

du tableau vivant (avec pantomime allégorique), les réalisations du «chœur parlé» (lequel quitte la scène du club pour sortir au grand air, dans l'ambiance d'un coin de ville ou sur les bords d'une rivière, ou pour éclater en protestant, dans une salle de tribunal).

Le premier livre sur le théâtre prolétaire roumain était un livre depuis longtemps nécessaire. Sa parution doit être consignée comme une remarquable réussite. Il sera, croyons-nous, un début stimulateur des recherches théâtrales en cette direction, d'autant plus qu'il constitue une expérience fertile pour les investigations contemporaines du spectacle politique d'agitation.

Ion Cazaban

AUREL CURTUI, "*Hamlet*" în România («Hamlet» in Romania), Bucharest, Ed. Minerva, 1977, 280 p.

A new doctoral dissertation in literature is a highly gratifying endeavour; yet, it is a pretentious one, too, when the subject tackled is Shakespeare's masterpiece, *Hamlet* and its reception in Romania.

Naturally, the fact that Romanian culture has become, in the course of time, acquainted with Shakespeare's outstanding works and especially with one of his masterpieces, *Hamlet*, at first through French or German renderings and only subsequently through direct contact with the original English text, has been highly beneficial for this culture, enabling it to approach more closely one of the summits "for all seasons" of universal literature. This approach has proved most fertilizing ever since. In his *Preliminaries* the author deals precisely with this aspect, endeavouring to present it most adequately. The first chapter, *The Reception of Shakespeare's Work in Romanian Culture*, contains, first, an overview of the attitude towards Shakespeare, as expressed by the representatives of universal culture since the titan's time; it is followed by a presentation of the first echoes of his works in Romania, due either to their readers (acquainted, in most cases, not with the original text, but with various German and French renderings of it) or to the theatrical performances of several of them. The author acquaints us with the excellent appreciations of Shakespeare's works expressed by such first-rate Romanian writers and cultivated people as G. Barițiu, I. Eliade-Rădulescu, N. Bălcescu, V. Alecsandri, I. Ghica, M. Emi-

nescu, B. P. Hasdeu, N. Filimon, I. L. Caragiale. Al. Odobescu, I. Slavici, T. Maiorescu, C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea, Al. Davila as well as by several prominent 19th-century actors, such as M. Pascaly, M. Millo, Gr. Manolescu. In the 20th century a new stage is marked by the contributions of eminent writers and critics, e.g. N. Iorga, E. Lovinescu, M. Dragomirescu, G. Ibrăileanu, Camil Petrescu, I. Botez, T. Vianu, Al. Philippide. Unfortunately, both in this chapter and in the last one, the author seems to have completely overlooked the great echo and influence Shakespeare's works, in general, and *Hamlet*, in particular, have had on the great poet and thinker Lucian Blaga and on another eminent Romanian poet, Ion Barbu. Instead, the author dwells too much upon the rather sentimental and superficial echoes of Shakespeare's works in Tudor Arghezi's poems, where such echoes are at times even too much "transfigured", e.g. in Arghezi's own *Hamlet*, which is in fact a kind of parody rather than a replica, because instead of the would-be "depth" the author believes in, Tudor Arghezi uses actually a Balkan truculence fully alien to the true Shakespearean spirit. In the same way, Victor Eftimiu's poems inspired by *Hamlet* are quite rhetorical and grandiloquent, being "Shakespearean" only in form. We should mention also another regrettable omission of a prominent poet, who has really known how to render most adequately in his own works the true Shakespearean spirit — we mean the poet Vasile Voiculescu.

The second chapter, headed "*Hamlet*" în Romanian, is a highly judicious and comprehensive survey of the fifteen integral translations and of some separate renderings of scenes and soliloquies from the tragedy. Although the author does not neglect the first Romanian renderings of *Hamlet* (most of them rather poor, following German and French intermediary versions, but having, nevertheless, got the glory of "breaking new ground") due to I. Barac, D. P. Economu, Gr. Manolescu, he lays stress, and with good reason, too, on the translations made from the English original; his own considerations in this respect are often of the utmost interest, and would perhaps deserve a separate treatment, owing to the pertinent remarks on Shakespeare's specific style and language, so rich in peculiarities of their own. The translations analyzed by A. Curtui are due to: A. Stern (very well analyzed, all its qualities and drawbacks being rightly pointed out); V. Anestin and V. Demetrius (both quite deservedly labelled "rather weak"); C. Popescu-Azuga (rather too rashly treated,

