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**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET: ITS TRANSLATION, GENESIS AND
STYLES OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAY BY CZECH THEATRE
ARTISTS OF THE SECOND HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY**

Bakalářská práce

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**Prohlašuji, že jsem závěrečnou práci vypracoval samostatně a použil jsem jen
uvedených pramenů a literatury.**

V Olomouci 17.4.2013

.....

vlastnoruční podpis

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on detailed mapping of the genesis of Hamlet, its style and contents. The second half of the thesis is dedicated to the manners and styles of the implementation of this play by Czech theatre artists of the second half of the 20th century. In the first chapter, the thesis describes the circumstances of the genesis of Hamlet, his author and historical and political conditions in which he wrote the drama. The second chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the play, its sources of inspiration, language style, issues related to the translation of the play to Czech and its characters. The third chapter represents the practical part of the thesis which is based on the analysis of two implementations of the drama; the analysis was made based on audiovisual records. This analysis concerns the rendition made in 1982 by director Miroslav Macháček (the National Theatre, Prague) and the rendition made in 2009 by Jan Mikulášek (the Theatre Husa na provázku, Brno). The last chapter focuses on the analysis of the actor's approach to the character of Hamlet, namely by František Němec (the National Theatre) and Jiří Vyorálek (the Theatre Husa na Provázku).

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Introduction

I have chosen this topic because I have always liked Czech theatre. It was very good for me that I have had a chance to see various plays by various artists during different stages of my life. What struck me the most was the Hamlet. This character and the play itself can be connected with so many feelings and attitudes that its ambiguity makes it applicable on almost every problem we can face during our lives. It was in Husa na provázku theatre when I first saw the play. I have also read it but the play had a real impact on me. At that time I was thinking of trying to compare this adaptation with another one by National Theatre and trying to find what the difference between them is. Both of them were recorded on video and are available to be borrowed in library in Brno.

This is one of the matters on which I am focusing in my bachelor thesis, comparing the one I saw on stage with the other one borrowed from the library. Another matter is the difference in approach of the Czech authors M.Hilský , Z. Urbánek and others to the translation of the Hamlet. Focusing on the Czech extracts from their work I try to find out. One part of my thesis is aimed at the analysis of the main characters and their behavior during the play. My main goal is to determine what are the differences and similarities regarding the script – direction adaptation of Hamlet by Czech theatre authors in the second half of the 20th century. That means to do a comparison based on the J. Mikulášek and M. Macháček inscenations by comparing not only the text and its wording but also costumes, scenography and acting as well as their approach to the play.

Comparing the two adaptations I am going to find answers to these questions:

- What are the main differences in the approach of the two directors?
- Were they influenced by the political situation?
- What is the difference of the Hamlet character as portrayed by the Czech actors?

1. Brief definition and outline of the times when drama Hamlet was written and biography of its author William Shakespeare

A brief mapping of cultural and political situation of the period of time in which the play was written is important for the orientation in the author's inspirations, motivations for its creation and selection of its form. As many other play writers, William Shakespeare was majorly influenced by the environment and conditions in which he was writing.

1.1 Elizabeth I 15th and 16th century

Elizabeth I is considered to be one of the most important rulers of England of all time, during her reign has the country seen significant success. It includes the establishing of the Church of England, the defeat of "invincible" Spanish Armada and the annexation of Ireland to England. On the other hand, there has been a decrease of functionality of the tax system and royal privileges were abused in granting profitable monopolies. Elizabeth I confirmed the Church of England as a state organization and therefore brought great changes in the political and religious life. During her reign, England established the so-called Elizabethan drama and theatre, which formed into the most important part of the cultural life of this time.¹

1.2 Elizabethan drama and theatre

Elizabethan theatre originated at the time when England was still going on in the country's annual celebrations and festivities associated with changes in the season, which were based on pagan rituals. Amateur musical groups, which reached its greatest glory in the 14th and 15th century, played in the cities and even nomadic societies had their place in the social enjoyment as their performances were sought-after especially in pubs and markets. Only London knew permanent orchestras. In the 16th century have been created other forms of theatrical entertainment around noble houses, in which they took place mainly during important visits or engagements etc. English theatre therefore did not have its own private space.²

In 1567, however, the London merchant John Brayne built the first freestanding theatre called "The Black Lion". Not so long after that, public theatres in London started

¹ BROCKETT, O. G. Dějiny divadla. P. 200-204.

² BROCKETT, O. G. Dějiny divadla. P. 206-214.

to be built quickly. Among the theatres, which were originated in this period, were theatres such as: Swan (The Swan), Rose (The Rose), and Globe Theatre (The Globe) which was co-owned by William Shakespeare.³

Elizabeth I maintained strong sympathies for theatre, on the other hand, she saw to it that the development of theatrical events was fully under her control. The Queen had to face numerous forces that wanted to challenge her authority. The theatre had the largest share on entertainment of both higher society and poor crowd; therefore it held enormous power to shape opinions in whole society. Elizabeth I maintained theatre completely under her control through a variety of directions and by the establishment of the Master of pleasures. Theatre companies were required to obtain a patent in order to operate its business and newly established Master of pleasures had the power to approve or reject the introduction of new plays. Among the companies, that received the patent, were also servants of Lord Chamberlain, whose member was William Shakespeare.⁴

Obedience to government regulation was not the only criterion of theatre's production. Theatre artists of Elizabethan times were totally dependent on their sponsors; the nobility was giving authors money to write new texts and performances. Since 1572 the theatre company could only be owned by nobleman with the title of Baron at least. Every play or performance was therefore censored from at least two sides. Last but not least problem was that the artists had to satisfy the taste of the audience, which decided whether the play will be listed in multiple performances or will be withdrawn immediately after the premiere. This assessment, however, wasn't measured by applause after the performance, but directly in its course. Viewers expressed their pleasure or displeasure with laudatory or vituperative chants and speeches, so we could compare their behaviour to the behaviour of today's sports fans watching the game.⁵

Absolutely convincing reports about the acting style of the Elizabethan theatre's actors were not preserved. We can only say with certainty that women's performances on stage were prohibited. Therefore into women's characters were filled men. Some researchers argue that due to the limited time for practicing, a very wide repertoire and

³ BROCKETT, O. G. *Dějiny divadla*. P. 200-204.

⁴ BROCKETT, O. G. *Dějiny divadla*. P. 197-200.

⁵ ZETTLVÁ, M. *Renesanční filosofie člověka a Alžbětinské divadlo*, kap 3.

unrealistic form of written theatrical texts was acting rather formal. Others are in favour of the opinion that from the authentic references and reports is apparent a relatively realistic acting style. One such evidence is "advices for actors" inscribed in the text of Shakespeare's Hamlet. To evaluate the naturalness and realism of expressions in acting is rather difficult, because every time period perceives those parameters differently.

Sources of drama began to run together in one stream in the eighties of the 16th century, mainly because the group of educated writers, which we call "university spirits", started to write for the public theatres. Among them were Thomas Kyd, John Lyly and Robert Green. These artists have managed to bridge the gap between popular and highly educated audience with successful blending of ancient and medieval themes and with engaging selection of topics from a variety of sources. University spirits lay down the foundations of the dramatic text, which used William Shakespeare and his contemporaries.⁶ Elizabethan play writers frequently found inspiration in medieval morals but also in the ancient drama, which influence has supported the development of particularly tragedy in their lyrics. Between the Greek and Elizabethan tragedies were, however, considerable distinctions. While in the form of a Greek tragedy the tragedy is caused by fickleness of fate in Elizabethan tragedy is the tragedy caused by the actions and nature of the characters.⁷ Characters not only in Shakespeare's tragedies thus have active participation in the creation of their destiny. Another typical feature of plays of the time is blending of the tragic and comic elements. In Shakespeare's dramas, this phenomenon is one of the most important principles.⁸

It is not possible to accurately determine the date for the formation of the Elizabethan theatre, but its end is dated to 1642, when Parliament decided to issue a ban on theatrical activities. That resulted in the demolition of theatres and paralysis of English cultural life for the next twenty years.⁹

⁶ BROCKETT, O. G. Dějiny divadla. P. 189-191.

⁷ ZETTLOVÁ, M. *Renesanční filosofie člověka a Alžbětinské divadlo*, chapter 3.

⁸ POKORNÝ, J. Shakespeareova doba a divadlo. P. 23-30.

⁹ POKORNÝ, J. Shakespeareova doba a divadlo. P. 23-30.

