. 'By refusing to let corruption touch the hero and heroine, Pasternak gives his readers a lesson: it is possible to be a free individual in history, to avoid moral relativism and corruption and lead a normal life.'<sup>100</sup> Nevertheless, whatever the reasons behind Pasternak's decision to modify many of the sexual references in his translations of Shakespeare's plays, the fact that he did so further enhances the impression that Radlova uses coarser language in her translation of *Othello*, going beyond the accepted norms of her time.

Contributing to the discussion on the coarse nature of Radlova's translation, Chukovskii commented that whilst many adjectives denoting praise or love are discarded, Radlova reproduces all of the insulting adjectives with the utmost accuracy.<sup>101</sup> It could also be argued that Radlova's choices in translation occasionally make characters' lines sound harsher than in the original.

IAGO [...] and the woman hath found him already. (II.1.240-241)

Яго [...] и женщина **учуяла** его.<sup>102</sup>

'Учуять' is 'to smell out', which is far more unpleasant than the original 'found'. It fits well with the spiteful nature of Iago's speech, but makes his words seem even more callous. Similarly, in Act II Scene 3, during Iago and Cassio's bawdy discussion of Desdemona, Iago describes her as 'full of game'.<sup>103</sup> 'Game' means "amorous sport"<sup>104</sup> here. With a slight change of meaning, Radlova translates this line as 'она создана для игры', so Desdemona becomes "created" for amorous sport. Radlova's choice of translation here perhaps suggests that Desdemona has been solely created

<sup>100</sup> Gallagher, p.124.

<sup>101</sup> Chukovskii, *Astma u Dezdemony*, pp.99-100.

<sup>102</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, II. 1. [and the woman has smelled him out.]

<sup>103</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, II. 3. 19.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, editor's notes, p.261.



for men's enjoyment, rather than her participation in these activities being her own choice. Whilst Radlova does not really stray far from Shakespeare's original text in these instances, it is possible to understand why critics of her day felt that her choice of language deviated from contemporary accepted norms.

Radlova defended her decision to maintain the cruder elements of Shakespeare's language vehemently. Citing Pushkin, who once protested that his play *Boris Godunov* was not for the ears of delicate young ladies, Radlova suggested that perhaps Shakespeare was not to the taste of genteel literary critics either. She insisted that if the critics deemed it necessary to neutralise the language of Shakespeare, then the language used by contemporary poets should also be subject to copious editing. As an example of the effects of the critics' sensibilities, she proposed the alterations which she felt would be required to Vladimir Maiakovskii's poem *Vo ves' golos'* (At the top of my voice). In Radlova's edited version, the prostitutes in the poem become simply "girls", the hooligans "boys", spitting becomes "coughing", while an allusion to the disease syphilis is changed to that of a harmless cold.<sup>105</sup>

Radlova maintained that whilst she welcomed constructive criticism from her peers, the best of the new Soviet translators accepted that the romantic versions of Shakespeare from the nineteenth century were no longer acceptable. The comparative analysis in this section indicates that Radlova was pushing the boundaries of the norms of her time.

#### **4.2.3 'My dear Othello': Translation of Terms of Address**

The way in which characters address each other throughout Radlova's translation was another aspect of her work which Chukovskii described as an oddity. He lists many examples where Radlova has failed to translate the terms of endearment or respect which Shakespeare's characters use when

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<sup>105</sup> Radlova, 'K diskussii o postanovke "Otello" v Malom teatre', 1.8.

speaking to one another, calculating that these discarded terms add up to approximately two and half pages of text. For Chukovskii, this is damaging for several reasons. Firstly, he argues that removing the respectful terms of address in the early scenes detracts from the grandeur of the play's Venetian setting, where a person's manners and deportment would be crucial for maintaining their standing within high society.<sup>106</sup> Secondly, Chukovskii contends that Radlova's failure to include many of the courtesies which characters use to one another fundamentally alters the way the relationships between them are portrayed. He cites Act IV Scene 3 as an example, where, in Shakespeare's text, Desdemona uses the word 'prithee' a total of four times when asking for Emilia's assistance in getting ready for bed.<sup>107</sup> Radlova clearly did not consider this important, as any Russian equivalent, even a simple 'пожалуйста' (please), is absent from her translation, and so for Chukovskii, Radlova's Desdemona sounds more like she is giving orders than making gentle requests of her confidante. It could be argued that 'prithee' adds little meaning to the conversation, and that Radlova rightly gives precedence to maintaining correct verse form and meter. However, it is certainly true that at certain points in the play, Radlova's briefer translation does perhaps alter the impression given of characters' regard for one another. For example, in Act V Scene 2, after hearing from Othello that he and Iago had plotted to murder him, Cassio exclaims 'Dear general, I never gave you cause'.<sup>108</sup> His mode of addressing Othello here demonstrates that even after everything which has taken place, he still feels affection and pity for him. Radlova's translation 'Я повода вам не дал, генерал!' (I didn't give you cause, general!) conveys Cassio's meaning correctly, but perhaps not his emotion. However, with her knowledge of the theatre and a view to the translation in performance, Radlova may simply have felt that any emotion necessary could be conveyed by the actor playing the role. Nevertheless, the lack of courtesies used by Radlova's characters would have further emphasised the differences in the

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<sup>106</sup> Chukovskii, 'Astma u Dezdemony' p.99.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, V. 2. 297.

language of Radlova's translation from that of her nineteenth century predecessors.

There is a particular form of address which appears frequently in Shakespeare's original text, but is largely absent from Radlova's, the address 'my lord'. A literal equivalent does exist in Russian, 'милорд'<sup>109</sup>, but this word does not appear in any of the Russian translations reviewed in this analysis. This address is clearly a borrowing from English, and modern dictionaries indicate that it is usually only used when referring to the English aristocracy, which the translators may not have felt appropriate for a play set in Italy and Cyprus. A more Russian translation of the address would seem to be 'мой господин'. Emilia uses this address for Iago, but neither Desdemona nor Iago ever use the term for Othello in Radlova's translation, either to address him directly, or when speaking about him to other characters. Instead, Radlova's Desdemona simply addresses Othello as 'my husband', or uses his name. This could simply be another example of Radlova's modernising approach, or an attempt by the translator to emphasise the strength of their relationship, and the fact that, at the beginning of the play, this is a much happier and equal relationship than that which exists between Emilia and Iago. Iago does not use the term 'мой господин' either, addressing Othello as the more modern and militaristic 'генерал' (General) or 'начальник' (chief or boss). When speaking of him, as in Shakespeare's text, he also uses the term 'мавр' (Moor). Interestingly however, Iago uses Othello's name in the first scene in Radlova's translation, which does not happen until Act I Scene 3 in her source text.

Whilst it could be viewed as forming part of her strategy of modernisation, Radlova's decision to impersonalise many of the terms of address which Shakespeare's characters use for one another could also be a reflection of the social situation in Soviet Russia, where, from the 1920s onwards, it was accepted practice for everyone to be addressed on an equal footing, using the term 'товарищ' (Comrade). In order to investigate to what extent Radlova

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<sup>109</sup> ['Milord']

may have incorporated other elements of Russian culture into her *Othello*, specific points in her translation will now be analysed in light of Lawrence Venuti's theories of domestication and foreignisation.

#### 4.2.4 Translation Decisions: Domestication?

Venuti argues that '[a] translation always communicates an interpretation, a foreign text that is partial and altered, supplemented with features peculiar to the translating language, no longer inscrutably foreign but made comprehensible in a distinctively domestic style. Translations, in other words, inevitably perform a work of domestication.'<sup>110</sup> Whilst Venuti's main purpose, 'to question the marginal position of translation in contemporary Anglo-American culture'<sup>111</sup> seems far removed from a translation of *Othello* in 1930s Soviet Russia, use of his theories presents the opportunity to examine Radlova's word choices with regard to their particular significance to Russian culture. Venuti states that a domesticating translation will inscribe a foreign text 'with linguistic and cultural values that are intelligible to specific domestic constituencies.'<sup>112</sup> Evidence of the inclusion of specifically Russian vocabulary was therefore sought throughout the analysis of Radlova's translation.

A notable example of a particularly Russian term being inserted into Shakespeare's text is Radlova's use of the word 'душа' (soul). This word is incorporated into the translation on ten separate occasions when the word 'soul' is not present in Shakespeare's original. In English, and certainly in Shakespeare's time, it is the heart which is at the centre of emotions, but in Russian culture, the soul is more important, and this is indicated by the number of times Radlova chooses to use the word.

Firstly, an example where Radlova translates 'heart' as 'soul':

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<sup>110</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1998), p.5.

<sup>111</sup> Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p.viii.

<sup>112</sup> Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation*, p.67.

OTHELLO With all my heart.<sup>113</sup>

ОТЕЛЛО Я рад **душевно**.<sup>114</sup>

Secondly, Radlova also uses the word to replace terms which describe a person's general character or behaviour, further emphasising the importance of the term "душа" in Russian.

IAGO [...] The Moor (howbeit that I endure him not)  
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature.<sup>115</sup>

ЯГО [...]А Мавр, - хотя его не выношу я, -  
Привязчивая, верная **душа**<sup>116</sup>

RODERIGO [...] she's full of most blest condition.<sup>117</sup>

РОДРИГО [...] у нее благословенная **душа**.<sup>118</sup>

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the term's religious connotations, Radlova also emphasises the term 'душа' when characters in the original are swearing oaths or talking of damnation.

OTHELLO [...] For nothing canst thou to damnation add  
Greater than that.<sup>119</sup>

ОТЕЛЛО [...]Ничем верней ты **душу** не погубишь  
Чем этим.<sup>120</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, I. 3. 276.

<sup>114</sup> *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, I. 3. [My soul is glad/I'm glad from the bottom of my soul.]

<sup>115</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, II. 1. 279-80.

<sup>116</sup> *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, II. 1. [The Moor – although I cannot stand him, is an affectionate, loyal soul.]

<sup>117</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, II. 1. 242-3.

<sup>118</sup> *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, II. 1. [she has a blessed soul.]

<sup>119</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, III. 3. 374-5.

<sup>120</sup> *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, III. 3. [You can truly do nothing more to destroy the soul than this.]

IAGO Before me, look where she comes!<sup>121</sup>

ЯГО Клянусь **душой**, вот она идет.<sup>122</sup>

Aside from Radlova's use of the word 'soul', there are some other examples in her text which would seem to have been more familiar to a Russian audience. In his speech describing the tales with which he wooed Desdemona, Othello speaks of 'antres vast and deserts idle'.<sup>123</sup> Deserts would appear to be very logical, given Othello's African origins, but Radlova chooses to translate this line with a different term, 'steppe', perhaps because it would have been a more recognizable geographical concept for Russians: '[б]ольших пещерах и **степях** бесплодных'.<sup>124</sup>

Similarly, in the teasing and joking that goes on between Iago, Desdemona and Cassio as they await news of Othello, Iago explains how he believes the ideal woman should behave. Included in his description are the following lines:

IAGO She that in wisdom never was so frail  
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail<sup>125</sup>

ЯГО И различает тонкий ум красоты  
Лососий хвост от головы **селедки**<sup>126</sup>

Here, Radlova has translated 'cod' as 'селедка' (herring), perhaps again because it would have been a far more familiar comparison for her audience. Other translators do not seem to have felt that this was necessary, with Veinberg, Lozinskii and Pasternak each opting for the literal translation 'треска'. For Shakespeare's audience, these lines would have contained a lot of sexual innuendo – particularly the word 'cod'. It could therefore be argued

<sup>121</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, IV. 1. 140.

<sup>122</sup> *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, IV. 1. 140. [I swear by my soul, here she comes.]

<sup>123</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, I.3.140.

<sup>124</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, I. 3. [Large caves and barren steppes]

<sup>125</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, II. 1. 152-3.

<sup>126</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, II. 1. [And distinguish the subtle mind of beauty, the salmon's tail from the head of a herring.]

that Radlova's substitution of another word means incurring translation loss, though it is also possible that these references would have been too archaic for a 1930s audience to have been aware of them.

As Venuti notes, however, it is not simply cultural elements which make up the domestic constituencies to which he refers. 'Translations thus position readers in domestic intelligibilities that are also ideological positions, ensembles of values, beliefs, and representations that further the interests of certain social groups over others.'<sup>127</sup> Radlova was one of the first translators in the Soviet era to undertake the task of transferring Shakespeare into Russian. It therefore seemed likely that her translation would contain evidence within the text that the new political regime and their policies were having an effect on the process of translation.

Radlova's translation of Othello's description of why he and Desdemona fell in love with one another is one which generated many columns' worth of discussion. The controversy was initially because it was strikingly different from Veinberg's existing translation, which was held in high regard by many critics. Shakespeare's original lines are as follows:

OTHELLO      [...] She loved me for the dangers I had passed,  
                    And I loved her that she did pity them.<sup>128</sup>

Veinberg had translated the lines as:

ОТЕЛЛО      Она меня за муки полюбила,  
                    А я ее - за состраданье к ним.<sup>129</sup>

According to Chukovskii, this particular translation was so popular that it had become a quotation in its own right. 'Кому, например, неизвестно великолепное двустишие из первого акта, сделавшееся в России такой же

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<sup>127</sup> Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation*, p.78.

<sup>128</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, I. 3. 167-8.

<sup>129</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Pëtra Veinberga, I. 3. [She fell in love with me for the torments, |and I with her compassion for her for them.]

широко распространенной цитатой, как оно является в Англии.<sup>130</sup> Iuzovskii hailed it as a 'поэтическая жемчужина русского перевода', (a poetic gem of Russian translation)<sup>131</sup> and stated that he would never have chosen to deviate from Veinberg's version. 'Ни за какие переводческие корижки мы не отдадим этой фразы.'<sup>132</sup> It should be noted, however, that Radlova was certainly not the only translator who chose not to do so. Lozinskii translated the lines as:

ОТЕЛЛО Я стал ей дорог тем, что жил в тревогах,  
А мне она - сочувствием своим.<sup>133</sup>

Whereas Boris Pasternak worded the lines as follows:

ОТЕЛЛО Я ей тревожной жизнью полюбился,  
Она же мне – горячностью души.<sup>134</sup>

Therefore, in spite of its popularity in some quarters, it seems that Veinberg's translation of the word 'dangers' as 'муки' – literally "torments" was not seen as untouchable by other translators. Interestingly, neither Lozinskii nor Pasternak chose to translate the word literally as 'опасности' either. But it is the militaristic nature of Radlova's departure from Shakespeare's original wording which makes her translation conspicuously different.

ОТЕЛЛО Она за бранный труд мой полюбила,  
А я за жалость полюбил ее.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Kornei Chukovskii, 'Astma u Dezdemony', p.103. [Who, for example, does not know the magnificent couplet from the first act, which is as widely cited as a quotation in Russia as it is in England.]

<sup>131</sup> Iuzovskii, p.3.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid. [Not for love nor money would we have given up this phrase.]

<sup>133</sup> *Otello*, perevod Mikhaila Lozinskogo, I. 3. [I became dear to her for having lived in anxiety, |And she to me for her sympathy.]

<sup>134</sup> *Otello*, perevod Borisa Pasternaka, I. 3. [She fell in love with me because of my troubled life, | and I with her for the fervour of her soul.]

<sup>135</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, I. 3. [She fell in love for my martial labours, | And I for compassion fell in love with her.]



luzovskii argued that this couplet from Shakespeare's original conveyed the central idea of both the character of Othello and the entire play – and that with her new translation Radlova had demonstrated her misconception of both. 'На эта лаконичная и исчерпывающая формула выражает философский замысел шекспировского «Отелло». Если же за «бранный труд» мой полюбила» - то, простите, но Дездемона вовсе не Дездемона, а Отелло – не Отелло.'<sup>136</sup> However, other critics wrote in support of Radlova's translation, arguing that Veinberg's translation was categorically incorrect. 'Но мы зная обязаны ему сказать, что никаких «мук»! У Шекспира не значится и что перевод Радловой в точности соответствует шекспировскому тексту.'<sup>137</sup>

luzovskii also insisted that if Desdemona had wanted a military man, then she would have chosen the younger and more attractive Cassio. 'Кассио – он тоже воин, но блестящий, красивый, молодой, благородный, знатный. Почему же все-таки Отелло?'<sup>138</sup> However, both Radlova and her husband defended her choice of translation by stating that Othello was first and foremost a soldier. In Elizabethan times, they argued, soldiers and adventurers were looked up to in much the same way that aviators were idolised in the 1930s, so it was natural that Desdemona would have found this element of his character attractive. Radlov, in particular, accused luzovskii and his colleagues for failing to understand what he believed were the motivations of Shakespeare's characters.

Возмущение Альтмана и Юзовского вызвано было невыносимой для них идеей, что Дездемона полюбила военного человека, да ещё за то, что он военный. [...] Под наплывом некоторого, пожалуй, чрезмерного сентиментализма они жаждали, чтобы

<sup>136</sup> luzovskii, p.3. [In this concise yet comprehensive formula is expressed the philosophical concept of Shakespeare's *Othello*. If it was for "martial labours" that she fell in love, - then, forgive me, but Desdemona is not Desdemona at all, and Othello is not Othello.]

<sup>137</sup> O. Litovskii, 'Posle spektaklia v Malom teatre', *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, 20 December 1935, p.4. [But we know we are obliged to tell him that there is no "torment"! It does not appear in Shakespeare, and Radlova's translation corresponds to Shakespeare's text with precision.]

<sup>138</sup> luzovskii, p.3. [Cassio – he is also a soldier, but bright, handsome, young, noble, distinguished. Why then, for all that, Othello?]

Дездемона влюбилась в глубоко штатского, но за то страдающего человека, военного случайно, но мученика по убеждению, мученьями своими зарабатывающего блаженство любви.<sup>139</sup>

For Radlov, as a soldier Othello arguably epitomised the type of positive character needed for the socialist realist stage. As has been previously discussed, the fact that the character of Othello gives rise to such an interpretation was one of the principal reasons why *Othello* was such a popular play during the Stalinist period. Radlova's choice of wording certainly emphasises the militaristic nature of her hero. The phrase "бранный труд" appears in patriotic war songs and poems, such as those about the Leningrad Blockade.<sup>140</sup> Whilst perhaps not overtly socialist realist, it does seem to be part of the kind of patriotic and heroic discourse which Radlova and her director would want to associate with their hero. The emphasis placed on the militaristic aspects of the play and its hero will be further discussed in the following chapter.

Venuti argues against domestication in translation because of his concern over its 'violence': 'Translation is the forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text with a text that is intelligible to the target-language reader. [...] Whatever difference the translation conveys is now imprinted by the receiving culture, assimilated to its positions of intelligibility, its canons and taboos, its codes and ideologies.'<sup>141</sup> Whilst the above examples do demonstrate instances of the inclusion of Russian and Soviet culture, they are by no means numerous and, whilst they are noticeable at text level, they do not dramatically alter the overall meaning and understanding of the play and its plot. For Venuti, '[t]he aim of

<sup>139</sup> Sergei Radlov, 'Voin li Otello?', p.114. [The indignation of Alt'man and Luzovskii was caused by the idea, intolerable for them, that Desdemona fell in love with a military man, and even for the fact that he was military. [...] Under an influx of some, perhaps, excessive sentimentalism, they crave for Desdemona to fall in love with a truly civilian man, but one who suffers for this; a military man by chance, yet a martyr to his beliefs, who through his own torments has earned the bliss of love.]

<sup>140</sup> For example, the term appears in the poem, 'Pesnia o Leningradskoi materi' by Ol'ga Berggol'ts in *Stikhi i poemy* (Leningrad: Sovetskii pisatel', 1979)

<<http://blokada.otrok.ru/poetry.php?t=6>> [accessed 7 November 2012].

<sup>141</sup> Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p.14.

translation is to bring back a cultural other as the same, the recognizable, even the familiar'.<sup>142</sup> However, it is here that the context in which Venuti is writing, the present day translation market in Britain and the United States of America, where minority languages are translated into one more dominant, creates problems for the application of his theory to the context of translating Shakespeare in 1930s Russia. The status of *Othello* as a classic text, and Shakespeare's status as a writer from whom those in power argued other writers could learn, meant that Radlova would never have been in the position where her readers or audiences did not know that they were viewing a translation. Her only purpose in domesticating her translation would have been to ensure that it fell within the boundaries of socialist realism, so that it would remain stageable under the tight restrictions of the Soviet regime, which included making her text more accessible for her audiences.

