

# Maria Hablevych and the Concept of Truth in *Hamlet*

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**Abstract.** The paper is focused on the interpretation of the notion of Truth in Ukrainian translations of *Hamlet* through the lenses of the contemporary Ukrainian Shakespeare Studies scholar Maria Hablevych (1950). In particular, it deals with the reproduction of Truth based on the notion of agent's professional *habitus*, which is regarded as a heterogeneous entity with several *sub-habiti*. The paper is an attempt to prove that multifaceted agency as the result of complex *habitus*, reflected in the agent's *hexis*, or style, facilitates better understanding and re-interpretation of the issues raised in Shakespeare's tragedy. The research touches upon the Ukrainian translator-agents, with some of them being committed to more than one agency, to trace the influence of the existing restrictive norms on their *habiti* and the respective interpretation of Truth in Shakespeare's tragedy.

**Keywords:** *habitus*, philological *sub-habitus*, interpretative *sub-habitus*, *hexis*, multifaceted agent, Shakespeare Studies, norms.

## Maria Hablevych ir „tiesos“ samprata *Hamlete*

**Santrauka.** Straipsnyje aptariama „tiesos“ sąvokos interpretacija *Hamleto* vertimuose į ukrainiečių kalbą, žvelgiant į pačią sąvoką ir jos interpretacijas iš šiuolaikinės ukrainiečių šekspyrologės Maria'os Hablevych (g. 1950 m.) perspektyvos. Remiantis vertimo lauko veikėjo(-os) (*agent*) profesinio *habitus* – heterogeniško, iš kelių *sub-habiti* susidedančio darinio – samprata, nagrinėjama, kaip nuo vertėjo(-os) profesinio *habitus* priklauso „tiesos“ sąvokos interpretacija vertime. Straipsnyje siekiama įrodyti, kad vertimo lauko veikėjų, turinčių sudėtinį *habitus*, kuris atsispindi ir jų *hexis*, arba stiliuje, daugialypę sprendimų ir veikimo galia, arba veikumas (*agency*), leidžia jiems geriau suprasti ir perteikti Shakespeare'o dramų problematiką. Tyrime siekiama atsekti, kaip esamos ribojančios normos veikė kai kurių, dažnai keliuose profesiniuose baruose veikiančių vertėjų į ukrainiečių kalbą profesinį *habitus* ir atitinkamai jų „tiesos“ sąvokos interpretaciją verčiant Shakespeare'o tragediją į ukrainiečių kalbą.

**Pagrindiniai žodžiai:** *habitus*, filologinis *sub-habitus*, interpretacinis *sub-habitus*, *hexis*, daugiaplanis(-ė) veikėjas(-a), Shakespeare'o tyrimai, normos.

## Introduction

Translation is a negotiation and renegotiation of meaning, which may vary depending on its interpreter. I attempt to show the way in which the understanding of the notion of Truth in *Hamlet* was developed and renegotiated in the Ukrainian translations against the background of interpretation by Maria Hablevych (1950), the Ukrainian Shakespeare Studies scholar, translator, editor, and critic. Her multifaceted agency is the result of the complex *professional habitus*. The latter is treated as the agent's cultural and social mindset reflected in the final product of translation and the potential to bring in a new dimension to the traditional understanding of Shakespearian ideas. I attempt to prove that *habitus* is not a homogeneous entity, but consists of several areas, which may be subjected to changes. These, in their turn, facilitate better understanding and reception in the target polysystem. The fresh and unconventional look at the notions, central to the tragedies of the Bard, is all the more important considering the existing restrictions and limitations in the time of each translation creation. This fact holds true when it comes to the notions that might be treated ambivalently by the Soviet regime. It is, thus, of importance to investigate the interpretations of the concepts in question from multiple perspectives.

## Habitus, Agency, and *Hexis*: A Theoretical Framework

In its primary sociological sense *habitus* is any “system of dispositions’ specific to (and active in) not only a nation-state but in the ‘fields’ within it” (Bourdieu 1972: Part 2). Jean-Marc Gouanvic is the first to study the importance of the habitus notion within Translation Studies framework (Gouanvic 2002: 160). According to the scholar, *habitus* influences the act of translating and may be identified by tracing the social trajectory of an agent. In literature a line between *habitus* as the result of translation practice and the specific *habitus* at the meeting point of two cultures is drawn as well (Wolf 2007: 19). Moira Inhilleri highlights the social component of the notion in question applicable for the study of translation. She looks at the process of translating as a social practice in the particular field. In her work translators and interpreters are viewed as agents whose *habitus* may influence and transform their practices (Inghilleri 2005: 143). A similar role is assigned to these agents by Daniele Simeoni. For him, *habitus* is “(culturally) pre-structured and structuring the agents mediating cultural artifacts in the course of transfer” (Simeoni 1998: 1).

