

The Writer as Poet-Creator in Yiorgos Cheimonas' Work

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The writings of the author and psychiatrist Yiorgos Cheimonas comprise nine prose texts, eight “lessons” about logos, a series of articles and interviews in literary or scientific periodicals, as well as his translations of the ancient Greek tragic poets and Shakespeare. This is quite a rich and multifarious material, through which we will attempt to assemble and specify the character—or the characters—the writer’s identity assumes, having, of course, in mind that literary discourse very often contradicts the scientific one and that—at least in the present case—scientific discourse “flirts” with literary style, loosening its strictly demonstrative validity. As for the translations, they concern us to the point that the selection of a text to be translated, as well as the translator’s choices inside the “body” of a text, are indications that contribute to the image of a writer’s original work. The word “image” is used to imply the figures the writer’s persona assumes, that is, the function as well as the *ethos* of a subject which structures and organizes discourse, as they arise from the grid formed by this subject’s “realizations” in the texts: the self-referential moments of the texts. Taking into account the distinctive place occupied by Yiorgos Cheimonas in Greek letters, mostly because of his idiosyncratic use of language, we will follow the problematics which run through his work in relation to the language itself and its literary treatment. We will also see what this treatment reveals about the author’s function, that is, what kind of subject it describes and brings forward.

The Fiction: A Comment on Writing

From his first appearance in prose writing with *Peisistratus* Cheimonas, a student at the time, states that writing is to him a bloody battle and his aim, “to be king of Carthagene”. As a first and adolescent work, *Peisistratus* certainly thematizes a young person’s effort to be recognized as an author, especially in marginal—“dumb”, as he himself argues—Thessaloniki. The narrator is facing a person called Peisistratus, whom he hates and envies, admires and derides at the same time. In fact, Peisistratus is the narrator’s creation and vice versa; they are the two faces of the same person who utters scientific discourse but also tells

tales, boasts and sneers at himself, makes statements and then contradicts them. This central person is surrounded by some other people he observes, describes, and scrutinizes, yet his eyes are mainly turned to himself, his wavering moods, the anger, the fear and the pain, especially the pain; “ο πόνος και η δημιουργία είναι δύο μεγάλοι κύκλοι που τέμνονται. – Πάσχον-Ποιούν!” [Pain and creation are two great circles that cross each other – To suffer-to act].¹ Creation is our resistance to a world where we do not determine either our birth or our death; everything happens in spite of us, and the pain we suffer is the pain of the matter forced to become world. Suicide itself is a “remarkable act”, for it claims the choice, the decision to die, in other words it constitutes creation.

The intelligent narrator contacts many “low” people, is interested in their common everyday life and their manners seem to attract him; however, his quest keeps him at a distance. Indeed, a possible sexual encounter is called off as he entrenches himself behind his private code, namely that of literature, a code the girl does not share. When the physical contact repels the narrator, he starts reciting a poem which is like a cavafian parody. After he recites it, he addresses her with a question: “...τι γνώμη έχεις για την αλεξανδρινή ποίηση; είχε ένα απελπισμένο πρόσωπο κι εγώ συνέχισα να βρίσκω τη φιλοσοφία του Ντιλτάι πολύ σωστή εσύ;” [What is your view on alexandrian poetry? Her face was desperate, and I continued to think of Dilthey’s philosophy as the right one – what about you?].² The resolution of the story sketches the lonely, unhappy, cynical and queer figure of the writer-outcast. Pain and isolation form two aspects of the portrait he attempts to compose, which we will come across several times in the examination of his work.

Dionysia, a character of the text *H Εκδρομή* [The Excursion], has a meaningful name, and claims to be a “mediator”. The explanations she gives describe an almost humanistic, social function, which points on the one hand towards the psychoanalyst and on the other towards the writer:³