1.3 William Shakespeare, his life, style and work

William Shakespeare was born in April 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon to Mary Arden and John Shakespeare. His father was an important citizen of Stratford. There he probably attended school for young men of his social class and in 1582 he married Anne Hathaway, who was eight years older than him and with whom he had three children.¹⁰

There are no convincing reports about other important events of his life until 1592, when his name was first mentioned as an actor and play writer in a rather snide remark from Robert Greene, who expressed concern over the fact that the actor has successfully attempted to write plays.¹¹ Reasons why Shakespeare left his wife, children and Stratford and moved to London, where he began to make a living, first as an actor, are not clear. Years between 1585, when the twins were baptized, and 1592, are called the period of lost years.¹²

Shakespeare's acting career was eventually overshadowed by his career as an author. There are records that state he was an actor, but we do not know what roles he played in or how successfully. The only exception is his role of the ghost in the Hamlet drama.¹³

In 1594 Shakespeare joined the theatre company named Servants of Lord Chamberlain, which in 1603 turned into Servants of King and had a royal patent. In this theatre company Shakespeare remained until the end of his London career.¹⁴

Historical accounts show that in 1599 Shakespeare became a co-owner of Globe Theatre (The Globe) and in 1608 of The Black Brothers' theatre.¹⁵ Shakespeare thus influenced many elements of theatre culture of his time. Around 1611 he returned to Stratford, where on the 23rd April 1616 died. The cause of his death is not clear. There are some speculations that he could die from typhoid fever. Shakespeare was buried on the 25th April 1616.¹⁶

¹⁰ ZETTLOVÁ, M. *Renesanční filosofie člověka a Alžbětinské divadlo*, chapter 3.

¹¹ POKORNÝ, J. *Shakespeareova doba a divadlo*. P. 43-47.

¹² ZETTLOVÁ, M. *Renesanční filosofie člověka a Alžbětinské divadlo*, chapter 3.

¹³ BROCKETT, O. G. *Dějiny divadla*. P. 190.

¹⁴ BROCKETT, O. G. *Dějiny divadla*. P. 206-2014.

¹⁵ BROCKETT, O. G. *Dějiny divadla*. P. 206-2014.

¹⁶ ZETTLOVÁ, M. *Renesanční filosofie člověka a Alžbětinské divadlo*, chapter 3.

Although his theatrical activities were various, Shakespeare became worldly famous primarily as a play writer. It is no exaggeration to say that he is the most famous play writer of all time. In his fifty-two years long life Shakespeare wrote thirty-six plays and over one hundred and fifty sonnets. His dramatic work can be divided into four categories: thirteen comedies (The Taming of the Shrew, Love's Labours Lost, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and other), seven historical (Richard III, King John, Henry VIII, and other), ten tragedies (Othello, Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet, and other) and five romances (Cymbeline, Pericles, Prince of Tyre, and other).¹⁷ Style of Shakespeare's plays was blank verse, which was already used by Christopher Marlowe, but first Shakespeare was able to work with this kind of verses the way that attributed to each and every play a different character.

Shakespeare's inspiration was mythology of ancient Greece, myths and folk tales of ancient history of Rome and Italy as a whole. This inspiration is also reflected in the choice of names of certain characters such as Romeo, Pericles or Giacomo.¹⁸

Shakespeare's work arouses admiration around the world for centuries. The key to the Excellence of his work and immortality of characters and monologues is probably universality of themes, relationships and feelings of the characters. Despite the fact that the storyline is always set in a particular environment and often times, the characters perfectly describe human existence and nature: betrayal, love, desire, ambition, regret, prejudices, etc., so topics that will never vanish from people's lives.¹⁹ It is therefore not surprising that Shakespeare's plays are still awaiting new productions and inspire many other artists.

¹⁷ HILSKÝ, M. *Shakespeare a jeviště svět*. Chapter 24-Hamlet.

¹⁸ ZETTLOVÁ, M. *Renesanční filosofie člověka a Alžbětinské divadlo*, chapter 3.

¹⁹ SHAKESPEARE, William. *Hamlet*. Přel. HILSKÝ, M. P, 147-160.

2. Creation of the Hamlet drama, its form, content and different approaches of translators to this drama

Due to the fact that Hamlet is Shakespeare's most famous tragedy and in general probably the world's most famous theatre play, it's next to impossible to take into account all theses and analyzes that were made to it. This work is not concerned only with the theory of the text of the play itself, and so this chapter discusses only the most crucial information.

2.1 Approximate date of the creation, its first performance and printed edition

Time of the creation of Hamlet is essentially identical with the time of its first release. Dramatic texts were in the Elizabethan era of theatre made on order for specific acting company, so it is obvious that Shakespeare wrote the play Hamlet for his theatre company Servants of Lord Chamberlain and shortly after that was premiered.²⁰ The exact date of the Hamlet's premiere is not known, but it is possible to set out a time range.

The most recognized Czech translator of Shakespeare's work Martin Hilský states in his book *Shakespeare and the stage of the world* for the dating of Hamlet following sentence: "26th July 1602 gave James Roberts instruction to register "a book called *Revenge of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*, as it was recently played by Servants of the Lord Chamberlain." This record proves with absolute certainty that Shakespeare's Hamlet was firstly performed sometime before that date. Similarly, it is certain that Shakespeare did not write Hamlet before the autumn 1598. At the time, Francis Meres published a book *Palladis Tamia*, which states a list of Shakespeare's plays and Hamlet was not among them, and because it was even at the time of its release the phenomenally popular play, it is clear that at the end of 1598 Hamlet was not created yet".²¹ Hilský in his quest for accurate dating of the play gives many more details tapering the period, but for the purposes of this work is the aforementioned definition sufficient.

²⁰ BROCKETT, O. G. *Dějiny divadla*. P. 198.

²¹ HILSKÝ, M. *Shakespeare a jeviště svět*. Chapter 24- Hamlet.

Shakespeare's own manuscript of Hamlet unfortunately wasn't preserved. The first printed edition of the play has occurred in 1603 and was created based on the record of the deformed text, which was probably acquired by hired actor, who played Marcellus and Lucianus in the play. It is considered that the actor took the text in order to steal the play and give it to another group of actors, who then illegally played Hamlet outside of London.²²

In the absence of the author's manuscript and the fact that the preserved manuscripts written by copyists or actors, it is clear that there is no certainty that the present form of the play is identical with how Shakespeare wrote it. The issue, which is most likely the closest to the author's, is from 1623. It is the first folio edition of Shakespeare's thirty-six plays. Researchers believe, that the cuts and additions that are made in the issue, could be done by William Shakespeare himself.²³

2.2 Inspiration for the play

The question whether Hamlet was inspired by a real story or a legend is not easy to be answered. Not even this question can be answered with one hundred percent certainty. Although experts seem to agree on the few very probable inspirations, which led Shakespeare to give birth to this play.

The play is conceivably an adaptation of an older play whose direct source was not preserved. It is possible that before Hamlet a similar play existed and its authorship is attributed to Thomas Kyd. It was probably bloody revenge tragedy. The story originally occurs in the Nordic sagas and was drafted in the 12th century by poet and chronicler Saxo Gramaticus in *Historiae Danicae*.²⁴ The theme, however, Shakespeare did not receive in Latin, but rather in the French translation of the legend by Francois de Belleforest from 1570. Belleforest in his translation of the original story tends to add moralizing comments and quotations from Scripture and bring it to the ideology of the time.²⁵

²² SHAKESPEARE, William. *Hamlet*. Přel. HILSKÝ, M. P. 147-160.

²³ SHAKESPEARE, William. *Hamlet*. Přel. HILSKÝ, M. P. 147-160.

²⁴ SHAKESPEARE, William. *Hamlet, princ dánský*. Přel. JOSEK, J. P. 3-7.

²⁵ SHAKESPEARE, William. *Hamlet, princ dánský*. Přel. JOSEK, J. P. 3-7.

Another possible inspiration could be real events that took place at Queen Mary Stuart's court. The story started in 1567 when her husband Lord Darnley was murdered, it turned out that the murder was committed by the Earl of Bothwell, who was at that time the queen's lover, and shortly after Lord Darnley's funeral married her. These events aroused a wave of indignation that reached far beyond the borders of Scotland. This whole story, the so-called "Darnley scandal" is shockingly similar to story of Hamlet. Whether Shakespeare knew the story or not and whether it served as the inspiration, we can only guess. It is clear, however, that the plot of Hamlet is not only the author's imagination or paraphrase of the old legends, but corresponds to actual events in Renaissance Europe.²⁶

2.3 Concise content of the play

The first act – Danish king is dead. Widowed Queen Gertrude marries his brother. Prince Hamlet is unhappy, and his unhappiness is multiplied when he is made aware of the ghost, who appears at the night on the wall. Hamlet meets him and finds out that it is the spirit of his deceased father. Ghost of his father tells him that he was murdered by his own brother and asks Hamlet for revenge.

The second Act – Hamlet begins to feign madness. Polonius – the main king's chamberlain – thinks that it is because Hamlet is in love with his daughter Ophelia and he tries to unravel the mystery. The king at the same time sends to Hamlet two of his loyal nobles to pry from him some information. He does not believe them and uses itinerant actors to stage performances about King's death. Hamlet wants to convince himself about uncle's guilt.

The third act – Work has been done. The king left the show. Hamlet went after him to kill him, but didn't find enough courage. Finally, his presence is requested by the Queen and he reveals her the whole truth about his uncle. She, however, thinks that this is just a result of his madness. Hamlet hears a rustle and in excitement kills Polonius, who was hiding behind a chair, in the belief that he is the king.