Within the frames of my study, the term is narrowed to the agent's mindset, namely, the totality of “*professional* dispositions and attitudes of agents within a given field or practice in a nation state” (Simeoni 1998: 17). Daniel Simeoni singles out the innate

social *habitus* and a restricted, or specialized one. Translating is viewed as a process of refining the social *habitus* of the agent into the specialized *habitus*. The agents of translation are often multitaskers, who combine multiple activities in their professional life. The product of translation, in its turn, is the result of the specialized field distribution and cannot be viewed as the outcome of the homogeneous sphere. In addition, *habitus* as a socio-cultural construct is subjected to changes in different time periods. An agent's *habitus*, therefore, encompasses one or several *sub-habiti* preconditioned by the respective environment. I distinguish between philological and interpretative *sub-habiti*. The former is oriented at the expertise needed in the field of translation, the latter—at the scope of knowledge in the literary field.

The practical realization of *habitus* or its relevant sub-area is reflected in *agency*. For instance, editorial or critical agency might presuppose the involvement of interpretative *sub-habitus*. Translatorial agency in practice does not necessarily mean the engagement of only one sub-area; within the frames of my research it is limited to the philological competence of the agent.

*Habitus* is reflected in *hexis*, *i.e.* the art and style of the agent's writing (Simeoni 1998: 17). The status of the agent and the differences appearing as a result of agents' decisions is what builds up the style. Within the purposes of this research *hexis* is viewed as the embodiment of *habitus* in the product of translation, implying creative experience of writing. Some agents of translation may have poetic *hexis*, with their individuality easily perceptible in the text. The notion under discussion is especially important considering the circumstances and restrictive policies of the empowering culture in which the field of the Ukrainian translation was developing. Not only did *hexis* serve as the means of self-expression for some of the agents, but it also enabled them to convey national elements in the translation and literary fields with the prevailing Russian ones.

The research into *habiti* as the scope of knowledge shaped by the socio-cultural factors would be incomplete without raising the question of norms. They are paramount when it comes to the social forces in translation as they have their impact on social practices and their products (translations). They are the '*agreements and conventions*' underlying the practice of translation are continuously negotiated by the people and institutions involved. Norms influence the way the agent acquires his professional *habitus* and further realizes it in translation.

Andrew Chesterman holds the view that norms are cultural values manifested in the social practices (Chesterman 2009: 176). In that respect, norms and *habiti* share similarity. The impact of norms takes effect via the translator's attitudes and responses to them (Chesterman 2009: 179). The definition of norms depends on social groups, or communities. Norms establish "what a particular community will accept as a translation" (Hermans 1999: 77–78). This approach opens the space for the negative influ-

ence of the norms in the given field. For instance, norms of the empowering language may limit the agent, who becomes a servant to the norms while the act of translation—a form of servitude (to apply the terminology of Daniel Simeoni). In the case of the Soviet-time translations, agents were largely restricted by the governing policy of the Communist party. Their products could not be published without precise supervision. From this perspective, translators in the Soviet times were expected to serve the regime. Some of the agents would conform to the imposed restrictions; others would defy them, either openly or subtly by means of their *hexeis*.

In the Soviet translation and literary field, norms function not as a helping tool for an individual, but rather as an effective instrument of a colonizer. Respectively, agents could not fully realize the potential of their *habiti*. Overstepping the boundaries of the constraining Soviet norms became possible after Ukraine gained its independence. It was also at that period that the agents with complex *habiti* could voice their ideas and establish new norms in Translation Studies and Literary Studies.

### The Complex *Habitus* of Maria Hablevych

Maria Hablevych (1950) as the modern Ukrainian Shakespeare Studies scholar, translator, critic, and editor is the multifaceted agent with a complex *habitus*. Her multi-directional activities complement each other, which allowed Maria Hablevych to develop her own unique interpretation of the Poet's legacy.

The philological *sub-habitus* of the scholar encompasses respective professional education in the Faculty of Foreign Languages in Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. Her occupations in the Soviet period varied: From the school counselor to the teacher of English and the university lecturer in the 1970s.

The translatorial agency of Maria Hablevych where the aforementioned *sub-habitus* comes into play comprises prose (short stories by E. A. Poe, John Updike, Jack Kerouak, D. H. Lawrence). All of them were published in the 1970s–late 1980s. Only after Ukraine gained its independence, did the agent focus on the poems by Emily Dickinson. The works of the American poet abound with philosophical and religious symbolism which could not be accurately reproduced due to the restrictions of the Soviet norms.

The philological *sub-habitus* of Maria Hablevych is less pronounced in relation to Shakespeare's legacy, yet it extends beyond a single genre and is evident in her works such as the poem *The Phoenix and the Turtle* (rendered as 'The Phoenix and the Dove' in Ukrainian, translation is mine), the chronicle *Henry VIII* (published in 1966), and the drama *Anthony and Cleopatra* (published in 2013). Hablevych, as an agent, has reproduced several excerpts from various plays of Shakespeare (including

the *Edward III* chronicle) into her interpretative sub-habitus. Therefore, in this case *sub-habiti* overlap.