Η Διονυσία λέει είμαι μεσολαβητής. Ο διακοσμητής είτε μέσα του είναι αφελής και λέει να καταλαβαίνω. Όμως πρέπει ο καθένας μας να στηρίζεται στον εαυτό του κι αυτό οι περισσότεροι το λένε με πικρία όμως εγώ το λέω με περηφάνεια. Είστε αφελής λέει η Διονυσία κι οι μεσολαβητές είναι απαραίτητοι κι όχι μόνο σε παρεξηγήσεις και διαφωνίες. Δεν είναι τόσο ασήμαντη η αποστολή τους κι ο ρόλος τους δεν είναι στοιχειωδώς συμφιλιωτικός κι είναι ουσιαστικά συμφιλιωτικός κι είναι απαραίτητοι σε κάθε σχέση. Είναι σαν εξομολογητές και σαν μεσολαβητές. Είναι άνθρωποι με σπάνια αντίληψη και με γνώσεις και με μεγάλη πείρα και πρώτ’ απ’ όλα με επιείκεια. Τους επιτρέπεται κάποια θεατρικότητα κι υπερβολή να είναι παραστατικοί αφηγητές κι εννοώ να αναπτύσσουν με τέχνη στον άλλο με καιρίες λέξεις και πιστευτό πάθος να αναπτύσσουν τη σημασία ενός πράγματος που τους εκμυστηριεύομαστε και κυρίως να μην είναι στην πραγματικότητα είρωνες ώστε να τους είμαστε ειλικρινείς γιατί η ειλικρίνεια φοβάται περισσότερο την

ειρωνεία παρά την ακατανόησία. [...] Όμως οι μεσολαβητές λέει η Διονυσία δεν είναι απλοί άνθρωποι και δεν μπορούμε να σχετιστούμε μαζί τους έχουν φυσιογνωμία αποκρουστική. Όμως είπατε λέει ο διακοσμητής είναι συνηθισμένοι άνθρωποι. Όχι λέει η Διονυσία έχουν κάτι το υπερφυσικό που εμποδίζει. Το αγγελικό κι όχι εννοείται το αγγελικό με την έννοια της αγνότητας και της καλοσύνης.⁴

The writer is the one who listens carefully to the others and actualizes the narration of their stories. He is an odd character and, despite his many virtues, he is in danger of being left alone and alienated from himself. He has a close contact with things and at the same time a tendency to stand away from them and march towards the supernatural.

Our next stop is *Ο Γιατρός Ινεότης* [Doctor Ineotis]. The homonymous hero escorts the “old”⁵ people to their death so that a new kind of people comes along. Doctor Ineotis, who plays the role of a prophet or an apostle, has a gypsy grinder with him, which he uses in order to express himself, to speak to the crowd. At this point, for the first time, we come across the issue of bodily, corporeal language; the gypsy has “a physical bodily cleverness”, he and Doctor Ineotis complete each other. When the time comes Doctor Ineotis kills the gypsy by torturing him, cuts him into pieces—that is the only way to free his message and his prophecy. Instead of speaking, “he proves the words in delight” on the gypsy’s body who is at his last gasp. Just before the murder, Doctor Ineotis defines this duty of his as a “moral obligation”: “ό,τι αξίζει στον άνθρωπο είναι να έχει να πει μια ιστορία συνταρακτική κι εκείνοι που δεν έχουν κι ούτε έχουν καν φανταστεί μια ιστορία. Είναι χαμένοι για πάντα και δεν θα γυρίσω να τους κοιτάξω κι όσο και να με παρακαλούν δεν θα γυρίσω γιατί έστω ότι υπάρχει ένα χρέος στον άνθρωπο αυτό είναι να πει μια συνταρακτική κι από ηθικό χρέος θα σάς πω [...]”.⁶ However, he, too, is condemned to live “in eternal loneliness”, he does not participate in the others’ fate: “Είχε οριστικά χαθεί από το τέλος των ανθρώπων. Όπως είχε ζήσει έξω από τη ζωή των ανθρώπων έτσι θα ζούσε κι έξω από το θάνατό τους”.⁷

The issue of incarnate expression is the central point in *Ο Αδελφός* [The Brother]. Once again the Brother comes to the world to accomplish a very important act; however, it is the sister who will “utter the Brother’s light”, will “express” him. She undertakes to “manifest” him and “incarnate him before the people”, “for there is no other way but the body”. In the Brother’s incarnate speech a religious stigma is apparent just like in the case of the confessor in *Η Εκδρομή*. It is the person who comes to “speak” as well as “listen” and in order to accomplish his *mission* he subjects his body to tortures, or “passions”. The body is sanctified and the speech—or else the testimony—becomes tangible. Speech in Cheimonas, incarnate or not, is mainly attributed to women. There is an abundance of feminine “voices”, both in the sense of women-narrators and in the accomplishment of the “mission” of speech through women (like Tenagne in *Γιατρός Ινεότης* or the sister in *Αδελφός*). Body language is the sphere of the