#### 4.2.5 Translation Decisions: Foreignisation?

In addition to the play's settings in Venice in the first scene, and subsequently the island of Cyprus, there are several references to other countries and cultures throughout the text of *Othello*. Alongside the above examples of domestication within the translation, it seemed probable that these foreign references would have been altered in some way, making them less specific and therefore minimising the risk of alienating the audience with unfamiliar names and situations. However, the findings from the analysis of Radlova's text indicate that there are no great changes to the way the play's setting is spoken about by the characters. In Act I, Scene 3, the Duke describes the Turks as the 'general' enemy (everyone's enemy),<sup>143</sup> whereas Radlova translates this as 'всегдашних', which means 'habitual' or 'constant', but this is the only significant difference. Very occasionally, Radlova's characters choose to refer to their home city when the reference is not there in

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, I. 3. 50.

Shakespeare's text, but it difficult to conclude that this is of particular importance, and is more likely to be due to concerns of meter or simply variation.

References to other foreign cultures within the play are also transferred into Russian without any great deviation from Shakespeare's text. As an example, there are several references to other countries in the drunken teasing between Iago, Cassio and the rest of the men in Act II Scene 3, and Radlova reproduces them all extremely faithfully, even substituting the effect of assonance in order to make up for the lack of alliteration in the Russian equivalent of 'potent in potting' – 'в попойке бойки.'<sup>144</sup> However, it is possible that the translation of the description of the English as the most prolific drinkers in Europe may have generated a different reaction from a Russian audience.

IAGO I learned it in England, where indeed they are most potent in potting. Your Dane, your German, and your swag-bellied Hollander – drink – ho! – are nothing to your English. (II.3.69-72)

Яго Я выучил ее в Англии, где люди в попойке бойки; датчане, немцы, толстопузые голландцы - эй, пейте же! - ничто перед англичанами.<sup>145</sup>

The strategy which Radlova employs here is not the approach which Venuti advocates, that of foreignization:

Foreignization does not offer unmediated access to the foreign – no translation can do that – but rather constructs a certain image of the foreign that is informed by the receiving situation but aims to question it by drawing on materials that are not currently dominant, namely the

<sup>144</sup> Transliterated, this phrase reads as: 'v popoike boike'.

<sup>145</sup>Shakespeare, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, II. 3. [I learned it in England, where people are ready for a booze-up. The Danes, the Germans, the pot-bellied Dutch – hey – drink! – They are nothing to the Englishmen.]

marginal and the nonstandard, the residual and the emergent.<sup>146</sup>

In translating the foreign names and vocabulary she does not use unusual language - she is not trying to draw attention to her task as the translator. However, she does not attempt to domesticate or explain the foreign elements in the text either. Instead, she leaves them untouched, maintaining the distance between the setting of the play and her own situation. Shakespeare's own choice of exotic settings such as Venice and Cyprus may have been deliberate, distancing the plays from Elizabethan/Jacobean England and providing, as translation scholar Dirk Delabastita describes, 'a dramatic safeguard against censorship.'<sup>147</sup> It is possible that Radlova was aiming for the same effect, making it clear that this was play set in a foreign location with foreign characters, far removed from the Stalinist Russia where it would be performed.

#### **4.2.6 'Well, God's above all': Translation of Religious References**

A further aspect of Shakespeare's text which it seemed would inevitably be affected by the demands of the target culture into which *Othello* was translated were the many references to religion within the play. Venuti views translation as 'the reconstitution of the foreign text in accordance with values, beliefs and representations that pre-exist it in the target language.'<sup>148</sup> If this were the case with Radlova's translation, it would be expected that any references to religion within the text would have been removed, given the programme of secularization enforced by the Soviet government. 1929, the

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<sup>146</sup> Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, pp.19-20.

<sup>147</sup> Dirk Delabastita, "If I knew the letters and the language" – Translation as a dramatic device in Shakespeare's plays', in *Shakespeare and the Language of Translation*, ed. Ton Hoenselaars (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2004), pp.31-49, p.45.

<sup>148</sup> Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p.14.

year Radlova's translation was commissioned, marked the beginning of a wave of extensive closings of churches.<sup>149</sup>

It is certainly true that the religious references in expressions that characters use are often replaced with different ones which generally remove any religious undertones. For example, Iago's exclamation 'S'blood' in the fourth line of the play is translated as 'Ах, чорт!',<sup>150</sup> his use of 'Marry' (By the Virgin Mary) in Act I Scene ii is represented by 'Клянусь...' <sup>151</sup>whilst Lodovico's greeting to Othello in Act IV Scene 1, 'God save you, worthy general!' becomes simply 'Привет вам, генерал!'<sup>152</sup> However, as is perhaps most evident in the last example, it is possible that Radlova is simply replacing the expressions in Shakespeare's text with the most natural-sounding, modern Russian equivalents rather than adopting a deliberate policy to remove religion from her text. Both Lozinskii and Pasternak also choose to use more modern expressions for these lines.

Another example of Radlova's attempt to write more natural sounding verse for her actors to speak could be her treatment of the lines and exclamations which include references to heaven in the original. These are frequently translated as expressions referring directly to God instead. For example, Montano's exclamation 'Pray heavens he be!' in Act II, Scene 1 is translated by Radlova as 'Спаси господь!',<sup>153</sup> while Desdemona's line in the same scene 'The heavens forbid' becomes 'Помилуй боже'.<sup>154</sup> Pasternak and Lozinskii also frequently use expressions referring to God, rather than heaven, such as 'Дай-то Бог!'<sup>155</sup> and 'Избави Бог!'<sup>156</sup> There are similar examples throughout Radlova's text, suggesting that she felt it was more natural for her characters to use expressions referring to God. It could also be argued that the removal of many of these oaths and exclamations are just further examples of

<sup>149</sup> Davis, p.5.

<sup>150</sup> *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, I. 1. [Oh damn!]

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid*, I. 2. [I swear...]

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, IV. 1. [Hello to you, General!]

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid*, II. 1. [Lord save us!]

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid*. [God have mercy.]

<sup>155</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Mikhaila Lozinskogo, II. 1. [God grant!]

<sup>156</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Borisa Pasternaka, II. 1. [God forbid!]

Radlova's "sacrificing" of what she considered the less essential elements. Given her devotion to maintaining iambic pentameter throughout all the sections of the play in verse, it is possible that she felt that an exclamation of "Swounds!" or similar was simply the most expendable element.

Other references to religious beliefs and practices, such as catechisms and purgatory are fully translated by Radlova, and by Pasternak and Lozinskii.

EMILIA            [...]I should venture purgatory for't.<sup>157</sup>

Radlova:            [...] Я бы отважилась отправиться в чистилище ради этого.<sup>158</sup>

Pasternak:        [...] Ради этого я пошла бы в чистилище.<sup>159</sup>

Lozinskii:        [...] Я бы и чистилища ради этого не побоялась.<sup>160</sup>

The preservation of these religious elements within the text suggests that again, Radlova was aiming to maintain distance between the world of the play and the world in which she was translating, and that as such, the play's setting was far enough removed from Stalinist Russia for its actors to be safe from being accused of advocating pro-religious propaganda.

#### **4.2.7 'Your son in law is far more fair than black': Translation of Racial References**

Many of the racial references within Shakespeare's play rely on wordplay and double entendres, which would create problems for any translator. For example, the references contained in these lines from Act II Scene 1:

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<sup>157</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, IV.3.71-72.

<sup>158</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, IV. 3. [I would have dared to go into purgatory for the sake of it.]

<sup>159</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Borisa Pasternaka, IV. 3. [For the sake of it I would have gone to purgatory.]

<sup>160</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Mikhaila Lozinskogo, IV. 3. [I would not have been afraid of purgatory for the sake of it.]

IAGO           If she be fair and wise: fairness and wit,  
                  The one's for use, the other useth it.

DESDEMONA   Well praised! How if she be black and witty?

IAGO           If she be black and thereto have a wit,  
                  She'll find a white that shall her blackness hit.

DESDEMONA   Worse and worse.

EMILIA   How if fair and foolish?<sup>161</sup>

In these lines, there is a lot of play on the word 'fair' meaning fair-skinned as well as pretty, and black meaning ugly. This is very difficult to reproduce in Russian, so for the most part, Radlova translates using words meaning either pretty or plain, or words referring to hair colour.

ЯГО           Коль я умна и красотой владею,  
                  Клад – красота, а ум торгует ею.

ДЕЗДЕМОНА   Ну похвала! А коль умна дурнушка?

ЯГО           Коль мы черны собою, но с умом,  
                  Красавчика-блондина мы найдем.'

ДЕЗДЕМОНА   Еще того хуже.

ЭМИЛИЯ       А если хороша и глупа?<sup>162</sup>

Interestingly, in other places, Radlova does seem to compensate for the lack of word play occasionally, using a different meaning of the word 'чёрный' when 'black' is not there in the original:

OTHELLO       [...] If thou does slander her and torture me (III.3.370)

<sup>161</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, II. 1. 129-134.

<sup>162</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi, II. 1. [As I possess both wit and beauty|A treasure – the beauty and the mind selling it. |Well praised! And as a clever plain girl? |As I am black myself – but with wit| A handsome blonde will I find. |Even worse. |And if good and stupid?



ОТЕЛЛО [...] А если ты ее чернишь, меня же  
Пытаешь<sup>163</sup>

Inevitably, however, the fact that the Russian language does not provide quite so many opportunities for double meanings on this subject means that some translation loss is incurred.

EMILIA [...] She was too fond of her most filthy bargain<sup>164</sup>

ЭМИЛИЯ [...] Она любила гнусный выбор свой.<sup>165</sup>

Here, the original 'filthy' could also refer to Othello's skin colour, whereas the Russian 'гнусный' (foul or vile) does not quite provide this option. Pasternak and Lozinskii also avoid any play on words here.

In addition to the incidences of translation loss, Radlova also alters some of the key expressions in the play which refer to race, creating a different effect. Returning to Iago's description of the consummation of Othello and Desdemona's marriage, arguably one of the key "black : white" images in the play, Radlova has actually removed the word "white" completely.

IAGO Even now, very now, an old black ram  
Is tupping your white ewe.'

ЯГО Сейчас, сию минуту, старый черный  
Баран овечку вашу кроет...'

In the source text, Shakespeare's Othello laments that his skin colour could be the reason for some of his perceived inadequacies:

OTHELLO Nay, for I am black  
And have not those soft parts of conversation  
That chamberers have<sup>166</sup>

<sup>163</sup> Ibid, III. 3. [If you blacken (slander) her and torture me]

<sup>164</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, V. 2. 155.

<sup>165</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Anny Radlovoi V, 2. [She loved her foul choice.]

<sup>166</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, III. 3. 266-268.

Possibly because ‘haply’ can mean “perhaps”, Radlova has changed these lines into questions:

ОТЕЛЛО                            [...]Черный я?  
                                       Я не умею гладко говорить,  
                                       Как эти шаркуны?’

A questioning tone would certainly emphasise Othello’s distress and uncertainty here, though clearly much would depend on how the actor playing Othello delivered these lines. However, it is interesting to note that in contrast, Boris Pasternak removes any doubt from Othello’s words in his translation:

ОТЕЛЛО            [...] Я черен, вот причина. Языком  
   Узоров не плету, как эти франты.<sup>167</sup>

The slight changes of emphasis in these examples could suggest that Radlova attributed less significance to the issues of race within the play than perhaps would be expected. The translation loss incurred through the lack of opportunities for word play may also have lessened the impact of this aspect of the play. The question of race in *Othello* and how this theme was interpreted by the actors who played the role on the Russian stage will be further explored in Chapter 5.

#### 4.2.8 Translation of Stage Directions

The translation decisions discussed in this chapter so far have all concerned the text itself. However, before moving on to the analysis of the translation in performance, consideration also needs to be given to the process of updating the text for contemporary script presentation and stage conventions.

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<sup>167</sup> Shekspir, *Otello*, perevod Borisa Pasternaka, III.3. [I am black, there’s the reason. | I do not weave patterns with language like these dandies.]

Radlova's translation contains several stage directions which are additions to Shakespeare's original text. There are descriptions at the beginning of each scene as to the setting which are not there in the original, such as 'Венеция. Улица',<sup>168</sup> 'Перед замком',<sup>169</sup> or 'Комнате в замке'.<sup>170</sup> Some minor characters from Shakespeare's text have also been cut, or had their names changed. One of the lines spoken by a 'Senator' in Act I Scene 3 of the source text is given to the Duke in Radlova's translation, while a line spoken by 'Second Gentleman' in Act II, Scene 1 of the original is attributed to '4-й дворянин'.<sup>171</sup> The character 'Boy Musician' in Act III, Scene 1 becomes simply '1-й музыкант'. It has been suggested that Shakespeare intended this role to be played by a child as the crudeness of the Clown would sound more amusing delivered to a more naive recipient.<sup>172</sup> Radlova, however, does not appear to have felt that this added humour was particularly important, nor do any of the other translators featured in this chapter. Characters occasionally enter and exit at different times. For example, in Act IV, Scene 2, the change in the moment which Emilia enters could mean that one of Othello's lines would have to be addressed to Desdemona, rather than Emilia as per the original. However, these small changes rarely affect the overall presentation of a scene.

On first appearances, then, Radlova's translation reads as though it were the script for a particular production, with additional descriptions for stage settings, and changes to the cast of characters perhaps reflecting the available actors in the company. However, on comparison with the stage directions included in Veinberg's earlier translation, it is apparent that the two sets of directions are extremely similar. He too includes additional descriptions as to the location of each scene, though there are occasional differences in his choice of wording. Wherever Radlova has deviated from Shakespeare's original in terms of the name or movements of a particular character, the

<sup>168</sup> Act I, Scene 1 [Venice. Street.]

<sup>169</sup> Act III, Scene 1; Act III Scene 4; Act IV, Scene 1 [in front of the castle].

<sup>170</sup> Act IV, Scene 2 [a room in the castle].

<sup>171</sup> '4<sup>th</sup> Nobleman'.

<sup>172</sup> Shakespeare, *Othello*, editor's notes, p.279.

same difference is also present in Veinberg's directions. It would therefore appear that in spite of her criticism of much of Veinberg's work, she appears to have used this aspect of his translation as something of a guide. Both Lozinskii and Pasternak also use very similar stage directions, suggesting that a brief description for the setting of each scene was a standard inclusion in a translation of one of Shakespeare's plays.

As stated in Chapter 2, the director Konstantin Stanislavskii used Veinberg's translation when he staged his production of *Othello* at the Moscow Art Theatre in 1930. Owing to the publication of his production plan, the ways in which Stanislavskii adapted Veinberg's brief scene descriptions are well documented. Stanislavskii states in his introductory notes to the plan that Shakespeare's original approach to the staging of his plays was extremely flexible: 'Играя на черном сукне и медная доски с надписями, вместо того чтобы менять целые декорации давал такие сценические формы, которые позволяют перекидывать действие из одного места и времени в другое.'<sup>173</sup> He therefore chooses to split Act III, Scene 3 into three parts. The first section of Act IV, Scene 1 is also moved by Stanislavskii to form a fifth scene in Act III. The remainder of the scenes in Act IV and the whole of Act V are then combined to create Stanislavskii's final act. The changes which Stanislavskii makes mean that whilst Veinberg's setting descriptions remain in the script, for the actual staging of the play they were then further developed and embellished by the director. Thus, scenes in the streets of Venice are played out in gondolas, and the scene described by Veinberg as set in simply 'Другая улица' (Another street), is actually staged outside Othello's house ('Дом Отелло'). Scenes set in and around the castle are transformed into

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<sup>173</sup> Konstantin Stanislavskii, *Rezhisserskii plan "Othello"* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1945), pp.6-7. Dr. Helen Nowak provides the following translation: 'Acting against a background of black cloth and changing boards with inscriptions instead of whole sets he produced scenic forms which permit the switching of acts from one place and time to another.' *Stanislavsky Produces Othello*, trans. by Dr. Helen Nowak (London: Geoffrey Bless, 1948), p.7.

much more specific locations, such as 'The Fountain' ('Бассейн'), 'The Study' ('Кабинет') and 'The Stairs' ('Лестница').<sup>174</sup>

As no such detailed information on the actual staging plans for the productions which used Radlova's translations has yet been uncovered, it is difficult to know where the additional descriptions she includes in her translation do in fact refer to a particular production or whether she was simply adhering to the accepted conventions for the staging of *Othello* and providing further information for the readers for whom the translation was initially commissioned. The available evidence for Radlov's choice of staging for his productions will be discussed in Chapter 5.

### 4.3 Concluding Remarks

In creating her new Soviet *Othello*, Radlova used simple, more modern language for her audiences and actors. One effect of this process of updating is that in comparison with her predecessor, Veinberg, and her contemporaries, Pasternak and Lozinskii Radlova uses slightly coarser language in her translation, but certainly no stronger than that which is present in her source text. She follows Shakespeare's schemes of versification and rhyme more carefully than her predecessors, aiming to educate Soviet audiences in the genius of Shakespeare. Examples of domestication within the translation are not particularly numerous, though some of Radlova's translation choices do emphasise the militaristic nature of Othello's character, in order to make him a more suitable socialist realist hero.

The theories referred to during this analysis provide a framework through which the translation can be analysed. They each identify points within the translation process which can provide information on how and why translators take the decisions which they make. Nevertheless, modern translation theory does have limitations when applied to historical examples

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<sup>174</sup> Stanislavskii, *Rezhisserskii plan*, pp.7-8.

of translation for a number of reasons. It focuses largely on the English language translation market, and largely views the translator as a free agent, able to make their own independent choices. Gideon Toury comments that '[o]ne's status as a translator may of course be temporary, especially if one fails to adjust to the changing requirements, or does so to an extent which is deemed insufficient.'<sup>175</sup> In Stalinist Russia, of course, if a translator failed to adjust to requirements, it was not simply their job which was at risk, but their life and probably those of their family. This heightened level of danger would naturally have led to much greater constraints on their decision making process. In this instance, as Venuti asserts: '[t]ranslation is not an untroubled communication of a foreign text, but an interpretation that is always limited by its address to specific audiences and by the cultural or institutional situations where the translated text is intended to circulate and function.'<sup>176</sup> Likewise, Radlova's translation had to be acceptable within the boundaries of socialist realism, which also shaped her own principles of translation, producing a workable version of *Othello* for actors which could easily be understood by their audiences. The fact she was translating Shakespeare and specifically *Othello* for performance had already been predetermined by the constraints imposed by the political regime.

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<sup>175</sup> Toury, 'The nature and role of norms in translation', p.205.

<sup>176</sup> Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, p.14.

## Chapter 5: Radlova's *Othello* in Performance

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### 5.1 Introduction

Anna Radlova's translation of *Othello* generated much critical debate, not simply over whether her version of the play was acceptable, but about how the translation of Shakespeare and other "classic" texts should be handled in the new Soviet era. The analysis in the previous chapter demonstrated the ways in which, within the text, Radlova's translation presented the Soviet audience with a new approach to Shakespeare: employing simpler, more modern and sometimes coarser language than previous translations had allowed, yet adhering closely to the structure and rhyme schemes of the source text.

However, as Patrice Pavis notes, when a translation is intended for performance, a completely new set of demands are placed upon the work. 'The phenomenon of translation for the stage [...] goes beyond the rather limited phenomenon of the interlingual translation of the dramatic text.'<sup>1</sup> While Radlova first undertook her translation of *Othello* for inclusion in a printed collection of Shakespeare's plays, she also made it clear that she was well aware of the additional demands made on a translation which was intended for the theatre. Her close links with a theatrical company seem to have made her sensitive to the needs of actors, and what was required of a translated text in order to make it performable. 'Переводя, я всегда выверяю стихи на произнесения помня, что Шекспир писал не для чтения про себя, а для живых актеров, произносивших его стихи перед живыми слушателями и зрителями.'<sup>2</sup> Radlova's translation of *Othello* was chosen by

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<sup>1</sup>Pavis, *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*, p.136.

<sup>2</sup> Anna Radlova, 'Ot perevodchika', in *K postanovke Otello, Molodoi teatr, Leningrad, 1932*, RNB, f.625, d.65, ll.17-18. [When translating, I always proofread the poetry by reading it

her husband for use in his production at his theatre in Leningrad in May 1932, and again, in April 1935. The translation was then staged for the first time in Moscow in December 1935, when Radlov was invited to direct at the Mal'yi Theatre.