Although her interest in Shakespeare and Shakespeare Studies never waned, it was not until the collapse of the Soviet state that the agent was able to systematize all her previous findings and engage in the development of critical essays, both her own and those by prominent Shakespeare Studies scholars. Some articles were revisited and subsequently republished. This was made possible by the increased availability of resources for the thorough and comprehensive study of Shakespeare's legacy in the years following Ukrainian independence. For instance, scholarly commentaries on Shakespeare's works became more accessible, enabling a deeper understanding. Without the knowledge of the Poet's life and artistic work, subtle implications and symbols could only be superfluously interpreted according to dominant norms. Additionally, the lexicographical sources were scarce and insufficient for an accurate reproduction of the English language as used by Shakespeare.

Furthermore, opportunities of cultural and academic exchange with foreign colleagues were rather limited. Scholars from any field could only travel abroad and share their experience under the supervision of the communist authorities, to ensure that the impeccable image of the Soviet state remained untarnished. They were also expected to glorify the findings of the Soviet scholars and while maintaining a critical stance towards the West. In stark contrast, when Ukraine gained freedom and sovereignty, all restrictions were lifted, opening up unlimited possibilities for the study of Shakespeare's life and artistic works. Agents gained the ability to travel freely and work with Shakespeare materials on-site, leading to the revision and reinterpretation of their earlier works. Even sensitive topics, such as religion, could now be discussed without the ideological constraints of the past.

Consequently, 2 volumes of articles and translations of critical essays by Maria Hablevych appeared in 2016 and 2019. The multifaceted agent was offered a chance of close collaboration with the translator-agents of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* Dmytro Pavlychko (1998) and Natalia Butuk (2011). The former corrected some parts in his version on the basis of critical commentaries. The latter followed the guidance of Maria Hablevych and produced the translation which reflected the interpretation of the multifaceted agent. Therefore, in comparison with the Soviet times, the collaboration among the agents in the field of translation has improved and was more productive.

In independent Ukraine, the position of Maria Hablevych underwent certain changes. Particularly, the agent with the complex *habitus* initiated the establishment of the Centre for the Humanities at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv in 1998 and remained in charge of it until 2004. The Centre's work marked another significant step towards creating a solid scholarly foundation for Shakespeare Studies in Ukraine.

Maria Hablevych set up a 2-year ‘Translation Workshop’ in 2000–2001, offering practical courses that encompassed the translation and interpretation of both literary and scientific-humanitarian texts. This approach not only expanded the professional *habitus* of the agent but also brought about innovative transformations in the fields of Translation Studies and Literary Studies, breaking away from the restrictive norms of the Soviet era.

The interpretative *sub-habitus* of Maria Hablevych plays a crucial role when it comes to Shakespeare Studies, as well as in her editorial and critical activities within her professional career. The scholar primarily focuses on the role of the Author and their relationship with the Reader. Maria Hablevych emphasizes the Author’s role in shaping their audience’s experience: the Reader must feel empathy towards the characters, but only in the manner intended by the Author and within the specific situations created by the Author (but which may be obscured from the Author’s ‘literary children’—which is not the same with the readers who are familiar with the context (Hablevych 2019: 206). For Maria Hablevych, the Author is all-knowing and omnipotent, determining the message his characters deliver and the manner in which they convey them to the audience. If, as Maria Hablevych suggests, the Author offers a basis for suspicion without providing reasons for dispelling them, then it was likely his intention to do so, and the agents should avoid over-explicating them (Hablevych 2019: 213). The remarks are deemed inappropriate in those parts of the plays where explanations can be inferred from the text. The Author writes his Text without the slightest intention for his **Reader** [original highlight] to become distracted from the poetic world he creates (Hablevych 2016: 242).

The Reader is closer to the subjective Author, as the Text stirs the imagination of readers in exactly the same way the Author intended. According to Maria Hablevych, the Spectator is a passive receiver of the information delivered through mediation (Hablevych 2016: 231). Therefore, Shakespeare’s plays are primarily reader-oriented.

The translator, as the primary Reader, comes closest to the Author’s intention (Hablevych 2016: 230–231). Accordingly, his creative imagination should be as powerful as the Author’s, evoking similar feelings in the target readers and transforming them into new ‘actors’ in the play. The words of the Poet serve as bridge between his imagination and that of the Reader. If the latter fails to conjure the intended picture in their imagination, it is attributed to the inaccuracy of their understanding (Hablevych 2016: 114). Unfortunately, according to Maria Hablevych, it is often the case that many translators prioritize their own literary ego at the expense of the Author. Reaching the Author’s horizon is impossible for the Reader. Therefore, instead of attempting to interpret it solely through the lenses of one’s own expertise, one must endeavor to see

the world from the Author's perspective. By doing so, interpreters of the Author will broaden their own horizons (Hablevych 2019: 31).

