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The Quest for Selfhood: Shakespeare's Sonnets Interpreted by Maria Hablevych

Abstract

The article provides insight into the Ukrainian Shakespeare Studies criticism by presenting an overview of the approach to Shakespeare utilised by Ukrainian scholar, critic, editor, and practising translator Maria Hablevych (1950–2025). In her critical reading of Shakespeare, Hablevych uses two approaches to the text: reader-response theory and the psychoanalytical approach. The scholar perceives the complexity of the authorial self of Shakespeare, mirrored in his works, which is then reflected in her *Commentaries* (1998). These perspectives find their further application in the two translation projects of the *Sonnets* (1998 by Dmytro Pavlychko,

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2011 by Natalia Butuk), in which Hablevych was involved as a critic and an editor. Both Ukrainian translations reveal different degrees of compliance with the editor's view on Shakespeare and his *Sonnets*. Regarding translation as a social practice, we treat Hablevych as a multifaceted agent, namely one with a complex role in both fields of literary studies and of Translation Studies. We seek to illustrate Hablevych's understanding and interpretation of the authorial self of the *Sonnets* against the postulates of reader-response theory (Iser, Ingarden, Jauss), Freud's psychoanalysis as well as Lacan's post-structuralist theses. We further look at their application in the Ukrainian versions of *Sonnets,* whose interpretation and translation were slightly (Pavlyvhko) or more distinctively (Butuk) influenced by Hablevych.

Keywords: Ukrainian Shakespeare Studies, Maria Hablevych, reader-response theory, translation studies, Shakespeare in translation, Shakespeare's *Sonnets*.

Introduction

Twentieth century Ukrainian Shakespeare Studies have largely been translator-oriented and focused predominantly on linguistic and stylistic analysis. This would leave the questions of the author's personality as well as the reader's psychology outside scholarly discourse in Soviet Ukraine. The first in Ukrainian academia to reverse this trend was Maria Hablevych (1950–2025), a contemporary Ukrainian Shakespeare scholar, critic, editor, and translator. In addition to excerpts from various Shakespearean plays – e.g. Hamlet's monologue or the opening scene of *Romeo and Juliet* – she translated *The Phoenix and the Turtle*, *Henry VIII*, and *Anthony and Cleopatra*. These have shaped her understanding of Shakespeare's works and refined her methods for decoding a text's semiotics. More importantly, her work towards the end of the twentieth century, which coincided with the fall of the Soviet Union and the elimination of restrictive Soviet-imposed norms (including the practice of art) allowed her to apply innovative methods of literary criticism and apply them while editing translations. The methods until this point had been largely neglected due to ideological constraints. Her approach to literary criticism of Shakespeare's works, reflected in translations under her editorial supervision, is not limited to structure and stylistics. It includes human-centred theories such as phenomenology, reader-response theory, and psychoanalysis.

In this article, we seek to trace the 'Author's' resurrection within the frames of phenomenology and hermeneutics.[1] We further describe and analyze Hablevych's model fluctuating between reader-response theory and psychoanalysis, drawing

1 In our paper, the academic criticism is used in Ukrainian translation as it had been inaccessible, deemed as ideologized or heavily censored in the times of the Soviet empire. It is only after

on the key theoretical findings of Freud and Lacan. Hablevych's psychological interpretation holds significance as it opens the text to the 'Reader' and their creative imagination, contributing to the discussion around Shakespeare's texts. At the same time, this assists in redefining the role of the author, whose psyche is seen as a uniting factor in regard to his literary legacy. Finally, we extrapolate Hablevych's interpretive approach on Ukrainian sonnet translations by Dmytro Pavlychko (1998) and Natalia Butuk (2011) to see how far they correlate with the delineated model and the extent of this correlation.

Hablevych's interpretative approach aligns with the nineteenth-century Romantic tradition. Her thinking draws on ideas from phenomenology. According to Hablevych, Shakespeare's dramas and especially his *Sonnets* manifest their potential solely in relation to his life. The psychoanalytical triad of the conscious, the subconscious, and the unconscious allows one to view certain poems (e.g. *A Lover's Complaint*) and some sonnets (e.g. Sonnet 94) as the poet's self-introspection and the quest towards becoming better through choosing pure heavenly love over earthly lust. Translations set boundaries for creative endeavours: they often exclude interpretation and therefore encourage a 'bracketed' experience of reading an original text. This entails suspensive reading of his works, which excludes texts edited by his later publishers or commentators. It also involves a close link with historicity. In particular, Hablevych emphasises the necessity to experience Shakespeare's works through our consciousness alone, without anyone else's imposed interpretation. The reality of his literary world appears as the only absolute information, operating as the basis for the development of one's own understanding.

