

EL PARANY DEL RATOLÍ: THE TRANSLATION OF SHAKESPEARE INTO CATALAN

The history of Shakespeare translation in Catalonia is a complex one. It cannot be identified readily with any specific cultural movement or programme, any single urge to produce a poetic model lacking in the target culture. To trace the translations chronologically is to be aware of constant shifts in perspective on the source text, always rooted in the wider context of European reception and re-readings of the bard. Hence, the beginnings of Catalan Shakespeare translation in the 1870s cannot be separated from Romantic re-evaluations of Shakespeare, in particular a tragic Shakespeare, and the tradition of foreign Shakespeares in performance, irradiating from Italy and France. The relatively late translation of Shakespeare into Catalan is surely best explained by the limits of artistic production within the Catalan cultural system of the nineteenth century, although Alfons Par (1935) also points to there having been greater interest in Scott, particularly in the first half of that century. The beginnings of Shakespeare translation can be further linked to moves to revive and expand the operation of Catalan theatre, as well as the commonplace aim of translation, to explore the possibilities of literary language and culture. All of these reasons sound perfectly plausible, yet they do not offer much insight into the question of "Why Shakespeare?" On the contrary, if we look at Josep Carner's (1907) "Del Shakespeare en llengua catalana", we become aware that Shakespeare is more of a metaphor of culture than a specific cultural value denoting a clear translation choice. This is not to deny that there are particular Shakespeares translated, personal Shakespeares, nor even a wider pattern that might be recognised as a specifically Catalan Shakespeare. Indeed, the long-term mystification of the Sagarra translations presents us with a partial answer to what the shape of the most accepted Catalan Shakespeare might be. What has become clear to me in my studies of Shakespeare's figuration in Catalonia is that there has been a strong critical and poetic urge to represent part of that translation history in terms of what we might call a *parany del ratolí*, a mousetrap, to figure translation in terms of the Hamlet myth and the conflicting urges towards representation the myth embraces. My aim in this paper is to explore this recurrent frame for the poetic history of Shakespeare translation in Catalonia,

as a metaphor which in some ways stands for the anxiety about origins and originality central to the translation process, the sign of Hamlet.

At one level the Hamlet myth resides in the divided history of *Hamlet* as play and Hamlet as man. As play, *Hamlet* is notoriously problematic because of its textual excess, as if it were striving to escape of the boundaries of a single framing. As man, Hamlet is both contained by and constantly outside of the play, as a kind of playwright himself, seeking to place a structure on his narrative, and in the numerous "hamletologies" that have developed around him and the play. On another level, Hamlet's representation of the problems of representation are to be found in the Mousetrap, the "parany del ratolí" in the words of Terenci Moix (1980). The play within the play supports a tendency to view Hamlet's role as that of playwright, underlined by regular attribution of Hamlet's advice to the players directly to Shakespeare. Yet it also underlines Hamlet's containment within the narrative, the play conceived by his father (hence representing a struggle with origins) as well as pointing to an excess of representation, where we are constantly faced with repetition of the same story. As may be seen, the mousetrap offers a seductive frame for the conceptualisation and performance of translation.

Anyone interested in the study of Western literary history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries will be aware of the almost inevitable presence of *Hamlet* (play and man, son and ghostly father) in cultural fields ranging from the theatrical to the philosophical to the political. It may also then seem inevitable that my paper on Catalan translations of Shakespeare should focus on *Hamlet*. However, just because the status and importance of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* now seems obvious, it does not follow that the meanings of the play and its enigmas do not have their own story to tell. They are the product of a complex history (histories even) of cultural negotiation.

Hamlet is also the cross-roads of Shakespearian criticism,
at which all the highways and every conceivable lane and
field-path seem to converge.

(Dover Wilson: 1970)

The cross-roads to be scrutinised here marks the history of the Catalan *Hamlet* and how it frames debates surrounding translation, theatrical representation and political and cultural realisation in Catalonia. I aim to show that in many ways the *Hamlet* story offers a pattern for these debates in the complex relationships between Hamlet and his father in

terms of origins, *Hamlet* and the Mousetrap in terms of representation, and the dialectic between action and passivity, intellectual and hero, common to hamletologies.

