

## SHAKESPEARE IN EMINESCU'S VISION

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**Abstract:** Eminescu proved that he was a professional analyst of universal and comparative literature, an authentic interpreter, anticipating the great teacher-scholars of the twentieth century (Tudor Vianu, Eugen Lovinescu, George Călinescu, Zoe Dumitrescu-Buşulenga, Edgar Papu etc.). In his view, Shakespeare is a role model.

**Keywords:** Eminescu, Shakespeare, literature, Romanian's, culture, genious.

Shakespeare and Eminescu are two tutelary genius, whose creative authority has been consolidated by posterity. It is interesting to note, however, Mihai Eminescu, the Romanian national writer's view about the greatest playwright of all time, Englishman William Shakespeare, whose work the author of "Evening Star" has met not only by German translations, but the creation itself into the original English language.

Perpessicius, an exegete and editor of Eminescu poems, noticed, with arguments, the findings of praise but deserved at Shakespeare, placing our poet, especially through the "Letters" and "Evening Star", "The right word", between Shakespeare and Fr. Villon. Because, Perpessicius comments "this outpouring of poetry throughout thrilled that tremble in the writing of Eminescu, the area of a lake caressed by the rays of the world, there is continuous presence of air spirit, an Ariel inspired and inspiring, that animates Eminescu's most beautiful pages, and this spirit is Shakespeare «It seems that the genius of Shakespeare breathed divine brit a new angel on earth lunatic, one new Ophelia» is written in place of «Poor Dionis», and our impression is that this image could become a true flagship, until one is present as «the breathing» Shakespearean genius in poetry and literary prose of Eminescu. A closer look elsewhere shows not only the rich and references to Shakespeare's name, but even the presence of a true Eminescu Shakespearian cult".

Studying closely Eminescu's creation (poetry, prose, drama, journalism), as Eminescu's publisher urges us, who wrote pages of deep understanding for

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Shakespeare, we can say, from the very beginning, that Shakespeare's influence was not decisive in Eminescu's creation and thinking – the Eminescologists discovering stronger foreign influences, but the presence of a cult of the British writer.

Active member of "Junimea" led by Titu Maiorescu, Eminescu has very exciting literary views about the creation and the role of popular literature, putting, for each European national culture, the tutelary genius: Shakespeare for Great Britain, Goethe for Germany, Dante for Italy, Cervantes for Spain, Hugo for France, even in music, Beethoven's musical genius is appreciated praise, this axiological hierarchy remaining valid today.

A question imposes itself: Eminescu read the original works of Shakespeare or by intermediate German and French editions? In other words, our poet knew English? Opinions are divided: George Călinescu believes that Eminescu was not been able to speak English", Al. Dușu that Eminescu did not know or knew very little English. On the opposite pole, Vladimir Streinu wrote that Eminescu was a persistent English' reader, Mark Beza believes that Eminescu was Shakespeare's original reader with influence in "Emperor and Proletarian" (from "King Lear"), "Mortua Est" and "The Brazen Bells of Midnight"... (from "Macbeth", "The Storm", "Hamlet") and Leon D. Levitchi appreciate that "[...] Eminescu speaks English at some level and in a sense that was guided mainly by the original and not by German and French's translations, which seems a plausible opinion".

Shakespeare was known to the public in the Romanian countries since the late eighteenth century, when there has been played some of his dramas, Caesar Balbac, Ion Heliade Rădulescu, Constanța Duma, Grigoriu Moldovan have written about him, his biography, written by Le Tourneur, was translated by Thomas Alexander Bagdat, fragments of his work have appeared in magazines such as "Ilustrațiunea", "Amicul Școalelor", "Tribuna".

The first information about Shakespeare were found by Eminescu in ET Röttscher's treatise "Art of dramatic representation", which he translated to Pascaly Michael's request, the band in which he was prompter. This translation started in 1868 and Shakespeare is considered to have a brilliant artist's nature, "Microcosm's creator".

Consecrating one's obituary, after his death on April 9, 1871, Eminescu notes the paper "Treaty of filosofía art" in which Theodor Henrich Röttscher has endeavoured to establish aesthetic stage art bolder [...] on the rapport of philosophy in works of art, an analysis of Shakespeare's and Goethe's major tragedies.