Hablevych applies elements of phenomenology, advocating for the strategy of direct reading of Shakespeare's work (without the recourse to the existing commentaries and interpretations) and psychoanalysis (Freud's model is traceable in the poems, such as *A Lover's Complaint*) to her close reading of the poet's self-manifestation in particular works. Hablevych approaches texts via phenomenological thinkers, especially Friedrich Schleiermacher and Edmund Husserl. The latter presupposes the return to a pure consciousness, with the exclusion of anything beyond one's immediate experience (Husserl 36–37). According to him, the universe can only be understood in reference to ourselves since we are the only subjects and sources of all meaning. Therefore, his phenomenological criticism encourages reading – and, as we would argue, interpretation and translation of a specific text (cf. Eagleton 51). The following sections will demonstrate key aspects of Hablevych's approach, concentrating on the author, the reader, psychoanalysis, examples from translations, and a brief conclusion.

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the 1990s that the large-scale humanities projects such as the *Anthology* by Maria Zubrytska began to emerge.

In Search of the Author

Both traditional and post-structuralist conceptions of the 'Author' underline that category as a component in the overall framework of a narrative text's elements and relations. Even in Barthes's (1968) and Foucault's (1969) restrictive views on the author as an impersonalized and interpretative construct, the term 'Author' is used to determine the meaning of a text, to relate it to other texts by the same person or to historical contexts, and to establish a dimension of norms and values, style, and a thematic unity (Barthes; Foucault).

Phenomenological criticism, on the other hand, challenges the significance of both the author and the context of a literary work in an attempt to ensure a wholly "immanent" and presupposition-free nature of reading (Husserl xv). As such, a text embodies the author's consciousness, manifested in a literary work, rather than merely pointing to biographical details (Husserl 33–36): the author's mind unifies the stylistic and semantic aspects of the work, which then form a complex totality in the text. Recurrent themes and imagery might reveal the way the author 'lived' in their world (Eagleton 51) which is then represented in the text. Roman Ingarden regards reading as the product of the creator's acts of consciousness, gaining independence via creativity (Ingarden, *O dziele literackim* [The Literary Work of Art] 30). Similarly, Wolfgang Iser approaches the author as the reader's construct in the process of reading (Iser, *Protses chytannia* [The Reading Process] 263): most important is the reader's interpretation of the author's voice and perspective as inferred from the text. Hans Jauss situates the author's role within a broader literary tradition (Iser, *Protses chytannia* [The Reading Process] 279). Thereby, the author's intent makes up an important part of the horizon of expectations, determining the reader's interpretation. In general, despite the recognition of a reader's active involvement in the process of constructing meaning, the psychology of the author and their reflection in literary works are seen as a universal theoretical basis for an interpretation. However, for Jauss, too, the authorial intent is perceived as just one element among many that contribute to the overall meaning of a text. Eric D. Hirsch, whose ideas mark the return of reader-oriented literary theory to hermeneutics, ascertains the chief role of the author's meaning in his *Validity in Interpretation* (1969): he distinguishes between 'meaning' as constructed by the author and 'significance' assigned by the reader. This does not exclude the possibility of multiple interpretations as long as the invariant authorial meaning with its system of expectations and probabilities allows for this (cf. Eagleton 39).

Hablevych adopts the general orientation set out by phenomenological theory but puts her own spin on it as well: she assigns the primary role to the author and their self-reflection. In particular, Hablevych emphasises the necessity to experience Shakespeare's works through our consciousness alone, without anyone else's imposed interpretation. The reality of his literary world appears as the only

absolute information, operating as the basis for the development of one's own understanding. She conceptualizes the text as the author's living thought (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 114). Her thinking seems to reveal a similarity with Schleiermacher's hermeneutic circle, particularly with the principle of a reciprocal relationship: just like each particular can be understood through the general and the whole is comprehended through its parts (Schleiermacher 24), Shakespeare's works should be interpreted through the scope of knowledge about his other writings (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 241). More precisely, Hablevych differentiates several contexts of interpretation: 1) the immediate context; 2) the imagery system of the work; 3) the poetics of the author; and 4) the historical context (44). In other words, she underlines the necessity of exploring the social and the linguistic aspects of the work, as well as literary and cultural aspects of Shakespeare's life, which are, she claims, mirrored in his literary works. Practically speaking, this means that her approach allows her to draw parallels between different works by Shakespeare, as each and every one of these have something to say about the living world and the thinking of their creator. In her theoretical approach, engaging with Shakespeare can therefore help readers and translators strive to achieve his high moral principles – including those on of beauty, truth, and love (Hablevych, *Svitlo i sutin* [The Light and Darkness] 27).

Author *versus* Reader: Construction of Meaning

The hermeneutic perception of the author at the centre of interpretation re-gained currency in the second half of the twentieth century after post-structuralist claims about the death of the 'Author.' Hablevych does not agree with the post-structuralist view (Hablevych, *Svitlo i sutin* [The Light and Darkness] 17). Instead, her ideas follow the reccurring thoughts of hermeneutics and, partly, reader response theory. In the context of Shakespeare Studies, the phenomenological viewpoint entails a return to the works of Shakespeare while 'bracketing' the sum of textual explanations and comments as potentially harmful to interpretation "The sole criterion for evaluating Shakespeare should be the original Shakespearean text itself" (Hablevych, Svitlo *Shekspirovoho Khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 241). Such a statement holds especially true in regard to the translator's experience with the text for further interpretation. This, at first glance, rejects the reader as a source of interpretation. Instead, the author's intention works as an integrative tool for the stylistic and semantic elements of the work. Historically, it is true that publishers' comments and the constant editing of the source text, "bring **other, complementing word**s [our emphasis] to the fore, overshadowing the text," (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho Khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's

Temple] 231). This in turn impacts the comprehension of the text for readers and, more importantly, in Hablevych's case, for translators.