unspeakable, the silent, and silence belongs to women. Feminine speech is historically and philosophically linked to the insane, mutilated, mute language. It is an anti-authoritative, anti-rationalist mode of utterance, full of gaps and contradictions. The intuitive and bodily is feminine not only from the point of view of feminist criticism but also from the point of view of psychoanalytic theory. One should quote Walter Benjamin, who recognizes in the woman the “guardian”⁸ of the essence of speech, for she does not surrender to the sonorous and blasphemous language of words. Language annihilates women’s souls, so women turn to silence. They remain auditors and in their silence they save their interlocutor’s speech. Within such a scheme silence fertilizes speech, it does not cancel it.

Not only in the text *O Αδελφός*, but in *Οι Χτίστες* [The Builders], too, the herald’s speech reaches people through the mediation of three women. They are the women who undertake to “propitiate” the herald’s speech so that it becomes communicative. They trace about the herald “an imperceptible track of concern” and at the same time they “undermine” him so as to protect the human kind and prevent the divine wrath. The herald exercises himself in body language, he torturingly cuts his body to pieces, diminishes or redoubles it to perform the “internal announcement”. The third daughter, Valassi, tears the herald’s skin, opens him up and displays his entrails with a “pious anatomy” and the triumphant words: “Αναγγελία είναι ο άνθρωπος. Αναγνωρίστε τον κήρυκα αυτόν. Τον αναγγέλλω”.⁹ This way she attains the communication between people and the herald, who is otherwise isolated from them. He cannot go near them (“it is not permitted to the herald to land”), he is foreign to them, even scary. His vocation as a messenger “shows disrespect towards the future of silence”. According to D. N. Maronitis, it is the adventure of human speech in a speechless world.¹⁰ Or, perhaps, the sanguinary human effort “to be united with what is not human”.¹¹ Whatever the case, in *Οι Χτίστες* we watch another Genesis (or Apocalypse?) taking place, which will end in the origin, in the “union of people” into a continuous and irregular essence, while the Creation remains uninhabited, the houses the Builders build are wide open and empty. That’s the end of the world as an allegory for the end of writing. The cosmic order fails to be established and its collapse signifies the bankruptcy of Discourse, since Discourse signifies order. The herald’s announcement has an eschatological character: he will not speak again.

The persecuted, “threatened violated judged” poet is also the central person in *Ο Εχθρός του ποιητή* [The Poet’s Enemy], Yiorgos Cheimonas’ last book. The poet Konstantinos Laios, who is surrounded by Eleni Xenou and his sister Kyveli, suffers the Lord’s Passion and is sneered at by his very companions: “δεν είναι για σένα αυτό το τέλος λέει η Κυβέλη με χαμόγελο εσύ και οι όμοιοί σου. Πόσο μέτριοι ανάξιοι ποιητές είστε. Εσείς όλοι οι καλοί ποιητές. Αυτό το τέλος είναι για τους μεγάλους ποιητές κι ίσως δεν χρειάζεται να τους πω μεγάλους. Αφού στην ποίηση μονάχα μεγάλοι ποιητές υπάρχουν κι αυτός είναι ο δεύτερος νόμος μου και τελευταίος: ότι η ποίηση δεν επαληθεύεται από καμιά ζωή από

κανέναν κόσμο. Η δικιά σου η ποίηση και ολωνών σας η ποίηση επαληθεύονται. Πόσο ταπεινά και θλιβερά η ζωή σου επαληθεύει. Εξαργυρώνει τους στίχους σου έναν-έναν κι ό,τι έγραψες κι ό,τι θα γράψεις".¹² According to Kyveli, the poet's enemy is an unjustified punishment, "η ποίηση είναι το μοναδικό πράγμα στον κόσμο που έχει αιτία και γι' αυτό αφανίζεται ρημαγμένη από κάτι που δεν έχει αιτία".¹³ The poet's enemy is the unjustified, the conventional, the social order against the poetic nature. This threat does not necessarily come from the outside, but also lurks in the poetic ego which is expended on "unworthy talks", as "the poet has no voice of his own and with his voice speak the people and the world". The poet uses an organized and structured language in order to serve current needs, a language of the mind and not of the soul, while "our soul is everything and our mind a hollow and profane order".¹⁴ Kyveli's accusation is the criticism to the inflexible, authoritative, male discourse by the female, "silent", bodily communication.

