

CHAPTER 9



Hamlet's Greek Metamorphoses: The Case of Four Different Greek Versions of Shakespeare's Hero in Translation

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Introduction

In his *Metamorphoses*, Ovid (43 BCE–17/18 CE) recounts a series of myths from Graeco-Roman mythology loosely linked together through the theme of transformation, either literal or figurative. His underlying postulate is the perpetual change and instability of everything human.

In more modern terms, André Lefevere was interested in transformations of classic texts through what he called 'rewritings' — in other words, through the various forms of representation through which we reapproach them instead of reading them in their original form, such as translations, encyclopedic entries, critical essays, and films, to name but a few. These rewritings 'create images of a writer, a work, a period, a genre, sometimes even a whole literature' (1992: 5). It goes without saying that they are not transparent transpositions of their originals; quite contrarily, there is always some degree of manipulation as they are 'produced in the service, or under the constraints, of certain ideological and/or poetological currents' (1992: 5). Translation 'is potentially the most influential [type of rewriting]', says Lefevere, 'because it is able to project the image of an author and/or a (series of) work(s) in another culture, lifting that author and/or those works beyond the boundaries of their culture of origin' (1992: 9).

Walter Benjamin, on the other hand, believed that it was not due to translations that the great works of literature survive, but it is rather the other way around. Translations owe their existence to these great works; they constitute the original text's afterlife.

Just as critical epistemology shows that there can be no objective knowledge, or even the claim to such knowledge, if the latter consists in reflections of the real, then here it can be shown that no translation would be possible if, in accord with its ultimate essence, it were to strive for similarity to the original. For in its continuing life, which could not be so called if it were not the transformation and renewal of a living thing, the original is changed. (Benjamin 2012: 77)

In a similar vein, Octavio Paz claimed that ‘without exception [...] translation implies a transformation of the original’ and that

Each text is unique, yet at the same time it is the translation of another text. No text can be completely original because language itself, in its very essence, is already a translation [...] However, the inverse of this reasoning is also entirely valid. All texts are originals because each translation has its own distinctive character. Up to a point, each translation is a creation and thus constitutes a unique text. (Paz 1992: 154)

Hamlet as a play is protean in its very nature, which is why it has become the object of endless speculation and analysis. Translators, like scholars and readers for that matter, have their own interpretation of the tragedy, which is inevitably reflected in their translation choices in the target text. Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* is itself a rewriting in Lefevre’s sense and Prince Hamlet is a metamorphosis of earlier heroes. The playwright’s tragedy is a rewriting of the thirteenth-century story of Amleth found in Saxo Grammaticus’ *Gesta Danorum* and handed down by François de Belleforest in the sixteenth century, as well as of the Ur-Hamlet of 1589. Since its first rendering into Greek by Ioannis Pervalogou in 1858, there have been no less than twenty-one translations and adaptations of *Hamlet* into Greek (see Giannakopoulou 2011), all of which differ somewhat from each other.

In her book on six French translations of *Hamlet*, Romy Heylen (1993: 24) perceives translation as a decision-making process and attributes differences in translation decisions not to mistakes, but to ‘different socio-historical and cultural constraints’ (1993: 5). ‘Literary translation can, in fact, be seen as a creatively controlled process of acculturation, in that translators can take an original text and adapt it to a certain dominant poetics or ideology in the receiving culture’ (1993: 21). Of course, apart from the dominant poetics of the time, the translator’s personal stance is also critical. Translators writing in the same socio-cultural conditions may opt for different translation choices. In his Greek versions, Hamlet lives a series of afterlives, all of which are distinct from each other and from the original as they take shape from the translators’ own socio-historic background, the norms for literary production of the time, but also their own poetics and ideology, and consequently their own reading of the tragedy.

The various readings of the tragedy also encompass the interpretation of Hamlet’s character as reflected in the hero’s action, speech, and thoughts. Since these are conveyed through discourse, each time he is retranslated, a different hero comes to life. Discussing the notion of metonymy, Tymoczko quotes Lakoff and Johnson who say that ‘there are many parts that can stand for the whole...which part we pick out determines which aspect of the whole we are focusing on’ (1980, cited in Tymoczko 1999: 58 n. 3). She also says that:

[m]etonymy in literary rewritings and retellings is also an important aspect in cultural continuity and change. It permits the adaptation of traditional content and form to new circumstances, allowing change while still maintaining a predominant sense of the preservation of larger elements of tradition. (Tymoczko 1999: 46)

In that sense, each translator of this case study opted for privileging different aspects of the hero's multifaceted character, a motion which resulted in presenting in their renderings a completely different Hamlet to the receiving culture. In what follows, we will meet four Hamlets, which have been specifically singled out because they are rewritings of Shakespeare's own rewriting of the story and at the same time they are originals because they constitute unique texts with their own characterization of Prince Hamlet in Paz's sense.

Hamlet, the Well-Bred Courty Prince: Angelos Vlahos's 1904 Neoclassical Rendering

The first Hamlet of our case study appeared at the turn of the twentieth century, a very tumultuous period in Greek history. There had already been four translations of *Hamlet* in the nineteenth century (from 1858 onwards), Dimitrios Vikelas's 1882 version being the most well received, but Angelos Vlahos wished to try his hand at a new translation in order to promote his own agenda. This was a time when the Greek national identity was still being shaped and there were severe ideological conflicts between the proponents of a more European-inspired modernization and those with Hellenocentric positions that sought inspiration directly from classical antiquity. This ideological debate took the form of a series of binary oppositions, such as old vs. new, tradition vs. modernity, glorification of the classical past vs. historical continuity. The focal point in which these oppositions became more acute, though, was what came to be known as the 'language question'.

Greece experienced diglossia from the nineteenth century until most of the twentieth. The language question turned into a critical ideological point of controversy on the basis of which the whole nation was divided. On the one hand were the purists, the followers of *katharevousa* (a conservative standardized variety of Modern Greek modelled partly on the classical language), who wished to redirect the language to its ancient Greek roots, cleansing it from any influences it had undergone during the Byzantine and Ottoman periods; on the other hand, the demoticists who strove to formulate a vernacular based on the demotic literary tradition during the aforementioned period. Not more than a year prior to Vlahos' 1904 translation of *Hamlet*, the gravity of the language question within the Greek ideological debates had peaked with bloody clashes in the streets of Athens, triggered by the language question, clashes which came to be known as 'Evangelika' (1901) and 'Oresteika' (1903).

