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The literature of Shakespeare in eighteenth-century Germany

SHAKESPEARE: 'THE GREAT OCEAN OF TRUE NATURE'

For over half the action of Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (*Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*), the young hero takes an uncommonly idealistic view of the theatre. He sees it as the agency for potential social change. Through it he hopes that 'the generous, noble feelings, worthy of mankind' that can be communicated by the performer to the spectator might grow into 'a fellow-feeling with all that is human'.¹ Hence, through theatre, divisions in society might be bridged. Wilhelm sees theatre as a means of personal cultivation as well. Only on stage, he claims, does he, a merchant's son, have the freedom to polish his manners so as to develop a fine aristocratic bearing and escape from the narrow confines of his upbringing. In the course of his theatrical odyssey, Wilhelm encounters the plays of Shakespeare and at once recognises their superiority to all other drama that he has seen or read. Logically, therefore, one might assume that Shakespeare's plays will be powerfully instrumental in the fulfilment of Wilhelm's theatrical ideals. However they are not. This is partly because, as the novel progresses, Wilhelm's ideals about theatre are revealed as fallible. More critically, however, the plays come to be seen as suited neither to Wilhelm's view of theatre's mission nor to the exigencies of theatrical representation.

This is immediately apparent from the way in which he responds to the plays when he first reads them, during his stay at the Count's castle with a troupe of travelling players. For a start, the man who suggests he should read Shakespeare, the officer Jarno, has, as Wilhelm has observed with distress, little tolerance for theatrical performance. Jarno recommends Shakespeare to Wilhelm as an antidote first to his unconvincing enthusiasm for Racine and the French tragedians, then to his more convincing

¹ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*, *Goethes Werke*, ser. 1, 55 vols. (Weimar, 1887–1918), vol. 21, p. 165. Translations from the German are my own, unless otherwise indicated.

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attachment to the theatre itself. Reading Shakespeare, Jarno argues, may abate Wilhelm's ardour for the theatre, leading him to rechannel his energies towards different and, it is implied, more productive interests. Wilhelm's initial reaction to Shakespeare's plays confirms what Jarno has said. While reading them, he avoids the public life of the theatre, retiring to one of the most removed rooms in the Count's castle, where only the Harper and Mignon, who has an active dislike of theatre, are allowed to visit him. The reading is a deeply private experience. Through it, Wilhelm becomes aware for the first time of the wealth of his perceptions and the abundance of his imagination. Shakespeare works on him like a magician who entirely possesses his mind.

One hears of magicians who by magic formulae draw a huge throng of spiritual forms into their cell. The spells are so powerful that they soon fill up the whole space of the room . . . Every corner is crammed full and every ledge occupied. Embryos expand themselves and giant forms contract themselves into mushrooms.²

But this sense of transformation initially encourages Wilhelm 'to take quicker footsteps forwards into the actual world, to mingle in the flood of destinies that hangs over it'. Only secondarily does it occur to him to use his new experience to enrich the theatre and even then he feels that only fragments of the plays, which he calls 'a few cups from the great ocean of true nature',³ can be effectively realised on stage. Embodying the whole experience of his reading would seem to be beyond the capacity of theatre.

Goethe suggests several reasons why this is so. For a start, while his description of theatrical life is vivid and engaging, it is clear that he regards most actors as innately incapable of recognising, let alone realising on stage, the richness of Shakespeare's world. Either, like Philine, they are given to the pleasures of the moment, or they prize acting as a means of self-display, or, like Melina, they are concerned only with the money they can make. In the course of the novel, the image of the theatre as an aggregation of all human foibles, failings and vices grows until, just before his initiation into the Tower Society, Wilhelm passionately renounces it. The theatre is not, it would appear, the place for serious artistic endeavour.