Susan Bassnett acknowledges that within theatre translation theory, there is 'the notion of the playtext that is somehow incomplete in itself until realised in performance.'<sup>3</sup> In order to provide a complete analysis of Radlova's translation, it therefore seems imperative to investigate, as far as is possible given the ephemeral nature of performance, the strengths and weaknesses of Radlova's translation when used on stage. The Radlovs' *Othello* will therefore first be set in context by examining some of the key elements in the history of the Russian interpretation of the play, and the productions which immediately preceded and followed their work. Contemporary reviews and archival accounts from those who worked on the productions will then be used to provide as complete a picture as possible of Radlova's playtext on stage. Particular attention will be paid to commentary regarding the ways in which the translation had a direct impact on the production.

## **5.2 The Polysystem of Productions: Russian Interpretations of *Othello***

Even-Zohar's polysystems theory encourages the contextualisation of individual elements within the cultural sphere, and the use of this theory has so far enabled the analysis of Radlova's *Othello* in relation to the trends and traditions within the general history of Shakespeare translation in Russia. In order to assess how Radlova's translation functioned in performance, it therefore seems appropriate to examine the performance tradition of *Othello* on the Russian stage. In order to gauge whether Radlov's interpretation of the

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aloud, remembering that Shakespeare wrote not for reading alone, but for live actors, delivering his poetry before live listeners and viewers.]

<sup>3</sup> Susan Bassnett, 'Still Trapped in the Labyrinth: Further Reflections on Translation and Theatre', in *Constructing Cultures*, eds. Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998), pp.90-108, (p.91).



play could be viewed as a “primary” (innovative) or “secondary” (conservative) activity<sup>4</sup> in the 1930s, this section will explore several key productions and their reception: the earliest on the Russian stage featuring the “re-writing” of Ivan Vel’iaminov; the interpretations of visiting actors such as Ira Aldridge and Tommaso Salvini; and the productions of Konstantin Stanislavskii in 1896 and 1930. This contextualising section will be completed by the assessment of a production directed by Nikolai Okhlopkov staged the year after Radlov’s productions at his studio in Leningrad and at the Mal’yi in Moscow.

### 5.2.1 Earliest Interpretations

When examining the history of *Othello* in Russia, it is clear that, as in the British tradition, contrasting opinions on the central themes of the play and the character of its hero have existed since its earliest performance. In her account of the history of *Othello* on the stage, Lois Potter notes that the play has always held a special place in the Russian Shakespeare repertoire. She attributes this high status to the fact that Pushkin had a particular admiration for the play.<sup>5</sup> Whilst Pushkin’s unrivalled status in the hierarchy of Russian literary figures is no doubt of significance, there are two aspects to his interpretation of *Othello* which are particularly important for the Russian performance tradition of the play.

The version of *Othello* which Pushkin is most likely to have seen on stage is that of Ivan Vel’iaminov, which, as discussed in Chapter 2, was largely based on the French “imitation” of Jean-François Ducis. Vel’iaminov’s *Othello* was first performed on the Russian stage in St Petersburg in 1806, and then in Moscow in 1808. It remained popular on the Russian stage for the next two decades, and, as with Nikolai Polevoi’s later translation of *Hamlet*, benefited

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<sup>4</sup> Even-Zohar, ‘Polysystem Theory’, p.21.

<sup>5</sup> Lois Potter, *Othello: Shakespeare in Performance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p.99.

from the skills of one of the period's most popular Shakespearean actors, Pavel Mochalov. His performance in the title role 'made an unforgettable impression', so much so that Pëtr Veinberg, future translator of the play, recalled the power of Mochalov's Othello in his memoirs more than half a century after the actor's death.<sup>6</sup>

The first aspect of Pushkin's interpretation of the play which is of interest is that that Pushkin viewed Othello as a man of a trusting, rather than a jealous nature. As O'Neil argues, 'Pushkin does not associate the hero of *Othello* with jealousy, nor indeed does Othello's jealousy constitute the play's primary interest for him.'<sup>7</sup> Pushkin does not seem to have been alone in wishing to explore the importance of themes other than jealousy within the play. O'Neil notes the publication of a literal prose translation of Act III Scene 3, when Iago first plants the seed of suspicion and jealousy in Othello's mind, in the journal *Moskovskii vestnik* in the late 1820s. The translation was introduced by a lengthy article on *Othello* by S.P. Shevyrev. O'Neil argues that '[t]he choice of this scene for publication reflects the attempt in the Romantic era to reinstate Shakespeare's Iago as a supremely subtle villain in his own right; in eighteenth-century stage adaptations he had been reduced by and large to a stock-figure melodramatic villain, a superficial foil to the hero.'<sup>8</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2, Vel'iaminov had sought to strengthen the character of 'Pezarro', the Iago of the French 'imitation' of Ducis on which his translation was largely based, and this representation of a more complex and calculating antagonist may have influenced Pushkin's interpretation.

However, O'Neil also acknowledges that while Pushkin may not have considered the theme of jealousy an important one, this was not the case for many of his contemporaries:

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<sup>6</sup> Altschuller, p.109.

Pavel Mochalov (1800-1848) was one of the most popular romantic actors of the 1820s and 1830s. He made his debut in 1817, and throughout his early career, acted mainly in melodramas. His career reached his peak in the 1830s when he undertook several Shakespearean roles with great success, including Lear and Richard III as well as the aforementioned Hamlet and Othello.

<sup>7</sup> O'Neil, p.103.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p.105.

any story of murderous jealousy was associated at the time with Othello. [...] Mikhail Lermontov's play *Masquerade* (1835-36) is considered to be the quintessential "Russian *Othello*" since it concerns a man who murders his wife after mistakenly assuming her to have been unfaithful to him.<sup>9</sup>

Debates over whether jealousy was inherent in Othello's nature were still continuing when Radlov staged his productions in the 1930s. He argued that that he offered a fresh interpretation of the character's motivations, though it is important to remember that, owing to Pushkin, the concept of an Othello who was not essentially a jealous man had already existed for just over a century.

The second significant element in Pushkin's interpretation of Othello is the importance which the poet attributed to the character's skin colour. Pushkin's maternal great-grandfather was African, and so as O'Neil suggests, Shakespeare's play provided a literary model on which he could base his own fictionalized renderings of his African heritage.<sup>10</sup> The works which O'Neil singles out as being explicitly connected with *Othello* are the unfinished historical romance *The Moor of Peter the Great (Arap Petra Velikogo)* and the narrative poem *Poltava*,<sup>11</sup> which features a relationship between an older man and much younger woman. O'Neil highlights the fact that the character

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid, p.137.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.103. Pushkin's maternal great-grandfather, Ibraghim Avram, was born a member of the Kotóko tribe, in the principality of Logo, south of Lake Chad, in territory now part of the Republic of Cameroon. His father was a prince whose territory was under attack from its more powerful neighbours, and he was abducted and sold into slavery. He was first sent to Constantinople, where he served in the palace of the Sultan Ahmed III, and he was then sent to Moscow. He became a servant to Tsar Petr I, then his godson and ward. He later took the name Abram Petrov Gannibal; Petrov after his benefactor, Gannibal was simply an impressive sounding surname. He accompanied the Tsar on several tours of Europe and all of his military campaigns, fighting in many decisive battles, notably the Battle of Poltava. He also studied engineering in France for five years. He married twice and had four sons and two daughters. On his death at the age of 85, his estate included several country properties and a house in St Petersburg.

N. K Teletova, 'A. P. Gannibal: On the Occasion of the Three Hundreth Anniversary of the Birth of Alexander Pushkin's Great-Grandfather', trans. by Ronald Meyer, in *Under the Sky of My Africa: Alexander Pushkin and Blackness* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2006), pp.46-78.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Ibraghim in the former work, seemingly named after his great-grandfather, is the first black character of significance in Russian literature, and that Russians would have had very little personal experience of actual blacks.<sup>12</sup> She notes that in Pushkin's time, Africa was seen as an exotic and uncivilized place, and that stereotypes regarding the country and its people as wild and fiery were common. In the context of these ideas, the character of Othello was therefore often interpreted as a 'сын природы', a 'son of nature' or 'noble savage', as he is called in Vel'iaminov's translation.<sup>13</sup>

While the foreignness of Othello may have been something with which Pushkin could empathise, for many of his contemporaries, his black skin created exotic associations of savagery and passion. Many productions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries therefore chose to lighten the colour of Othello's skin, so that he was of North African descent rather than the sub-Saharan origin, which is perhaps indicated by Shakespeare's descriptions of Othello's appearance in the text.<sup>14</sup> Ducis, for example, felt that a hero with a lighter skin colour would be less shocking for his audiences in France, particularly any female members.<sup>15</sup> Audiences therefore became accustomed to an Othello of North African appearance, and portrayals of this kind continued throughout the nineteenth century. Photographs displayed in the Moscow Art Theatre museum indicate that when Stanislavskii played the role of *Othello* in 1896 with the Society of Art and Literature, he adopted a more North-African appearance, as he appears to be wearing a keffiyeh, a traditional Middle-Eastern headdress.

The discussions in the early nineteenth century over whether Othello was an Arabian "Moor" or an African "Negro" seem to have transcended questions of skin colour, however, and are also linked to the question of the hero's temperament. As O'Neil comments:

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.110.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, pp.104-106.

<sup>14</sup> For example: 'Roderigo: What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe' (I.1.67).

<sup>15</sup> O'Neil, p.106.

As far as Coleridge, Schlegel and other romantic theorists go, it seems that it was essential to them to distinguish between the “noble-savages who dwell between some primordial “golden age” and the Christian “civilised” world of Europe (that is, “Moors”), and the primitive peoples sold as slaves (“Negroes”). Othello’s conflict was seen as a result of the war between the elemental passions of his original “natural” state and the controlling force of the enlightened world.<sup>16</sup>

As O’Neil notes, this distinction between “Moor” and “Negro” was less significant in Russia because, aside from a few notable exceptions, it had no real involvement in the African slave trade. However, the concept of Othello being a partially-civilised savage clearly took hold within the Russian tradition, as Soviet theatre practitioners including Radlov argued against what they saw as an extremely prejudiced interpretation of the character: ‘Понимание образа Отелло всегда мешали если не открыто расистские теории, то расистские предрассудки большинства буржуазных исследователей, видевших источник трагедии в первобытном характере мавра, в его необузданном темпераменте или даже в низком умственном уровне.’<sup>17</sup> As far as nineteenth century preconceptions regarding skin colour were concerned, however, these were to be challenged by the first of many foreign visiting actors who were to have an influence over the Russian performance tradition of *Othello*.

### 5.2.2 The Influence of Foreign Performers

As discussed in Chapter 2, the theatrical traditions and cultural context in which a performer is brought up play an important shaping role in determining his or her stage profile and techniques. When foreign actors

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p.108.

<sup>17</sup> Sof’ia Nel’s, *Shekspir na sovetskoj stsene* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1960), p.143. [The understanding of Othello’s character has always been hampered, if not by overtly racist theories, then by the racial prejudices of the majority of bourgeois scholars, who saw the source of the tragedy in the primitive character of the Moor, in his ungovernable temperament or even in his lower level of intelligence.]

visited Russia in the nineteenth century, their performances and interaction with Russian theatrical circles facilitated the blending of theatrical cultures, enabling Russian performers to learn from their work and develop new approaches to their productions of *Othello*.

Ira Aldridge was an African-American who was born in New York in 1807, but had travelled to England in 1824. By the 1830s, Aldridge had firmly established his reputation as a respected tragedian, and was popular with theatregoers throughout the British Isles. However, the colour of his skin meant that he was never truly accepted by London society, and many reviews of his performances were extremely racist. He therefore took the decision to begin touring Europe, and undertook his first continental tour in 1852, visiting cities including Brussels, Frankfurt, Berlin, Prague and Budapest.

Aldridge's first trip to Russia took place in 1858, where he gave 31 performances at the Imperial Theatre in St Petersburg, 21 of which were in the role of *Othello*. In their study of Aldridge's life and work, Herbert Marshall and Mildred Stock note that the timing of this visit was extremely opportune, as there was 'a complete absence of Shakespeare' on the Russian stage at the time.<sup>18</sup> Marshall and Stock attribute this absence to a lack of successful leading actors: Vasily Karatygin and Pavel Mochalov were now dead, and Mikhail Shchepkin had retired. Aldridge's performances were therefore very well received. Even-Zohar posits that translations of foreign texts can often help to fill vacuums within a developing literature,<sup>19</sup> and Aldridge's success in Shakespearean roles in Russia would seem to indicate that the same can be true of foreign actors in a theatrical system.

Rather than Aldridge encountering prejudice, Marshall and Stock maintain that the reaction to his arrival and performances in Russia was more one of curiosity. They also suggest that, three years before the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, Aldridge became something of 'a symbol of liberation from

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<sup>18</sup> Herbert Marshall and Mildred Stock, *Ira Aldridge: The Negro Tragedian* (Carbondale & Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1958), p.223.

<sup>19</sup> Even-Zohar, 'The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem', p.193.

slavery and backwardness'<sup>20</sup> for the intelligentsia, who linked the liberation of the slaves in America with the situation of the serfs in Russia. As his popularity grew, Aldridge also began to play many white roles, including Shylock and King Lear, using white make-up. He performed in English, supported by a German troupe using Schlegel's translation, which must have further enhanced the influence of the German Romantic versions of Shakespeare's works in Russia at this time. Aldridge then made a second tour to Russia in 1862, to perform at the Malyi Theatre in Moscow. He once again played his roles in English, but this time was supported by the Malyi company, who of course performed in Russian. Once again, the interest in Aldridge was considerable, so much so that the majority of his performances were transferred to the larger Bolshoi theatre, usually solely reserved for performances of ballet and opera.<sup>21</sup> Following his success in Moscow, Aldridge then made several long tours through the Volga and Central Russian provinces, and is believed to have been the first foreign actor to have done so. The provinces allowed the actor greater freedom, and he was therefore able to stage productions of plays such as *Macbeth* and *Richard III*, which were forbidden in the larger cities.

As noted in Chapter 2, Aldridge was able to bring a different performance style and new interpretations of Shakespeare's characters which had been shaped by the British tradition to the Russian stage. Through his touring, he reached an extremely wide audience, and also established good relationships with several key figures within Russian theatrical circles, many of whom were keen to learn from this Shakespeare specialist.<sup>22</sup> However, it is his performance in the role of Othello for which he is best remembered. Soviet critics identified elements in Aldridge's interpretation which they recognised as parallel to their own understanding of the character. Iurii Levin comments on the emphasis which Aldridge placed on his character's faith in

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<sup>20</sup> Marshall and Stock, p.221.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p.257.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p.223.

Desdemona,<sup>23</sup> whilst Sof'ia Nel's notes that though Aldridge portrayed the passion, jealousy and thirst for revenge which was typical of the mid-nineteenth century, he also introduced a deeper interpretation to the character of Othello than had previously been seen. This depth perhaps brought his Othello closer to the versions of Shakespeare's hero which would become popular on the Soviet stage: 'Олдридж давал расширенное толкование образа Отелло, показывая, что мавр страдает за поругание общечеловеческих идеалов.'<sup>24</sup>

As Irena R. Makaryk notes, Aldridge can also be given credit for the fact that he 'opened the theatrical trade routes to the East.'<sup>25</sup> Many foreign actors were to follow in his footsteps and embark on tours of Russia throughout the remaining decades of the nineteenth century, playing Shakespeare in their native languages. The most significant of these further visitors as far as the Russian tradition of *Othello* was concerned was the Italian actor, Tommaso Salvini.

Salvini played the role of Othello, supported by his Italian troupe at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow during Lent in 1882. Potter describes this as '[p]robably the most important event in the "international" history of *Othello*', as his performance was to prove a great inspiration to the director Konstantin Stanislavskii. From his descriptions in his autobiographical work *Moia zhizn' v iskusstve (My Life in Art)*, it seems that Stanislavskii was most impressed by the strength of emotion in Salvini's performance, describing how the Italian actor held the entire theatre in his power, as if in the palm of his hand. Stanislavskii in fact found the performance so striking that he feels the need to use images (likening Salvini to a sculptor and a tiger) in order to

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<sup>23</sup> Iuri Levin, 'Shestidesiatye gody' in *Shekspir i russkaia kul'tura* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), pp.407-527 (p.542).

<sup>24</sup> Sof'ia Nel's, *Shekspir na Sovetskoi stsene*, p.147. [Aldridge gave a wider interpretation of the character of Othello, showing that the Moor suffered for the violation of universal ideals.]

<sup>25</sup> Irena R. Makaryk, "'The Tsar of Poets'? The Changing Fortunes of Shakespeare in Russia', *Toronto Slavic Quarterly*, 23 (2008) <<http://www.utoronto.ca/tsq/23/Makaryk.shtml>> [accessed 21 March 2014] (para 30 of 54).



convey the full effect of the actor's technique.<sup>26</sup> As Pavis and many other theorists have indicated, the text is only one part of a theatrical performance, as an actor will supplement his role 'with all sorts of aural, gestural, mimic and postural means'.<sup>27</sup> The fact that Salvini was performing in Italian, and so a text with which Stanislavskii was far less familiar, may have allowed him to concentrate more on the 'supplementary means' in Salvini's work, which evidently left an extremely strong impression.

### 5.2.3 Stanislavskii's Productions of *Othello*

Stanislavskii was so inspired by Salvini that he was determined to stage and star in his own production of *Othello* with the Society for Art and Literature. In preparation, he and his wife visited Venice and spent time in museums, sketching costumes from frescoes and looking for antiques and tapestries for the sets. This detailed research is perhaps the result of the influence of another set of foreign visitors; the Meiningen Players, who visited Moscow in 1885 and 1890. Stanislavskii notes in *My Life in Art* that viewing performances by this German company had led him to attribute more importance to the visual representation of the historical setting of the plays that he staged: 'Под влиянием мейнингенцев мы возлагали больший, чем было нужно, расчет на внешнюю сторону постановки, главным образом на костюмы, историческую, музейную верность эпохе'.<sup>28</sup> Stanislavskii's first production of *Othello* consequently featured lavish scenery, complete with gondolas which floated across the stage.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> K. S. Stanislavskii, *Moia zhizn' v iskusstve*, pp.194-195.

<sup>27</sup> Pavis, *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*, p.144.

<sup>28</sup> K. S. Stanislavskii, *Moia zhizn' v iskusstve* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1978), p.178.

Jean Benedetti provides the following translation: 'Under the influence of the Meiningen we paid more attention than we should to the externals of the production, especially the costumes and period authenticity, particularly in the crowd scenes, which at the time were an important innovation on the theatre.' Stanislavski, *My Life in Art*, p.128.

<sup>29</sup> Stanislavskii, *Moia zhizn' v iskusstve*, pp.198-202.

Later on in his travels, Stanislavskii also describes a chance meeting with a 'красавец-араб' (a handsome Arab), who was wearing his national costume, in a restaurant in Paris. Fascinated, Stanislavskii asked to be introduced and spent time with him discussing his costume, and studying his body language and movements. Stanislavskii then returned to his hotel and attempted to replicate these gestures in front of the mirror with the aid of sheets and towels as a makeshift costume. As has already been indicated, when playing the role of Othello, Stanislavskii adopted a costume similar to that of the man he met in the Paris restaurant, suggesting that he felt that Othello was a character of North African origin. His description of the persona he was striving to perfect also indicates that for Stanislavskii, Othello was far from the uncivilised savage which had been suggested by some nineteenth century interpretations, and even the passionate incarnations of Aldridge and Salvini: 'стройного мавра с быстрыми поворотами головы, движениями рук и тела, точно у насторожившейся лани, плавную, царственную поступь и плоские кисти рук, обращенные ладонями в сторону собеседника.'<sup>30</sup> Stanislavskii states that his concept of Othello was now a combination of the two men who had inspired him to the role: a man with the passion of Salvini but the grace of his new acquaintance.<sup>31</sup>

On his return to Moscow, Stanislavskii began preparations to stage the production, which eventually premiered in January 1896. His description of the rehearsals in *My Life in Art* makes no reference to his choice of translation for the play. This absence of reference could suggest that Stanislavskii did not attribute much importance to the differences a translation could make to the performance of a foreign work, or simply that Veinberg's translation of 1864 had long been the canonised version, and so no other choice was possible. Stanislavskii describes the production as a work beset with problems. The company was very short of money and so they had to rehearse in his

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<sup>30</sup> Stanislavskii, *Moia zhizn' v iskusstve*, p.197. Benedetti provides the following translation: 'an elegant Moor with swift turns of the head, movement of the hands and body like a graceful deer, an imperious walk, slender arms with palms turned towards anyone speaking to me.' (Stanislavski, *My Life in Art*, p.277).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

apartment, his wife was unwell, and he therefore had to cast an extremely inexperienced actress in the role of Desdemona, and he had to employ an actor from outside the company to take on the role of Iago, with whose performance the director was not satisfied. Stanislavskii himself found the role of Othello extremely difficult, struggling with the emotions which were required of him, and experiencing problems with his voice.<sup>32</sup>

Stanislavskii did not therefore regard this first production of *Othello* as a success. Nevertheless, it did allow him to experiment and develop his concept of the themes in Shakespeare's tragedy. One element of the plot to which he gave great prominence was the racial differences between the play's two settings of Venice and Cyprus.