²⁶ SHAKESPEARE, William. *Hamlet*. Přel. HILSKÝ, M. P. 147-160.

The fourth act – Hamlet leaves for England. He suspects king's betrayal and therefore takes the letter that King wrote. It states that the King of England has to execute Hamlet. Hamlet changes the content of the letter and then returns back to Denmark.

The fifth act – Hamlet meets with his loyal friend Horatio, who knows the whole truth about the death of Hamlet's father. He also encounters two gravediggers, who are digging a grave for drowned Ophelia. Laertes, Ophelia's brother, wants to avenge her and father's death and along with the king sets a trap for Hamlet. The situation results in queen's death, because she accidentally drinks the poisoned wine. Also Laertes and Hamlet are wounded by a poisoned sword. And just before his death, Hamlet manages to kill Claudius, and therefore fulfil his revenge.²⁷

2.4 Form and linguistic style of the play

Hamlet, as all the other dramas, is written in a form that it is called blank verse. Blank verse is unrhymed form of five time iambic stanzas (ten-syllable verse, where every odd syllable is unstressed and every even is stressed). English iamb is derived directly from the commonly used English language, where the accent rises with the second syllable.²⁸

This fixed rules and blank verse, which he took as his form of expression, did not cause that drama Hamlet would bog down among other tragedies. Shakespeare used in Hamlet many specific linguistic means and distinctive features that would be without any problem recognized only by the quotation of the text.²⁹

Shakespeare uses in Hamlet's utterances a lot of so-called "dichotomy".³⁰ Its examples include: to be or not to be, to die or to sleep or deny and suffer or resist and be through. This form creates an argumentation based on binary oppositions and choices between them. Hamlet (character) is in his considerations constantly interrupted by

²⁷ SHAKESPEARE, William. *Hamlet*. Přel. HILSKÝ, M. P. 147-160.

²⁸ ZETLOVÁ, M. *Renesanční filosofie člověka a Alžbětinské divadlo*, chapter 3.

²⁹ Blank verse, 2012. Poetic terminology. <http://www.poeticterminology.net/07-blank-verse.htm> (accessed March 20, 2013).

³⁰ HILSKÝ, M. *Shakespeare a jeviště svět*. kap.24-Hamlet.

himself and creates a stream of thoughts, which is richly forked and finally goes back to the original topic of existential considerations.³¹

The most famous part of the play is undoubtedly fatal monologue "to be or not to be". This monologue "is the pulsating heart of the entire tragedy which does not only question the meaning of being, but refers to the character itself and reveals the method of play, in which it is contained".³² Monologue is the utterance of doubt and these doubts have their own grammar, rhetoric and logic anchored in duplication, for example "anxiety and eternal suffering" or "kicking and mockery of time". The amount of pairs of figures in this single monologue is quite extraordinary and it protrudes in Hamlet's speech.³³

In no other Shakespeare's play is used as much additional doubled nouns and adjectives associated with "and". This of course slows down the flow of Hamlet's speech, but it is not in the text by accident. Almost everything in Hamlet is told twice. In some cases, this principle escalates into chaos and rush.³⁴

The language, that Shakespeare used in Hamlet (as well as in his other dramas), fascinated linguistic scholars and translators around the world. It is "*inherently performative language and speech of his dramas not only says something, but does something*".³⁵ It is no wonder that it still encourages new translators to further attempts for more precise, onomatopoeic or simply better translation.

2.5 Problems with translation of Hamlet into Czech and examples of different approaches of some translators

All of the extracts are in Czech because there can be seen the difference in the translation. Translating Shakespeare's most famous tragedy is certainly a challenge not only for Czech artists. One of the biggest pitfalls for Czech translators is the difference in rhythm of English and Czech language. While English has mostly accent on the

³¹ HILSKÝ, M. *Shakespeare a jeviště svět*. kap.24-Hamlet.

³² HILSKÝ, M. *Shakespeare a jeviště svět*. kap.24-Hamlet.

³³ HILSKÝ, M. *Shakespeare a jeviště svět*. kap.24- Hamlet.

³⁴ SHAKESPEARE, William. *Hamlet*. Přel. HILSKÝ, M. P. 147-160.

³⁵ HILSKÝ, M. *Shakespeare a jeviště svět*. kap.24- Hamlet.

second syllable (on which the English iamb is also based), Czech language only has accent on the first syllable (which corresponds to trochee).³⁶

There may be problem how can be a verse faithfully translated if the rules for its operation are fundamentally different in the source and final language. Some translators have tried to convert the verse into Czech language at any price also in iambic form. One of these translators was Josef Václav Sládek.³⁷ Each foot of his verse begins with an unstressed syllable and ends with a stressed one. This approach leads to the fact that a large number of words appear in Sládek's translation that have only metric and rhythmic function.³⁸

*„Být čili nebýt – ta jest otázka -
víc důstojno-li ducha trpěti
od střel a praků zlého osudu,
neb ozbrojit se proti moři běd
a ukončit je vzpourou. – Umřít - spát; -...“³⁹*

E. A. Saudek⁴⁰ is already beginning to loosen the iamb form in his translation. In his conception, it is possible to start a verse with a dactylic or trochaic foot. This form better complies with the requirements of Czech language and the blank verse is thus achieved in the second half of the verse, and especially at its end.⁴¹

*„Žít nebo nežít – to je, oč tu běží:
zda je to ducha důstojnější snášet
střely a šípy rozkacené sudby,
či proti moři běd se chopit zbraně
a skoncovat je zpourou. Zemřít – spát -...“⁴²*

³⁶ BARVÍKOVÁ, Veronika. *Pojetí Shakespearova Hamleta českými divadelními scénami*. Page 15.

³⁷ Josef Václav Sládek (27. 10. 1845 Zbiroh – 28.6.1912 Zbiroh) was a Czech writer, poet, journalist and translator. He is considered the founder of Czech poetry for children. He was a member of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

³⁸ BARVÍKOVÁ, Veronika. *Pojetí Shakespearova Hamleta českými divadelními scénami*. Page 15.

³⁹ An extract from the translation of Josef Václav Sládek.

⁴⁰ Erik Adolf Saudek (18. 10. 1904 Vienna, Austria – 16. 7. 1963 Sozopol, Bulgaria) was a Czech translator, mainly from English (Shakespeare), German (Goethe) and French (Moliere).

⁴¹ BARVÍKOVÁ, Veronika. *Pojetí Shakespearova Hamleta českými divadelními scénami*. Page 15.

⁴² An extract from the translation of Erik Adolf Saudek.

The purpose of the translation, of course, is not just conversion of the form in the possibly most faithful manner. The main positive aspect of Hamlet is primarily its thematic timelessness. This gives the directors of individual productions freedom and liberty in the interpretation of Shakespeare's text. Therefore it is very important that the translation corresponds as closely as possible with the intention of dramaturgic-directorial concept of given production.⁴³

Some translations are thus created specifically for a particular production. One of these translations is a translation of Břetislav Hodek.⁴⁴ His translation was made for the National Theatre production directed by Miroslav Macháček, premiere in 1982. His language may seem conservative to us in retrospect (though it is only a thirty-year shift). Miroslav Macháček, however, intended to approach Hamlet classically, so the moderation of the translation is appropriate. Hodek's translation is vivid, interesting and has preserved blank verse.

*„Být nebo nebýt – to je totiž problém:
jestli je ušlechtilejší přetrpět mozkem
praky a šípy kruté štěstěny,
či proti moři útrap zvednout zbraň.
Vzepřít se a tím je ukončit – Zemřít, spát - ...“⁴⁵*

A more common approach is, of course, directorial selection of existing translations. In this case, the most popular translation with the directors in Czech Republic is the one of Martin Hilský.⁴⁶ His translations of Shakespeare's plays (including Hamlet) are closest to contemporary viewer both with the content and form, yet they are not consumerist or simplified in any way.

⁴³ HILSKÝ, M. Shakespeare a jeviště svět. Chapter 24-Hamlet.

⁴⁴ PhDr. Břetislav Hodek (24. 5. 1924 Prague – 18. 3. 2007 Prague) was a Czech lexicographer, literary scholar, writer and translator from English. He belongs to the leading Czech experts on William Shakespeare and his age.

⁴⁵ An extract from the translation of Břetislav Hodek.

⁴⁶ Prof. PhDr. Martin Hilský, CSc., dr. h. c., MBE (* 8. 4. 1943 Prague) is a professor of English literature at the Faculty of Arts at the Charles University and the Faculty of Arts at the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, translator from English, shakespeareologist and husband of a Czech translator Kateřina Hilská.