Also regarding the influence of Shakespeare in Eminescu's creation, opinions are divided. From the exaggerations of D. Murărașu concerning sources in some Eminescu's poems, "izvorăstii" as G. Călinescu called them, giving, however, evidence of scholarship, scientists have demonstrated a genuine scientific interest, comparative research, or simply excluding some parallels transmission of the themes' or ideas' concordances.

In Shakespeare's creations are images, themes or motifs such as:

a) life as a dream (from Hamlet: "dream of a shadow and the shadow of a dream") in "The Poor Dionis", "Memento Mori", "The Brazen Bells of Midnight"... , "Emperor and Proletarian", "The First Letter", "Andrei Mureșanu", "Standing at the window", "Day-and day he added me", "Sleepy Birds", "Sweet Girlfriend, Oh Leave Me", "I do not think either in Jehovah", "Shadow of Istrate Dabija Voevod", "O-wisdom, you have wings of wax!", "Melancholy";

b) the world as a theatre (of "Hamlet", "Merchant of Venice", "The storm", "As You Like") especially in "Gloss". But, as Stephen Avădani justifies, the presence of these motifs and themes in other literature "simultaneously or sequentially, can be explained firstly by the existence of archetypal patterns of thought and feeling – so pure parallels or analogies".

According to G. Călinescu, Misanthrope Timon of Athens is "akin to Eminescu pessimistic" and "Athenian Timon's influence [pharaoh TLA Avatars nn] is evident", as "Mortua Est" "meanings are closer to the Shakespeare's drama (Hamlet), whose hero finds the revenge human values and, consequently, the nonsense of life in a badly-made world".

Other similarities can be made between the couple Bogdana – Sas in "Bogdan- Dragoș" and Lady Macbeth from the play with the same name, between the feminine character of Mira and Ophelia from "Hamlet", evoking "the old King Lear" in "Emperor and Proletarian" etc., but with all these Shakespeare echoes one can said that at Eminescu we can talk not only about taking influences, which would alleviate the damaging problem, but about congeniality" because Eminescu "plainly not only the tragic sense of Shakespeare's creation (although allusions to these meanings are the most common), but also did he decipher the resonances of a Renaissance stage", as with Falstaff's reply translation of Henry IV.

To Shakespeare, Eminescu does not only predict the value of his genius as a national symbol, but also has a cult, as he expressed himself in the poetry "Icon and Sill": "I also feel the charm and I admire in my soul / The way Shakespeare used to admire once with his big eyes".

He dedicated him an odd, in 1876, at his 26 years old, in "Books" poetry, which expresses his feelings of appreciation and love:

*Gentle friend of my soul  
The full font of your chants  
Flashes in my thought and I repeat it again.  
You are so cruel, and so soft,  
Today is storm and gentle is your voice  
As God you show yourself in a thousand of faces  
And learn what a century can't learn you*

In the same admiring tone he continues the characterization in the next three stanzas:

*“For all that I feel, is evil or good / I feel Pretty-all-you-thank you / You have opened my eyes light, / I’ve learned to read the word, / being wrong as you, I love mistake: / to be like you is all my pride”.*

Tudor Vianu concluded, from comparative studies, that in some Eminescu’s poems is “the astonishing reflection of the greatest English poet’s genius into the greatest Romanian poet genius” and Zoe Dumitrescu Buşulenga signals “the catalytic influence of the English genius into the Romanian’s genius”.

Eminescu was planning to write a play about the Romanian ruler Alexandru Lăpuşneanu, taking Shakespeare as a model: “From Alecsandru Lăpuşneanu it could be made a Romanian Macbeth especially if you use the last act of Negruzzi’s novel” notes Eminescu. That Eminescu knew and appreciated Shakespeare’s creation, it is proved by the next scrap on Shakespeare and national art,

“Shakespeare spoke of a man, the man how it is His drunker is a drunkard, his hero, his madman is insane, his sceptic is sceptical and every man is bemired with the collaboration of his character, because The People conceive the way he sees and Shakespeare belonged to his people, par excellence”.

Admirable appreciation for a national writer!

In a letter to Iacob Negruzzi, on 17 June 1870, Eminescu takes up the idea of Epigones: “Our ancestors believed in what they wrote, as Shakespeare believed in his fantasies”.

In prose, “the divine brit” appears in the novel “Poor Dionis”, novel read in the literary club Junimea on 1 September 1872, kept at Titu Maiorescu’s home, featuring Vasile Pogor, Iacob Negruzzi, N. Gane, Miron Pompiliu, A.D. Xenopol.