These obstacles to the successful representation of Shakespeare arise, it might be argued, mainly from the underdeveloped condition of German theatre during the 1770s, the decade in which the novel is set. But Goethe extends his enquiry to a consideration of the aesthetic compatibility of Shakespeare and the theatre. This becomes the most persistent theme of the long discussions between Wilhelm and the actor-manager Serlo. Serlo is represented as a competent and effective theatre artist. His actors have a

² *Goethes Werke*, ser. 1, vol. 21, p. 298.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

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'high, clear understanding of their art',⁴ while his own performances are distinguished by their completeness, vigour, conciseness and variety. Consequently, he becomes the guarantor of the theatre as a serious art form. It is therefore the more notable that he has fundamental doubts as to the viability of staging Shakespeare's plays unless the original text, which in this instance we should understand as the prose translations of Wieland,⁵ has been radically altered. Most of Serlo's and Wilhelm's discussions revolve around *Hamlet*, the production of which Wilhelm makes conditional upon his becoming a professional actor. Serlo eventually succeeds in leading Wilhelm away from his insistence on staging *Hamlet* in its original form, which facilitates production of the play but at the same time means that the stage is not being used to realise objectively the intensely subjective experience of Wilhelm's first reading. The encounter with Shakespeare that so amplified his imaginative life cannot, it would seem, be replicated on stage.

Serlo finds compelling practical reasons for this. He possesses a commercial sense as acute as that of any of his colleagues and avoids staging Shakespeare's plays because their lack of dramaturgical economy places undue stress on 'the number of personnel, on the decorations and theatre machinery, on time, on dialogue, and on the physical strengths of the actor'. Even though these challenges might be met, Serlo does not consider the rewards to be gained from them to be worthwhile, as audiences, represented throughout the novel as superficial in judgement, are accustomed to prizing only beautiful passages. They would fail to appreciate the whole work of art before them. 'The theatre', Serlo concludes acerbically, 'is only something patched up and pieced together.'⁶ He therefore sees no problem in adapting the plays to appeal to their deficient tastes.

Wilhelm comes to accept the need for adaptation, but for different reasons. He acknowledges the limitations posed by Serlo, but argues that the main reason for adapting *Hamlet* is to remedy an aesthetic flaw. This he identifies as an incongruity between the inner and outer actions of the play, between what he defines as

the great inner relationships of the persons and of the events, the powerful effects arising from the characters and actions of the main figures [and] the external relationships of the persons by which they are brought from one

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 22, p. 84.

⁵ Wieland's translations of twenty-two of the plays were published between 1762 and 1766. The first volume of the verse translations of A. W. Schlegel, which became the standard version of Shakespeare in Germany, was not published until 1797. At any point in this study, the term 'original' should be understood as referring to the plays as they appear in the First Folio, translated into German and published in a version that at any given time was generally considered to be complete and unchanged.

⁶ *Goethes Werke*, ser. I, vol. 22, p. 157.

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place to another or are bound together in this way or that through certain coincidental events.⁷

While Wilhelm insists that the former, the 'inner action' of the play, must remain untouched, he is quite happy to tamper with the latter, which he regards as little more than dispensable framework. His resulting adaptation is a fairly plausible version of *Hamlet* in which the various toings-and-froings of the action all take place between Denmark and Norway in a political context that the audience will understand with ease. In the place of the apparent external disunity of Shakespeare's play there is now unity, in place of untidiness there is now tidiness, and of confusion clarity.

By the standards of the eighteenth century, in which stage adaptations of classics were the universal rule, Wilhelm's version of *Hamlet*, given only in plot summary, is quite commendable. In contrast to the only version of *Hamlet* that was performed in Germany until the end of the century – by Friedrich Ludwig Schröder, the original for the character of Serlo⁸ – Goethe's fictional hero has made some intelligent choices. He retains both Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, where Schröder had cut Rosencrantz; he is fully aware of the importance of all the scenes with the Players, while Schröder had cut all but the play scene itself: above all, he has both Laertes and Hamlet die at the end, while Schröder, obedient to the tastes of the late eighteenth century that disliked undeserved deaths, did not.

But even though Wilhelm's adaptation is closer to the original, for two reasons the very act of adaptation violates his initial attachment to Shakespeare. First the piece has been tailored to accord with the model of French neoclassical tragedy,⁹ whereas Wilhelm's initial reading of Shakespeare had been in reaction to that model. Secondly, as Serlo points out, the new version does not require the audience to use their imagination. This he approves of, as he considers that any appeal to the imagination will make the audience's responses uncertain, a circumstance he is altogether unwilling to introduce into his theatre.¹⁰ Though Serlo does not expound on this, no doubt he suspects such an appeal for it might loosen the hold he ideally wishes the stage to have over the spectator. Yet Shakespeare's plays first appealed to Wilhelm by their power to kindle his imagination, giving him both a greater sense of his individuality and a greater understanding of the world around him. His plays awoke in him 'a thousand feelings and abilities ... of which he had previously had no understanding nor presentiment'¹¹ and confirmed 'everything [he had] anticipated about mankind and its destiny'.¹² In the circumscribed world of the new *Hamlet*

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 158–9. ⁸ See chapter 4.