Origins and Originality

It cannot be said that *Hamlet* is the first of Shakespeare's stories to catch the imagination of the writer in Catalan although, in performance, it is perhaps the play which is most cited as a "life-changing" experience. One of the events most identified as a source of inspiration is Ernesto Rossi's 1868 performance of *Hamlet*, which caused such a stir that he was called upon to give a lecture on the subject which was subsequently published. The play becomes part of an imaginative, intellectual and performative process of figuration and refiguration, traced in fragmentary translations in periodicals, reviews of foreign productions and even a thesis on the play in 1890 (Barallat: 1896), comprising a critique of Moratín's legendary translation of 1798. A decade earlier, the canonicity of *Hamlet* was cited in support of a translation of the exchange between Hamlet and Ophelia which leads up to the "To be or no to be" speech:

Traduhim tota aquexa admirable escena tal com la escrigué
Shakespeare, ja qu'en son temps no's comptava per escenas
las entradas ó sortidas... pera donar una mostra de lo que es
aquexa portentosa dramática, potser la més atrevida y la
més alta, dintre la vida del teatro. (Franquesa: 1880, p.43)

It is to be noted that this early Catalan rendering of *Hamlet* is carefully positioned within the Romantic literary system, in terms of the debate over classical propriety in the theatre. Comment is made upon Moratín's attitude towards Ophelia and hence the translated section, which he saw "ab tan mals ulls". So this Catalan *Hamlet*, like that of Barallat's thesis of 1890, positions itself both against Moratín, the classic Castilian translation, and within nineteenth century reevaluations of the play, in terms of a rejection of Neo-Classical constraints.

1898 is the year in which the first "full" Catalan translations of *Hamlet* are published. Arthur Masriera's (1898) version is the one most cited in journals, particularly theatre periodicals, in the first fifteen years of the twentieth century. The other version published that year is perhaps the most notorious of Catalan translations of Shakespeare, that of Gaietà Soler (1898), under the pseudonym of Angel Guerra. This latter has been clearly linked to attempts to foment a Catholic theatre in Catalonia, and was published by *La*

Talia Catalana. It has also been decried as a travesty in histories of the influence of Shakespeare in Spain.

Alfons Par (1940), for instance, writes of the version as follows:

Las razones de escenografía católica no son excusa para profanar la obra más religiosa de Shakespeare. (Par: 1940, p.148)

..... si el argumento queda rebajado a un conflicto adocenado, no es mejor el estilo en que lo escribió el literato barcelonés, confuso, antipático, lleno de barbarismos, con fraseología casera y sin acoger casi ninguno de los profundos conceptos del original. Precisamente a mosén Cayetano Soler, que era filósofo y autor místico, se le ocurrió no dar cabida a aquellos conceptos agudísimos que penetran hasta lo íntimo de la conciencia y que hacen esta tragedia apropiadísima para la escena católica sin necesidad de desnaturalizarla. (Par: 1940, p.149)

There is also reference here -if rather nonplussed- to one of the most interesting features of the play, which is its use of Moratín's version (in Spanish) for the re-presentation of the Mousetrap.

Pormenor inexplicable: mientras la obra está escrita en catalán, para la representación interna apeló el refundidor al castellano de Moratín... hasta cierto punto, pues le cambia dos estrofas. (p.149)

Once again it seems necessary for the Catalan translator to position his version in relation to the Moratín translation.

What we have observed here are five alternative "originators" of Shakespeare and *Hamlet* in Catalan, four of which find the need to position their original moment in relation to Moratín, by either negating his approach, rejecting it or attempting to contain it. Interestingly, the next version of *Hamlet* for consideration also makes a play for

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"origination" and "originality". Antoni Bulbena i Tosell's prose version of *Hamlet* is first published in 1910 and refers back to the other translations. Bulbena backdates the writing of the translation by eighteen years, hence perhaps placing greater emphasis on the claim of the play to be an originator. His presentation of the play is very revealing in its exploration of the status of *Hamlet* in Catalan and its perceived role in the Catalan cultural renaissance, as it places emphasis both on the performative aspect, the relevance of *Hamlet* for Catalan theatre, and the issue of the language which brings it into being. These two aspects of *Hamlet* reception can be traced throughout the history of Shakespeare translation in Catalonia.

