

Alina Bottez^{*}

OTHER AND MOTHER IN SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET AND THE OPERAS IT INSPIRED

Keywords: *adultery; insanity; oblivion; opera; Other; religion; womanhood.*

Abstract: *This paper looks at the kaleidoscope of otherness in Shakespeare's Hamlet as a fruitful source for musical exploitation. Among the numerous forms of alterity, womanhood and motherhood are seen as the great Other. The bard's play is compared with two of the stage musical works it inspired across cultural borders – by Ambroise Thomas in France and Pascal Bentoiu in Romania. It shows how the rigours of the operatic tradition imposed various transformations from spoken to sung language, entailing a dramatic metamorphosis which results in the alteration or downright rewriting of the plot, or the reduction of the number of acts and characters.*

Another central issue is that of translation and adaptation. The cultural and historical context (namely the impositions of grand opéra and of French theatre in France and of the communist regime in Romania) is also regarded as an influencing factor in the creation of the operas.

Thematically, this study analyses the otherness of the Ghost as a blend between pagan and Christian creeds, a cocktail of Catholicism and Protestantism, etc., and a number of other forms of alterity such as violence, oblivion, insanity, usurpation, incest and adultery with references to critics such as Victor Hugo, Jacques Derrida, Stephen Greenblatt, Alan Sinfield, Jean-Paul Roux or G. R. Hibbard.

Music can increase dramatic tension and character outline through tonal structure, rhythm, timbre, vocal virtuosity, etc. The paper analyses the felicitous entwinement between dramatic warp and musical invention.

^{*} University of Bucharest, Romania