In this context, Shakespeare was employed to help shape the Greek national identity in relation to the other European states. Yanni interestingly notes that unlike other European nations, the Greeks did not lack a past, but a present, and that 'the presence of Shakespeare added a degree of European cultural approval to the individual projects of national reconstruction and helped to forge political and ideological ties with Europe' (2004: 3). Shakespeare became a source of inspiration in both a theatre and a literature that were still under formation. Furthermore, his role was instrumental in enriching the language, which is why he was claimed by demoticists and purists alike, both of whom strove to prove the merits of the respective language variety for rendering higher literature.

Angelos Vlahos (1838–1920) was a prominent nineteenth-century political and literary figure. He occupied a series of influential positions including Greek Ambassador in Berlin, Minister of Education, and first Director of the Royal Theatre, but most importantly chair of a series of literary competitions through which he influenced the norms for literature and the theatre during the better part of the second half of the nineteenth century. Vlahos was an ardent royalist, purist (in other words, a proponent of *katharevousa*), and neoclassicist. He was also quite successful both as a playwright and a translator. He rendered five of Shakespeare's tragedies, namely *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, and *Macbeth*, which were included in his 1904 volume *Σακεσπείρου Ἀριστουργήματα Sakespirou aristourgimata* [Shakespeare's Masterpieces] (Shakespeare 1904).

Vlahos's choice to translate Shakespeare was driven by his lifelong struggle to help shape national identity and particularly a national dramaturgy. He considered Shakespeare to be the successor of Homer and his selection of source texts was also underwritten by his neoclassicist views on art and its role in promoting 'idealized types' since he saw the translation of texts such as *Hamlet* as instrumental for the moral formation of his contemporaries. At the same time, through his elevated courtly renderings, Vlahos wished to restore *Hamlet's* 'true' spirit from the established 1882 version of Vikelas and reinstate Shakespearean drama as a model for high art, reclaiming him for the elite from the popularized versions through which the Greeks had come to know him during the nineteenth century.¹

Shakespeare, though, and particularly *Hamlet*, presented Vlahos with some unsurmountable problems, since the play could not easily be accommodated within his neoclassical aesthetics. This discrepancy was most openly expressed in his Prologue to the collection of Shakespeare's five tragedies, where he confesses the following:

Shakespeare excels all the dramatic poets of the modern times and remains the uncontested and unattained paradigm of perfection to date, as concerns characterization. Nevertheless, the same cannot be claimed for the technical experience of the English dramatist, especially if this experience is measured in accordance with the Aristotelian notions because one cannot always find unity of either time or place in his plays and the much more important unity of action is often loose and fragmented; the local colour and the temporal truth of his dramatic scenes are often incorrect and inaccurate; the choice of dramatic means unpolished and tasteless; the propriety of the utterances and the situations more often than not unacceptably neglected; and his style is often complex and imperceptible, unnatural and rhetorically ostentatious.² (Vlahos 1904: 17; my translation)

So Vlahos is shocked by the flouting of the Aristotelian principles; the lack of the three unities (time, place, and action); the flouting of the norm of stylistic decorum with the use of obscenities, and the neoclassical principle of good taste (*bienséance*) with the inclusion of inappropriate behaviour, finding Shakespeare's style altogether too elaborate. Even though he did not mention it overtly, Shakespeare's mixing of genres and his use of bawdy language was probably what he had in mind when he spoke of the poet's 'choice of dramatic means' as being 'unpolished and tasteless'.

Finally, he was critical of Shakespeare's 'unchecked imagination' and 'uncontrollable technical liberty', as neoclassicists had an aversion to any romantic excess of feeling and imagination and were suspicious of any kind of innovation that defied the neoclassical order.³ As it is, Shakespeare flouted all three of the cornerstones of neoclassical principles — namely, decorum, order, and verisimilitude.

Nevertheless, what with the worship of classical texts and the norms pertaining to translation at the time, Vlahos would not dream of tampering with a giant such as Shakespeare, so he kept the format of his rendering very close to the surface structure of his source text. What mostly gave his target text a retrogressive, conservative feeling was his choice of *katharevousa*, especially at a time when the norm for both literature (especially poetry) and the theatre seemed to be irrevocably tilting towards the demotic. Shakespeare had already been translated in the demotic by translators such as Alexandros Pallis (1851–1935), Nikolaos Poriotis (1870–1945) and K. Kartheos (1878–1955). But Vlahos, who at sixty-six years old had a lifetime of militant purism behind him, was unwilling to adapt to the new poetics and therefore rendered Shakespeare retrogressively in an elevated *katharevousa* driven by a poetics that was obstinately stuck in the nineteenth century.

Vlahos's choice of language variety constituted a serious declaration of his ideological standpoint, as well as the readership/audience he aimed at and the kind of Hamlet he wished to present. He attempted to reclaim *Hamlet* on behalf of the aristocracy from the popularized versions through which Greek audiences had received him in the nineteenth century, as well as the translations of Polyklas (1889) in the demotic and Vikelas (1882) in a mild *katharevousa*. The type of language is also critical in the characterization of Hamlet, since a courtly atmosphere is created and the prince speaks in an elevated language fit for royalty.

Vlahos's Hamlet speaks in alexandrines, which also convey dignity and an elevated, courtly atmosphere, even though the particular verse form was completely alien to the Greek canon. Versed in the courtly etiquette from his experience both in Greece and in Europe, Vlahos has Hamlet reproduce the royal plural, which is also a convention that is absent from the Greek canon.

Vlahos's neoclassical principles made him uneasy with Shakespeare's figurative language, be it ambiguity, double articulation, symbolism, metaphor, or imagery, and what Heylen (1993: 110) calls 'the poetic substance' of the original. He is also uneasy about indecorous language and 'indecent' behaviour. Thus, in most cases Vlahos tones down or even eliminates Shakespeare's 'improprieties' whenever he can. As a whole the play acquired a moralizing character and projected Hamlet as a model figure of the kind Vlahos saw as the most crucial contribution of great tragedy.

So this Hamlet is a rather old-fashioned, conservative prince. He spoke in *katharevousa* and alexandrines, which immediately set him out as a highbrow youth who irrevocably pertains to the upper classes of society. He is versed in the courtly etiquette and loyal to his class and duty. He is cultivated, well-mannered, and completely in accordance with the neoclassical principle of good taste (*bienséance*) and the aesthetics of the ascending bourgeois class. His manners are dignified and

noble, and he expresses himself in accordance with the neoclassical rules of propriety and decorum, avoiding bawdy language and sexual innuendos. The young prince is heroic, though not impetuous, and abides by hierarchy and order. He is respectful of his parents and is moved by noble motives in his delayed action. He hesitates to avenge his father's murder due to his honouring of the familial hierarchy and filial respect, and his end is noble as befits his royal status.