Shakespeare’s name appears on the scene of Dionysus’ house, in front of which was a beautiful white house at night, and through the window one can hear “sweet notes of a piano and a shattering young child’s voice wafting a lightsome prayer”. Opening his eyes, Dionis saw a “flapper girl dipped in a white robe, quivering with her twiggy fingers, long and sweet, the ivories of an acoustic piano, accompanying a slight sounds of the divine notes of its sweet and soft voice. It seemed that Shakespeare’s divine genius breathed a new angel on earth lunatic a new Ophelia”.

The same text is repeated in Eminescu’s novel “Empty Genius”<sup>1</sup> which was written, according to the correspondence between the poet and Iacob Negruzzi, between 1868-1871: “Then I started writing my novel partially regarding the immediate impressions after 1868, at a time when I was in Bucharest, and partially after an episode I was told by a student at Transylvania”<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Novel printed by Ion Scurtu, as original novel, with a critical introduction and notes, Bucharest, Chart Institute “Minerva”, 1904, XXXV, p. 183. The text in which Shakespeare appears in M. Eminescu, *Works*, VII, p. 183. See also ms. In 2255.

<sup>2</sup> I. E. Torouţiu, Gh. Cardeş, *Literary studies and documents*, I, Bucharest, Institute of Graphic Arts “Bucovina”, 1931, p. 321-322 (*apud* D. Vatamaniuc, notes to Eminescu, *Works*, VII, p. 356).

In the novel, the foreign writers who are further quoted are Al. Dumas, Torquato Tasso, Jókai Mór and in the quoted letter, Eminescu refers to his trip to Blaj, in 1866, which offered him information about the Revolution of 1848<sup>3</sup>.

In journalism, Shakespeare is often quoted as an exemplifying model for justification of relevant statements in various fields.

For instance, advocating for the establishment of a national theatre (an idea "just as beautiful as it is useful"), with an appropriate repertoire, an idea supported by Iosif Vulcan and by the press of that time in Transylvania, Eminescu proposes a repertoire of works that serve the national idealism, that send a message, even if they don't have a special aesthetic value.

He makes use of the "public's patience with regard to the enumeration of a list of our dramatic inheritance" V. Alecsandri (partially), V.A. Urechia, B.P. Hasdeu Samson Bodnărescu, Al. Depărățeanu. Interesting is the fact that he does not recommend the works of D. Bolintineanu (whose poetry is a composition "full of genius and heart [...] gold mirrors of the Romanian past"), because in drama, it "seems to be the case of casting his eyes on the Northern genius: on Shakespeare".

With objectivity, he criticizes the difference in value between the two writers, offering the opportunity to characterize the author of "Hamlet":

"Indeed, when you take his works in your hands, they seem so torn, no links to one another, and it seems that there is nothing easier than writing like him, in fact maybe even surpassing him. But there might not have been another tragic author than Shakespeare who had dominated his work more, who had woven with more awareness all the threads of his work precisely because it only seemed to be torn as a more experienced eye could soon realize the unity full of symbolism and profundity that reigns in all creation of this powerful genius. Goethe – a genius – declared that a playwright who reads yearly more than one of Shakespeare's plays is a playwright ruined forever. Shakespeare should not be read, but studied, in such a way that you can discover what your power does not allow you to imitate, because, in my opinion, Shakespeare's land, on which Mr. Bolintineanu could have successfully stepped, is that of abstraction as in «A Midsummer Night's Dream», «Winter's Tale», «As you like it» etc, and not that of a serious and terrible land, the matter of historical relevance, and most of all the pretension to be above all true"<sup>4</sup>.

"*With a clearer vision*", stepping through the creation of geniuses such as Shakespeare, Goethe and Hugo, Eminescu responds to potential allegations of misunderstanding of these world literature classics: there should be a higher degree of public cultural education, and Romanian playwrights should understand the need to subordinate themselves to «their nation» and "the models in that regard are the Spanish playwrights, Shakespeare, and a Norwegian author, perhaps too hardly known to the Romanians and that is playwright B. Bjornson"<sup>5</sup>.

Because, Eminescu continues his demonstration in the article signed and published by him in "The Family" of Iosif Vulcan<sup>6</sup>, a genuine playwright is one

<sup>3</sup> See also Tudor Nedelcea, *Eminescu, the historian*, Craiova, Fundația "Scrisul Românesc", 1998.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 86.