As Hablevych reads post-structuralist critics Roland Barthes's *The Death of the Author* (1968) and Michel Foucault's *What Is an Author?* (1969), she regards the author as a medium for multiple meanings: an author's negation means the revocation of the privilege the category had enjoyed with critics. In post-structuralist terms, therefore, the interpretation of meaning is not tied to a real individual anymore. In contrast to this, Hablevych's ideas hark back to the author's role in meaning-making; in this she adopts a stance similar to that of Eric D. Hirsch. In his view, an interpreter should primarily attempt to reconstruct the original authorial meaning (cf. Lanovyk 278). The authorial situation and meaning are defined by the extratextual factors, which, however, can be elicited from the text itself (Lanovyk 280). Hirsch's idea of 'recognitive interpretation', based on the reconstructive process of interpretation, resonates with Hablevych, who urges readers to look at the world through Shakespeare's lens. This can be achieved through close textual study:

> The goal is instead of interpreting Shakespeare's world through one's own lens, but rather to perceive it through Shakespeare's own – subjective as it might be – vision, and to communicate that vision to others […]. The key object of study must be Shakespeare's word itself, condensing the entire depth of his resonance. (Hablevych, *Svitlo i sutin* [The Light and Darkness] 30)

In doing so, the reader expands their horizon rather than imposing it on that of Shakespeare (Hablevych, *Svitlo i sutin* [The Light and Darkness] 30). Via such a reading, Shakespeare's literary works serve as a source of comparison: they mirror comprehension and reflect the author's horizon, demonstrating the author's way of thinking. Like Hirsch, Hablevych agrees that a determinate meaning of the text exists independently of the reader's subjective interpretation (Hablevych, *Svitlo i sutin* [The Light and Darkness] 30). In placing a significant value on the author's intention, historical context, linguistic conventions as well as selected psychological aspects, Hablevych deviates from the principles of phenomenological criticism *sensu stricto*. Nevertheless, her approach remains in accordance with the hermeneutic tradition of looking at the text in parts and as a whole, in a hermeneutic cycle. According to reader-response theory, readers have to fill in so-called "places of under-delineation" or 'lacunae' (Ingarden, *Pro piznavannia* [The Cognition] 137). These fillings would depend on their personal characteristics, such as age or background. Such a perspective implies that the meaning of a literary work emerges through the reader's active participation. The existence of these gaps can be explained as an author's intentional act of leaving blank spaces or ambiguous textual passages so that the reader's imagination is mobilised. This is crucial to Hablevych: authors write their texts without the slightest intention for

their reader to become distracted from the poetic world they create by additional commentaries or explanation – in other words, excessive explication (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 242). The danger with Shakespeare's works, especially drama, is, according to Hablevych, that their interpreters are too willing to explain these lacunae and, in fact, deviate from the text itself. In such an instance, the reader does not use the chance to properly engage creatively. Hablevych, therefore, defines the main task for the reader as an active involvement of the imagination within the frames of the original text as intended by the author. This should take place within the limitations allowed by Shakespeare's text only. In other words, Hablevych emphasizes that readers are re-creators rather than co-creators of potential textual meanings.

Hablevych takes a stance different from the views of the chief proponents of reader-response theory. In their view, it is the reader who decides on the potential meaning. Jauss stresses the merging of readers' and texts' horizons (Jauss 137). Iser introduces the category of 'Implied Reader' as the factor of possible meaning realisation (Iser, *Implied Reader*). However, the category in question is abstract, presenting a textual strategy rather than a definite real-life person. The term includes both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text, and the reader's actualization of this potential through the reading process (Iser, *Implied Reader* xii). The 'Real Reader' is the one to make the actualization possible. This type of reader transforms literary texts into aesthetic objects: "the literary work has two poles, which we might call the artistic and the aesthetic: the artistic refers to the text created by the author, and the esthetic to the realization accomplished by the reader" (Iser, *Implied Reader* xii).

The Ukrainian scholar places the reader in the position of erudition and high moral values – the category becomes a desired collective readership rather than merely the sum of textual strategies (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 132). From her perspective, this educated reader should respond to the issues raised by an author in a pre-designated way, e.g. by projecting Shakespeare's characters as abstract models onto one's own life. Indeed, the skilful playwright would enable the creation of situational and psychological models appearing in his poetic and dramatical works (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 136). Such a reader will likely understand and uphold the high moral ideals in Shakespeare's works. This kind of noble and educated readership with the same or very similar horizon as the author's may be regarded as the 'Ideal Reader'. As such, for Hablevych, this 'Ideal Reader' is both a prototype for and a reflection of Shakespeare's intended audience, whose projected hypothetical existence inspired Shakespeare's best poetry. The 'Ideal Reader' of Hablevych functions as the one totally relating to Shakespeare's values and potentially sharing them (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 232). Her argument is that the reader's understanding is

therefore achieved through their recognition of the author's values and, to a certain extent, a self-identification with the characters of Shakespeare's works.