Maria Hablevych's ideas partially resonate with the views of Michel Foucault. Foucault maintains that the author's biography, stance, societal position, and preferences can provide insights into the situations presented in the text and their transformations (Foucault 1969). Similarly, Hablevych highlights the role of social and cultural contexts reflected in Shakespeare's literary works, which should serve as a starting point in Shakespeare Studies (Hablevych 2019). However, for the Ukrainian scholar Shakespeare is more than a mere abstraction, even though he is assigned the role of an author-function within the framework of his texts. Maria Hablevych regards Shakespeare as both a historical and literary figure, with a distinct literary ego (Hablevych 2016). For Michel Foucault, on the contrary, the Author is rather a construct of the Reader, emerging from the projections of how the text is handled (Foucault 1969). Therefore, it opens the space for a number of subjective positions of Reader—and in the case with Shakespeare multiple interpretations are almost totally unacceptable, as Maria Hablevych maintains (Hablevych 2016). The common ground lies in the fact that the Author, whether seen as a historical figure or a textual function, organizes the literary work and serves as a tool for distinguishing between different texts. Lastly, the Author's name shapes the reception of the text. In other words, Shakespeare's legacy garners attention precisely because its Author is Shakespeare.

The concept of habitus would remain incomplete without outlining the hexis of Maria Hablevych. While her realization of the philological *sub-habitus* can be a subject for a separate study, her hexis in relation to editorial and critical agency reveals distinct scholarly features. This becomes evident from her editorial remarks on the *Sonnets*, particularly in translations by Dmytro Pavlychko and Natalia Butuk. In these instances, the multifaceted agent attempts to capture the spirit and the letter of the original work, prioritizing the preservation of the original spirituality of Shakespeare. This commitment was most vividly demonstrated during the editorial process of the modern translation of *Sonnets* (2011) by Natalia Butuk. Maria Hablevych introduces changes to the translation based on her understanding of the *Sonnets* as one artistic unity and the key characters—the Fair Youth, the Dark Lady—as the opposite sides of the Author's creative mind (Hablevych 1998). Furthermore, this multifaceted agent maintains the importance of being cautious in order not to miss true Shakespearean voice amid the chorus of contextual voices of his commentators. Translators should avoid tailoring the imagery to the specific realia prevailing in their field. Otherwise, misunderstandings and misinterpretations of various kinds may arise, which could affect the overall reception of the text. Maria Hablevych supports her claims with an example, citing the reproduction of religious terminology in *Hamlet*. In Ukrainian translations from the Soviet period, the

nuances of the Church terminology related to the Protestant rite were either generalized or omitted due to the prevailing atheist ideology at that time (Hablevych 2016: 242).

In summary, the philological and the interpretative *sub-habiti* were instrumental in shaping the multifaceted agency of Maria Hablevych. The interpretative *sub-habitus* of Maria Hablevych which gained prominence over the philological one in her professional *habitus* became most pronounced during the post-Soviet era. The ability to consider certain characters from Shakespeare's plays as possessing high moral values or interpreting them in a spiritual context became possible only after breaking-free from the Soviet norms in both translation and literary fields. Empowered to voice her ideas more openly, the scholar was able to reshape the hierarchy of values within the fields of Translation Studies and Literary Studies. Specifically, the scholar was able to reveal new dimensions in the Shakespearean imagery and offer a fresh understanding of the key concepts in his artistic legacy, seen through the lens of the Bard as the Prophet of Love. The fusion of both *sub-habiti* within her professional identity resulted in a comprehensive scholarly approach that combined elements of Translation Studies, Literary Studies, and Shakespeare Studies. This fact will be further illustrated through the interpretation of the concept of Truth as an example.

### Truth Through the Lenses of the Multifaceted Agent with the Complex *Habitus*

Truth was one of the most sensitive topics in the country under the rule of empire (be it the Russian or the Soviet one). The origin of the concept dates back to as early as the Old-Slavonic language, where it correlated with 'rule,' 'oath,' or 'agreement.' It is reflected in the titles of the Ukrainian legal codes of the 12th–13th centuries such as *Ruska Pravda* ('Truth of Rus'). Hence 'true' stood for 'legal,' 'just,' 'right.' The fact is still traceable in the proverbs, which could be roughly translated as "you cannot get away from truth," "to look into the eyes of Truth," implying the power of Truth as the Law. Both notions are structurally-related in the modern Ukrainian language: Compare: *pravda*—*pravlyo* (rule), with the same root.

