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EXPERIMENTAL HAMLET OR HOW TO POPULARIZE CLASSICAL LITERATURE¹

ABSTRACT

Alternative methods in teaching literature are increasingly used nowadays. Teachers often opt for teaching Shakespeare's plays in a nontraditional way, mostly because of the changing reading habits and ubiquitous digital environment. The aim of the present research was to examine students' attitude towards a modern theatrical adaptation of *Hamlet*. Six students took part in a workshop, which was organized after watching the performance. The conclusions reached in the workshop indicate that, although the students' reactions to the play were quite positive, not all of them prefer modern to traditional concepts of reading and classical literature. Younger students support the idea of innovation combined with classical literature more. However, a study which would include more participants and focus on a sharper contrast between experiencing traditional and more modern versions of literary works is needed to confirm these tendencies.

Key words: teaching, Shakespeare, Hamlet, literature, technology, popular culture

EKSPERIMENTALNI HAMLET ILI KAKO POPULARIZOVATI KLASIČNU KNJIŽEVNOST

ABSTRAKT

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Alternativne metode podučavanja književnosti se danas sve više koriste. Nastavnici i profesori često pribegavaju netradicionalnim načinima predavanja Šekspirovih dela, što zbog promena koje su prisutne kod same prirode čitanja, što zbog sve veće okruženosti digitalnom tehnologijom. Cilj ovog rada jeste da ispita stav učenika prema jednoj modernoj pozorišnoj adaptaciji *Hamleta*. Šest učenika je učestvovalo u kreativnoj radionici nakon gledanja predstave. Izvedeni zaključci pokazuju da iako su reakcije učenika na predstavu bile uglavnom pozitivne, nije se svima dopao savremeni način čitanja klasične literature. Mlađi učenici su u većoj meri izneli pozitivan stav prema modernim adaptacijama klasične literature. Međutim, studija koja bi uključila veći broj učesnika i fokusirala se na oštriji kontrast između doživljaja tradicionalnih i modernijih verzija književnih dela je neophodna kako bi se ove tendencije potvrdile.

Ključne reči: podučavanje, Šekspir, Hamlet, književnost, tehnologija, popularna kultura

1. INTRODUCTION

As Edwards (1985: 32) states, “It is probably safe to say that in the world’s literature no single work has been so extensively written about as Hamlet Prince of Denmark”. It is no wonder then that *Hamlet* remains one of the most thought-provoking pieces of literature in the 21st century as well. However, in accordance with our time, the reception of Shakespeare’s works has moved away from the traditional reading of the text (Gordić-Petković 2007: 34). In the world of modern technologies, digital networks and cyber-reality, it is no longer possible to analyze *Hamlet* solely in the context of the 17th century. That is the reason why *Hamlet*, together with many other classical works of literature, is often adapted or appropriated.

Whereas adaptation is usually characterized as a simple translation of one medium into another, appropriation involves the placement of setting in a new context (Sanders 2006: 26). In either way, a literary work is changed in order to become relevant again (Gordić-Petković 2007: 35). What is usually changed is the language, whereas plots and characters stay the same. However, as Burt (2003: 18) claims, these were traditionally not considered Shakespearean, but borrowed from other sources. That is how “popularization does not return us, then, to the fuller, original and essential Shakespeare; it *is* the essence of Shakespeare” (Burt 2003: 18). As Milić (2000: 63) states, the original, in this case, does not even exist.

Playing with original texts today is no longer a taboo, since it “can be seen as a key location for the exploration of culture and its transmission” (Fischlin & Fortier 2000:1). On the other hand, it is often claimed that students’ attitude towards literature in general is getting worse (Shapiro&White 1990; McKenna, Elsworth, & Kear 1995). Digital environment has doubtlessly been changing reading habits. Studies have shown that digitalization has had a negative influence on in-depth, concentrated reading (Ziming 2005: 707). Whereas people’s ability to find key words quickly and read selectively has improved, comprehensive reading has deteriorated (Ziming 2005: 707). Moreover, traditional reading is largely being replaced by e-reading, which is very different in its nature. E-reading is characterized by interaction, in which readers become active participants in the process of recreation. These changes indicate that the very notion of literature will soon get a completely new meaning (Fischer 2003: 323).