as it is not devoid of some real merits either); Şt. O. Iosif (comprising only the famous soliloquy "To Be or Not To Be", an excellent achievement, in both the author's and in our own opinion); D. Protopopescu (is given the place it deserves, according to its real merits, contrary to its appreciation by the late Prof. V. Streinu, who overrated its drawbacks and underestimated its merits); M. Banuş (here we cannot possibly agree with the author's warm appreciations of it, as this translation is more often than not quite prosaic, both in form and essence, lacking completely the genuine Shakespearean spirit, not to mention the too numerous inadvertences in it, acknowledged, although very reluctantly, even by the author himself); Şt. Runcu (not devoid of certain merits, although it is rather "uneven", after all); L. Leviţchi and D. Duţescu (excellent production, perhaps the closest, in spirit, to the real atmosphere pervading Shakespeare's play); Vl. Streinu (generally speaking, a very good translation; however, we think that the author ought to have analyzed it in greater detail, instead of limiting his efforts to a few highly eulogistic sentences, as Streinu's version of *Hamlet* is highly deserving, indeed, and does not need to be overpraised in such a bombastic way, its merits being quite obvious to anybody, except for a few details, e.g. in Hamlet's soliloquy "To Be or Not To Be", the real meaning conveyed by the lines "There's the respect/ That makes calamity of so long life" is, in our opinion, not "That is the reason/ Which makes a calamity of a too long life" but rather "That is the reason/ That makes calamity last for so long time"); I. Vinea (most excellent, too, but at times too severely judged by the author, although we deem it closer to the "poetical truth" of the original than the previous one).

The third chapter, *The Reception of "Hamlet" by the Romanian Critics*, is, in our opinion, the climax of the whole work. After an outline of *Hamlet*'s reception by foreign critics, Aurel Curtui deals with the views on Hamlet as expressed by M. Eminescu, I. L. Caragiale, Al. Davila, State Dragomir, L. Rebreanu, V. Eftimiu, G. Topîrceanu, Camil Petrescu pointing out the real contribution of each of them. The next section of the chapter, devoted to the so-called "systematic Romanian criticism of Shakespeare", discusses the approaches to *Hamlet* by T. Maiorescu, C. Dobrogeanu-Gherea, N. Zaharia, C. Moldoveanu, G. Ibrăileanu, E. Lovinescu, M. Dragomirescu, providing most pertinent characterizations.

However, in the following sections of the chapter, the author gives up almost entirely

his previous historical-chronological approach to the analyzed phenomena, using instead another criterion, viz., the opinions expressed by Romanian critics on the characters and the plot of the play. Of course, both the typology and the dramatic conflict are most important and a presentation of the Romanian critics' views on them is highly necessary; but, on the other hand, this inconsistency of the author's leads to unnecessary repetitions and to a mixture of several different opinions. Except for this, we fully agree with A. Curtui's most pertinent and important assertion that, unlike the modern Western critics, attracted chiefly by some minor aspects in the play or analyzing it according to some preconceived ideas (e.g. the would-be "basic pessimism" of *Hamlet*, the alleged necessity for making chiefly or solely a psycho-analytical study of the play or the ostensible "initial dementia" of Hamlet himself a.s.o.) the Romanian critics, although "more timid" in a way and rather slow in jumping at immediate "conclusions" have, nevertheless, expressed several "fresher" opinions about Shakespeare's masterpiece; that is why the Romanian critics have indeed succeeded in investigating, rather extensively in some instances, the complex character of the Danish prince, seen from several essential angles. In this respect, A. Curtui makes an ample survey and analysis of the opinions expressed by N. Iorga, T. Vianu, I. Botez, R. Teodorescu, A. Voinescu, Al. Dima, D. Nănu, B. Fundoianu, D. Protopopescu, P. Comarnescu, P. Constantinescu, and — why not! — by... A. Curtui himself; his are often most attractive and show A. Curtui as a most gifted, clever and perspicacious exegete of the manifold problems raised by the *Hamlet* "case". However, here, too, we find some regrettable omissions e.g. that of the very gifted and clever analyst H. Acterian.

The last section of the chapter comprises the "contemporary trends" in the Romanian critics' approach to *Hamlet*, represented by T. Vianu, Zoe Dumitrescu-Buşulenga, Al. Philippide, M. Gheorghiu, A. Cartianu, O. Drimba, M. Bogdan, L. Leviţchi, I. Zamfirescu, Al. Duţu, Vl. Streinu, D. Grigorescu and A. Curtui himself; however, here the exegesis due to the author is not so significant as in the previous sections, except for his great erudition in the matter.