Начать с того, что Кипр – совсем не Венеция, как его обыкновенно изображают в театре. Кипре – Турция. Он населен не европейцами, а турками. Поэтому участвующие в народной сцене были одеты турками. Не следует забывать, что Отелло приехал на остров, где только что было потушено восстание. Одна искра – и все вновь вспыхнет.<sup>33</sup>

The political and racial undertones of the plot were to take on even greater significance in Stanislavskii's next production of *Othello*, which, 34 years later, took place after the Bolshevik Revolution.

#### 5.2.4 *Othello* at the Moscow Art Theatre, 1930

As can be seen from the subsequently published production plan, Stanislavskii's second production of *Othello* was presented in the 1864

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, pp.197-202.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p.199. Benedetti provides the following translation: 'Let me start with the fact that Cyprus was not Venetian, as it was normally depicted in the theatre, but Turkish. It was inhabited not by Europeans, but by Turks. The extras in the crowd scenes were dressed as such. We must not forget that Othello had come to an island where a rebellion had been put down. One spark and everything would burst into flame again.' (Stanislavski, *My Life in Art*, p.146).

translation of Pëtr Veinberg. Work started on the production as early as late December 1926, and there were 157 rehearsals. However, due to his deteriorating health, Stanislavskii had to relocate to Nice in 1929, on the advice of his doctor. In order to compensate for his absence, Stanislavskii wrote a detailed production plan which was sent to the company in Moscow page by page. As B. Zingerman describes, however, the production was to have a 'несчастливая судьба' (an unhappy fate).<sup>34</sup> There were only ten performances, from 14 March to 25 May 1930, as on 29 May, the actor playing Iago, Vladimir Sinitsyn, was killed when he fell from a fourth floor window.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, although short-lived, the production appears to have been extremely popular with the public, as the applause was such after the second performance that the curtain had to be raised 22 times.<sup>36</sup>

The role of Othello was played by Leonid Leonidov, described as 'один из корифеев' (one of the leading lights) of the Moscow Art Theatre, whose intense performance was likened by Stanislavskii to the much admired Salvini. Interestingly, as can be seen from the photograph below, his appearance seems to be of a more sub-Saharan African than the character Stanislavskii portrayed in 1896.

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<sup>34</sup> B. Zingerman, 'Othello' in *Moskovskii khudozhestvennyi teatr: 100 let*, ed. by A. M. Smelianskii (Moscow: Izd-vo Moskovskii khudozhestvennyi teatr, 1998), pp.127-128, p.127.

<sup>35</sup> *Stanislavsky – A Life in Letters*, ed. and trans. by Laurence Senelick, p.538.

<sup>36</sup> Zingerman, p.127.



**Figure 1: Leonid Leonidov as Othello.**

This initial success with audiences was to be continued when Stanislavskii's unfinished production plan was published in 1945. The work was therefore to influence many future productions, both in Russia and across the rest of Europe. The Soviet critic Sof'ia Nel's enthusiastically describes the plan's publication as 'Больш[ое] событи[е] в истории советского шекспироведения и театра'.<sup>37</sup> However, writing in 2002, Potter notes that *Othello* is 'so pervasive in [Stanislavskii's] posthumously published writings on the theatre [...] that it had a disproportionate effect in central and Eastern

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<sup>37</sup> Nel's, *Shakespeare na Sovetskoi stsene*, p.154. [A major event in the history of Soviet Shakespeare studies and theatre].

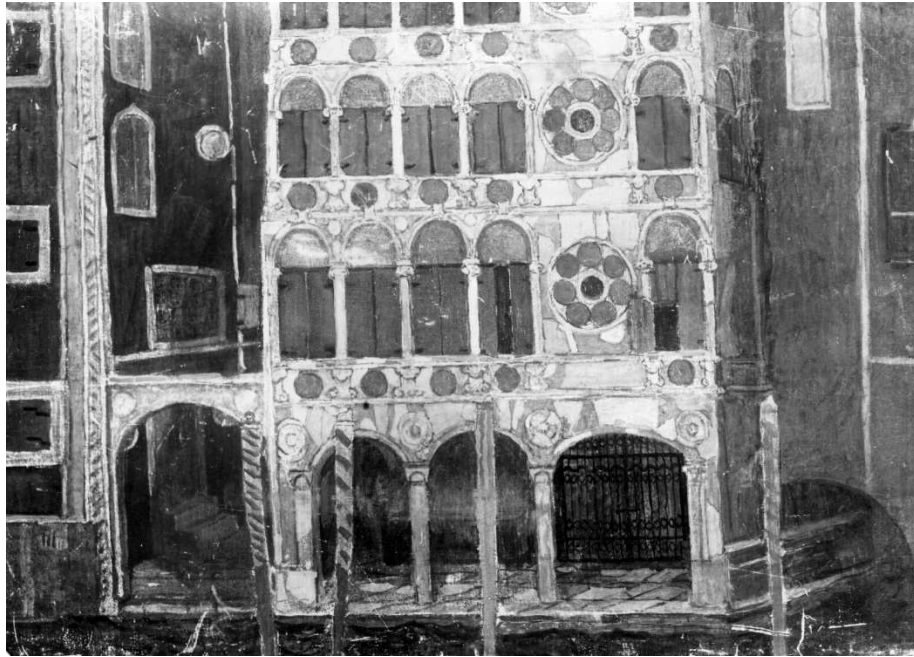
Europe.<sup>38</sup> However 'disproportionate' the effect, the publication must nevertheless have cemented Stanislavskii's interpretation of *Othello* in the minds of audiences and critics alike. In Russia, it must also have further strengthened the canonisation of Veinberg's translation. Writing in 1997, Maurice Friedberg notes that phrases from Veinberg's *Othello* 'continue to live in the Russian language as commonly used quotations from Shakespeare.'<sup>39</sup> Interestingly, he refers in particular here to the lines 'She loved me for the dangers I had passed|And I loved her that she did pity them' (*Othello*, I.1.158), over which Radlova was so strongly criticised when she offered an alternative translation.

In his plan for the new production, it is clear that Stanislavskii drew on many of the ideas which had formed the basis for his 1896 staging of the play. The sets featured a similarly lavish design by the artist A. Ia. Golovin. Possibly influenced by his collaboration with Edward Gordon-Craig, Stanislavskii was keen to avoid prolonged breaks between scenes, and so a revolving stage was used in order that there was no break in the action, whilst the Venice scenes again involved gondolas which were moved across the stage on wheels. The elaborate nature of the sets can be seen from the photograph of the mock-up of Brabantio's house from Act I Scene 1, and the design for the Senate set in Act I Scene 3.

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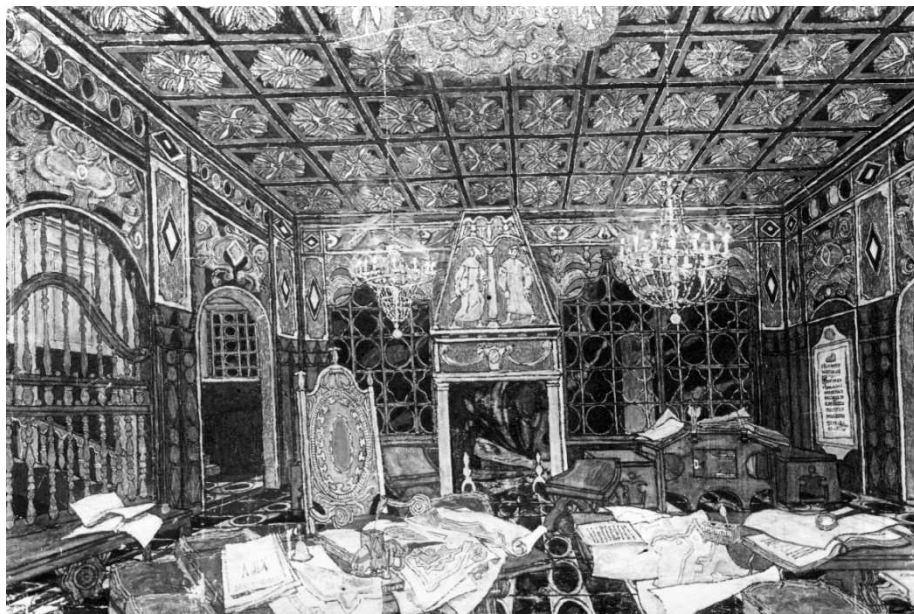
<sup>38</sup> Potter, p.98.

<sup>39</sup> Friedberg, p.56.



**Figure 2: Mock-up for Act I Scene 1, Outside Brabantio's House**

Though the set design may have been based on ideas from a previous production, they must have seemed even more ornate to audiences accustomed to the austerity of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Radlov's theatre company, it may be remembered, started life in the "Iron Hall" of a working club.



**Figure 3: Set design for Act I Scene 3 – The Senate**

As far as characterisation was concerned, Stanislavskii's production plan typically contains 'detailed discussions of individual characters and scenes, accompanied by many drawings of mise-en-scène.'<sup>40</sup> For example, he describes at length how Roderigo came to fall in love with Desdemona, and why Othello has chosen Cassio, rather than Iago, to be his lieutenant:

Но в Венеции среди блеска, чопорности, высокомерия на официальных приемах, среди высокопоставленных лиц, с которыми приходится иметь дело Отелло, Яго – не на месте. Кроме того, сам генерал слаб по части наук, писания и образования. Ему нужно иметь подле себя человека, который мог бы заполнять пробелы образования, адъютанта, которого можно было бы без боязни послать с поручениями к самому дожу, к сенаторам.<sup>41</sup>

Significantly however, critics have noted that Stanislavskii offered fresh interpretations of Shakespeare's principal characters. Sof'ia Nel's highlights the fact that Stanislavskii did not view jealousy as the central element of the hero's character: 'Станиславский считает, что ревность не является основным содержанием переживаний Отелло'.<sup>42</sup> She argued that he instead chose to concentrate on the competing emotions which the character experiences. In addition to lack of focus on jealousy, Potter asserts that Stanislavskii's treatment of the role of Desdemona was quite different from anything which would have been seen on stages in Britain or America at that time. She was usually an extremely passive character, with her more important scenes cut for fear of offending audiences. 'It would be several decades before the western theatre paid as much attention as he did to

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<sup>40</sup> Stříbrný, p.81.

<sup>41</sup> K. S. Stanislavskii. *Rezhisserskii plan Otello* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1945), p.14. Helen Nowak provides the following translation of this description: 'But in Venice, in the glittering, haughty and disdainful atmosphere of official receptions, amongst people of high standing with whom Othello is forced to mix, Iago is out of place. Besides, the general himself sadly lacks the art of spelling and general education. He needs a person who can fill these gaps, an adjutant whom he can send without hesitation as an envoy to the senators or even the Duke himself.' *Stanislavsky Produces Othello*, p.18.

<sup>42</sup> Nel's, p.155. [Stanislavskii believed that jealousy was not the main component in the emotional experience of Othello.]



Desdemona's sexuality.<sup>43</sup> From Stanislavskii's notes on the character, it also seems that he was keen for the Desdemona in his new production to depart from the established traditions for the character on the Russian stage: 'Не следует забывать, что Дездемона совсем не та, какую ее обыкновенно играют на сцене. Там из нее делают какую-то робкую и запуганную Офелию. Но Дездемона совсем не Офелия. Она решительная, смелая. Она не хочет обычных браков по домострою. Ей нужен сказочный царевич.'<sup>44</sup>

One of the other most notable aspects of Stanislavskii's interpretation of *Othello* is his emphasis of the political and social context of Othello's encampment on Cyprus, which are again highlighted in his second production. By 1930, the political content of plays and the social responsibility of the theatre had of course taken on greater significance. As Zdenek Stříbrný notes, '[w]hereas *Othello* had often been seen primarily as a domestic tragedy, Stanislavskii took great pains to plan the action on a large background of clashing political and social forces.'<sup>45</sup> Just as in the 1896 production, the discontent of Turkish inhabitants at the colonial situation in Cyprus was, as George Gibian describes, 'given great prominence'.<sup>46</sup> This prominence is clearly illustrated in this extract from Stanislavskii's instructions for Act II, Scene 1:

Кипр – турецкий город и жадно ждет своего освобождения от тяжело ига. Судьба туземцев должна теперь решиться: или вдали появится турецкий флот, и тогда они спасены, или придут венецианцы, и тогда они будут еще более угнетены. Наверху, венецианцы жадно ждут своих, потому что, если они не

<sup>43</sup> Potter, p.99.

<sup>44</sup> Stanislavskii, *Rezhisserskii plan*, p.17. Nowak's translation is as follows: 'One must not forget that Desdemona is not in the least like the girl usually portrayed on the stage. More often than not she is shown as a diffident and timid Ophelia. She is resolute, courageous, resists the orthodox type of marriage prescribed by tradition. She longs for a Prince Charming.' (p.20).

<sup>45</sup> Stříbrný, p.81.

<sup>46</sup> George Gibian, 'Shakespeare in Russia', p.31.

приплывут, то Монтано и вся охрана острова будут перерезаны. Их ожадательное состояние понятно.<sup>47</sup>

The costumes of the supporting cast used in the Cypriot port and street scenes certainly emphasise the “Eastern” nature of the play’s second setting. The detailed attention which Stanislavskii paid to the costumes and actions of his supporting cast members could also be seen as a further example of the influence of the Meiningen Company, by whose handling of ‘народные сцены’ (crowd scenes) Stanislavskii was extremely impressed, and therefore later incorporated this detail into his work.<sup>48</sup>



**Figure 4: A supporting cast member in Cypriot costume**

<sup>47</sup> Stanislavskii, *Rezhisserskii plan*, p.119. Nowak provides the following translation: ‘Cyprus is a Turkish town feverishly waiting for its liberation from the Venetian yoke. The fate of the natives is at stake: if the Turkish Fleet appears from afar they will be saved, but if the Venetians come, their life will be harder than ever. Above, the Venetians eagerly wait for reinforcements; they know, if reinforcements fail to come, Montano and his whole garrison can expect to be slaughtered by the natives.’ *Stanislavsky Produces Othello*, p.81.

<sup>48</sup> See Stanislavskii, *Moia zhizn' v iskusstve*, pp. 159 and 178.

As will be demonstrated in the next section of this chapter, in creating his productions of *Othello*, Radlov chose to draw on many elements which had already been established within the Russian performance tradition of the play. There were already competing interpretations of Othello's character: jealous or not jealous; civilised yet passionate foreigner or ill-educated savage. Stanislavskii had also demonstrated how the political elements in the play could be exploited. The fact that Radlov chose to work with a fresh new translation may have allowed him to better shape his own interpretation of the play. Before examining the work of the Radlovs, however, the last part of this contextual section will examine a production which followed a year after the Radlovs' *Othello* was first performed, in order to demonstrate the position within the theatrical polysystem which their work held.

### 5.2.5 *Othello* at the Realistic Theatre, 1936

Whilst much of the debate over Radlova's translation was still continuing, another *Othello* was staged in Moscow the following year, premiering on 23 March 1936.<sup>49</sup> The production, directed by another former student of Meierkhol'd, Nikolai Pavlovich Okhlopkov, offered an interpretation very different from Radlov's, and was described by one commentator as a '«шекспиремент»' (a "Shakesperiment").<sup>50</sup>

As Nick Worrall describes, 'Okhlopkov did not appear to have any clear philosophical conception of the play, but typically, tended to imagine it in terms of striking imagery'.<sup>51</sup> The set for the production, designed by Boris Knoblok, was therefore, like that for Stanislavskii's production, extremely elaborate, with some seamstresses employed to work on the project for three months. The staging encompassed a huge gondola, a symbol of Venice, which was split into two sections and jutted out into the audience. In the middle of

<sup>49</sup> David Zolotnitsky, *Zakat teatral'nogo oktiabria* (St Petersburg: Rossiiskii institut istorii iskusstv, 2006), p.393.

<sup>50</sup> B. Reykh, 'Shekspir v Realisticheskom teatre', *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 29 May 1936, p.3.

<sup>51</sup> Worrall, *Modernism to Realism on the Soviet Stage*, p.166-167.

the gondola's two sections was a raised acting area, which could be reached by four ramps which cut diagonally across the entire auditorium.<sup>52</sup> Worrall argues that Okhlopkov's approach to the play was based on a study of 'folk culture', and that he wanted to stage *Othello* 'as a piece of street theatre, involving something reminiscent of pageant-waggons processing from station to station.'<sup>53</sup> The unconventional entrance arrangements allowed the audience to view the actors processing onto the stage in palanquins, or on stretchers carried by stage servants. The director and his designer had originally intended to install swivel seats so that the audience could turn and follow the action as it moved around. This proposal was eventually abandoned due to the expense in favour of a more conventional seating arrangement, though Okhlopkov's measures to surround the audience with the performance here are very similar to those explored by Antonin Artaud with his concept of the Theatre of Cruelty.<sup>54</sup>

In spite of the impressive visual effects of the production, however, Worrall notes that production was a 'critical failure'<sup>55</sup>. Contemporary reviews indicate that critics were unsure of the main concept behind the production.<sup>56</sup> Sof'ia Nel's argues that Okhlopkov's *Othello* was not particularly close to Shakespeare, calling it a 'reworking'. She states that in contrast to Radlov, Okhlopkov emphasises the theme of jealousy: Nel's likens it to an Italian melodrama.<sup>57</sup> Adding to the debate over the use of coarse language in Radlova's translation, the critic B. Ber comments that the translation used by Okhlopkov, that of Iu. Ansimov, does not contain any of the coarser language

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p.167.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p.166.

<sup>54</sup> Artaud wrote *Le Théâtre et son Double* (The Theatre and its Double) between 1931 and 1935, it was later published in 1938. In this work, he describes how the spectacle of the Theatre of Cruelty should surround the audience, advocating what Kimberly Jannarone has described as 'a more immediate involvement of spectator with performance'. Okhlopkov also seems to have been keen to achieve this effect of immersion for his audience. Kimberly Jannarone, *Artaud and his Doubles* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012), p.91.

<sup>55</sup> Worrall, *Modernism to Realism on the Soviet Stage*, p.166.

<sup>56</sup> B. Ber, 'Iskazhennyi Shekspir – "Otello" v realisticheskom teatre', *Teatr i dramaturgiia*, 6 (1936), 330-333 (p.330).

<sup>57</sup> S. Nel's, "'Otello" na moskovskom stsene', *Sovetskii teatr*, 4-5, (1936), 16-21. (pp.20-21)

and expressions used by Radlova. He notes in particular that the term 'шлюха' (whore) has been substituted for slightly more decorous term 'блудница' (a much older word, with a meaning more like 'woman of loose morals'). As may be recalled from Chapters 2 and 4, Ansimov has here made the same choice as the nineteenth century translator Veinberg. Ironically, however, Ber states that the action in Okhlopkov's production is far more sexually motivated than in Radlov's concept of the play.<sup>58</sup>

It has unfortunately not been possible so far to locate the translation by Ansimov, or any further information on the translator. However, in a footnote to his biography of D. S. Mirsky, G. S. Smith states that Mirsky was involved in the editing of Ansimov's translation, and that Mirsky had thought the translation was of a high standard.<sup>59</sup> This connection is interesting, given Mirsky's earlier support of Radlova's work, but as yet no further sources on Ansimov and his working process have been uncovered, as there is no mention of his translations in Soviet encyclopaedias. It is of course possible that the name is a pseudonym, or that it is an indication of the lack of attention paid to translators which is still a contentious issue for those in the profession today. Nevertheless, Ber's observation on the apparent discord between Ansimov's 'politer' translation and Okhlopkov's interpretation of Shakespeare's characters' motivations raises an interesting point regarding the implications for a production if the translator and director have a different concept of the play, or do not have any contact with each other. Pavis notes that one of the fundamental problems of preparing a translation for the theatre is that the translation 'is intended for a future situation of enunciation with which the translator is barely, if at all, familiar.'<sup>60</sup> It has not been possible to discover whether Okhlopkov had any communication with his translator, but the Radlovs' personal relationship and the fact that they had clearly come to an agreement over their interpretation of *Othello* meant

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<sup>58</sup> Ber, pp.332-333.