In the following excerpts from Bulbena i Tosell's introduction to his translation of the play, the two fields of reception are intertwined. On the one hand the perception of a lack of linguistic ability to produce an integral, literal translation of *Hamlet* reminds us of the anxieties produced by the *Hamlet* text, and yet here this is perceived as a way of participating in world culture, for no other language can do any better. On the other hand the enterprise of linguistic regeneration, pulling on a rich literary tradition, is strongly linked to a second aim, that of reviving Catalan theatre. So, both readers and actors are recruited to read and learn:

Als llegidors de la present tragedia.... Una traducció íntegra y literal del Hamlet al català no és probable que, en absolut, may eczistesca, per més que algun editor vulla fer-ne gula en pròlechs ni portades, com tampoch no'n serà en ninguna altra llengua....(Bulbena: 1910, p.5)

.... recordarem ací... algunes régles indispensables y autoritzades dels nostres clàsichs. Y séns dupte que, tenint-les en compte, hi ganyaria bon xich la escena catalana, qui, com totes les del món -no tractant-se d'alguna pintura de costums íntims o casolans,- deuria ésser escola del bell parlar y de dicció acurada.(Bulbena: 1910, p.7)

All three of the turn-of-the-century *Hamlets* (Masriera, Gaietà Soler and Bulbena i Tosell) underline the importance of the play and, in particular, their version of the play for both the *llengua* and the *escena catalana*. What they represent, then, in some ways are new ways of representing.

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A second edition of the Bulbena i Tosell translation is published as part of the popular series of reading texts, *La novel.la nova* in 1918. The next translation of *Hamlet*, and the one which becomes the "classic" version is that of Magí Morera i Galícia (1920), whose version remains current mainly because of C.A. Jordana's and, more importantly, Sagarra's neglect of the play. The absence of *Hamlet* from each of these translators' versions of Shakespeare's complete works give rise to a number of interesting readings of the play's status in the Catalan cultural system in terms of absence and anxiety. A feature of such readings is the identification of *Hamlet* with the central character, as if each contains and yet does not contain the other. Hence, Triadú (1964) explains Sagarra's and Jordana's failure to translate the play in terms of a "Hamlet complex", in assessing Morera i Galícia's achievement as follows:

No deixà el buit de Hàmlet en la sèrie de versions tan completa que dugué a terme. Potser no patí tant del complex de Hàmlet, que potser afectà un C.A. Jordana i un Josep Maria de Sagarra. (Morera: 1964, p.5)

The full text of Morera i Galícia's *Hàmlet* is first published as part of the *Biblioteca Literària* for the *Editorial Catalana* in 1920 and produces a large body of critical writing, hence becoming a source for a number of new Catalan hamletologies. It has been reprinted a number of times since, including a new (MOLU) edition in 1997, marketed with a still shot from Kenneth Branagh's recent film on the cover. Yet it is perhaps the 1964 *Biblioteca Selecta* edition which most clearly reveals the metaphorical possibilities of the Hamlet myth in Catalonia. Joan Triadú's prologue places emphasis on the monumental anxiety represented by the work, *Hamlet's* sphinx-like quality.

Hàmlet és l'obra que posa a prova els actors que es proposen representar-la. Siguin de la latitud que siguin i parlin la llengua que parlin. Car Hàmlet es troba en totes les llengües. Magí Morera i Galícia l'anostrà en una molt acurada traducció que avui, autoritzadament revisada, ve a commemorar el quart centenari de la naixença de Shakespeare. (Morera: 1964, blurb on cover)

As a monument to the origins of Shakespeare, the credentials of its translator as an originator and an original are underlined.

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Heus ací lector la millor traducció catalana de Hàmlet fins avui coneguda. Reeditar-la, revisada, com a homenatge a Shakespeare, en aquest any del quart centenari del naixement del més gran dramaturg de la nostra civilització, és un encert i un acte de justícia. L'obra més important del teatre de Shakespeare ha fet prou respecte als nostres traductors incomplets perquè la deixessin per més endavant...

