

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

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

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

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

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

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

“Other works of the human mind equal *Hamlet*; none surpasses it” (Hugo). For all the innumerable contradicting, even conflicting opinions of Shakespeare's masterpiece, this assertion by Victor Hugo, at least, comes close to being unanimous.

The very fabric of the play is woven out of various planes of otherness.

The highly enigmatic texture of the play is no doubt connected to the fact that from the very beginning the text is haunted by a spectre. As the plot unfolds, it becomes apparent that the whole warp of its structure is placed under the sign of the ghost¹. This “questionable shape” (I.4, 22) whose interpretation Shakespeare reserved for himself is

^{*} University of Bucharest, Romania

¹ For my analysis of the Ghost I rely on a previous paper, “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Ghost or The Ghost with a Thousand Faces. Hamlet's Ghost – Fiction or Nature?” published in *University of Bucharest Review. A Journal of Literary and Cultural Studies*, vol. III no. 11/2001, 17–38.

the most obvious Other in the play, and there are many sides to its alterity since there is a multitude of thresholds it crosses.

It is “constructed on the boundaries between hallucination and spiritual reality and between fantasy and fact, the border or membrane where the imagination and the corporeal world, figure and actuality, psychic disturbance and objective truth meet” (Greenblatt 192).

The embodiment of otherness and paradox, the ghost contradicts the principle of existence, by stating $A = \sim A$. It stands, first of all, between life and death, annihilating the natural opposition between existence and non-existence.

The phantom stands for the unknown, for the enigma of death feared as the most threatening and immediate form of otherness, and that is why its presence is signalled only by abstract, impersonal terms: “it,” “this thing,” “ghost,” “spirit,” “goblin.”

The ghost is an intermediary, a compromise between paganism and Christianity. A. C. Bradley (qtd. in Sinfield 222) sees the whole construction of *Hamlet* as a combination between Christian rules and states of mind and the pagan Roman and Greek mode.

A creature of the limit, the ghost is also placed in between “airs from heaven” and “blasts from hell” (I.4, 41). Being an inhabitant of Purgatory, the ghost automatically becomes a creature of the threshold between Catholicism and Protestantism, thus a marker of otherness: “*Hamlet* exploits the shared ground, the embarrassing overlap, between Protestantism and the doctrines it seeks to repudiate” (pagan and Christian alike; Sinfield 230).

In this context, a distinctive form of otherness is mourning, wearing black clothes to mark the loss of a loved one – physical evidence that brands one as different and advertises grief, a display that is strongly unpalatable to Protestant restraint. Hamlet is aggressive in mourning his father, which is a Catholic custom. But Claudius will voice the Protestant opinion that man must never interfere with God’s decree and always approve all His decisions (I.2, 92–95).

This phantom of the limit is also a creature of the border between night and day. From the beginning of the 11th century, when spectres start being acknowledged as heavenly or infernal messengers, night comes to be associated with the ghosts, with the unknown, with otherness.

This intermediate position between night and day is perhaps why ghosts are mostly associated with dream-visions, and dream is another form of otherness in opposition with indisputable reality. The spectre is also on the verge between wake and slumber, between the conscious and the unconscious.

The spectre is, therefore, also placed at the threshold between the seen and the unseen, and it has the capacity of showing itself only to those it chooses, namely those who have befriended it during its life. Evanescence is another consecrated form of otherness. The Ghost is the beneficiary of what Derrida calls “the visor effect” (Derrida 7), being able to see without being seen.

Violence is another form of transgression, therefore of otherness, especially when performed against a receptacle of power such as the king. Murder is a supreme form of violence. Fratricide however exceeds all the borders of normality and becomes hybridic.

And yet another instance of otherness is usurpation, which appears under two aspects in *Hamlet*. The phantom appears as a usurper, an upsetter of the natural sequence of things. According to Horatio, it usurps that time of night, an assertion whose effect is that “It [the ghost] is offended²” (I.1, 51), while Hamlet considers that it makes night hideous (I.4, 54). Both Hamlet the elder and his son have been usurped by the same person, Claudius, brother to the former and uncle to the latter (“A little more than kin but less than kind” – I.2, 65).

