‘The rumble of continuing life’: Kozintsev’s *Hamlet* and its distorted reception

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Abstract
This article challenges central tenets of the Western reception of Grigori Kozintsev’s 1964 screen adaptation of *Hamlet*. Adding new information derived from published and unpublished archival materials and insights from the film director’s son, it argues that Kozintsev’s intentions were more universal than contemporary political. It serves as a call for caution and for the reconsideration of certain articles of received wisdom, in particular with respect to the film’s supposedly anti-Stalinist language.

Keywords
*Hamlet*, Shakespeare and cinema, Russian cinema, Grigori Kozintsev, Dmitri Shostakovich, Soviet culture

Résumé
Cet article interroge les thèses centrales autour desquelles s’organise la réception en Occident de l’adaptation cinématographique de *Hamlet* par Grigori Kozintsev, en 1964. En nous appuyant sur des sources nouvelles puisées dans des archives publiées ainsi qu’inédites, et sur les éclairages apportés par le fils du cinéaste, nous avançons que les intentions de Kozintsev avaient une visée universelle plutôt que contemporaine et politique. Cet article invite par là à la prudence et à la réévaluation de certains travaux qui ont pu faire consensus, notamment en ce qui concerne le langage supposément anti-stalinien du film.

Mots clés
*Hamlet*, Shakespeare et le cinéma, cinéma russe, Grigori Kozintsev, Dmitri Chostakovitch, culture soviétique

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The adaptation of Hamlet is for me like a love match. I passionately love this play. And there is nothing else in art which is for me better or more important.\(^1\)

I had been dreaming of this adaptation almost since my childhood.\(^2\)

In 1964, the Soviet Union celebrated Shakespeare’s 400th anniversary on an unprecedented grandiose scale, marked by an outpouring of conferences, books, articles, theatre productions, and other forms of adaptation. By far the best-known product of the celebrations, at least in the West, is Grigori Kozintsev’s cinema adaptation of Hamlet with music composed by prominent Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich, which went on to be nominated for several international prizes (including the Golden Globe and BAFTA) and won the Special Jury Prize at the Venice Film Festival in 1964.\(^3\) Apart from being one of the Soviet Union’s most successful cinematic exports, this film has provided a first encounter with Soviet Shakespeare appropriations for most non-Russian speakers, and hence it has been widely discussed and written about. Although there exist fruitful and objective studies of Kozintsev’s cinematic language and the process of adapting Shakespeare’s text in Boris Pasternak’s translation for the screen, a significant number of commentators argue that the film enshrines a critique of the Soviet regime, as shall be discussed in this essay.\(^4\)

The notion of Hamlet as a political play has come to be regarded as much more an Eastern European characteristic than a Western one. A comparison of Laurence Olivier’s (1948) and Kozintsev’s screen adaptations, revealing the fundamental contrast between the psychological concerns of the former and the politico-social ones of the latter, is a recurrent feature of Western studies of Shakespeare onscreen, generally along these lines: ‘Olivier’s film of Hamlet is psychoanalytic and personal. That of Grigori Kozintsev is political and public’.\(^5\)

There is indeed some supporting evidence for identifying political, or perhaps better, psycho-political, allegory of a generalised kind, in Kozintsev’s reading of Hamlet. An example may be found in the letter of 7 January 1963 to Shostakovich, in which Kozintsev asks for a small musical number to accompany Ophelia’s dance lesson at the beginning of the scene at Polonius’s home, which would represent her ‘denaturalisation and dehumanisation’, as he puts it. Kozintsev explains,

The term is of course stupid [glupyï] but I can’t think of any other. But the image is presented as such: a sweet girl – almost a child is turned into a puppet […] She is forced to give up on love, look for trickery in everything, etc. This is the beginning of her madness. I would like the monotonous mechanical dance to express a soulless and unhuman state. […] At the same time I’d like you to use bits of this theme in the later scenes of madness. In those scenes we could perhaps develop a tragic theme from this embryo […] It is possible to repeat this mechanical theme in the scenes of Elsinore as a theme representing blunt monotony and the prescribed happiness in the court of Claudius.\(^6\)

Although such statements focus on the human condition as represented by Shakespeare’s storylines and characters, the last sentence in particular clearly gives licence to a degree of political interpretation as well.
Similarly, in his working notes for *Hamlet*, Kozintsev describes Elsinore as ‘[a] seat of government, not just a castle or a fortress, [it is] life itself and not just the everyday life of some kind of specific time’, which also opens the door to political commentary, albeit again without specifying geography or chronology. The visual imagery of the film, including the heavy gates that close behind Hamlet at the start of the film only to open again after his death, Ophelia’s iron corset, and the omnipresence of soldiers in armoury, all seems to point towards an overarching theme of the individual versus authority. This, of course, maps closely onto the socio-political history of the Soviet Union, particularly at the juncture between what we now term the Thaw and Stagnation eras. But it does not exclude application to any other time or place.

What is less acceptable is to force all the imagery of this film into an over-determined anti-Stalinist allegory. Such ideologically slanted views, to be illustrated below, might be dubbed the ‘Testimony syndrome’, with reference to Solomon Volkov’s account of the life and works of Shostakovich. First published in English in 1979, *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich* proved to be an opportunity for music journalists, enthusiasts, and practitioners alike to polish up their image of Shostakovich as a closet dissident who had been secretly laughing up his sleeve at the Soviet regime since at least as far back as 1932. The inauthenticity and fraudulent nature of Volkov’s book have long been demonstrated and accepted in the world of scholarship, but the ongoing ‘Shostakovich Wars’ that it inaugurated reveal how the struggle for the composer’s legacy has been intertwined with the politics of the Cold War. This so-called ‘revisionist’ but in fact vulgar anti-socialist view of Shostakovich still dominates in journalistic and Internet fora, where the more daring and heartbreaking the story told – whether by publicists or by musicians themselves – the more it attracts a captive audience and the more money it makes.

This article is accordingly offered as a warning against similar hijackings of Kozintsev’s Shakespearean outputs. I shall first point out some glaring examples of narrow or politicised attempts at interpreting Kozintsev’s film. I shall then indicate the path towards alternative, more fact-based approaches, concentrating on *Hamlet*, with the help of the director’s own published writings, unpublished archival materials, and statements from his son.

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The urge to find contemporary political allegory gained momentum around the same time as the appearance of Volkov’s book. In that year, Bernice Kliman remarks that among her list of ‘mini-faceted versions of the multi-faceted play’, only Kozintsev’s ‘highlights the political *Hamlet*’; and she goes on to dub it ‘a treatment that invites comparisons with modern political regimes, particularly with Stalin’s dictatorship in Russia’. Having imposed such ‘single-mindedness of the directorial treatment’, Kliman finds the film ‘curiously disappointing’, though despite ‘obvious allusions to Stalin’ her disappointment appears to be a consequence of the high expectations that the ‘beautiful’ film evokes in its viewer.