Sortosament, Magí Morera i Galícia salvà l'honor, fa molts anys, del shakespeareanisme de Catalunya. (Morera: 1964, p.5)

Si llavors Magí Morera i Galícia quedà definitivament classificat com a poeta de valors relatius i de nobles materials... com a traductor, en canvi, s'obria a un camí que l'ha portat, ara, en aquesta edició, a les nostres mans. (Morera: 1964, p.6)

Morera here is responsible for the best translation of *Hamlet*, making up for the gaps, the incompleteness of subsequent Shakespeare translators. He is presented as having saved the honour of "Shakespeareanism" in Catalonia and, hence, part of the act of justice denoted by the recovery of his translation lies in revealing the centrality of his labours to introduce *Hamlet* into Catalan culture. Morera's role is comparable to that of Hamlet, in the words of Triadú. It is his interaction with origins, with a source text, as a translator rather than an "original" author, that make him a valid part of tradition, in the same way that it is Hamlet's struggle with authority, his interaction with the voice of the father (a prior Hamlet) that fuel the action and reflections of the play. The "Hamlet complex", described here by Triadú, and later again by Marià Manent (1982), is a recurrent frame for editions of the Morera i Galícia version.

The further cultural significance of this translation and translator at a moment which marks the beginnings of the more serious task of Shakespeare translation undertaken under the auspices of the *Noucentisme* project and its inheritors in the 1920s and 1930s is perhaps what leads it to be reproduced in a third edition in 1982, with yet another editor to fight its corner, as part of the *Millors Obres de la Literatura Universal*, alongside Morera's other published Shakespeare translations. There is little commentary on the

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translation itself, although Morera's versions are listed as being amongst the most important ones translated into Catalan this century. There is no mention of Terenci Moix's *Hamlet* of 1980, notwithstanding the critical acclaim it received in production. Even after Salvador Oliva's translation of Shakespeare's complete works for contemporary Catalonia, Morera i Galícia's translation has been reprinted twice in the 1990s.

Terenci Moix, in contrast, makes no attempt to hide previous versions and is careful to posit a context for the necessity of a new translation. In his introduction, the sense of anxiety with respect to the translation project seems acute, although this may also be perceived as a rhetorical device to show himself as a truer mirror of "hamletology". His translator's notes are also significant for their emphasis on the performance aspect of the play, which links them closely to earlier figurations of Hamlet as supreme intertext: man, literary text, performance text, "ology".

I, com que sembla que és gairebé impossible escriure coses
noves sobre Hamlet, m'hauré d'afanyar a comunicar,
bàsicament, la novetat d'un Hamlet entès i estimat per
Terenci Moix, també autor. (Moix: 1980, p.11)

This "també autor" can be read in at least two ways, as meaning "as well as Hamlet" or, given the tendency in Catalonia and further afield to identify the character of Hamlet in many of his speeches with Shakespeare himself, "as well as Shakespeare".

The final translation of *Hamlet* is that of Salvador Oliva (1986). Once more, the reader is struck by the modesty of the translator's presentation of a text which is described to be of incredible importance in the same introductory pages:

... no és cap exageració afirmar que aviat es necessitarà tota
una vida per poder llegir tots els estudis dedicats a aquesta
tragèdia... (Oliva: 1986, p.5)

Oliva refers to a "mar tan immens d'interpretacions", expressing a sense of the overwhelming nature of the task at hand, but in some ways this is to allow for another position claiming originality. In fact, it would seem that in some ways with *Hamlet* this can only be achieved by effacement, by being subsumed into the play - translation as negative capability. After referring to critical incontinence, Oliva calls for containment:

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...és sempre el retorn a l'obra, la repetida submersió en aquest enigma, l'única manera d'incrementar la fascinació que exerceix sobre nosaltres... (Oliva: 1986, p.6)

