

THE TRANSFORMATION OF SHAKESPEAREAN PLOTS FOR UZBEK AUDIENCES

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Abstract: This article examines how the narrative structures of Shakespeare's plays undergo transformation when adapted for Uzbek audiences. Cultural interpretation, theatrical conventions, and audience expectations influence decisions related to plot compression, character reinterpretation, and thematic emphasis. By analyzing selected Uzbek performances, the study identifies contextual substitutions, symbolic modification, and dramaturgical restructuring as key adaptation strategies. The results demonstrate that transformations do not diminish Shakespeare's relevance; instead, they reinforce cultural accessibility and theatrical resonance within the Uzbek context.

Keywords: Plot adaptation, dramaturgy, cultural context, Uzbek theatre, reinterpretation

Introduction:

Shakespearean drama continues to influence global theatre due to its philosophical depth, emotional complexity, and universal themes. However, when these plays are staged for audiences outside their original cultural framework, directors and translators often encounter challenges in preserving narrative coherence and relevance. In Uzbekistan, national theatrical traditions prioritize moral clarity, musicality, and expressive dialogue, creating conditions for selective modification of Shakespeare's original plotlines. These changes reflect the evolving cultural expectations of local audiences, who interpret familial loyalty, honor, and social responsibility through regionally embedded values. Therefore, plot transformation becomes an essential component of cultural adaptation rather than a deviation from artistic integrity.

Methodology:

A qualitative comparative methodology was employed to examine adaptations of *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Romeo and Juliet* staged in Uzbekistan between 2015 and 2024. Performance reviews, director interviews, and academic commentaries were analyzed to identify consistent patterns of dramaturgical restructuring. Semiotic observation focused on plot compression, scene omission, and altered character arcs. Hermeneutic analysis was implemented to interpret thematic emphasis and cultural symbolism. Triangulation across textual, performative, and reception-based data ensured interpretive accuracy and reduced researcher bias.

Results:

Analysis revealed several prominent tendencies in Uzbek adaptations:

1. **Plot Compression:** Lengthy philosophical monologues are shortened to maintain pacing, reflecting local preferences for dynamic staging.
2. **Character Simplification:** Ambiguous moral traits are clarified to align with traditional expectations of heroism and virtue.
3. **Symbolic Modification:** Political implications are softened in favor of interpersonal conflict, emphasizing family duty and emotional struggle.
4. **Musical Integration:** Traditional maqom motifs are inserted to reinforce atmosphere and cultural identity.
5. **Emotionally Intensified Endings:** Directors amplify collective grief to evoke stronger cathartic responses.

Discussion:

Plot transformation serves as a cultural negotiation between the original dramatic structure and the values of the receiving audience. Shakespeare's complex philosophical dialogues often rely on Elizabethan intellectual frameworks; thus, Uzbek adaptations condense these speeches. For example, Hamlet's meditative soliloquies are shortened, highlighting emotional indecision rather than abstract metaphysics. This modification allows audiences to engage through psychological empathy rather than academic interpretation. In Othello, racial discourse is frequently reframed as social honor and jealousy, concepts deeply rooted in Central Asian ethics. Costumes and color symbolism are adapted to reflect traditional aesthetics, communicating thematic tension through visual codes familiar to viewers. Romeo and Juliet often integrates local wedding customs, traditional musical instruments, and folk choreography, transforming the plot's representation of love into a culturally recognized form of communal celebration. While the tragic ending remains, the emotional weight is intensified through collective lament—an established performative tradition in Uzbek theatre. These examples illustrate that transformation does not distort narrative integrity. Instead, it anchors universal themes—betrayal, loyalty, ambition—within recognizable cultural frames.

Conclusion:

Plot transformation in Uzbek adaptations of Shakespeare's plays is an intentional and culturally informed process. Through selective modification, directors ensure that foreign narratives evoke emotional resonance and maintain relevance within local theatrical traditions. Adaptation strategies such as plot compression, symbolic substitution, and cultural musical integration enable audiences to interpret complex dramatic structures through familiar artistic codes. Ultimately, these transformations preserve Shakespeare's thematic depth while facilitating cultural accessibility. Future research may examine audience reception patterns and digital performance formats to track evolving adaptation strategies in contemporary Uzbek theatre.

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