<sup>59</sup> G. S. Smith, *D. S. Mirsky: A Russian-English Life, 1890-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.356.

<sup>60</sup> Pavis, *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*, p.137.

that Radlova's familiarity with the 'situation of enunciation' which her director intended must have been better than that of many others preparing translations for the stage.

Though many of the critics reviewing Okhopkov's *Othello* recognised his directorial talent and ingenuity, many viewed his decision to stage the play as a mistake. His production appears to have been completely overshadowed by that of Radlov, but also seems to have failed to meet the expectations of a production of an established classic. As Arkady Ostrovsky explains, '[w]hile the 1920s sought to modernize and adjust classics to the purposes of the proletarian art, the 1930s demanded a complete "faithfulness" and allowed no diversion from the canon.'<sup>61</sup> Amongst all the debate about the best way to present the true spirit of Shakespeare in order to educate the Soviet people, freer interpretations of Shakespeare's texts on stage were, in this period, apparently no longer welcome.

### 5.3 Radlov's Productions of *Othello*

Productions of *Othello* were central to Radlov's directorial oeuvre, and with each production came developments and the re-shaping of his interpretation of the play. However, his key concept of the play's plot and characters seem to have remained fairly constant throughout. In an interview given to the newspaper *Literaturnaia gazeta* in December 1935, Radlov stated that he interpreted *Othello* 'как пьесу не о ревности, а о большой любви' (as a play not about jealousy, but about great love).<sup>62</sup> He maintained that he formed this concept of the play '[в]опреки традиции' (in spite of the tradition) indicating that he felt jealousy had previously always been seen as the central theme of the play. For Radlov, Othello is not a jealous character: 'Не варвар-дикарь, полный ревности и готовый вспыхнуть в любую минуту, подобно бочке с порохом [...] а наоборот, умный, большой, современный,

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<sup>61</sup> Ostrovsky, p.73.

<sup>62</sup> E. P., 'Othello v Malom teatre', *Literaturnaia gazeta*, 9 December 1935, p.5.

доверчивый человек – вот такое Отелло.<sup>63</sup> He instead argued that previous interpretations of the play had begun from the wrong starting point. The key to the play, as far as Radlov was concerned, was not how quickly Othello becomes jealous, but rather how ingenious Iago has to be in order to destroy the trusting relationship between Othello and Desdemona:

[В]скрывать не то, как быстро начинает ревновать Отелло, а как трудно заставить его ревновать, не то, как проста задача Яго, а, наоборот, какой огромный и дьявольский талант должен был прийти ему на помощь, чтобы сломить естественное и глубокое доверие Отелло к Дездемоне.<sup>64</sup>

Long after the staging of Radlov's productions of *Othello*, Soviet critics such as Sof'ia Nel's continued to reinforce Radlov's interpretation by arguing that placing jealousy at the centre of the play was simply an extremely old-fashioned concept, typical of pre-revolutionary ideas: 'Основное содержание трагедии «Отелло» буржуазные исследователи Шекспира обычно сводили к проблеме ревности.'<sup>65</sup> Twenty-first century critics have also suggested that the greater emphasis on the scheming skills of Iago is an example of how Soviet directors such as Radlov took the opportunity to accentuate those elements of the play's plot which best suited the ideology of the new Soviet epoch. As Potter notes, 'Iago's obsession with money and his ruthless individualism made him an obvious representative of the rising capitalist culture of the Renaissance'<sup>66</sup> and therefore an ideal villain in the new Communist world.

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<sup>63</sup> Radlov, 'Kak ia stavliu Shekspira', p.51. [Not a savage barbarian, full of jealousy and ready to flare up at any minute, like a keg of gunpowder [...] but on the contrary, a clever, great, modern, trusting person; that is Othello.]

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p.51. [to reveal not how quickly Othello starts to become jealous, but how difficult it is to make him jealous: not how simple Iago's task is, but on the contrary, what immense and devilish talent he has to call on in order to break the natural and deep trust which Othello has in Desdemona.]

<sup>65</sup> Sof'ia Nel's, *Shekspir na Sovetskom stsene*, (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1964), p.140. [Bourgeois scholars of Shakespeare usually reduce the main substance of the tragedy *Othello* to the problem of jealousy.]

<sup>66</sup> Potter, p.100.

Radlov was also keen to dismiss the previous concepts of Othello as an uncivilised, wild savage, again dismissing them as pre-revolutionary prejudice: 'Отелло предстает перед нами не в виде дикаря, грубого, злого и ревнивого, каким его хотело видеть неумное арийское высокомерие XIX века, а сильным, мужественным воином, современником отважных мореплавателей елизаветинской эпохи.'<sup>67</sup> For Radlov, Othello clearly embodied all the best qualities of a man of the Elizabethan era. As has been noted in Chapter 2, 'the Soviet culture of the 1930s saw itself as a direct heir of the Renaissance',<sup>68</sup> which made Othello the ideal hero for the Soviet stage.

Radlov's decision to emphasise the elements in *Othello* which corresponded with the ideals of the Renaissance era was, as indicated, very much in keeping with how Soviet society wanted to be seen. Ostrovsky notes that '[d]rawing parallels between the socialist era and the Renaissance became almost commonplace in the 1930s,'<sup>69</sup> and these perceived parallels raise a number of fascinating connections. For many, the Renaissance represented the birth of modern man, 'a break from the Middle Ages, creating a modern understanding of humanity and its place in the world'.<sup>70</sup> It was a period of great advances in education, philosophy, exploration and scientific discovery. Likewise, in Russia in the 1930s, Stalin's brand of Communism was promoted as the only way forward to a better life, whilst the principles of socialist realism ensured a programme of mass education through the arts. However, as Jerry Brotton notes, the Renaissance period also had a much darker side.<sup>71</sup> It was a time of religious debate and conflict, and enormous inequality. Through war and disease, it witnessed the destruction of many indigenous peoples and cultures unprepared for adopting European beliefs and ways of living, while there were gruesome punishments in store for anyone falling foul

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<sup>67</sup> *Leningradskii gosudarstvennyi teatr p/r S. Radlova – K Shekspirovskomy festivaliu: Otello – Romeo i Dzhul'etta – Gamlet* (Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1939), p.10. [Othello appears to us not as the crude, fierce and jealous savage which the unwise arrogance of the nineteenth century wanted him to be seen as, but as a strong, brave warrior, a contemporary of the courageous seafarers of the Elizabethan era.]

<sup>68</sup> Ostrovsky, p.61.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Jerry Brotton, *The Renaissance Bazaar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp.21-22.

<sup>71</sup> Brotton, pp.10-12.



of those in power. While Soviet directors may have been happy to attribute characteristics typical of the rise of capitalism to their villains, it is unlikely that these other, darker parallels were ever highlighted at the time.

### 5.3.1 The First Leningrad Production

Radlov's first attempt at staging *Othello* was in 1927, when he was invited to direct a production of the play in Pëtr Veinberg's translation at the State Drama Theatre in Leningrad (formerly the Aleksandrinskii). He did not look back on this piece of work with satisfaction, going as far as to describe it in one article as one of the worst and least convincing productions he had ever staged.<sup>72</sup> Radlov gives a number of reasons for the failure of the production. Firstly, the leading role was shared by Iurii Iuriev and Illarion Pevtsov, who, whilst both talented actors, had such dissimilar styles that they almost delivered two completely different versions of the play. Secondly, he viewed the fact that the theatre refused to commission a new translation, and insisted that he use that of Veinberg, as a principal reason for the difficulties he faced with the production: 'У меня был в руках старый и очень нехороший перевод Вейнберга, и я не мог убедить театр заказать новый, хотя и пытался его в этом убедить.'<sup>73</sup>

However, Radlov also admits that another cause for the lack of success in the production was a fault of his own. He asserts that he failed to recognise the importance of the contrasts which Shakespeare creates throughout the play, many of which are provided by the sub-plots, seemingly not connected to the central action of the tragedy. He singles out the comical scenes between Cassio and Bianca, which he had initially understood as simply offering the audience a reprise from the intense nature of the tragic scenes, but which he later came to understand provided an important contrast in order to better

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<sup>72</sup> Radlov, 'Kak ia stavliu Shekspira', p.18.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. p.18. [I had in hand the old and very bad translation of Veinberg, and I could not persuade the theatre to order a new one, though I tried to persuade them of this.]

understand the relationship between Othello and Desdemona: 'эти сцены связаны с основной темой пьесы, ибо отношения между Бианкой и Кассио – это грубая физическая любовь, так контрастирующая с большой человеческой любовью Отелло и Дездемоны.'<sup>74</sup>

While Radlov may not have looked back favourably on his 1927 staging of *Othello*, it is clear that his work on this production helped to shape his interpretations of the play which were to follow in the 1930s. He later described how it was this work which had made him realise the necessity of moving away from the traditional, pre-revolutionary interpretations of Shakespeare. For Radlov, the difference between the production at the State Drama Theatre and his next staging of *Othello* at the Molodoi (Young) Theatre, which premiered in 1932, was a clear example of the 'борьба за советского Шекспира' ('the fight for a Soviet Shakespeare').<sup>75</sup>

### 5.3.2 *Othello* at the Molodoi Theatre

In contrast to his criticism of the use of Veinberg's translation in the 1927 production, Radlov attributes much of his satisfaction with the 1932 production to the fact that he was able to use the new translation by his wife: 'у меня в руках имелся новый превосходный перевод Анны Радловой, в сущности, всем своим живым мастерством предопределивший переход к реалистической трактовке Шекспира.'<sup>76</sup> Indeed, in his "Expositional thesis", published to accompany the première of the production, Radlov keenly explains the importance of using a new translation. The reasons he gives are very similar to those his wife asserts in her writings on translation: that the translators of the nineteenth century failed to pay adequate attention to the

<sup>74</sup> Radlov, 'Shekspir i problemy rezhissury', *Teatr i dramaturgiia*, 2 (1936), 57-62 ( p.61). [these scenes are connected with the main theme of the play, because the relationship between Bianca and Cassio is a coarse, physical love, so a contrast with the great, human love of Othello and Desdemona.]

<sup>75</sup> S. E. Radlov, 'Vstupitel'noe slovo S. E. Radlova k p'ese Shekspira *Otello*', RNB, f.625, d.127

<sup>76</sup> Radlov, 'Kak ia stavliu Shekspira', p.20. 'I had in hand the excellent new translation by Anna Radlova, which in essence, with all its vivid mastery, predetermined the transition to a realistic interpretation of Shakespeare.]

rhythms and verse of Shakespeare's text; that they removed much of the coarser language which was present in the original; that there were numerous inaccuracies; and that their work was extremely verbose and much longer than their source text, so that the power of Shakespeare's work was diluted.<sup>77</sup> Possibly anticipating much of the criticism which was to follow, Radlov made a particular point of defending his wife's decision to use much coarser language in her translation of certain scenes than had previously been employed by nineteenth century translators:

В той пьесе в переводе А. Радловой, которую вы сейчас услышите, вы найдете довольно много очень волных и резких слов. Для чего они нужны? Ну, прежде всего, потому что они написаны у Шекспира. А для чего они нужны Шекспиру? Потому что он ими приближает искусство к реальной жизни, к реальным людям.<sup>78</sup>

Radlov's reference here to the fact that Shakespeare's characters should be recognisable as real people was clearly an important aim for the production, as he also stated that it was an essential factor in the design of scenery and costumes, which were completed by the artist Aleksandr Rykov: 'костюм является не нарядом для выхода на сцену, а реально функционирующим в движениях и в жизни человека'.<sup>79</sup> Both Radlov as director and Radlova as translator argued for the need for Shakespeare to be accessible to ordinary people, so that they could identify with the characters on stage.

In an article he wrote in celebration of a "Shakespeare festival" in 1939 which reflected on all his Shakespearean productions, Radlov stated that one of the key realisations he had between the productions in 1927 and 1932 was that a greater knowledge of the period in which the play was written would allow

<sup>77</sup> S. E. Radlov, 'Ekspozitsionnye tezisy k postanovke *Otello* v Leningradskom Gosudarstvennom Molodom Teatre (1932), RNB, f.625, d. 65.

<sup>78</sup> Radlov, 'Vstupitel'noe slovo S. E. Radlova k p'ese Shekspira *Otello*', RNB, f.625, d.127. 'In this play, in the translation of A. Radlova, which you are now going to hear, you will find quite a lot of very free and harsh words. Why are they necessary? Well, first and foremost because they are written in Shakespeare. And why were they necessary for Shakespeare? Because with them he brings art closer to real life, to real people.'

<sup>79</sup> Radlov, 'Kak ia stavliu Shekspira', p.54. [A costume is not just clothes for wearing on stage, but for really functioning in the movements and life of a person.]

him to develop a better understanding of the characters: 'Более близкое знакомство с эпохой окрасило для меня совершенно заново целый ряд сцен, положений, намеков и характеров трагедии.'<sup>80</sup> He clearly imparted the importance of this contextual knowledge to the actors in his company, as can be seen in the reflections of Tamara Iakobson, who played the role of Desdemona. In her notes on the role, Iakobson makes it clear that this understanding of the time provided crucial insight into the character of Desdemona. She argued that a new, stronger interpretation of the role was required: 'Эта бурная эпоха, эпоха английского возрождения и явилась основой для нового толкования образа Дездемоны, далекой от Дездемоны прежней и обычной трактовки, в которой тихая и покорная грусть, беспомощные женские слезы были главными красками роли.'<sup>81</sup> Iakobson argues that the clues to this stronger incarnation of Desdemona are there in her actions in the play, remarking that eloping with Othello without the knowledge of her father is a far greater flouting of social conventions than sharing in Iago's rather coarse banter at the beginning of the second act. Iakobson states that 'только женщина полная сознания своей свободы и энергии к борьбе за нее' ('only a woman fully conscious of her freedom and the energy to fight for it') would speak up for Othello in front of her father and national dignitaries in the way that she does.<sup>82</sup>

The fact that Radlov was working with actors who were part of his company and whom he had helped to train was clearly an advantage for the director, as it was easier for him to help shape their interpretations, and instil his own principles into their work. Othello was played by Georgii Eremeev. He was very young to take on the part, as he had only graduated from theatre school in 1929, but it became one of the most important roles of his career, and one

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<sup>80</sup> *Leningradskii gosudarstvennyi teatr p/r S. Radlova – K Shekspirovskomu festivaliu: Otello – Romeo i Dzhul'etta – Gamlet* (Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1939), pp.7-8. [A much closer knowledge of the era completely coloured anew quite a number of scenes for me, the situations, allusions and characters of the tragedy.]

<sup>81</sup> Iakobson, Tamara. 'Dezdemona – Zametka', RNB, f.625, d.781. [This turbulent era, the era of the English Renaissance, was the basis for a new interpretation of the character of Desdemona, far from the usual Desdemona of previous interpretations, in which quiet and sadness, with helpless female tears, were the main features of the role.]

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

that he returned to many times. When writing the actor's obituary in 1940, Radlov noted that Eremeev's Othello had always been regarded as his best performance by his colleagues.<sup>83</sup> Eremeev's interpretation of the role emphasised the contrasting elements in the hero's character, his almost childlike trust in people alongside the power he exerts as a strong and capable military leader.<sup>84</sup> Clearly influenced by his director, the actor stresses the importance of understanding the social order of Shakespeare's society in order to portray the conflicting elements of Othello's character successfully. Radlov was also satisfied that the actor Dmitrii Dudnikov, in the role of Iago, had fully understood and conveyed the importance of Iago's calculating nature in the downfall of Othello: 'он создает в Яго образ исключительного обаяния, которому трудно не подчиниться.'<sup>85</sup>

David Zolotnitsky notes that the lack of criticism written on this production makes its analysis difficult.<sup>86</sup> However, the sources which do exist imply that Radlov was not alone in believing that his production successfully conveyed his aims to the audience. On the treatment of jealousy in the play, the critic, Sergei Tsimbal wrote:

Сам Отелло сопротивляется возникающему в нем чувству, но провокации Яго, интриги и хитросплетения, которыми он окружен, приводят его к катастрофе – значит, дело не в самом чувстве ревности, которое играет подробную роль, а в тех взаимоотношениях человека и среды, которые обуславливаются и социальными, и расовым, и всякими иными признаками. Вот эта тема и стала основой для спектакля Молодого театра.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>83</sup> Radlov, 'Georgii Eremeev', *Teatr*, 3 (1940) 111-115, (p.114).

<sup>84</sup> Georgii Eremeev, 'Otello – Zаметка', RNB, f.625, d.742.

<sup>85</sup> Radlov, 'Kak ia stavliu Shekspira', p.53. [he creates in Iago a character of exceptional charm, whom it is difficult not to obey.]

<sup>86</sup> Zolotnitsky, *Sergei Radlov*, p.102.

<sup>87</sup> S.Tsimbal, 'Molodoi teatr i ego puti', *Rabochii I teatr*, 19 (1933), 5-7 (p.6). [Othello himself resists the feeling rising up inside him, but the provocation from Iago, the intrigue and web of artful designs with which he is surrounded, lead him to catastrophe. This means that it is not the feeling of jealousy itself, whose role is circumstantial, but those interrelations between

Othello's jealousy is no longer viewed as the principal driving force of the plot, as was always Radlov's intention. Instead, it is Iago's manipulation of the wider social forces at play which lead to the hero's downfall. As has been demonstrated, Stanislavskii was already placing a heavy emphasis on his own interpretation of the political forces underlying the plot of *Othello* in his 1930 production. Two years later, when, following the formation of the Writers' Union, the concept of socialist realism was beginning to take shape, the prominence of social and political subject matter was all the more important. Radlov's use of a new translation, which not only refreshed and modernised Shakespeare's text, but emphasised the elements of the Othello's character most fitting with his concept of the socialist realist 'positive hero'<sup>88</sup>, must have allowed him to further shape the play to his cause for a Soviet Shakespeare.

### 5.3.3 *Othello* at Radlov's Studio-Theatre

In 1935, Radlov revived *Othello* at his studio theatre in Leningrad (Teatr-Studio pod rukovodstvom Sergeia Radlova). This was in fact the same venue as the Molodoi Theatre, but had been re-named following its transfer into the Leningrad State Theatre system.<sup>89</sup> The production therefore used Radlova's translation once more, and featured the same cast as his 1932 work, with Eremeev in the lead role, Dudnikov as Iago and Iakobson as Desdemona.

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man and his environment, which are conditioned by social, racial and various other criteria. This is the theme which became the foundation for the play at the Molodoi Theatre.]

<sup>88</sup> Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, p.46.

<sup>89</sup> Zolotnitsky, *Sergei Radlov*, p.108.



Figure 5: Georgii Eremeev as Othello

In his subsequent writings on Shakespeare, Radlov seems to view this third attempt at *Othello* as a great success, and the realisation of all his previous work on the play. The theatre critic Aleksei Gvozdev was in agreement that Radlov's revival of *Othello* represented a considerable achievement: 'Новая режиссерская редакция постановки «Отелло» в театре-студии им. С. Э. Радлова отмечена исключительной свежестью эмоционального раскрытия

образов Шекспира.<sup>90</sup> He noted that rather than simply making the characters of Othello and Iago of primary importance, the strength of the production meant that the attention of the audience was drawn to many different aspects of the play. 'Каждая деталь становится значительной, но не сама по себе взятая, а как неотъемлемая часть рвущегося вперед действия.'<sup>91</sup> This observation seems to echo that of Tsimbal on Radlov's earlier production, that the wider social concerns of Shakespeare's era had been given greater prominence alongside the personal experience of the characters. The social morals of any theatre production were now under even greater scrutiny following the formal advent of socialist realism in 1934.

As this was the second time Radlov had used his wife's translation, he does not seem to have felt the need to promote his choice in quite the same way as he did for the 1932 production. Nevertheless, the translation's innovative qualities were still picked up on by critics. Echoing the earlier arguments of the Radlovs themselves, Tsimbal proclaimed that Radlova's translation brought Soviet audiences closer to the "original" Shakespeare, returning the 'грубоват[ая] мужественность и поэтич[еск]ая сил[а]' (rough masculinity and poetic power) to his work which had been smoothed out by the translators of the past.<sup>92</sup> Gvozdev does not make any comment on Anna Radlova's translation, preferring to focus solely on aspects of the performance. However, he does note the clarity of diction with which the text is conveyed to the audience, implying that it was easy for the actors to work with. He also notes that the actors appear extremely well-rehearsed, ensuring they are able to successfully convey the action to the audience.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> A. Gvozdev, 'K vysotam tragicheskogo spektaklia – *Otello* v teatre-studii p/r S. E. Radlova', *Rabochii i teatr*, 9 (1935), 110-111 (p.110). [The new directorial version of the production *Othello* at Sergei Radlov's Theatre-Studio is noted for the exceptional freshness of the emotional manifestation of Shakespeare's characters.]