Hamlet, the Noble Youth from Corfu: Konstantinos Theotokis' 1916 Localized Rendering

Although a mere dozen years had passed since Vlahos's translation, another, very different *Hamlet* appeared in the Ionian island of Corfu in 1916.

A series of earthshattering historical events had taken place in the meantime, the most important of which were the Balkan Wars (1912–13) with their grave ideological, political, and social repercussions on Greek society.⁴ The outcome of the war led to shifts in the borderlines and an abrupt growth in population, accelerating the capitalist formation of the country. The growth of the working class and the newly-imported ideas of Marx sensitized Greek society towards social inequality under capitalism. Thus, alongside the ever-present 'language question' arose the 'social question'.

Konstantinos Theotokis (1872–1923) came from a prominent aristocratic family of Corfu and was in fact a count; but unlike Vlahos, under the influence of Marxian thought, Theotokis renounced his heritage in 1897 and became a socialist. In tune with his ideology as well as the strong demoticist tradition of the Ionian Islands, he was also an ardent demoticist. As a writer, he wrote a local version of ethnography (*roman de mœurs* in French), a new kind of naturalist urban prose which brought the short story from the countryside to the city, echoing the changes in class structure that the country was undergoing.

In his translations, Theotokis wished on the one hand to prove that the demotic was a language variety rich enough in which to render higher literary works such as Shakespeare's tragedies, and on the other to offer the greatest works of literature to his fellow countrymen in the vernacular. What made his case interesting, though, was that he did not opt for the standard demotic but the regional vernacular of his home island of Corfu.

Shakespeare and, of course, *Hamlet* were natural choices for his pursuits, but his use of dialect made his *Hamlet* highly idiosyncratic. In this version, Hamlet is presented as if he were the young heir to a Corfu noble family of landowners, much like Theotokis himself, rather than a Danish prince.

In accordance with Theotokis' quest to enrich the language, this *Hamlet* is extremely prolific in neologisms. Throughout the play, he coins words in accordance with the rules of the demotic. Apart from the various Corfu dialectal forms, he also uses Cretan dialectal words and even a few Turkish ones, but interestingly enough no Italian influences are used, since this was the language of the colonizers in Corfu. He also goes a long way to avoid any morphosyntactic forms of the *katharevousa*, introducing forms in the demotic where he felt necessary.

Unlike Shakespeare, who uses iambic pentameter for the lines spoken by royalty and prose for the baser characters, Theotokis' dialectal language is sustained throughout, making the stylistic difference imperceptible by the target audience.

This *Hamlet* is also rendered in verse; the protagonist speaks in the iambic eleven-syllable verse, which is closer to Shakespeare's iambic pentameter than any other Greek-language *Hamlet* to date.

Apart from the fact he speaks in dialect, this Hamlet is naturalized as a native of Corfu through the relocation of all cultural elements such as the cultural allusions, the flora and fauna he sees outside his window, and the local words describing professions, as well as the references to place. In particular, through the addition of text describing the setting of the scene, his Elsinore is a very different one from that of Shakespeare; Theotokis's addition of settings constitutes a domesticating device that positions the action of the drama against the backdrop of a Corfu mansion.

Theotokis is also domesticating in his rendering of Hamlet's metaphors. Like his English-speaking counterpart, Theotokis's Hamlet has a keen eye concerning life around him, especially his surrounding countryside and the people that inhabit it, so he is equally observant and colourful in formulating metaphors from the natural realm as well as various household metaphors.

As the naturalist writer he was, Theotokis always aimed at exposing the lower instincts of the people around him, both in urban and rural surroundings, unrestricted by prudery, so this Hamlet does not try to sound decorous as Vlahos's Hamlet before him. On the other hand, he is not keen on wordplay and humour, not because Theotokis had any qualms about the mixing of genres like Vlahos did, but because he was a pessimistic naturalist writer and did not have any particular interest in the humorous parts of the play. In his original work he offered a grim and disheartening image of society, and this is sustained in his translation as well.

Theotokis's Hamlet is waging a personal battle against injustice: he represents the struggle of the individual against a corrupt state similar to the one in Greece at the time. He is a proponent of integrity and freedom to the very end, much like Theotokis was in his own life, and comes out victorious albeit in a symbolic and utopian manner.

In sum, mainly through his use of dialect and his domestication of cultural elements throughout, Theotokis' Hamlet is presented as a Corfu aristocrat, who wages his personal war of integrity against corruption in Elsinore-*cum*-Corfu. Theotokis's Hamlet is a paradigm of the struggle of the individual against a society that is rank and corrupt. 'Denmark's a prison' (II.2.243) and so is the society of Corfu. Hamlet dies at the end of the play, but only after he has achieved a triumphant moral victory.

Hamlet, the Idealist and Enlightened Philanthropist: Vassilis Rotas's 1937 Populist Rendering

The third *Hamlet* in this case study came out in the interwar period. In the two decades that had elapsed since Theotokis's rendering, the World War I (1914–18) and the Asia-Minor catastrophe (1922) had taken place.⁵ Greece was experiencing

its second dictatorship after that of Pangalos (1925) — namely, Ioannis Metaxas's regime, which came to be known as the dictatorship of August Fourth (1936–41), and World War II was only three years away.

Vassilis Rotas (1889–1977) was a writer, a translator, a man of the theatre, a demoticist, a Marxist, and later a partisan in the war.⁶ Like Theotokis before him, Rotas saw the language as inextricably linked with the people and the struggle for their rights. He believed that lifting the division between 'high' and 'popular' art and offering some of the greatest works of literature to the people in the demotic might help them raise their cultural level and gain self-esteem, and, consequently, freedom (Krontiris 2005: 216). With that in mind, he was the first translator to ever render the whole Shakespearean oeuvre into Greek.

He saw Shakespeare's rich vocabulary as a great opportunity to prove the merits of the demotic and enrich the language of his time (Damianakou 1994: 59–60). Through his translations of Shakespeare, he 'intended to exert an influence on the development of the Greek language and of the theatre' (Krontiris 2005: 209).

Rotas saw in Shakespeare a profoundly popular writer (1986: 424, 459, 662), stressing the dramatist's influence from the *commedia dell'arte* (1986: 663). It seems that Rotas was attracted to exactly this aspect of Shakespeare which Vlahos, being a royalist and an elitist, considered to be his flaw. Rotas also stressed the fact that Shakespeare spoke the language of the people, a language that could be understood by people from all walks of life (1986: 440).

His version of the demotic, though, was a kind of rural demotic full of expressions he gathered from illiterate people in the Greek countryside who he considered to be unblemished by any damaging influences from purist education (Rotas 1986: 461). As his renderings became extremely popular, this is the kind of language in which the Greeks received Shakespeare for more than half a century.

