

OPHELIA'S MADNESS AND ITS REPRESENTATION IN
TWO ROMANIAN PRODUCTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper will focus on the *Hamlet* productions at the Bulandra Theatre, Bucharest (1985) and the Craiova National Theatre (1996), and will consider them as belonging to the category of “rewritings”. Consequently, in analysing them, we shall be primarily interested in what the two directors, Alexandru Tocilescu and Tompa Gábor, did “with” or “to” this classical text in which, as Kott states, “there are many subjects one can select. But one must know what one selects and why.” Following his piece of advice, this paper will concentrate on Ophelia in general, and on her madness, in particular. That is why our critical discourse will primarily rely on the psychoanalytic and feminist approaches. Moreover, in the “decoding” of these productions, we shall take into account the fact that the transfer to a foreign environment requires not only linguistic translation but also cultural adaptation. Consequently, the analysis of the translated versions will consider the degree to which they keep alive the essential meaning of the original text, what was omitted from or added to it, the impact of these alterations on the overall meaning, whether the spirit of the Shakespearean language, rich in connotations and figures of speech, has been preserved, etc. On the other hand, in describing the manner in which Ophelia’s madness was staged, we shall rely on a close reading of the text and our familiarization with the performance history of the part and shall bring to the fore what was innovative in the two directors’ vision on it. In short, this in-depth examination of such theatrically signifying systems as facial expression, gesture, movement, costume, hairstyle, music, setting, props will only prove once more that Shakespeare constructed this scene as a performance within the play, i.e. as a metatheatrical moment.

KEYWORDS: “rewriting”, cultural adaptation, “the female malady”, theatrical communication, theatrically signifying systems, metatheatricality.