Such lines of thoughts can be traced to the present day, although in the post-Soviet era, the supposed allegorical specificity of the film is more likely to be viewed in a
positive light. A Google search for ‘Kozintsev’s Shakespeare’ brings up as one of its first results Tiffany Ann Conroy Moore’s book, Kozintsev’s Shakespeare Films: Russian Political Protest in Hamlet and King Lear (2012). Unfortunately, this is the very source that is most guilty of the ‘Testimony’ syndrome, as the following excerpts demonstrate:

The film’s emphasis on Norway’s military preparations and the arrival of Fortinbras’ soldiers evoke the violent suppression of dissent within the USSR and the international Cold War standoff – the Cuban missile crisis happened just before the film’s release. Claudius continued to function as a Stalin-esque figure, as he had in the ’53–54 production [i.e. Kozintsev’s staging of the play at the Pushkin, now Alexandrinsky, Theatre], but could just as easily have represented Khrushchev and those Party officials who remained entrenched in the Stalin-era mentality. 13

Molotov was sent to be the ambassador to Mongolia and Malenkov was put in charge of a Siberian power station [. . .]. This recalls Claudius’ dispatching Hamlet off to England once his presence at Elsinore became inconvenient. 14

It [the dramatic turning point of the film] is the apotheosis of Kozintsev’s condemnation of Stalin and the continuation of Stalinism under Khrushchev on behalf of his audience. 15

Needless to say, none of these interpretations has any documented foundation; nor do those close to Kozintsev, especially his surviving son Alexander, endorse them.

The idea that Kozintsev’s Claudius is a portrait of Stalin is one of the most recurrent interpretational strands in the secondary literature. For example, Spencer Golub finds this self-evident: when referring to Sergei Radlov’s 1938 production, he suggests that Radlov’s ‘monumental character portraits [. . .] prefigured Kozintsev’s multiple references to Claudius’ (i.e. Stalin’s) “revolution from above” and the resultant “cult of personality”’.16 A more recent example is Samuel Crowl’s depiction: ‘Kozintsev’s Claudius (Michail Nazwanov) is a barrel-chested cross between Stalin and Henry VIII who dominates the Danish court’. 17

It has also been speculated that Kozintsev’s Fortinbras, despite having his lines reduced to a minimum in the film, represents direct Soviet political allegory. When discussing the end of the film in comparison to the end of Kozintsev’s 1954 stage production, where the director had completely removed Fortinbras’s storyline, Moore concludes, ‘therefore Fortinbras enters the scene and pushes Horatio aside much like Brezhnev did the beleaguered Khrushchev’. 18 To corroborate this argument, she quotes another ill-informed study, by Anthony Dawson: ‘the film remains uncertain whether Fortinbras is Stalin or Khrushchev, but he is certainly not Hamlet’. 19

Apart from such readings, which once would have fitted in neatly with the agendas of Cold War cultural competition, 20 but which can hardly be excused in post-Soviet times when we have access to archives, Moore also claims to have uncovered the secret religious tendencies and Christian messages of Kozintsev’s films. She regards these as ‘providing a quiet affirmation and slaking of the Soviet audience’s thirst for transcendental truth’. 21

There is no factual evidence for this either, and it wholly contradicts Alexander Kozintsev’s view of his father, as will be discussed towards the end of this essay. A subtler, more persuasive argument, referring to Kozintsev’s well-known atheism, is offered by
Alexander Etkind, who regards the director’s ‘secular framework’ as ‘result[ing] in a sublime understanding of high culture that was uniquely endowed with meanings that had previously been invested in religion and ideology’.22

There are also several persistent mistakes in handling of sources. Again, Moore’s book provides representative examples, among them claiming that Shostakovich’s 1931–32 opera *The Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk District* is an adaptation of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* (in fact it is based on Nikolai Leskov’s novella),23 and that Kozintsev’s book, *Shakespeare: Time and Conscience* was published in Russian in 1965 and hence is an encoded homage to the Polish dissident writer Jan Kott.24 The original Russian title of Kozintsev’s book, *Nash sovremennik – Viliam Shekspir*, certainly resembles Kott’s celebrated *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*. As has been noted, the changed English title might have been a way of avoiding confusion with that volume.25 However, Kozintsev’s book was actually published in Russian in 1962, well before Kott’s (1964–65), and indeed letters and archival material indicate that it was actually Kott who borrowed the title from Kozintsev. The film director’s widow, Valentina Kozintseva, who together with Iakov Butovskii was behind the five-volume collection of Kozintsev’s works as well as several other studies, recollects,

> When I told G. M. [Grigory Mikhailovich Kozintsev] that Kott simply pinched [ukral] his title, G. M. defended him by saying that such words – ‘our contemporary’ – were in the air. During the 1971 Shakespeare Conference (in Vancouver) Kott approached G. M. and apologised for the pinched title.26

Irrespective of primacy of authorship, it would still be tempting to suggest that Kozintsev’s film was influenced by Kott’s political reading of Shakespeare. Dennis Kennedy, for example, persuasively shows how Kott’s writings contributed to the contemporisation of Shakespeare and stressed the ‘relevance and immediacy of Shakespeare’s texts to the excruciations of the post-war world’.27 But any claims of direct influence from Kott on Kozintsev rest on shaky foundations. A letter to the filmmaker’s sister, Liubov Kozintseva-Ehrenburg, written when the film had well advanced into production, suggests that Kozintsev had not read Kott’s earlier book by this point (though he had naturally heard of it), since he says he has just asked a friend in Poland to get hold of it for him.28

Remarkably, some widely read Western studies are happy to infer Kozintsev’s intentions without having consulted Russian primary sources. A glance at Moore’s bibliography, for instance, reveals the notable absence of the five volumes of Kozintsev’s writings and letters. These, together with unpublished archival material from the director’s personal collection held at the Central State Archives of Literature and Art in St Petersburg (TsGALI), should be the first port of call for anyone seeking to understand Kozintsev’s ever-evolving approach to and fascination with Shakespeare.

To be sure, the few primary sources used by non-Russian-speaking scholars are themselves not without their problems: the English translations of Kozintsev’s two books (*Shakespeare: Time and Conscience* and *King Lear: The Space of Tragedy*)29 lack not only editorial commentary but also the valuable footnotes that accompany the Russian
texts both in the original and, more extensively, in their posthumous re-publications. Above all, the prime source — the films as represented on DVD or in the cinema — is itself distorted in one of its vital components, namely, the words, since most versions have subtitles that derive directly from Shakespeare’s text, made to fit to the image rather than the actors’ lines. Here, the issue is Kozintsev’s use of Pasternak’s free rendition of Shakespeare — an adaptation, rather than translation, which is almost as much Pasternak as it is Shakespeare. The matter is further and intriguingly complicated by the many existing versions of Pasternak’s translation of the tragedy. A side-by-side comparison of Pasternak’s 1940 and 1964 (posthumously published) rendering of ‘To be or not to be’ alone reveals the poet’s change of attitude towards the essence of the tragedy. The disappearance of Pasternak’s text in the subtitles means that non-Russian-speaking audiences miss out on vital aspects of the film, including the juxtaposition of Pasternak’s poetics and modern-day language with the historic costumes and setting, as well as the convergences and divergences between the interpretations by Pasternak, Kozintsev, Shostakovich, and the actors, in particular Innokenty Smoktunovsky in the title role.