Hilský sees Shakespeare's uniqueness in three points. The first one is human experience. Through the experience, the audience identifies themselves with the life of the character. The second point is the timelessness and openness of plays and the third one is, of course, the brilliance of Shakespeare's language.⁴⁷

*„Být nebo nebýt – to je otázka:
je důstojnější zapřít se a snášet
surovost osudu a jeho rány,
anebo se vzepřít moři trápení
a skoncovat to navždy? Zemřít, spát - ...“⁴⁸*

Jan Mikulášek chose for his production at the theatre “Husa na provázku” (premiere in 2009) the translation of Zdeněk Urbánek⁴⁹, which was created for the National Theatre production directed by Jaromír Pleskot (premiere in 1959). This production should have humanized and demythologized Hamlet. The translation is therefore conducted in this spirit.

*„Být, nebo nebýt. Jak to rozhodnout?
Je důstojnější mlčky sklonit hlavu
Před potupnými šípy osudu
Nebo vzít zbraň a přival trápení
Ukončit navždy vzpouru? – Zemřít, spát, ...“⁵⁰*

Some critics had reproached him for excessive austerity and diversion from Shakespeare's eloquent form; others evaluated positively the simplification of poetic form for the development of communication with the audience.⁵¹ Why had Mikulášek chosen this translation, is the subject of chapter 3.12.

⁴⁷ HILSKÝ, M. Shakespeare a jeviště svět. Chapter 24-Hamlet.

⁴⁸ An extract from the translation of Martin Hilský.

⁴⁹ Zdeněk Urbánek (* 12. 10. 1917, Prague – 12. 6. 2008, Prague) was a Czech writer, translator, university lecturer and dissident - Charter 77 signatory.

⁵⁰ An extract from the translation of Zdeněk Urbánek.

⁵¹ KOTAČKOVÁ, Kateřina. *Zdeněk Urbánek and His Controversial Translation of Hamlet*. Page 12.

2.6 Analysis of the story, the characters and their actions

It is almost impossible to comprehensively and clearly summarize “what Hamlet is about” or what type of character and motivation for behaviour the characters have. The interpretation of this text has undergone literally as many changes for about 400 years of its staging as human society experienced in the political, philosophical and artistic history during this period. The fact, that the play is built to provide a wide range of interpretations, is certainly one of the main reasons for its timelessness and popularity.⁵²

In the 17th century, Hamlet was understood primarily as a story of heroic avenger, who having strong moral credit was trying to avenge the death of his royal father. During the period of classicism, tragic form was mostly attributed to the drama in continuity to the ancient tragedy. Such Hamlet was portrayed by the famous actor, dramatist and playwright of classicism David Garrick.⁵³

In the 19th century, the comprehension of Hamlet turned into a story of torn fantasist unable to act, which was true to romanticism that was lingering in this period of time.⁵⁴

The 20th century is the century that definitively left the undifferentiated and uniform artistic style, and therefore also the interpretations of Hamlet begin to grow in many directions and forms.⁵⁵

In the 30s, John Gielgud⁵⁶ accentuated the nobleness and aristocratic manner of Hamlet's character. Thirty years later as the director, however, he disposed of historical costumes and let the actors dressed in civilian clothes play Hamlet as a theatre rehearsal.⁵⁷

⁵² Hilský, M. Divadlo svět- Hamlet, mp3, 2009. Český rozhlas Vltava. (accessed March 20, 2013).

⁵³ SHAKESPEARE, William. *Hamlet, princ dánský*. Transl. JOSEK, J. Page 3-7.

⁵⁴ Ibidem.

⁵⁵ BROCKETT, O. G. *Dějiny divadla*.

⁵⁶ Sir Arthur John Gielgud, OM, CH (14. 4. 1904 – 21. 5. 2000) was an English actor, director and producer. A descendant of the renowned Terry acting family, he achieved early international acclaim for his youthful, emotionally expressive Hamlet.

⁵⁷ SHAKESPEARE, William. *Hamlet, princ dánský*. Transl. JOSEK, J. Page 3-7.

In 1965, Peter Hall⁵⁸ turned the formerly noble Hamlet into a student rebel.⁵⁹ Laurence Olivier's⁶⁰ Hamlet suffers from the Oedipus complex on the film screen and is unable to kill his father's murderer just because he does what he wanted himself...

Hamlet was thus played on the world stages as a family, historical, psychological and philosophical drama. The play was bestowed the form of a poetic or political game, thriller or a spiritualistic story.

In the most basic sense, Hamlet is a play about the murder, namely the murder of the king. At the time of its creation, this was perceived somewhat differently than how we see it today. In Elizabethan England, the king was seen as an individual and as a representative of the state and set of royal functions. This duality manifested itself in the king having two bodies - one human, imperfect and mortal body and the other mystical, perfect and immortal. The figure of the spirit of the deceased king, who appears on the castle walls and asks Hamlet to avenge his murder, is thus based on the belief in the immortal king's body and not just on a pure fantasy of the author.⁶¹

Hamlet is also a play of questions. The entire text of the play begins with the question "Who's there?" and the most famous monologue of Hamlet (which can be considered the most famous monologue of world dramatic literature) is introduced with the question "To be or not to be ...". The play is interwoven with questions and so encourages to constant questioning about the sense of actions, existence, love, death, revenge and many other instances of life. Thus, it leads its characters, the viewer as well as the creator to introspection.⁶²

Yet considerations, actions and utterances are constantly interrupted by something. Each story event that takes place is interrupted by something (Ophelia's funeral, wedding of Gertrude and Claudius or mere changing of the guards). Similarly,

⁵⁸ Sir Peter Reginald Frederick Hall, CBE (* 22. 11. 1930) is an English theatre and film director. Hall founded the Royal Shakespeare Company (1960–68) and directed the National Theatre (1973–88). He has also been prominent in defending public subsidy of the arts in Britain.

⁵⁹ SHAKESPEARE, William. *Hamlet, princ dánský*. Transl. JOSEK, J. Page 3-7.

⁶⁰ The film adaptation of Hamlet from 1948, directed by Laurence Olivier, lead roles: Laurence Olivier. This film won four Oscars in 1949, including the Oscar for the lead role.

⁶¹ HILSKÝ, M. *Shakespeare a jeviště svět*. Chapter 24-Hamlet.

⁶² Ibidem.

Hamlet's attempt to avenge his father's death is constantly interrupted. In the storyline thus dominates discontinuity that does not give the characters a chance to act according to plan.⁶³

Everything is a game! This principle is brought to perfection in Hamlet. Each character holds a role. Claudius tries to maintain an expression of solid and irreproachable statesman, Gertrude tries just as well to play the role of a queen, a mother and a wife, and Hamlet decides to pretend madness in order to achieve his goal. Each character is trying to keep the advantageous face. This behaviour is however subject to a mirror in the form of a theatre in theatre. In this deliberately staged play, Hamlet sets a mirror to his uncle, himself as well as the viewers and puts in motion the cycle of events that culminate in a tragic end.⁶⁴

Although Shakespeare had certainly a very precise idea about the characters he created, their actions and utterances can be interpreted differently. Whether it was author's intention to create them so that they provided a wide range of interpretation to theatre artists remains a secret. Yet it is certain that the ambiguity and formability of motivations and intentions of characters make Hamlet irresistible for staging intentions.

It is certainly possible to analyze individual characters only from the text of the play but the result will always be influenced by personal interpretation. Therefore is my analysis based on the work of Martin Hliský, who is currently considered the largest capacity in this field.

2.6.1 Claudius

The primary trigger for the story of the whole play is the murder of king Hamlet, which is committed by his brother Claudius. Claudius thus becomes the originator of all other situations and enemy of the main character, prince Hamlet. The best one-word definition of Claudius would therefore undoubtedly be "villain." However, Claudius is a villain, who has been given great abilities, namely abilities that are paradoxically very useful for the position of king - the position Claudius gained by the fratricide and subsequent marriage with a royal widow. Claudius manifests himself as a very capable orator and politician who knows exactly what words to use and when. He is ambitious

⁶³ Ibidem.

⁶⁴ HILSKÝ, M. *Shakespeare a jeviště svět*. Chapter 24-Hamlet.

and his every move and action is guided by reason. He is very well aware that it is necessary to convince the courtiers and the people as soon as possible that they have to look forward and forget the difficult event from the past. His first appearance begins with a monologue, which is conducted precisely in this diplomatic and compassionately understanding spirit.⁶⁵

*„Ač dosud máme v paměti smrt bratra,
drahého Hamleta, a v srdcích bychom
spíš měli nosit žal a celou zem
proměnit v jednu bědující tvář,
rozumem jest nám ovládnout náš cit,
na bratra myslet ve zmoudřelém smutku
a pamětlivi přitom být též sebe...“⁶⁶*

Claudius hopes that everything headed to oblivion and to be accepted by the public as well as by Hamlet as soon as possible. Hamlet, however, rejects Claudius' rhetoric and starts to pose a huge threat to him. When Claudius gets frightened after a theatre performance by the idea that Hamlet knows about his crime, he is forced to act pragmatically and assertively. That is a fundamental difference in the character of Claudius and Hamlet. While Claudius looks forward and acts, Hamlet is rather passive, in thoughts drowned philosopher.⁶⁷

Claudius has one more characteristic that is not too common with negative characters. This characteristic is the conscience. Claudius would like to repent for his sins, and even has the courage to admit that he is not able to.⁶⁸

*„Můj hřích je hnusný, zapáchá až k nebi.
Nejstarší kletba na něm ulpívá –
bratrovražda. Ne, nemohu se modlit,
ač touhu silnou mám i odhodlání. ...“⁶⁹*

⁶⁵ HILSKÝ, M. *Shakespeare a jeviště svět*. Chapter 24-Hamlet.