In some cases, the category of the 'Ideal Reader' by Hablevych often correlates with the 'Real Reader' – the former serves as a mirror for the latter. The 'Real Reader' response to Shakespeare's works is a stimulus for improvement and growth, and development. The 'Ideal Reader' is conceptualized as less of a textual strategy than the sum of textual possibilities, which the 'Real Reader' should recognize. The construction of meaning is achieved either through the careful examination of Shakespeare's works or by sharing identical high moral values and ideals with the characters of Shakespeare's work (Hablevych, *Svitlo i sutin* [The Light and Darkness]). However, Hablevych states, readers often disappoint by failing to comprehend and comply with the set authorial principles (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple]). The disappointment with the 'Real Reader' failing to recognize an author's high ideals can be reflected in some of the author's work which operates on that recognition. The sense of disappointment can be found in Shakespeare's poetry. According to Hablevych, it is apparent in some of the sonnets, such as Sonnet 27 or Sonnet 29. The latter features the poet's creative discontent, "fortune's disgrace" and his "outcast state" (29, ll. 1–2) in regard to his creative endeavours (Hablevych, "Komentari" [Commentaries] 239). Hablevych maintains that the poet's reaction to his readers' response is also reflected in certain dramas by Shakespeare, especially early ones (Hablevych, "Komentari" [Commentaries]).

In the context of translation theory and practice, reader-response theory – as applied by Hablevych – sets certain boundaries for Shakespeare translators who are supposed to be the first and most attentive readers. These limitations on a translator's part might include a vast knowledge of the author's life and a disregard for comments by previous Shakespeare interpreters. Additionally, modern translators of Shakespeare's literary works should be careful not to complete the aforementioned lacunae supposedly left by the playwright. In their understanding and reproduction of an author's text, Hablevych argues, translators should be guided solely by the word of the author. In that way, they become subservient to, in this case, Shakespeare. Even their creative position should not exclude the poet's centrality. As such, Hablevych positions her ideas on translation as touching upon reader response but taking a clear stance towards a different and very specific role of the translator as a mediating reader.

The Author's Self in his Works: The Psychoanalytical Approach

Psychoanalytical literary criticism presents another line of research in Hablevych's Shakespeare Studies. Despite recognizing a possibly restrictive nature of Freudian application to Shakespeare's works resulting in an overgeneralization (Hablevych,

Svitlo i sutin [The Light and Darkness] 15–16), Hablevych employs selected aspects of psychoanalytical criticism in the study of Shakespeare's works. She supports the idea of an author's self-reflection in their creative works. Through the careful examination of the author's life and social context, a scholar and/or a translator can arrive at certain conclusions about, in this case, the peculiarities of Shakespeare's characters. Hablevych criticises Freud's approach to the characters' un- or subconscious manifestations of the authorial ego (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 131). Instead, she insists on their essence as conscious creations of the poet, guided by the spirit of altruistic love for others (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 131).

Hablevych highlights allegorical and metaphorical models of the human psyche which she discovers as inherent in the *Sonnets*. As the embodiment of the authorial self in the *Sonnets*, she considers the poet's soul: his subconscious, replicated in the 'Fair Youth' (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 218). While other supporters of Freudian theory mostly focus on plays and dramas, since Freud found most of his examples in *A Midsummer's Dream*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*, Hablevych instead attempts to recreate the poet's psyche by looking at the lyrical material and by contextualizing it with reference to the drama as well as – more importantly – Shakespeare's poetry. This had never been accomplished before in Ukraine during the Soviet times. Indeed, most Ukrainian Shakespeare Studies at that time revolved around the reception of his works rather than the understanding and criticism of his original writings. Even more so, the development of Shakespeare Studies through the lens of psychoanalytical or of feminist criticism became possible only after the fall of the Soviet empire. Even then, the psychoanalytical approach in Ukrainian Shakespeare Studies was still in its infancy. The only successful exception, apart from Hablevych, may be the article by Marina Novikova "Mifosvit *Makbeta*: volodari ta vidmy" [The Mythical World of Macbeth: Lords and Witches]. It examines the relationship between power and lust, stating that "Desire seeks power, power seeks authority, and authority seeks the absolute" (298). However, while Novikova regards lust as a truly destructive feeling, Hablevych sees it as a productive and pro-creative force that needs to be controlled (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple]). Strictly speaking, Maria Hablevych's ideas might be regarded as pioneering ones in the fields of translation and literary studies in Ukraine. Her approach to poetic Shakespeare has largely been neglected by other scholars who focused on Freud's approach to Shakespeare. Hablevych treats the *Sonnets* as a self-introspection of the poetic soul (Hablevych, *Svitlo i sutin* [The Light and Darkness] 29). She draws parallels with the Freudian triad, which identifies the *id* as an instinctual part of the mind, the *ego* as the rational part, and the *superego* as responsible for complying with social norms (Freud, *Vstup do psykhoanalizu* [Introduction to Psychoanalysis] 546).