This leads seamlessly to one of the most repulsive examples of otherness to the modern mind – incest, sexual relations entertained against the law of nature.

A frightening form of otherness is oblivion, one that is akin to that troubling statement that $A = \sim A$, namely that what used to be one’s mind is now a *tabula rasa*. Forgetfulness is a menacing spectre in itself in this play whose triggering incident, the regicide, is introduced with a reference to the river Lethe (the river of forgetfulness in the ancient Greek underworld; I.5, 33). The reference, nevertheless, is connected to the prince who, the Ghost says, should be stirred by the gruesome account of the murder even if he were duller than a weed growing on the wharf of this river. Gertrude’s hasty marriage is also associated with oblivion, a sort of senility of the heart. But Hamlet’s blunt memory seems to be a constant danger, so the role of the ghost is mnemonic. The memory it controls has a special quality: “Remember me” (I.5, 91) is a magic phrase which operates a volte-face in Hamlet’s existence. In a blend of pagan and Christian elements that is true to the whole economy of the play, this haunting phrase is reminiscent of the Bible (Luke 22:19 – The Last Supper³) and Saint Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians (11:24–25⁴).

Going one step further from forgetfulness in the alienation of the mind, madness is one of the most disquieting forms of otherness. ‘Diseased’ stands both for unhealthy and deprived of ease. In *Hamlet*, disease is both feigned and real. The prince puts “an antic disposition on” (I.5, 179) as an armour, to avoid inspection and detection and be shielded from malevolence and violence. Through it he too wants to obtain, like the ghost, the visor effect and be able to see without being truly seen. The diseased, insane self becomes a mask, a diversion, a red herring.

² The term has religious connotations, being used in Mark 14:26-30 in connection with betrayal:

27. And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be **offended** because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

28. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

29. But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be **offended**, yet will not I.

³ “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me”

⁴ “24. ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’ 25. In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’”

But Hamlet is at least partly, or eventually, genuinely insane. If it were only for his rash poking at a curtain with his sword, as a result of which Polonius drops dead (III.4, 24–30). The assumption that he is under the impression of killing Claudius only makes his gesture more irrational, since he has been planning to confront the king and tell him why he is being punished ever since the beginning of the play. His weighing the execution has been careful, very exacting, since he has even refrained from killing his uncle during his prayer for fear he should be redeemed (III.3, 73–96). He justifies his slaying Polonius thus: “A bloody deed – almost as bad, good mother, / As kill a king and marry with his brother” (III.4, 29–30). But the reasoning is faulty, since plotting to kill a king has a motive, albeit evil, while Hamlet’s jerky thrust looks more like a neurological seizure, a harebrained fit.

Another case of madness stems from this murderous reflex, that of Ophelia, daughter to Polonius. Already worn out by the insults and cruelty of Hamlet, who had once professed his love for her, the news that her loved one has slain her father pushes her over the edge of sanity.

This brings us to the ultimate form of otherness, which is, alas, womanhood. Shakespeare was always adverse to the opposite sex. When they are not downright evil (Lady Macbeth, Goneril, Regan), his female characters are witches (Hecate, the Weird Sisters), mad (Ophelia), unruly (Hippolyta, Beatrice, Rosalind), fussy and spoiled (Olivia), whining (Hermia and Helena), scheming (the Merry Wives), sexually perverse (Desdemona, Cleopatra), stupid (Hero, Desdemona) or weak (the rest). The few notable exceptions (Cordelia, Portia, Viola) are either small parts, not really memorable, or have to cross-dress as men. As a rule, none of Shakespeare’s female characters are completely luminous, none have behaviours that are above ambiguity and debate. Shakespeare’s degraded relationship with his wife is common knowledge, as is his alleged homosexuality.

Therefore, the womb is the great Other, with its alien manifestations governed by the moon, a star that also lends its name to the eponymous lunatics. So the mother is seen as the Other, all the more paradoxically since in the beginning mother and child form the same body.