⁶⁶ An extract from the translation of Martin Hilský.

⁶⁷ HILSKÝ, M. *Shakespeare a jeviště svět*. Chapter 24-Hamlet.

⁶⁸ SHAKESPEARE, William. *Hamlet*. Transl. HILSKÝ, M. Page 147-160.

⁶⁹ An extract from the translation of Martin Hilský.

Shakespeare created a rival to Hamlet, who is equipped with many weapons and is thus not a classic, purely negative villain. It can be said that the diversity of Claudius' character makes the story more complicated and more colourful.⁷⁰

2.6.2 Horacio

If Claudius is Hamlet's biggest enemy, then Horacio is the character who is closest to him. He is the only main character in the tragedy that does not die. He is the only friend to prince Hamlet and represents a morally pure island in the otherwise very distorted and rotten Danish state.⁷¹

*„Šlechtné srdce puklo. Dobrou noc,
můj milý princí. Chóry andělské
ať zkonejší tvou mysl. ...“⁷²*

Horacio does not appear in either of the originals, which inspired Shakespeare. He is therefore only result of author's fantasy. There are many reasons why was Horacio added into the story. One reason may be that Hamlet needs a soul mate, so that he could survive and was strong enough to fulfil his task. Another reason could be that Shakespeare often has supporting male character in his plays, which apart from own story line also fulfils the role of the narrator. Examples from other dramas are: Cassio (Othello), Banquo (Macbeth) and Kent (King Lear).⁷³

2.6.3 Ophelia

In the drama, male characters have superiority in terms of numbers. In fact, there are only two women in Hamlet, one of which is Gertrude, Hamlet's mother and queen, and the other one being the only character representing romantic love and young emotion, which is a very unique motivation in a play full of intrigues and pretence.⁷⁴

Ophelia, daughter of Polonius, is the only young girl who appears in the play and her fate is entirely determined by the behaviour of men. Apparently, Hamlet used to

⁷⁰ Hilský, M. Divadlo svět- Hamlet, mp3, 2009. Český rozhlas Vltava. (accessed March 20, 2013).

⁷¹ SHAKESPEARE, William. *Hamlet*. Transl. HILSKÝ, M. Page 147-160.

⁷² An extract from the translation of Martin Hilský.

⁷³ SHAKESPEARE, William. *Hamlet*. Transl. HILSKÝ, M. Page 147-160.

⁷⁴ HILSKÝ, M. *Shakespeare a jeviště svět*. Chapter 24-Hamlet.

love her in the past, or at least he had awakened the feeling of love in her with his behaviour. This, however, we learn only from the utterances of other characters. From the first to the last act, we do not encounter any real signs of romantic feelings again. Ophelia is rejected by Hamlet and her heart just receives more and more wounds.⁷⁵

*„ ... Já ze všech nejvíc zubožená žena,
Blažená kdysi hudbou jeho slov!
Proč kdysi vznešený a mocný rozum
bezmocně řinčí jako prasklý zvon? ”⁷⁶*

Her whole life tragedy culminates in insanity and subsequent death by drowning. Ophelia's insanity, however, is very different from the one of Hamlet. While Hamlet is manifested as a madman who has an insane head and we often do not know whether it is a ruse or reality. Ophelia's insanity comes primarily from a broken heart and is thus very emotional.⁷⁷ Thanks to emotionality, purity and young age, Ophelia's destiny sounds perhaps most tragically of all.

2.6.4 Laertes

Ophelia's great guardian and very close person is her brother Laertes. He is a young, impulsive nobleman who loves life and knows how to enjoy secular pleasures. In many ways, Laertes is the antagonist to Hamlet. His actions are driven by very similar motivations but unlike Hamlet, he is able to act very quickly and is not burdened by any inside contradiction. Shakespeare puts their contrary interests and behaviour on the eyes to the viewer with many links. While Hamlet is about to leave to the University of Wittenberg, Laertes leaves to Paris, where he will more than to studies devote to pleasures that the French city of love has to offer. Both men have an incomplete family. Hamlet has no father and Laertes has no mother. The atmosphere of their families is yet very different. Disruption dominates in Hamlet's family and family love is irretrievably gone, Laertes more than anyone in the world loves his sister and gets on well with his father as is proper in a healthy family.⁷⁸ It takes months to Hamlet to get revenge for his father and he is controlled by grief and doubt about all and everything. Laertes makes

⁷⁵ HILSKÝ, M. *Shakespeare a jeviště svět*. Chapter 24-Hamlet.

⁷⁶ An extract from the translation of Martin Hilský.

⁷⁷ HILSKÝ, M. *Shakespeare a jeviště svět*. Chapter 24-Hamlet.

⁷⁸ HILSKÝ, M. *Shakespeare a jeviště svět*. Chapter 24-Hamlet.

the decision almost immediately and right after the decision, he does not hesitate to act without longer considerations.⁷⁹

„Udělám to.

A meč si navíc potřu prudkým jedem,

co jsem ho koupil od mastičkáře.

Když se té masti čepel jenom dotkne,

i pouhé škrábnutí je smrtelné...“

Laertes thus represents the part of the man, which Hamlet is missing. He is well-built, strong and hot-headed. If prince Hamlet possessed these characteristics, the drama would probably be at its end already in the second image.

2.6.5 Hamlet

Hamlet, the prince of the Castle of Elsinore, gets caught up in a drama in the most painful time of his life. We learn about what Hamlet's character was like before the death of his father during the whole story. Hamlet was prince who knew how to have fun, liked theatre and court merrymakings. This is also supported by Getrude's words encouraging Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern to cheer up the prince like in the past. Also, Hamlet had a very warm relationship to his father and mother. He was able to love a woman. Ophelia was courted by him, he used to send her presents and love letters.^[83]

However, Hamlet with such character cannot be reached in the drama. Hamlet feels like a different person, considering his mother's early wedding and wedding merrymaking as tasteless and also as a betrayal. When he later sees the ghost which reveals him the true cause of his father's death, a strong internal struggle and thirst for revenge burst out inside of him. Since that moment, Hamlet is writhed with pain and anger, which finally overpower him. He repudiates Ophelia hideously and closes himself. Hamlet himself says that he will have to pretend madness. Nevertheless, he is torn apart and chased by his own thoughts that he is on an insecure way if his madness is only a played, pretended role.^[84]

⁷⁹

HILSKÝ, M. *Shakespeare a jeviště svět*. Chapter 24-Hamlet.

His revenge plan which consists in murdering Claudius is permanently interrupted by Hamlet's own insecurity and also by external circumstances. When the closest possibility to murder Claudius occurs, Hamlet is not able to do so. He is scared by the idea that he would kill a human in a prayer of penitence. Thus, Hamlet is not an avenger like, for instance, Laertes. He is not able to execute his task resolutely and mindlessly. His reflections are interwoven with non-answered questions, his mind keeps digressing from one thought to another and, therefore, tears his concentration apart. Paradoxically, the last interruption of Hamlet's plan is his own death. [\[85\]](#)

Hamlet therefore does not fulfill his task and dies. But his biggest worry is not related to his death. What worries him the most is that there is not anyone who could tell his story. Actually, it is the unfinishment what makes Hamlet Hamlet. His questions without answers and plans without acts are his essence and crux. [\[86\]](#)

3. Differences and similarities regarding the script-direction adaptation of Hamlet by Czech theatre authors in the second half of the 20th century

The implementation by Macháček was created in the 1980s of the 20th century, i.e. in the last decade of the totalitarian era. It was the so-called “big screen” on the stage of the most prestigious and very classical National Theatre, and the then best Czech actors were casted in the play (for instance František Němec, Josef Somr, Jana Hlaváčová, Petr Kostka and others).

By way of contrast, Hamlet by Jan Mikulášek was implemented in the Theatre Husa na provázku in 2009. The Theatre Husa na provázku is a theatre which was founded as an antipole to the big stages in order to enable the use of expressions which are different from classical theatre means and discover new forms and approaches to the theatre. The implementation was created in the last decade, i.e. in the period which can be considered as our present time, which is considered as a period of freedom of the artistic expression and almost unlimited possibilities to be creative.