⁹ Jane K. Brown, 'The Theatrical Mission of the *Lehrjahre*', in *Goethe's Narrative Fiction*, ed. William J. Lillyman (Berlin and New York, 1983), p. 75.

¹⁰ *Goethes Werke*, ser. 1, vol. 22, p. 161. ¹¹ *Ibid.*, vol. 21, p. 299. ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 310.

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adaptation, there is order and clarity; both audience and actors can feel at ease with the material as they are sure about what is happening. However, the potency and breadth of Shakespeare's original appeal to Wilhelm has been severely reduced.

But even in adaptation one aspect of Shakespeare's work has an intense, even a disturbing influence over the actor: this is his power of characterisation. In the course of the discussions on *Hamlet*, Wilhelm observes that the play approximates more to the novel than to the drama as Hamlet's lack of an assertive character retards rather than forwards the action. Shakespeare's hero, according to Wilhelm, does not have the substance that harnesses him to 'the fate that hurries humanity without their intervention through outwardly unconnected circumstances to an unforeseen catastrophe'.¹³ In other words, the play lacks dramatic momentum and a sense of inevitability, features definitive of the dramaturgy of neoclassical tragedy.¹⁴ Instead, Shakespeare's action, being comparatively unhurried, allows the audience to contemplate the action at their leisure and to concentrate more completely than they could do in neoclassical tragedy on the characters represented on stage. Whether this is desirable is questionable, for Shakespeare's characters, in contrast to those in the average drama of the time, are complete and lifelike. As they can embody corrupt as well as wholesome traits of personality, they can have a potentially degenerating effect both upon those who act them and, implicitly, on their audience too.

This is most clearly demonstrated through a rather bizarre chain of events. While the production of *Hamlet* is still being discussed, Aurelie, Serlo's sister, questions Wilhelm about Ophelia. Wilhelm quickly realises that she identifies his account of Ophelia's rejection by Hamlet with her own situation after she had been abandoned by her lover Lothario. Later Aurelie questions the propriety of Ophelia's songs during the mad-scenes: 'What do ribaldry and lewd stupidity have to do in the mouth of this noble maiden?' she asks.¹⁵ Wilhelm justifies the songs as the expression of desires that had previously been hidden. At this moment, Serlo grabs a dagger lying on Aurelie's dressing-table, leading to a passionate confrontation between brother and sister. Serlo has associated the talk of Ophelia with Aurelie's suicidal tendencies arising from her abandonment; undoubtedly he feels that such matters should not be discussed, either on stage or off. At issue too is his unease at Aurelie using a dramatic character

¹³ *Ibid.*, vol. 22, p. 178.

¹⁴ A long discussion of the seemingly clear but ultimately deceptive differences between the drama and the novel can be found in chapter 5 of Eric A. Blackall's *Goethe and the Novel* (Ithaca and London, 1976).

¹⁵ *Goethes Werke*, ser. 1, vol. 22, p. 91.

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to express the pain of her betrayal.¹⁶ It is clear that by the manner in which he had Aurelie die Goethe also found the identification of the actor with the character to be destructive. She dies from an illness caused by a further row between her and her brother, after she has frankly acted on stage the pain of another character who has suffered sexual betrayal, Orsina in Lessing's *Emilia Galotti*.