For all the above-mentioned reasons, teachers often opt for teaching Shakespeare in a nontraditional way. Burt (2003: 19) claims that students at college are often shown scenes from different film adaptations of a single play. Visual learners can find this medium more appealing. Moreover, moderate adaptations can be very useful for teachers who use them to make a contrast with the original version (Coursen 1997: 5). Interestingly, Kirwan (2014) has asked his students to tweet their reactions to Shakespeare’s film adaptations and encouraged their participation in a virtual community of Shakespeare film lovers. There have also been attempts to engage students with the help of graphic novels (Frossard 2012). In addition, unconventional teaching methods have been used to help students with learning difficulties. Acting in the plays enabled students with dyslexia and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) to overcome their difficulties and understand Shakespeare (Johnson 1998).

As far as inventive approaches to Hamlet are concerned, Curcio (2009) reports how teaching *Hamlet* by participation in performances, film adaptations, closed-capture feature, CDROM-based games, discussion boards, class websites and blogs has helped teachers enrich their lectures. Milić (2000) offers a creative possibility of interpreting characters through their relationship with *words* and *reading*. In case of the interpretation of Hamlet, for instance, Milić leaves his readership with the question of how silence beyond his words should be interpreted or “how we should read silence” (2000: 146). Polonius, on the other hand, can be analyzed as a character that needs to keep the words under control, in the area of their literal meaning, because only such words correspond to his notion of truth (Milić 2000: 77).

The aim of the present research is to determine students’ attitude towards a modern, interactive literary experience. For this purpose, a modern adaptation

of Hamlet at Serbian National Theatre in Novi Sad was chosen. In the words of its director, Nikola Zavišić, this Hamlet is “some kind of an experiment with TV cameras” (“Eksperiment u SNP” 2016). Jovana Mišković, who enacts Hamlet, said that they “reached a world of one performance - specific atmosphere, compact text and dense events, just as our time is” (“Eksperiment u SNP” 2016). According to the above-mentioned studies, it is expected that the students will react positively and show interest in the performance. Moreover, the research will provide an opportunity to examine students’ opinion about the popularization of literature, with the help of modern technology.

2. PRE-TESTING

2.1. Methodology

Before watching the performance at the theatre, the students were given a questionnaire (Appendix 1) and a quiz (Appendix 2). The aim of the questionnaire was to look into the students’ general attitude towards adaptations prior to watching the play. The purpose of the quiz was to see how much they had already known about Hamlet.

The questionnaire consisted of five open-ended questions and the quiz included ten questions. Eight questions were multiple-choice and two were open-ended. Six students (five female, one male) completed the questionnaire and the quiz. They were two high school students, three college students and one employed student. The mean age was 27 years. The students belonged to the group which was being prepared for the FCE exam and they were interviewed in ‘English2go’ language school in Novi Sad. Our initial intention was to include at least ten students. However, not every student in the group was interested in watching the performance.

2.2. Results

Some of the answers in the questionnaire were rather predictable, whereas others were completely unexpected. When making a comparison between younger and older students’ answers, it was predicted that younger students would be more open to adaptations, film remakes, shortened versions etc. This proved to be true, since both high school students tested said that they prefer watching a film to reading a book, since it is easier and takes less time, whereas all other participants said that they prefer reading a book, because they see it as a unique

adventure, which allows them to have their own interpretations. Moreover, while both of high school students read shortened versions of books available online, none of the older students had ever done it. One student even expressed an extremely negative attitude towards shortened versions, describing them as “the crippled ones” and suggesting “skipping reading altogether instead”. None of the students had anything against parodies and puns with quotations, characters and motifs from some books in the virtual world. However, some of the older students tested showed quite a rigid attitude when it comes to popularizing works of literature. One student even said that she would never allow watching films instead of reading books and that she would use technology only for showing the pictures. Finally, most of the students thought a literary work will probably change if it is put in another medium, mostly because of shortening, which is necessary if a book is to be turned into a film or performance.