The Theoretical Discourse: A Deviation Towards Literature

In his literary work Cheimonas often embodies elements of anatomy, neurophysiology and psychoanalysis; likewise, in his studies about language, setting out from observations which derive from his psychiatric studies, he deviates to personal statements about literature, where it is no longer the psychiatrist speaking, but the writer Cheimonas. The aphasic speech is the central concern of the scientist Yiorgos Cheimonas. Cheimonas does not think of the aphasic speech as a disorder of normal linguistic patterns that needs therapy but, instead, as the demonstration of the fictional functionality of "normal" language. The following extracts are indicative: "We should perhaps face the aphasic speech rather as a 'new' language than a deficient one". "We can say that aphasia is not an expression of a non-symbol-situation, as we normally consider it [...] but, on the contrary, leads to what we would call a symbolization of speech. The signifier-signified unity is decomposed, the signifier brings along no signified any more, is lost, or, detached from the signified, is ruminated, dispersed in its phonemic components". "Speech flows into denominative utopia. No name will be formed at the end". "The word is released when the struggle between intelligence and meaning has ceased; the word is a secondary product...".¹⁵

The persons in Cheimonas' narrative landscape speak a shattered, spasmodic language: suspended phrase, disorganization of syntax, absence of punctuation or abnormal punctuation, words with sound correspondence only. The fragmented speech is reinstated as the genuine, real speech. In *Οι Χτίστες* the real, bodily mutilation produces the name and the meaning simultaneously:

... Τότε ήρθε και στάθηκε μία μεγάλη γυναίκα. Είπε πως ήταν η μάνα του πεθαμένου. Φορούσε ένα χοντρό μαύρο μεταξωτό και στα μαλλιά της πέτρες θαμπές από σπασμένα κοσμήματα και σκόρπιζαν από τα τσακισμένα τους δεσίματα πέτρες ακατέργαστες από περιουσία. Είπε

με λεν Ευδοκία και κατοικώ στα μοναστήρια. Είμαι Λαζή. Έπεσε μεγάλο κακό κι έπιασαν έναν έλληνα και τον βασάνιζαν. Τον ταπεινώναν κι εκείνος όρθιος εφώναζε η Ελλάς ζει. Τον κόβουν οι Βούλγαροι οι Τούρκοι δεν θυμάμαι πια. Είμαστε κοινά και συγγενικά φύλα. Όλοι εμείς ίδια μοίρα κι άραγε ίδιο γαίμα. Τον έκοψαν την γλώσσα αλλά εκείνος όρθιος εφώναζε συνέχεια και με κομμένη γλώσσα φώναζε λα ζι. Έτσι γεννήθηκε το έθνος των λαζών κι ονομαστήκαμε λαζοί.¹⁶

Language in Cheimonas is glorified, but also dethroned. Logos is on the one hand the innate impetus that leads to signification and denomination, even if it signifies and denominates its inability to communicate; on the other hand, speech is what separates us from the world, because: “the world is present when language is absent”. Nevertheless, the writer continues to write even if his writing is absorbed by the empty space. The blank page, the full stop at the end of an uncompleted formulation, the syntactic anarchy, all are deviations to which the language that cannot narrate has recourse. What is the ambition of an author who affirms the inability of speech? Cheimonas, in his article “Εγκέφαλος και Λόγος”, states that “...in literature the hero’s psychological-mental exaltations express nothing but the writer’s strong linguistic excitement: writer is the one who, above all, wants to speak”.¹⁷ Such a narcissism of speech does not abide with the bloody struggle of a man charged with a language he does not feel to be natural but which is the only one he has to express this very same agony.