Just as Ophelia in her madness will merge the figures of Hamlet and her father, the prince starts from a disenchantment with the female sex at his mother’s hasty marriage with his uncle and will subsequently project that distrust unto Ophelia and all other women. He will ask Ophelia for no reason: “Are you honest?” (III.1, 104). As G. R. Hibbard states, “Woman’s sexuality has evidently become an obsession with him; and to this extent at least he is genuinely mad” (Hibbard 51).

Far more than whimsicality, female wantonness is a frightening brand of otherness, and in his first soliloquy Hamlet will pronounce the sentence which has become one of the many proverbs generated by the play: “Frailty, thy name is woman” (I.2, 146). Female falsehood is generalised and, indicting makeup as a form of counterfeit, he will tell Ophelia: “I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God / has given you one face, and you make yourselves another” (III.1, 143–144). In that scene,

his conclusion will be “Get thee to a nunnery, which he will repeat no less than five times (III.1, 122, 130, 138, 141, 150), thus stating that men must stay away from women lest they should contaminate them.

Naturally, the supreme form of wantonness and falsehood is adultery. The etymology of the Latin noun *adulterium* is not entirely clear, but one plausible interpretation is that it comes from the preposition *ad* and the adjective *alter*, since it is the crime committed by aspiring to be with a person other than the rightful one. Pliny uses it as a synonym for alteration. In adultery, it is not only the partner who is ‘another’, but also the person who commits the sin. They are changed and corrupted by this behaviour into becoming something else than their previous righteous selves. But the notion of adultery depends on the point of view. Since neither Gertrude nor Claudius is married to anyone else, they do not actually commit adultery. It is Hamlet’s imagination, which keeps the memory of his father alive, that perceives their union as such. And Shakespeare constantly uses the adjective ‘adulterate’ instead of ‘adulterous’ in order to stress its meaning of corruption.

Even if the adultery is debatable, lechery and bawdiness are not. And the amount of obscenity in Ophelia’s mad scene is absolutely shocking, since it is not possible to account for such a burst of sexual innuendo from the lips of a pure, candid and inexperienced virgin. As stated before, Shakespeare’s female characters are surprising and all must be presumed guilty until proven innocent.

The abyss of the female psyche is so profound that not even the women themselves can fathom it. It is very interesting to remark that Gertrude’s first lines in the play, addressed to Hamlet, are about his mourning (“Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off, / And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark” – I.2, 68-69). In two lines she manages to show that her only interest is in appearances and decorum (referring to the clothes) and to ask her son to trade one father and king for another. This cue portrays her as superficial and disloyal. From this moment on, her son will address a number of heartless tirades to her, so violent as to shock even a modern audience, let alone an Elizabethan one, so used to obeying the fifth commandment. As G. R. Hibbard perceptively remarks,

Pierced by her son’s dagger-like words, the Queen who has hitherto seemed devoid of all moral sense – kind by nature, easygoing, and obviously sensual, she appears to be actuated in all she does by a dislike of being made to feel uncomfortable herself and of seeing others made uncomfortable – begins to realize something of what she has done and see herself as she is. (Hibbard 59)

Therefore, she is an Other to her own self, since she does not master self-knowledge. In fact, her status is to a certain extent disconcerting. It evinces a certain amount of sameness, since she stays the Queen, but also of difference, since the king she is married to changes. And that is a unique situation. The *qui-pro-quo* of names is also confusing at times, between Hamlet the king/her husband and Hamlet the prince/her son.

*
* *

Otherness is therefore at the core of the play. But let us consider yet another kind of otherness, this time turning to the operas that Shakespeare's masterpiece inspired. This study focuses on two of them, written by Ambroise Thomas (1868) and Pascal Bentoiu (1969), since those by Saverio Mercadante (1822), Sandor Szokolay (1968) and Humphrey Searle (1968) have not been recorded and some not even published.

Saint-Saëns pronounced one of the most balanced opinions in writing that "being one of the beacons of the modern school, Ambroise Thomas preserved the traditions of a lyrical art of which he was the last representative" (in Masson 9, my translation).

Hamlet by Thomas is less an instance of adaptation than of rewriting, since it is loosely based upon the 1847 translation of Alexandre Dumas père, in itself an illustration of the syntagm that has become a truism by now: *traduttore – traditore*.