The personal identification of the actor with the role is especially possible in Shakespeare because of his exceptional powers of characterisation. Due to the leisurely course of his action, the character could draw more attention than the action itself. This has its dangers for it threatens to violate the boundary between the artificial world of art and the realm of private emotions. While art, from the humane viewpoint of the Enlightenment, should moderate any aberrant or excessive emotions, Shakespeare's characters would seem to activate, even feed them. Goethe confines his narrative to the influence of Shakespeare on the performer, but by implication the spectator can be affected too. This disturbing, visceral influence therefore contradicts the highest purpose of theatre as advocated by Wilhelm, that as a communal art it should help create a cohesive society by encouraging each class to respect the other and by arousing in the audience that 'fellow-feeling for all that is human'.¹⁷ But through Shakespeare, the theatre seems to have a diametrically opposed function, as his plays are capable of feeding, perhaps even generating isolation and despair. They can also stimulate egotism. Though Wilhelm does not end his life like Hamlet, the irony is that he is in fact greatly prone to identify himself with a dramatic character and therefore to use the theatre to indulge himself rather than to achieve positive social change. His famous interpretation of Hamlet as a flawlessly noble and sensitive young man placed in a situation that is intolerable for him is flatteringly closer to his image of himself than to the more unpalatable original in Shakespeare's play. He only begins to move away from Hamlet and from the theatre as a whole when he comes to see himself as being different from his original perception of Hamlet.¹⁸

The issue of the performability of Shakespeare is never resolved, nor can we expect it to be. *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* is fiction not criticism, so

¹⁶ A detailed description of the identity between Ophelia and Aurelie is provided by Mark Evan Bonds, 'Die Funktion des Hamlet-Motivs in *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*', *Goethe-Jahrbuch*, 96 (1979), 103–4.

¹⁷ *Goethes Werke*, ser. 1, vol. 21, p. 165.

¹⁸ For discussions of the relationship between Wilhelm and Hamlet, see Stefan Blessin, 'Die radikal-liberale Konzeption von *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*', *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 49 (Sonderheft) (1975), esp. 200–4; Blackall, *Goethe and the Novel*, pp. 121–2; David Roberts, 'Wilhelm Meister and Hamlet: The Inner Structure of Book III of *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*', *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, ser. 2, 45 (1975), 64–100; and Clark S. Muenzer, *Figures of Identity: Goethe's Novels and the Enigmatic Self* (University Park and London, 1984), esp. pp. 55–9.

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Wilhelm's dealings with Shakespeare and the theatre are indicative of his personal growth and development, not of a finished critical judgement by Goethe. Nevertheless, Goethe's ambivalent attitudes towards the suitability of Shakespeare in the theatre are pertinent as he held them persistently. They can be found virtually unchanged in the first and generally very different draft of the novel, *Wilhelm Meisters Theatralische Sendung* (*Wilhelm Meister's Theatrical Mission*), which dates from the 1780s but was not published in his lifetime. This draft was written soon after a vigorous and historic debate on Shakespeare and his importance to the German theatre and people had received a tremendous impetus through the writings of *Sturm und Drang*. Goethe had been a leading figure of this group. The theatre had been slow in responding to this debate, but when *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* was published in 1795 and 1796, Shakespeare's plays were coming to be seen more frequently than before on German stages. Few works of literature were more widely read in Germany during the first years of the nineteenth century than *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*,¹⁹ and like all popular and important literature the novel both reflected and influenced public opinion. This suggests that Goethe's curious reticence over Shakespeare cannot be dismissed as mere idiosyncrasy. Indeed it may not implausibly be taken to articulate tastes and concerns over Shakespeare that were widely shared in Germany at that time.

SHAKESPEARE AND THE GERMAN ENLIGHTENMENT

Although severely eviscerated versions of Shakespeare's plays had been seen in Germany since the early seventeenth century, there is no evidence that his name was known there until 1682, when it was mentioned in passing in a handbook on poetry.²⁰ He did not, however, become the object of critical attention until 1741, when a translation of *Julius Caesar* was published, the first of his plays to appear complete in German translation. This occasioned a major dispute between the Leipzig literary historian and theoretician Johann Christoph Gottsched and the young critic and playwright Johann Elias Schlegel. One of Gottsched's ambitions was to create a native German drama of literary worth by having performed in popular theatres German plays modelled on the French neoclassical drama. Hence audiences in these popular theatres would have the opportunity of seeing drama previously seen only by the aristocracy in

¹⁹ See the introduction to *Goethes Wilhelm Meister: Zur Rezeptionsgeschichte der Lehr- und Wanderjahre*, ed. Klaus F. Gille (Königstein, 1979) for a survey of the critical reception and the importance of the novel to German culture.

²⁰ D. G. Morhof, *Unterricht von der Teutschen Sprache* (Kiel, 1682). See Roy Pascal, ed., *Shakespeare in Germany, 1740-1815* (Cambridge, 1937), p. 37, for the single sentence in which he is mentioned.