The last chapter of the book, *The Literary Echoes of "Hamlet" in Romanian Literature*, has been partly referred to previously. While we fully agree with A. Curtui's judicious presentations of the fruitful influence exerted by Shakespeare's works on Hasdeu, Eminescu,

Caragiale, Delavrancea, we think, however, that the mention of such minor writers as S. Bodnărescu or D. Bolintineanu even is quite superfluous here; besides, Shakespeare's influence on Camil Petrescu ought to have been expounded upon. The general review of the Romanian poems directly inspired by *Hamlet* is, in general, most welcome. The succession of Romanian poets, either illustrious or obscure, who have written poems inspired by Shakespeare's tragedy is indeed impressive. Among these are E. Gruber, D. Zamfirescu, D. Nanu, Mia Frollo, G. Bacovia, M. Codreanu, H. Furtună, D. Anghel and Șt. O. Iosif (under their well-known joint pen name A. Mirea), M. R. Paraschivescu, V. Eftimiu, T. Arghezi, Al. Philipide, and others. Although, as already shown, some other important names might have been added to the list and although some praises are too liberally bestowed on a few writers, we cannot but agree with the author's *Final Conclusions*, that such a work is always liable to improvement, and its almost unavoidable omissions can be corrected any time. Thus we should recommend the author to consider adding a new chapter in which to analyze also the way *Hamlet* has been played and directed on the Romanian stage from the 19th century until this day, as the book provides but few references in this respect, and this gap cannot be filled up by the scanty considerations made in the other chapters.

Owing to the author's great competence and to his most adequate information, as well as to his seriousness, passion and power of analysis, Aurel Curtui's doctoral dissertation, in spite of some shortcomings is, nevertheless, a true reference book among the Romanian exegeses of Shakespeare's works.

Constantin Stihi-Boos

CLIO MĂNESCU, *Mitul antic elen și dramaturgia contemporană* (Le Mythe antique hellène et la dramaturgie contemporaine), Ed. «Uni-vers», Bucarest, 1977, 256 p.

Le recul quotidien des mythes dans l'histoire produit, entre autres, un espace vide, qui, dans une certaine perspective n'est qu'illusoire et occupé de préférence par l'esprit comparatiste à la recherche taxonomique de quelques restes. Leur détection sous forme de similitudes de thème peut même constituer une préoccupation avantageuse, le jeu des surfaces linguistiques des textes culturels s'offrant parfois comme le

succédané d'une continuité d'essence. Il y a néanmoins une transcendance irréductible du contenu réel des époques culturelles révolues qui les rend, en un certain sens, inintelligibles — par exemple dans le sens de cette difficulté qui «consiste dans le fait qu'ils (l'art et l'épopée grecs — *n.n.*) nous procurent, aujourd'hui encore, une délectation artistique...» (Karl Marx, *Contribuții la critica economiei politice*, Bucarest, 1960, p. 256). Notre relation avec cet objet culturel archaïque qu'est le mythe consiste donc à mettre entre parenthèses sa réalité originelle et à la définir dans tous les cas en fonction de son contour extérieur. Un phénomène similaire a lieu dans le livre dont nous nous occupons ici: l'impression d'ensemble qui s'en dégage est celle d'une retraite successive devant les prémisses imposées par son objet. Ceci est néanmoins une trajectoire normale par rapport à la nature de la relation théâtre-mythe qui consiste dans un perpétuel estompement du contenu réel, ou seulement supposé, du mythe.

Pourtant, à la différence d'un livre antérieurement publié, sur un thème presque identique (*Teatru și mit*, par Maria Vodă Căpușan), le livre écrit par Clio Mănescu prend acte du fait que le théâtre — et à plus forte raison le théâtre contemporain — ne saurait se rapporter à la signification du mythe que par le truchement de la tragédie antique grecque. Et c'est justement pour se maintenir dans l'espace de cette constatation fondamentale que l'auteur essaie, dans une grande partie du livre, d'évoquer l'image non médiate du mythe, afin de mettre en évidence — par le jeu de la réflexion de cette image dans le théâtre à l'intérieur du thème — la structure et la nature des significations qui ont résisté au transport entre mythe et théâtre. Cependant, s'étayant seulement sur ces significations transportables, le discours entrepris dans le livre souffre une double limitation: tout d'abord le fait que, à défaut d'un approfondissement du rapport à la réalité du mythe et au mécanisme épistémologique par lequel ses significations émergent vers le théâtre, le mythe apparaît seulement comme une somme des thèmes. Ensuite parce que, à cause de la sélection des significations «mythiques» de la perspective de leur pertinence théâtrale, celles-ci apparaissent relativement séparées de la réalité du mythe et fonctionnent, dans les passages où l'on fait des références à la dramaturgie contemporaine, selon la logique commune d'une analyse de texte, sans mentionner le fait qu'elles échappent à la teneur littérale d'un texte pour avoir, dans l'hypothèse où l'on admet leur relation avec le mythe, une impli-