Hablevych departs from the Freudian interpretation of the *superego* as a moral imperative. She claims that the 'Fair Youth' is only to a certain extent comparable with the superego – that is, in the sense that perfection might result in pride (Freud, *Vstup do psykhoanalizu* [Introduction to Psychoanalysis] 532). Hablevych claims that the 'Fair Youth' in his poetic form actually serves as a mirror for the author to express and admire himself. The Youth is also the textual intermediary between the poet, expressing ideal love, and his 'Real Reader', who should be able to recognize this pure feeling (Hablevych, "Komentari" [Commentaries] 300). For Hablevych, love in the Freudian sense is self-love; for her, Shakespeare's love is a selfless altruistic feeling rather than sexual desire (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 131). The 'Fair Youth' is the manifestation of pure love, devoid of earthly lust, which the poet strives to achieve for himself. The image of the young man, the author's "sweet self" (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 128), i.e. his textual reflection, is even more complex. The author's superego – reflected in a reading of the 'Fair Youth' as mirroring the author – is also perfect love. This is channelled to the reader, and thus, reveals more altruistic features than Freud's reading of the superego (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 131).

Shakespeare's authorial self also reveals itself in the simultaneous presence of the 'Conscious', the 'Subconscious', and the 'Unconscious' mind (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 100). Hablevych argues that this model can be traced in the poem *A Lover's Complaint*, in which an old man plays the part of the Conscious; a seducer, a young man, a creative spirit, incarnates the Subconscious; and a woman embodies the Unconscious. In the *Sonnets*, (most of the Fair Youth cycle and a few in the Dark Lady cycle), this pattern slightly shifts: the poet's voice relates to the conscious, the reason, while his soul correlates with the unconscious, where both love and lust reside (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 129). His subconscious serves as a decisive element in giving preference to the pure heavenly love over the down-to-earth lust. In Freudian terms, the Conscious stands for a keenly aware mind, the Unconscious involves feelings and experiences, often desires, while the Subconscious bridges them together (Freud, *Vstup do psykhoanalizu* [Introduction to Psychoanalysis] 546). It is the young man, who channels love and unites all three characters. Love, in Hablevych's interpretation, is perceived as a stark creative drive, assisting the poet to produce his output: creative literary works (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 122).

This interpretation falls in line with the idea of creativity as a means for self-expression and self-exploration. Though Freud sees self-expression as a peculiarity primarily in psychological novels rather than poetry, we find his ideas also resonant in Hablevych's treatment of Shakespeare's poetic output. This is due to the fact that

she interprets Shakespeare's literary works as a unified entity. In Freud's *The Poet and the Activity of Fantasy* (1907), an author's ideal ego is reflected in the main character of a literary work (Freud, "Poet i fantazuvannia" [Creative Writers and the Activity of Day-Dreaming] 89). Freud claims that the author tends to split his 'self' into part-selves through self-reflection and these would then embody conflicting experiences of his life in his characters (Freud, "Poet i fantazuvannia" [Creative Writers and the Activity of Day-Dreaming] 89). One such contradictory encounter is the division of love and lust. According to Hablevych, this can also be found in Shakespeare. The poet splits his self, assigning his better part, i.e. pure love, to the 'Fair Youth' and lust to the female 'Dark Lady' (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 230), in a binary-centred gender approach.

Additionally, Hablevych posits that Shakespeare's characters are situational and psychological constructs – whether they appear in Shakespeare's dramatic or his poetic works (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 136). In her view, not only the poet, but readers, too, may identify themselves with Shakespearean characters. These were designated as abstract philosophical and psychological models but with Shakespeare's noble and intelligent contemporaries in mind (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 132). Due to internal criticism, a 'Real Reader's' response, by, for e.g. a wealthy aristocrat, might then be rather unwelcome or too topical. External criticism, in fact, is why Hablevych recognizes a pensive mood in sonnets 27–32: the clouded sun of these sonnets reflects the disheartened author (Hablevych, "Komentari" [Commentaries] 243) due to negative criticism. Following such a reading, Hablevych connects the tonality of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* to the dramas that appeared simultaneously; she then draws parallels between the reader-response of the one (drama) to the poet's reflection in the other (poetry), specifically the *Sonnets*.