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the court theatres, at that time the only theatres with any pretensions to high culture in Germany. For Gottsched, therefore, drama was allowable only if it obeyed the three neoclassical unities: if the action followed the laws of probability, if by an elevated tone it encouraged audiences to admire the characters, and if it schooled those audiences to be obedient and virtuous. Tragic action, Gottsched insisted, should be 'capable of arousing pity and fear and stimulating in a moderate way one of the virtues from the emotions of the spectator'.²¹ He could only understand the hold of the stage over the audience in absolutist terms, as the relationship of a superior over a subordinate, of a ruler over a subject, in which no freedom was allowed the latter to think for himself. For such a man, *Julius Caesar* was an abomination. The play did not follow the unities, nor did it possess a consistent, logical action that demonstrated the workings of reason and justified the legitimacy of any governmental authority. Above all, Shakespeare offended neoclassical decorum by placing admirable and heroic figures in circumstances that demeaned their status, 'the most foolish scenes of labourers and rabble' being set next to 'the greatest Roman heroes who speak of the most important affairs of state'.²²

Gottsched's objections were answered by J. E. Schlegel, who, in comparing *Julius Caesar* with a play by Andreas Gryphius, achieved the crucial insight that Shakespeare could not be judged by the same criteria as the French neoclassicists as his priorities were different. Whereas in the French drama character was subordinated to action and moral purpose, in Shakespeare character predominated. His plays were 'more imitations of persons than imitations of a certain action'.²³ The play was given unity by the inner life of the characters and their relationships, not by the formal observation of the neoclassical unities. Schlegel also observed that Shakespeare created characters more from his own imagination than from historical documents. This gave his drama a human reality that was a welcome alternative to the wooden characters of Gryphius and, though he does not state it explicitly, of the contemporary German dramatists of Gottsched's school. Schlegel was not entirely independent of Gottsched's neoclassical tastes. He too deplored the mixture of high and low in *Julius Caesar* and found Shakespeare's language to be 'bombastic'. But his key observation on the importance of character in Shakespeare's plays was to have major repercussions in future dramatic criticism.

²¹ Johann Christoph Gottsched, *Versuch einer critischen Dichtkunst, Ausgewählte Werke*, 11 vols. (Berlin and New York, 1973), vol. 6, pt. 2, p. 318.

²² Gottsched, 'Anmerkungen über das 592 Stück des Zuschauers' (1742), in *Shakespeare-Rezeption. Die Diskussion um Shakespeare in Deutschland*, ed. Hansjürgen Blinn (Berlin, 1982), vol. 1, p. 62.

²³ Johann Elias Schlegel, 'Vergleichung Shakespears und Andreas Gryphs', *Ausgewählte Werke* (Weimar, 1963), p. 462.

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Gottsched's influence over German literature declined as the Franco-phone culture of the courts lost its appeal for German writers, even though this culture continued as a powerful influence in Germany until well into the nineteenth century. Its pre-eminence was challenged by a rising middle class that used models from English and national German literature to give its own literature identity. Shakespeare was a pivotal figure in this change. An early stimulus to the rise of this culture was the publication in German translation between 1739 and 1743 of the complete run of Addison's *Spectator*, which included discussions of Shakespeare's genius and essays arguing that knowledge of the world was more important for a writer than skill at following the rules of neoclassical drama. Individual writers such as the Swiss Johann Bodmer cited English writers, including 'Saspar' (Shakespeare), to show that the imagination had a vital function in literary production.²⁴ The physician Albrecht von Haller conducted an extensive commentary on Shakespeare whom he regarded as 'a great and powerful exceptional figure in the history of poetry',²⁵ with deep knowledge of the human condition. He established an opposition between Shakespeare and Voltaire, favouring 'the natural audacity and greatness of the old Englishman against the polite and academic manners and oratory of Voltaire'. But only in the 1750s did Shakespeare become a subject for vigorous discussion, first in periodicals,²⁶ and then in the writings of those involved in the evolution of a German culture independent of the French-oriented courts.