Hamlet in particular was until then being staged in Vikelas's moderate *katharevousa* and even in Pervanoglou's archaic translation, since the previous two translations discussed above never made the stage, so there was a pressing need for a new rendering in the demotic, which by now had become the norm for the stage. Therefore, the National Theatre director Dimitrios Rondiris decided to commission the translation from Rotas (who had already translated three other plays by Shakespeare) so that it would become the script for the 1937 performance of the tragedy.⁷ Rotas accompanied his translation with his own stage directions in accordance with his interpretation of the play; these were eagerly sought after by the theatre professionals (Damianakou 1994: 137).

Rotas's *Hamlet* was completed and staged in 1937 and published in book form in 1938. The first edition of the work is invaluable, as it includes a thirty-page introduction by Rotas, which constitutes a blueprint for his later translations of Shakespeare. It also includes forty pages of endnotes entitled 'Comments on *Hamlet*, interpretation, stage directions, etc.', which were not reproduced in the later editions. The translator's introduction includes background information on the previous translations of *Hamlet* into Greek, explanatory notes, and an analysis of the play with a detailed characterization of the main *dramatis personae*. The endnotes

contain philological and hermeneutic comments, stage directions, and even his own score for three of Ophelia's songs.

From the very title of his translation, it becomes obvious that there is a stylistic shift in the target text in accordance with Rotas's belief in the popular nature of Shakespeare's work. The title on the front page of the 1938 edition was ΑΜΛΕΤ, ΤΟ ΒΑΣΙΛΟΠΟΥΛΟ ΤΗΣ ΔΑΝΙΑΣ *Amlet, to vasilopoulo tis Danias* [Hamlet, the Young Prince of Denmark]. The word βασιλόπουλο *vasilopoulo* 'young prince' is a popular form of the word resonant of fairy tales. The subtitle was retained in his Ikaros re-publication (1954) of the book and it only became *Amlet* in the consequent editions issued by the Epikerotita publishing house in 1988.

In tune with Rotas's belief in the popular character of Shakespeare's work, this Hamlet speaks in a rural demotic and is altogether presented as a popular figure. Even though he is a prince, he is at the same time a prince for the people, in striking contrast with Vlahos's courtly Hamlet. Some of the popular expressions he uses are of considerably low register, leading again to a drastic shift in style, not to mention that they sound quite awkward when they come out of the mouth of a well-mannered prince. On the other hand, he manages to employ a stylistic difference between, say, Polonius's or Osric's pretentious discourse and Hamlet's straightforward manner of expression, which makes the audience empathize with the prince even more strongly as he 'speaks their own language'.

Rotas chose not to render Shakespeare in the traditional fifteen-syllable rhyme scheme of demotic songs, as one would expect, but to employ his own rhyme scheme, the trimeter choriambic metre with twelve to fourteen syllables, which he considered the best choice for a dramatic play in Greek (Shakespeare 1938: 201).

Unsurprisingly, like Theotokis' *Hamlet* before him, this *Hamlet* is keen on neologisms, which is attributable to both their eagerness to enrich the language. Rotas is also much more confident in the mixing of genres and the use of humour and wordplay in a tragedy than, say, Theotokis. Throughout this rendering, cultural elements are again domesticated, which was the norm for translation at the time.

In his notes, Rotas has a whole idiosyncratic way of characterizing Hamlet. To him, Hamlet symbolizes the spiritual man, the idealist. He is the educated, rational, pensive, cultivated young man, who has studied in Wittenberg, the school of Luther and Giordano Bruno, and 'who assimilated in his teaching Epicurean, Stoic, and Neo-Platonic ideas, the superiority of the spiritual world, of God who instills the infinite in all its parts' (Rotas 1938: 20).⁸ Therefore, Hamlet is devastated, not primarily because of the murder of his father or his mother's hasty marriage or even his uncle's usurpation of the throne, but mostly because of 'the loss of his ideals' (Rotas 1938: 20).⁹ 'By having immersed into contemplation and spiritual cultivation, he became a nobler man as a person; he rose to a higher state' (Rotas 1938: 22).¹⁰

According to Rotas, Hamlet's ideals collapse one after the other: the ideal of love (Ophelia is kept away from him by her father and is not sincere with him) and the ideal of friendship (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern plot against him with the King). His initial reaction is to contemplate suicide, but he discards this instantly because

he believes in the existence of another world, beyond life, a higher world, a world of judgement:

But all this sorrow for the lost ideals around him overwhelm him to a degree that he initially expresses the idea of suicide. Nevertheless, he discards this idea as being a bad one, which Hell (the superior Judge) punishes. Because the ideal of faith is what he is left with. He believes in the existence of another world, beyond life, a higher world, a world of judgement.¹¹ (Rotas 1938: 21)

On the other hand, his plight is unbearable to him. So, he is necessarily led to 'negation, animadversion, abjuration, like all the correctors of this world' (Rotas 1938: 22). According to Rotas, this is the essence of the tragedy: 'Our hero's plight is his inner struggle, the struggle of his heart with his spirit. Well, let us stress this struggle, because it constitutes the core of this drama' (Rotas 1938: 23).¹²

According to Rotas, after Hamlet cultivated his spirit, he became a subject and further down he describes Act 3 as 'a victory of the cultivated man' (Rotas 1938: 22, 35).¹³ Unlike his forefather Orestes, Rotas says, he does not kill his mother: 'some cultivation inside him does not allow him to reach that point' (Rotas 1938: 29).¹⁴ Addressing the question of Hamlet's indecision, Rotas defends the hero, grasping at the same time the chance to condemn individual acts of violence against wrongdoings. In accordance with his humanistic values, Hamlet's inactivity is justified and praised as the superiority of the thinking man, who pauses to reflect before he acts instead of blindly succumbing to his instincts, like the barbarians and the fanatics that surround him (Shakespeare 1938: 230). He postpones revenge for his father's murder, an urge towards which he is led by his baser instincts, and rightfully so, according to Rotas, because he is a man of Reason:

Nevertheless, his mind struggles. On the one hand, it stigmatises, ridicules, condemns; on the other, it stands up to confront passion. Revenge? What revenge? There is no revenge for the cultivated man, because that is passion; for the cultivated man there is only forgiveness.¹⁵ (Rotas 1938: 33)

As concerns Hamlet's madness, Rotas has once again an interpretation of his own. He is convinced that Hamlet is neither mad, nor feigning madness, but that his stance is incomprehensible and appears as madness only to those in power who cannot find reason in his motives and actions.

All in all, this is a prince of the people, fighting through reason for what is just, instead of blindly taking revenge for his father's murder.