Published and unpublished archive materials reveal the vital importance that a translation and an actor’s voice and intonation held for Kozintsev. Butovskii wrote about Kozintsev’s quest to get Anna Akhmatova to translate the soliloquies into prose, in order to differentiate them from the rest of the text. ‘Monologues are the process of thinking, not speech’, wrote Kozintsev in 1961. Refusing to interfere with the work of her recently deceased friend (Pasternak), Akhmatova turned down Kozintsev’s request, in spite of her love for Hamlet and enthusiasm for the project. It was not the first time that Kozintsev had attempted to mix translations and even Shakespeare’s works for his artistic vision. Back in 1954 while working on his stage production of Hamlet for Pushkin Theatre (Alexandrinsky), Kozintsev, having excised the storyline of Fortinbras, decided to finish his production with Hamlet reciting Shakespeare’s Sonnet 74. Kozintsev informed Pasternak of this in a letter on 26 February 1954: ‘That is why I would like to ask you, if you have time and inclination, to translate Sonnet 74 for us (and if possible: with a structure as close as possible to the structure of Hamlet’s monologues).’ Pasternak’s response was surprisingly sharp: ‘I won’t enter into discussion of the ending that you’ve invented. I am used to Shakespeare’s and it seems completely natural to me’. He then included a translation which he admitted to be a draft but that in the nearest future he had no time to work on. Kozintsev did not hide his disappointment at Pasternak’s reaction. Although Pasternak quickly tried to make amends, Kozintsev decided to go with Samuil Marshak’s existing translation of the sonnet, though it appears he only asked for Marshak’s permission after the production had premiered. In another letter to Pasternak, Kozintsev attempted to pour oil on troubled waters by praising his poetry and expressing the pleasure of working with him, tactfully leaving out the sonnet issue and only adding ‘unfortunately a lot had to be done fast before the premiere’. Pasternak had separately discussed the production with his cousin, philologist Olga Freidenberg, who was disappointed with the production in general and the ending in particular, and yet Pasternak kept up appearances in his reply: ‘A pity that you didn’t have time to write to me and let me know that you weren’t satisfied with my translation
of the Sonnet. I would have gladly rectified it’. Despite Pasternak’s apparent disapproval of Kozintsev’s intervention, it was he who initially expressed his assent to the director’s freedom when dealing with his translation: ‘Cut, change and reorganize as you want. The more you throw out of the text, the better [...] Use the text as you wish, with the utmost freedom; it is your right’. Although Kozintsev in his reply reassured the poet of his best intentions to keep as much of the translation intact as possible, in practice, Kozintsev seems to have given complete freedom only to Shostakovich, who, as will be discussed below, on a few occasions did not follow Kozintsev’s requirements and vision.

Although he repeatedly referred to Smoktunovsky as the ultimate Hamlet – ‘there could be no other actor as Hamlet’ – Kozintsev had to work hard with the actor, whom he had cast after seeing his theatrical performances in particular as Prince Myshkin in Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s The Idiot, in order to free his delivery from all kinds of theatrical mannerism. Smoktunovsky reportedly had to act the scenes of the internal soliloquies to the voice and reading of Kozintsev, painstakingly acquiring the intended rhythm and expressions, which then enabled him to read the texts in Kozintsev’s intended way.

This snapshot of Kozintsev’s relentless work with Smoktunovsky is just one piece of evidence that rebuts the actor’s later florid claims regarding his supposedly crucial role in the conception and realisation of the film. By contrast, Western studies, while putting Smoktunovsky on a pedestal for his doubtlessly skillful acting and his post-war enforced restriction of movement (which they routinely and exaggeratedly refer to as the Gulag), have nothing to say either about his shameless self-promotion and false claims, or indeed about Kozintsev’s painstaking coaching.

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Rather than constantly recycling unexamined, unsubstantiated political interpretations, a richer understanding of Kozintsev’s Hamlet could usefully begin by returning to the sources. Not that these sources are unproblematic. But they do suggest necessary refinements to existing commentaries, which demand a certain amount of detailed reporting.

Some of the most characteristic visual, and in particular musical, aspects of the film can only be fully appreciated when studied in parallel with Kozintsev’s working notes from his 1954 Hamlet as well as his 1941 King Lear theatre productions, both of which feature Shostakovich’s music. Moreover, some of the more interesting notes are precisely those in which Kozintsev considers music in relation to the action. For instance, the theme of the Ghost, particularly the string tremolos and their punctuating chords, echoes the storm music of the 1941 King Lear – an excerpt of the score that, according to Kozintsev’s notes, the director had chosen to be recycled for the representation of the Ghost of Hamlet’s father in the 1954 production. Even the three punctuating chords with which the film opens, and which are always linked to, if not part of, Hamlet’s theme, have a precedent in Kozintsev’s musical requirements for his 1954 theatre production. In his notes regarding the change of scenery, Kozintsev suggests three gongs as a signal. However, he insists that the transition to Hamlet’s room should be signalled with three chords of a different nature, and then adds in parentheses: ‘Hamlet’s theme’. This clarification suggests that the three chords are either a component of a multiple
Hamlet motif or that they signal it; in any case, they cannot qualify as a ‘leitmotif for Elsinore’, which is how Tatiana Egorova and, following her, Erik Heine, identify them.48

With respect to Ophelia’s songs, it is only through the uncovering of material belonging to the 1954 theatre production and other archival material that we are able to have a clear picture of their impact. This is worth painstaking explanation, because Kozintsev’s depiction of Ophelia is one of the most discussed and referred to images of the film, and yet her ‘mad’ songs and their sources seldom feature in those discussions.

Unlike in the 1954 production in which Ophelia sang all six of her songs, four of which with instrumental accompaniment,49 Kozintsev kept only three of Ophelia’s songs in the film: ‘How Should I Your True Love Know’, ‘Valentine’s Day’, and ‘My Robin’. These are all sung a cappella and in a natural, non-professional manner by actress Anastasia Vertinskaia. However, the melodies from the first and third songs are incorporated in other musical cues of the film: respectively, in Hamlet’s farewell to Ophelia, which depicts Ophelia reading Hamlet’s love poem before being interrupted by a strange visit from him; and in the death of Ophelia, a montage that links Laertes and Claudius’s plot to Hamlet’s return via shots of Ophelia’s empty chambers, her dead body in the water and a seagull’s flight.

While Egorova unaccountably considers these songs to be influenced by Russian folk music,50 Olga Dombrovskaja correctly observes that Shostakovich turned to songs that ‘were traditionally heard in the productions of Hamlet since the 18th century or perhaps even from Elizabethan times’.51 When it comes to Shostakovich’s source for these songs, Dombrovskaja admits that the picture is incomplete and only points out an inference that might be drawn from a letter from Kozintsev to Jay Leyda in June 1952, in which the director mentions having looked for a volume of Shakespeare music in bookshops but failing to find it.52 More importantly, she reports the existence of two unknown and undated manuscripts in the Shostakovich archives, with the harmonised melodies of the three songs.53