Thomas's opera is constrained by the conventions of *grand opéra* and of the tradition of classical theatre in France. It therefore preserves the five acts, but the rest is altered almost beyond all recognition. Fortinbras, Voltimand, Cornelius, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, Osric, Bernardo, Francisco, Reynaldo, the English Ambassadors and the Clowns disappear. It starts with the coronation scene and later on Horatio and Marcellus give the news of the apparition to the Chorus, who must in turn give it to Hamlet! In the following scene, however, it becomes obvious it has failed to do so, and Horatio and Marcellus have to do it themselves.

Laertes leaves to fight for his country in Norway and he entrusts his sister to Hamlet. The whole weight shifts – Hamlet is far more preoccupied with love than with the Ghost's request.

We are thus spared Polonius's advice list, which would nevertheless have made good material for an aria. In fact Polonius's whole part is drastically reduced and the nice surprise is that he does not die and he will take part in his daughter's funeral procession.

The Ghost is Catholicised, since this is a French opera: "Un divin pouvoir m'arrache aux feux d'en bas" – this clearly indicates Hell, not Purgatory. Simplifying the Shakespearean uncertainty, Hamlet addresses it here as "Spectre infernal!" Yet he later says the ghost's will is holy and his memory – pious. The whole text is full of nonsensical contradictions.

The Ghost seems to point to Gertrude's adultery **before** his death, while the poison is poured upon the sleeping king's lip, which of course destroys the metaphor of poisonous words dropped into one's ear⁵.

Ophelia reads a book of her own accord and Polonius is not there to guide her. Hamlet passes her by without stopping. The Queen appears, worried about her son. In a duet, Ophelia deplores the prince's coldness and wants to retreat to a nunnery! Gertrude

⁵ Just as Jean-Paul Roux shows (55–58), the king, his people, his territory, his crown and wife are one. Hence, if the king's ear is poisoned, through the identification between king and country "the whole ear of Denmark / Is by a forged process of [his] death / Rankly abused" (I, V, 36–38).

implores her not to go, as she is her last hope for Hamlet. As she seems to be a dream mother-in-law for any woman, Ophelia obeys.

The famous “To be or not to be” monologue is moved to the beginning of Act III.

In a duet with his wife, Claudius asserts that Hamlet has lost his reason. Gertrude is afraid her son has found out the truth and thus makes it clear to the audience that she was her husband’s accomplice in the murder. Hamlet joins them in a trio and informs them of the actors’ arrival. He then sings and aberrant drinking song. If the interpreter has any sense of discernment, he will not make it a cheerful one, in spite of the sparkling and exuberant quality of the music in major key (B flat).

The Mouse Trap is entirely a ballet and pantomime scene, since the ballet scene was a *sine qua non* requirement of the Paris Opera House.

Claudius’s guilt is unmasked. In the ensuing havoc, Hamlet urges the chorus to avenge the dead king, implying that the realisation is general. The ensemble provides a perfect opportunity for a conventional Finale.

After the displaced monologue, Hamlet sees Claudius pray. The guilty king thinks he sees his brother’s ghost and calls for Polonius’s help! Thus Hamlet, concealed, understands that Polonius is also his uncle’s accomplice.

In a trio, Gertrude informs her son that Claudius has settled his wedding with Ophelia. But, as he looks at his betrothed, the prince realises she is the traitor’s daughter and their love is doomed and sends her to a nunnery, which had been her wish in the first place.

Left alone with his mother, Hamlet accuses her of murder. Guilt and grief make the Queen temporarily lose her mind – which is part of the revered *belcanto* tradition of much-cherishes mad-scenes. Thus in this opera there are three of them, if we also count in Hamlet’s drinking song. Gertrude begs for her life and the Ghost appears and reminds Hamlet to spare her.

Ophelia loses her wits because she no longer has the prince’s love. Her father’s death at the hands of her lover is no longer an issue since Polonius is alive and well. All the bawdy allusions are purged from this decorous scene. The song she sings is not Shakespeare’s. This bowdlerised and cleansed image of a happily married couple is followed by the repetition of the “Doubt that the stars are fire” couplet (first heard in the Act 1 duet) and by Ophelia’s drowning. Unrequited love resulting in madness and death are solid operatic conventions. Yet, this scene is a musical masterpiece.