<sup>6</sup> "Family", VI, no. 3, 18/30 January 1870, pp. 25-28.

who “by meeting the size and beauty, purity and true Christian piety, stands completely out of his exclusive circles consisting of only some social classes in order to reach the great and powerful abstraction of the people”.

Being an authentic dramatic chronicler, Eminescu applies an aesthetic and critical judgment to the dramatizations of the “attic” novels or “boulevard dramas” as a result of reading Aristotle and Röttscher, his model being also Shakespeare:

“We do not believe that a cruel and realistic representation of the bodily weaknesses is the mission of dramatic art. It is true that of all the infirmities only two do not offend the spirit of drama, but only through the silence they inspire: blindness and madness. «Both of these characteristics may be depicted in the tragedies of the oldest writers and in the works of the greatest poet: in Shakespeare’s King Lear or in Hamlet»<sup>7</sup>.

When continuing the axiological considerations of universal drama, he notes that the Spanish have “*from age to age a few isolated geniuses*”, while the tragic Greeks and the French “*have got very far*” and this is “the time of Molière and Shakespeare”<sup>8</sup>.

According to this aesthetic principles Eminescu criticizes the growing number of translations and transpositions on stage of mediocre dramatic writers, recommending classical works to the Romanian translators, apart from emphasizing the value of authentic folk as I. Creangă did,

“the translation of written work without value is the easiest work which dispenses the writer from his own production and from interpreting the meaning of words. A translation of Shakespeare, Molière or Goethe is a merit, because the form and meaning are so intertwined, that the translator must interpret word by word and phrase with phrase”<sup>9</sup>.

Being preoccupied with creating a quality repertoire for a national theatre, with a “capital of roles appropriate for the talent and physique” of the actors, with “a capital of good plays”, especially Shakespeare’s and Molière’s, Eminescu proposes a capitalization on the experience of the Burgtheater in Vienna (where he used to go frequently), “a theatre of the court” just as he wanted to be the theatre in Iași (“a home for national art”), because “art is serene and eternal. The plays of Shakespeare and Molière’s comedies may be put on stage even after thousands of years and they will be heard with the same keen interest because human passions always remain the same”<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Theatrical magazine “*Courier de Iași*”, IX, no. 139, December 22. 1876, p. 3, Works, IX, p. 293.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 294. Eminescu translates the study of Heinrich von Treitschke (1884-1896), Ein Wart Judenthum über Unser, regarding the fate of Jews in Germany and Europe, Shakespeare is mentioned in this paper as opposed to religious tolerance from the sage Lessing Nahan (*Readers of newspapers ...*, in “*Time*”, V, no. 21, January 26. 1880, p. 1, X works, publicist, November 1. 1877-15 February 1880, Bucharest, RSR Academy Publishing, 1989, p. 401.)

<sup>9</sup> New sheet in the “*Courier de Iași*”, X, no. 1, January 5, 1877, p. 3, Works, IX, p. 298.

<sup>10</sup> Theatrical magazine “*Courier de Iași*”, X, no. 31, 20 March 1877, p. 3; Works, IX, p. 350.

But, in order for these dramas to endure time, it is necessary that their translation into Romanian to be closer to the original value. From this point of view, Eminescu brings critical arguments to one of the most active translators of Shakespeare's works (in addition to Scarlat Ion Ghica și Haralamb G. Lecca), Adolf Stern, who translated "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark" (in 1877 and 1905), "Julius Caesar" (1881), "King Lear" (1881):

"Among the many misfortunes that the famous swan of Avon encountered, we can also enumerate the translation into five iambic feet that Adolf Stern, a man of letters from Bucharest, applied to the melancholic Hamlet. Who will translate Mr. Stern's gibberish into Romanian – that's the question?"<sup>11</sup>.

Even the actors who have interpreted Shakespearean characters are not spared from his critical scrutiny. The Italian actor Ernesto Rossi (1827-1896) offers him the opportunity to do that; he was on tour in Iași, in January 1878, with the plays: "Romeo and Juliet", "Othello", "Hamlet", "King Lear", "Richard III", "Macbeth", and, though famous in his country, he could not step up to Shakespeare's level of creation. Spectator at these performances, Eminescu discusses the representative art of universal drama, because a play, "but especially one of Shakespeare, is a work of art, in which all characters are so meaningful that they should be played by great artists" taking into account, however, that

"one may never find a group that actually meets the expectations of so many excellent artists so that the whole work of art can be as fit as a bass-relief in which no figure should stand out of the edges that separate the statue, isolated from the bas-relief"<sup>12</sup>.