Findings from the Pushkin Theatre archive in St Petersburg and the Russian State Archive for Music and Literature (RGALI) in Moscow may help with the chronology. The former holds the orchestral parts from the 1954 production; and since the whereabouts of the main score (or piano score) are unknown, these have been used to reconstruct the Gigue and the Finale. However, a separate manuscript sheet containing the melody to Ophelia’s ‘How Should I Your True Love Know?’ seems to have remained undetected to this day. As witnessed and reported by composer Sergei Slonimsky, the 1954 Ophelia definitely sang this traditional melody with Shostakovich’s harmonisation.54 The Pushkin Theatre manuscript suggests that the mysterious undiscovered manuscripts Dombrovskaja mentions may have belonged to Shostakovich’s now-missing score for the 1954 Hamlet, particularly given that, according to their correspondence, Kozintsev sent Shostakovich’s theatre score to him in January 1963, while the composer was working on his film music and was still considering reusing his previous material.55

Thus, the approximate dating of the manuscripts of the songs goes at least as far back as the time of Shostakovich’s work on the 1954 production, which in turn suggests that the composer’s source for this traditional melody was other than what Dombrovskaja had
suggested. At the same time, a document in the archived collection of the actress Mariia Babanova contains a manuscript of Ilya M. Meerovich, responsible for the music for Nikolai Okhlopkov’s *Hamlet* (also 1954), in which the composer writes out two melodies belonging to Ophelia’s songs, first using Shakespeare’s words and then words from a traditional song. One of these songs is ‘How Should I Your True Love Know?’, written to the same melody used by Shostakovich. The reference for the English text of Shakespeare is supplied on the verso as ‘*Hamlet* Horace Furness, Philadelphia, 1877’, but no reference or indication is provided for the melodies.56 The same melody had been used by William Walton in his music for Laurence Olivier’s 1948 film version of *Hamlet*; and, given that Okhlopkov was appointed a deputy of the Ministry of Culture in 1953 in charge of foreign films, it is possible that he had viewed and known of Olivier’s film and had suggested the songs to his composer. In fact, the most authoritative account of this melody’s origins states that it was transcribed from an actress who had played the part of Ophelia prior to the burning down of Drury Lane Theatre in 1812, where the manuscripts handed down from original sources had been housed.57

As collaborators since their work on *The New Babylon* in 1929, Kozintsev and Shostakovich had developed a strong affinity over the years. The director’s son, Alexander, remembers,

> In 1970 my father wrote to me: ‘Shostakovich has returned [. . .] Seeing him and working together with him is always a joy: somehow you come to believe that there is such a thing as a very good and quite simple relationship even with a genius’.58

Their special connection was even stronger when it came to Shakespeare, to the point that Kozintsev senior admitted:

> Much of what I understand in Shakespeare took shape under the influence of [Shostakovich’s] music. There is no artist in any sphere of contemporary art with such tragic power, such a wealth of humour and such intense lyricism as Dmitri Dmitrievich. The world of Shostakovich’s imagery truly expresses the scope of Shakespeare’s thoughts and feelings.59

Some of Kozintsev’s ideas for musical cues as explained to Shostakovich in his letters read more like self-analysis and ‘thinking out loud’; these notes provide invaluable insight to the director’s concept and its evolution. In a letter dated 30 December 1963, for example, Kozintsev writes,

> I have been working all the time preparing for you the lengths of musical cues. A few general thoughts have come to my mind. We have as if two separate orchestras, each of different musical style. One as if to say ‘author’s music’ – a contemporary symphony orchestra – and (the other) a kind of stylised ancient orchestra, associated with actual scenes. By the second I mean court music: fanfares for the King, military timpani, music for court ladies, Ophelia’s education, maybe a song [romans]. Also to this group would belong a fair-ground [balaganniy] orchestra of wandering actors: trumpets – introduction to the show, gigue, stirring fear for the bloody melodrama.60

Shostakovich’s final score and the soundtrack do not follow the idea of separate orchestras; both the conception and its non-realisation might have had to do with the
‘historically informed movement’ that was gradually finding its way in the Soviet Union but was still undeveloped. In any case, Kozintsev’s notes indicate his idea of duality and opposing worlds that inform the universe of the film – Wittenberg and Elsinore, as he mentioned in his interview with Ronald Hayman. The musical world he identifies as ‘author’s music’ in his letter to Shostakovich clearly points to the artist’s commentary on Shakespeare’s tragedy, as he goes on to identify the themes that this music depicts: ‘tragic themes of conscience (Hamlet), duty (Ghost), the iron age’.61 Yet he also suggests possible ways in which the two worlds would collide. An example of this is in his ideas regarding the scene of final duel – though not all these ideas made their way to the final list or the soundtrack:

Hamlet goes to the duel. The duel in the play is highly melodramatic; I think it’s not worth making the scene any more condensed. On the contrary I prefer if the music could be at odds with the mood – foretelling the denouement, death – some sort of dance or song [romans], or the same number as Ophelia’s education – a different girl is being prepared for high-society life.

Another musical idea that is absent from the film concerns the scene of Hamlet’s encounter with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. In the film, the scene goes without any music – evidently a later decision made by Kozintsev. While the fact that Shostakovich composed music for this scene, as Dombrovskia shows, provides insight into his work process,62 Kozintsev’s reflection as verbalised in his letter to the composer reveals how – far from the obvious political symbolism that has been foisted upon the film63 – his thoughts ran on a higher, more abstract level:

Hamlet walks through the hall, while speaking to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (‘Denmark is a prison’). In theatre prison is often literally interpreted: décor of jail and (full of) various fears. But here, Shakespeare has a completely different notion: the living space and communal services of Elsinore are excellent; this is a prison for human thoughts and feelings.

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Kozintsev’s rich visual and cinematographic language provides enough material for study even without the verbal component. In fact, there are elements that might have a different and even more effective meaning for Anglophone audiences than for Russians. An example of these, as pointed out by Aleksei Semenenko, is the presence of the ‘Great Dane’ dog as a metaphor of the guard, since the Russian for this breed is ‘nemetskiy dog’ (German dog). But as Semenenko rightly points out, this choice might have been a simple coincidence.64 It is tempting, as has been done in some studies, to insist that Kozintsev made such references consciously. However, Lehmann’s suggestion that Kozintsev’s depiction of the Ghost might have had the Soviet version of Batman in mind comes across as a mere jeu d’esprit, unworthy of her many valuable observations about the film elsewhere in her article.65 Just as with many commentators’ ventures into crudely obvious material symbolism, it all boils down to not equating meaning as perceived with meaning as intended.
This is not to say, though, that studies by historians of Russian culture should always be taken at face value. One of the earliest articles, which reappears as a major secondary source in most later writings on Kozintsev’s film, is Arthur P. Mendel’s ‘Hamlet and Soviet Humanism’, published in 1971. I have referred elsewhere to this article as a possible source of the received wisdom regarding the supposed ban of Hamlet during the Stalin Era.66 In that instance, the problem with Mendel’s argument was that he took a quote from theatre-critic Nikolai Chushkin out of context and hence unwittingly started off the enduring myth of the Stalin ‘ban’ (which, by the way, Testimony had its small part in perpetuating67). In the case of his study of Kozintsev’s screen adaptation of Hamlet, the problem is that Mendel bases his arguments largely on Kozintsev’s Shakespeare Time and Conscience and its original Russian version. The understandable assumption that Kozintsev’s scholarly work of the 1950s and early 1960s was directly reflected in his film adaptation is seriously challenged once we read his later writings and correspondence. Not only did he consider the film adaptation to be a completely different task from a reading or stage performance of the play, but as early as the year of publication of the book and while working on the film, Kozintsev had evidently changed his views about Hamlet. In a 27 January 1963 letter to Soviet theatre scholar Simon Dreyden, in response to the latter’s praise of the book, Kozintsev writes,