<sup>91</sup> Gvozdev, p.110. [Every detail becomes significant, not taken by itself, but as an integral part of the action surging forward.]

<sup>92</sup> S. Tsimbal, '*Otello* – prem'era teatra studii p/r S. E. Radlova', *Literaturnyi Leningrad*, 26 April 1935, p.4.

<sup>93</sup> Gvozdev, p.110.



Reviewers provide rather mixed reactions to the performances of the individual actors. Gvozdev views the portrayal of Iago by Dudnikov as stronger than that of Othello by Eremeev. Nevertheless, whilst he compliments Dudnikov on his portrayal of the outward Iago, the 'honest soldier,' trying to further his career, Gvozdev also stresses that he lacks the inner passions by which the character is driven.



**Figure 6: Georgii Eremeev as Othello and Dmitrii Dudnikov as Iago**

Gvozdev also suggests that while Iakobson's portrayal of Desdemona is outwardly beautiful, the inner emotions of the character are not successfully conveyed to the audience. The critic S. Tsimbal, however, praises Iakobson for the maturity and flair of her performance, particularly in the final scene.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> S. Tsimbal, 'Othello – prem'era teatra studii p/r S. E. Radlova', *Literaturnyi Leningrad*, 26 April 1935, p.4.



**Figure 7: Georgii Eremeev as Othello and Tamara Iakobson as Desdemona**

The performances of the supporting cast members are also viewed in a mixed light. The actress Solshal'skaia, playing Emilia, is singled out for her performance in the final scene, and the actor Smirnov, portraying the role of Cassio, is complimented by both Gvozdev and Tsimbal for his gentle, yet vivid performance.<sup>95</sup> However, both critics view the portrayal of the secondary roles of Roderigo and Bianca in a less positive light. For Gvozdev, both characters have traces of the grotesque about them, which goes against the realistic aims of the production, whilst Tsimbal describes the performances of actors Fedorov and Smirnova as superficial caricatures.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Gvozdev, p.111.

<sup>96</sup> Tsimbal, *'Otello'*, p.4.



**Figure 8: Dmitrii Dudnikov as Iago, Fedorov as Roderigo  
(The backdrop is a map showing Rhodes and Cyprus)**

As far as the visual aspects of the production were concerned, Gvozdev notes the success of the collaboration between director and set designer for the production, Victor Basov. He describes what he felt was a rare degree of harmonisation: 'Художник не только «прочел» пьесу, но и зажегся замыслом режиссера, в свою очередь вдохновляя его творчество. Такого рода метод работы на театре – редко явление.'<sup>97</sup> Gvozdev continues to describe Basov's mastery at creating a design for the stage out of simple materials which was reminiscent of the work of some of the greatest Italian painters such as Tiepolo, while Tsimbal also notes how well the director and designer complemented each other: 'Мысль режиссера превосходно реализована в работе художника Басова'.<sup>98</sup> Gvozdev's reference to simple materials reflects the fact that Radlov's choice of staging for his production

<sup>97</sup> Gvozdev, p.110. [The artist has not only 'read through' the play, but has been captivated by the concept of the director, in turn inspiring his work. Such an affinity of work methods rarely happens in the theatre.]

<sup>98</sup> Tsimbal, 'Otello – prem'era teatra studii p/r S. E. Radlova', *Literaturnyi Leningrad*, 26 April 1935, p.4. [The concept of the director was superbly realised in the work of the designer Basov.]

was far less ornate than that of Stanislavskii, though this is perhaps unsurprising given the experimental nature of his “studio” as opposed to an established theatre with traditions to maintain and more financial resources on which to draw. Nevertheless, the simpler staging, along with the seemingly somewhat satiric costumes, indicates that this was a conceptually modern production, in keeping with Radlova’s quest to produce a newly accessible version of the text.



Figure 9: Act I Scene 3 - The Senate. Georgii Eremeev as Othello and Tamara Iakobson as Desdemona

### 5.3.4 *Othello* at the Malyi Theatre, Moscow

Based on the success of his other Shakespearean productions, Radlov was then invited to stage a production of *Othello* at the Malyi theatre in Moscow. The production premiered on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1935. Once again, it used Anna Radlova’s translation, the first time it had been seen on stage in Moscow. In the pamphlet published by the Malyi theatre to accompany the new production, it was described as a ‘resurrection’ of *Othello*: ‘Малый театр стремится показать в своей новой работе не только *Отелло*, но и



воссоздать *Отелло*.<sup>99</sup> Once again, Radlova's translation was promoted as an essential part of this innovative interpretation.

Существенным вопросом работы над Шекспиром является также выбор перевода. Малый театр и здесь стремится стоять на уровне требований, предъявляемых современностью, и выбор его останавливается на новом переводе Анны Радловой, сделанном с большей точностью, чем это имело место в ранее существовавших переводах, во многом значительно искажавших Шекспира.<sup>100</sup>

The pamphlet highlights the importance of the developments in the practice of Soviet translation in enabling audiences to fully understand and appreciate Shakespeare's work, and also advertises the fact that the Malyi theatre was co-organising a conferences on Shakespeare with the Shakespeare section of the All-Russian Theatre Society (Vserossiiskoe teatral'noe obshchestvo), in order to facilitate discussion of Russian interpretations of Shakespeare in translations and productions. This collaboration put the production, and with it, Radlova's translation, at the heart of the debate on the Soviet interpretation of Shakespeare, and is a further example of how discussion between theatre practitioners, academics and translators seems to have been officially promoted far more within the Soviet Union than in many other cultures. As highlighted in the introduction to this thesis, the centralised control of the Stalinist cultural system made possible this type of all-encompassing debate.

Much of the reaction to Radlova's translation, such as the distaste at her use of coarser, everyday language and the controversy over her translation of the

<sup>99</sup> *Otello v Malom teatre – postanovke 1935* (Moscow: Izdanie muzeia gosudarstvennogo akademicheskogo Malogo Teatra, 1935), p.9. [The Malyi theatre tries to show in its new work not only *Othello*, a recreation of *Othello*.]

<sup>100</sup> *"Otello" v Malom teatre – postanovka 1935 g.* (Moscow: Publishing House of the Museum of the State Academic Malyi Theatre, 1935), p.11. [The essential question of working on Shakespeare is also a choice of translation. The Malyi theatre aspires here to meet the requirements of modernity, and its choice in favour of the new translation by Anna Radlova, carried out with greater accuracy than has occurred in earlier, existing translations, which in many ways considerably distorted Shakespeare.]

phrase 'she loved me for the dangers I had passed' has already been discussed in Chapter 4. For the purposes of this chapter, however, the focus will be on the criticism which deals with the direct effect which the translation had on the production itself, and how workable it seemed to be for the actors performing it. As has already been noted, the theatre critic Iu. Iuzovskii was one of the chief detractors of Radlova's translation. With regard to the translation in performance, Iuzovskii comments that whilst Veinberg may have only thought of the readers of his translation, Radlova seems to have only thought of her audience, and the actors performing it. He asserts that the language she uses is often very condensed, giving the actors space to perform: 'Она приглашает актера к творческой инициативе.'<sup>101</sup> In other words, the concise nature of Radlova's text allows the actors to have maximum input, employing many of the supplementary means (gestural, postural) to which Pavis referred in order to magnify meaning, rather than the verbal text driving the action. However, Iuzovskii states that Radlova's lines are sometimes too compact, so that one has to return to an older translation, such as that of Veinberg, in order to understand them, and that he would rather sacrifice this density, so that the audience is not left to solve riddles: 'мы готовы немедленно пожертвовать этой сжатостью, если из-за этого теряется ясность мысли.'<sup>102</sup> Iuzovskii's confusion over the meaning of some lines in Radlova's translation could also support Kornei Chukovskii's observations on the problems caused by Radlova's devotion to the principle of equilinearity, where he argued that crucial elements of Shakespeare's language were discarded in order to maintain the correct number of syllables.<sup>103</sup>

In a review published later in December 1935, the critic S. Ignatov makes a mixture of positive and negative points about Radlova's translation. He begins by proclaiming that the leading actor, Aleksandr Ostuzhev has been able to

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<sup>101</sup> Iuzovskii, p.3. [She invites the actor to have creative initiative.]

<sup>102</sup> Iuzovskii, p.3. [We would immediately sacrifice this compactness because of the loss of clarity of meaning.]

<sup>103</sup> Kornei Chukovskii, 'Astma u Dezdemony', *Teatr*, 2, 1940, pp.98-109.

reveal the real, “original” Shakespeare to Soviet audiences, and that he has been helped in this by Radlova’s translation, which had removed the ‘сладость’ (saccharine aspects) of Veinberg’s earlier ‘re-writing’ of the play. Providing an interesting contrast to luzovskii, he commends Radlova for the succinct nature of her language. However, he does comment that Radlova’s pedantic accuracy and some mistakes in her translation hamper the actors, indicating a few places where he found the text difficult to comprehend. Nevertheless, Ignatov acknowledges that Radlova’s translation is still a considerable achievement, which has played a significant part in making Radlov’s Moscow production a success.

Гораздо важнее и ценнее, что переводчица удалось найти язык очень сжатый и выразительный, несомненно помогающий актеру не декламировать, а лепить словесную ткань роли. В этом, как и в точности перевода, все же несколько смягчающего ряд выражений подлинника, и в яркости и сочности языка – большая заслуга А. Д. Радловой.<sup>104</sup>

Ignatov also refers to the ‘polemic’ which had arisen over Radlova’s translation. Though he comments that he does not particularly want to enter the debate, he dismisses many of luzovskii’s criticisms, and suggests that luzovskii is not really in a position to evaluate the translation, clearly never having read the Shakespeare’s text in English. ‘Есть хороший обычай: при оценке перевода заглядывать в подлинник.’<sup>105</sup> However, both the criticism of luzovskii and that of Ignatov regarding the difficulties which the translation causes for the actors are perhaps best answered by the actor in the leading role – Aleksandr Ostuzhev.

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<sup>104</sup> Ignatov, ‘Torzhestvo aktera *Otello* v Malom teatre’, *Teatr i dramaturgiia*, 2 (1935), 63-69 (p.63). [Much more important and valuable is the fact that the translator has been successful in finding very succinct and expressive language, undoubtedly helping the actor not to recite but sculpt the oral fabric of the role. This, and the accuracy of the translation, though somewhat softening a number of expressions from the original, and the brilliance and succulence of the language is the major input from Anna Radlova.]

<sup>105</sup> Ibid. [There is a good custom: before appraising a translation, glance at the original.]

In the furore which surrounded Radlova's translation during the run of the production at the Malyi, Ostuzhev became one of her most ardent supporters, speaking in her defence at conferences and writing letters to the press. In an interview first published in 1938, Ostuzhev described the reasons for his preference:

Приглаженный, певучий текст Вейнберга был лишен стремительности, динамичности шекспировской мысли [...] Нередко текст вставал препятствием между актером и воплощаемой им идеей. Этот недостаток блестяще усрtranен новым переводом А. Радловой, и сколь бы не было трудно переучиваться с привычно текста на новый, я решительно отказался от перевода Вейнберга и перешел к переводу Радловой: здесь я и в тексте почувствовал шекспировскую конкретность, ясность, целеустремленность слова.<sup>106</sup>

The fact that Ostuzhev states that he had to completely re-learn the role also emphasises the fact that Veinberg's translation of *Othello* had complete dominance in theatres up until these first performances using Radlova's translation. His comments here regarding Radlova's text allowing room for artistic expression, reflect those of Iuzovskii, though as an actor, Ostuzhev only sees this opportunity for creativity in a positive light, and makes no mention of being hampered by inaccuracies in the translation. The concept of the production enabling maximum input from the actors is further reflected in a review of the production from Nel's, who comments that Radlov's

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<sup>106</sup> V. D. Tizengauzen, 'Ostuzhev ob Otello' in *Ostuzhev-Otello: sbornik*, ed. by V. L. Finkel'shtein (Leningrad, Moscow: Vseros. teatral'noe ob-vo, 1938), pp.19-36 (pp.35-36). This interview is also published in an English translation by Avril Pyman in the collection *Shakespeare in the Soviet Union*, ed. by Roman Samarin and Alexander Nikolyukin (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966), pp.150-164. Pyman therefore provides the following translation of this quotation: 'Weinberg's polished, sing-song translation lacked the vigour and the dynamic quality of Shakespeare's thought [...] Often the text served as a barrier between the actor and the image he was trying to create. This fault has been brilliantly corrected by the new translation by Anna Radlova and, although it was extremely hard to relearn the text to which I had become accustomed, I definitely rejected Weinberg's translation in favour of Radlova's: in this text I felt Shakespeare's earthiness, his clarity and the purposefulness of his language.' (p.164).



interpretation of Shakespeare, whilst perhaps not highly innovative, is free from pretentiousness or affectation, and that this clarity gives the actors freedom to develop their roles. 'У Радлова нет никаких особых чисто режиссерских выдумок, ни хороших, ни плохих. Но он не загромождает сцену, не мешает актеру внешними бутафорок – ими фокусами. Тем самым он дает большой простор как физический, так и внутренне эмоциональный, для творчества актера.'<sup>107</sup> The simple and modern nature of Radlova's translation could well have assisted the actors in their bodily amplification of the verbal text, as Ostuzhev's words suggest. These points would seem to add weight to the arguments of Shakespeare translation scholars which were discussed in Chapter 1, regarding the freedom which performing a canonised text in a foreign language allows. Re-translation, bringing the text up-to-date so that the actors are working with essentially contemporary vocabulary, can only serve to enhance this freedom. It also ensures a greater degree of accessibility and relevance for the audience.

Radlov's decision to cast Ostuzhev in the role of *Othello* caused some controversy amongst other members of the Malyi Theatre company, as Ostuzhev was 61 by the time of the first performance. Many considered his career to be all but over, as he had lost his hearing and had not been cast in a significant role since 1929.<sup>108</sup> However, Radlov was convinced that he had made the correct choice of leading actor, and in the eyes of many spectators, it proved to be an extremely wise decision: 'Отелло в Малом театре – спектакль актера, и заслуга постановщика С. Радлов прежде всего в том, что он нашел этого актера.'<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> S. Nel's, "'Отелло" на Московском стсене', p.19. [Radlov does not have any particular purely directorial ideas, not good, not bad. But he does not overload the stage; the actor is not disturbed by the props man, by his tricks. Thus he gives a lot of space for the physical and so the inherently emotional interpretation of the actor.]

<sup>108</sup> Zolotnitsky, *The Shakespearian Fate of a Soviet Director*, p.131.

<sup>109</sup> Ignatov, p.69. [*Othello* at the Malyi Theatre is the performance of an actor, and the prime merit of director S. Radlov has been that he found that actor.]



**Figure 10: Aleksandr Ostuzhev as *Othello***

Radlov stated in interviews with the press that his concept for this production of *Othello* was the same as it had been for his production in Leningrad, though naturally, with a group of different performers, these ideas were expressed in a different way. He also spoke of the importance of using the individual talents and skills of each actor. Nevertheless, Radlov also admitted

that working with actors used to the traditions of a company different from his own was not without its problems: 'Передо мной была задача максимально использовать актерскую культуру Малого театра. Центральная проблема моего варианта классической постановки шекспировской трагедии заключалась в поисках органического сочетания шекспировского реализма с романтизмом.'<sup>110</sup> This difference in theatre traditions is reflected in some of the reviews of the production, with Luzovskii commenting that the Leningrad studio production provided a far stronger reflection of Radlov's interpretation of the play. Nevertheless, Radlov was quick to praise his leading actor for being prepared to take on a new translation and new interpretation of *Othello*: 'Отелло – народным артистом Остужевым, который мужественно и решительно стал на путь нашего нового понимания Шекспира, отбросив старый и обветшалый перевод Вейнберга, переучив заново огромную роль Отелло, создав образ пламенный, нежный, страстный и незабываемый.'<sup>111</sup>

The production was originally supposed to have its première in February 1936, but this date was moved forward to December 1935.<sup>112</sup> According to the diary of Ostuzhev, rehearsals for the production began early in 1935, though there was a prolonged break from mid-January to mid-March.<sup>113</sup> Radlov therefore rehearsed his Leningrad production alongside preparing for his Moscow *Othello*. Due to this rather unconventional rehearsal schedule, and rather fortunately for modern research, Radlov and Ostuzhev discussed much of their interpretation of the character of Othello in letters, rather than

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<sup>110</sup> E. P., p.5. [Before me was the task of making the most of the acting culture of the Malyi Theatre. The central challenge of my version of a classical production of Shakespeare tragedy was in the search for a combination which integrated Shakespeare's realism with romanticism.]

<sup>111</sup> Sergei Radlov, 'Shekspir na sovetskom stsene', Stat'ia dlia gazety *Veчерhniaia* Moskva, 19 April 1939.

RNB, f.625, d.87, l.5. [Othello, performed by the people's artist Ostuzhev, who courageously and decisively started on the path of our new understanding of Shakespeare, discarding the old and decrepit translation of Veinberg, learning anew the enormous role of Othello, creating an ardent, tender, passionate and unforgettable figure.]

<sup>112</sup> E. P., p.5.

<sup>113</sup> 'Dnevnikovaia zapis' Ostuzheva A. A. Raboty nad rol'iu Otello po odnoimennoi tragedii Shekspira V' (1935).  
RGALI, f.2016, op.1, d.182.

in person. The tone of these letters is respectful, though the impression given is that of a director gently coaxing his leading actor round to his way of interpreting the character: ‘Меня очень радует, что мы так совпали с вами в ощущении силы Отелло, силы его любви и его доверия к Дездемоне, в ощущении того, как трудно Яго победить эту веру, это доверие.’<sup>114</sup> For his part, in an interview published in 1938, Ostuzhev stated that he valued his working relationship with Radlov, and had found his ideas on the character extremely valuable: ‘Огромная эрудиция Сергея Эрнестовича, его исключительное знание материала и тонкая интуиция подлинного артиста [...] нередко помогали мне проникать в понимание шекспировских образов [...] Радловский Шекспир был той основой, на которую я опирался, создавая моего Отелло.’<sup>115</sup>

In his 2006 article on Shakespeare and socialist realism in the 1930s, Ostrovsky asserts that Ostuzhev’s portrayal of Othello was very different from Radlov’s interpretation. ‘In Radlov’s interpretation, Othello was first and foremost a soldier and remained so until the end. [...] Ostuzhev, renowned for his lyricism, did not play a conquistador or a great warrior’.<sup>116</sup> It is certainly true that Radlov wanted to emphasise the military talents of his hero, and in his letters he encourages Ostuzhev to take every opportunity in which to showcase these. As discussed in Chapter 4, Radlova’s modern translation also assisted in the accentuation of the military elements in Othello’s character, most notably with her wording of the line ‘She loved me for dangers I had passed’ where she translated the word ‘dangers’ with the phrase ‘бранный труд’ (martial labour).<sup>117</sup> Ostrovsky posits that Ostuzhev found it very difficult

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<sup>114</sup> ‘Stenogramma – Zamechanii tov. Radlova k roli Otello’, 29 September 1935, RGALI, f.2016, op.3, d.9. [I am very glad that our impressions of Othello’s strength are so in agreement with one another; the strength of his love and faith in Desdemona and how difficult it is for Iago to win this belief, this trust.]

<sup>115</sup> V. D. Tizengauzen, p.32. Avril Pyman provides the following translation: Sergei Ernestovich’s immense erudition, his exceptional knowledge of the material and his subtle theatrical intuition [...] often helped me to a deeper understanding of Shakespeare’s characters [...] Radlov’s Shakespeare was the foundation on which I based my approach to Othello. (Tizengauzen, p.161.)

<sup>116</sup> Ostrovsky, pp.70-71.

<sup>117</sup> *Othello*, I. 3. 168.

to correlate Radlov's interpretation of Othello with his own, and instead drew on the nineteenth century Romantic traditions to which he was accustomed.<sup>118</sup> As has been noted, Radlov himself reflected on the difficulties he experienced due to differences in acting styles and theatrical training, and critics such as Luzovskii did comment on what they felt was a disparity between the interpretations of actor and director. However, Ostuzhev's defence of the Radlovs' work should also be taken into account. Whilst there were undoubtedly differences in their interpretations, it can also be argued that Radlov and Ostuzhev were drawing selectively on the same tradition, influenced by the conditions which socialist realism imposed on all theatres at that time.