The final act opens with two gravediggers who sing an unavoidable drinking song and have no contact with the other characters or with poor Yorick. Reluctantly Hamlet accepts Laertes’s dare to a duel, which takes place in the same graveyard, and is wounded. They both hear the funeral procession and neither knows who is dead. Polonius, the King, the Queen and the Ghost are there too. In his grief, Hamlet remembers his pledge and the Ghost reproves him for his tardiness. Therefore the prince lashes out and kills Claudius. All present exclaim: “The King!” While Hamlet replies: “No, my father’s murderer!” To baffle Shakespeare’s clumsy procrastination, justice is efficiently made. The Ghost pronounces the murder avenged and asks that Gertrude be sent to a convent (which seems a handy and

popular solution to all wrongs). Claudius does not miss his chance to clarify that he dies damned, while his wife asks for God's forgiveness. The Ghost tells Hamlet: "Live for your people. God himself is crowning you!"

This end which depicts Hamlet as the future King of Denmark is taken over from Alexandre Dumas's translation. Nevertheless, an outraged English response to the opera made Thomas write an alternative ending, in which the Ghost is absent. Dismayed at seeing Ophelia's lifeless body, Hamlet kills Claudius and then kills himself.

This account of Ambrose Thomas's work clearly shows the influence of tradition and convention upon translation and adaptation. The sacrosanct law of decorum and political correctness *avant la lettre* banned violent death as well as bawdiness from the French stage. Likewise, vocal balance in the opera required two relatively proportionate couples: Hamlet and Ophelia (baritone and soprano) versus Claudius and Gertrude (bass and mezzo.) Therefore, the prince's part is significantly reduced, while the others are substantially augmented.

*

* *

Pascal Bentoiu wrote his opera between 1966 and 1969, and it was first performed on stage in 1971. He wrote his own libretto, about which he said: it

is therefore not Shakespeare's play; it is only inspired from the famous tragedy, which it re-pencils – to musical ends – in a much simplified form. The great themes remain, but denuded, stripped of poetry, almost abstract. The music attempts to re-create – if it can – the poetry, the psychological depth, the dramatic vehemence, the human and philosophical significance. The author therefore proposes *not* illustrative music to *Hamlet*, but a *musical* drama that constitutes a contemporary interpretation of the Shakespearean theme. (Bentoiu 7, my translation)

Therefore, a lot of structural changes were bound to occur. As always, a number of characters were eliminated – surprisingly Horatio, but also Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, Francisco, Marcellus, Bernardo, Reynaldo, Fortinbras and the grave-diggers. The text is reorganised from five acts into two parts and ten scenes. The opera starts with the encounter between the prince and his father's spectre. The "To be or not to be" monologue is moved from Act III, scene 1 to the 8th scene, namely after Claudius's plot with Laertes to kill the prince.

The conclusion to the play, uttered by Fortinbras who is absent in the opera, is pronounced by a Chorus reminiscent of the Greek Chorus, a collective character that is merely a spectator whose mission is to comment on the action and provide moral insight. The four lines ("A noble soul has vanished. / Good night, sweet prince. / May the song of angel wings / Shroud your eternal rest" – my translation) remind us of Ophelia's "Good night" lines. The composer indicates that this conclusion marks the beginning of ascension after a prolonged descent into the Inferno (7).

Unlike Thomas's opera, Bentoiu's is extremely faithful to the spirit of Shakespeare's play and to his text, which he preserves as far as possible. Yet, as he himself says,

Opera is in no way the musical illustration of a text, but – in a performance – the visualisation of a complex musical structure which is in its turn based upon a literary and dramatic structure. And the libretto cannot be regarded as a theatre play, but as a necessary foundation that determines to a large extent the big picture of the future musical construction. (Bentoiu 7, my translation)

There are nevertheless a number of marks of otherness too. Strangely, the most significant are connected to the very characters relevant to our topic "Other and Mother."