Thanks for the kind words. I am flattered. To be honest I already wish I could change what I have written. [...] I’m afraid that with my articles I have entrapped myself (sam svil sebe verevku). When the film is released everyone is going to ask: but there, you wrote this and that, you promised this and that... and so on.68

Furthermore, prior to this, in a 22 December 1961 letter to American filmmaker and film historian Jay Leyda, Kozintsev wrote of his work on the book, announcing the title as ‘Our contemporary William Shakespeare’ and adding that the book had no relationship whatsoever to his future film.69 Even so, notwithstanding the director’s concern regarding expectations, his writings at the very least inform his audience of his work process. As Kenneth Rothwell observes, writing about King Lear onscreen,

A major reason for Kozintsev’s understated, covert rhetoric may well be that much of what he thought about the movie had already been expressed in his diaries before he began filming [...] The book [King Lear: The Space of Tragedy] is the meta-cinematic side of his production because all the theorizing about the film, and about the problems of making a film, went into it before the film itself was made. It made a cinema without prefixes possible.70

Rothwell offers a perceptive account of Kozintsev’s approach to filming Shakespeare, noting that his films are ‘remarkable’ despite being apparently ‘unremarkable’, 71 and that ‘Kozintsev has approached the making of a film as a sculptor who would suggest rather than articulate the innermost character of his subjects’.72

Kozintsev’s reading of Shakespeare evolved throughout his life, partly in parallel with the evolution of Soviet stage and screen conventions. Actor and director Sergei Gerasimov, who in 1923 joined the Factory for Eccentric Actor (FEKS) workshop
founded by Kozintsev and Leonid Trauberg, reports of the project of staging *Hamlet* according to the anti-naturalistic principles of FEKS:

Hamlet was supposed to be FEKS’s decisive retort to the classical productions of Shakespeare’s tragedies [...]. Modernizing the plot, we decided that, for the beginning, Hamlet’s father – who would remain the victim of the insidious plot – would die, not with the help of old-fashioned poison, but through the ear thanks to a telephone handset through which a high voltage electrical current would be channelled. Thus began the reconstruction of Hamlet. This performance would not materialize, although we had already learnt the texts by Kozintsev and Trauberg written in the vein of crime novels or Gaston Leroux.  

Nearly 40 years later, Kozintsev fondly remembered his years of work with Trauberg on agitki (agitational, i.e. ideologically committed, theatre): ‘I was brought up on agitka; the word “agitka” for me sounds good and worthy’. He continued, ‘Nowadays I am often asked why I took on “Hamlet”? Because “Hamlet” is an agitka for the human being and for humanity, against inhumanity [...].’ An example of Kozintsev’s changing interpretation may be detected in his attitude towards the ending of the tragedy. In the mid-1950s, he was convinced that ‘the line of Fortinbras is not related in an active way to the main characters; removing this line does not affect the philosophical conflict of the tragedy’. As we have seen, Kozintsev’s removal of Fortinbras and resurrection of Hamlet at the end of his 1954 theatre production sparked a heated exchange with Pasternak. That aside, it seems Pasternak’s idea about Shakespeare’s ending as expressed in his reply to Kozintsev made an impact on the director’s own vision – at least for the film in which he restored the storyline of Fortinbras, albeit highly abridged. Having dismissed Kozintsev’s ending for his theatre production, Pasternak writes, ‘This [in Shakespeare] is the rumble [gul] of continuing life after the silence of an isolated death’. Although Kozintsev did not respond to this statement in his reply to the poet, it is hard not to detect echoes of this vision in his instructions to Shostakovich regarding the soundtrack for Hamlet’s death:

> It’s possible to finish the musical number on [Hamlet’s death] or continue further. The camera moves to a stone. And stays for long. One stone. After a total silence, as if from nowhere, once again the sound [zvuk] of continuing life arises and intensifies. People are born and die; wars go on; rulers change...

Fortinbras’s army arrives at Elsinore. Maybe again the rumble of timpani just as it was heard at the beginning of Claudius’s reign.

In spite of all of the political interpretations of his film, it was something altogether more universal that informed Kozintsev’s film. In 1963, reflecting on his ongoing work on the film, he wrote in his notes,

> Art is probably a continuous search for truth; one continues with mosquito-like power one’s millennial search. And if one succeeds in doing something however tiny one transmits one’s force to the next person [...]. That is the story of my *Hamlet* production.

Kozintsev repeatedly announced the main underlying idea for his *Hamlet*, at least around the time of the film’s release:
Hamlet is not a tragedy of delaying or Hamletism; it is not tragedy of reflection. Hamlet is the tragedy of conscience [...] And Hamlet’s revenge is not in that he kills such a number of people and in the end kills the King; it is that he awakens the conscience of these people. Shakespeare wrote these roles in a remarkable way; each of them – Gertrude, Claudius – each still have some conscience. [...] And when the theme of the Ghost appears – mainly – in music, it strikes like lightning [molnia]. [...] Even if Hamlet was killed by the poisons and daggers, still happiness would not have returned to Gertrude, still Claudius would not have found peace. Still all this would have been destroyed.79

In the same speech, Kozintsev praised his crew, including his costume designer, Suliko Virsaladze, who applied 16th-century silhouettes to contemporary clothes in order to avoid turning the film into a costume drama.

Before his death, Kozintsev’s views had again evolved in several respects, including the meaning of the end of Hamlet:

And so the finale: Hamlet votes for Fortinbras. Historic harmony . . . Shakespeare’s out-of-joint time is restored with the participation of his heroes and himself. [...] Only one link had to be displaced: first Fortinbras arrives in Denmark. Then ‘The rest is silence’ is spoken [in effect] not by Hamlet but by the poet in response to the proposal of creating a kind of ‘mask’ to comment on Fortinbras’s enthronement. [...] The noise [shum] of life continues but poetry goes silent. [...] It is Hamlet who died, but Shakespeare just stopped speaking.80

These not entirely self-explanatory fragments were written in 1973, shortly before Kozintsev’s death, and they could not be further away from the ending of his 1954 production, which had reaffirmed the timelessness of poetry. Evidently, his intellectual relationship with the play was dynamic and multi-faceted. But this is hardly reflected in the secondary literature. The final pages of Kozintsev’s diaries burst with his many ideas for a never-to-be-realised production of The Tempest. They also reveal an old master who increasingly identified with Prospero and a resigned Shakespeare. ‘What remains – triumphal and grandiose farewell? Even less. It’s inconceivable to think of retirement with an ingratiating concluding speech of jubilation’.81 These are the final words in his notes; the following pages are empty.