As far as the quiz is concerned, the average number of correct answers was six, which showed that the students had known and remembered quite enough about the original play. Every student knew that *Hamlet* is a tragedy and that the most popular quotation is “to be or not to be”. Almost all students (5) knew that the play takes place in Denmark. They also mostly knew (4) that Hamlet’s mother is Gertrude, Ophelia drowns in a stream and metaphysical questions are explored in the play. Half of the students knew that Hamlet is considered a misogynist and that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Hamlet’s friends who are also the main characters of an absurdist play. Only two students knew that Portia does not appear in *Hamlet* and only one knew that Mel Gibson enacted *Hamlet* in one of the most famous film adaptations. It should also be mentioned that the student with the least number of correct answers was also the youngest one, whereas the only student who reached the maximum number of points was the oldest one.

3. WORKSHOP

3.1. Aim and structure

After watching the performance at the theatre, the students took part in a workshop in ‘English2go’ language school in Novi Sad. The first part of the workshop dealt with the students’ general impressions via open-ended questions. They were asked if they liked the performance and which parts were especially interesting for them. Another question was whether they thought this modern version had managed to keep the most important parts of the original play or it had brought some major differences. The purpose of the opening part was to introduce the changes in the adaptation, which were to be discussed in the main

part of the workshop. In the second part, we discussed major changes and the way in which they influenced the overall perception of the play. Questions were more controlled in this part, because there were four major topics that would be analyzed: *the use of cameras and video beams*, *unusual setting*, *omitted and changed scenes* and *the portrayal of characters*. These changes were written on four posters and the students were first asked to write their ideas on the posters (without looking at other students' ideas) and later to discuss them. In the last part of the workshop, more general questions regarding the relationship between classical works of literature and modern technologies were discussed.

3.2. General impressions

Starting with their general impressions of the play, some of the participants in the workshop said that it was completely different from what they had expected (very modern, interesting etc). In their opinion, some of the strongest elements of this adaptation were *the combination of the movie and the theatre experience*, which allowed the audience to watch two scenes presented in different artistic ways at the same time (live and filmed performance); this also enabled the audience to see *facial expressions*, which showed the characters' deepest emotions very closely; then, *the minimalistic scene*, which made the audience focus on the actors and their actions; *the use of lights*, because everything was dark; *music*, which was appropriate for the whole situation, though a bit disturbing. Another appealing innovation for them was that *Hamlet was played by a woman*. One of the students' interpretations of the director's decision to place a male soul into a female body was that he wanted to show us that "Hamlet is not a certain person who lived in the 17th century, but actually a universal person... and that all of us can be that Hamlet." Thematically, students chose to emphasize *the depravity of mankind* and *non-existence of privacy* as the strongest aspects of the play.

One of the changes which the students did not like were *the costumes*. Actually, they liked Hamlet's costume, because it was metaphorical (a long black robe with a hood), which was not the case with other characters. Apart from Gertrude's costume whose red color could be symbolic, costumes were imitations of the outfits from the past or the actors did not wear them at all.

3.3. Major changes

3.3.1. *Cameras and video beams*

After writing their ideas on the posters individually, we discussed them altogether. The first major innovation was *the use of four cameras and two video beams* on the stage. Here are some of the changes digitalization brought:

- visualized emotions
- black-and-white picture on the screen
- possibility of showing us two scenes at the same time (main stage and backstage)
- combination of arts
- impression of watching a reality show

Cameras enabled the audience to see facial expressions very well. One of the students said that it was very interesting to see how the director made use of the cameras in the Mousetrap scene to capture “action and reaction”, when the actors got off the stage and sat in the first row to watch the play. The expressions of Claudius and Gertrude could be followed on the beams as a reaction to “The murder of Gonzago”. What’s more, one of the students said that the cameras brought the objectivization of subjective experience, which she did not like, because the facial expressions of Hamlet on the video beams presented him as a clown, not a tragic character. In this way, Hamlet became someone “who uses his time to make fun of other people”, which is unlike Shakespeare’s Hamlet. When it comes to the black and white effect of the video beams, it contributed to the sense of creepiness and darkness. Another strong message which was conveyed with the help of the cameras keeping track of everything happening both on and offstage was that “you can’t hide a secret; all the secrets are revealed”. Students also said that the cameras incessantly following the actions of the characters gave the impression of watching a reality show, with Ghost reminding us of Big Brother. That is because he appeared both on the screen and on the stage and was the only one who was omniscient. Finally, it is relevant to mention that actors carried the cameras with themselves all the time, which could be a reference to the modern way of reasoning that nothing happened if it is not documented.