First of all, the Ghost is interpreted by the same tenor who sings the part of young Hamlet, whose voice is recorded on magnetic tape and played alternatively with the live orchestra and voices. This goes far beyond technological effect. The modernity of this artifice probes profoundly into the psychological depth of the characters. On the one hand, the homonymous characters, Hamlet the elder and Hamlet the younger, father and son, king and prince, have the same voice. Consequently the same blood, the same will, the same purpose, the same love of country and of justice. Across the barrier of time (of different generations) and of death, they sound the same. But the difference in volume and the uncanny air lent by the loudspeaker effect, by the echo and eerie quality of sonority, stress the otherness of the apparition. On the other hand, the Ghost is only characterised vocally and it does not appear on stage in the flesh. Corroborated with the sameness of the voice, this is an inkling of the strong possibility that the Ghost might be merely a figment of Hamlet's diseased imagination.

Resonating with this there is another notable difference in the opera. The boudoir scene in which Hamlet confronts his mother and accidentally kills Polonius in an uncontrollable fit of irrationality is translated into pantomime. Not one word is uttered or sung, the whole visual scene relying upon two paramount factors – the singers' acting and the light effects, while the strength of the fragment is of course musical. The beginning is bathed in "blurred, uncertain light" (stage indications), the apparition of the Ghost is suddenly underlined by "special light" (and, musically, by recorded organ music, always associated with the sacred), while the end is a "slow and total darkening." While the stage is pitch-black, the orchestra plays a short percussion fugue in parallel with a pre-recorded tape that plays a distinct material. The general impression of chaos, violence, dissonance and discordance depicts insanity and murder. "Sudden crude light, almost painful to the eyes" will mark the transition to the following scene, which is a scene of madness – Ophelia's.

Another layer of otherness pertains to *Hamlet's* being a Romanian opera. Besides the text, which is in Romanian, social, historical and cultural facts have also left their imprint. A minor distinction is apparent from the very beginning of the text, when the prince addresses the Ghost as "Hamlet-King-Father." The national demarcation – Dane – is left out, which immediately suggests the universality of the play, in no way connected to Denmark.

But even before the beginning of the text there is another significant cultural element: the modal *a cappella* choral prelude bears a strong Byzantine influence, which immediately renders this *Hamlet* more eastern. The concluding chorus, which reminds the listener of Paul Constantinescu's *Byzantine Easter Oratorio*, will lend symmetry to the opera according to the same lines.

Historically, the libretto was influenced by the reality of the communist regime of the time. Thus, the scene in which Claudius is praying and the prince refrains from killing him lest he should be redeemed is suppressed altogether, since religion was banned by communist ideology. Likewise, all bawdy allusion is purged from Ophelia's ravings, since socialist censorship was bound to bowdlerise all unhealthy lack of decorum.

Therefore, otherness can be more or less felicitous in the operas, but in the end it proves enriching and it always brings the qualities of the score into bold relief.

Works Cited

- Bentoiu, Pascal. "Cuvântul autorului" in *Hamlet* (Opera Română – Program: București). 1975.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx – The State of Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*. London & New York: Routledge, 1994. Print.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Hamlet in Purgatory*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001. Print.
- Hibbard, G. R. "General Introduction" to William Shakespeare. *Hamlet*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. 1–66. Print.
- Hugo, Victor. *William Shakespeare – fragments* (1864; translated by Melville B. Anderson, first published in English by A. C. McClurg and Co., Chicago, IL, USA, 1886) in *Westralian Worker*, 10 January 1919, page 2. Web.
<<http://john.curtin.edu.au/fitzgerald/collection/pen20.html>>. 27 May 2012.
- Masson, Georges: *Ambroise Thomas – un compositeur lyrique au XIX^e siècle*, Metz: Editions Serpenoise, 1996. 7–9, 90–109. Print.
- Roux, Jean-Paul. *Regele – Mituri și simboluri*. Bucharest: Meridiane (Artă și religie Collection), 1998. Print.
- Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (The Oxford Shakespeare, Oxford World's Classics), 2008. Print.
- Sinfield, Alan. "Tragedy, God and Writing – *Hamlet, Faustus, Tamburlane*" in *Faultlines. Cultural Materialism and the Politics of Dissident Reading*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992. Print.