From this point of view, he is aware of a discrepancy between Rossi's play and his team, which has – in Eminescu's opinion – to act as an orchestra, while Rossi plays his role as the main instrument. With no other opportunities, the dramatic chronicler of the "Time" becomes more concessive, given the electrifying atmosphere of the public in Iași:

"But as we are thankful for any true art, we give up the idea of seeing Shakespeare performed as a whole, that's what we see with the eyes of our soul, and we declare ourselves overly defeated by the strong play of the great Italian master".

Classical culture has, in his opinion, an important role for any country – especially for Romania – for worldwide recognition and, therefore, classical education must be at the grounds of any school reform. In the official newspaper of liberal civilized polemic "The Romanian", Eminescu criticizes harshly Emil du Bois-Reymond, his former professor of physiology at Berlin, who claimed that "all ancient culture is built on sand"<sup>13</sup>. By denying the role and value of traditional

<sup>11</sup> Shakespeare, in "Courier de Iași", X, no. 45 May 1877, p. 4; Works, IX, p. 373.

<sup>12</sup> Rossi's performances in "Time", III, no. 22, January 28, 1878, p. 3, Works, X, p. 42.

<sup>13</sup> D. Jules Ferry, seems to us ..., in "Time", V, no. 177, August 9, 1880, p. 1-2; Works XI, Journalism. 17 February -31 December 1880, Bucharest, RSR Academy Publishing, 1984, p. 293.

culture – an idea taken up by liberals – du Bois has compromised himself, because, Eminescu maliciously comments,

“if Goethe lived, he would not write Faust, but he would be a parliamentary, and today Homer would be an apprentice pharmacist and Shakespeare would be an editor at The Telegraph. Here is the evidence presented by the government in favour of limiting classical studies”<sup>14</sup>.

In his famous study, “Old Icons and New Icons”, Part III, “The Old and The Young”, Eminescu formulates theories, with compelling arguments, about the primacy of work that must underpin the development of culture and civilization and thus raise the individual’s intellect, the need for productive work, using in this mainly economic and social study, the name of Homer, Kâlidasa, Shakespeare, Raphael, Palestrina, Beethoven, Ștefan cel Mare, Mihai Viteazul, Matei Basarab, Vasile Lupu, Grigore Ureche, Miron Costin etc.

Starting from the concept:

“Just as life consists of movements, so is social truth, the mirror of reality, forever in motion”, because “what is true today, tomorrow is doubtful and not only human fate goes up and down the wheel of this world, but ideas too”<sup>15</sup>, Eminescu finds that only art is constant, and “that is a strange thing, meaning not what benefits the people, but what people need for their personal pleasure”<sup>16</sup>. In this gallery of artistic geniuses Shakespeare is also mentioned with justification: “We are still so pleased with the creations of the greatest poet that has lived on Earth, Shakespeare’s creations, and we enjoy their beauty, and even perhaps more than his contemporaries”<sup>17</sup>.

Starting from the same idea of the primacy of work, which must be based on productive capital, Eminescu notices the “*social decomposition*” in Russia, where “*positive classes*” are deprived, and “*brutal materialism*”, created by Karl Marx, takes the place of old beliefs and of Christian civilization. In art, Eminescu explains that “the elegant style of Renaissance architecture, the greatest Gothic style pales in front of the monotonous style of barracks for rent, Shakespeare and Molière resort to ironies and dramatic works of incest and adultery, Offenbach and cancan drive away Beethoven and Mozart”<sup>18</sup>; it is a sad, decadent era, when “great ideas become dusk, the gods die,” because of a “general economic corruption”<sup>19</sup>.

In other political articles, Eminescu finds the opportunity to make reference to Shakespeare. For example, while speaking about the English government, a supporter of the Ottoman Empire, and about the British liberal opposition which organized protest meetings against the Turkish atrocities in the Balkans, Eminescu quotes from “Henrich IV”, Part I, Act III, scene 7 (a play with a very limited access in the nineteenth century):

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>15</sup> Old and New Icons in the “Time”, II, no. 281, December 14. 1877, p. 2-3, Works, X, p. 22.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> *The other day, Monday morning ...*, in “Time”, V, no. 73, April 5. 1879, p. 1-2; Works, X, p. 214.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.