Radlov stressed the importance of not viewing Othello's jealousy as the central force of the plot. Similarly, Ostuzhev argued that to portray Othello as a jealous husband would be to diminish the scale of the meaning of the play. 'Трактовать Отелло как ревнивца, [...] означает обеднить, сузить образ, убить в нем все самое привлекательное, и большую проблему превратить в частный случай, интересный разве лишь для детектива.'<sup>119</sup> Instead, Radlov stated that the play was about a great love. Ostuzhev also spoke of the importance of portraying the strength of the relationship between Othello and Desdemona. 'Любовь Отелло и Дездемоны – здоровая, человеческая, настоящая, большая внутренняя любовь, идущая из глубины их характеров.'<sup>120</sup> He warns against the vulgarization of Othello's love, arguing that previous interpretations which have portrayed the hero as having the uncontrollable temperament of a 'Berber stallion'.<sup>121</sup> This concern

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<sup>118</sup> Ostrovsky, p.71.

<sup>119</sup> Tizengauzen, p.33. Pyman provides the following translation: 'To show Othello as a jealous husband [...] would be to impoverish and narrow the image, to destroy what is most attractive in him and to turn a great problem into an individual murder case, fit only to serve as the plot of a detective story.' (Tizengauzen, p.161.)

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, p.28. Pyman's translation reads as follows: 'Othello's and Desdemona's love is a healthy, human, real, big, inner love, which springs from the depths of their natures.' (Tizengauzen, p.156)

<sup>121</sup> A Berber, or 'Barbary' stallion, is a North African breed of horse with a reputation for hardiness and stamina, but a fiery temperament. While in Shakespeare's day, they were viewed as an extremely valuable commodity, as per Osric's line, *Hamlet*, V. 2.140 'The king, sir, hath wagered with him six Barbary horses', they also had a reputation for a voracious

is also reflected in Radlov's reasoning on the importance of contrasting the love between Othello and Desdemona and the lust between Bianca and Cassio.

Like Eremeev, Ostuzhev recognises the contradictions in Othello's character, 'простота и величие, наивность и глубокий ум, суровость и доброта, пылкость и мягкость',<sup>122</sup> but he too attributes these to Othello's complicated social position. The colour of his skin makes him an outsider, and though he has been elevated to a position of power within in his newly adopted society, this is only on account of his military talents. Ostuzhev also drew on the tradition begun by Pushkin that it was Othello's deeply trusting nature which was the key to his tragedy.<sup>123</sup>

Chapter 2 reflected on the types of tragedy which were acceptable within the boundaries of socialist realism. Othello, the victim of a misunderstanding and Iago's manipulation, was an ideal hero for the 1930s. He was not innately capable of wrong-doing; his tragedy had been inflicted upon him, in Inna Solovyova's words, 'from elsewhere'.<sup>124</sup> Ostuzhev therefore explains how Othello's actions could then be interpreted as positive:

Отелло не убивает Дездемону; он уничтожает источник зла [...] и только поэтому, убедившись позже, что не она, а он сам оказался источником зла, он совершает суд над собой и уничтожает уже себе так же, как источник зла. Только при таком решении самоубийство Отелло может быть воспринято, как признак его силы, а не его слабости.<sup>125</sup>

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sexual appetite. See for example, Iago's line, *Othello* I. 1. 110-111, 'you'll have your daughter covered with a Barbary horse'.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, p.24. Pyman provides the following translation: 'simplicity and greatness, naïveté and profundity, severity and kindness, fiery temper and gentleness of heart' (Tizengauzen, p.153.)

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, p.28-29.

<sup>124</sup> Solovyova, p.338.

<sup>125</sup> Tizengauzen, p.34. Pyman provides the following translation: 'Othello does not kill Desdemona, he destroys a source of evil [...] and for this reason alone, when he later discovers that not she but he himself is a source of evil, does he execute judgement on his own person and destroy himself – also as a source of evil. Only on this basis can Othello's

The question of race within the production provides a further example of how the Radlovs and their leading actor were able to ensure that this staging of *Othello* was politically relevant. As noted in Chapter 4, Radlova inserts a question mark into her translation of the line 'Naply for I am black' (Act III, Scene 3), which becomes simply 'Черный я?', further emphasising Othello's fear that Desdemona has left him because of his race. Ostrovsky notes that all critics remembered the anguish with which Ostuzhev delivered this line.<sup>126</sup> When interviewed about his role, Ostuzhev stated that he chose to emphasise the nobility of the 'black' Othello in sharp contrast to the 'белый негодяй' (white villain) Iago, 'белая проститутка' (white prostitute) Bianca and the 'белая бездарность' (white nonentity) Roderigo.<sup>127</sup> Ostuzhev argued that this contrast provided a clear protest against the fascism which was gaining in popularity in other parts of Europe, and that it was only in an all-encompassing society such as the Soviet Union that the character and tragedy of Othello could be fully appreciated.

Весь советский народ, как и я, любит Отелло, потому, что мы любим человека. Вся наша жизнь, наша чудесная советская действительность представляет собою необычайно целеустремленную, последовательную линию осуществления заботы о человеке, о людях, любви к ним.<sup>128</sup>

As Stříbrný describes, this idealised vision of Soviet society can now be read with 'a sense of colossal discrepancy between utopian illusion and cruel reality.'<sup>129</sup> However, it is a further example of how crucial it was for a production in the 1930s to ensure that it was politically relevant for its time.

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suicide be interpreted as a sign of strength rather than of weakness.' (Tizengauzen, pp.162-163.)

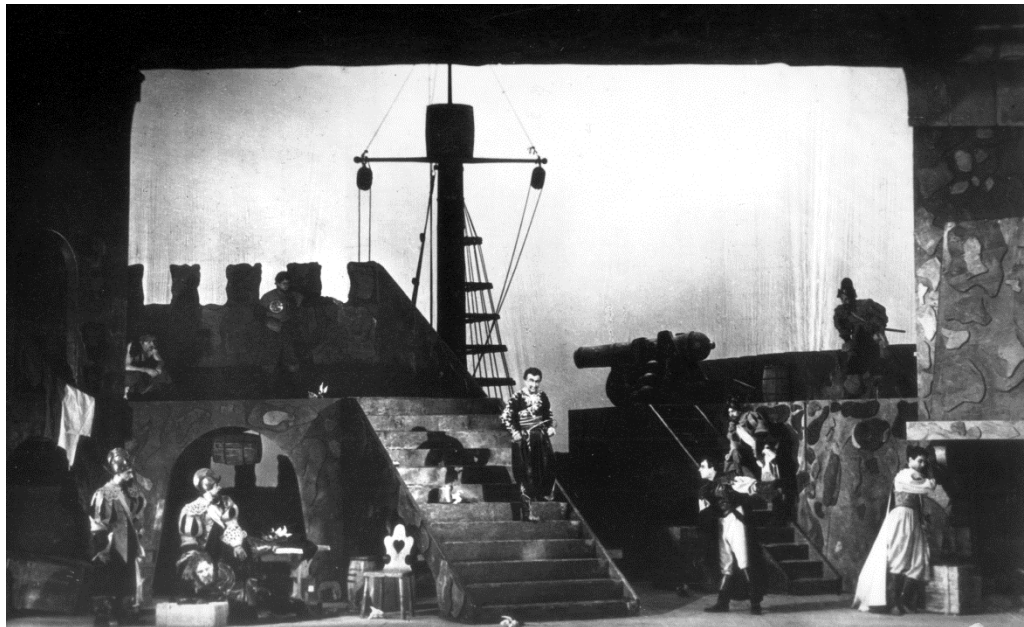
<sup>126</sup> Ostrovsky, p.71.

<sup>127</sup> Tizengauzen, p.29.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid, p.35. Pyman provides the following translation: 'The Soviet people love Othello, as I do, because we love man. Life in our country is devoted to ensuring through all its policies the realisation of a society which will care for man, for people, and teach the love of man.' (Tizengauzen, p.163.)

<sup>129</sup> Stříbrný, p.83.

However, in spite of Ostuzhev's protestations of his modern and accepting portrayal of Othello, the choice of design for his costume does seem to draw on several aspects of the history of the character's interpretation on the Russian stage. As can be seen from the photographs already shown, whilst Ostuzhev's make-up appears to be quite dark, his costume in the first act appears to be North-African in appearance, perhaps reminiscent of the sophisticated character whom Stanislavskii met in the Parisian restaurant. However, when he appears in his capacity as Commander of the Venetian forces in Cyprus, the cloak and headdress are removed and he appears in a far more conventional soldier's outfit. Interestingly, however, the uniform appears more Napoleonic than Elizabethan.



**Figure 11: *Othello* at the Malyi Theatre, Act II Scene 1**

There is then another noted change in the later scenes of the play. The pictures of Ostuzhev in the role, once doubt in Desdemona begins to set in and he becomes enmeshed in Iago's web, show an Othello whose costume looks far more tribal, and perhaps more sub-Saharan in appearance. This contrast perhaps also reflects the more domestic and private nature of these scenes, as opposed to the earlier, public ones.





**Figure 12: Vladimir Meier as Iago and Aleksandr Ostuzhev as Othello**

Whilst the established traditions of the Malyi theatre may have had an influence here, there is also a similarity with Georgii Eremeev's costume from the Leningrad Studio production. In the later scenes of the show, Eremeev adopted a long white coat, much like that of Ostuzhev.



**Figure 13: Georgii Eremeev as Othello**

Whilst Radlova's translation undoubtedly caused controversy and debate amongst critics, the reception of Ostuzhev's performance was almost unanimously positive. Iogann Al'tman described the profound effect which the production had on its audience, particularly younger members who had never seen the play before. He depicted spectators as having their eyes fixed on the hero as he struggles with his doubts, fidgeting nervously in their seats when he challenges Iago, and bowing their heads and lowering their eyes as the dying Othello falls on the bed beside the body of Desdemona.<sup>130</sup> The mesmerising effect of the leading actor was reflected in the applause he received at the end of the performance; Ostuzhev received thirty seven curtain calls on the first night.<sup>131</sup>

Ignatov described Ostuzhev as a 'мастер сцены' (master of the stage), and commented on the detailed nature of his performance; the way Ostuzhev demonstrates the many different nuances of Othello's character. 'он в каждом спектакле дополняет эту тщательную отделку новыми штрихами, иногда незначительными, но неизменно обнаруживающими тонкую чуткость артиста.'<sup>132</sup> The carefully thought-out nature of his performance is also noted by Al'tman, who also praises Ostuzhev's attention to detail, and the effectiveness of even his slightest movement. Ostuzhev was clearly successful in conveying the elements in Othello's character which were central to his interpretation: 'Отелло – это честность, внутреннее благородство, величавая простота, глубочайшая человеческая непосредственность. Доверчивый как ребенок, и несдержанный, как стихия, Отелло не знает тонкостей, хитросплетений венецианского общества.'<sup>133</sup> More importantly, however, as far as the intentions of the Radlovs for their production were concerned, many critics argued that with this production, Ostuzhev had been able to reveal a depth to the character of

<sup>130</sup> Al'tman, p.4.

<sup>131</sup> Zolotnitsky, *The Shakespearean Fate of a Soviet Director*, p.131.

<sup>132</sup> Ignatov, p.68. [in every performance he adds this careful refinement with new details, sometimes insignificant, but invariably displaying the subtle sensitivity of the artiste.]

<sup>133</sup> Al'tman, 'A. Ostuzhev v roli Otello', p.4. [Othello – this honesty, inner nobility and majestic simplicity, deep human sincerity. Trusting as a child, and as unrestrained as the elements, Othello does not know the refinement and artful designs of Venetian society.]

Othello which had not previously been seen on the Soviet stage, allowing Soviet audiences to experience something akin to genuine Shakespeare:

‘Остужев раскрыл советскому зрителю подлинного Шекспира.’<sup>134</sup>

In spite of the praise which Ostuzhev received for his performance, however, critics were not as complimentary regarding the performances of the rest of the cast. Many felt that their performances lacked strength compared to that of the leading actor. Here, it seems that the rather rushed rehearsal schedule may have had a detrimental effect, as Radlov is criticised by some reviewers for not devoting enough time to working with the remainder of the actors in the company. Ignatov goes as far as to argue against the principle of the touring “system” (presumably a reference to the fact that Radlov was a “guest” director at the Malyi), stating that it was damaging to Soviet theatre as a whole. Once again, the difference in theatrical traditions and training seem to have been problematic, as Ignatov maintains that the younger actors in the Malyi company will have been brought up with a different repertoire, and that they needed more time to adapt to using Radlov’s contrasting approach.<sup>135</sup>

Ignatov criticised the actresses sharing the role of Desdemona, L. Nazarova and O. Malysheva, for not being equal to the role, and not demonstrating the depth of her character. ‘У нее высокий, богатый ум, у нее большая воля и тоже «большое сердце».’<sup>136</sup> Though Ignatov acknowledges that Desdemona is always a very difficult part to get right, he accuses Nazarova of playing the role with ‘излишнее кокетство’ (superfluous coquetry), making her portrayal of the character in important scenes far less sympathetic for the audience: ‘На Дездемону в исполнении Назаровой не производит впечатления и рассказ Отелло о чудесных свойствах платка, в ответ на который она с

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<sup>134</sup> S. Ignatov, p.63. [Ostuzhev has revealed the original Shakespeare to the Soviet audience.]

<sup>135</sup> Ibid, p.67.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid, p.66.

капризным упорством говорит о Кассио.<sup>137</sup> In contrast to Ignatov's rather negative assessment, however, Karl Radek congratulates Nazarova for the 'reanimation' (оживление) of one of Shakespeare's most difficult female roles. Interestingly, Radek also refers to the 'coquetry' of Nazarova's performance, but he chooses to view this in a positive light, praising the actress for demonstrating Desdemona's courage and cheerfulness.<sup>138</sup> Nazarova's costume, complete with fur and feathers, appeared to echo the wealth of the Venetian society, which in her marriage to Othello, Desdemona was leaving behind.



**Figure 14: L. Nazarova as Desdemona**

Ignatov writes in a slightly more complimentary fashion of the performance of Nazarova's compatriot, Malysheva. He acknowledges that she performs some scenes extremely well, in particular singling out the strength of will she displays in the Senate in Act I Scene 3, the expressive nature of her performance of the Willow song and discussion of betrayal with Emilia in Act IV Scene 3, and her final conversation with Othello in Act V Scene 2:

<sup>137</sup> Ignatov, p.67. [Othello's story of the miraculous properties of the handkerchief does not impress Nazarova's rendition of Desdemona, and in response she talks of Cassio with capricious persistence.]

<sup>138</sup> Karl Radek, 'Othello v Malom teatre', *Izvestiia*, 6 January 1936, p.4.

‘Искренность и богатство внутреннего содержания делают образ привлекательным и трагичным.’<sup>139</sup> However, Ignatov states that Malysheva’s performance is inconsistent, and that sometimes her portrayal of the character becomes too ordinary, and at times, interestingly, too Russian: ‘Верные интонации часто сочетались с неверными жестами и мимикой, излишне бытовыми и чересчур... русскими.’<sup>140</sup> Whilst Ignatov appears to be referring to the body language used by Malysheva here, it is possible the fact that Radlova employed simpler, more everyday language in her translation, and with the removal of formal terms of address such as “милорд” (‘my Lord’), may also have contributed to this ‘everyday’ impression.

Ignatov views the interpretation of Iago’s character in the production as problematic, stating that too great an emphasis is placed upon Iago’s ambition. He argued that the actor playing the role, Vladimir Meier, had turned away from the traditional portrayal of Iago as a villain, and instead had depicted him as man largely motivated by jealousy.<sup>141</sup> Ignatov acknowledges that some scenes work better than others, ‘[л]учше место – финал I акта и III акт, где Яго очень тонко поселяет сомнения в душе Отелло’<sup>142</sup> but on the whole, states that Meier’s performance is not strong enough in comparison with that of Ostuzhev: ‘ему недостает мастерства и школы Остужева, чтобы поставить Яго наряду с Отелло.’<sup>143</sup> Iuzovskii also argues that Meier’s Iago looks weak compared to the performance of Ostuzhev, suggesting that Shakespeare’s brilliant manipulator had been reduced to a simple ‘мелкий жулик’ (swindler/crook).<sup>144</sup> This description of a weaker and less effective Iago seems to be at odds with Radlov’s insistence on the importance of Iago’s

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<sup>139</sup> Ignatov, p.67. [The sincerity and richness of her inner core made an attractive yet tragic character study.]

<sup>140</sup> Ibid. [Correct intonation is often combined with incorrect gestures and mimicry, excessively mundane and too...Russian.]

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, p.64.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid. [The best places are the end of Act I and Act III, where Iago very subtly lodges doubt in the soul of Othello.]

<sup>143</sup> Ibid. [he lacks the mastery and training of Ostuzhev, in order to place Iago on a level with Othello.]

<sup>144</sup> Iuzovskii, p.3.

role in the downfall of Othello, and perhaps again indicates the lack of time which the director may have had to work with the individual actors.



**Figure 15: Vladimir Meier as Iago**

Ignatov also finds fault with the interpretations of Cassio and Brabantio, describing both actors who shared the role (Aleksandr Zrazhevskii and Aleksandr Vasenin) as portraying Desdemona's aggrieved father as a foolish

character, likening him to a character from a simple comedy or even vaudeville.<sup>145</sup> Iuzovskii also viewed the portrayal of Brabantio as comic.<sup>146</sup>



**Figure 16: Aleksandr Zrazhevskii as Brabantio**

Ignatov also criticises Radlov for not devoting enough attention to the part of Cassio, commenting that in the hands of the actor Vsevolod Aksenov, the character is little more than a passive instrument to be used by Iago in his schemes. Whilst this may be the basis for the role, Ignatov argues, there needs to be further depth to the character to warrant his position in Othello's company: '[...] В Кассио есть что-то, что ставит его в глазах Отелло выше Яго.'<sup>147</sup> Ignatov does, however rate the performance of one member of the company as nearly equal to that of Ostuzhev, that of Vera Pashennaia, one of the two actresses sharing the role of Emilia: 'Огромный сценический темперамент В. Пашенной позволил ей поднять роль Эмилии на

<sup>145</sup> Ignatov, p.64.

<sup>146</sup> Iuzovskii, p.3.

<sup>147</sup> Ignatov, p.68. [In Cassio, there is something which places him higher than Iago in the eyes of Othello.]

исключительную высоту подлинного трагизма в V акте и поставил её в один ряд с Остужевым как настоящего мастера.<sup>148</sup>



**Figure 17: Vera Pashennaia as Emilia**

The costumes of both Pashennaia and Zrazhevskii appear to have been more traditionally Elizabethan than many of the others. The production seems to have featured a broad mixture of periods; though it is not clear whether this is a deliberate choice or simply a reflection of the Mal'yi company's wardrobe stock.

Ignatov also praises both actresses playing the role of Bianca, L. Merkulova and M. Polovikova. In particular, Ignatov singles out Polovikova, stating that she emphasises the character's more positive qualities, so that she becomes more than the common prostitute so often seen on stage: 'она подчеркнула в куртизанке любящую женщину и этим подняла её, приблизила к Дездемоне'.<sup>149</sup> Iuzovskii, on the other hand, describes the character as 'страшная, радловская Бианка' (the awful Radlovian Bianca), suggesting that

<sup>148</sup> Ignatov, p.68. 'The enormous stage temperament of V. Pashennaia allowed her to raise the role of Emilia to the exceptional heights of genuine tragedy in Act V and placed her on a par with Ostuzhev as a true master.'

<sup>149</sup> Ignatov, p.68. [she underlines the loving woman in the courtesan and this raises her, bringing her nearer to Desdemona.]



his distaste for the coarser language in Radlova's translation overtook any impression which an actress could create.<sup>150</sup>

As with Radlov's second Leningrad production, the sets were designed by Victor Basov. However, given that this was the Malyi Theatre, with a reputation and traditions to uphold, as well as presumably far greater financial resources, the staging was far grander than that at Radlov's Studio-Theatre. In his discussion of Shakespeare and Socialist Realism in the 1930s, Ostrovsky posits that the sets designed by Basov represented Radlov's understanding of the principles of realism, 'with their massive balustrades and bridges, heavy balconies and wide loggias, stone bastions and lavish hangings.'<sup>151</sup> They also clearly reflected the architectural grandeur of the Renaissance period Radlov strove to emulate. Critics at the time gave mixed reactions, with N. Verkhovskii asserting that the historically-authentic sets designed by Basov for the production aided the search for the authentic Shakespeare which Radlov was striving for.<sup>152</sup> In contrast to Verkhovskii, however, Ignatov argued that Basov has not fully grasped the 'театральная реальность' (theatrical reality) of Shakespeare, and that the sets were too distracting, drawing attention away from the actors.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Iuzovskii, p.3.