Hamlet, the Disillusioned Suicidal Young Man: Yorgos Himonas's 1988 Postmodern Rendering

The fourth *Hamlet* of our case study came out much later, in the period that followed the fall of the Colonels' junta (1967–74) and under the PASOK administration.¹⁶

Giorgos Himonas (1938–2000) was active both as a writer and a psychiatrist.¹⁷ He studied in Paris at the eve of the May 1968 uprising and was profoundly influenced by the literary, philosophical, social, and political developments that took place at the time and particularly by poststructuralism and postmodernism.

He rendered five classic Greek and Shakespearean tragedies in a vivid Modern Greek language, which made them stageable at a time when the previous translations, like the one by Rotas, had long been dated.¹⁸

More than any other translator of *Hamlet* into Greek in the past, Himonas was interested in Hamlet the character *per se*. He felt a profound sense of kinship with the young prince to a point that he identified himself with him. Himonas was especially enchanted by the dark, gloomy, and self-destructive aspects of Hamlet's character. In his Introduction, Himonas unfolds his special interest in Hamlet:

I translated two tragedies, as this was the safest way to dominate on the dark emotion that has always subdued me when I saw or read Tragedy; and I have been associated with Hamlet for quite some time now — taking part in the obscure game between the creators and their creations, their own as well as those of others, that stems from the laws of writers — not because I am interested in Shakespeare, but because I am interested in Hamlet, despite Eliot's reservations.¹⁹ Never in literature has any other creature spoken so blatantly, rigidly, savagely, on matters that concern the human essence as Hamlet has, that foreign person, who remains foreign to the end and whom the drama does not create: it drags and enmeshes; it detaches him from the chaos he belongs to and uses him for its progression, destining him, from the very beginning, for the necessary act — the one through which the drama benefits and is completed.²⁰ (Himonas 1988: 7)

In an interview he gave on the eve of *Hamlet's* publication, Himonas again explained that what interested him in the play was Hamlet as a character, and mostly his melancholy. When asked whether he considered melancholy to be Hamlet's major characteristic, he answered, positively, saying:

I believe it is the key to his whole behaviour, his essence, his actions. His decisions. And the key for an actor. I believe that the actor who plays the part should use this key. Of course, when I say melancholy, I do not mean anything pathological [...]. And maybe in this sense of melancholy he is very modern. [...] I believe that Hamlet is the very *synthesis of his decision for absence and his being obliged to undertake action*. That is why he is so excessively angry. If there is one word to describe Hamlet's character on stage, I believe it is the anger he feels. Because he is already absent. As a matter of fact, I cannot bring to my mind a literary hero who is as drastic as Hamlet, both as a conception and as an existence [...]. And I believe that its core synopsis — which is the basis of its dramatic essence — is this: the will for absence and his being forced to participate; in other words, to live. He is being forced to live. And he recapitulates all the smaller literary problems as they are depicted through the various literary heroes. He recapitulates those, but mainly this: he presents that which is the most critical. He brings it to the ultimate, the final dilemma: to live or to die?²¹ (Themelis 2000: 55–57)

Following from the above, Hamlet's destiny is pain. Himonas' Hamlet bears strong romantic elements. He is what Himonas calls a lover of grief:

Watching the tragic hero very closely, you have the feeling that he resists, he refuses to quit — not from the great act he is destined for: he refuses to quit from the sorrow. He is a lover of grief. One suspects that grief had started before the unjust, inevitable events [...] which constitute him an instrument,

and at the same time, a victim of some reparation. One is convinced that alongside the adamant motive of a 'legitimate' ethical principle that accounts for his stern decisions, there is an also adamant, as well as paradoxical fixation he has with grief — as if grief had been the prerequisite for his condition as the extraordinary, that is the unique and lonesome person. That, I claim, is the most fitting definition of the tragic hero: to be the most obviously detached, segregated individual, who will unwaveringly defend the individual consciousness — only to perish with it in the end [...]. Grief produces and constantly feeds his heroic, that is his suicidal arrogance. What is more: he revels in grief.²² (Himonas 1995: 129–30)

As concerns madness, the psychiatrist Himonas does not believe in madness, but in alternative perceptions of reality. Even though in the following lines he was not referring to *Hamlet*, the analogies are too striking to be overlooked:

It is difficult for me to view the psychiatric individual as being 'ill'. [...] I have the feeling that the psychiatrically 'ill person' undertakes to live for us the nightmare of being above the abyss — a nightmare we are all aware of; it exists in some dark place of our night; it has shone before our eyes some moments.²³ (Himonas 1995: 70–71)

Himonas describes Hamlet's 'madness' not as a clinical situation, but as a conscious choice of an acting process, as a 'mimesis' of discourse and action in a world of 'virtual' reality (Douka-Kambitoglou 2008: 60). Himonas's Hamlet is exceptionally intelligent and is feigning madness. Quite tellingly, Himonas (1988: 9) says that Hamlet 'often resorts to madness, this dramatic feigning of life'.²⁴ He attributes the tragic hero's 'erratic behaviour' to his 'organic dependence on the absolute'.²⁵ He is 'intrinsically morose' and 'erupts through the conventions of an ideational, traditional order, which he necessarily represents'.²⁶ 'In the end they [the tragic heroes] always leave, either dying (usually violently) or by physically departing. When they stay, they are lifeless, awkward, untrue — and they need to be untrue in several points of the dramatic story anyhow; there is no other way' (Himonas 1988: 8).²⁷

This Hamlet speaks in prose in very modern Greek. His discourse is stripped from any Elizabethan stylistic tropes and is very pithy and succinct. He seems to exist in a topos that is non-language-, culture-, or time-specific. This Hamlet employs different imagery and metaphors than his Elizabethan forefather. Whereas the underlying theme of Shakespeare's tragedy is illness and decay, this Hamlet spins his images and metaphors around the themes of death and sexuality, with which he seems to be obsessed.

Unlike the Elizabethan Hamlet, this one is self-destructive. He does not ponder death with the queries and reasoning of the Renaissance Man, but actually longs for it. Himonas renders Hamlet's famous dilemma as 'To be. To be not.'²⁸ By eliminating the disjunctive conjunction 'or' of the source text, he deprives the hero of any alternative.²⁹ The final lines of the soliloquy are also rendered in a sharp, unwavering style that decisively tilts towards 'not being'. The pace is hectic and Hamlet almost urges himself, and by extension his reader/spectator, to take his own life, ending his misery with the following words:

You are gripped by fear you stall
 And live. And the debacle continues living
 from your life. Finish this world
 Finish your life. This very minute. Now. With a knife.³⁰

As if this were not enough, in his soliloquy of II.2.544–601, where Hamlet verbally attacks himself on account of his cowardice, Himonas' Hamlet actually adds the line 'I want to die'.³¹ In this, he is the polar opposite of Rotas' optimistic and idealistic reading of *Hamlet*, according to which the young prince momentarily ponders suicide, but discards it instantly driven by his faith in a higher ideal.