“All of them promise religiously to the public that they will give the impression of the immortal Sir John, of the admirable Sir John Falstaff, as he was described by Shakespeare: the divine Sir John who has not seen his knees for many years because he is thick and fat and who has gained his enviable size only due to ... his sentimentality”<sup>20</sup>.

Commenting on the new literary direction of the “Press” magazine Eminescu quotes the lyrics, “*For Brutus is a man worthy of esteem / worthy of esteem are all of course*, as Shakespeare the master says”<sup>21</sup>.

Parodying the liberal ambassador Ștefan Belu, nicknamed Pandarus, sent by the Bucharest government to the wedding of the Grand Duke of Luxembourg, Wilhelm III, King of Holland (1849-1890), Eminescu refers again to the great British writer: “in a lesser-known drama of Shakespeare, entitled *Troilus and Cressida*, there is an elderly gentleman who manages to bring peace to the hearts of the two sighing turtledoves in Troy, by welcoming them into his house”, a clear reference to welcoming Jesus in the house of Martei, and he concludes: “the hospitality of a woman was an ancient virtue, while in the case of lord Pandarus it was an ancient vice”<sup>22</sup>.

Similarly, in order to highlight the “division and hatred between citizens of the state, for the fiction and the demagogue gentlemen’s honest cheeks” who deny meritocracy, Eminescu calls for the “immortal Shakespeare”<sup>23</sup> quoting the lines of Ulysses in “*Troilus and Cressida*” (Act 1, scene 3).

Although he was in a constant dispute of ideas with the official newspaper “The Romanian” and with the Liberal government, led by I. C. Brătianu (whose many merits he acknowledges), Eminescu takes a public stand against the attack towards the liberal Prime Minister:

“We do not apologize or ever justify a crime. But we look for an explanation: there is a clear distinction between an excuse and an explanation. If we explained the vicissitudes the soul of Richard III has to go through, if we were to reveal those deep and dark sophistry that a great critic of Shakespeare’s calls the logic of passion, we would not excuse and justify the crimes of the king of England”<sup>24</sup>.

The proclamation of the Kingdom of Romania, in 1881, and the news regarding a “*radical change in the I. C. Brătianu cabinet*” with perpetual passage of politicians from one party to another, offer Eminescu the opportunity to refer, again, to Shakespeare’s creation:

<sup>20</sup> Turkey “diplomacy with going ...”, in “*Courier de Iași*”, IX, no. 97, September 1, 1876, p. 3, Works, IX, p. 356.

<sup>21</sup> *Literary conversation*, in “*Courier de Iași*”, X, no. 36, April 6, 1877, p. 3, Works, IX, p. 356.

<sup>22</sup> *Pandarus, wedding best man*, in “*Time*”, III, no. 285, December 30, 1878, p. 1, Works, X, p. 165.

<sup>23</sup> *We think we talked enough ...*, in “*Time*”, IV, no. 5, January 9 1879, p. 1-2; Works, X, p. 169.

<sup>24</sup> *The truth hurts, nothing hurts like the truth ...*, in “*Time*”, V, no. 278, 13/25 December 1880, p. 1, Works, XI, p. 442.

“But be it one or the other, any agreement that in order to become someone enamu che enasu with Cariagdi, Carada, Giani etc., the soul of a well born man needs to go through almost tragic adventures, like Timon from Athens, a hero of a Shakespearian drama. In fact for a man so friendly, hospitable, generous like Timon in Act I to be turned into a savage misanthrope, a hermit like Timon in Act IV, his soul goes through a lot of adventures that take him from one extreme to another, and turn him from white to black, from a lily to a mandrake”<sup>25</sup>.

Even Mihai Kogălniceanu’s speech, held at the House of Representatives on 1st May 1882, regarding the issue of the Danube is also dealt with references to Shakespeare. The liberal “bad faith” government cannot be trusted so then “what advice can you give a man you cannot trust and who has irrecusably proved that he is not worth it?”<sup>26</sup> the journalist asks himself while continuing his comment:

“But it is understandable that this advice is not appreciated. When I told them the words that Shakespeare sometimes put into the mouth of his characters, Go hang yourself because you have paid your dues to the world!, then the cold feeling of nothingness embraces C. A. Rosetti almost to the point of hysteria and making no sense”<sup>27</sup>.