Despite the contradiction, what is gathered above sketches an author’s figure submitting to the guilt for the incompleteness of the writing act but also aspiring to create a world built *ex nihilo* by rules of his own. Cheimonas’ attraction to extreme experiential situations (abominable murders, teratogenesis, cannibalism, ritual suicide) is due to his commitment to the representation of the tragedy which begins with the “vulgar parting of the individual being from the common being”. What we experience ever since is what Cheimonas calls “ontological grief”. It is exactly what attracts him to translate the tragedies (the Sophoclean *Electra*, Euripides’ *Bacchae* and *Medea*, Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*). According to Cheimonas tragedy is the literary form in which for the first time in the world man takes part in the restoration of a disorder of the world; “he is not just the bearer of an idea, a moral principle, a law—he is *equal* to nature and the gods, factor of the integrity, the application of a justice which must rule the world’s workings”.¹⁸

Let us notice at this point that Cheimonas indulges himself with quite a lot of “heretic” liberties when translating. One characteristic example is the addition of the phrase “Don’t touch me” (Μη μ’ αγγίξεις),¹⁹ not present in the original text of *Electra*, which ascribes—according to the writer, always—the heroine’s repulsion to physical contact in a modern verbal expression. He is interested in the “modern audience of tragic speech”—though this does not mean that he deals with the translated text as if it were original (specifically in *Electra* the translation is accompanied by the original text page to page). The odd punctuation chara-

teristic of his style is present in the translations as well, (like, for example, the full stop in *Hamlet*: "To be. Not to be".), while the same thing happens with the visual aesthetics (mid-verse gaps, capital letters, etc.).

The Difficult Re-naisance of Logos

If man experiences his parting from the world in a tragic way, the writer is *par excellence* isolated and exiled, since he is situated before the crowd and undertakes to talk on their behalf. Besides, this is the birth of narration: the moment someone sends his speech forth to the crowd and the crowd stops to listen. The narrator is distinguished by exactly what differentiates man from the rest of the world: language in words. In the equivocal meaning of the word "logos" coincide language and meaning, the mental process and its bearer, its expressive vehicle. From this coincidence sets out linguistic theory as well. According to Walter Benjamin,²⁰ language is the "communicable being of things". Consequently, what language communicates is (language) itself. Man's language specifically is a language made of words, or else, names. Man, in other words, communicates by naming all other things, which is a gift given to him by God. Benjamin tells the story of the Bible: God bestowed life, mind and language at the same time in man, and man is the only creature God did not create by naming him but endowed him with the property of naming. The knowledge of things lies for Adam in names. Knowledge in the grace of God is inherent in names. In this magical, chaste, innocent and unprecedented situation Adam lived blissfully. Language for him was knowledge itself, the world itself. The knowledge the snake promised was a kind of knowledge without name, the distinction between good and evil. Thus, from the era of knowledge we pass to the era of *crisis* (with the double meaning again, judgement and critical situation), but also the era of *abstraction*, since man leaves names behind in the abyss opened by the doubt which exists between good and evil. Language, finally, becomes a vehicle, that is a medium; in other words, it has to communicate *something* rather than itself from now on. The fall chases man out of the perfect harmony between things and speech. Names lose their purity, come to confusion, things sink into silence. From now on, names will not be authentic, for authentic they were only in the kingdom of God.

Whether we want to keep the theological content of Benjamin's "reine Sprache" or not (like de Man does,²¹ interpreting "reine Sprache" as a technical language, completely void of any signifying function), the fact remains that man after the "fall" finds himself caged in a language he does not feel his own, a language annulled or keeping silent at the moment he articulates it, at its birth. He does not possess the unity of name and knowledge: while God made things recognizable in their names, man names them according to the knowledge he receives. Despite the efforts to trace correspondences between the sounds of language and the things to which it refers,²² the mystic faith in language, not merely as the perfect reflection of the world but as its perfect plaster cast, does not resi-

de in the contemporary definition and interpretation of language. True language, Benjamin asserts, is beyond sounds but also beyond thought itself: it is the non-communicative, silent “essence of the world”. Sounds are the symptoms of the existence of this essence; but the essence itself lies in silence.

It is around the center of such a linguistic-philosophical meditation that Cheimonas’ both theoretical and literary discourse whirl. Beyond the dilemma of whether language is a mediocre, poor instrument or whether we are its incapable users, belonging to its “prehistoric period”, he pushes language to a boundary trial, not in order to punish it, but seeking to recreate it out of its debris. The retreat to silence mentioned above is temporary, it is cancelled every time in the next word. Through this trial, language will either be drained off to death or regain its lost validity and credibility—after all, Cheimonas explicitly substitutes the issue of pleasure in literature with the “trust of reading”. Such an undertaking of renaissance is what Cheimonas calls “founding the name”,²³ equivalent to finding the sufficient symbol or denomination. It is not without a reason that proper names are impressively numerous in his literary work and play a significant role. Cheimonas’ linguistic and literary plan reveals, under these terms, the ultimate writing ambition and at the same time the impasse, the ineffectual target of this ambition: to create a new, *familiar* speech, a new familiar world—familiar in its origin and its essence. Or, in other words, not to give names to things already created, but, like a new God in a new Genesis, to create things by naming them.