This Hamlet's distress has nothing to do with his father's murder and his mother's treason, not even with Denmark's moral decay, but it stems from the fact that he is being forced to live and take revenge. To Himonas, the keyword for the understanding of Hamlet is not in terms of psychology, but in terms of his 'troubled, as well as intensely felt relation with the absolute' (Douka-Kambitoglou 2008: 26).

I believe that Hamlet's core question, to live or not to live, [...] hides another more fundamental, much more anguishing — I would define it as practical — question: that is, how to live. Hamlet does not have, will never find, a way to live, from the beginning to the end of the drama, because *no usage of this world is good*. It may be paradoxical, but the lack of Eliot's correlative constitutes its very nature. He is forced to live, forced to act, to be contained and defined, he becomes passionately irritable, vengeful in every which way — he does not avenge the murder of his father, he avenges his fate to exist, and to exist so; he avenges the very need to avenge. His whole journey, his whole conduct is a constant opening and closing, an endless coming and going between the void and the meaningless world. Having grasped from very early that *doing* by no means corresponds to *having to be done*, he is hurled and broken in the gap among *being* and *seeming*, resigning from the latter from the very beginning.³² (Shakespeare 1988: 9)

In his Introduction, Himonas unfolds his own perception of the tragic hero, Hamlet being its very paradigm:

And since life is always adjacent, [the tragic heroes] are to bring back to this world its authenticity — which cannot but be adjacent, outside the life of humans, from which everything that is real has been dismissed as resistant, hyperbolic, destructive. These creatures are indeed destructive, because they are self-destructive — as they cannot stand the situation of the human things anyhow.³³ (Himonas 1988: 7–8)

Himonas moulds Hamlet in accordance with his views on the 'extraordinary individual', that is a man whose greatness exceeds that of the common man, and has to pay the price for it, as the latter is incapable of accepting his greatness. In Hamlet's famous soliloquy in Act 3, Scene 1, Himonas renders the unmarked 'enterprises of great pitch and moment' of the source text with the very marked 'the great deeds / for which you were born. You were only born for them'.³⁴ The hero is no ordinary man. He was predestined to accomplish a higher purpose in life.

To sum up, Himonas's Hamlet is the tragic hero *par excellence*, unique and lonely, a 'lover of grief', suicidal and gloomy, an 'extraordinary individual', who was only born for great deeds and suffers not by the predicament in which he has found himself, but by being forced to live and perish for the grand deeds for which he was preordained while his only wish is to die.

Conclusion

Four rewritings of Shakespeare's rewriting of *Hamlet* have led to considerably different metonymic characterizations of Prince Hamlet through different translation choices. These choices, reflecting the translators' interpretation of the tragedy, are of course the result of the distance in time and place, as well as the evolution of the language and the literary norms, but also of the translators' positioning in the socio-historic context in which they lived and their personal poetics. The rewritings of Shakespeare's tragedy result in the metamorphosis of the Danish prince into four other Hamlets that are strikingly different in character, but can also be seen as different facets of the prince in his afterlives, if we are to agree with Benjamin.

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Notes to Chapter 9

1. In the nineteenth century Shakespeare was popularized by self-taught theatrical groups instead of being a symbol of the financial and cultural elite (Yanni 2005: 56–84 and *passim*).
2. «Κατὰ τοῦτο, τουτέστι τὴν ἠθογραφίαν, ὑπερέχει ὁ Σακεσπείρος πάντων ὁμοῦ τῶν δραματικῶν ποιητῶν τῶν νέων χρόνων, καὶ παραμένει μέχρι σήμερον ἀπαράμιλλον καὶ ἀνεφικτον τελειότητος πρότυπον. Δὲν δύναται ὁμως νὰ ῥηθῆ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ περὶ τῆς τεχνικῆς ἐμπειρίας τοῦ ἀγγλοῦ δραματοποιῦ, ἂν ἰδίως ἡ ἐμπειρία αὐτῆ μετρηθῆ κατὰ τὰς ἀριστοτελικὰς ἐννοίας. Διότι οὔτε τοπικὴν οὔτε χρονικὴν ἐνότητα ἀπαντᾷ τις πάντοτε εἰς τὰ δράματά του, καὶ αὐτὴ δὲ ἡ πολὺ τούτων σπουδαιότερα ἐνόησεν τῆς πράξεως εἶνε πολλὰκις χαλαρὰ καὶ διεσπασμένη. Ἡ τοπικὴ χροιά καὶ ἡ χρονικὴ ἀλήθεια τῶν δραματικῶν αὐτοῦ σκηνῶν εἶναι πολλαχοῦ ἐσφαλμένα καὶ ἀνακριβεῖς, ἡ ἐκλογή τῶν δραματικῶν αὐτοῦ μέσων σκαιὰ ἐνίοτε καὶ ἀκαλαίσθητος, ἡ κοσμιότης τῶν λόγων καὶ τῶν πραγμάτων οὐχὶ σπανίως παραμελημένη πλεον τοῦ ἐπιτετραμένου, καὶ τὸ ὕφος δὲ αὐτοῦ πολλάκις διάστροφον καὶ περινενοημένον, ἀφύσικον καὶ ῥητορικῶς πομφολυγῶδες.»
3. «Αἰὰ παραδόσεις τοῦ ἀγγλικοῦ θεάτρου ἐπέτρεπον εἰς τὴν ἀχαλίνωτον φαντασίῳ τοῦ ποιητοῦ πᾶσαν τεχνικὴν ἐλευθερίαν» (Vlahos 1904: 17).
4. For more on the historical and political context surrounding Theotokis, see Romeos (1997).
5. Greece actively participated in the war on the side of Entente in Macedonia as late as 1917–18.
6. For a detailed timeline of Rotas's life, see Karayannis (2001).
7. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1928), *Twelfth Night* (1932), and *King Lear* (1933).