Texts as Mirror, Characters as Self: Translation

Hablevych's thinking on the "incorporation of the author's self in a text" caused her to work with the Ukrainian translators Dmytro Pavlychko, who revised his first translation of the *Sonnets* (1984–1986) based on Hablevych's thorough critique in 1998 ("Komentari" [Commentaries]). Hablevych's later collaboration with another translator, Natalia Butuk in 2011, demonstrates an even closer cooperation, due to a greater amount of editorial interventions. Notably, in both publications, Hablevych's influence is apparent: both feature the original text of the 1609 *Sonnets* as well as illustrations selected by Hablevych. Pavlychko's translation contains extensive scholarly commentaries on the context of the sonnets. Butuk's version

was later intended as a second edition, similar to Pavlychko's, but with a more pronounced editorial intervention of Hablevych. So far, it has not come into being. As a whole, Hablevych's impact on the understanding of Shakespeare's Sonnets in Ukraine is undeniable.

The following paragraphs will exemplify Hablevych's input into the *Sonnets*' interpretation with its further reflection in two Ukrainian translations, both edited by Hablevych, as described in the above sections, with regard to two specific pieces of the Sonnet cycle. The perceived complexity of the authorial self of Shakespeare, as interpreted by Hablevych, can be demonstrated in the example of Sonnet 10. It quite clearly shows the poet's introspection. As Maria Hablevych highlights, in this sonnet poetic drama evolves, where the Author draws a distinct line between love and lust for the first time ("Komentari" [Commentaries] 218). We shall also briefly touch upon Sonnet 62, as it contains a vivid metaphor of a looking-glass (mirror), which acquires the features of Lacanian interpretation in Hablevych's critical reading.

Shakespeare's Sonnet 10, one of the so-called procreation sonnets, presents a harsh critique against the 'Fair Youth', which is indicated in the *Commentaries* (1998) on the original lines:

> For shame, deny that thou bear'st love to any,
> Who for thy self art so unprovident;
> Grant if thou wilt, thou art beloved of many,
> But that thou none lov'st is most evident:
> For thou art *so possessed with murd'rous hate*,
> That 'gainst thy self thou stick'st not to conspire,
> Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate
> Which to repair should be thy chief desire.
> O change thy thought, that I may change my mind,
> Shall hate be fairer lodged than gentle love?
> Be as thy presence is, gracious and kind,
> Or to thy self at least kind-hearted prove,
> Make thee an other self for love of me,
> That beauty still may live in thine or thee
>
> (Hablevych, "Klasyka vdoma. Shakespeare. Komentari do Sonneta 10" [Classics at Home. Shakespeare. Commentaries on Sonnet 10]; our emphasis)

Hablevych maintains that the addressee is the poet himself rather than a friend or the 'Fair Youth' only (Hablevych, "Komentari" [Commentaries] 215). Here, she asserts, the poet's *I* emerges quite distinctly. The sonnet reveals an appeasement of the author's artistic *selves* and the creation of another *self*, as a leverage for his

conflict that Hablevych attributes to his soul ("Komentari" [Commentaries] 218). The author, considered as an '*I*', in fact, is aware of his unconscious (i.e. his soul) as an active, artistic power (Hablevych, "Komentari" [Commentaries] 219). As a result, Hablevych argues, the 'Conscious' holds a conversation with the 'Unconscious'. The conscious part undertakes to compose poetic lines, intended for a reader. The poet's ultimate goal is to phrase his vision of love and eventually impose on or transmit this vision to the reader. With a necessary degree of creative effort, a reader should, as a consequence, easily decode the authorial intention (Hablevych, "Komentari" [Commentaries] 215) and his concept of love. Shakespeare's type of love in this sonnet, Hablevych argues, contains kindness and grace and is devoid of lust, as has been explained further above. Furthermore, the poet attempts to convince his reader that ideal love should 'live in thine" (l. 14) – and proliferate in others (Hablevych, "Komentari" [Commentaries] 215).

Hablevych ponders that the poet had formerly cherished his sweet self as a producer of love. However, the recurrent topic of Sonnet 10 is love connected to beauty, but in contrast to lust. Hablevych states that the 'Unconscious' is the source of love, showing itself in the "sweet" sonnets, thus poetry in general. The poet's soul, though, is tuned for writing other pieces, too, e.g. drama, in quite a different mood "possess'd by murderous hate" (l. 5). Hablevych distinguishes that the poet despises himself for a persistent feeling of lust, though he had tried to eradicate it. Hablevych discusses how far love and lust are realised by the author in his different writings with regard to her critical interpretation of the Fair Youth as the embodiment of pure love and the better part of the author's soul, and the Dark Lady as the bearer of lust.

Hablevych applies Schleiermacher's circle to her analysis (Hablevych, *Svitlo Shekspirovoho khramu* [The Light of Shakespeare's Temple] 45) by placing the sonnets in question within a broader context of Shakespeare's literary works and attempting to explain them on a psychological level. To safeguard himself from becoming purely a writer of lust and giving in to hatred, the poet, Hablevych ascertains, urges himself to create a third dimension – "an other self" (Sonnet 10, l. 13). This part of his soul would be responsible for prophesying true "gentle love" (l. 10), while his unconscious '*I*' is occupied with the portrayal and despisal of lust in works such as *Titus Andronicus* (Hablevych, "Komentari" [Commentaries] 218). This way, Sonnet 10 can be read as the poet's attempt to find a common ground between his 'Conscious' and his 'Unconscious'. In the interpretation of Hablevych, one part of the author writes about lust, "an other self" (Sonnet 10, l. 13) concentrates on love. As such, Shakespeare could uphold a noble idea of love.

