

Title: *The Seagull* by Anton Chekhov in a Postmodern Version of Tom Stoppard (1997)
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In this paper, I will consider Stoppard's version of "The Seagull" as a part of Stoppard's postmodernist technique.

In his original plays Tom Stoppard is in a constant dialogue with other cultures and texts. His favorite method is based on the parodic rewriting of the text, farce close to the absurdist manner of writing, irony, intertextuality.

A playwright of such aesthetic views was supposed to work in the genre of dramatic adaptation.

The choice of Anton Chekhov's comedy "The Seagull" is clearly motivated: in the world culture A. Chekhov takes the second place after William Shakespeare.

Tom Stoppard has a clearly defined view on translation method. He is against "scrupulous ledgers" – translators. The main reason for his "excursions from the straight and narrow path" of literal translation is parodying, playing with the main characters of the comedy – and first of all – with the protagonist.

In T. Stoppard's interpretation of the play the protagonist is Konstantin Treplev – a personality of "Hamletian type".

T. Stoppard gives his answer to the eternal problem of all interpreters – is Treplev talented? No, definitely not. A pretentious and wordy monologue of the World Soul is a "demonstration of Konstantin's lack of gift". Stoppard cuts Nina's monologue in the 4th act with words: "And the poor moon lighting her lantern all for nothing" (70). That metaphor is viewed as an epitaph of Konstantin – a person and a writer.

Another aspect of the protagonist's depicting is domestic. The relationship of Hamlet and Gertrude with their counterparts of Konstantin and Arkadina is seen as in a distorting mirror: in Shakespeare's text it is love, care and desire to understand each other. In Stoppard's version Konstantin is alone in his love for his mother. I look at different intertextual borrowings in Stoppard's text to prove my point.

Comparing the characters of the Russian comedy with its English interpretation we can see the simplification of the main characters of Stoppard's version in contrast with complexity of Chekhov's characters. The characters are "secondary" (M. Epshtein) in the postmodernist discourse, they lose their originality and individual traits.

References

Chekhov, Anton. *The Seagull: A New Version by Tom Stoppard*. London: Faber and Faber, 1997.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* (The Complete Penguin Shakespeare). Penguin Books, 1969.