8. «Ο νεοϊδεάτης, ο κλασικός φιλόσοφος τών νέων Νέων Χρόνων, πού διδάξε, συγχωνεύοντας και άφομοιώνοντας έπικούρεια, στωϊκά και νεοπλατωνικά διδάγματα, τήν άνωτερότητα του πνευματικού κόσμου, του θεού πού έμψυχώνει το άπειρον εις όλα του τα μέρη.»
9. «Έχασε τα ιδανικά του.»
10. «Με το να 'χει ριχτεί στη συλλογή και στην πνευματική καλλιέργεια έγινε άνωτερος άνθρωπος, προσωπικότητας, ανέβηκε ψηλά.»
11. «Μά όλη αυτή ή θλίψη για τα χαμένα ιδανικά του, ή ντροπή για το κατάντημα τής μάνας του και τή χυδαιότητα γύρω του τον πλημμυρίζουν τόσο πού άμέσως κιόλα έκφράζει τήν ιδέα τής αυτοκτονίας. Όμως αυτή τήν ιδέα τή διώχνει άπ' το νοϋ του, σαν ιδέα κακή πού ή Κόλαση (ό άνώτερος Κριτής) τήν τιμωρεί. Γιατί το ιδανικό τής πίστης αυτό του μένει. Πιστεύει στην ύπαρξη ένός άλλου κόσμου, πέρα από τή ζωή, κόσμο άνωτερου, κόσμο κρίσεως.»
12. «Το βάσανο του ήρωά μας είναι ή έσωτερική του πάλη, ή πάλη τής καρδιάς του με πνεϋμα του. "Ε, λοιπόν, άς σημειωθεί αυτό, γιατί αυτή ή πάλη είναι όλο κι' όλο το δράμα.»
13. «...λαμπρή νίκη του πνευματικού ανθρώπου.»
14. «Με το να 'χει ριχτεί στη συλλογή και στην πνευματική καλλιέργεια έγινε άνωτερος άνθρωπος, προσωπικότητας, ανέβηκε ψηλά»; «κάποιος πολιτισμός μέσα του τον έμποδιζει να φτάσει ως εκεί.»
15. «Όσοτόσο το πνεϋμα του αγωνίζεται. Από το' να μέρος στιγματίζει, ρεζιλεύει, καταδικάζει, από τ' άλλο μέρος όρθώνεται αντιμετώπι στο πάθος. Έκδίκηση; ποιά έκδίκηση; δέν υπάρχει έκδίκηση για τον πνευματικόν άνθρωπο υπάρχει μόνον συγγνώμη.»
16. The Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) came to power in 1981.
17. Himonas himself gives a short outline of his life trajectory in Himonas (2005: 483).
18. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1988) and *Macbeth* (1994), Sophocles' *Electra* (1984), and Euripides' *Bacchae* (1985) and *Medea* (1989).
19. He is referring to T. S. Eliot's essay 'Hamlet and His Problems' (Eliot 1921), in which the writer claims that *Hamlet* is an artistic failure, as the hero's actions lack what he calls an 'objective correlative', in other words they are not based on a chain of events that would justify his feelings and motivate his actions.
20. «Μετάφρασα δύο τραγωδίες, επειδή αυτός ήταν ο ασφαλέτερος τρόπος να κυριαρχήσω στην σκοτεινή συγκίνηση πού από πάντα με κατέβαλλε βλέποντας ή διαβάζοντας Τραγωδία και συνδέθηκα, ήδη πολλά χρόνια, με τον Άμλετ — μετέχοντας στο άσφαλές παιχνίδι πού επιτρέπει ή νομοθεσία των συγγραφέων μεταξύ των δημιουργών και των πλασμάτων τους, των δικών τους αλλά και των άλλων — όχι επειδή με ενδιαφέρει ο Σαίξπηρ, αλλά επειδή με ενδιαφέρει ο Άμλετ, σέ πείσμα τής ζωηρής αντίρρησης του Έλιοτ. Ποτέ στην λογοτεχνία, κανένα άλλο πλάσμα δέν μίλησε τόσο ώμά, άκαμπτα, βάνουσα, για θέματα ουσίας του ανθρώπου όπως μίλησε ο Άμλετ, αυτό τό ξένο πρόσωπο, πού ως τό τέλος θά μείνει ξένο και πού τό δράμα δέν τό γεννά: τό παρασύρει και τό εμπλέκει, τό άποσπά από τό χάος όπου ανήκει και τό χρησιμοποιεί στην κίνηση του, προορίζοντάς το, από τήν άρχή, για τήν αναγκαία πράξη — αυτήν πού ωφελεί τό δράμα και τό έκπληρώνει.»
21. «Πιστεύω ότι είναι και το κλειδί για όλη του τη συμπεριφορά, για την υπόστασή του, για τις πράξεις του. Για τις αποφάσεις του. Και το κλειδί για έναν ήθοποιό. Πιστεύω ότι ο ήθοποιός πού θα τον παίξει θα πρέπει να χρησιμοποιήσει αυτό το κλειδί. Βέβαια, λέγοντας μελαγχολία, δέν έννοώ τίποτα το παθολογικό, [...]. Και ίσως μ' αυτή τήν έννοια τής μελαγχολίας είναι και πάρα πολύ μοντέρνος. [...] Ακριβώς αυτή ή σύνθεση τής άπόφασης για άπουσία και του έξαναγκασμού για δράση, πιστεύω ότι είναι ο Άμλετ. Γι' αυτό και είναι τόσο έξαιρετικά θυμωμένος. Άν υπάρχει μιá λέξη πού έπρεπε να δώσει τον χαρακτήρα του Άμλετ στη σκηνή, πιστεύω ότι είναι ο θυμός πού έχει. Διότι είναι ήδη άπών. Πραγματικά, δέν μπορώ να φέρω στο νοϋ μου ένα πρόσωπο από τή λογοτεχνία πού να είναι τόσο δραστικό όσο είναι ο Άμλετ. Σαν σύλληψη και σαν ύπαρξη. [...] Και πιστεύω ότι ή βασική του σύνοψη — πού συνιστά και τή δραματικότητα του — είν' αυτή: Η βούληση τής άπουσίας του και ο καταναγκασμός του για συμμετοχή. Για ζωή, με πιό απλά λόγια. Τον καταναγκάζουν να ζήσει. Και άνακεφαλαιώνει όλα τα επίμερους λογοτεχνικά προβλήματα όπως ένσαρκώνονται στους διάφορους λογοτεχνικούς ήρωες. Τα άνακεφαλαιώνει, αλλά κυρίως αυτό: παρουσιάζει το πιό ουσιώδες. Το φτάνει πιá μέχρι το τελευταίο, το έσχατο δίλημμα: Να ζήσεις ή να πεθάνεις;»