His reflections on *Hamlet* and the status of the work end with reference to previous translations, but only to move the debate on to the issue of how the name should figure in Catalan. Such a concern would seem to reflect the importance of the issue of naming, of the very representation of the idea, within the text and in the theorization of Catalan translation that surrounds each of its rewritings. Magí Morera i Galícia is identified as a particular originator of a Catalan Hamlet, a Hàmllet with a grave accent - "va catalanitzar el nom propi del títol posant-li un accent".(p.18) Oliva's own thoughts on the matter are that to accentuate *Hamlet* (given in italics) in Catalan is, at the very least, unnecessary. His argument is, of course, orthographical but it also reflects a political position, one which assumes *Hamlet's* common currency in contemporary Catalonia and hence foregoes the need for wrangles over origins and originality, whilst at the same time appealing to a higher authority. In going on to defend the "catalanization" of Fortinbras as Fortimbràs, Oliva ends his musings as follows:

Espero que el lector em perdonarà aquesta segona insistència en aspectes tan menors. M'ho han aconsellat la prudència i el respecte que devem a les paraules. (Oliva: 1986, p.18)

Here, he usefully conflates respect for Shakespeare's "paraules" - the "words" so prominent in the text of *Hamlet* - with the more patriotic sentiment of support for the Catalan language.

Representation(s)

The wrapping of the issue of *Hamlet* in words and the question of what they represent is of great interest in the attempt to uncover what kind of hamletologies are posited in Catalan, what kind of play is repeated. In order to do this, let us return first to the enigma, to see how the figure of Hamlet as man, and by extension mythology, is traced in Catalan. What kind of language is used to express him? In order to assess this, I will concentrate first on the figure he cuts in hamletologies - ranging from prologues to translations to reviews, articles, memoirs and other literary reflections. I will then proceed briefly to consider the representation of the "to be or not to be" speech, so

commonly used as not only the enigma of Hamlet but the enigma of life in general that it may be taken as paradigmatic or as an empty signifier or even both together. This particular Hamlet contention is certainly one which brings into play the kind of relationship of excess and lack expressed by translators and critics in their attempts to represent (the play).

The term hamletologies is not one that I have invented for the purpose of my paper. It denotes a concept, a field, which has been more than attested to in Shakespeare criticism, the existence of Hamlet as a figure who transgresses the boundaries of the play which seeks to contain him. In fact there is a whole history of criticism, from Voltaire to the Romantics and onwards, which has been far more concerned with the figure of Hamlet and his philosophising than the play itself. Character-based approaches, seeking to expose the enigma of Hamlet the man, had been so widespread that twentieth century critics were able to take this trend as a given, and write their return to the play - a return endlessly figured by Oliva - into something original. What is more, this excess, this existence that stretches beyond the boundaries of the play is something that is figured (and has been read as such) in the final act of the play itself. The ending of Hamlet, his death -

Oh, I die, Horatio
The potent poison quite o'ercrows my spirit.
I cannot live to hear the news from England,
But I do prophesy th'election lights
On Fortinbras. He has my dying voice.
So tell him, with th'occurents more and less
Which have solicited - the rest is silence.

Horatio

Now cracks a noble heart. Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

This ending - this "the rest is silence" - is something which Salvador Oliva cites as one of the areas on which he must contend with many critical readings of the play. He points to the play of words, linking it to the "to be or not to be" soliloquy, as one which can be understood in two ways: either "La resta (del que he de dir) és silenci" or "El repós és el silenci", the latter being supported by the sources offered in the Arden edition: Psalm

CXV 17 "go down into silence" and 2 Esdras vii 32 "dwell in silence". Oliva remains with this reading, seeing Horatio's epilogue as one which desires Hamlet's rest to be more pleasant (than that of the ghost perhaps - "Recorda't."), returning once again to the sentiments of the "to be or not to be speech", where death is presented as a dream, as un "repòs". This reading offers Oliva's key to the enigma of *Hamlet*, yet it is also possible to see the exchange in terms which deny the "silent rest" expressed. The rest is very definitely not silence in the play. Hamlet and the words which contain him continue beyond his ending, a fact that in Catalan can be perceived in the not inconsiderable words which have accrued to the status of Hamlet's existence, as well as in the more playful representations of "To be or not to be - that is the question" in contexts ranging from the political - Cambó as Hamlet - to the sporting Sami-Hamlet, and in the different strategies for containment of the Mousetrap.