<sup>151</sup> Ostrovsky, p.69.

<sup>152</sup> Verkhovskii, RGALI, f.2016, op.1, d.176.

<sup>153</sup> S. Ignatov, p.64.



**Figure 18: *Othello* at the Malyi Theatre, Act I Scene 2**

A further criticism on the set design was to come from Vsevolod Meierkhol'd, who in his 1936 speech 'Meierkhol'd against Meierkhol'dism', likened Basov's sets to second-rate illustrations in a nineteenth century edition of Shakespeare translations from the publishing house Brockhaus and Efron, which had absolutely nothing to do with the Venice in which Shakespeare had set his play.<sup>154</sup> These comments must have been particularly chastening, given Radlov's ambitions to present his audiences with a realistic and original Shakespeare, but Meierkhol'd's criticism of the production was not limited to comments on the scenery. He questioned the fact that Radlov's productions and Radlova's translations of Shakespeare had been posited as standards which could not be bettered, dismissing Radlova's translations as 'плохие' (bad), and suggesting that corrected versions of Veinberg would be much better. He does not give any details as to why he dislikes the translations, but argued in the case of *Othello* that the play should centre on the intrigue created by Iago, rather than on the theme of love or jealousy, and therefore maintained that Iago should be the character of prime importance.

<sup>154</sup> V. E. Meierkhol'd, 'Meierkhol'd protiv Meierkhol'dovshchiny (iz doklada 14 marta 1936 g.)' in *Stat'i, pis'ma, rechi, besedy, chast' vtoraia, 1917-1939* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1968), pp.330-347, p.341.

In response, Radlov claimed that the criticism of his wife's translations was extremely unconvincing, given that Meierkhol'd had no knowledge of English, and had praised the translation some years before.<sup>155</sup> However, this conflict was about more than a choice of translation or set design. Katerina Clark notes that 1935 marked the point at which the controversy over whether Meierkhol'd's or Stanislavskii's approach to theatre was more appropriate for the Soviet theatre was at its most intense, and the comments of the two men need to be read in the context of this wider debate on theatrical style.<sup>156</sup> The Radlovs had both argued for the return to a Shakespeare free from any traces of nineteenth century romanticism, but Radlov extended this idea of purity to encompass directorial intent. He stated that when a director worked with any classical text, it was the play itself which should always take priority, rather than director's personal interpretation, or the assertion of a particular directorial style. 'В работе советского театра над классическими пьесами было много ошибок. Эти ошибки проистекали оттого, что для постановщика было более интересным свое личное дело, чем идея спектакля.'<sup>157</sup> This was a veiled attack on Meierkhol'd's freer directorial style; Radlov later used a staging of *Revizor* by Meierkhol'd as an example of a production where the director's personal interpretation took precedence over the ideas in the original text.<sup>158</sup> As has already been seen in the case of Okhlopkov's production of *Othello*, in the 1930s, deviations from the canon were viewed as unacceptable, and there were severe implications for directors who did not ensure that their work met with Party expectations.

In spite of the criticism and political tensions, however, the public reaction to the production was extremely positive, and demand for tickets was huge.

'Интерес советского театрального зрителя к постановке «Отелло» в

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<sup>155</sup> S. Radlov, 'Meierkhol'd i Meierkhol'dovshchina', *Literaturnyi Leningrad*, 27 March 1936, p.6.

<sup>156</sup> Clark, *Moscow: The Fourth Rome*, p.196.

<sup>157</sup> S. E. Radlov, 'Shekspir i problemy rezhissury', *Teatr i dramaturgiia*, 2 (1936), 57-62, (p.57).

<sup>158</sup> Radlov, 'Shekspir i problemy rezhissury', p.57.

Малом театре необычен и возрастает с каждым днем.<sup>159</sup> One reviewer commented that no other production, even dating back to those in the 1890s starring the acclaimed actress Maria Ermolova, had generated such an unprecedented reaction from the theatre-going public. Many people watched the play several times; even those who did not usually choose to go to the theatre.<sup>160</sup> *Othello* was therefore to become an essential part of the Malyi Theatre's repertoire in the 1930s. In December 1937, the 100<sup>th</sup> performance took place. David Zolotnitsky comments that the number of performances would have been even greater, had it not been for Ostuzhev's failing health; a heart attack which the actor suffered during a performance in summer 1936 had left him incapacitated for several months. Once recovered however, Ostuzhev returned to play to full houses once more, in what Zolotnitsky concludes was 'one of the greatest Shakespeare productions' of the decade.<sup>161</sup> In 1938, a collection of essays and interviews with the actor, director and other cast members was published in celebration of Ostuzhev's performance, while histories of Shakespeare on the Russian stage continue to regard his interpretation as a major event in the legacy of *Othello* on the Russian stage.

## 5.4 Concluding Remarks

The fact that Radlov always chose to emphasise the fact that he was using his wife's new translation in his productions demonstrates that it formed an essential part of his interpretation, and therefore Radlova's translation choices must, in some part at least, underlie their success. Her use of more contemporary language freed Shakespeare from the trappings of nineteenth century refinement, while giving the actors space for their own creative input.

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<sup>159</sup> 'Uspekh Otello', *Sovetskoe iskusstvo*, 17 February 1936, p.4. ['The interest of Soviet theatre audiences in the production of *Othello* at the Malyi Theatre is extraordinary, and grows with every day that passes.']

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>161</sup> Zolotnitsky, p.138.

As this chapter has demonstrated, Radlov drew on those elements within the Russian tradition of *Othello* which best suited his intention of creating a “Soviet Shakespeare.” Working closely with a translator who shared such similar aims also enabled him to amplify the elements of the play most relevant to Soviet audiences. As Pavis notes, a translation for the theatre needs to be ‘clearly and immediately understood’ by spectators, and therefore must be ‘adapted and fitted to [the] present situation.’<sup>162</sup> This statement corresponds neatly with Radlova’s own arguments for the need to re-translate Shakespeare to suit the new Soviet audiences. This adaptation was all the more crucial in the dangerous political climate of Soviet Russia in the 1930s. Critics who supported the Radlovs’ work argued that they had successfully brought Shakespeare to the Soviet public, educating each audience member as they undertook their individual quest for socialism:

Театр, который, как в данном случае Малый театр своей постановкой «Отелло» будит в широких массах зрителей понимание культурного наследия, работает над развитие и советского социалистического гуманизма и является, таким образом, соучастником строительства социализма.<sup>163</sup>

As to the question of whether the Radlovs’ *Othello* can be viewed as a ‘primary’ or ‘secondary’ activity within the ‘Shakespeare polysystem’, it is perhaps better to conclude that the translator and director made shrewd choices in defining their approach to the acculturation of Shakespeare. Whilst some aspects of Radlova’s translation style, such as the use of much more modern vocabulary, could be seen as ‘primary’, they also fitted neatly with the socialist realist doctrine of bringing classic literature (and drama) to the masses. Similarly, the traditions which Radlov drew on selectively from the performance history of *Othello* enabled him to focus on the positive

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<sup>162</sup> Pavis, p.141.

<sup>163</sup> Radek, p.4. [Theatre which awakens an understanding of cultural heritage in the grass roots spectator, as in the case of the Malyi theatre with its production of *Othello*, works on the development of Soviet socialist humanism, and in this way, appears to be a participator in the building of Socialism.]

associations with the Renaissance popular at the time. A combination of tradition, modernity and political acclimatisation therefore ensured that Radlov's Moscow *Othello* and with it, Anna Radlova's translation, became one of the central talking points of Shakespeare production in the 1930s.



Figure 19: *Othello* at the Malyi Theatre, Act I Scene 3

## Conclusion

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The Moscow All-Union Theatre Society conference in December 1939, which was described at the very beginning of this thesis, highlighted three key points regarding Shakespeare and translation in Soviet Russia. Firstly, that Russian and Soviet study of these two subjects has often developed in close collaboration with one another; secondly, that many talented writers in this period were working on the translation of foreign classics, and thirdly, that Anna Radlova's translations of Shakespeare were extremely prominent in the 1930s, albeit very controversial. The adoption of a framework of translation theory in order to explore these points has enabled the examination of Anna Radlova's work from several different perspectives.

Viewing the history of Shakespeare in Russia alongside the history of translation has emphasised the fact that attempts throughout history to theorise translation in Russia have often been connected to the translations of Shakespeare, from the early example of Belinskii's article on "artistic" and "poetic" translation from 1837, through to Chukovskii's highly critical chapter on the "scientific" translations of Shakespeare in his book on literary translation, *Vysokoe iskusstvo* (A High Art), first published in 1941.

Polysystems theory emphasises the importance of assessing the relationships between the different works of literature (and theatre) within a culture's repertoire. This relational thinking enables the evaluation of the effects of the canonisation of certain translations on those which are subsequently produced. The use of Even-Zohar's work therefore allowed both Radlova's translation and the productions in which it was used to be set in the context of the Russian tradition of Shakespeare, and specifically *Othello*, thus updating current scholarship on Shakespeare in Russia.

Examining trends in translation style has helped to explain the appearance of certain 're-writings' of Shakespeare at particular moments in history, enabling

the assessment of the reasons behind the controversy surrounding Radlova's translations. Her translation tactics were therefore viewed as a reaction to the methods of the translators of the nineteenth century, a rejection of their bowdlerisation of Shakespeare's language and imagery, lengthy explanations and their alterations of Shakespeare's verse structure and the rhythms of his text. Chapter 2 discussed how the rejection of the styles of previous translations brought about cycles of several literal renditions of Shakespeare, followed by translators who then took a far freer approach. Radlova, who strove to maintain a commitment to equilinearity, followed a largely literal method of translation, albeit with elements of modernisation. Her translations were then succeeded by Pasternak's freer 're-writings', which he argued should be viewed as works of art in their own right.<sup>1</sup>

Setting Radlov's productions of *Othello* in the context of the stagings of the play by Konstantin Stanislavskii and Nikolai Okhlopkov which preceded and followed it also clarified understanding of the elements from the Russian tradition on which Radlov was choosing to draw in order to create his own, Soviet version of *Othello*. The resurrection of the history of the Shakespeare polysystem has therefore shown the efficacy of Even-Zohar's theory. However, as explained in Chapter 1, in order to understand all the influences on the work of the Radlovs, it was necessary to employ the work of other theorists, such as André Lefevere and Gideon Toury in order to explore the extent of the controlling forces on that polysystem. For Radlova and her husband, the most significant of these were the changes brought about by the introduction of socialist realism. Stalin's call that writers should be the 'engineers of human souls'<sup>2</sup> meant that all literature and theatre had to serve a political purpose, educating the working people in the ways of socialism. The use of Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus' in Chapter 3 demonstrated how Radlova's own concepts of translation were shaped by these ideals; her arguments about creating a Shakespeare in a language which could be

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<sup>1</sup> Pasternak, 'Zametki perevodchika', p.393.

<sup>2</sup> Zhdanov, p.21.



comfortably performed by actors and easily understood by the new Soviet audiences fit neatly into this doctrine.

The second point highlighted by the 1939 conference was the fact that so many famous Soviet writers now worked in translation. Later in the Stalinist period, Mikhail Lozinskii continued arguing for the educational function of translation, and its role in familiarising readers with different cultures and time periods,<sup>3</sup> and won awards for translations completed with his literal approach. In contrast, Boris Pasternak translated Shakespeare much more freely, using his translations as ‘a means of personal creative expression’,<sup>4</sup> and as a way of maintaining ‘lines of communication with his readers’.<sup>5</sup> His attitude fitted with the official advice on a freer approach to translation, designed to allow, as Friedberg terms it, ‘the minor censorship of foreign literature’.<sup>6</sup> The comparative assessment of the different styles of Radlova, Lozinskii and Pasternak in this thesis demonstrates that there was in fact a surprising flexibility under Stalinism, and that the individual translator within the polysystem could still operate under their own particular theories, providing that they were careful to ensure that their translation tactics could be attributed to the official doctrine in some way. These possibilities for individual style suggest that the position of the translator under a totalitarian state is not as constricted as would perhaps be expected.

The reasons behind the popularity of *Othello* in the Stalinist period demonstrate that different approaches to translation were not the only way in which Shakespeare could be used to negotiate cultural politics under Stalin. As explored in Chapter 2, compliance with the personal tastes of the leader himself was often a method of avoiding persecution, and his preferences for characters of action were extremely influential in shaping the Stalinist Shakespearean repertoire. On a more official note, *Othello* fitted the demands of socialist realism better than many of Shakespeare’s other plays because as an honourable soldier, Othello matched the criteria of the ‘positive hero’ required in Soviet drama. Radlova’s

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<sup>3</sup> Chekalov, p.177.

<sup>4</sup> France, p.6.

<sup>5</sup> Gallagher, p.121.

<sup>6</sup> Friedberg, p.79.

decision to underline the military strengths of the character in her translation ensured that her husband's productions were able to rely on this argument. However, Radlov's emphasis on Iago's skills of plotting and manipulation was also important in the socialist realist shaping of his productions. As Katerina Clark notes, literature and drama needed to represent 'what is' as well as 'what ought to be'.<sup>7</sup> In this way, the manipulative evil of Iago could also serve as a lesson to Soviet audiences:

Villains who present one face to the world and another in private also illustrated the rhetorical dictum that the country was full of "masked enemies", pretending to be loyal citizens but, underneath, seething with anti-Soviet sentiment and watching for every opportunity to use it effectively. Thus the villains of fiction served the further function of providing object lessons in the need for "vigilance", the need "to take nothing on trust but to examine everything very closely."<sup>8</sup>

The analysis of the history of Shakespeare in Russia within this thesis also highlighted the difference in requirements for a translation intended for performance, as opposed to reading. Of the many different Russian translations of Shakespeare produced, less literal translations, not as constricted by the demands of the source language, such as those by Nikolai Polevoi and Boris Pasternak, appear to have been more popular with theatre audiences. As discussed in Chapter 1, a translated play text is viewed by theatre translation theorists today as simply one element in the process of bringing the performance of a translated work to the stage. David Johnston, for example, argues that '[a] play text is a special form of scripting which, even from the most prescriptive of dramatists, cannot be taken as anything other than providing a springboard towards performance.'<sup>9</sup> Similarly, in a recent article, playwright Simon Stephens described all play texts, including translations, as 'starting points for a night in

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<sup>7</sup> Clark, *The Soviet Novel*, p.37.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p.187-188.

<sup>9</sup> David Johnston, 'Theatre Pragmatics', p.58.

the theatre.’<sup>10</sup> As far as the language and style to be used in a translation for the theatre, Johnson states that translators ‘must write for actors’, by preparing ‘speakable andactable versions.’<sup>11</sup> Stephens, who does not translate from the source text but adapts foreign plays from literal translations, argues that his task is to turn this literal translation into something ‘actable’, which ‘sits happily in actors’ mouths.’<sup>12</sup> In the same way, Radlova insisted that translators of Shakespeare’s plays should always aim for their work to be realised on stage.<sup>13</sup> She also argued for the need to consider the actors, stating that those on stage should be able to pronounce the words of Shakespeare as their own.<sup>14</sup> Debate at the 1939 conference suggests that Radlova may have been successful in these aims, given that her work was defended by the actors who had taken part in the performance of her translations. However, as explored in Chapters 3 and 5, the principles which the Radlovs shared in their approach to Shakespeare and their close working ensured that the translation complemented and strengthened the director’s aims for the production, and therefore functioned successfully on stage.

In one of her most recent studies, Sirkku Aaltonen combined approaches from translation and performance studies in order to examine how a Finnish translation of the play *Incendies* by Lebanese/Canadian playwright Wajdi Mouawad was brought to the stage. She posits that ‘the translation process involved an enthusiastic team with the translator cooperating closely with the theatre practitioners’.<sup>15</sup> Aaltonen explores the hierarchy of translator, director and other members of the creative team, concluding that ‘the directorial position in itself carries a certain amount of power.’<sup>16</sup> For the purposes of her research, Aaltonen corresponded regularly with the translator, in order to explore the working process fully. Whilst further examination of the Radlovs’ letters held in

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<sup>10</sup> Simon Stephens, ‘Why my Cherry Orchard is a failure’, *The Guardian*, 16 October 2014 <<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2014/oct/16/the-cherry-orchard-chekhov-simon-stephens-katie-mitchell>> [accessed 21 October 2014] (para 13 of 25)

<sup>11</sup> Johnson, p.66.

<sup>12</sup> Stephens (para 6 of 25).

<sup>13</sup> Radlova, ‘Perevody Shekspira’, p.4.

<sup>14</sup> Radlova, ‘O perevode’, p.24.

<sup>15</sup> Sirkku Aaltonen, ‘Theatre translation as performance’, *Target*, 25 (2013) 385-406 (p.400).

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p.396.

their personal archive at the National Library of Russia would add strength to further study of their work, one of the undoubted strengths of their productions was the importance which the director placed on the translation which he used in the production, as well as his close relationship with his translator. Though in his work with Edward Gordon Craig, Konstantin Stanislavskii became aware of some of the problems caused by inaccuracies in the Russian translations available, he does not seem to have been concerned with such difficulties in any of his productions of *Othello*. Using Veinberg's translation meant that he could never be anything but distant from his translator. Whilst extremely prominent in his writings on theatre, the actual stagings of *Othello* which Stanislavskii directed never became such significant events in the repertoire of his theatres as Radlov's production at the Malyi starring Aleksandr Ostuzhev. This thesis therefore adds further emphasis to the importance of a good working relationship between translator and director when staging a play in translation. Furthermore, the reconstruction of the Radlovs' *Othello* provides a counterweight to the dominance of Stanislavskii's views on *Othello* in English scholarship on the Russian tradition of the play.

The final point raised by the All-Union Theatre Society conference is the eminence and controversial nature of Radlova's translations in the 1930s. In exploring the development of her approach to Shakespeare, and providing the detailed analysis of her translation and its performance, this study extends the knowledge and understanding of Radlova's life and work. The arrest and imprisonment of Radlova and her husband, and the rumours which continued to circulate even after their rehabilitation are the principal reasons behind the fact that her work has been largely overlooked in modern scholarship. As an example of the ill-feeling towards Radlova which persisted long after her death, this is an extract taken from Kornei Chukovskii's diary, written in March 1955, and later edited and published by his granddaughter in 1994:

Это мне напоминает случай с Анной Радловой. Она гнусно переводила Шекспира. Я написал об этом, доказал это с математической точностью. Малый ребенок мог убедиться, что ее

переводы никуда не годятся. Но она продолжала процветать, — и Шекспир ставился в ее переводах. Но вот оказалось, что она ушла в лагерь Гитлера — и тогда официально было признано, что она действительно плохо переводила Шекспира.<sup>17</sup>

Chukovskii's quote betrays a note of envy here. Radlova was first castigated in the 1930s for being too modern; she was viewed as wanting to take the translation of Shakespeare too far towards the new era, thus betraying the surviving old intelligentsia. However, once they had suffered persecution in the same way as many of their contemporaries, they then became pariahs because of the reasons behind their arrest, due to the fact that they had unfairly been labelled as traitors.

The work of the Radlovs is still treated with caution in more recent English research, where the fairly minimal references contain phrases such as 'it is not for us to judge' and 'extremely chequered career.'<sup>18</sup> Further exploration of the work of their theatre company in Nazi occupied territories during the Second World War, and their continued commitment to performance following their imprisonment in a labour camp, would aid the improvement of their reputation. However, in highlighting the value of their contribution to the acculturation of Shakespeare in Russia, this thesis provides a more positive assessment of the work of Sergei and Anna Radlov, as well as a more objective view of the terribly difficult situation with which they were faced.

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<sup>17</sup> K. Chukovskii, *Dnevnik 1930-1969*, ed. E. Chukovskaia (Moscow: Sovremennyi pisatel', 1994) p.223. The following translation of this entry is provided by Michael Henry Heim: 'It reminds me of the case of Anna Radlova. Her Shakespeare translations were awful. I wrote about them, making my points with mathematical precision. A child could have told the translations were worthless. But she flourished, and they kept being staged. Not until she went over to Hitler was she acknowledged to be the poor translator she was.' Kornei Chukovskii, *Diary, 1901 – 1969*, ed. Victor Erlich, trans. by Michael Henry Heim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p.394.

<sup>18</sup> Stříbrný, (2000) p.89.

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