22. «Προσέχοντας από πολύ κοντά τον τραγικό ήρωα, έχεις τήν αίσθηση ότι αντίστέκεται, αρνείται να παραιτηθεί — όχι ασφαλώς από τήν σπουδαία πράξη για τήν όποία είναι προορισμένος: αρνείται να παραιτηθεί από τό άλλος. Είναι ένας έραστής του πένθους. Ύποψιάζεσαι ότι τό πένθος του έχει αρχίσει προτού συμβούν τά άδικα, τά μοιραία γεγονότα, [...] όλα εκείνα πού χρίουν τόν τραγικό ήρωα ως όργανο, και ταυτόχρονα θύμα, μιάς άποκατάστασης τών πραγμάτων. Αισθάνεσαι ότι, παράλληλα μέ τό αδιάλλακτο κίνητρο μιάς «έγκυρης» ήθικης τάξης πού νομιμοποιεί τίς άκαμπτες αποφάσεις του, λειτουργεί και μία έξισου άκαμπτη, όσο και παράδοξη, έμμογή του πρós ένα πένθος. Ωσάν τό πένθος νά είναι ό άπαράβατος όρος τής πραγματικότητάς του ως συγκεκριμένου, δηλαδή ως μοναδικού και μοναχικού προσώπου. Αυτός, ύποστηρίζω, είναι και ό καιριος όρισμός έν γένει του τραγικού ήρωα: νά είναι τό ευδιάκριτα κευχρισμένο, περιχαρακωμένο άτομικό όν, τό όποιο μέχρι τό τέλος θά υπερασπίζεται άνυποχώρητα τό άβατο τής ατομικής συνείδησης — για νά άφανισθεί στό τέλος μαζί μ' ατήν [...]. Τό πένθος παράγει και συνεχώς διογκώνει τήν ήρωική, δηλαδή τήν αυτοκτόνο, υπεροψία του. Ακόμα περισσότερο: άπολαμβάνει τό πένθος.»
23. «Δυσκολεύομαι πάντοτε να δώ τό ψυχιατρικό άτομο ως «άρρωστο». [...] Έχω τήν αίσθηση πώς ό ψυχιατρικός «άρρωστος» άναλαμβάνει νά ζησει, για λογαριασμό μας, τόν εφιάλτη του νά είσαι επάνω από τήν άβυσσο — εφιάλτης πού όλοι τόν γνωρίζουμε, ύπάρχει σέ κάποιο σκοτάδι τής νύχτας μας, κάποιες σημείες έλαμψε εμπρός από τά μάτια μας.»
24. «Ό ίδιος καταφεύγει συχνά στην τρέλα, σ' αυτή τήν δραματική ύποκρισία ζωής.»
25. «άτακτη συμπεριφορά»; «όργανική εξάρτηση ... από τό άπόλυτο.»
26. «έγγενή δυσθυμία»; «νά έκραγούν μέσα από τίς συμβάσεις μιάς ιδεακής, παραδοσιακής τάξης τήν όποία και κατ' ανάγκη εκπροσωπούν.»
27. «Στό τέλος πάντα θά φύγουν, είτε πεθαίνοντας (συνήθως βίαια) είτε και πραγματικά φεύγοντας. Όταν παραμένουν, είναι πιά έκπνοοι άμήχανοι, ψευδείς — και χρειάζεται, άλλωστε, νά είναι ψεύτικοι σέ άρκετά σημεία τής δραματικής ιστορίας, δέν γίνεται άλλως.»
28. «Νά ζεις. Νά μή ζεις» (Shakespeare 1988: 88).
29. Also see Douka-Kambitoglou (2008: 52).
30. «
Σέ πιάνει φόβος άργείας
Και ζεις. Και ή πανωλεθρία διαρκεί ζώντας
από τήν ζωή σου. Τελείωσε τόν κόσμο έσύ
Τέλειωσε τήν ζωή σου. Αυτήν τήν στιγμή. Τώρα. Μ' ένα μαχαίρι.»
31. «Θέλω να πεθάνω» (Shakespeare 1988: 83).
32. «Τό κεντρικό, θαρρώ, έρώτημα του Άμλετ νά ζεις ή νά μή ζεις, πού συμπυκνώνει (και θά έλεγα άκυρώνει, αναβάλλει) όλη του τήν αγωνία, ύποκρύπτει ένα άλλο πιό θεμελιώδες, πιό αγωνιώδες — θά τό ώριζα πρακτικό — έρώτημα: πώς νά ζεις. Ό Άμλετ δέν έχει, δέν θά βρει ποτέ, τρόπο νά ζησει, από τήν έναρξη ως τή λήξη του δράματος, γιατί καμμία χρήση του κόσμου δέν είναι καλή. Είναι ίσως παράδοξο, αλλά ακριβώς ή δυσαναλογία ή και άπουσία τής έλιοτικής 'συστοιχίας' συνιστά τήν ίδια τή φυσιογνωμία του. Αναγκασμένος νά ζησει, καταναγκασμένος νά πράξει, να περιορισθεί και νά όρισθεί, γίνεται παράφορα δύστροπος, έκδικητικός πρós όλες τίς κατευθύνσεις — δέν έκδικείται τόν φόνο του πατέρα του, έκδικείται τήν μοίρα του νά ύπάρχει, και νά ύπάρχει έτσι, έκδικείται τήν ίδια τήν άνάγκη νά έκδικηθεί. Όλη του ή διαδρομή όλο τό φέρεσιμό του είναι ένα συνεχές άνοιγοκλείσιμο, ένα αδιάκοπο πήγαινε-έλα ανάμεσα στό κενό και στόν άνούσιο κόσμο.» Έχοντας από πολύ νωρίς συλλάβει ότι τό πράττειν κατά κανένα τρόπο δέν αντιστοιχεί στό πράττεσθαι, έκτινάσσεται και διαλύεται στό χάσμα πού ύπάρχει ανάμεσα στό είναι και στό φαίνεσθαι, παραιτούμενος έξαρχής από αυτό τό τελευταίο.»
33. «Κι άφού ή ζωή είναι πάντα διπλανή, νά επαναφέρουν σ' αυτόν τόν κόσμο τήν ίδια τήν άληθινότητά του — που δέν μπορεί παρά νά είναι δίπλα, έξω από τήν συμπαγή ζωή τών ανθρώπων, από τήν όποία τό άληθινό έχει μοιραία άποβληθεί ως αντίσταση, υπερβολή, καταστροφή. Τά όντα αυτά είναι πράγματι καταστροφικά έπειδή είναι, προπάντων, αυτοκαταστροφικά — μιά και, έτσι ή άλλως, δέν άντέχουν στό καθεστώς τών ανθρώπινων πραγμάτων.»
34. «Και τά έργα τά μεγάλα πού γι' αυτά γεννήθηκαν. Μονάχα γι' αυτά γεννήθηκαν.» (Shakespeare 1988: 89)