The overgrown writing ego which appears behind these pretensions practises his self-complacent acrobatics on boundary themes and on a border language, until he sinks into silence; but silence is also speech, by the definition “λόγος αυτός και ο αντίθετός του” [language itself and its opposite]. Silence is speech either by setting speech on fire or by undermining it. Cheimonas, in expectation of the final speech which has to exist “outside speech”, because there lies its birth too, has recourse to the “gradiose speeches” of our tradition: Solomos and Aeschylus, in *Ο Γάμος* [The Wedding] and *Ο Αδελφός* respectively. Finally, in *Ο Εχθρός του Ποιητή*, the battle calms down and the narration rests on unprecedentedly normal forms. Is the writer retreating? In any case, the poet Constantinos Laios dies at the end of the book and is buried with all the ceremonies offered to Jesus Christ. His death and the following rites allude to a Resurrection. But then again, the poet confesses after his death that “for the first time I felt the earth where I was lying, only the earth is mine”.

With the massacred speech of his original texts as well as with the over-presence of translation in his work, Yiorgos Cheimonas demonstrates one and the same thing: the insufficiency of human speech, the inability to communicate and express oneself through language. In his fiction and essay writing he constructs a meta-language, a discourse on writing and a linguistic *aporia*. Nevertheless, setting out from the modernist capitulation of the linguistic instrument as an insufficient medium, he ends in an anti-modernist proposition: the construction of a powerful writing subject which, by remaining within the problematics of lan-

guage, re-ascribes to logos its lost splendor elevating it to Creation. Art regenerates speech and lays claim to deification. The impasse is surpassed through the religious model. If the problem is the origin, in the sense of both the starting point and authority, the writer anoints himself Master of his work, claiming both authority and authenticity. One could talk about arrogance or even failure, since his writing automatically demolishes whatever it builds. This discrepancy, however, is the corner-stone of his attempt. Cheimonas' writing does demolish the walls that would protect its stability and safety. Instead, it chooses the laborious censure and the tireless expansion of limits. These are the tokens of its honesty.

Even such a lonely and grandiose writing subject has fellow-travellers or, we could say, ancestors; ancestors which he chooses to accompany him and support his borderline writing: the pre-Socratic philosophers, the ancient tragedians, the fragmented and stately speech of Solomos. Cheimonas does not rest on the sanctioned voices; he plunges in the depths and the origins of human quest, where what matters is the reestablishment of harmony, the recovery of the world's essence and existence. Literature is, in Cheimonas' internal design, the most suitable means strictly charged with such an aiming; besides, in *Ο Εχθρός του Ποιητή* he will plainly and sententiously nominate art as god: "art is what has remained of god", and, consequently, the artist – in this case, the Poet-Creator.

Notes

1. Γιώργος Χειμωνάς, *Πεισίπρατος*, Athens, Ipsilon, 1980, p. 32. (Thessaloniki, 1960).
2. *Πεισίπρατος*, see above, p. 56.
3. The psychoanalyst is in a way a writer, too; he puts together the fragments of the stories the patient gives him, composing the puzzle, the whole story, which certainly requires "stuffing" so as to become solid and complete; the psychoanalyst's job does therefore resemble the writer's fiction writing, in a way.
4. "Dionysia says I am a mediator. The decorator said to himself she is naive and he says yes I understand. But each must depend on himself and people say that bitterly but I say it with pride. You are naive Dionysia says and mediators are necessary and not only in misunderstandings and disputes. Their mission is not so insignificant and their role is not theoretically that of the conciliator, it is substantially conciliatory and they are necessary in every relationship. They are like confessors and like mediators. They are people with rare perceptive skills and knowledge and great experience and most of all with lenience. They are allowed some theatricality and exaggeration so that they can be vivid storytellers that is they narrate skillfully to the others using key words and convincing passion they develop the importance of something we confide in them and mainly they should not actually be sarcastic so that we are honest because honesty is more afraid of sarcasm than lack of understanding. [...] However mediators Dionysia says are not simple people and we cannot relate with them they have appalling features. But you said the decorator says that they are common people. No Dionysia says they have something supernatural that is an obstacle. The angelic and not the angelic in the sense of chastity and goodness". *Η Εκδρομή*, Athens, Kedros, 1964, pp. 31-32. The extracts from Cheimonas' fiction are translated by Fotini Apostolou.