The issue of peninsular hamletologies is also one whose history cannot be ignored. Pérez Gállego's *Hamletología* of 1976 is a work which is often presented as a Shakespeare monograph which merits reading beyond the boundaries of the Spanish state, a work which gives the lie to perceptions of the history of Shakespeare in Spain as something inferior, unworthy of the great "universal" history of Shakespeare criticism. It is on *Hamlet* too that we find one of the few works on Shakespeare by a Spaniard that might be cited in English. However, there is always awareness of the partial nature of these events, these hamletologies:

Proponer en España una teoría de Hamlet es sumamente meritorio, siempre, claro está, que sea nueva y rigurosa. El aislamiento siempre se ha notado, pero en nuestra aldea global se nota antes. (Pérez Gállego: 1992, p.12)

This same anxiety, in relation to the possible (or lack of) universality of Spanish and Catalan hamletologies, is expressed by Terenci Moix, amongst others, in the introduction to his translation:

La conciliació entre els dos extrems de la polèmica shakespeariana - la teòrica i la pràctica - ha esdevingut prou civilitzada en l'àmbit cultural anglosaxó, però no sé si, encara avui, és possible a casa nostra. Com més m'he endinsat en la lectura dels grans estudis hamletians, més

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m'he adonat de la llarga distància que els separa de la cultura catalana. (Moix: 1980, p.12)

This seeming awareness then that, as Pérez Gállego would have it, "cualquier proyecto en Shakespeare lleva a Hamlet, que es como un mecanismo productor de lenguajes" and furthermore, along with Manuel Angel Conejero, that the existence of the character is now such that it is hard to tell whether he can be contained by any language, is bound to reveal both the necessity for translating the play, and the character, and the dangers within such an enterprise:

Cabría aquí preguntarse con temor, y sólo preguntarse, si no será el personaje la propia estrategia y sólo ella; si no será el personaje el propio proceso de autocomplacencia que supone ver crecer los parlamentos, los soliloquios, etc; si Hamlet no será Hamlet en tanto que existe la conciencia de hacer crecer el proceso lingüístico que lo conforma; si no será ya el propio significante, el propio formato que constituye el personaje, cuando a la hora de traducir ese personaje con lo que únicamente contamos es el formato. (Conejero: 1993, p.181)

In tracing representations of a play which has been given to represent the character's own struggle for true representation in language, in theatre, are we not bound to find the problematics of representation foregrounded in whatever the contexts, are we not bound to see represented before us a representation of the struggle to originate, to contain beginnings as well as ends. This would seem to be the central dilemma, in our century at least, of hamletology.

This aspect of hamletology has perhaps already been made clear in my paper, the anxiety with respect to the original, the ghost of Hamlet and Shakespeare's version of *Hamlet* (if this, in itself, can be recovered). When we see that from the earliest framings of the play the issue of language, of whether or not Catalan has the words to express Hamlet, has been foregrounded, it becomes apparent that the creation of hamletologies in Catalan is very much a political issue.

Masriera, for instance, points to its relationship with a parallel urge by Thomas Brown to translate Ausias March, speaking for Catalonia:

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En nom de Catalunya agraída jo us dedico l'Hamlet
Català, qual versió he fet al costat del vostre...(Masriera:
1898, dedication)

His is a version driven by the desire to facilitate the Catalan language and the Catalan stage with a monument enjoyed for years in all other European languages:

aquell geni immortal que't dirá en mal catalá, lo que fa
alguns cent anys havia dit en totes les llengües europees.
(Masriera: 1898, p.6)

His is an impossible enterprise (as other translators attest) but a necessary one:

Doném nostre versió sens notes crítiques ni cap comentari
erudit; únicament ab santa y catalana franquesa cridem
alguna vegada l'atenció del lector confessant nostre
insuficiencia davant d'algún passatge obscur y difícil, fent
notar de pas com s'en sortíren d'altres traductors. (Masriera:
1898, p.5)

Amongst those consulted stands Moratín. Yet Masriera still claims his version is "enter y vertader com l'escrigué son autor" in contrast with "tot l'aixam de traydorets que, sens escrúpol de conciencia s'han permès modificar la gran creació shakespeariana."