With regard to Kozintsev’s general disillusionment at the end of his life and career, his son Alexander, an anthropologist, has offered some perceptive observations – some published, some not.82 Elaborating on his father’s unrealised plans for film adaptations of As You Like it, Measure for Measure, and The Tempest, Alexander points out three main changes in the filmmaker’s attitude. First, they had to be colour films: ‘Here – for the first time in Kozintsev’s work – Shakespearean landscape, and the plants and creatures inhabiting it were to become animate, poetic and full of charm’. The film director’s notes from 1973 on his unrealised As You Like It, which he describes as ‘a sad [pechalnaia] ironic fantastical comedy’,83 for instance, state, ‘there are a lot of natural elements here, from the earth to water and storm; white horses’.84 Second, Alexander Kozintsev observes that Shakespearean amorous motifs and romance acquired independence and were allowed to take centre stage. Third and most importantly, having earlier believed that ‘Shakespeare was able to demonstrate – better than any artist past
and present – the rightfulness of Marxism’, in his late drafts, Kozintsev showed ‘a severe
disappointment in a mass audience; collapse of the ideals of so-called democratic art,
which my father had cherished for his entire past life’. Alexander explains,

Over most of his life, my father was an out-and-out historical materialist. His firm belief
was that the source of all ills is social injustice, whereas the best life strategy is to counter
it. The ‘algebraic’, i.e. universally applicable, formulation of this concept can be found in
his last two black-and-white Shakespearean films as well as in Don Quichote […] The
‘arithmetic’ solutions offered in his and Trauberg’s Maxim Trilogy seemed less and less
convincing to him.

These observations are revealing of the state of mind of a prominent senior member of
the intelligentsia in the pre-glasnost years, but they also provide crucial insight into the
concept of Kozintsev’s earlier Shakespearean adaptations, both realised and unrealised.
In this regard, Alexander quotes his father’s comments on The Tempest: ‘What I need
now is to film a Pushkinian Shakespeare. What I tried to film before was Dostoevskian
Shakespeare’. Alexander continues, ‘At this coil in the Hegelian spiral, from the height
of this life cycle, chaos can be overcome by the negation (or rather sublation – Aufhe-
bung) of history and the affirmation of the eternal power of nature, spirit, and art’.

Until such statements are properly integrated into our understanding of Kozintsev’s
creative engagement with Shakespeare, it seems that our interpretations are destined to
remain skewed and incomplete – a ‘rumble of continuing life’ that obscures more than it
clarifies. Looking anew at the archival sources and at the role ascribed by the filmmaker
to music offers a clear path forward, and it should enable us to jettison interpretations
that substitute crude ideology for Kozintsev’s own humanist/universalist outlook.

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passion for Shakespeare onscreen that made Mariangela Tempera an inspiring precedent
for many researchers in the field, and especially for those in the early stages of their
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Notes
1. Grigori Kozintsev, letter to Boris Runin (19 May 1964), in Valentina Kozintseva and Iakov Butovskii (eds), Grigori Kozintsev: Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh, 5 vols (Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1986), V: p. 484.
2. Grigori Kozintsev, letter to Lubomir Linhart [Czech cinema critic] (20 April 1964), Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), Grigori Kozintsev: Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh, V: p. 478.
3. On Kozintsev’s film and various aspects of it, see for example, Courtney Lehmann, ‘Grigori Kozintsev’, in Mark Thornton Burnett, Courtney Lehmann, Marguerite H. Rippy, and Ramona Wray (eds), Welles, Kurosawa, Kozintsev, Zeffirelli (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 92–140; Natalia Khomenko, ‘The Cult of Shakespeare in Soviet Russia and the Vilified Ophelia’, Borrowers and Lenders: The Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation, 9(2), 2015, pp. 1–11; Aleksei Semenenko, Hamlet the Sign: Russian Translations of Hamlet and Literary Canon Formation (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2007), pp. 129–38. On Shostakovich’s music for the film, see Erik Heine, ‘Madness by Design: Hamlet’s State as Defined through Music’, in Alexander Ivashkin and Andrew Kirkman (eds), Contemplating Shostakovich: Life, Music and Film (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 97–120; and Olga Dombrovskaiia, ‘Hamlet, King Lear and Their Companions: The Other Side of Film Music’, in Ivashkin and Kirkman (eds), Contemplating Shostakovich: Life, Music and Film, pp. 141–66. See also other articles by Dombrovskiaia, including her preface to the Hamlet film soundtrack, ‘Music to the Film Hamlet: Dmitri Shostakovich and Grigori Kozintsev – a Collaborative Effort’, in Shostakovich: New Complete Collection of Works, vol. 140 (Moscow: DSCH, 2016), pp. 247–58. For Kozintsev himself, the Venice Prize was less valuable than the reception of his King Lear at the 1971 World Shakespeare Congress in Vancouver (private communication with Alexander Kozintsev [20 June 2020]).
4. For a recent example of the latter, see Tiffany Ann Conroy Moore, Kozintsev’s Shakespeare Films: Russian Political Protest in ‘Hamlet’ and ‘King Lear’ (London: McFarland, 2012).
5. J. Lawrence Guntnner, ‘Hamlet, Macbeth and King Lear on Film’, in Russell Jackson (ed.), The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 120. See also Alfred Thomas’s chapter, “‘The Heart of My Mystery’: The Hidden Language of Dissent in Shakespeare’s Hamlet and Grigori Kozintsev’s Film Gamlet’, in his Shakespeare, Dissent, and the Cold War (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 58–96. The comparison also features in Zdenˇ ek Stˇ r´ıbrny´, Shakespeare and Eastern Europe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 106–11.
6. Grigori Kozintsev, letter to Shostakovich (7 January 1963), in Valentina Kozintseva and Iakov Butovskii (eds), Perepiska G. M. Kozintseva 1922–1973 (Moscow: Artist–Rezhisser–Teatr, 1998), p. 229.
7. Grigori Kozintsev, *Nash sovremennik Vil’yam Shekspir* [Our Contemporary William Shakespeare], in Kozintseva and Butovskii, *Grigori Kozintsev: Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh*, III: p. 445.

8. Solomon Volkov (ed.), *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich / as related to and edited by Solomon Volkov*, trans. Antonina W. Bouis (New York: Harper & Row, 1979).

9. See Laurel Fay, ‘Shostakovich versus Volkov: Whose *Testimony*?’ and ‘Volkov’s *Testimony* Reconsidered’, in Malcolm H. Brown (ed.), *A Shostakovich Casebook* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), pp. 11–21, 22–66.

10. Of course, by no means all studies of Kozintsev’s Shakespearean output published in the West fall into this trap. Mark Sokolyansky, for instance, provides a concise factually based account of the two films, even if it does not add new findings: ‘Grigori Kozintsev’s *Hamlet* and *King Lear*’, in Russell Jackson (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 199–211.

11. Bernice Kliman, ‘Kozintsev’s *Hamlet*: A Flawed Masterpiece’, *Hamlet Studies*, 2(1), 1979, p. 117.

12. Kliman, ‘*Kozintsev’s Hamlet*: A Flawed Masterpiece’, p. 127.

13. Moore, *Kozintsev’s Shakespeare Films*, p. 74. The allusion to the Cuban missile crisis appears again when the author discusses the storm scene in Kozintsev’s 1971 film of *King Lear*.