3.1 Hamlet in the National Theatre, 1983

Since 1886, this drama has been implemented in the National Theatre by six directors and four actors performed the leading role. The most famous and successful were the following: director J. Kvapil with leading-role actor E. Vojan (1927), director K. H. Hilar with leading-role actor E. Kohout (1926), and director J. Pleskot with leading-role actor R. Lukavský (1959). Since the implementation by J. Pleskot, thirty years passed without any new director daring to implement Hamlet again. It can be therefore said that in the National Theatre, Hamlet is implemented once in each of the artistic generations. In 1983, the decision to implement this world most famous drama was made by the director Miroslav Macháček.^[87]

3.2 Hamlet in the Theatre Husa na provázku, 2009

As regards the script in the Theatre Husa na provázku, Hamlet represents a new play implemented therein; considered as new with respect to its last phase which has been very prolific and which has been led by the artistic manager and director Vladimír Morávek. He actually decided to yield the direction to young and promising director Jan Mikulášek^[88]. Such decision brought hope that Hamlet in the Theatre Husa na provázku shall not follow stable traditions which emerged in connection with previous implementations of the play and shall open a new (maybe even a worrying) view at the Castle of Elsinore.^[89]

3.3 Script-direction conception Lošťák-Macháček

It is not for the first time in the career of Miroslav Macháček⁸⁰ that he works with Shakespeare; he had already experienced the acclaimed implementation of Henry V in the National Theatre in 1972. Miroslav Macháček and the script editor Radoslav Lošťák⁸¹ approached the implementation of Hamlet through distinct metaphor and very strong interpretation of the leading role. The key of their approach is the pure theatre and its magic. The theatre which enables the authors to seize the basis of the drama and interpret it in a new way, and reflect their own opinions and feelings related thereto. It enables the creation of the image of the contemporary world on the stage while using four hundred years old texts; it also enables the catalysation of the present happenings and often also the creation thereof. This topic is found also in the play itself where in the scene played by the actors occurs that a radical change in the world of the play appears through the theatre

⁸⁰He was born on May 8, 1922 in Nymburk. In 1945, he was enrolled on the State Conservatory in Prague where he studied acting for three years. After finishing his studies, he had engagement in the East-Bohemian Theatre in Pardubice, and from 1950 he had engagement in the Realistic Theatre of Zdeněk Nejedlý in Prague. In this year, he was also accused from enemy activities and had to leave this engagement; in this connection, he was also dismissed from DAMU in Prague where he had worked as teacher. In 1952, he was engaged by I. Glanc in České Budějovice where he worked as director from 1952 to 1954, and later he worked as the head director of the dramatic section until 1956. In 1956, he returned to Prague. From 1969 until the end of his life, he was in a very complicated situation due to his attitudes. In 1975, he presented a critical report in the National Theatre and in the same year, his treatment in the psychiatric clinic commenced. In 1989, he actively participated in revolutionary events; he was very dissatisfied with the situation in the National Theatre.

⁸¹Radostav Lošťák *November 11, 1935, is Czech drama author and writer. Since 1969, he has worked as script editor (in the period from 1969 until 1978 in the State Theatre in Olomouc, and since 1978 in the dramatic section of the National Theatre in Prague). He is the author of many radio, television and especially theatre plays (Walking on the Rocks, Late Bird Singing, House without Snowing). In the National Theatre, he focused particularly on plays created by contemporary Czech drama authors (O. Daněk, J. Jílek, J. Šotola).

performance. This scene is the key to the interpretation of the implementation by Macháček, which is found “lying” right on the stage.⁸² In the theatre program, Radoslav Lošťák says: *„Hamlet is particularly a dramatic basis, an attractive possibility to fully realizable “theatre of the world”. The world offered by the author is rugged by conflicts, sometimes cruel, sometimes even exorbitant in an uncatchable way. But the “theatre on theatre“, which is played in this “theatre of the world” in Hamlet and helps to reveal Claudius’s crime is as strong and big as the life itself. Actually, it is what helps to establish the truth, rouses the dejection, touches, moves the consciousness and reveals its hidden power and strength. We may only wish that such theatre stays here forever.*⁸³

Macháček also dramatically changed the perception of the character of Hamlet. His Hamlet is not a hesitant and indecisive philosopher. *„The new quality of the interpretation of the character is perhaps the ideally balanced present ability to decisive act, which are not mannered gestures of a torn prince, but especially rational circumspection, the ability to look under the surface of things and distinguish the life values therein.”*⁸⁴

3.4 Script-direction conception Vrbová-Mikulášek

*„The beginning of the year 2009 is the “period of Hamlet” where we participate in many tragedies every day, regardless whether we want it or not. We live with some of them in a close proximity, and the remaining ones are only observed by us from afar. We are forced by each of them to change our attitude, and reassess or cast doubt on our thoughts. Finally, we have to make the final decision and fully accept responsibility for our acts and also for our future, just like Hamlet.*⁸⁵ This is how script editor Barbora Vrbová describes its relationship to the drama in the theatre program.

Thus, Hamlet by Mikulášek is particularly about people and their decisions. And that is the reason why any political subtext, which would attack presence and situation of the society, has been removed from the interpretation. Under the activity of the director, Hamlet acquired a form of a family drama; thus, a drama of a family

⁸²Königsmark, V. To be the Mirror and Chronicle of the Era. *Scéna Praha*, Jan 12, 1983,

⁸³The National Theatre. *Hamlet: Theatre Program*. Praha, 1982.

⁸⁴Königsmark, V. To be the Mirror and Chronicle of the Era. *Scéna Praha*, Jan 12, 1983,

⁸⁵The Theatre Husa na provázku. *Hamlet: Theatre Program*. Brno, 2009

(any family) living isolated in its home and going through turbulent moments resulting in a tragedy. „...what is performed is actually a play about a breakdown of a family in which the son reacts inappropriately to his father's death and is emotionally dependent on his mother. ...is this the essence of the period and its „mirror“? Are we nothing but egoistic beings focused on our excessive, hypersensitive emotions?“⁸⁶ This is how (not in a very flattering way) the theatre theorist David Drozd assesses the implementation of the play.

However, the family drama is not implemented without metaphors and stylizations. Mikulášek's style of directing includes considerable work with stylizations in all parts of the implementation. In some moments, the actors perform hysterically pathetic screams. Strange instruments occur on the stage, such as a picture of two hippos in striped T-shirts. Some parts of the story remind of a mute grotesque. The musical component of the implementation is inconsistent and often even invites the audience to inappropriate laughing. According to the director's words, he is inspired by anything that surrounds him, including fine arts, music, work made by other directors (especially by Pitínský) and also by his own dreams.⁸⁷ Briefly, Mikulášek chooses from many elements of the theatre diversification and composes a colorful mosaic in the center of which prince Hamlet is situated.

In this case, Hamlet's character is not an ancient hero who heroically decides to avenge his father's death. Also, he is not an intellectual and permanently thoughtful philosopher. It is just a man writhed in his fears, full of conflict and, thus, dis-idealized, and realistic and close to the audience.

In Mikulášek's implementation, the music plays a very important role. In the first minutes of the performance, more than thirty-years old song „Dad, stay at least until Christmas“ by Karel Gott sounds, which demonstrates that the audience shall be prepared for Hamlet in a non-traditional rendition.

Another noticeable musical insertion occurs also in the first half of the performance when the key motive of film Adams Family starts to sound from the darkened stage.

⁸⁶Drozd, D. Absolutely Apolitical, but Smart Hamlet. *Lidové noviny*, March 02, 2009

⁸⁷The Theatre Husa na provázku. *Hamlet: Theatre Program*. Brno, 2009.

The director uses the music as the accelerator of the situations and also as the lightening element. Although some of the chosen pieces might be considered by the audience as inappropriate and evoke the impression that the director does not respect the „classics“, the applied approach to the musical component of the implementation is very effective and renders the play slightly tragicomic.

3.5 Scenography by Josef Svoboda

Hamlet by Macháček is taking place on an almost empty stage designed by Josef Svoboda, which is moved forward the audience via the covered orchestra pit and which is “roofed” by a half-rolled down iron curtain. The space is filled only with several stairways which are relocated now and then and, thus, change the setting of the story. The monologues are often performed in the covered orchestra pit (in front of the iron curtain) and as close as possible to the audience. This principle evokes the impression that a character steps out from its world and finds itself in the space between the audience and the story.

All the stress is put on actors and their acting. We cannot identify any superfluous instrument or set piece on the stage. The light usually falls in the shape of a cone on a particular character or action and the audience is not distracted by any other perception than by what is taking place in every moment of the time-space ephemerality of the actor’s action.

The only noticeable change of the scene comes at the very end of the performance when Claudius who is dying pulls down the black horizon and a monumental stairway, through which dead but victorious Hamlet is carried out with pieta, appears behind it. This final, lightly pathetic, element accents the authors’ intent to look at Hamlet through the optics of theatre.

3.6 Scenography by Marek Cpin

In “Husa”, Hamlet is taking place in a room the furniture and equipment of which evoke the impression of former luxury, which has been however affected by the ravages of time. The walls are covered by flaking off wallpapers and old faded photos which substitute canvas; in the left front corner, there is a piano the more famous era of which has already passed as well. Marek Cpin matched everything in brown and the atmosphere of the stage is very depressing.