The concept under discussion is also connected to the notion of Righteousness, which adds religious aspect to it. Compare: '*pravda*'—'*pravednyk*' (a person following God's rules and seeking justice, or '*spravedlyvist*') (Etymolohichnyi Slovnyk Ukrainiskoi movy in 7 vol.).

In the modern Ukrainian language Truth ('*pravda*') primarily corresponded to the true facts about something ('*istyna*'): "Ой не по правді, мій миленький, зо мною живеш." [*You do not live with me, my darling, as truth would have it.*] (The Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language in 4 Vol.). However, it was in the Soviet era that the Truth-Lies

binary opposition was brought to the forefront, and it was widely used in the dictionaries of that time (The Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language in 11 Vol.). The sense implying (possible) Falsity is traceable in the phrases that could be roughly translated as “*my / his / her truth, truth stands at one’s side.*” The works of the contemporary authors who either fully or partially complied with the imposed rules or the works from the pre-Soviet times containing considerable ‘improvements’ were used to exemplify that component of meaning. Similarly, the translators of that period approached the aforementioned subject with caution, downplaying the legal aspect of Truth.

In the English language Truth stands for the “*true facts about something, rather than the things that have been **invented** or **guessed** [highlight mine]*” (LDOCE). Interestingly enough, it also indicates a fact that is “*believed* by most people to *be true*” (LDOCE). As such, it is grounded in a binary opposition that allows for different interpretations. Furthermore, the opposite of the concept enters the discourse.

Primarily, the notion stood for ‘*faithfulness*’ in Old English (LDOCE). The sense of ‘*accuracy*’ has become common since 1560. In the Proto-Germanic language, Truth indicated something pertaining to ‘*good faith*’ and ‘*firmness/solidity*’ [highlight mine]. English and most other Indo-European languages lack a primary verb equivalent to “*speak the truth,*” as a contrast to ‘*lie*’ (Online Etymology Dictionary).

The concept of Truth is central to the tragedy of *Hamlet*: The truth about his father’s sudden death, the truth of existence (in his famous monologue where he is pondering over the vengeance for the Truth). The prince searches for the Truth and writes to Ophelia:

Doubt thou the stars are fire;  
Doubt that the sun doth move;  
Doubt truth to be a liar;  
But never doubt I love. (Shakespeare: 1623)

We shall focus on the last line of the letter, interpreted as though it sounded: “*Doubt truth is not a liar.*” Maria Hablevych stresses that Hamlet, as an educated Protestant and a student of Wittenberg University, intended to caution against believing in what “*appears [original highlight] to be an absolute Truth*” (Hablevych 2019: 150). As the agent interprets it: “*Doubt that Truth lies (is a Liar)—Truth cannot lie, do not doubt in one thing—my love for you*” (Hablevych 2019: 144). The fact can be attributed to the semantic peculiarities of the notion under discussion. Nevertheless, the need for a broader approach arises when we examine the notion within the context of Shakespeare’s creative genius, as Maria Hablevych points out (Hablevych 2019). In this sense, the scholar attempts to restore the original understanding of Truth, untainted by later Soviet (mis)interpretations. Maria

Hablevych regards both Hamlet and Ophelia as heralds of the ideas of the Omnipotent Author, whose wisdom surpasses that of spectators/readers. Consequently, their vision of Truth excludes the slightest chance of Lies/Falsity or one-sidedness (Hablevych 2019: 220). According to this multifaceted agent with a complex *habitus*, the Bard, with his acute societal awareness, creates a well thought-out hermeneutic context where even the seemingly least significant actions or gestures gain importance. Hence, certain episodes or phrases (such as Valentine's song of the mad Ophelia or the famous 'Flowers Scene') deemed inappropriate by some of the commentators fit perfectly well with the Author's intention (Hablevych 2019: 204).

From the perspective of the multifaceted agent, Hamlet embodies Truth and possesses the ability to perceive people with his inner sight. This is why Hamlet feigns madness, pretending to be a court jester who "*voices the Truth*" (Hablevych 2019: 142). He knows what Truth is from his own experiences, having it "*at his mind's eye*" (Hablevych: *ibid.*) Therefore, Truth cannot '*seem*,' it can only '*be*.' Furthermore, lying does not deserve to be labeled as Truth. As the agent emphasizes, Hamlet demonstrates that there is one indivisible Truth. He holds a firm belief in Truth even in the face of rumors about his father's ghost: If such a righteous man as his father appears in the realm of the living, then something must have gone wrong in Heaven (Hablevych 2019: 152). Thus, Maria Hablevych attempts to restore the primary meaning of Truth and its legal sense as an indivisible entity, which, in turn, adds depth to the interpretation of Hamlet. It is my contention that a purely Translation Studies approach to the analysis of the notion under discussion, with solely the realization of the *philological sub-habitus*, would be incomplete.

