

SOCIALIST READINGS OF SHAKESPEARE: HARD-LINE VERSUS
ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

This paper sets out to trace the slow emancipation of critical discourse in Shakespeare criticism in Romania from the dominance of Soviet socialist realism in the fifties and sixties. The first section refers to the difficult fifties and the limited ground of independence and negotiation that Romanian academics managed to gain. The second part makes reference to two turning points in the theatre and theatre criticism. Like elsewhere in the socialist bloc, a wedge was gradually driven between Shakespeare studies and Shakespeare performances. The paper, however, intends to suggest that bridges between new approaches in the theatre and in critical readings of Shakespeare were established eventually, yet they didn't occur in the narrowly professional area of academic studies, but rather in that of cultural journalism.

KEYWORDS: Shakespeare socialist realism, performances, studies, Eastern Europe, Romania