Most prominent of these were the Berlin essayists, Lessing, Nicolai and Moses Mendelssohn, who edited a number of literary periodicals that did much to develop critical insights into contemporary literature.²⁷ One of the most famous of their articles, written by Lessing in 1759, rejected Gottsched's theatre by arguing that 'the great, the terrible, [and] the melancholic', all characteristics of the English drama, were more to German taste than 'the pretty, the tender, [and] the amorous', which were considered typical of the French.²⁸ In a later article, Lessing commented on how Shakespeare's characters speak nobly as neoclassical heroes do, while using the commonest of words as neoclassical heroes do not.²⁹ In

²⁴ Johann Jakob Bodmer, Preface to *Von dem Wunderbaren in der Poesie*, extracted in Pascal, *Shakespeare in Germany*, p. 37.

²⁵ Karl S. Guthke, 'Haller's Shakespeare-Bild', *Seminar*, 6, 2 (1970), 103.

²⁶ Several of the ideas of the major essayists of the later 1750s and 1760s were anticipated in lesser known, earlier periodicals. See Blinn, *Diskussion*, pp. 15–21.

²⁷ For a summary of the Shakespearean criticism of these three writers, see Eva J. Engel, 'Lessing, Christoph Friedrich Nicolai and Moses Mendelssohn: Advocates of Shakespeare', in *Lessing and the Enlightenment*, ed. Alexej Ugrinsky (Westport, Conn., 1986), pp. 25–34.

²⁸ Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, 'Literaturbriefe I. 17. Brief', in *Werke*, 8 vols. (Munich, 1973), vol. 5, p. 71.

²⁹ Lessing, *Werke*, vol. 5, p. 184.

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SHAKESPEARE ON THE GERMAN STAGE

Shakespeare, noble heroes do not appear as in neoclassical tragedy, in trappings that give them an aura of grandeur and invincibility.

These comments added a political dimension to the theme of character, which had originated in Schlegel's essay and had, to that point, been the over-riding concern in discussions of Shakespeare. Nicolai, for example, deplored the bad taste of the popular drama and the dryness of Gottsched's remedy for it, arguing that to solve both problems the German writer should study character in the real world and take Shakespeare as his model.³⁰ Shakespeare dealt with the reality of human experience in contrast to the idealised world of French drama. His insights into human nature were considered to be so penetrating that he gave to theatre an eminence that raised it above other humanistic disciplines. 'A Shakespeare', Mendelssohn wrote, 'has realised the causes, consequences and effects of jealousy in a splendid play [*Othello?*] better, more accurately and more completely than such material has been treated in all schools of worldly wisdom.'³¹ Mendelssohn also praised Shakespeare's ability to exercise the imagination of his audience so they do not notice inconsistencies in plot and whether the unities are being followed or not.³²

This line of critical thinking, characteristic of the German Enlightenment, came to fruition with the publication in 1769 of the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* (*Hamburg Dramaturgy*), essays written by Lessing as a commentary on plays staged during the short-lived Hamburg national theatre project. As there were no plays by Shakespeare in the repertoire, he had no opportunity to write direct critical expositions on him, but he often used him as a foil, demonstrating how his play-world is more authentic and complete than that of neoclassical drama. He compares Voltaire's use of the ghost in *Semiramis* to the ghost in *Hamlet*, observing how Shakespeare carefully recreates all the conditions in which we normally expect ghosts to appear, so that while our reason tells us ghosts do not exist, its appearance strikes us as being quite natural. Voltaire, however, who wishes to avoid such popular associations, has his ghost appear among several people in broad daylight, which renders it laughable. A more arresting critical insight is Lessing's realisation that we are made afraid not so much by the circumstances as by Hamlet's reaction to the ghost. 'The ghost works on us', he wrote, 'more through [Hamlet] than by itself. The impression it makes on him passes on to us and the effect is too evident and strong for us

³⁰ Friedrich Nicolai, 'Briefe über den itzigen Zustand der schönen Wissenschaften in Deutschland', in Blinn, *Diskussion*, pp. 63–7.

³¹ Moses Mendelssohn, from his review of Lowth's *De sacra poesi Hebraeorum; praelectiones academicae Oxonii habitae* (1757) in *Auseinandersetzung mit Shakespeare*, ed. Wolfgang Stellmacher (Berlin, 1976), p. 58.

³² Moses Mendelssohn, 'Briefe, die neueste Litteratur betreffend', in Stellmacher, *Auseinandersetzung*, p. 59.