The most distinct attribute of the stage is the omnipresent clay which represents the main scenic metaphor of the implementation. The clay is present from the beginning of the performance. For the first time, it is at the appearance of the ghost; this part is performed by all actors. They come to the stage and recite the lines of the ghost while pouring the brown mixture on the floor from glasses. The mixture seems to symbolize the omnipresent death, dying and burying. As the plot develops, more and more clay appears on the stage. It appears everywhere. The characters bring it in suitcases, pour it underneath their costumes, Claudius uses it as poison etc.

3.7 Costumes by Šárka Hejnová

The costumes designed by Šárka Hejnová contribute especially to the accentuation of the actor's element of the implementation by Miroslav Macháček. This component of the scenography does not refer to certain historical era. Hamlet wears simple black trousers and a shirt in the same color. This is what makes the absolute difference between him and other characters; his costume suggests that he is a character which is beyond the rest of the figures at first sight.

The rest of the courtiers, including the royal couple, wear clothes which manifest their status in the court and the lower their status is, the less decorated their clothes are. If we were to match the cut and the style of the costumes with certain period, it would be probably the antiquity or renaissance. However, it is not supposed to be the reconstruction of the historical clothes at all.

3.8 Costumes by Marek Cpin

All characters in the implementation by Mikulášek wear civil clothes. Men wear suits, women wear elegant or even evening dresses. Everything is matched in brown-grey tints as well. The cut of the costumes evokes the period of normalization, which is also stressed by the hairstyles of the actresses. Even Hamlet is not an exception. His costume is dominated by black color, which is generally traditional with respect to the costume of this character. Nevertheless, he is not the only character wearing the color and, thus, he does not seem to be any different from other characters in this respect.

The costumes, although evoking the period of normalization, support the main intention of the inscenators which was to perform Hamlet as a family tragedy. After all, it is the period of normalization and the fashion related thereto that evoke

especially in people over thirty memories of the family atmosphere of their childhood.

3.9 Acting in the implementation in the National Theatre

In the implementation by Macháček, the acting is even extremely dramatic. All actors' actions are based on the text and more stress is also put on the text. All actors play their parts in a way which perfectly corresponds to their lines, by using their movements, gestures and color of voice. There does not appear anything (not even for a while) that would be in conflict with the sense of the words. Thus, it is the acting which enables the words to make the impression, the acting is here for the words and tries to personify and form them into characters pertaining to the figures.

3.10 Acting in the implementation in the Theatre Husa na provázku

According to the director himself, the actors are the main component of his inspiration helping to seize the implementation.⁸⁸ Also in the final performance, the actors and their acting are granted large space. Nonetheless, they are not led to the so-called realism by Čechovov. The moments of the sincere actor's life on the stage are alternated by grotesque moments, big unnatural gestures, hysterical screams and dream passages which take place in slow motion while another character is speaking.

Plenty of signs for individual emotions and incidents appear on the stage rather than experience of the implementation itself. When Ophelia goes through her suffering, the individual parts of her text are interrupted by very painfully looking and theatrical falls on the floor. Polonius persuading Ophelia tries to put himself in the role of authoritative father, however, he permanently loses the position in this role and his monologue becomes a combination of appellative screaming accompanied by even gestures which Hitler were using and silent mumbling and self-encouragement.

The principle of the actor's sign and strong stylization creates a bizarre world of twisted characters which reveal us the feelings, which might be kept in secret by words.

⁸⁸The Theatre Husa na provázku. *Hamlet: Theatre Program*. Brno, 2009.

3.11 Text and its wording in the implementation by Miroslav Macháček

Miroslav Macháček did not manage to choose the appropriate translation which would correspond to his vision of Hamlet from those which were available at the time. He therefore chose a reversed procedure and ordered a new, let's say tailored, translation of the drama. Břetislav Hodek translated Hamlet keeping in mind that it will be Miroslav Macháček who will implement it as the first. He managed to render the character of Hamlet more decisive and, thus, to de-mythize the play in a certain way. However, according to some of the reviewers, the price of this achievement was too high. „*The lines by Hodek incline to the rhythimized prose and, in general, a more prosaic expression. (In some moments, this leads to an easier understanding and also to simplification.) Nevertheless, such de-poetisation causes the decrease of the effectiveness of the esthetic message and we might even consider it as the “de-shakespearation” of Shakespeare.*“⁸⁹ The question whether the translation by Hodek is really unfaithful to the original version and lowers the esthetic value of the drama shall be perhaps answered by the professional public or individual spectators themselves.

Nevertheless, Macháček applied the translation as a whole and the deletions made therein by himself were really few. Therefore, the plot of the implementation is really faithful to the original text and lets us to see Hamlet in all scenes created by Shakespeare in the drama.

3.12 Text and its wording in the implementation by Jan Mikulášek

Mikulášek chose for his implementation the translation by Zdeněk Urbánek. His translation was used for the first time in 1959. At that time, he was chosen for the implementation by Jaromír Pleskot. At the time of the release of Hamlet in the version translated by Urbánek, it was rather called Urbánek's Hamlet than Shakespeare's Hamlet. The translation apparently provoked tempestuous discussions not only within the circle of the professional public⁹⁰.

⁸⁹Vojta, M. To Read in a New Way or to Interpret in a New Way. *Tvorba Praha*, Oct 20, 1982,

⁹⁰The Theatre Husa na provázku. *Hamlet: Theatre Program*. Brno, 2009.

In the translation, Urbánek particularly changed the perception of the character of Hamlet. At the request of Pleskot, he created Hamlet – fighter. A man who is not scared of avenging his father’s death whatever it takes⁹¹.

The main reason why Mikulášek chose the translation by Urbánek was the intention to give the contemporary audience the insight to the play and to facilitate its way to understand the contents of the tragedy⁹².

Mikulášek uses the text very freely; noticeable deletions have been made therein by himself. This does not concern only the lines of the text, but, in some cases, also the whole scenes. For instance, Hamlet does not start with the first scene of the play, but with the scene of the wedding merrymaking. Some parts of the play have been even redeployed. The most famous monologue “To be or not to be” was even placed at the beginning of the second half of the play.

Besides, the actor’s recitation of the lines is not presented with ostentatious seriousness and respect of every single word, as it is usual in case of most of the older implementations. Mikulášek seems to leave the actors to throw some lines away and, thus, often turns their function and impression into sneering. Maybe the sneering at the lines, maybe the sneering at the situation in which the words are being pronounced...

The director afforded an unusual freedom with respect to the work with the text and took the advantage of all possibilities to make the text correspond the best to his creative intention. „*The play translated by Zdeněk Urbánek was substantially modified by the director and more likely studied as a variation of Hamlet...*“⁹³

3.13 Comparison

The comparison of these two implementations is not based only on the different approaches of the individual theatre authors. Each artist is influenced especially by the period in which he creates. The comparison between Hamlet by

⁹¹The Theatre Husa na provázku. *Hamlet: Theatre Program*. Brno, 2009.

⁹²The Theatre Husa na provázku. *Hamlet: Theatre Program*. Brno, 2009.

⁹³Rathouská, K. Focused on: William Shakespeare Hamlet: the Theatre Husa na provázku. *Mladá fronta DNES*, March 28, 2009.

Macháček and Hamlet by Mikulášek enables us also to detect the transformation of the Czech theatre production which has been going on for the last 23 years.

From the current point of view, the implementation by Macháček may be viewed as sedate and classical, while from the point of view of the eighties of the previous century, Hamlet by Mikulášek would have probably caused an immense sensation. Nevertheless, if we look at both implementations in the context of their eras, we find out that they both are typical for the period of their creation.

3.13.1 Period Context

Neither of the directors directly criticizes the politics in his implementation. This would not have been even admissible in the National Theatre in the normalization eighties and that is why Macháček makes an appeal to moral aspects of an individual and presents Hamlet as a decisive man fighting for the truth and justice. Such interpretation might be, in the metaphorical sense, considered as certain criticism of the society. Nevertheless, the criticism is hidden in the implementation in an appropriate way in order to avoid its contest from the point of view of the then ideology.

Mikulášek avoids the political criticism in his implementation intentionally. The de-politization of Hamlet is one of his main aims. It is obvious that in the contemporary society the expression of disagreement with political conditions would not provoke any unwanted excitement. As regards Mikulášek's approach to the drama, it is an effort to give insight in Hamlet to "normal" people. His Hamlet is a man who can be met in the street every day without even noticing him. It is a desidealized non-heroic man going through an internal struggle which he does not manage to overcome.

3.13.2 Approach to the text

One of the most noticeable differences between these two directors lies in the way they approached the original text of the drama. Macháček had his own new translation of the play made and within this translation he honors the text by Shakespeare as a whole. Apart from minimal deletions, he applies the text of the play as a non-changing form. Thus, the original play constitutes the most important part of his implementation, and the words are granted a strong significance. The implementation by Macháček was created especially on its basis.

On the other hand, Mikulášek chose the approach to the original text which is much freer. He applies the translation by Urbánek rather as a lead and skeleton, which is modified and transformed in different ways in order to suit the best his direction intentions.