In the reading notes, transcripts or excerpts, the name of the famous British writer occurs frequently and with admiration. In a note of January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1873 regarding certain aesthetic principles, Eminescu asks himself: “What would be the art of the future in the edges of reason?”, and giving his answer: “The combination of fantasy with reason”<sup>28</sup>, continuing the reading note: “Clear metal without imperfection. Heine. Lyric. Shakespeare in the passing of time [...] the passion, the movements of life are in Shakespeare”<sup>29</sup>.

In an excerpt he writes about “dreams that arise in deep sleep, having dramatic consistency (A nobody, but in a dream – a Shakespeare)”<sup>30</sup>.

Commenting on the relationship between pseudo talent, talent and genius, Eminescu advises young people to embrace only the profession or the occupation they have vocation for: “Rather than being a pseudo talent in literature, it is better to be a talented shoemaker” because the appearance of a genius in any field of human activity is more difficult than “the birth of a new solar system in the unborn valleys of chaos”<sup>31</sup>.

And he exemplifies: “Homer, Shakespeare, Raphael, geniuses in the arts are born once every 3 to 4 thousand years, Newton and Galileo, Kant and Darwin,

<sup>25</sup> D. Bratianu, *confirming the news himself*, mss 2264, Works, XII, journalism. January 1st. - December 31. 1881, Bucharest, R.S.R. Academy Publishing, 1985, p. 463.

<sup>26</sup> *In his speech on 1 May ...*, mss 2264, Works, XIII. Journalism. 1882-1883, 1888-1989. Bucharest, R.S.R. Academy Publishing, 1985, p. 355.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>28</sup> *Beauty-aesthetic*, mss 2257, Works, XV, p. 410.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 410-411.

<sup>30</sup> *Reality and Dream*, Mss 2287; Works, XV, p. 434.

<sup>31</sup> *Pseudotalent, talent and genius*, Mss 2225; Works, XV, p. 142.

geniuses in science, every thousand years”<sup>32</sup>. He wishes to stress the difference between genius and talent: “If we have talent, meaning a few centigrams of brain more than simia communis, we can stand out through constant work in our time; if we do not work, we will resemble our brethren, the beasts”<sup>33</sup>.

When transcribing the book of M. Lazarus and N. Steinthal, *Introductory reflections on the psychology of peoples*, he finds the difference between ancient tragedy, on the one hand, and the German or the English one, on the other hand, the latter being represented by Schiller and Shakespeare: “These tragedies created by poets are even essentially different from the Greek ones”<sup>34</sup>. And in the transcription of Rudolf Gottschall's work, *The novels of Gustav von See*, he notes: “Many studies of Shakespeare have praised those circles of action that mirrored one and the same fundamental idea, circles which seem to have a central spiritual point and only different rays”<sup>35</sup>.

After this incursion into his literary and publishing work, we can say that Eminescu had a real cult for Shakespeare, not just a reverential and complex one, but also a productive and lucrative one, not so much by direct influence, but by enriching the range of ideas and themes of his own creation. Reading only his original work, Eminescu sensed his geniality and appreciated it as such, the presence of Shakespeare in literary works, especially in publishing – to which a wider and diverse readership had access – was beneficial for the whole Romanian literature, from the age of great Romanian classics. The Shakespearean model in Romanian culture, promoted by Eminescu, was an axiological standard to which all literary, directing and performing productions related.

It should also be pointed out a fact noted by G. Călinescu:

“the literary value of these articles lies first of all in the advisable way to translate the great abstractions without many neologisms, in a language available to all. Maiorescu had this gift. But Eminescu exceeds him by far on the formal side. He comes down to the village sayings and proverbs, resorts to conclusions and he certainly makes stunning figures. Never were the general ideas expressed to the reader in our newspaper in such a way to give the illusion that everyone understands”<sup>36</sup>.

Eminescu proved that he was a professional analyst of universal and comparative literature, an authentic interpreter, anticipating the great teacher-scholars of the twentieth century (Tudor Vianu, Eugen Lovinescu, George Călinescu, Zoe Dumitrescu-Buşulenga, Edgar Papu etc.). In his view, Shakespeare is a role model.

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>33</sup> *Idem*.

<sup>34</sup> Mss. 2285; *Works*, XV, p. 640.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 714.

<sup>36</sup> George Călinescu, *Opera lui Mihai Eminescu. V. Analize. Eminescu în timp și spațiu*, Bucharest, Fundația Regală pentru Literatură și Artă, 1936, p. 299.