3.3.2. *Unusual setting*

When it comes to the setting of the play, there were a lot of novelties. The students mentioned the following:

- moving scene/stage
- Hamlet’s costume
- music
- dark scene
- curtains which should hide and keep privacy

- death of characters

The tragic fall of Hamlet and the whole dynasty was symbolically presented at the end of the play when all the characters literally sank to the bottom of the stage. In the discussion, the students said that the music contributed to the overall dramatization, because it was present in the parts in which it was necessary to prepare the audience for something important and sinister. Dark scenery was also appropriate for the topic and curtains were cleverly contrasted with cameras, since their purpose (to keep privacy) could not be fulfilled. The death of the characters was not shown on the stage.

3.3.3. *Omitted and changed scenes*

The omission of scenes contributed to the compactness of the play. The audience was not left with some time to think, because important things were happening on the stage all the time. The students agreed that the most significant change regarding the scenes was the omission of Hamlet's soliloquies, which show "the depth of Hamlet's hesitation". In this way, Hamlet's thoughts were taken away from him and his character became different. One student added that consequently "the vicious circle of tragedy was not shown in a proper way". Another significant change was the shortening of the Graveyard scene. Since this scene is considered to be crucial for the analysis of metaphysical aspects of the play (Mack 1952), because Hamlet ponders the questions of the brevity and mystery of life, it was somewhat unexpected to see it reduced. Finally, the Mousetrap scene was considerably changed. "Play within the play was made more humorous than it is in its origin, making it appropriate for audience, especially young ones", said one of the students. In this version of Hamlet, the acting troupe was not present at all. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern took that role instead and they were extremely comic. They were the ones who acted Gertrude and Claudius and did so in a very humorous way, which again was far beyond the scope of the original play. It is also important to note that Hamlet was more than the organizer of this play. He was the one who explained who the actors were and what the plot was about. Other omitted scenes include the ones with Marcellus, Bernardo, Reynaldo, Osric and Norwegian ambassadors and soldiers. Interestingly, Fortinbras was given greater importance, since he was the one who came to transfer a message instead of the ambassadors.

3.3.4. *The portrayal of characters*

3.3.4.1. *Hamlet*

It was shared opinion that the adaptation showed only basic things about Hamlet: “They didn’t show the tragic structure of his character... they didn’t explain why he is a tragic character”; “I also think they didn’t highlight enough that indecisive character of Hamlet”. Actually, the reason why Hamlet was not so much perceived as a tragic character was the omission of most of his soliloquies. Even those parts of the soliloquies which were kept did not leave a strong impression on the audience. It was well noted that the most quoted line of the play just passed as something insignificant. This certainly influenced the perception of Hamlet as being “an aggressive person in the performance, but not in the book”, as one of the students observed. He is no longer a melancholic, depressive character, as he has been analyzed (Freud 1900; Bradley 1971; Perić 2005), but a violent misogynist. If in the original play Hamlet is “rather an instrument, than an agent” (Johnson 1765), in this adaptation Hamlet definitely becomes an agent.

3.3.4.2. *Horatio and Ghost*

Horatio remained a loyal friend to Hamlet. Interestingly, one student observed that Horatio was shown as the second Hamlet or his alter ego. He was omnipresent in the whole play, but still invisible. He remained a true mirror of Shakespeare’s Horatio, who was described as one of those who: “balance passion by reason and are not Fortune’s puppets” (Campbell 1930: 147). As far as Ghost is concerned, the students really liked the way he was presented. Cameras enabled us to perceive him as something real, yet not as real as other characters, since he belonged to the virtual world, not the one presented on the stage.

3.3.4.3. *Claudius and Gertrude*

Claudius was portrayed as a typical villain, who reflected Shakespeare’s Claudius perfectly. On the other hand, Gertrude was “too happy”, “very simple” and “with no emotions”, as the students said. She was wearing a sparkling red dress, which could symbolize the lack of respect for her lately deceased husband. One student said that her deeds pull the trigger of tragedy in the original play, which is why she is a tragic character. However, this adaptation showed her as rather pathetic. Another interpretation was that “the idea was to present Gertrude as completely empty, with no thoughts or emotions”. This representation of her character is intriguing, especially when we compare it with rather different perceptions of her passionate personality (Barker 2002).