If we were to assess which director stayed more faithful to the original play by Shakespeare, we would definitely choose Miroslav Macháček. However, Shakespeare did not write any of his plays in order to maintain it as a simple text. Each drama is determined to be implemented and, thus, the interventions by other artists (directors) are taken into account in advance. If we were to compare the implementation by Macháček and Mikulášek to original Hamlet, we would have to compare them to the very first original implementation of Hamlet, and since almost no information regarding this implementation are available, the comparison would never be absolutely precise.

The approach to the implementation of the dramatic texts has gone through incredible changes for the last twenty years. Nowadays, we talk about a so-called post-dramatic theatre, which is a theatre aiming to give the audience the distinctive impression and does not want to reduce its role to a mediator between the dramatic text and its stage implementation. The post-dramatic theatre aims to discover, analyze and make visible its own language. This principle might be likened to the comparison between a classic picture and a cubist picture.⁹⁴

Neither of the implementations of Hamlet can be called classic. Although Macháček applies realistic acting to his implementation, the scenography is purely symbolic. However, the symbol is obvious and clear. The spectator's imagination and capacity of connotation is not subjected to big demands. The whole play is perceived as sumptuous and imposing. Everyone must know from the start that he came to see one of the most famous dramas of the world theatre.

The approach by Mikulášek is much less grandiose; on the other hand, there are more references, metaphors and symbols which compose the skeleton of the

⁹⁴Lehmann, Hans-Thies: Post-dramatic Theatre.Str. 365.

implementation. The spectator has to decode at any moment what he is being provided with by the author.

4. Conception of the character of Hamlet by Czech actors, its variations, differences and similarities

The relationship of the actor to the character and the relationship of the director to the actor representing the character are interconnected very closely. The inspiration is usually mutual. The director is inspired by the actor, his gestures, color of his voice, posture etc. The actor's source for the rendition of the character is the director's conception and director's vision and he tries to form the character in a way which corresponds to the director's imagination. Thus, when analyzing the performance of individual actors, we do not consider their personal contribution thereto but the combination of work of at least two persons and the result thereof as a whole.

4.1 Hamlet by František Nĕmec

A tall figure wearing black clothes, having deep eyes and obstinate look. This is probably the most significant impression made by Hamlet performed by František Nĕmec. His Hamlet is an adult and mature man who is aware of his status. His posture is masculine and firm. At first sight, he is the most noticeable figure on the stage.

All actions and speeches made by Nĕmec as Hamlet on the stage are strictly dramatic and realistic. However, it is not a so-called principle of the fourth wall. Hamlet's internal monologues are taking place on forbine, just like in a dialogue with the audience. Even at such moments Nĕmec does not leave the role and does not make any alienation effects. The speeches to the audience rather resemble the speaking to a mirror.

František Nĕmec as Hamlet experiences true suffering and tragedy on the stage. The spectator witnesses extremely emotionally strong scenes which are presented through more intensive voices and big gestures. However, they are not perceived as inappropriate or forced.

We cannot deny that Hamlet by František Nĕmec has an absolute authenticity and great actor's energy; however, certain pathos, which might be deemed exaggerated by the audience, is present in his rendition.

4.2 Hamlet by Jiří Vyorálek

Unlike Hamlet by Němec, Hamlet by Vyorálek is not any different from the other characters on the stage. It is a man wearing civil clothes and not having very firm posture.

His Hamlet is made by using very strong stylization. His speeches are accompanied by gestures which are often getting out of the situation and are inappropriately exaggerated. Due to his teenage fringe tossing and relaxed pronunciation, Hamlet makes the impression of a spoilt brat in the first scene of the play.

In the following scenes, there are also many moments of sincere and realistic experience which is, however, expressed absolutely minimalistically, for example while Hamlet is sitting on a chair. These moments are, in contrast with the stylization, very strong and in total compliance with the given emotion contained in the text.

The so-called throwing off of the lines is very often as regards the rendition of Hamlet by Vyorálek. What might be considered as a very important part of the text is pronounced by Vyorálek with disdain and almost without any energy. Nevertheless, the effect is opposite: the parts of the text pronounced this way are only getting another color but they are not deprived of the importance and attention.

The combination of realistic acting and strong stylization is very common in the current theatre. It supports the principles of the current approach to the realization of the textual basis of the play especially through metaphor and symbol. Vyorálek played the part of Hamlet via using this method very naturally and, thus, created from his actor's expression perhaps the most important component of the implementation made by Mikulášek.

Conclusion

Having compared those implementations I have reached interesting results. All in all none of those implementations cannot be called strictly classic. Nevertheless, the Macháček's one is more classical based on the translation he used. Supposing the Macháček's one is more classical, it is also extremely dramatic it can be caused by the fact that it is played on big stage. By comparison made Husa na provázku theatre was built as an opposite to the big stage. Concerning the facts that Hamlet by Macháček was played during totality era it left the audience a message to look under surface of things. The Hamlet character was used to make people think more, although not directly. On contrary I have come to know that Mikulášek did not hide any political or ideological ideas, he just wanted bring audience closer to Hamlet character. In connection with that I successfully determined the difference between those two ideas of Hamlet. The biggest difference that really surprised me was the scenography of each of them. That in my opinion really reflects the whole distinction. Music was also the matter that kind of shocked me. Meanwhile, the orchestra accompanied Hamlet in Macháček adaptation, Mikulášek used really non-classical way. My expectation are fulfilled I succeeded in comparing those two implementation. However, there is still are other adaptations of Hamlet which can be compared.

Generally speaking, I cannot say which of these adaptations is better. I personally liked the one played in Husa na provázku theatre the most. The reason is that I like originality of Mikulášek especially the clay metaphor and the music he used. I would not say that Macháček adaptation is old-fashioned but is focused on the audience which prefers classic. Focusing on the difference between performances of Hamlet character the most interesting fact for me was that Hamlet by Vyorálek was just an ordinary man wearing civil clothes. On contrary Hamlet by Němec was confident mature man aware of his status. According to me the biggest difference was in the way they were expressing emotions. Hamlet by Němec was a lot more dramatic and emotional on contrary Hamlet by Vyorálek was giving speeches with no emotions.

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ANOTACE

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Název práce:	Hamlet Williama Shakespeara: jeho překlad, původ a styly zpracování této hry českými divadelními umělci druhé poloviny 20. století
Název v angličtině:	William Shakespeare's Hamlet: its translation, genesis and styles of the implementation of the play by Czech theatre artist of the second half of the 20th century
Anotace práce:	Práce se v první kapitole zabývá okolnostmi vzniku dramatu Hamlet, jejím autorem a historicko-politickými podmínkami, ve kterých drama napsal. Druhá kapitola je věnována rozboru hry, jejím inspiračním zdrojům, jazykovému stylu, problematice překladu díla do češtiny a analýzou jejích postav. Třetí kapitola je praktickou částí práce, která je založena na rozboru dvou inscenací dramatu, a to na základě audiovizuálních záznamů.
Klíčová slova:	české divadlo, Hamlet, rozbor, historické a politické podmínky, Národní divadlo, divadlo Husa na provázku, politický kontext, Miroslav Macháček, Jan Mikulášek, originalita, scénografie, kostýmy, režisér, herci, překlad, přístupy
Anotace v angličtině:	In the first chapter, the thesis describes the circumstances of the genesis of Hamlet, his author and historical and political conditions in which he wrote the drama. The second chapter is dedicated to the analysis of the play, its sources of inspiration, language style, issues related to the translation of the play to Czech and its characters. The third chapter represents the practical part of the thesis which is based on the analysis of two implementations of the drama; the analysis was made based on audiovisual records.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Czech theatre, Hamlet, analysis, , historical and political conditions, National theatre ,Husa na provázku theatre, political context, Miroslav Macháček, Jan Mikulášek, originality,

	scenography, costumes, directors, actors, translations, approaches
Přílohy vázané v práci:	
Rozsah práce:	34 stran
Jazyk práce:	Anglický

Resumé

Práce je zaměřena na podrobné zmapování vzniku dramatu Hamlet a jeho styl a obsah. Druhá polovina je věnována způsobům a stylům zpracovávání této hry českými divadelními tvůrci druhé poloviny 20. století. Práce se v první kapitole zabývá okolnostmi vzniku dramatu Hamlet, jejím autorem a historicko-politickými podmínkami, ve kterých drama napsal. Druhá kapitola je věnována rozboru hry, jejím inspiračním zdrojům, jazykovému stylu, problematice překladu díla do češtiny a analýzou jejích postav. Třetí kapitola je praktickou částí práce, která je založena na rozboru dvou inscenací dramatu, a to na základě audiovizuálních záznamů. Jde o zpracování režiséra Miroslava Macháčka z roku 1982(Národní divadlo, Praha) a Jana Mikuláška z roku 2009 (Divadlo Husa na provázku, Brno). Poslední kapitola se zabývá rozbohem hereckého přístupu k postavě Hamleta Františka Němce (Národní divadlo) a Jiřího Vyoralka (Divadlo Husa na provázku).