14. Moore, *Kozintsev’s Shakespeare Films*, p. 96.

15. Moore, *Kozintsev’s Shakespeare Films*, p. 99.

16. Spencer Golub, ‘The Taganka in the *Hamlet Gulag*’, in Dennis Kennedy (ed.), *Foreign Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 165. Apart from the ‘Claudius = Stalin’ equation, Golub’s account of Radlov’s production is rather generalised. He could usefully have mentioned a more suggestive connection between it and Kozintsev’s, namely, the tapestries that decorate most rooms of the castle with their intriguing depictions. Kozintsev’s tapestries are widely commented on, from Jack Jorgens’s claim that they are one of many aspects of Kozintsev’s film that are indebted to Laurence Olivier’s – see Jack Jorgens, *Shakespeare on Film* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), p. 218 – to Mark Thornton Burnett’s reading of various symbolist allusions in his *Hamlet and World Cinema* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 223, 225, 226.

17. Samuel Crowl, *Screen Adaptations: Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*: The Relationship between Text and Film* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 109.

18. Crowl, *Screen Adaptations: Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, p. 84.

19. Anthony Dawson, *Hamlet* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 188.

20. Not all commentators in the Cold War era made similar conclusions. For instance, Barbara Hodgdon’s perceptive review maintains an objective tone, despite being written in 1975: ‘‘The Mirror up to Nature”: Notes on Kozintsev’s *Hamlet*, *Comparative Drama*, 9, 1975–76, pp. 305–17.

21. Hodgdon, ‘‘The Mirror up to Nature”: Notes on Kozintsev’s *Hamlet*, p. 11.

22. Alexander Etkind, ‘Mourning the Soviet Victims in a Cosmopolitan Way: Hamlet from Kozintsev to Riazanov’, *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema*, 5(3), 2011, p. 394.

23. Neither Shostakovich’s opera nor Leskov’s novella on which the opera is based follow the storyline of Shakespeare’s play. Leskov’s story belongs to a substantial list of Russian novels and literary works that take a Shakespearean character out of its original context and refer to it as an archetype. See Hugh McLean, *Nikolai Leskov: The Man and His Life* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 146. Other examples include Turgenev’s *King Lear of the Steppes* and *Notes of a Hunter* (the latter featuring a Hamletian figure based on Turgenev’s own typology), see Ivan Turgenev, ‘*Rech’ o Shekspire*’, in *Turgenev: Polnoe sobranie*
sochinenii i pisem v dvadtsati vos’mi tomakh: Sochineniia v piatnadtsati tomakh, 15 vols (Moscow: Akademiia Nauka, 1968) XV: p. 50.

24. Moore, Kozintsev’s Shakespeare Films, p. 4.

25. Sokolyansky, ‘Grigori Kozintsev’s Hamlet and King Lear’, pp. 199–200.

26. Editorial footnote to Kozintsev’s letter to Liuba Kozintseva-Erenburg (17 August 1965), in Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), Perepiska G. M. Kozintseva 1922–1973, pp. 276–7.

27. Kennedy (ed.), Foreign Shakespeare, p. 8.

28. Grigori Kozintsev, letter to L. M. Kozintseva-Erenburg (15 February 1963), in Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), Perepiska G. M. Kozintseva 1922–1973, pp. 236–7. Kott’s earlier study is Szkice o Szekspire (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1961).

29. Grigori Kozintsev, Shakespeare; Time and Conscience, trans. Joyce Vining (New York: Hill and Wang, 1966); Grigori Kozintsev, King Lear: The Space of Tragedy: The Diary of a Film Director, trans. Mary Mackintosh (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

30. For a study of Pasternak’s and other Russian translations of Hamlet, see Semenenko, Hamlet the Sign.

31. See Semenenko, Hamlet the Sign, pp. 162–3.

32. Semenenko describes the language in Pasternak’s translation as ‘an eclectic combination of contemporary vocabulary consisting of idioms (most often as substitutions for Shakespeare’s metaphors), colloquialisms, Russicisms (including archaisms), and also technical terminology argotisms’: Semenenko, Hamlet the Sign, p. 95.

33. Reported in Iakov Butovskii, ‘Monologi prozoi’ [Monologues as prose], Kinovedcheskie zapiski, 94–5, 2010, pp. 307–28.

34. Grigori Kozintsev, Nash Sovremennik Vil’iam Shekspir [Our Contemporary William Shakespeare] (Leningrad: Iskusstvo, 1962), p. 409.

35. Butovskii, ‘Monologi prozoi’, p. 308.

36. Kozintseva and Butovskii, Grigori Kozintsev: Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh, V: p. 420.

37. Boris Pasternak, letter to Grigori Kozintsev (4 March 1954), in Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), Perepiska G. M. Kozintseva 1922–1973, p. 122.

38. Grigori Kozintsev, letter to Boris Pasternak (12 March 1954), in Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), Grigori Kozintsev: Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh, V: p. 421.

39. See Grigori Kozintsev, letter to Samuel Marshak (mid-April 1954), in Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), Grigori Kozintsev: Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh, V: p. 423.

40. Grigori Kozintsev, letter to Boris Pasternak (20 April 1954), in Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), Sobranie sochinenii, V: 424–5.

41. Grigori Kozintsev, letter to Boris Pasternak (20 April 1954), in Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), Sobranie sochinenii, V: 425. For exchanges between Pasternak and Freidenberg, see Boris Pasternak, Perepiska s Ol’goi Freidenberg [Correspondence with Olga Freidenberg] (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1981), pp. 310–15.

42. Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), Grigori Kozintsev: Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh, I: p. 240. For a perceptive analysis of the differences of opinion regarding the ending and Fortinbras, see Maria Corrigan, ‘Poetry or Real Estate: Kozintsev on Hamlet’s Defeat and the Arrival of Fortinbras’, Russian Kino-Narrative, 2(7), 2012, pp. 90–7.

43. Grigori Kozintsev, Vremia i sovest’: iz rabochikh tetradei [Time and Conscience: Notes from Working Diaries], (Moscow: Biuro propagandy sovetskogo Kinoiskusstva, 1981), p. 418.