3.3.4.4. *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*

“They are comic for the same reason for which Hamlet makes all those facial expressions - to explain to us that there is no tragedy anymore; there are no strong emotions anymore”, one student observed. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern with their “sponge” personalities are symbols of conformism, whose betrayal was even more emphasized here, since they were explicitly informed that Hamlet was to be killed, and yet they did nothing to prevent that. Therefore, their characters can be taken as an important comment on today’s notion of friendship.

3.3.4.5. *Fortinbras*

Another innovative decision was to make the heir to the Danish throne a woman. As opposed to Hamlet, who was wearing a long black robe which did not reveal who was in question, it was obvious that Fortinbras was played by a woman. Students interpreted this decision as a message that women have taken men’s occupations and are equal to men today. One student even said that she was the best, because “she was the voice of reason”, which matches the analysis of Fortinbras as a character “in whom reason has swayed passion” (Campbell 1930: 147). In addition, the very end of the play showed Fortinbras without the cameras on the stage. Is this a note to mankind?

3.3.4.6. *Polonius, Laertes and Ophelia*

Like Claudius, Polonius and Laertes remained quite close to their original depiction. The students did not agree about the portrayal of Ophelia. Whereas some students did not like her at all, because she “looked like a silly teenager” and was “a bit hysterical”, others thought that her love for Hamlet was shown in a good way. One student even said that her acting was the most convincing and touching part of the performance.

3.3.5. *Hamlet as a story about a person’s inner life and perception of other people*

During the discussion, the students did not fail to mention that Hamlet is “a story about a person’s inner life” as well as “a story about family, about how the things in the family affect other things about you”, which could not be grasped in this adaptation of the play. When asked about possible reasons for the director’s decision not to focus on Hamlet’s indecisiveness, the students’ answers

varied. “Maybe this is Hamlet’s desirable personality... this is what Hamlet really wants to do, but he doesn’t”; “Maybe that was because most people know Hamlet in that way, so they didn’t want to highlight that again” or “he is a man of the present time”. This last observation is particularly interesting if we want to think about possible interpretations of Hamlet in the context of the 21st century, when everything happens so fast and people have no time to be indecisive and to think. Another student added that the interpretation may be even more pessimistic, because this modern Hamlet is about our new ideal: “Don’t think, just do it.” Whereas the original Hamlet is a thinker and an introvert, the new Hamlet is doing something all the time. This could also be related to the fact that “people nowadays stay on the surface and don’t go deeper anymore”, as another student noted.

What does this modern version of Hamlet focus on then? “Revenge, misogyny, crazy aggression/lunacy, wisdom, dynamics” were some of the students’ views. On the other hand, the director of the play said that his Hamlet focuses on privacy issues, voyeurism and state security (“Eksperiment u SNP” 2016). Such a broad range of topics certainly introduced intriguing questions and a myriad of possible interpretations.

3.4. Final part of the workshop - how important is it to adapt classical works of literature?

In the final part of the workshop, the students were asked to comment on the relationship between modern technology and literature. When asked if they thought modern adaptations of literary works are important, some students were against them:

“It is not important at all and I am very rigid about it. You have classic art and that is classic art. There is no reason to adapt anything, but that doesn’t mean that you don’t have a right to do that. If you want to read *Hamlet*, you should read *Hamlet*. However, there is no reason for any artist not to try to give his own vision of that play... but I wouldn’t treat that as adaptation. I would treat that as a second work of art based on the same motif.”

“I don’t think that an artist should recreate a work of art. I think that when you change something, that is a completely new piece of art. I don’t like this. Somehow I would only see the original Hamlet. This performance was very good, but for me the original Hamlet is the original Hamlet. When something new occurs, I get this feeling that every student would interpret it in his own way, and every answer would be correct. You have a right to your own opinion,

but Hamlet was created by Shakespeare and he gave it to us. I am the old school student and it is how it is supposed to be.”

“If we continue doing that, we won’t have time for real creativity. It’s easier to take something which is a work of art instead of making your own work.”