The presence of this line of thinking about the sonnet is quite different in the two Ukrainian translations of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* in the independent Ukraine Hablevych is associated with, those by Dmytro Pavlychko and Natalia Butuk.

The original closing lines of Sonnet 10 end with the following couplet: "Make thee an other self for love of me, / That beauty still may live in thine or thee" (Sonnet 10, 13–14). Dmytro Pavlychko translates this as follows: "Будь і в душі таким, яким ти є / На вид, що сяє й ласку роздає!" (Shakespeare, *Sonety* [*Sonnets*] 25). In English, this re-translates as "Stay in your heart what you are / Shining and giving out affection!".[2] As such, the creation of an alternative authorial *self* is not perceptible. Rather, Pavlychko emphasizes the need to remain in the same perfect state.

Natalia Butuk's translation "Чи задля мене – свій лиши відбиток, / Аби краса могла хоч в ньому жити" reads "Or for me, just leave your imprint, / So that beauty may live in it" (Shakespeare, *Shakespeares Sonnets. Shekspirovi sonety* 10), when translated back into English. As such, this version places a greater emphasis on the poet's development, rendering the original idea quite precisely. Such an interpretation allows us to firmly place the sonnet in the 'Procreation' cycle with its strong theme of producing an heir. According to Hablevych, this heir would then be a corresponding literary work written by Shakespeare around the same time. So, while one part of the author writes *Titus Andronicus* and *Henry VIII*, his "sweet self" (Hablevych, "Komentari" [Commentaries] 219) is absent. Then, "an other self" (Sonnet 10, l. 13) preserves the best feelings by the author in the sonnet. This reading is presented rather differently by the two Ukrainian translators but both allude to Hablevych's thought.

Another instance of authorial introspection is traceable in Sonnet 62. Hablevych claims that the poet presents his second *self* – a "thee" but refers to a "myself", condensed in the 'Fair Youth' and aimed at the reader of his poetic word (Hablevych, "Komentari" [Commentaries] 275). Hablevych argues that the 'Fair Youth' mediates between the author and his 'Real Reader', through which the poet channels his soul's beauty. She interprets "my*self*" as indicating a part of the poet's soul, specifically the primary addressee of his words. In Sonnet 62, the author's contemplation, i.e. Hablevych's authorial introspection, is presented via "Me thinks no face so gracious is as mine, / No shape so true, no truth of such account" (ll. 5–6) and "But when my glass shows me my self indeed" (l. 9). These excerpts demonstrate an opposition between the 'imaginary' idea in lines 5–6, and the 'real' reflection as referred to in line 9. A physical mirror would reflect only real objects; instead, complex entities, such as the soul or truth, are reflected in a metaphorical mirror created by the poet. This 'glass' not only reflects images, but shows a true essence (Hablevych, "Komentari" [Commentaries] 275). Indeed, through this mirroring technique, readers are therefore even able to examine themselves.

The interpretation delineated above correlates with a Christian reading: it reminds one of the symbolic meaning of a magnifying glass-mirror, i.e. a looking-glass. Metaphorically, this can signify truth or wisdom, which one can achieve in

2 Unless otherwise specified, all reverse translations are ours.

unity with one's Creator, e.g. in the Christian sense: "now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face" (1 Cor. 12, 13 qtd. in de Vries 323). The suggested reading allows to consider a religious interpretation that refers to Nature in the sense of being a reflection of God. This association of "glass" may be attributed to the Creation: God contemplates his own mind in His creation, i.e. nature, as in a mirror (de Vries). Consequently, a poet, another type of creator, contemplates his creations. Shakespeare's 'Fair Youth' can therefore be established as a better self with whom he aspires to unite in the "mirror" of his word, i.e. his sonnets. In this unity, the poet discovers the truth. However, he is also the "other self", urging readers to have similar associations and responses, and unite with their better selves through reading. The analysis of Sonnet 62 by Hablevych bears some resemblance to the Lacanian concept of the mirror stage, particularly, the formation of the *I* through transformation during the mirror stage: the image, with a promise of an identity as a mere mirage, leaves the observer (the poet and later the reader) longing to return to this wholesome *self* (Lacan 441). This wholesome *self*, according to Hablevych, is an idealised man with all his "earthly" desires, such as lust, removed from his love. The image also features comparisons to his great predecessors, "the tanned antiquity" (l. 10), such as Ovid or Horace, whose imagery the poet borrows and develops further (Hablevych, "Komentari" [Commentaries] 275). In her Lacanian-like reading, Hablevych observes the poet's desire to unite with his 'Imaginary' representing his better *self*, embodied in the Fair Youth. He possesses a deep understanding, he has an 'inner eye' for truth and beauty as part of a pure heavenly love, which the poet celebrates and hopes to recognise in others.