44. Butovskii, ‘Monologi prozoi’, 319, 326–7 fn76. In 1966, Smoktunovsky played the leading role in Eldar Riazanov’s cult comedy Beregis’ avtomobilia [Beware of the car], an episode of which showed him as Hamlet in an amateur theatre; this episode is an obvious parody of Kozintsev’s Hamlet. For other examples of films that obliquely or directly react to Kozintsev’s
Hamlet, see Burnett, ‘Hamlet’ and World Cinema, pp. 219–51. Boris Gaydin had already provided a more comprehensive list of films/cartoons/series with Hamlet-like figures or allusions to the tragedy in his article, ‘Obraz Gamleta na otechestvennom ekrane vkrnei vtoroi poloviny XX, nachala XXI veka’ [The image of Hamlet on the homeland screen of the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century], Znanie. Ponimanie. Umenie, 4, 2013, pp. 170–82. 45. Butovskii, ‘Monologi prozoi’, pp. 315–21; see also the negative remarks by Smoktunovsky about Kozintsev in his 1993 interviews with Anna Gereb, <www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Y1VL9wFnw&True=151s> (accessed 30 October 2020). 46. Grigori Kozintsev, Materiali k postanovke Gamleta, TsGALI, fond 622 op 1, ed. khr. 310, pp. 52–3. 47. Kozintsev, Materiali k postanovke Gamleta, p. 54. 48. Tatiana Egorova, Soviet Film Music: An Historical Survey (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1997), p. 177; Erik Heine, ‘The Film Music of Dmitri Shostakovich in The Gadfly, Hamlet and King Lear’ (PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2005), p. 178. 49. See Shostakovich’s letter dated 11 February 1954 to Kozintsev: ‘I am sending you the instrumentation of four songs. For the fifth and sixth I didn’t do an instrumentation, as you told me that they go without music’, TsGALI, fond 622, op.1, ed. khr. 1000, p. 21. 50. Egorova, Soviet Film Music, pp. 182–3. 51. See Dombrovskajaia, ‘Music to the Film Hamlet’, p. 254. 52. Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), Perepiska G. M. Kozintseva 1922–1973, p. 224. The letter appears in Kozintsev’s correspondence. 53. Dmitri Shostakovich Archive, f. 2, op. 1, del. 166. 54. Personal interview with Slonimsky at his St Petersburg apartment, 28 March 2013. 55. Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), Perepiska G. M. Kozintseva 1922–1973, pp. 230–1. 56. I. M. Meorovich, ‘Pesni Ofelii na slova narodnye i U. Shekspira dlia golosa s arfoi, ispolnen- nye v spektakle Moskovskogo teatra Revolutsii Gamlet’, RGALI, f. 3021, op. 1, ed. khr. 8. 57. Louis Elson, Shakespeare in Music (London: David Nutt, 1901), pp. 234–5, with the melody and bass line provided on p. 236. 58. From New Babylon to King Lear: The Kozintsev-Shostakovich Collaboration, Alexander Kozintsev’s speech for The Woodrow Wilson Centre, Kennan Institute, Washington, DC, March 22, 2018. 59. Grigori Kozintsev’s speech at a joint meeting of the Lenfilm Art Council and First Creative Unit on the acceptance of Hamlet on 30 March 1964, Stenographic report, TsGALI SPB, fond 257, op. 18, d. 924, l. pp. 56–76. 60. These excerpts are translated from Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), Perepiska G. M. Kozint- seva 1922–1973, pp. 247–8. 61. Grigori Kozintsev and Ronald Hayman, ‘Talking about His “Lear” and “Hamlet” Films with Ronald Hayman’, The Transatlantic Review, 46/47, 1973, p. 13. 62. Shostakovich composed a brand new minuet for this scene. This was in contradiction with Kozintsev’s requirement (in his list of musical cues) for a music from a previous scene as a background. Certain instances of Shostakovich’s music being either left out or rendered inaudible because of the other noises of the soundtrack seem to have irritated the composer. See Dombrovskajaia, ‘Music to the Film Hamlet’, p. 252. 63. Alfred Thomas, for instance, whose chapter is another prime example of imposing anti-Stalinist, dissident interpretations on Kozintsev’s Hamlet, points out blatant material refer- ences to prisons throughout the film’s imagery: Shakespeare, Dissent and the Cold War, pp. 73–4.
64. Semenenko, *Hamlet the Sign*, p. 130. The breed has other less current names including Datskii (Danish). In any case, according to the director’s son, Kozintsev insisted that Hamlet and *Hamlet* had little to do with Denmark, and indeed that the most inappropriate place to shoot his film would have been the actual Elsinore Castle (personal correspondence, 24 June 2020).

65. Lehmann, ‘Grigori Kozintsev’, p. 109. I have put the Batman comparison to the director’s son and he has vehemently rejected it (personal correspondence, 30 May 2018).

66. See Michelle Assay, ‘What Did Hamlet (Not) Do to Offend Stalin?’, *Actes des congrès de la Société française Shakespeare*, 35, 2017, <www.shakespeare.revues.org/3840> (accessed 30 October 2020).

67. Volkov (ed.), *Testimony*, pp. 64–5.

68. Grigori Kozintsev, letter to Simon Dreyden (27 January 1963), in Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), *Perepiska G. M. Kozintseva 1922–1973*, p. 233.

69. Grigori Kozintsev, letter to J. Leyda (22 December 1961), in Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), *Grigori Kozintsev: Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh*, V: p. 467.

70. Kenneth Rothwell, ‘Representing King Lear on Screen: From Metatheatre to “Meta-cinema”’, *Shakespeare Survey*, 39, 1987, pp. 75–90, 85.

71. Rothwell, ‘Representing King Lear on Screen’, p. 83.

72. Rothwell, ‘Representing King Lear on Screen’, pp. 84–5.

73. Sergei Gerasimov, *Zhizn’ Fil’my. Spory* (Moscow: Iskusstvo. 1971), pp. 6–7, quoted in Natalia Noussinova ‘Sergei Gerasimov, a student of the Factory of the Eccentric Actor (FEKS)’, *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema*, 13(2), 2009, p. 142.

74. Grigori Kozintsev, ‘Vystuplenie na konferentsii kinematografitov Leningrada’ [presentation at the Conference of Cinematographers in Leningrad], 1963, in Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), *Grigori Kozintsev: Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh*, II: p. 222.

75. TsGALI SPB (Central State Archive for Literature and Arts St Petersburg), fond 622, opis 1, ed. kh. 307, p. 55.

76. For correspondences between Pasternak and Kozintsev (as well as between Pasternak and Olga Freidenberg), see Grigori Kozintsev and Boris Pasternak, ‘Pis’ma o Gamlete’, *Voprosy literatury* (1975/1), pp. 212–23; Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), *Ot balagana do Shekspira: khronika teatral’noi deiatel’nosti G. M. Kozintseva* (St Petersburg: Bulanin, 2002), pp. 397–401, 411–3. See also Evgenii Pasternak and Elena Pasternaka (eds), *Perepiska Borisa Pasternaka* [Correspondence of Boris Pasternak] (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1990), pp. 277–94.

77. Boris Pasternak, letter to Kozintsev (4 March 1954), in Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), *Perepiska*, p. 122.

78. Grigori Kozintsev, note from 18 December 1963, in Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), *Grigori Kozintsev: Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh*, IV: p. 454.

79. Grigori Kozintsev, ‘O liudakh, delavshchikh “Gamlet”’ [About people involved in *Hamlet*], speech to Lenfilm artistic committee during discussion of *Hamlet* (30 March 1964), in Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), *Grigori Kozintsev: Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh*, I: pp. 494–5. He repeated the same speech on 16 April before the premiere of the film at Leningrad Dom Kino (494–5).

80. Grigori Kozintsev, entry in workbook Weimar (7 April 1973), in Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), *Grigori Kozintsev: Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh*, IV: pp. 540–1.

81. Grigori Kozintsev, note (predating 29 April 1973), in Kozintseva and Butovskii (eds), *Grigori Kozintsev: Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh*, V: p. 343.
82. Unless otherwise stated, the following remarks are derived from Alexander Kozintsev, ““Pushkinian Shakespeare” and Cinema: The Last Drafts of Grigori Kozintsev’s Shakespeare Films’ [unpublished seminar paper], World Shakespeare Congress, London and Stratford-upon-Avon, 2016. This was also published in part as ‘O zamyslashkh poslednikh Shekspirovskikh fil’mov Grigorii Kozintseva’ [About plans for the last Shakespeare films of Grigori Kozintsev], Kinovedcheskie zapiski, 27, 1995, pp. 206–8.

83. Kozintsev, TsGALI, fond 622, op.1, ed.khr. 279, p. 19.

84. Kozintsev, TsGALI, fond 622, op.1, ed.khr. 279, p. 2.

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