It is in the context of framings such as these that we may recall Morera i Galícia's figuration as one who saved the honour of Shakespeare in Catalonia, as well as the counterframings of Terenci Moix and Salvador Oliva, whose legitimating strategies focus on stressing the undefinitive nature of their status.

In identifying the languages spoken by and speaking *Hamlet*/Hamlet, as a central issue in tracing a hamletology, we must be aware of how these contrasting tendencies towards linguistic and cultural plenitude and towards the anxiety of the overwhelming nature of the task, the conflict between heroic action and inaction, figure very strongly in traditional representations of the play. To make my point, I will refer to a version of Hamlet as man, a hamletology, expressed in Castilian by Joan Maragall. In his reading of Shakespeare, the "to be or not to be" question is once again foregrounded. Hamlet's dilemma between action and inaction is presented as the dilemma of Spain post-1898.

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Un hombre fuerte, un hombre proporcionado a la acción impuesta, se hubiera lanzado impetuosamente a ella para vencer o morir en la demanda; Hamlet, no; Hamlet vacila, porque su espíritu es débil. Empieza por fingirse a sí mismo, diciéndose que ha de averiguar lo que hay de cierto en ella; y tal averiguación no la practica directamente, sino por medios ingeniosos y con habilidades. Es hábil, porque es débil; porque las habilidades requieren tiempo, y su debilidad no quiere otra cosa que aplazamientos. (Maragall: 1899, p.131)

This is the origin of the catastrophe, "casi contra su voluntad, arrastrando a los culpables, a los inocentes, y a él mismo... muere encargando a los sobrevivientes que expliquen su conducta y entregando el reino a un príncipe extranjero". (Maragall: p.132)

The sympathies of this Catalan, then, are with Fortinbras, who is to inherit the kingdom of the Hamlets. The nature of this transference is presented as follows:

Esta transfusión de individuo a individuo no es más que una representación ideal o una curiosidad fisiológica; de pueblos a pueblos puede ser una evolución natural y casi una ley histórica.

... en una u otra forma Fortimbrás ha de ser señor del reino de Hamlet. (Maragall: p.135)

Given Oliva's later insistence on the Catalanization of Fortinbras but not that of Hamlet, it is difficult to ignore the burgeoning political nature of the Catalan Hamlet narrative.

The perception of the vacillation of Hamlet as giving rise to a political disaster is one that remains central to subsequent Catalan hamletologies, and may be read in the anxiety of the translators. Interestingly, after Magí Morera i Galícia's combative choice of a different option, "viure o no viure" - this being his statement of the "qüestió" - the problem is reframed by Agustí Esclasans in an article of 1927, "Hamlet, fantasma de bronze". Here Hamlet is presented as the anti-representation, the negative personality because not a man of action; this in a cultural context wherein translation, the reappropriation of the classics of the world canon, and especially Shakespeare, tended to

be presented as a call to action, as part of an active process of rebuilding Catalan culture. In popular representations, too, Hamlet is used to exemplify vacillation, a vision only later revised in editions post-Jan Kott, post-Eastern European representations of *Hamlet* as the ultimate struggle against abusive authority. How this "ser o no ser" figures in Catalan linguistically is one of the points which are dwelt upon most by translators and critics of the translations, culminating in Vallverdú's surreptitious revision of Morera i Galícia's version, reproducing the "ser o no ser" favoured by other translators and by tradition.

Where *Hamlet* is used unproblematically as a call to action is in the reproductions of Hamlet's advice to the players about how to act. His speeches at the end of Act II are used as a model - often framed as Shakespeare himself speaking - of how to renew Catalan theatre, both in terms of writing plays and their representation by actors, how they are to play. It is with such "required" reference to the play within the play, the representation within a representation of the problems of representation that perhaps I should end my comments on Catalan hamletologies, with the Mousetrap, the *parany del ratolí*, only to add that one of the translators at least, Terenci Moix, sees himself caught up in this *parany*, "el parany prodigiós del Príncep de Dinamarca", the field of hamletologies.

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