## Truth Through the Lenses of Other Ukrainian Agents

Since translation itself is a socially preconditioned activity, the social and political setting that influenced the interpretation of the concept of Truth should be briefly outlined. For the purposes of my research, I have selected two pre-Soviet versions by Mykhailo Starytskyi and Panteleimon Kulish (from the 1880s); then translations by Leonid Hrebinka and Hryhoriy Kochur were produced during the establishment of the Soviet state (in the 1930s), but were published during the peak of the communist power after World War II. I also include the retranslation of *Hamlet* by Mykhailo Rudnytskyi, a multifaceted agent from the Western part of Ukraine, in my research to ascertain whether the distance from Soviet norms somehow influenced his *habitus* and, consequently, his understanding the notion of Truth. The translation field of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in Ukraine can be characterized as one with escalating tensions between the suppressed Ukrainian culture and the dominant Russian one. The 1863 *Valuiev Circular* and the 1876 *Ems Decree* banned the printing of Ukrainian translations. To be more

precise, the preface to the 1882 edition of *Hamlet* by Mykhailo Starytskyi was initially published in Russian, later to be translated in the 1928 edition. Consequently, the response to the restrictive policies of the Russian Empire manifests itself in the works of both agents: The styles of both Panteleimon Kulish and Mykhailo Starytskyi are heavily marked with the national coloring. The vocabulary of the former includes rich Church Slavonic, Polish, and bookish Ukrainian layers, as opposed to the Ukrainian vernacular of that time. Ivan Franko, his editor, introduced more than 100 stylistic changes to the translations of Panteleimon Kulish, deeming them far too conspicuous.

Mykhailo Starytskyi opted for the lines from Ukrainian folk songs to incorporate certain stylistic elements, such as low style or irony. He acknowledges this approach in his commentaries, stating: “*I took the liberty to use national similes in the text*” (Starytskyi 1928: XXI). He amply used typical Ukrainian lexemes, which constituted a characteristic feature of his *hexis*, and introduced new Ukrainian coinages as well. Many of these neologisms later became part of the vocabulary of the modern language. However, due to the dominance of the Russian sector within the Ukrainian elite, his translation faced heavy criticism. In order for the translation to be approved and printed in 1882, the translator’s daughter had to bribe one of the censors. This incident provides further another evidence of the restrictive norms in the field of translation during the period of the Russian Empire.

Despite this fact, retranslations of *Hamlet* by Mykhailo Starytskyi and Panteleimon Kulish, which were close in time and space, e.g. ‘active ones’ (Pym 1998), were frequently referenced to in critical commentaries and prefaces by other agents. Specifically, Ivan Franko, the editor of both versions of *Hamlet*, used the examples from Mykhailo Starytskyi’s work in his commentaries on Panteleimon Kulish’s translation (1899). In other words, collaborative efforts among the agents was still possible even in the face of restrictions. Another noteworthy example is the fact that the Ukrainian Literary Studies scholar Andriy Nikovskiy, who authored the preface and commentaries for the 1928 edition of *Hamlet* translated by Mykhailo Starytskyi, also comments on the translator’s choices made by Panteleimon Kulish and refers to the views of his editors (Nikovskiy in Shekspir: 1928). As a result, the interplay of voices at different levels, which contributed to a better reception of the product, becomes evident in the paratexts.

“*Про правду думай: се брехун безчесний.*” (Shekspir 1899: 76)

[Think of truth as of shameless liar.]<sup>1</sup>

“*Зневірайсь, що є де правда гола.*” (Shekspir 1928: 59)

[Despair, that there’s bare truth somewhere.]

<sup>1</sup> Translation of the corresponding Ukrainian lines into English is mine. The same is with the excerpts from letters.

Thus, despite all the above mentioned constraints, the agents working in the Russian Empire and during the first years of Soviet Republic experienced more freedom for the textual dialogue. Nevertheless, for them as well, Truth exists in the unity with Lie.

The 20<sup>th</sup> century saw little improvement in the cultural and political situation benefiting the Ukrainians. Agents operating in the field of translation within the Soviet state tended to favor literalism and assimilation with the dominant languages of the colonizer. Those who adhered to these norms were given preference and more opportunities for publications. This is exemplified by the case of the *Hamlet* version by Viktor Ver (Cherevko). Despite being much stylistically weaker, it was published in 1961, faster than earlier and more successful translations. Another peculiarity is its abundance of Russian words, which fell in line with the policy of Russification. In this version, the translator reproduces Hamlet's epistle word-for-word:

*“Не вір, що сонце рухливе,  
[Doubt the sun is movable.]*

*Не вір у племінъ зір,  
[Doubt there is ray of the stars.]*

*Не вір, що правда – брехлива,  
[Doubt that truth may lie.]*

*У моє ж кохання – вір.”  
[Believe in my love.] (Shekspir 1961: 75)*

As we perceive, the notion of a single, indivisible Truth is present. However there is doubt whether the agent saw Hamlet as the embodiment of that Truth, particularly the Truth in its primary spiritual sense, intrinsic to the Ukrainian language and culture.