However, younger students had a completely different and more flexible attitude:

“I look at it in a positive way. They had an inspiration, Shakespeare for example, and they wanted to make something similar, but more understandable to population nowadays.”

“I am more flexible, because humans are changing through centuries. I think it is important to make adaptations of classical pieces. No one says that they will change Shakespeare’s words, or mind, or conclusions, or his idea of that piece... but I think that someone should make an adaptation to make it closer to the young population, because I think that’s the way how those pieces will live longer. So I think it is important. That kind of performance was popular at that time and now there is a need to do something and make it popular. “

“It’s doubtless that the original version is deeper, more complex and more compete, but I also find this interesting. It’s good to read the original one and to think about Hamlet in the right way. However, I also think it’s good to have freedom to have your own impression of that, to emphasize different things and to make it somehow different from the original one. It’s good to have two aspects of one thing.”

Even though students had very strong arguments both for and against adaptations of classical pieces, they agreed that everyone has a right to recreate. Students who were against adaptations, said that modern versions of classical pieces should not bear the same name as the original. They thought these could even be interesting, as long as someone does not try to replace the originals with them. They thought that the purpose of a modern version should be to spur interest and make someone read the original. However, they also expressed their fear of people becoming too lazy to read in the future with all available adaptations surrounding them.

4. CONCLUSION

The workshop showed that the participants enjoyed the performance at the theatre and were ready to thoroughly analyze it. For them, the play was scintillating. They thought it cleverly presented and criticized our time – our need to be seen and noted, to act without thinking, to be aggressive and selfish. In addition,

it perfectly illustrated today's privacy issues and a growing reality show population. However, some of the students thought that the director should have given it a different name, since this adaptation was everything but the original tragedy of Hamlet. Without having the depth of a real tragedy and with characters reduced to some of their traits, this Hamlet should have warned the audience about its nature, as was done in the past (Hamnet 1993).

In brief, the results of the research indicate that not all students are ready to adapt to new technology and active processes of recreation. Some of them still prefer more traditional concept of reading and classical literature. Other mostly younger students, however, believe that classical literature will be alive as long as it is adapted to the present time. That is the only way in which it can stay relevant. Otherwise, it may soon be forgotten. Therefore, teachers should probably try to combine traditional and more innovative, experimental techniques in their classrooms in order to try to make all students equally interested. Furthermore, combining traditional and experimental approaches to literature enriches the curricula and opens new ways of interpretations (Coursen 1997; Milić 2000; Curcio 2009; Frossard 2012; Kirwan 2014). Whereas the younger students interviewed were reluctant to speak about the original Hamlet, they found "the new one" very thought-provoking. In this way, the use of technology and innovations in the play, followed by the subsequent workshop made a contribution to the exchange of ideas and perceptions of modern adaptations. It is also important to mention that the students communicated in English all the time, which was beneficial for their language course.

What needs to be added, though, is that the number of participants in the workshop was limited. Therefore, the results obtained should be taken with caution, until a study with a greater number of participants is conducted. However, the participants in the present research can be taken as an illustration of a variety of audiences, which differ with respect to not only their age, but also their social background, level of education and preferences. Moreover, a study which would incorporate a sharper contrast between experiencing traditional and more modern versions of literary works would contribute towards a better understanding of students' perception of literature and its relationship with technological innovations.

Finally, there is a whole history of adjusting classical works of literature to a wide array of audiences. Burt (1998) provides such a history of adaptations of Shakespeare in a range of different backgrounds. Technology can thus provide a unique framework for interpreting a literary work, both in its original and modern context (Porter 1999), which was the teaching strategy employed in the present research. Since teaching literature involves interpreting not only the text,

but also the context, it is of paramount importance to offer students a possibility of reading a text from their own perspective. This is how constant rewriting and reinterpreting of Shakespeare's plays shows his universality and relevance in modern times (Gordić-Petković 2007: 35). *Hamlet* is important from a political, psychological and philosophical perspective (Mack 1952; Freud 1990; Foakes 1993), and it is precisely the plays like Zavišić's *Hamlet* that provide us with an opportunity to look into all those dimensions.