5. The doctor's name is a pun: youth [νεότης]; in counterpoint with the old kind of people, it could be interpreted as the everflourishing creative ability.
6. "What is important in a man is to have a dramatic story to tell and those that don't have one or have not even imagined one. They are lost for ever and I will not even turn to look at them and no matter how they beg me I will not turn because let us accept that a man has an obligation, this is to tell a dramatic one, and out of a moral obligation I will tell you [...]" *Ο Γιατρός Ινεότης*, Athens, Kedros, 1971, pp. 17-18.
7. "He was finally lost from the end of men. As he had lived outside the life of men he would also live outside their death too".
8. Walter Benjamin, "The metaphysics of youth", *Selected Writings '13-'26*, ed. Bullock & Jennings, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996, p. 9.
9. "Man is an announcement. Acknowledge this herald. I announce him". *Οι Χτίστες*, Kedros, Athens, 1979, p. 49.
10. Δ. Ν. Μαρωνίτης, *Η πεζογραφία του Γ. Χειμωνά. Αφηρημένο και συγκεκριμένο* [Y. Heimonas' Fiction: The Abstract and the Concrete], Athens, Lotos, 1986, p. 76.
11. *Οι Χτίστες*, p. 42 ("να ενωθεί με ό,τι δεν είναι άνθρωπος").
12. "this ending is not for you Kyveli says with a smile you and your kind. How mediocre unworthy poets you are. You all the good poets. This ending is for the great poets and perhaps I do not need to call them great. Since in poetry there are only great poets and this is my second and last law: that poetry is not verified by any life by any world. Your poetry and our poetry are verified. How humbly and sadly your life verifies. It will cash your verses one by one and whatever you have written and whatever you are going to write". *Ο Εχθρός του ποιητή*, Athens, Kedros, 1990, pp. 32-33.
13. "poetry is the only thing in the world that has a cause and that is why it is annihilated devastatingly by something that does not have a cause. That has always been the end of the poets to be destroyed without a cause".
14. All the extracts are from *Ο Εχθρός του ποιητή*, pp. 32-35.
15. The extracts are taken from the eight lessons about speech (see *Works*) as well as the article "Εγκέφαλος και Λόγος" [Brain and Language] in *Σπείρα*, no 7 (November 1978), pp. 271-289.
16. "Then an old woman came and stood. She said she was the mother of the deceased. She wore a heavy black silk and in her hair opaque stones from broken jewels and rough stones from a fortune were scattered from their shattered fastens. She said my name is Evdokia and I live in convents. I am Lazi [Greek immigrants living in Germany]. There was a great disaster and they caught a Greek man and tortured him, they humiliated him and he remained standing and cried Hellas is alive. They cut him, the Bulgarians the Turks I do not recall any longer. We are similar and related races. We all have the same fate and could it be the same blood. They cut off his tongue and with a cut tongue he cried la zi. That is how the nation of the lazoi was born and we were called lazoi". *Οι Χτίστες*, pp. 23-24.
17. *Σπείρα*, no 7, p. 276.
18. From the foreword to the translation of *Bacchae*, Athens, Kastaniotis, 1985, p. 7.
19. The phrase necessarily carries along the sound of the biblical "Μη μου άπτου".
20. Walter Benjamin, "On language as such", *Selected Writings '13-'26*, ed. Bullock & Jennings, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1996.
21. Paul de Man, "Conclusions: 'Walter Benjamin's: The task of the translator'", *The Resistance to Theory: Theory and History of Literature*, vol. 33, Mineapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

22. See Gerard Genette, *Mimologies/Mimologiques, Voyage en Cratylie*, trans. E. Morgan, Lincoln and London, University of Nebraska Press, 1995.
23. Γιώργος Χειμωνάς, *Η Δύσθυμη Αναγέννηση, Όγδοο μάθημα για το Λόγο [The Gloomy Renaissance, Eighth Lesson on Language]*, Athens, Ipsilon, 1987, p. 28.

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