Quite the opposite case is with Leonid Hrebinka. He, as a poet and translator-agent, was completely excluded from the Ukrainian cultural context. Indeed, his name was not mentioned in one of the most extensive article on Shakespeare's legacy by Hryhoriy Kochur titled *Shakespeare in Ukraine* (1966). Furthermore, the author of the article became aware of another version of *Hamlet* only after his own translation was published in the 1960s (Dzera 2018: 506). The agent's manuscript was lost during the Soviet repressions of the 1930s. It was not until 1973 that it was found by chance in poor condition, with some of the pages being unreadable. Two years later, it appeared in the *Vsesvit* Foreign Literature journal, having been restored by Maria Azhniuk, who conducted a textual analysis of the manuscript. Notably, in some instances, lines proved difficult to recover, so the politically correct translation by Viktor Ver was used to 'patch' it. The text underwent more drastic manipulations between 1984 and 1986 when it was being prepared for the 6-volume edition of Shakespeare's works. The

authentic translation of *Hamlet* completed by Hrebinka finally saw the light in the times of independence, first in 1990 as part of the collection of poetry and translations by Leonid Hrebinka, and then in 2003 as a separate volume.

*Hexis* of Leonid Hrebinka bears a distinct poetic component. Indeed, it is rich in the vocabulary imbued with ethno-linguistic coloring. The allusions to the national poet Taras Shevchenko create space for multiple interpretations of Shakespearean imagery and the key concepts of his play. Not only does his poetic *hexis* manifest itself semantically, but it becomes obvious in the formal characteristics of the translation as well. More precisely, it is traceable in the melodious versification. However, such an approach was found harmful in the Soviet times, and when his translation was published in the 6-volume edition of Shakespeare's works in 1980s, it was considerably simplified by the editors, notably Dmytro Tupailo. This serves as an example of questionable agency on the part of the editor-agent, as it appears to prioritize the colonizer's needs and intentions over the development of Ukrainian translation.

Hryhoriy Kochur was a brilliant translation agent who survived the repressions during the Great Terror of the 1930s, but was subsequently exiled to Siberian camps for 10 years. Possessing a well-rounded philological education, encyclopedic expertise, and a perfect command of a number of European languages, English and French among others, Kochur exhibited characteristic features of his *habitus*. He embarked on his career by translating the French Parnassus poets in the 1870s, whose elegant style left a significant impact on his translatorial manner. The agent under discussion played a role in the Ukrainian neoclassicist movement, contributing to the establishment of the tradition of classical translation in the Ukrainian literary field. Therefore, what the agent introduced into the Ukrainian polysystem, in contrast to the dominant style and poetics, was a strict form and avoidance of over-expressiveness. Hryhoriy Kochur was the one who discovered the manuscript of his fellow-translator Leonid Hrebinka, made a photocopy and handed it over to the Ethnographic Museum in the late 1960s. The agent did everything in his power to ensure that the work was thoroughly studied and subsequently published. Interference with the text occurred only in cases where it would have become illegible. Unlike later editor-agents who served the interests of dominant powers in the field of translation, the agent in question had Ukrainian interests in mind to the extent possible.

It seems natural that under such circumstances, both agents interpreted Truth in its opposition to Lie:

“Не вір у **правду без брехні**, а вір в моє кохання [highlight mine].”

(Shekspir 2001: 153)

[Doubt that there is truth without lies; don't doubt my love to you.]

“Не вір і правді в світі – в кохання вір моє.” (Shekspir 2003: 23)  
[Doubt even truth in the world—don’t doubt my love to you.]

According to Maria Hablevych, a multifaceted agent with a complex professional *habitus*, the translation of the latter would make sense if the term ‘*world*’ is understood to refer to ‘*other people / strangers*,’ to whom neither Hamlet nor Ophelia belongs. However, this interpretation sounds somewhat unnatural in the context of the preceding lines (Hablevych 2019: 144).

In Western Ukraine, as part of the Polish Republic, the field of translation was in a better condition. The agents there faced less severe oppression in comparison with the rest of Ukraine. Mykhailo Rudnytskyi, the agent whose excerpt is presented below, had more chances to travel and exchange ideas with fellow translator-agents both in Europe and in Soviet Ukraine. He maintained particularly strong connections with Ukrainian neoclassicists such as Mykola Zerov. The latter was a teacher of Hryhoriy Kochur, resulting in similarities between the *hexis* of Mykhailo Rudnytskyi and that of Kochur.