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EKSPERIMENTALNI HAMLET ILI KAKO POPULARIZOVATI KLASIČNU KNJIŽEVNOST

Sažetak

Alternativne metode podučavanja književnosti se danas sve više koriste. Nastavnici i profesori često pribegavaju netradicionalnim načinima predavanja Šekspirovih dela, što zbog promena koje su prisutne kod same prirode čitanja, što zbog sve veće okruženosti digitalnom tehnologijom. Usled ovakvih okolnosti, čitalačke navike učenika se menjaju, a čitanje se polako transformiše u interaktivan proces. Predavači tragaju za načinima na koje Šekspirove drame mogu da približe učenicima, kako bi ta dela ponovo postala relevantna, u jednom novom kontekstu. Cilj ovog rada jeste da ispita stav učenika prema jednoj modernoj pozorišnoj adaptaciji *Hamleta*. Šest učenika je učestvovalo u kreativnoj radionici. Pre gledanja same predstave, putem upitnika su ispitani stavovi učenika prema ekranizaciji književnih dela, skraćenim verzijama, kao i odnosu između književnosti i tehnologije. Takođe, učenici su uradili kratak test o Hamletu, kako bi se utvrdilo njihovo pređašnje znanje. Rezultati testa su pokazali da učenici poseduju prosečno znanje o Hamletu. Interesantno je da su mlađi učenici bili i zastupnici ideje o ekranizaciji i popularizovanju književnih dela, dok su stariji izneli nešto rigidniji stav u upitniku. Nakon predstave, održana je radionica na kojoj se diskutovalo o promenama koje je donela moderna adaptacija. Učenicima se veoma dopala predstava, jer je na pronicljiv način predstavila i iskritikovala naše vreme, potrebu da budemo viđeni i primećeni, da delamo bez razmišljanja, da budemo agresivni i sebični. Ipak, neki učenici su smatrali da je bilo neophodno predstavi dati drugi naziv, jer se ona značajno udaljila od Šekspirovog *Hamleta*. Zanimljivo je i da su u nastavku polemike mlađi učenici izneli pozitivan stav prema modernim adaptacijama, dok su stariji ostali pri tome da klasičnu književnost i adaptacije treba držati strogo razdvojene. Treba istaći da je za donošenje pouzdanih zaključaka o stavovima učenika ipak potrebno istraživanje koje će uključiti veći broj ispitanika i staviti naglasak na različite doživljaje tradicionalnih i modernih verzija književnih dela.

Ključne reči: podučavanje, Šekspir, Hamlet, književnost, tehnologija, popularna kultura

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Questionnaire

Gender:

Age:

General questions:

1. Do you prefer reading a classical book or watching its adaptation? Why?
2. Have you ever read a shortened version of a book available online instead of reading the whole book? In what situations and why?
3. Parodies and puns with quotations, characters and motifs from some books are very common in the virtual world. Do you like this idea and do you think it should be supported?
4. How important do you think is to popularize works of literature? Would you support major modifications using technology to make literary works more attractive for younger generations?
5. Do you think that the main ideas of a certain literary work necessarily need to change if the work is put in another medium (television, internet etc.)?

Appendix 2: Quiz

Hamlet Quiz

1. *Hamlet* is a:
 - a) comedy
 - b) tragedy
 - c) tragicomedy
2. Gertrude is:
 - a) Hamlet's mother
 - b) Hamlet's beloved one
 - c) Hamlet's sister
3. The play takes place in:
 - a) Denmark
 - b) England
 - c) Scotland
4. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* explores one of the following themes:
 - a) Love
 - b) Ambition
 - c) Metaphysics (questions about the basic nature of things)

5. Hamlet's friends, who were later revived in a satire and an absurdist play are:
 - a) Horatio and Laertes
 - b) Rosencrantz and Guildenstern
 - c) Claudius and Polonius

6. Hamlet is often interpreted as a:
 - a) misogynist
 - b) philogynist
 - c) misanthrope

7. How does Ophelia die?
 - a) She drinks from a poisoned cup.
 - b) She drowns in a stream.
 - c) She stabs herself.

8. Which of the following characters does not appear in *Hamlet*?
 - a) Polonius
 - b) Fortinbras
 - c) Portia

9. The most quoted line from Hamlet is _____

10. In 1990, Hamlet was played by _____ in a famous film adaptation.

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