Such an interpretation of a strife for improvement coincides with the symbolic meaning of the face as "a mirror of one's character" (Vries 174). A "gracious" face (Sonnet 62, 5) mirrors an outward manifestation of the soul (Hablevych, "Klasyka vdoma. Shakespeare. Komentari do Sonneta 62" [Classics at Home. Shakespeare. Commentaries on Sonnet 62]); hence, the Fair Youth as the poet's personification is indeed insightful, Hablevych argues. His beautiful face demonstrates an inner truth which is then conveyed to the reader (Hablevych, "Komentari" [Commentaries] 275). Reading this in a broader context, the mirror might be interpreted as the poet's literary works, which show the reader the true essence of things. In Lacanian terms, the mirror of the poetic works shows an ideal image. For example, this highlights a poet whose heart is primarily occupied by pure love and who is able to convey this to his readership. They, in turn, have the ability to conceive of his ideas. Therefore, the relationship between the author and his works may be described as the connection between the above-explained *ego* and the *mirror* itself.

Both Ukrainian translators, Pavlychko (1998) and Butuk (2011), maintain key indicators of the perceived author's self-reference in their versions. As will become evident, Butuk can be interpreted as closer to the original in her rendering of the glass metaphor. Shakespeare's original excerpt reads: "But when my glass shows

me my self indeed / Beated and chopped with tanned antiquity, / Mine own self-love quite contrary I read: / Self, so self-loving were iniquity" (ll. 9–12) (Hablevych, "Klasyka vdoma. Shakespeare. Komentari do Sonneta 62" [Classics at Home. Shakespeare. Commentaries on Sonnet 62]). Pavlychko shifts the emphasis to the subject performing the action: Коли ж покаже люстро вид правдивий, / Посічений, побитий давниною – Відчитую інакше гонор хтивий: / Це гріх – так любуватися собою (Shakespeare, *Sonety* [*Sonnets*] 77), which retranslates into English as "And as I look at myself in the glass / I find my old face full of wrinkles, / I perceive self-love as a delusion / A shameless delusion I've taken to." As such, the complex meaning of the above interpretation of the mirror is obscured because the emphasis is shifted to the observer's action. As a result, the union with the 'Imaginary' is less perceivable and a beneficial self-analysis is lost.

Butuk, on the other hand, translates these lines differently: "Та як на себе я в свічадо гляну – / На тятий зморшками мій давній лик, / Сприймаю себелюбство як оману / Безсовісну, що я до неї звик" (Shakespeare, *Shakespeares Sonnets. Shekspirovi sonety* 62). Translated back into English, this reads: "When the glass shows the true face, / The bruised, battered face of old. / I read it differently, this lustful pride: / It is a sin to so admire oneself." She preserves the subject, completing the action as a mirror showing "me" (l. 9). Her translation enables a psychoanalytical interpretation of the Sonnet, as it clearly refers to the poet's self-introspection. This remains in line with Hablevych's ideas.

Conclusion

The projection of an author-oriented as well as a reader-oriented literary theory onto a literary text reveals the complexity of Maria Hablevych's approach towards Shakespeare's work and their translations into Ukrainian. Her views are reflected in the Ukrainian versions of the *Sonnets*. The 1998 translation by Dmytro Pavlychko preserves psychological elements only to some extent. The 2011 translation by Natalia Butuk, however, is closer to Hablevych's ideas about authorial introspection and self-analysis. Yet both translation projects are explicitly influenced by Hablevych's critical thought.

In her understanding of Shakespeare, Hablevych advocates for a negotiated author-centred approach to interpreting Shakespeare in the spirit of hermeneutics. What is more, she calls for a firm phenomenological foundation in Shakespeare Studies methodology. The application of reader-response theory notwithstanding, the author's centrality does not exclude a reader's creative effort but rather stresses a respect, by the reader, for the author and their lacunae in a text. In a certain way then, this may be called a respect on Hablevych's part for the reader's imagination. According to her, it is therefore important that this aspect is taken into consideration

by translators, editors, and publishers, who might be tempted to overexplain the lacunae in a text when interpreting and translating. As such, Hablevych recognizes the categories of the 'Real' and the 'Implied Reader' of Shakespeare, and that they overlap in many aspects. Hablevych's take on them allows us to describe their relation as a constant interchange. Despite being doubtful of the unreserved applicability of psychoanalytic methods to Shakespeare, Hablevych uses Freudian concepts in her interpretation of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. In addition, her attempts to study the author's self in their context fall in line with Lacan's psychoanalytic theory, particularly with the urge to meet one's better self, one's 'Imaginary' in the 'Mirror' of one's works. Altogether, Hablevych's approach constitutes a somewhat eclectic yet thoroughly unique and sound critical approach to Shakespeare Studies. Her readings open the way for a more unified approach to the *Sonnets*. Her line of interpretation treats Shakespeare's poetic works as a display of the poet's psyche in relation to his readers. She also demonstrates their quest for self-improvement, ultimately serving an ideal, including that of Shakespeare's pure love presented in the sonnets.

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