“Не вір у правду, **різну від брехні**, а вір в моє кохання [*highlight mine.*]” (Shekspir 2008: 59)  
[Doubt the truth, which is different from lies, believe in my love.]

The aforementioned rendering fits perfectly well in the interpretation of the agent with the complex *habitus*: The clear division between Truth and Lie is visible in his rendering as well. This phenomenon can be partly explained by the similarity in their *sub-habiti*: Much like Maria Hablevych, Mykhailo Rudnytskyi retained his interest in Literary Studies and literary criticism. His agency encompassed both critical and editorial dimensions. Most notably, he translated *Hamlet* in the 1920s, while still under Polish rule and in a relatively unrestricted environment. The situation changed dramatically after Halychyna became part of the Soviet state, when he was even compelled to publicly apologize for his former ‘destructive activity.’ The fact that the agent viewed Hamlet as a universally recognized character, rather than as someone overwhelmed by inner conflict, becomes evident in a letter written by Yosyp Hirniak. The latter worked as the stage director cooperating closely with the agent in 1943 during the period between two occupations, the Soviet and the Nazi German regimes:

*One of the tasks I set myself in those troubled times was to present a man who holds God in his soul but despises the world, created by God.* (Rudnytskyi in Kozak 2008: 172)

Hence, in contrast with other agents, whether they are his contemporaries or the more distant ones, Mykhailo Rudnytskyi comes closest to the modern interpretation of the issues raised in *Hamlet*.

## Conclusions: Can Truth Be a Liar?

The *habitus* of the agent is sensitive to the political and cultural environment. While it is norm-governed, it may come into opposition with these norms if they become overly restrictive. Its nature is complex, with specific sub-areas activated during certain activities. This habitus enables the realization of a multitude of directions in the professional life of an agent; and is manifested through the respective agency.

The philological *sub-habitus* within the professional *habitus* concerns linguistic and translatorial expertise. In the case of Maria Hablevych, this *sub-habitus* is realized in her work as a translator and editor-agent. The interpretative *sub-habitus* holds primary importance when it comes to understanding literary characters in a broader more universal context.

In the Author-Text-Reader triad, Maria Hablevych emphasizes the presence and importance of the Author in the Text. The Author serves as the sole and exclusive point of orientation for the agents involved in the production and distribution of the translation product.

Multifaceted agents with the complex *habiti*, such as Maria Hablevych or Mykhailo Rudnytskyi, demonstrate a deeper and more complex understanding of the problems and conflicts within *Hamlet*. All the translations of *Hamlet* analyzed in the paper, in light of Maria Hablevych interpretations, emerged as results of tensions in the field of translation. When compared to the Russian and later Soviet agents, Ukrainian translation agents held a lower cultural status.

However, through their choices, they attempted to bring Ukrainian language and culture to the fore. Agents with the prevailing philological *sub-habiti* were more concerned with word choices and the formal characteristics of the poetic phrases rather than semantic subtleties. This fact is evident in their *hexeis*. The poetic *hexeis* of some of them served as instruments of self-identification and the opposition to the restrictive colonial system. It is notable that agents with distinct poetic *hexeis* suffered the most under the communist system, to the point of nearly being eradicated from the fields of literature and Translation Studies field. But for their fellow-agents, their works might never have reached the intended audience or would have been significantly impoverished.

The examination of the concept of Truth in *Hamlet* as reproduced by Ukrainian translation agents demonstrates that any form of oppressive power (be it the Russian Empire or its successor, the Soviet State) affects its interpretation and rendering by translation agents. Whether deliberately or subconsciously, the concept entered the Ukrainian polysystem in a rather distorted manner.

The closest interpretation of Truth as an absolute ontological category within the Russian-dominating field of translation is that of Mykhailo Rudnytskyi, an agent with

a complex professional *habitus* engaged in multifaceted activities. It was only after Ukraine gained its independence that another agent, Maria Hablevych, was able to re-introduce the components of the concept of Truth inherent in the Ukrainian linguistic and cultural context, offering alternative and deeper interpretations of Shakespearian tragedy.

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## Appendix

Interpretation of the Truth Notion: A Comparative Table

AGENT	YEAR	HABITUS	AGENCIES	INTEPRETATION
Maria Hablevych	2019	Interpretative Philological	Translatorial Editorial Critical	<i>Truth that lies is not truth</i>
Mykhailo Rudnytskyi	1930	Interpretative Philological	Translatorial Critical	<i>Truth, which is different from lies</i>
Mykhailo Starytskyi	1882	Philological Poetic	Translatorial	<i>Shameless liar</i>
Pantelemon Kulish	1889	Poetic Philological	Translatorial	<i>Bare truth</i>
Leonid Hrebinka	1930s 1957	Poetic Philological	Translatorial	<i>No truth without lies</i>
Hryhoriiy Kochur	1960s	Philological Poetic	Translatorial	<i>No truth in the world</i>